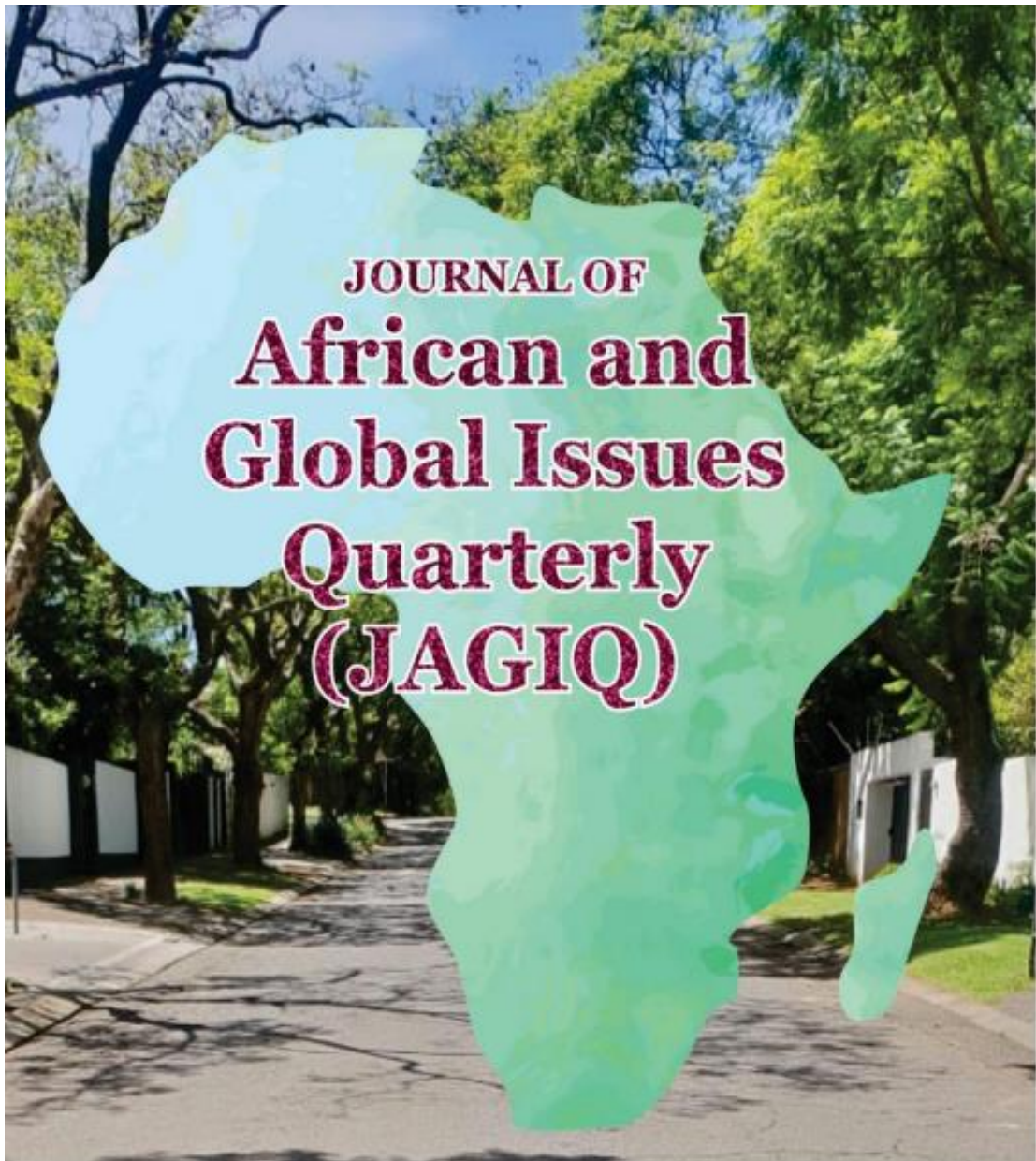




ISSN: 2709-8478 (PRINT)
2710-0073 (ONLINE)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69778/2710-0073/2026/7.2/EN>

Editorial Note:

Strengthening Accountability, Confronting Violence, and Reimagining Security in Africa

This Special Issue of African and Global Issues Quarterly arrives at a critical juncture. Across Africa, nations grapple with interconnected crises: the erosion of public trust in financial governance, the devastating rise of organised violence among youth, the persistent marginalisation of vulnerable populations, and the enduring legacy of colonial and neocolonial institutions that continue to shape contemporary realities. The thirteen papers presented here dissect these challenges with intellectual rigour and practical urgency.

We open with Nakabago and Hofisi's forensic examination of Uganda's Universal Primary Education capitation grant. For decades, UPE has been hailed as a pro-poor triumph. Yet, as the authors reveal, weak monitoring and evaluation of internal controls have turned a lifeline into a leaky vessel. Without real-time auditing and community-based oversight, financial accountability remains aspirational. This paper is a clarion call: education funding cannot be separated from forensic vigilance.

The crisis of youth violence, examined across two complementary studies by Somtochukwu, Muyideen, and colleagues, forces us to look where society often refuses to look: inside Ogun State's correctional facilities. Their first paper critically submits that socioeconomic indicators unemployment, broken kinship networks, and educational exclusion are causal pathways into cultism. The second adds a psychosocial layer, revealing how trauma, identity displacement, and the search for belonging drive young inmates deeper into violent collectives. Together, these studies argue that incarceration without therapeutic intervention is not rehabilitation but a factory for recidivism.

History matters. Daniel Oluwafemi John takes us into Igangan Town, Oyo State, between 1973 and 2021. The farmer-herder crisis is often framed as a contemporary emergency, but John demonstrates its long arc: decades of land tenure ambiguity, climate-induced migration, and state neglect. Understanding 1973 is essential for solving 2026. This is a sobering lesson in how unresolved grievances become inherited wars.

Joel Odaudu moves beyond Africa's borders with a multidimensional causal analysis of terrorism. Rejecting single-factor explanations, Odaudu insists on the confluence of political exclusion, economic inequality, and social fragmentation. His framework is a necessary tool for any government designing a counterterrorism policy that does not merely react but prevents.

The international justice system faces a necessary reckoning in Avitus A. Agbor's incisive critique of the International Criminal Court's racist image and agenda. Through comparative analysis of the situations in Ukraine and Palestine, Agbor exposes the selective application of international law a double standard that undermines the Court's legitimacy and perpetuates global hierarchies of victimhood.

Choma, Thobejane, and Rannditsheni's revisiting of human rights for people living with albinism foregrounds a community too often marginalised in both policy and scholarship. Their work reminds us that human rights discourse must move beyond abstract universality to address specific, lived vulnerabilities rooted in superstition, stigma, and systemic neglect.

Governance and accountability receive comprehensive treatment. Mohono, Gabanakgosi, and Shopola's Public Value Theory perspective on parliamentary oversight provides a fresh

framework for understanding democratic governance in Southern Africa. Zweni and Mahlala extend this conversation to grassroots public participation in municipal budget development, demonstrating that budgets are political statements about whose needs are prioritised.

The spectre of fragmentation looms large in Kelechi Johnmary Ani's unravelling of secessionist movements in Ambazonia and Biafra. By examining governance failures, identity politics, and historical grievances, Ani illuminates the root causes of separatist aspirations rather than merely managing their symptoms.

The private sector's challenges in volatile environments are explored by Parsad and Chummun, whose study of operational excellence in VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environments focuses on South Africa's insurance industry, offering practical insights for navigating uncertainty.

Academic rigour and methodological integrity come under the spotlight in Musaigwa, Nojiyeza, and Tabane's practical guide to writing strong conclusion chapters, addressing a perennial challenge in research dissemination and preempting reviewer criticism.

Nthambeleni Charles Netshisaulu's conceptual analysis of reversible metaphors in Tshivenda adds a rich linguistic dimension, demonstrating how language reflects and shapes cognition, culture, and social relations.

Taken together, these contributions remind us that accountability is not a bureaucratic checkbox. It is the thread linking school grants to classroom outcomes, correctional policies to safe communities, land history to peaceful coexistence, international law to genuine justice, and linguistic expression to cultural identity. The papers collectively argue that sustainable development in Africa demands simultaneous attention to financial probity, social inclusion, historical reckoning, and institutional reform.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all contributing authors for their intellectual rigour and commitment to advancing knowledge that serves African communities. In a world increasingly characterised by complexity and contestation, the role of critical scholarship has never been more vital. This Special Issue intervenes with rigour, compassion, and hope.

Editor

Dr. Nicholas Idris Erameh

Nigerian Institute of International Affairs

Lagos, Nigeria

Email. Eramehnicholas@gmail.com

Table of Content:

1. Monitoring And Evaluation Of Internal Controls In The Financial Accountability Of The Universal Primary Education Capitation Grant In Uganda <i>Johan Nakabago, Costa Hofisi</i>	5
2. Psychosocial Analysis Of Youths' Involvement In Cultism In Ogun State Correctional Facilities, Nigeria <i>Ogunmefun Folorunsho Muyideen, Njoku Daniel Somtochukwu</i>	26
3. A History Of Farmer-Herder Crisis In Igangan Town, Oyo State, Nigeria, 1973-2021 <i>Daniel Oluwafemi John</i>	43
4. The Political, Economic, And Social Determinants Of Terrorism: A Multidimensional Causal Analysis <i>Joel Odaudu</i>	56
5. Blunting The Racist Image And Agenda Of The International Criminal Court (Icc): The Situations In Ukraine And Palestine <i>Avitus A. Agbor</i>	80
6. Revisiting Human Rights And People Living With Albinism <i>Tsoaledi Daniel Thobejane, Vhuhwavho Rannditsheni, Hlako Choma</i>	95
7. The Role Of Parliamentary Oversight And Its Influence On Democratic Governance: A Public Value Theory Perspective <i>SD Mohono, BJ Gabanakgosi, MA Shopola, T Motswakae</i>	110
8. Unravelling The Dimensions Of Secessionist Movements In Africa: Focus On Ambazonia And Biafra <i>Kelechi Johnmary Ani</i>	130
9. Use Of Total Physical Response Method For Teaching Action Verbs To Primary School Learners <i>Farisani Thomas Nephawe</i>	141

10. Implementing Operational Excellence In Vuca Environments: A Study Of The Insurance Industry In South Africa
Sahil Dwarika Parsad, Bibi Z. Chummun
159
11. Reversible Metaphors In Tshivenda: A Conceptual Analysis Of Domain Swapping
Nthambeleni Charles Netshisaulu
177
12. The Catalyst Of Public Participation In The Development Of Municipal Budgets In Category B Municipalities In South Africa: A Community Engagement Perspective
Abongile Zweni, Sandiso Mahlala
201
13. Europe’s Manufactured “Migration Crisis”: Media, Militarisation, and Mobility in a Time of Global Crisis
Aghogho Akpome, Kofi Takyi Asante
218

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69778/2710-0073/2026/7.2/a9>

USE OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE METHOD FOR TEACHING ACTION VERBS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Farisani Thomas Nephawe

Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics.

University of Venda, South Africa

farisani.nephawe@univen.ac.za

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6746-2766>

Abstract

English is fundamental for communication among various nations worldwide. However, teaching action verbs to learners by Grade 4 English First Additional Language (EFAL) primary school teachers is difficult. This research investigated the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for teaching action verbs to primary school learners. Grounded in Maria Montessori's theory of education and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of child development, the research employed a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The study's population consisted of 25 primary school teachers who taught EFAL for more than five years. However, only five teachers were purposively sampled to participate in this research based on their teaching experience and approachability. Three teachers who share similar characteristics with the target group were selected for piloting. Data were collected using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and were analysed thematically to categorise the codes and identify the patterns. Before employing this method, teachers struggled to teach action verbs to their learners. However, after using it, teaching action verbs became easier. The study's limitations included a small sample size and time constraints. Nevertheless, its implications highlight the effectiveness of this method in teaching action verbs. Thus, this research recommends frequent use of the TPR method in this regard.

Keywords: *Acquiring, action verbs, learning, teaching, total physical response*

Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can be challenging for learners whose native language differs from English throughout the world. For example, when teaching action verbs to primary school learners, understanding the rules governing their appropriate usage can be cumbersome (Agistiawati

et al., 2025). Nizomova and Qurbonova (2025) assert that teaching action verbs to learners is a significant yet challenging task that requires effective methods to develop mental skills and foster a passion for learning, rather than merely acquiring knowledge. Although many methods exist for teaching action verbs to primary school learners, a specialised

approach that aligns with their cognitive, emotional, and social development is difficult to identify (Shafog'at, 2025). In primary schools, EFAL teachers typically employ a range of classroom teaching activities to help learners develop language skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Afrianti & Rustipa, 2023). However, they struggle to impart informed knowledge (Agistiawati et al., 2025) to their learners, despite being consistently expected to generate creative and innovative ideas during lessons.

In South Africa, primary school education is founded on the premise that teaching and learning English are essential for effective communication (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022), as the education system relies heavily on English. However, teachers struggle to teach action verbs (Agistiawati et al., 2025) to their learners, despite being consistently expected to generate creative and innovative ideas during lessons. However, the suitable method for teaching action verbs to primary school EFAL learners is limited (Afrianti & Rustipa, 2023). Hence, the researcher demonstrated the effectiveness of using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching action verbs to primary school EFAL learners.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method, proposed by Dr James Asher, an American professor of psychology, gained prominence in the teaching and

learning of action verbs in the 1970s, alongside other methods, including learning games and communicative language teaching. It is a language learning method that uses body movements in the acquisition of the target language (Johnson, 2025). In this method, learners respond to the teachers' commands using physical movements to acquire vocabulary knowledge. In this regard, memory is enhanced through association with physical responses.

TPR promotes accurate vocabulary usage, enhancing communication, as it provides a comprehensive framework for easy access to language learning (Agistiawati et al., 2025). It incorporates both theoretical foundations and practical steps, focusing on acquisition, centring on how children first acquire language, and emphasising listening comprehension before speaking (Shafog'at, 2025). This method not only incorporates physical actions but also includes elements such as games, music, and role-playing within its overall structure, integrating underlying core principles, including active learning, a multi-sensory approach, and a low-stress environment, to enhance learning and memory (Afrianti & Rustipa, 2023). TPR can be used as a strategy within a broader teaching context, and it is fundamentally a complete method with a specific theoretical basis for language teaching and learning (Johnson, 2025). Additionally, it improves vocabulary

acquisition and speaking skills, such as fluency, increases learners' motivation and engagement, and enhances memory and comprehension.

For teaching the English language, teachers can provide directions using linguistic objects, and learners follow their instructions accurately. Teachers may instruct learners to move to the front of the classroom, 'sit down', 'stand up ', or point at the clock, and they perform the actions. As learners improve, these directions can become more specific and include more language comprehension-related words and phrases, such as 'talk quickly', 'put on your red jumper ', or 'stand in front of the teacher' (Johnson, 2025).

The TPR method addresses elements that include cognitive processing, attention, and motivation through experiential learning and physical engagement. The focus gradually shifts from producing the language to associating it with words and actions, which strengthens the relationship between the two languages. The TPR method is beneficial for teaching action verbs, not only to primary school learners but also to learners of all ages in preparation for transition to secondary school (Shafog'at, 2025). Conversely, it is not involved in static/non-action verbs, including love, want, know, believe, belong, seem, and have, which describe existing conditions, beliefs, or feelings (Nordquist, 2025).

The primary school EFAL learners match their desire for learning through movement and enhance word retention through actions that help them remember and be stress-free. While the best way to master any language is to live among the speakers, some primary school learners often lack the opportunity to interact with native English speakers (Agistiawati et al., 2025). Consequently, learning action verbs through teacher commands in primary school settings troubles the non-native English-speaking learners. Nevertheless, this essential method is ideal because it links language to physical actions, helping the primary school EFAL learners to comprehend and respond appropriately to the demands of the English language (Agistiawati et al., 2025). TPR method enhances vocabulary acquisition effectively because learners can listen to the teacher pronouncing the English words appropriately, develop speaking skills, create a stress-free environment and an enjoyable learning situation (Qurbonova & Rozikova, 2025) by engaging the right brain responsible for movement in learning, building language understanding before speaking skills are required.

The primary school EFAL learners are relevant for using the TPR method, as learners in the age range (around 9-10 years old) benefit from learning through movement and experiences, which are highly effective for cognitive and psychomotor development, vocabulary acquisition by associating

words with real actions, and motivation (Mala, 2025). Since the classes for primary school EFAL learners often have a relatively small size, allowing for more individualised attention and interactive activities, which is conducive to the TPR approach. These learners mark the beginning of comprehensive learning in the EFAL curriculum, and they are often enthusiastic and motivated to learn, making them more receptive to innovative teaching methods, such as TPR (Komariah et al., 2025). Using the TPR method to teach action verbs to primary school learners, valuable insights were obtained.

These learners are more likely to be at the beginner or intermediate level of English proficiency, making it an ideal time to introduce new language teaching methods. Therefore, they are at a stage where they are rapidly developing their language skills and are more likely to benefit from interactive and engaging methods (Abdumutaljonovna, 2025), such as TPR. In this grade, the EFAL curriculum typically focuses on building vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills, which aligns with the goals of the TPR method. The TPR method leverages individuals' natural predisposition for physical activity and play, strengthening memory and understanding by linking words to actions in a low-pressure environment (Anisa, 2025).

Furthermore, the TPR method creates an environment that enhances their confidence, concentration, and retention of new language concepts (Suwanna & Langprayoon, 2025). Mala (2025:1) claims that “through movement-based learning, children become more active, focused, and motivated because the TPR method is an effective teaching strategy for learners”. Therefore, the learning atmosphere created is more interactive and freer from pressure (Tans & Kabelen, 2025) because children are not forced to speak directly but rather understand and respond to commands physically.

In sociocultural theory, most factors are likely to influence learners' acquisition of their target language. These factors include exposure to English outside of school, the attitudes of their peers and teachers towards the language, and the relevance of the language to their daily lives and future goals, all of which may influence their learning process. Incorporating the learners' cultural background and experiences into language lessons enhances their motivation and engagement in the learning process (Johnson, 2025). Thus, drawing connections between the language and cultural context makes the learning process more meaningful and relatable.

The factors that influence proficiency in primary school EFAL learners may yield important insights into how social and cultural factors impact language acquisition and academic achievement.

To implement the TPR method, the following are the necessary prerequisites: 1) Start with simple commands such as ‘stand up’, ‘open the door’ or ‘touch your nose’, 2) Model the action by demonstrating to learners what exactly they should do as regards commands and action simultaneously, 3) Encourage learners to follow along, 4) Gradually increase complexity by introducing more sentences with action verbs, 5) Incorporate TPR into regular lessons such as storytelling and vocabulary and then check the keywords, 6) Make the lesson fun using props, games such as ‘Simon says’, music, simple stories with action s such as showing hands.

TPR is a reliable technique for teaching languages, in which teachers provide directions using linguistic objects, and learners follow their instructions accurately. Teachers may instruct learners to move to the front of the classroom, sit down, stand up, or point at the clock, and they must act accordingly. As learners improve, these directions can become more specific and include more language comprehension-related words and phrases, such as ‘talk quickly’, ‘put on your red jumper ', or ‘stand in front of the teacher’ (Johnson, 2025). TPR addresses many elements that influence language use among learners, including cognitive processing, attention, and motivation, through physical activities. In this regard, mastering vocabulary, particularly action verbs, is fundamental for elementary learners to

develop practical communication skills in English (Zega et al., 2025). However, the difficulties prompt teachers to devise informative strategic interventions.

Studies including those by Anisa (2025), Jayanti and Rachmawati (2025), Lobar (2025), Tans and Kabelen (2025), and Zega et al. (2025) have been conducted to investigate the use of the TPR method for teaching action verbs. However, the limited findings necessitated that the researcher examine the benefits of the TPR method in teaching action verbs. For example, Anisa (2025) investigated the use of the TPR method in teaching action verbs to learners and found that it facilitated active participation through physical activity.

Jayanti and Rachmawati (2025) examined teachers' experiences in using the TPR method as a means of teaching English to young learners. They established that the TPR method had a positive influence on teaching action verbs. Lobar (2025) studied the effectiveness of the TPR method in teaching action verbs and found that learners performed remarkably. Tans and Kabelen (2025) investigated the use of the TPR method to teach action verbs to second-grade learners at an elementary school during the 2024/2025 academic year and found that learners performed above average. Similarly, Zega et al. (2025) investigated the mastery of action verbs in classroom action research and found

that 94% of learners performed drastically.

This research was underpinned by Maria Montessori's (1914) and Nadel's et al. (2000) multiple trace theories described hereunder:

- Maria Montessori's theory of education

This theory is a holistic, child-centred educational approach that emphasises a child's natural desire to learn, independence, and individual pace (Lobar, 2025). It holds that education should follow the child and promote hands-on and experiential learning, making connections between action verbs and movement (Mala, 2025). In this situation, it fosters the academic and social-emotional development of learners.

- Vygotsky's sociocultural theory

This theory holds that learning occurs through social interactions and cultural influences. It is significant for cognitive development, which is enhanced by teachers and/or more knowledgeable others, such as adults and peers (Ameri, 2020). The mechanisms used include imitation, instruction, and collaboration, where the support is gradually reduced as the learners gain competence. Later, the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance is enhanced (Johnson, 2025). Thus, this theory enables teachers to

scaffold the learning of action verbs for their learners.

These theories are influential frameworks that promote social interaction and collaboration (Ameri, 2020). They support the effectiveness of the TPR method in teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners. This theory reduces anxiety by delaying the need for learners to speak, minimises stress, and makes language learning more relaxed and enjoyable. It enhances memory by combining listening and movement activities. In this regard, the TPR method engages kinesthetic EFAL learners by acquiring knowledge through movement and physical activity (Jayanti and Rachmawati, 2025).

The TPR method is particularly relevant in teaching action verbs because it effectively integrates language and physical movement, thereby promoting learners' understanding and retention of these verbs. In this method, the teacher commands, and the learners perform, creating a stronger and more vivid memory trace that facilitates easier recall of the verb subsequently (Tans & Kabelen, 2025). Römhild et al. (2023) claim that the TPR method brings together diverse ideas, breaks monotony, and introduces variety into the process. Therefore, by incorporating this method into the teaching practice, teachers can create an engaging, interactive, and practical

learning environment that supports the development of learners' understanding of action verbs.

However, limitations and challenges in using TPR may include difficulty with abstract concepts, as expressing abstract ideas and complex sentences can be challenging (Porto, 2025). There is a potential for classroom discipline issues, as the lively and active nature of TPR may lead to problems if not used properly. High teacher skill requirements are necessary, as the TPR method requires teachers to possess high-level professional qualities, including strong language expression, physical abilities, and performance skills (Johnson, 2025). The TPR method has limited suitability for some learners, as it may not be equally practical for all learners, potentially being less suitable for more advanced learners.

This study's objectives were to identify a suitable method for teaching action verbs to primary school learners and evaluate the importance of using the TPR method in this regard. This research attempted to answer the research question: 1) What method is relevant for teaching action verbs to

primary school learners? 2) How can the TPR method enhance the teaching of action verbs to primary school learners? The objectives and research questions in this study highlight the importance of using the TPR method for teaching action verbs to primary school EFAL learners.

Materials and Methods

The research employed a qualitative research approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of using the TPR method to teach action verbs to primary school EFAL learners. The population of this research comprised 25 primary school teachers who had been teaching EFAL to Grade 4 learners for more than five years. Five purposively sampled teachers based on their teaching experience and approachability were interviewed in accordance with the objectives of this research and the researcher's expectations.

Table 1. Demographic Profile for Teachers (n=5)

Teacher	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching Experiences	English Proficiency
One	33	Male	Diploma	6 years	Good
Two	27	Female	Diploma	8 years	Good
Three	41	Male	Diploma	11 years	Excellent
Four	26	Female	Diploma	7 years	Good

Five	33	Female	Diploma	9 years	Good
------	----	--------	---------	---------	------

In Table 1, data visualisation is represented by teacher, age, gender, qualification, teaching experience, and English proficiency. The table is organised into six columns with seven rows. Only the teachers with teaching Diplomas were sampled because those with degrees are not employed to teach the primary school learners. Five teachers were designated as One through Five to conform to the ethical considerations. Regarding age, Teachers One and Five were 33 years old, followed by Teacher Two at 27 years, Teacher Three at 41 years, and Teacher Four at 26 years. Three females and two males represent the genders. All teachers held diplomas that demonstrated their qualifications. Regarding teaching experiences, Teacher One had 6 years, Teacher Two had eight years, Teacher Three had eleven years, Teacher Four had seven years, and Teacher Five had nine years of experience. All five teachers teach Grade 4 EFAL learners in South African primary schools.

Three teachers who share similar characteristics with the target group were selected for piloting. Using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, the researcher investigated the teaching of action verbs to primary school EFAL learners. A thematic analysis was employed because it enables the categorisation of codes and the identification of patterns.

The steps used in the data analysis process included data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification (Afrianti & Rustipa, 2023). Permission to conduct the present investigation was obtained from the Department of Education in Limpopo Province, South Africa, as well as from the Lwamondo Circuit manager, the principals of the primary schools, and the parents/guardians of the learners, since all were under 16 years old.

Various quality control measures were employed to maintain the trustworthiness of the qualitative data (Riazi et al., 2023). For example:

- To enhance dependability, a detailed description of the research mechanisms was provided, including the aim, research questions, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures (Shufutinsky, 2020).
- To enhance credibility, the researcher shared the research's outcome with teachers, seeking their feedback to confirm or clarify their views and experiences (Libman, 2023).
- To enhance confirmability, the researcher reflected on how the teachers' conventions and values predisposed the research processes and interpretations

(Riazi et al., 2023) to minimise the potential for bias.

- To enhance transferability, the researcher critically reflected on the biases of the teachers, assumptions and perspectives that influenced the research proceedings and outcomes (Shufutinsky, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

Findings and discussion were presented based on the objectives of this study, which aimed to answer the research questions. The researcher utilised classroom observations and semi-structured interviews.

1. Classroom observations

Classroom observations were employed to illustrate the use of the TPR method in teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners. The challenges identified during the lesson presentations were resolved. Three sessions were conducted before the start of the main observations, but only one was used to assess the importance of the TPR method. However, five contact sessions with teachers One and Two and their learners were prearranged to minimise disruptions to their daily routine. Both teachers and learners were informed about the purpose of the research. The researcher used a tape recorder, paper, and a pen to collect field notes. The setting of the primary school was in a deep rural traditional village and had 37 learners who were taught for 25

minutes. Five excerpts were used as follows:

Excerpt 1

Teacher One, who has six years of experience in the EFAL, started teaching action verbs using the TPR method.

Teacher One: Good afternoon, class.

Learners: Good afternoon, Sir.

Teacher One: Today's lesson concerns action verbs.

Learners: What are they, sir?

Teacher One: You will act them out.

Learners (in unison): How can we act them out when we don't understand them?

Teacher One: Understanding them requires the use of the TPR method.

Learners (in unison): We really like playing, Sir.

In this excerpt, Teacher One did not want to inform learners about action verbs because he wanted them to discover the actions and sounds of the words themselves. Grade 4 EFAL learners were deeply engrossed in the lesson. Therefore, it is evident that the TPR method is essential and practical for teaching action verbs. The finding is congruent with Anisa's (2025) suggestion that the TPR method facilitates the learning of action verbs by the primary letters. In addition, the TPR method has tremendous value in teaching and learning, as suggested by Montessori and Vygotsky's theories.

Excerpt 2

Teacher Two, with eight years of experience, greeted her learners and started the lesson.

Teacher Two: Good morning, my dear learners.

Today, we are dealing with action verbs. What are they?

Thomas: They are names of places.

Teacher Two: No, Thomas. They are not. Why do you think they are names?

Learners (in unison): We are not sure of these words. Can you assist us?

Teacher Two: OK. Raise your right hands!

Learners: They all raised their right hands.

Teacher Two: Excellent. The word raise is an action word.

One of the learners: Thank you so much.

Teacher Two asked learners if they knew action verbs. Learners could not answer correctly.

However, after using the TPR method, learners responded remarkably. The finding is in line with Jayanti and Rachmawati's (2025) suggestion that the TPR method had a positive influence on teaching action verbs, and if this method is used appropriately, the teaching and learning of action verbs can be enhanced. This aligns with Montessori and Vygotsky's suggestions.

Excerpt 3

Teacher Three, with 11 years of teaching experience, entered the class and began the lesson.

Teacher Three: Good morning, class.

Learners: Good morning, Mr Dambudzo.

Teacher Three: Do you know what action verbs are?

Learners: Tell us. How are they?

Teacher Three: Stand up, all of you, and put your hands in your pockets.

Learners (to this, they all put their hands in their pockets)

Teacher Three: Wow, so good. The words 'stand' and 'put' are action verbs

Billy: Sir, I like the way you teach us the action verbs.

Teacher Three: Oh, thank you.

In this excerpt, it is evident that teaching action verbs is challenging for learners to understand without the use of the TPR method. As in Excerpt 1, learners could understand them after employing the TPR method. The finding is congruent with Lobar's (2025) assertion that the TPR method enhances the teaching of action verbs, in which learners performed remarkably. That is why most primary school teachers prefer the TPR method to any other teaching method in their endeavour to teach the action verbs accordingly. The results from learners' comprehension of the use of the action verbs align with Montessori and Vygotsky's theories.

Excerpt 4

The fourth teacher, with seven years of experience, used different techniques as follows:

Teacher Four: Dear learners, anyone who can answer correctly will be given sweets.

Learners (smiling): We are ready. Come with your questions.

Teacher Four: What are action verbs?

Sarah: They are words representing a place, a person or a ball.

Teacher Four: No, they are not. Please, come to the front.

Learners (All learners come to the front)

Teacher Four: The word 'come' is an action word because you all acted.

Thomas: Yeah, I guessed it right, but I was scared.

Teacher Four also used questions to determine if learners were familiar with action verbs. One of the learners answered incorrectly, describing a noun instead of a verb. The teacher wittingly requested that all learners move to the front. After they responded positively, the teacher told them that the word 'come' is an action verb. The finding concurs with Tans and Kabelen's (2025) claim that using the TPR method increased learners' desire to learn action verbs. In this regard, primary school teachers enjoy using the TPR method, as evidenced by learners' understanding of action verbs. That is why most teachers follow Montessori and Vygotsky's theories when teaching their learners.

Excerpt 5

Teacher Five used his 9 years of experience and commenced her lesson like this:

Teacher Five: Good morning, all of you.

Learners (in unison): Good morning, madam.

Teacher Five: Who can smile and cry simultaneously?

Maluta (Rudzani smiled, but could not cry): Is that correct, madam?

Teacher Four: You smiled, but you did not cry simultaneously.

Mukondeleli: How possible? Can anyone perform these actions together?

Teacher Five: The point is about acting them out correctly.

Charlie: What is it?

Teacher: It is about how the English verbs 'smile' and 'cry' are both action verbs.

Mukondeleli: Oh yes, I understand; learning through this method is superb.

Teacher Five showed that applying a TPR method suggested by Montessori and Vygotsky's theories has value for money in the understanding of action verbs. Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners' knowledge of some action verbs improved drastically based on the use of the TPR method. The finding supports Zega et al. (2025), who suggest that the TPR method enhances the teaching of action verbs.

2. *Semi-structured interviews*

The researcher interviewed five teachers on the use of the TPR method for teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners. Each teacher was interviewed for 10 minutes to save time and obtain comprehensive

and manageable data. The researcher transcribed and meticulously sorted the findings. Data were organised into themes based on the collected transcripts. A thematic analysis technique was utilised to derive meaning and identify themes from the transcripts, without preconceptions (Ahmed et al., 2025).

Five teachers were interviewed about teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners. Each interview lasted 10 minutes to save time and obtain comprehensive yet manageable data. The researcher transcribed and meticulously sorted the findings. Data were organised into themes based on the collected transcripts. A thematic analysis technique was utilised to derive meaning and identify themes from the transcripts, without preconceptions (Ahmed et al., 2025).

Data familiarisation and initial coding techniques were used to collate the codes with supporting data, group codes into themes, review and revise the themes, and write the obtained findings. The researcher grouped codes into themes, refining them, and writing up his findings thematically using the following steps:

1. Grouping of codes into initial themes where the researcher moved from specific, line-by-

line coding to broader, overarching ideas by:

- Sorting and clustering individual codes and grouping

them based on how they relate to one another. This was done by using qualitative sticky notes and ATLAS.ti software.

- Creating sub-themes within larger groups, organising codes into smaller, distinct categories.
- Defining a central idea by writing a 1-2 sentence description capturing the core concept.

2. Reviewing and revising themes where themes were tested against the original data, namely,

- Level 1 (Data Check) by reading through all the coded extracts for each theme to find if they form a coherent pattern.
- Level 2 (Dataset Check) by re-reading raw transcripts or notes for the thematic map to accurately reflect the story of the entire dataset.
- Refining and renaming the themes that overlap significantly, splitting themes that have too much going on, and renaming them so they clearly communicate the findings.

3. Writing the obtained findings to draft the results, focus on telling a compelling, evidence-based story by using the following items:

- Structure logically by organising the write-up around the themes, using clear headings and subheadings.
- Present the narrative by describing what each theme meant, explaining the concepts

and how they relate to the research question.

- Provide concrete evidence by supporting every theme with direct quotes or specific examples from raw data.
- Synthesise by avoiding just listing quotes; weave the data into an analytical narrative that demonstrates depth and interpretation.

The teachers were coded as One, Two, Three, Four, and Five to adhere to ethical principles. Five themes subsequently emerged from the semi-structured interviews:

Theme One: Action verbs trouble Grade 4 EFAL primary school teachers

The action verbs are essential for demonstrating the coherence and cohesion of sentences. Without understanding action verbs, it becomes difficult for EFAL teachers to teach their learners. Teacher One commented on that

When I teach action verbs to my Grade, I find it a hard nut to crack. Sometimes when I command learners to do what I want, they stare at me.

Based on Teacher One's comment, it is evident that Grade 4 EFAL primary school teachers face challenges when teaching their learners, as learning a language differs from the spontaneous acquisition of language. In this sense,

understanding the action verbs poses challenges to learners whose mother tongue is not English. The findings support Zega et al. (2025), who suggest that the TPR method enhanced the teaching of the action verbs, and this is proven by learners' comprehension of the action verbs.

Theme Two: Teaching action verbs requires a suitable strategic intervention

A suitable method enhances the teaching of action verbs, resulting in informed competence in the language. Without planned strategic interventions, Grade 4 EFAL teachers may struggle to effectively teach action verbs. Teacher Two remarked that

When I realise that my learners experience problems in understanding the meaning of action verbs, I often come up with methods that can boost their understanding.

Teacher Two's comment suggests that Grade 4 EFAL teachers recognise that their learners can comprehend action verbs when reliable methods are employed. The finding is congruent with Lobar's (2025) claim that the TPR method enhances the teaching of action verbs, in which learners performed remarkably. Hence, most teachers apply Montessori and Vygotsky's theories when teaching their learners.

Theme Three: The TPR method is relevant to teaching action verbs

Although numerous methods, such as games, music, and storytelling, exist for teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners, the TPR method is considered a non-threatening approach. Teacher Three remarked that

The TPR method always enhances the understanding of action verbs. My Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners understand action verbs if I use the TPR method to teach various action verbs.

From Teacher Three's remarks, it is evident that knowing the TPR method has good value for money. It enhances a remarkable understanding of the meaning of action verbs because learners can act out what is required by a particular action verb. The finding is in line with Tans and Kabelen's (2025) postulation that using the TPR method increased learners' desire to learn action verbs. In most primary schools, the teaching and learning of action verbs are enhanced due to the use of the TPR method because both Montessori and Vygotsky's theories are important when teaching their learners.

Theme Four: An awareness of the importance of the TPR method is beneficial

The TPR method benefits the teaching of action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners. This method helps mitigate a poor understanding of action verbs. That is why some learners struggle to follow the teacher's

commands. One of the Teachers, One, Two, Three, Four and Five stated that

When we teach our learners, they often produce excellent results. They can follow all the teachers' commands when they see other learners acting them out professionally.

From the statements simultaneously made by all teachers in the preceding comments, it is evident that an awareness campaign is indispensable for the benefit of learners in understanding the meaning of the action verbs. Therefore, bringing insight into the TPR method is an undeniable aspect of teaching action verbs. The finding supports Anisa's (2025) suggestion that the TPR method facilitates the learning of action verbs. In this way, Montessori and Vygotsky's theories are essential in the learning of action verbs.

Theme Five: The TPR method is here to stay for teaching action verbs

Although some methods can be developed over time, the TPR method is here to stay. When learners combine physical activity with language learning, they tend to understand and remember new words and concepts more effectively. Teacher Five commented that

I believe that the TPR method will continue if people perform actions in their daily lives. Learners will always align the action verbs they learn with the target language.

From Teacher Five's comment, it is evident that the TPR method cannot be phased out, as it is an ordinary course that learners enjoy learning through play. The discovery supports Jayanti and Rachmawati's (2025) assertion that the TPR method had a positive influence on teaching action verbs to primary school learners. The primary school teachers often use the TPR method to promote teaching and learning because Montessori and Vygotsky's theories indicate that learners understand the use of action verbs.

Conclusion

The researcher analysed the benefits of using the TPR method for teaching action verbs to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners by examining teachers' perceptions. This research answered the research questions: 'What method is relevant for teaching action verbs to primary school learners?' and 'How can the TPR method enhance the teaching of action verbs to primary school learners?' After conducting classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, the importance of using the TPR method to teach action verbs to

Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners was established. The research demonstrates teachers' willingness to use the TPR method. The insights obtained from this research are essential for indicating the benefits of using the TPR method to teach action verbs. The implications of this study promote the benefits of using the TPR method in this regard.

Nonetheless, the limitations of this research included the sample, which consisted of only five Grade 4 teachers who have been teaching EFAL to primary school teachers for more than five years at Lwamondo Circuit based on their approachability and experience. The time constraint was another limitation as the activities were conducted within the allotted 25 minutes, which was insufficient for realising the benefits of using the TPR method. Future researchers can conduct further research on the importance of using the TPR method. This research recommends the frequent use of the TPR method for teaching action verbs not only to Grade 4 EFAL primary school learners but also to learners in other grades.

References

- Abdumutaljonovna, P. S. (2025). Instructing English to young learners through total physical response (TPR). *Innovation in the modern education system*, 6(51), 545-550.
- Afrianti, U. U., & Rustipa, K. (2023). Teaching English vocabulary using the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Undiksha*, 11(2), 213-219. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpbi.v11i2.64935>

- Agistiawati, E., Fuadi, A., & Mariyanah, S. (2025). Creative teaching practices: A combination of Total Physical Response (TPR) for elementary school learners in Tangerang. *Niswantara: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 2(01), 16-24. <https://doi.org/10.70508/wjwpe814>
- Ahmed, S. K., Mohammed, R. A., Nashwan, A. J., Ibrahim, R. H., Abdalla, A. Q., Ameen, B. M. M., & Khedhir, R. M. (2025). Using thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 6, p.100198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2025.100198>
- Ameri, M. (2020). Criticism of the sociocultural theory. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 3, pp.1530-1540.
- Anisa, I. D. (2025). Using Total Physical Response (TPR) on Young Learners in Teaching English Vocabulary (Doctoral dissertation, UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan).
- Jayanti, S., & Rachmawati, E. (2025). Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in Teaching English Classroom Interaction for Young Learners. *Journal of English Education Program (JEEP)*, 12(1), 14-22. [https://doi.org/10.25157/\(jeep\).v12i1.17390](https://doi.org/10.25157/(jeep).v12i1.17390)
- Johnson, S. (2025). Total physical response| TPR Definition, Method & Examples.2025 paper com. <https://paper.com/academy/lesson/total-physical-response-method-examples.html>
- Komariah, I., Munggaran, S. W., Anisah, A. S., & Marwah, S. S. (2025). Children's Language Ability in Primary School from the Perspective of Sociocultural Theory. In *International Conference on Teaching and Learning*, 1, pp. 329-336. <https://conference.ut.ac.id/index.php/ictl/article/view/1784>
- Libman, A. (2023). The Credibility Revolution and the Future of Russian Studies. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 39(1-2), 60-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2022.2148446>
- Lobar, S. (2025). The Total Physical Response (TPR) method is used to improve the English vocabulary acquisition of elementary school pupils. *O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti konferensiyalari*, 296-300. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15505043>
- Mala, E. (2025). Analysis of the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in improving English vocabulary understanding of 5-6-Year-Old Children. *Bulletin of Early Childhood*, 4(6), 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.51278/bec.v4i1.1878>
- Montessori, M. (1914). *Dr Montessori's own Handbook*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Nadel, L., Samsonovich, A., Ryan, L., Moscovitch, M. (2000). Multiple trace theory of human memory: computational, neuroimaging, and neuropsychological results. *Hippocampus*, 10(4):352-68. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-1063\(2000\)10:4<352::AID-HIPO2>3.0.CO;2-D](https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-1063(2000)10:4<352::AID-HIPO2>3.0.CO;2-D). PMID: 10985275
- Nephawe, F. T., & Lambani, M. N. (2022). Use of the question-and-answer method in teaching English prepositions to Primary School learners. *International*

- Nizomova, M., & Qurbonova, A. (2025). Effective Methods for Teaching English to Young Children: Engaging Strategies for Building Language Skills. *Journal of Analytical Synergy and Scientific Horizon*, 1(1.1 (A series)), 99-108. <https://zenodo.org/records/14834467>
- Nordquist, R. (2025). Definition and examples of dynamic verbs. <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-dynamic-verb-1690487>
- Porto, M. (2025). Cosmopolitanism and language education, *Human Rights Education Review*, 8:1, 186-190, DOI: 10.7577/hrer 5828
- Qurbonova, G. D. O. M., & Rozikova, Z. D. O. T. (2025). Teaching English to Primary School Learners: Effective Methods and Approaches. *Academic research in educational sciences*, 6(NUU Conference Learners 1), 1152-1161.
- Riazi, A. M., Rezvani, R., & Ghanbar, H. (2023). Trustworthiness in L2 writing research: a review and analysis of qualitative articles in the *Journal of Second Language Writing*. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 2(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2023.100065>
- Römhild, R., Marxl, A., Matz, F. & Siepmann, P. (Eds.) (2023). *Rethinking Cultural Learning: Cosmopolitan Perspectives on Language Education*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier. 242 pp. € 29,50 (paperback) ISBN: 978-3-98940-005-4.i
- Ruhl, C. (2024). Montessori Theory of Education. *Simply Psychology*.<https://www.simplypsychology.org/montessori-method-of-education.htm>
- Shafog'at, B. (2025). Teaching very young and young learners. *Hamkor konferensiyalar*, 1(14), 156-158. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15175973>
- Shufutinsky, A. (2020). Employing the self for transparency, rigour, trustworthiness, and credibility in qualitative organisational research methods. *Organisation Development Review*, 52(1), 50-58.
- Suwanna, S., & Langprayoon, P. (2025). Developing English pronunciation via total physical response (TPR) and learning videos in Physical Education: A case paper of Thai Grade 6 EFL Learners. In 2025, the 10th International STEM Education Conference (iSTEM-Ed) (pp.1-6).IEEE.<https://doi.org/10.1109/iSTEM-Ed65612.2025.11129416>
- Tans, F., & Kabelen, A. H. (2025). Using the Total Physical Response method to increase vocabulary mastery among second-grade learners of the elementary school INPRES OENALI in the 2024/2025 academic year. *English language teaching and education journal*, 1(04), 86-95.<https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/bestuur.v9i1.00000>

Zega, R., Harefa, W. A., Gulo, S. N., & Namo, E. F. J. (2025). Improving the Eighth Grade Learners' Mastery of Verbs Using the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 10(4),441-449.<https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i4.1050>