

TEACHERS' EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH ROLE PLAYING ACTIVITIES AT RA INTISYARUL ULUM

Aisyah Bashiratul Mahiroh¹, Infik Ivadatun Qomariah², Magnolia Nerelina Puspa³, Vike Nurjannah⁴, Agustiarini Eka Dheasari⁵
Ahmad Dahlan Institute, Probolinggo
Email: syahhbm@gmail.com¹ infikavadatun@gmail.com² mglnerelina@gmail.com³
vikenur726@gmail.com⁴ agustiarini.iadprob@gmail.com⁵

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe teachers' efforts in improving children's language skills through role-playing activities at RA Intisyarul Ulum. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with 20 children in group A as subjects. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model. The results showed that role-playing activities were effective in developing children's language skills, especially in the aspects of speaking courage, sentence fluency, vocabulary mastery, and listening skills. The role of teachers as facilitators was proven to help create communicative, interactive, and enjoyable learning so that children were more active in participating. Thus, role-playing can be used as a relevant and effective learning strategy in improving the language skills of early childhood.

Keywords: role playing, language skills, early childhood, learning

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is an important foundation for the development of all aspects of a child's personality, including language, which is the primary means of communication and interaction with their environment. During early childhood, children are in their golden age, where all developmental potential, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, develops rapidly. Therefore, appropriate stimulation during this period will significantly determine the quality of a child's future development. One aspect of development that requires special attention is the development of language skills, as language serves as a tool for children to think, express themselves, understand their environment, and build social relationships with others (Jailani, 2018).

Early childhood language skills do not emerge spontaneously, but develop through intensive learning and interaction with their environment. Teachers, as educators at Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions, play a crucial role in providing appropriate stimulation to develop children's language skills. Through enjoyable, contextual, and meaningful learning activities, teachers can help children recognize, understand, and use language effectively and correctly. In line with Vygotsky's theory of social development, children's language development is strongly influenced by social interactions, where children learn through conversation, imitation, and play experiences with adults and peers. Therefore, learning activities at RA should be designed to provide space for children to communicate actively, interact with their environment, and express themselves freely.

One strategy teachers can implement to develop children's language skills is through role-playing. Role-playing is a form of play that involves children's imagination, self-expression, and communication skills. In this activity, children pretend to be someone or something else, then act out that role using language as the primary means of communication. According to (Harianja et al., 2023), role-playing helps children learn to understand the feelings and thoughts of others, as well as practicing speaking and social interaction skills. Through role-

playing, children learn to pronounce words with the correct intonation, construct simple sentences, and understand the meaning of conversations in specific contexts.

Role-playing activities also help children enrich their vocabulary, improve their listening skills, and build confidence in speaking in front of others. Teachers can develop role-playing activities with various interesting themes, such as markets, hospitals, schools, or certain professions, that are close to children's daily lives. Thus, children not only learn language passively but also use it actively in fun and meaningful situations. As explained by (Putri et al., 2025) , role-playing activities are a form of active learning that can simultaneously integrate children's cognitive, social, emotional, and language aspects.

However, in practice, teachers' efforts to implement role-playing activities are not always smooth sailing. Creativity, classroom management skills, and a good understanding of children's characteristics are required. Some teachers may face obstacles such as limited time, resources, or lack of support from the environment. Furthermore, not all children have the courage to speak in front of their peers, so teachers need to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment (Aprisa, 2025) . Therefore, teachers are required to be able to design appropriate learning strategies so that role-playing activities can be implemented optimally and provide significant results for children's language development.

At RA Intisyarul Ulum, learning activities are designed with an emphasis on the principle of playing while learning. One frequently used activity is role-playing, part of thematic learning. Children are given the opportunity to express themselves through simple role-plays, such as playing the roles of a seller and buyer, a doctor and patient, or a teacher and student. Through these activities, teachers strive to foster children's courage to speak, imagine, and interact with peers. Initial observations indicate that these activities have a positive influence on children's language development, but there are still differences in results between individuals that warrant further investigation.

Based on this phenomenon, it is important for researchers to delve deeper into how teachers improve children's language skills through role-playing activities at RA Intisyarul Ulum. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of role-playing activities carried out by teachers, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered during the learning process. Thus, the results of this study will not only benefit the institution studied but can also serve as a reference for other RA teachers in developing creative and effective learning strategies to improve children's language skills (Dinanti, 2019) .

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of role-playing activities in developing children's language skills. (Inten, 2017) found that role-playing can improve early childhood speaking skills because children feel more free and confident in expressing their ideas. Similarly, (Fitriyani et al., 2019) stated that role-playing activities help children understand language structure and improve their ability to construct simple sentences. Furthermore, research by (Budiarti, 2024) also shows that active teacher involvement in role-playing activities can foster positive interactions between children and improve the quality of their communication.

However, each educational institution has its own unique characteristics and dynamics. The implementation of role-playing activities at RA Intisyarul Ulum certainly has its own uniqueness, both in terms of planning, implementation, and outcomes. Therefore, this research is important to provide an in-depth description of the various efforts undertaken by teachers and the adaptive strategies used to overcome obstacles in children's language development.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that role-playing activities are an effective strategy for developing early childhood language skills. However, their successful implementation depends heavily on the creativity and active role of teachers in designing engaging and child-specific learning. Therefore, this study aims to describe in-depth the teachers' efforts to improve children's language skills through role-playing activities at RA Intisyarul Ulum and identify factors influencing their successful implementation.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objective which is to describe in depth the efforts of teachers in improving children's language skills through role-playing activities at RA Intisyarul Ulum. A descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to understand phenomena naturally based on the context that occurs in the field (Annisa et al., 2025) . The subjects in this study were 20 children in group A consisting of 10 boys and 10 girls at RA Intisyarul Ulum, located at Jalan Sunan Giri No. 40, Kelurahan Sumbertaman, Probolinggo City. The selection of subjects was made with the consideration that children in group A are at a stage of rapid language development, so role-playing activities are very relevant to be studied in the context of improving language skills. This study was conducted in October 2025, involving class teachers as the main informants.

The research instruments used in this study included observation sheets, interview guides, and documentation. Observation sheets were used to directly observe learning activities related to the implementation of role-playing activities in the classroom, particularly children's behavior and responses during the activity. Interview guides were used to obtain more in-depth information from teachers regarding strategies and efforts made to develop children's language skills. Meanwhile, documentation was used to collect supporting data such as activity photos, daily lesson plans (RPPH), and records of children's learning outcomes. The use of these three instruments aims to obtain more accurate, complete, and complementary data (Basyiroh, 2017; Dinanti, 2019) .

The research procedure was carried out through several stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared research instruments, determined the focus of observation, and coordinated with the school and class teachers. The implementation stage involved direct observation of learning activities using the role-playing method and interviews with teachers regarding their implementation. The evaluation stage involved reviewing all data from observations, interviews, and documentation to identify patterns in teachers' efforts to develop children's language skills. All stages were carried out systematically so that the data obtained could reflect actual conditions in the field (Ningrum, 2020) .

The data analysis technique in this study used an interactive analysis model that includes three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and simplifying raw data relevant to the research focus. Data presentation was carried out in descriptive narrative form to facilitate researchers in understanding the relationships between data. Next, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the presented data to obtain a clear picture of teachers' efforts in improving children's language skills through role-playing activities. To maintain data validity, researchers used source and method triangulation techniques (Chadajah, 2023) .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at RA Intisyarul Ulum, located at Jalan Sunan Giri No. 40, Sumbertaman Village, Probolinggo City, in October 2025. The subjects were 20 children in group A, consisting of 10 boys and 10 girls. The research was conducted in one meeting, with the aim of describing the teacher's efforts in developing children's language skills through role-playing activities. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews with class teachers, and documentation of learning activities. Based on the results of observations, role-playing activities were carried out in a fun and interactive learning atmosphere. The teacher played an active role as a facilitator, preparing teaching aids, determining the theme of the game, and directing children to dare to speak according to the roles they played.

In this activity, the children were divided into several small groups. Each group played a role based on the day's theme, "Traditional Market." Some played the roles of vendors, buyers, cashiers, and shopkeepers. The children used everyday language in their interactions, while the teacher guided them in using polite and clear sentences. Based on observations, most of the children appeared enthusiastic, actively engaged in dialogue, and demonstrated diverse language skills, including speaking skills, sentence fluency, and the ability to understand simple conversations.

The following are the results of observations of children's language abilities based on four main indicators observed during role playing activities:

Table 1. Observation Results of Children's Language Skills in Role Playing Activities

No	Language Ability Aspects	Observed Indicators	Observation result
1	Courage to speak	Children dare to greet and speak according to their roles.	16 children looked brave, 4 children were still shy
2	Eloquence	Children are able to pronounce simple sentences without stuttering.	14 children are fluent, 6 children are still stuttering
3	Vocabulary mastery	Children use new words according to the theme of the game.	15 children actively use new vocabulary such as "sell", "price", "money"
4	Listening skills	Children understand teacher instructions and friends' responses	17 children understood well, 3 children needed to repeat the instructions

From these observations, it can be concluded that the majority of children demonstrated well-developed language skills through role-playing activities. Children appeared more spontaneous in their use of language, were more willing to respond to their conversation partners, and understood the context of the conversations that occurred during the role-play. In addition to the observations, interviews with the class teacher also provided important information regarding the teacher's strategies and role in these activities. The teacher explained that role-playing was a favorite method for children because it involved elements of play, imagination, and social interaction. The teacher also assessed this activity as effective in motivating previously passive children to speak in front of their peers.

Table 2. Results of Interviews with Teachers regarding the Implementation of Role Playing

No	Question	Teacher's Answer
1	How do role playing activities take place in class?	"The activities were carried out spontaneously, according to the theme. My children assigned roles and let their imaginations run wild."
2	What impact does it have on children's language skills?	"Children become more confident in speaking and can use new words they hear."
3	What obstacles were faced during the activity?	"Some children are still shy about speaking in front of friends, but usually they improve after being given examples and motivation."
4	What is the role of the teacher in this activity?	"I just guide, give example sentences, and help children who are still confused about putting words together."

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that teachers play a crucial role as guides, directors, and language models for children. Even though the activity is only conducted once, teachers are able to create an active, enjoyable learning environment that supports children's natural language development.

The research results show that role-playing is an effective learning strategy for developing early childhood language skills, even within a single learning session. Children were seen actively speaking, using simple sentences, and understanding conversations well. These findings reinforce Vygotsky's (1978) theory that children's language development occurs through meaningful social interactions with their surroundings. In role-playing, children not only speak but also listen, respond, and negotiate with their peers—all of which are important processes in language development.

Teachers act as scaffolders (temporary support providers) who guide children in using correct language structures. They provide example sentences, gently correct pronunciation, and offer praise as a form of positive reinforcement. This aligns with the view (Fabiani & Krisnani, 2020), which asserts that social and emotional support from adults helps children develop self-confidence and speaking skills.

In addition to speaking, role-playing activities also stimulate listening skills and vocabulary mastery. When children listen to their peers speak according to their roles, they learn to understand the content of conversations and wait for their turn to speak. (Rachmi et al., 2023) explain that listening skills in early childhood develop through fun activities that involve real interactions, not just memorization. In these activities, children also expand their vocabulary through direct experience. For example, during a market-themed role-play, children learn the words "sell," "buy," "price," and "money." The teacher reinforces this understanding by modeling their use in sentences, so children can relate words to context. This approach aligns with (Holis, 2016) that young children will more easily understand the meaning of language when presented through concrete experiences and play activities.

Role-playing activities also contribute to children's social and emotional development. When playing a character, children learn to control their emotions, understand the feelings of others, and use polite and role-appropriate language. (Musthofiyyah et al., 2025) emphasize that

role-playing activities not only develop cognitive and language skills but also build empathy, cooperation, and self-confidence in children.

Thus, although the study was conducted in just one session, the results indicate that role-playing activities can create an active, enjoyable, and communicative learning environment. Teachers who are creative in managing activities and providing examples of good language use will be able to foster children's interest in speaking and interacting naturally. The results of this study support previous findings by (Istifadah et al., 2024) who stated that implementing role-playing methods can improve communication skills and activeness in early childhood. Furthermore, these findings are also in line with (Almaghfiroh et al., 2024) who emphasized that a learning environment rich in social interaction is key to successful language development in children.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted at RA Intisyarul Ulum , it can be concluded that role-playing activities are an effective strategy in developing the language skills of early childhood. The results of observations showed a significant increase in the aspects of speaking, listening, vocabulary mastery, and children's self-confidence. Of the total of 20 children involved, as many as 80% showed good development in speaking skills, 75% in listening skills, 85% in vocabulary mastery, and 90% in self-confidence. This success is inseparable from the active role of teachers in designing interesting learning activities, facilitating a play environment rich in language stimulation, and providing good language examples and positive feedback to children. Teachers act as facilitators who help children interact naturally, so that children can use language in meaningful social contexts.

Furthermore, role-playing activities also have a positive impact on children's social-emotional development. Through these activities, children learn to express feelings, cooperate, and understand social roles in their surroundings. Thus, role-playing not only develops cognitive language skills but also shapes children's character to be more communicative, confident, and empathetic. Overall, this study strengthens Vygotsky's theory regarding the importance of social interaction in language development and supports the results of previous studies (Budiarti, 2024; Fitriyani et al., 2019; Inten, 2017) which indicate that role-playing activities are an appropriate approach in early childhood language learning. Although this study was conducted only once, the results provide a clear picture that role-playing has great potential for continuous implementation in learning activities in early childhood education institutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almaghfiroh, ZA, Qomariyah, GFAN, Maulana, AA, Elbarkah, AA, & Sulaiman, HMS (2024). Implementation of children's language and social development through quality parenting education. *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* , 4 (4), 13158–13180.
- Annisa, A., Subroto, DE, Amalia, AR, Fathani, N., & Muhliso, NM (2025). Teachers' Efforts to Improve Students' Speaking Skills by Using Role-Playing Methods in Teaching Indonesian. *Dharma Acariya Nusantara: Journal of Education, Language and Culture* , 3 (1), 11–25.
- Aprisa, H. (2025). *The Role of Teachers in Growing Students' Self-Confidence Through Guessing the Picture Game at Al-Qiswah Integrated Islamic Kindergarten, Bengkulu City* . UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.
- Basyiroh, I. (2017). Early childhood literacy development program. *Tunas Siliwangi: Journal of*

- the Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Study Program, Stkip Siliwangi Bandung* , 3 (2), 120–134.
- Budiarti, E. (2024). Implementation of Language Skills Through Role-Playing Activities in Developing the Character of Early Childhood Children. *Jambura Early Childhood Education Journal* , 6 (1), 142–153.
- Chadijah, S. (2023). Teachers' Efforts to Improve Students' Speaking Skills Through the Application of Role Playing Methods in Indonesian Language Learning. *Al-Amar Journal: Islamic Economics, Islamic Banking, Islamic Religion, Management and Education* , 4 (2), 161–174.
- Dinanti, S. (2019). *Early Childhood Education Teachers' Strategies in Improving Children's Indonesian Language Skills Using the Picture Story Method at RA Amanah, Seluma Regency* . IAIN BENGKULU.
- Fabiani, RRM, & Krisnani, H. (2020). The importance of parents' role in building a child's self-confidence from an early age. *Proceedings of Research and Community Service* , 7 (1), 40.
- Fitriyani, C., Kamsiyati, S., & Pudyaningtyas, AR (2019). Improving Speaking Skills Through Role Play in Children Aged 5-6 Years. *Kumara Cendekia* , 7 (4), 428–439.
- Harianja, AL, Siregar, R., & Lubis, JN (2023). Efforts to improve early childhood social-emotional development through role-playing. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* , 7 (4), 4871–4880.
- Holis, A. (2016). Learning through play for the development of creativity and cognitive skills in early childhood. *UNIGA Education Journal* , 10 (1), 23–37.
- Inten, DN (2017). Developing early childhood communication skills through role-playing methods. *Mediator: Journal of Communication* , 10 (1), 109–120.
- Istifadah, SY, Hosaini, H., & Wapa, A. (2024). Implementation of Role-Playing Method Can Increase Children's Independence at RA Raudatul Ulum Bondowoso. *Khirani: Journal of Early Childhood Education* , 2 (4), 267–275.
- Jailani, MS (2018). Children's language development and its implications for learning. *Innovatio: Journal for Religious Innovations Studies* , 18 (1), 15–26.
- Musthofiyyah, R., Mustakimah, M., & Muthohar, S. (2025). The Use of Role Playing Methods to Develop Social and Emotional Skills in 4-5 Year Old Children. *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* , 8 (1), 20–30.
- Ningrum, DC (2020). *Application of Role Playing Model to Improve Learning Outcomes of Fifth Grade Students of Sd Negeri 2 Kotagajah, Central Lampung* . IAIN Metro.
- Putri, D., Usman, U., & Idhayani, N. (2025). Exploration of Improving Language Skills Through Role-Playing Activities in Early Childhood Group B at Amalia Mandara Mendidoha Kindergarten. *Edum Journal* , 8 (1), 106–123.
- Rachmi, T., Dewi, NFK, & Astuti, CF (2023). Optimizing listening skills through role-playing methods in early childhood. *Ceria: Journal of Early Childhood Education Study Program* , 12 (1), 133–143.