

# Implementation of Role-Playing Methods for Early Childhood Language Development at TK Aisyiyah Sumber I

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This study aims to identify how the role-playing method can improve language skills in early childhood learners and to explore the factors that influence its effectiveness. By simulating real-life scenarios in a fun and interactive way, the method seeks to transform children who are typically quiet, passive, or lacking in confidence into active and self-assured communicators.

*Methodology:* Employing a qualitative approach, researchers observed and interviewed children aged 5–6 at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten. Data collection centered on systematic classroom observations of role-play sessions and in-depth interviews with both children and their teachers to gather insights into changes in communication behavior and the conditions supporting those changes.

*Results:* Following the implementation of role play, children who had previously been reticent began to engage actively and confidently with peers, expressing ideas, feelings, and thoughts both spontaneously and voluntarily. Quantitative indicators of improvement included expanded vocabulary, more complex sentence structures, and stronger verbal interaction skills. Additionally, role play fostered social and emotional engagement, further reinforcing language development.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* The findings demonstrate that the role-playing method is an effective strategy for early-childhood language learning. To sustain its benefits, educators and parents should collaborate to design scenarios that are engaging, meaningful, and age-appropriate, and provide guided support throughout the activities. This research offers practical guidance for curriculum planners and caregivers seeking to enhance communicative competence and confidence in young learners.

## Introduction

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a form of coaching children from birth to 6 years of age carried out by providing educational encouragement that supports the development and physical and spiritual growth of children towards further education (Law NO. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System) Re-referring to the law, it can be understood that early childhood education is education that provides guidance aimed at children from birth to 6 years of age by providing stimulus in helping children grow and develop from physical to spiritual children so that children have the readiness to enter further education. According to (Saputri & Katoningsih, 2023) the purpose of PAUD education is to encourage, direct, support, and provide teaching and learning activities that develop children's skills and capacities. Some parents may wonder why their children need to be educated from birth. It is because with the help of parents, children can find and know which language to use more easily. Because often parents who speak out loud end up listening to their children. Thus, the child learns and pronounces it. (Anis Rahmawati et al., 2019) reveals that language is all types of interaction and communication in which individual feelings and thoughts are expressed, with which all things that are said can be properly observed by others.

Early childhood is a golden age where development and growth are very rapid. Thus, early childhood development must be maximized by providing stimulus and teaching that is appropriate to the age of the child and starting to introduce non-formal or formal education to train children's growth and development. Therefore, as educators, both parents and teachers, it is very necessary to understand the stages of development in children, because it is very important to be able to enlighten educators and parents in educating children as educators or people will never be separated from learning every child's growth we need to learn again in understanding it so that the emotions in our souls can be controlled in dealing with children if we want to continue to learn and be patient in educating children (Sari et al., 2023)(Indihadi et al., 2022). According to (Nihayah, 2021) early childhood/preschool is a very good opportunity for children to learn. For this reason, support from teachers and guardians is needed so that children can learn so that their needs are met. Early childhood has natural creativity which can be seen from behaviors such as always asking questions, enjoying exploring the environment, being interested in trying everything and having a strong imagination (Ni'mah & Rachmawati, 2022).

PAUD greatly influences the growth and development of personality aspects in children. Self-confidence is an aspect that children are able to acquire in an early childhood environment, but every early childhood does not necessarily have self-confidence. Children who do not have self-confidence become mentally shy, timid, avoidant, not brave, to limit

themselves, this makes it difficult for children to socialize with their friends so that children will have difficulty doing something they want (Fitriani, 2022). At an early age, self-confidence must be instilled in children so that when the child grows up, a child will have a bolder personality and always be confident in a decision he must take. Self-confidence when the child is an adult will foster benefits in everyday life that make him able to show his true self, not easily influenced by others, optimistic, not easily hesitant, always think realistically, and can improve the quality of life. Hence the importance of instilling self-confidence from an early age (Yunifia & Wardhani, 2023).

Early childhood education is one form of education that focuses on laying the foundation towards growth and 6 (six) developments: religion and morals, physical motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and art, in accordance with the uniqueness and stages of development according to the age group passed by early childhood as stated in Permendikbud 137 of 2014 concerning National PAUD Standards (replacing Permendiknas 58 of 2009). One of the 6 early childhood developments is language development, PAUD (Early Childhood Education) child language development is the process in which children aged 2-6 years begin to understand and use language more effectively. At this stage, children experience rapid development in communication skills, both oral and language comprehension. Here are some important aspects of early childhood language development: 1. Phonological Development, children begin to master the basic sounds in language, although there are still some words that may be pronounced unclearly. At this age, they begin to be able to pronounce more sounds correctly. 2. Vocabulary Development, children's vocabulary increases rapidly. They begin to recognize the names of objects, people and activities around them. By 4-5 years old, children can recognize up to 1,500 words or more and are able to use them in more complex sentences. 3. Syntactic Development, children begin to form sentences with better structure, although there may still be errors. They begin to understand basic rules in grammar, such as the use of subjects and predicates. 4. Semantic Development, children's understanding of the meaning of words and concepts begins to develop. They begin to understand multiple meanings in words and can follow more complex conversations. 5. Pragmatic Development, this relates to children's ability to use language in a social context, such as speaking politely, taking turns when speaking, or adjusting their speaking style to who they are speaking to (e.g. adults or peers). 6. Listening and Comprehension Skills, children in the early childhood years are beginning to be able to listen to and understand longer stories or instructions. They can follow simple commands and understand conversations involving several ideas. Stimulation such as reading together, talking with the child, and providing a language-rich environment will help optimize the language development of PAUD children. Therefore, research at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten uses fun role play, whereby playing roles children can communicate with their friends to convey ideas, thoughts, feelings that they know and feel through the language they convey. Aspects of language development consist of: "(1) understanding receptive language, including the ability to understand stories, orders, rules, like and appreciate reading; (2) expressing language, including the ability to ask questions, answer questions, communicate verbally, retell what is known, express feelings, ideas and desires. (3) literacy, including understanding the relationship between letter shapes and sounds, imitating letter shapes, and understanding words in stories" (Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional RI, 2014). Children's language development can be maximally improved with the help of language acquisition theory. This can be achieved by being a positive role model, providing encouragement, and creating child-friendly routines (Ummah, 2019).

The importance of developing children's language through the role-playing method is because language is a form of communication, oral, written or sign based on a symbol system. Therefore, language development through the role-playing method is very important because it can train the power of capture, train students to speak fluently. The ability to communicate is one of the important abilities for a person to have. Through communication we express feelings, wants, needs, ideas thoughts and exchange information. Through communication we can interact with other people (Saputri & Katoningsih, 2023). Thus, language is a tool to convey everything that children feel and know when interacting with others, so the language development of young children is very important in this regard.

The right teaching method to foster aspects of children's language development is the role-playing method. Play is a basic right of early childhood. When people play, they can freely express their positive emotions. The benefits of play are significant especially in the early years of a child's life. As a result of play, the child grows in moral, physical, mental, language and social capacities. For young children, the benefits of play are not limited to when they play with a group of friends (Hayati & At Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, the role play method has been implemented as part of the learning strategy to support early childhood language development. Educators at this school recognize that role play provides an interactive and fun learning atmosphere, which can motivate children to more actively participate in learning activities. In addition, role play also helps children understand social rules and develop confidence in communication. The role-playing method is one of the appropriate methods used to improve children's self-confidence. Through this method, children's social abilities can develop, such as building interactions with other children, being able to adapt to friends their age, being able to know their own behavior and understand that every action has a risk (Lubis, 2019). Role-playing can increase children's interest in learning because role-playing is directly related to daily life so that children do not easily feel bored during learning activities, can help children's social emotional development such as building peer relationships and children can control their emotions. So that interaction between children is created when playing roles, by using language children will express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Every child will learn very well during play activities and in the play the child will negotiate, communicate, solve problems and make choices. Mereka akan berimajinasi dan berkhayal mengenai hal yang sudah dilakukannya guna melatih penguasaan cognitive, social and physical. During these play activities, children can exercise their emotions and express themselves through the events and experiences they encounter throughout the day.

If playing is done together, it will be able to train children to be able to understand what other people feel and then children will be able to be involved to become a leader and member which they will need when interacting with other people (Mardiani & Yetti, 2020).

PAUD greatly influences the growth and development of personality aspects in children. Self-confidence is an aspect that children can acquire in an early childhood environment, but every early childhood does not necessarily have self-confidence. Children who do not have self-confidence become mentally shy, timid, avoidant, not brave, to limit themselves, this makes it difficult for children to socialize with their friends so that children will have difficulty doing something they want (Rika Widianita, 2023) At an early age, self-confidence must be instilled in children so that when the child grows up, a child will have a bolder personality and always be confident in a decision he must take. Self-confidence when the child is an adult will foster benefits in everyday life that make him able to show his true self, not easily influenced by others, optimistic, not easily hesitant, always think realistically, and can improve the quality of life. Therefore, it is important to instill self-confidence from an early age (Yunifia & Wardhani, 2023). According to (Nihayah, 2021) early preschool age is a very good opportunity for children to learn. For this reason, support from teachers and guardians is needed so that children can learn so that their needs are met. Based on these findings, role play in young children is a powerful tool to encourage language development in the preschool years. Motivation and interest of young children are important considerations in role-play language learning activities (Musi & Winata, 2017). Help children develop empathy through role-playing activities. Children learn to regulate their emotions and monitor their friends' reactions while having fun (Khairani et al., 2023).

Through language children can create various symbolic interactions in terms of expressing their feelings, experiences and knowledge (Wahyundari & Handayani, 2021) Language development in early childhood has an important role in children's cognitive and social development. Language becomes the main tool used by children to communicate and express their ideas, feelings, thoughts and ideas. Role-playing allows children to communicate with language and of course they must have the confidence to express what they want to say. The role play method has several important components: 1) Roles and Characters: Students act out written roles in structured exercises. They can be real people or made up. 2) Scenarios or Situations: There is a range of complexity and realism that can be simulated in each scenario. The context and purpose of the role play is determined by the environment in which the role play takes place. 3) Social Interaction: Students engage in role-playing activities such as talking to each other, cooperating, and solving problems. 4) Skill Development: Students improve their communication, social, emotional, and intellectual abilities through role-playing. They are responsive to issues from multiple perspectives, analytical, and problem-solving. 5) Practical Experience: This method emphasizes hands-on learning to better prepare students for real-world challenges. 6) Emotional Appreciation: Students can better anticipate and process their own reactions to certain circumstances by engaging in role play (Harianja et al., 2023). In Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten Group B with 18 children, several children were found to be passive, lacking confidence, and having difficulty in conveying their ideas and ideas. This requires a special approach so that these children can develop better language skills. Role-playing provides opportunities for children to express themselves, enrich their vocabulary, and practice communication skills with their peers and adults. This study aims to determine how the implementation of the role-playing method can help children's language development at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten. In Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, role play uses macro role play. According to (Hidayah et al., 2024) macro role play is children playing real roles and becoming someone or something. When children have daily experiences with macro role play (through themes that are around real life), then they learn many pre-academic skills such as listening, staying on task, solving problems and playing cooperation with others.

## Method

Research at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is an investigative process to understand social problems based on the creation of images made using words, reporting the results of the views of researchers in a clear and detailed manner and arranged in a scientific setting. (Peningkatan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Melalui Pendekatan Saintifik Pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Di RA Mutiara Ciputat (Improving Critical Thinking Skills through a Scientific Approach in Children Aged 5-6 Years at RA Mutiara Ciputat), n.d.). Data collection techniques are observation, interview, and documentation. The subject of this research is group B children aged 5-6 years who are in Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten with a total of 18 children, 12 boys and 6 girls. These children were chosen because they are at an important stage of language development, where the role play, method is expected to contribute to the improvement of their communication skills. The class teacher was also used as an informant to provide additional insight into the application of this method in the learning process. This research was conducted at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, located at Jalan Kahuripan Utama no 13 Sumber RT 02 RW 12 Banjarsari Surakarta. The research took place during learning by using a fun role-playing method so that children are interested and expected to improve children's language skills.

For the application of the role-playing method in early childhood language development in this study is a triangulation technique using several different data sources to obtain a more comprehensive picture. It is hoped that by using this triangulation technique, the research can provide a more valid and reliable insight into the effect of role-playing techniques on early language development.

## Results and Discussion

One of the efforts that is thought to affect children's communication by providing the treatment of macro role-playing activities by playing several characters at once in the story makes children relate to other characters in the story so that it will improve language and speaking skills in children (Anis Rahmawati et al., 2019). Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten uses macro role play by playing the role of doctors, farmers, traders. Professional role play motivates children to take part in becoming the desired character and of course there will be interaction with one another when playing the character according to their choice.

Based on the results of observations made at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, several findings were obtained related to children's language development after the role-playing method was applied. (1) Increased self-confidence. Children who initially tended to be passive and reluctant to speak began to show an increase in participation during role play. They were more active in taking on the roles as desired, whether in the role of a doctor, teacher, or other roles that describe daily life. Previous research states that role play encourages children to speak more, so that it can increase children's confidence in communicating. This is in accordance with the opinion of (Yunifia & Wardhani, 2023) that "Therefore, it is important to instill an attitude of confidence from an early age" (2) Vocabulary Improvement. Before the implementation of the role-playing method, children tend to use a limited vocabulary. After role-playing, children begin to recognize and use a variety of new vocabulary, both related to the role played and in social interactions with their friends. Role play can enrich children's vocabulary because they are encouraged to use new words according to the situation they are playing with the support of the teacher. (3) Ability to Express Ideas and Feelings Children who had difficulty expressing their ideas and feelings began to be more open after participating in role-playing activities. They began to dare to convey ideas in role-play scenarios, for example when they became a leader in the game, they directed their friends according to their ideas, this is because children have started to gain confidence. Role playing is effective for training children's ability to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. (4) Improved Communication Skills with Peers Role-playing encourages more intense interaction between children. Children learn to listen, respond and communicate effectively with their peers. These interactions not only practice language skills, but also help children understand social concepts such as turn-taking, mutual respect, and cooperation, showing that role play significantly improves children's ability to cooperate and communicate in groups.

Language allows children to translate experiences into symbols that can be used to communicate and think. Language is a tool for expressing ideas and asking questions, and language also produces concepts and categories for thinking (Nopiana & Celina, 2022). Supporting role-playing activities at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten always prioritizes fun and safe play. In accordance with the opinion that children can develop in all ways through play. Young children need a safe and fun playground to learn and grow (Nurhayati et al., 2021). Table of child observation results the following is a description of the observation table and interviews with teachers and guardians of Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten students after participating in role-playing activities and table figure 2 in the form of the achievement of children's language development after role-playing obtained from interviews with teachers and parents.

**Table 1.** Results of child language development of Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten children before using the role-playing method.

No	Name	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Preschool boy	0	4	6	2
2	Preschool girls	0	2	3	1
	Amount	0	6	9	3

**Table 2.** Results of child language development of Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten children after using the role-playing method.

No	Name	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Preschool boy	0	0	1	11
2	Preschool girls	0	0	0	6
	Amount	0	0	1	18

Description BB: Not Developing, MB: Starting to Develop, BSH: Developing as expected, BSB: Developing Very Well

**Table 3.** Result of interviews teachers with parents and guardians of students at Kindergarten Aisyiyah Sumber 1.

No	Results After Role Play Activity	Before	After
1	Increased Self-Confidence	Not Improved	Increased
2	Vocabulary Improvement	Not Improved	Increased
3	Ability to Express Ideas and Feelings.	Not Improved	Increased
4	Improved Communication Skills with Peers	Not Improved	Increased

Based on the results of teacher interviews at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, language development with the role-playing method is very effective for improving early childhood language development, because with role-playing both micro roles and macro roles, children will spontaneously express their ideas, ideas, feelings about what they feel because role-playing creates mutual interaction which will increase vocabulary in early childhood. There are some children who

were previously quiet, lacking confidence, difficult to communicate with, tend to be passive, do not want to express what they feel, what their ideas are, express what they see, now become more active in responding to their environment and many vocabulary words spontaneously appear because of the reciprocal relationship during role play. This proves that the role-playing method is fun, in accordance with the objectives of the research at Aisyiyah Kindergarten, namely, to identify how role-playing can improve children's language skills, as well as factors that influence the effectiveness of the method. Aisyiyah Kindergarten Sumber I can improve language development in early childhood. Likewise, the results of interviews with the principal of Aisyiyah Kindergarten Sumber I that role-playing is very effective for improving early childhood development, so the principal in this case is very supportive and facilitates all the needs needed for role-playing activities. Meanwhile, the results of interviews with guardians of Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten students are very happy and supportive of role-playing activities, because by playing the role of children who used to be quiet now express more of what they see at home and are now smarter at expressing what they feel, expressing their ideas, ideas. This is in accordance with the results of research from (Wahidah & Latipah, 2021) that children's language development is this, among others, includes children's interactions with other people, feelings, intelligence, physical and mental skills. Because language is a way of communicating or connecting between members of the community around the child to convey thoughts, ideas, feelings, and desires, understanding the quality and phases of language development in children is very important for parents or teachers. Based on the results of this study, the role-playing method was shown to have a significant impact on children's language development at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten.

Role playing not only improves children's language skills, but also trains other aspects such as self-confidence, social skills, and cognitive abilities. Children who were previously passive are now starting to be more courageous to speak and express themselves in various situations. Success Factors of Role Playing include (1) Use of Scenarios Relevant to Children's Lives. In implementing this method, teachers choose scenarios that are close to children's daily lives, such as playing a doctor, market, or teacher. This helps children more easily understand and relate the role to their experiences, so they are more interested in being directly involved in this activity. This opinion is in accordance with the opinion expressed by (AZIZAH, 2021) that Macro role play is children playing real roles and becoming someone or something. When children have daily experiences with macro role play (through themes that are around real life), they learn many pre-academic skills such as listening, staying on task, solving problems and playing cooperatively with others. (2) Supportive Environment Support from the teacher who acts as a facilitator is very important. Teachers provide guidance without being overly domineering, so that children can explore roles that suit their desires. Giving positive feedback from the teacher also increases children's motivation to communicate, this is in accordance with the opinion of (Nihayah, 2021) that early / preschool age is a very good opportunity for children to learn. For this reason, support from teachers and guardians is needed so that children can learn so that their needs are met. (3) Peer Involvement Interaction with peers in role play makes children learn about two-way communication. Children have to listen and respond to their friends, which in turn trains their language skills in a broader social context, this is in accordance with the opinion of (Mardiani & Yetti, 2020) that "When playing is done together, it will be able to train children to be able to understand what other people feel and then children will be able to be involved to become a leader or member which they will need when associating with other people". However, there are some challenges facing the implementation of this method, such as: (1) Differences in Language Development Pace Some children show slower language development than others. This requires an individualized approach from the teacher to ensure each child gets language stimulation that is appropriate to their abilities. (2) Lack of Scenario Variation. The use of monotonous scenarios can reduce children's interest in being actively involved. Therefore, there needs to be variation in the selection of role play themes so that children do not get bored, remain interested and motivated.

Good language skills will make it easier for children to communicate with others both orally and in writing. By communicating, children will get new information so that children's knowledge will increase. This is in line with Aisyah's opinion, 2019 that language skills are the ability and dexterity to use language which includes listening or listening, speaking, reading and writing. Language skills can be stimulated through play activities that are fun for children. We can develop language skills in children through fun learning, one of which is the role-playing method. This is in line with the results of research from (Fajriani & Kurnia, 2020) that children's language skills did not develop well until the teacher started using the role-playing method, after which children experienced significant progress. That way early childhood language skills will develop optimally. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there is a very strong relationship between role playing and early childhood language skills. Role playing is the most effective game used to develop language skills because in role playing activities the teacher can create more interesting stories.

Supporting factors in language development, first cognitive factors, where every child's knowledge or thinking is an integral part of the child's language development. Cognitive experts also point out that children's speaking ability depends on their cognitive maturity. Cognitive development is a thinking process with the ability to increase or add new vocabulary or vocabulary in children little by little begins to increase. Games with role play children can socialize, interact and communicate with their peers will little by little children can get new words. With supporting factors in language development, namely cognitive factors where children can understand every word and external / social environmental factors encourage children to interact with others. Cognitive is a mental activity that can make a person able to connect, assess, and consider an event that has an impact on a person in receiving knowledge. Cognitive ability is a form of development that leads to the ability to gain meaning or meaning of knowledge gained from experience and information,

by playing the role of interaction there is a language from the pronunciation of words when interacting with people who have knowledge and information with this cognitive ability children can understand the meaning of each word. The external / social environment is an area that is a place where various social interactions take place between various groups with symbols and values and norms that exist in the environment, the social environment in early childhood includes the environment where they live besides parents at home and the environment where they learn and play with peers and teachers and caregivers if they are in daycare. Then there is interaction with the social environment when playing or when studying with friends, it will shape their cognitive thinking patterns in gaining knowledge and new vocabulary that children, then they practice or use the language when talking with others or when children play with role play by making examples that exist in the child's social environment realized in the form of play (Wardhana, 2022).

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research at Aisyiyah Sumber I Kindergarten, role playing can improve children's language skills, as well as factors that influence the effectiveness of implementing this method. The role-playing method has been proven to be effective and provides great benefits in supporting early childhood language development. Some of the findings from this research are increased self-confidence, increased vocabulary, ability to express ideas/feelings and improved communication skills. Interaction during role play improves children's communication skills, including the ability to listen, respond, and collaborate. Children learn to understand social concepts such as speaking turns and respecting each other. This can be seen from the results of the research after the role-playing method was carried out, children experienced good improvement. This happened because of interactions with their friends and also because of the teacher's very big role in helping children develop their language skills. This situation can also be seen from every indicator of children's language abilities. This means that through this role-playing method children can respond to several words from friends, teachers and other people and are expected to be ready to enter elementary school.

The results of the research showed that there was a significant increase in children's language skills after implementing the role-playing method, thereby increasing children's vocabulary, sentence structure and verbal communication skills. In addition, role playing also facilitates children's social and emotional involvement, which has a positive impact on language development. To ensure continued effectiveness, there needs to be support from teachers in creating interesting and relevant scenarios to children's lives and providing appropriate guidance. Apart from that, the development of this method needs to continue to be evaluated and adapted to the needs of children's future development.

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