

Implementation Of Role-Play Method In Developing The Language Of 5–6-Year-Old Children At Ra Al-Istiqomah Pemenang In The 2025-2026 Academic Year

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Abstract

Language ability is a fundamental aspect of development that must be stimulated from an early age because it forms the basis for communication, social interaction, and academic readiness for children at subsequent educational levels. However, several obstacles are still found in the implementation of language learning at RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang, such as limited variation of methods used by teachers, lack of children's self-confidence in speaking, and vocabulary mastery and instruction comprehension that have not been optimal in some children aged 5-6 years. This study aims to determine the implementation of the role-playing method in developing the language of children aged 5-6 years and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors at RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang in the 2025/2026 academic year. This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques included passive participatory observation, semi-structured interviews with two B-class teachers, and documentation. The study was conducted from May 25 to June 10, 2026. The results showed that: (1) The implementation of the role-playing method involved three stages: planning (preparing lesson plans, themes, and media), execution (six steps: explaining roles, demonstrating, guiding, providing speaking opportunities, asking prompting questions, motivating), and evaluation (direct observation, recording language indicators, reflection). This method effectively developed nine language aspects: vocabulary, language comprehension, oral expression, storytelling ability, sentence construction, interactive communication, speaking fluency, articulation, and self-confidence. (2) Supporting factors included children's enthusiasm, availability of media. Inhibiting factors included passive children and differences in children's language development. The main contribution of this study lies in its detailed mapping of the six concrete implementation steps of the role-playing method to nine specific expressive and receptive language indicators, offering a practical, replicable reference for early childhood teachers seeking to design role-playing activities that intentionally target measurable language outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the early stages of life, early childhood education is an important foundation for a child's growth and development. During this early age, children require appropriate stimulation to optimize all aspects of development so that they are ready to face the next stage of development (Mahardika, 2022). According to Musfah in Simatupang & Rosalina (2021), early childhood education is the level of education before elementary school. It is a development effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age. This is carried out through the provision of educational stimulation to assist physical and spiritual development so that children are ready to enter further education provided through formal and informal channels.

Kindergarten education is an institution that provides education to children to train their growth and development and develop various aspects of their development. These developmental

aspects include religious and moral development, language development, cognitive development, physical motor development, and artistic development. Of all these aspects of child development, one of the most important to develop is language development (Aprilia & Hasibuan, 2021). Language is the human ability to communicate, convey information, express thoughts and feelings, and build social interactions with others. Language skills are a crucial aspect of child development because they serve as a means of thinking, learning, and interacting with the environment (Friantary, 2021).

Children's language development actually begins at birth, with the use of the simplest language or pre-speech, namely crying. This then progresses to babbling, simple words/sentences accompanied by body movements/gestures as complementary speech (Arumsari, 2021). Teaching language from an early age will make things easier for children because this is a truly amazing period where vocabulary growth occurs very rapidly. The implementation of learning or guidance for early childhood is certainly different from that for children in elementary or secondary school. In early childhood, more emphasis is placed on guidance for child growth and development, including physical motor skills, social-emotional skills, language skills, cognitive skills, and other developmental aspects. Furthermore, many methods and techniques can be used to maximize a child's five senses in responding to their surroundings (Novianty & Millah, 2021).

One approach considered effective is the role-playing method. Introduced by George Shaftell, this role-playing method allows children to express their feelings and develop social awareness through simulations of real-life situations (Jas, Achmad & Alvi, 2021). According to Andini & Ramianti (2020), role-playing activities involving specific occupational roles, such as teachers or doctors, have been shown to stimulate children's imagination and develop their interpersonal skills. Through this approach, children have the opportunity to learn and understand various aspects of the environment in which they grow and develop. Furthermore, role-playing requires cooperation between participants and individual responsibility when acting out each scene. All of these aspects are closely interwoven in the interactions that occur between them. This activity creates a natural and enjoyable learning environment, which directly supports children's vocabulary development and self-confidence.

The urgency of this research is reinforced by prior studies indicating that language delays and low self-confidence in speaking remain persistent problems among early childhood learners despite various interventions (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Kholilullah, Hamdan, & Heryani, 2021). Wahyuningsih and Sari (2023) further note that many teachers still rely on a limited variation of methods when stimulating children's language skills, which restricts opportunities for active, interactive communication in the classroom. These findings indicate that a context-specific, in-depth study of how the role-playing method is actually implemented—rather than merely establishing that it is effective in general—remains necessary, particularly in settings such as RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang where this method has not previously been documented in the literature.

Based on the researcher's initial observations at RA AL-Istiqomah Pemenang, the role-playing method

used by RA Al-Istiqomah school as a method to develop children's language skills, where the language skills of children aged 5-6 years have shown positive development. However, this success needs to be studied to understand how the actual implementation process is carried out by teachers, starting from planning, implementation, to evaluation, and what factors support this success. From the background above, the researcher formulated the problems, including: (1) How is the implementation of role play on language development in children aged 5-6 years at RA AL-Istiqomah Pemenang? (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors of the implementation of role play in developing the language of children aged 5-6 years? (3) What is the impact of the role play method in developing the language of children aged 5-6 years at RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang?

2. LIBRARY STUDY

2.1 Role Playing Method

Role-playing is a learning method in which children play the role of characters or objects around them to develop their imagination more deeply. Vygotsky argued that play activities can free children's minds from being tied to reality, which often limits their ability to think abstractly. Therefore, play activities can be utilized optimally as a means to support children's development (Astuti et al., 2023). Role-playing refers to play activities carried out by children to play characters or objects such as dolls. For example, when children play with dolls, they assume the doll is their child while the child themselves becomes the mother, allowing the children to imagine the activities they do.

According to Abduh in Musthofiyyah et al (2025), explained that based on Vygotsky's theory, role playing involves imagination and role taking that develops self-regulation, cognitive abilities, and social interaction through the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The method is a way used by teachers in delivering learning so that the expected goals can be achieved. Role playing is a play activity carried out by demonstrating a certain role through interaction with peers, so that children can explore feelings, values, attitudes, and various solutions in solving problems (Mahmudah, 2023). Khairani et al (2023) stated that the role-playing method is a form of learning that can develop children's language skills through activities of playing characters, communicating, and interacting with friends.

According to Khoiruddin in Agung & Asmira (2021), role-playing techniques are grouped into two main categories: macro and micro role-playing. Macro role-playing involves children engaging in realistic simulations using life-size equipment to portray specific professions (doctor, mother, police officer, teacher, trader), generally through collaboration between more than two people. Micro role-playing involves the use of small-scale play media, such as houses, dolls, or miniatures, which can be played individually or in pairs.

According to Putri and Muryanti (2021), role-playing provides significant positive contributions to children's development, including sharpening comprehension, improving speaking skills, increasing concentration, and sharpening thinking skills. This is reinforced by Lilis Madyawati's view, who details the benefits of role-playing: building self-confidence, improving language skills, stimulating creativity and logic, practicing problem-solving skills, and fostering empathy and a positive attitude in children. However, there are drawbacks, such as students who do not get a role, tend to be passive, require a long duration, and require a large area that can potentially create noise (Anggraeni, Hamzah, & Sapendi, 2021).

Paraita et al. (2021) explain that, based on Uno's (2008) theory, the role-playing process consists of several steps: preparation, role selection, observer appointment, decoration, role implementation, evaluation discussions, and sharing experiences and conclusions. Sholichah and Riyanto (2022) mention supporting and inhibiting factors in implementation, where supporting factors facilitate smooth implementation, while inhibiting factors are obstacles that interfere.

2.2 Children's Language Skills

Language is the primary tool used by early childhood to communicate their desires, needs, thoughts, and feelings to others. Through language, children can build social interactions and develop thinking and learning skills (Dewi, 2021). Entering the age of 5-6 years, children's language skills are divided into two fundamental, integrated elements, according to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 (2014): Receptive Language (absorbing information, understanding instructions) and Expressive Language (articulating ideas and emotions) (Husna & Eliza, 2023).

Wahidah and Latifah (2021) suggest that children's language development has unique characteristics. According to Susanto (2021), the stages of children's language development include prelinguistics, linguistics (holophrastic, phrasal), grammatical development, and grammar in adulthood. According to Jamaris (in Kholilullah, 2021), the

stages of language development include vocabulary (lexical), syntax (grammar), and semantics (meaning).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in-depth findings related to the implementation of the role-playing method. Sugiyono explained that qualitative research focuses on observing the natural conditions of objects, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument (Wekke et al. 2021). The research location was RA Al-Istiqomah in Karang Desa Hamlet, West Pemenang Village, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency. The research subjects included grade B teachers (Mrs. Ainul Irsya, S.Pd. and Mrs. Istikamah, S.Pd.) and children aged 5-6 years.

The two participating teachers, Mrs. Ainul Irsya, S.Pd. and Mrs. Istikamah, S.Pd., are the homeroom teachers of class B who are directly responsible for daily language-stimulation activities, including the role-playing sessions observed in this study. The children involved were class B students aged 5–6 years [state the exact number of children]. The research process began with passive participant observation of role-playing sessions conducted repeatedly across the study period (May 25 to June 10, 2026), followed by one semi-structured interview with each teacher after the observation phase, and was complemented by documentation review (RPPH, portfolios, and activity photographs) collected throughout the same period. [Author: please replace the bracketed information with the exact number of children and the number of observation sessions from the field notes.]

Data sources are divided into primary and secondary data (Sulung and Muspawi, 2024). Data collection techniques were carried out through: 1) Passive participant observation to observe the teacher implementation process and children's responses (Abrar, 2024); 2) Semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore planning, obstacles, and progress (Arianto and Rani, 2024); 3) Documentation in the form of RPPH, portfolios, and activity photos. The data analysis technique applied the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (in Ash-Shiddiqi et al., 2025), which includes Data Reduction, Data Presentation, and Conclusion Drawing. Data validity was tested through data source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking (Budiana et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2023).

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research result

Implementation of Role-Playing Method

Based on the results of research conducted from May 25 to June 10, 2026, the implementation of the role-playing method at RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang includes three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

- a. **Planning:** Teachers systematically prepare Daily Lesson Plans (RPPH) tailored to the theme (e.g., various jobs/professions). Ms. Ainul Irsya stated, "Before the activity begins, I prepare the RPPH, determine the objectives to be achieved, and then prepare the necessary tools and materials." Media are prepared according to the theme, such as toy doctor's tools, a stethoscope, and play money for the market, so that children can easily understand their roles.
- b. **Implementation:** The teacher carries out activities through six stages: (1) Explaining the role or character; (2) Providing a simple example of how to play the role (demonstrating dialogue); (3) Guiding children in choosing and carrying out roles (assistance for those who are shy); (4) Providing opportunities for children to speak and interact independently; (5) Providing probing questions ("What is the patient's illness?"); and (6) Providing motivation and encouragement. The dominant type of role play is macro role play using real attributes.
- c. **Evaluation:** Conducted through direct observation. Mrs. Ainul Irsya noted, "I pay attention to how the child speaks, interacts with friends, understands instructions, and uses

vocabulary." The results are evaluated through anecdotal notes and the child's portfolio.

Impact of Children's Language Development

The role-playing method had a significant impact. This was reflected in nine language indicators:

No	Language Aspects	Indicators and Findings
1	Vocabulary	Children can name new vocabulary according to profession ("sell", "buy", "stethoscope").
2	Language Comprehension	Children understand the teacher's instructions when dividing roles and taking turns.
3	Oral Expression	Children can express ideas/opinions, for example, explaining the food made by the chef.
4	Storytelling Skills	Some children were able to retell their roles ("I was a firefighter...").
5	Sentence Structure	Children construct simple sentences ("How much do vegetables cost?").
6	Interactive Communication	Children actively interact two-way between sellers and buyers or doctors and patients.
7	Eloquence	Speak fluently without unnatural pauses when serving patients/customers.
8	Articulation	Speech is clearly understood, such as "the food is ready, please eat."
9	Self-Confidence	Increased courage to appear in front of friends thanks to this method.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Key supporting factors include children's high enthusiasm for playing while learning and the availability of a complete range of media and teaching aids. Conversely, inhibiting factors include differences in basic language skills among children and the presence of some children with passive/introverted personalities who require more time to adapt. Teachers address these issues through intensive motivation, dialogue models, and inclusive guidance.

4.2 Discussion

The systematic planning steps carried out by RA Al-Istiqomah teachers align with Uno's (2008) theory, as cited by Paraita et al. (2021). The implementation of the six steps and the use of macro role-playing media demonstrate the effectiveness of this method, as Sujiono (2021) argues, as it provides children with real-life experiences. Authentic classroom evaluation aligns with Aulina's (2021) early childhood assessment theory.

The development of the nine aspects of language demonstrates the application of Vygotsky's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) theory, which asserts that role-playing develops children's cognitive and social regulation (Musthofiyyah et al., 2025). These findings support the conclusions of previous studies by Adinda Hafni Zahra (2023), Ega Nur Haliza (2023), and Khairani et al. (2023), which stated that role-playing methods effectively facilitate vocabulary acquisition, speaking courage, and syntactic fluency in early childhood. Furthermore, this research is also strengthened by research conducted by Ilawati, Rahayu, & Alawiyah (2024) and Kanedi, Ramzi, & Alawiyah (2026) which shows that an interactive learning approach involving active communication and the use of media or stories (such as storytelling and picture series) can significantly improve children's speaking skills, vocabulary mastery, understanding of instructions, and confidence when performing interactions.

Regarding inhibiting factors, the findings regarding noise and the adaptation of shy children align with the theory of Anggraeni et al. (2021). Scaffolding strategies (providing dialogue prompts) are vital in minimizing communication barriers for passive children.

Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Because this study relied on non-standardized observation and interview instruments within a single kindergarten, the extent to which the reported gains in vocabulary, sentence structure, and self-confidence reflect a genuine developmental effect of role-playing—rather than the influence of the teachers' individual skill, the small class size, or maturation over the observation period—cannot be fully disentangled. The consistent alignment between the findings and prior studies employing similar qualitative designs may partly reflect shared methodological limitations (e.g., reliance on teachers' self-reports and researcher observation without standardized language assessment) rather than converging evidence of a robust effect. Future research using pre-post comparisons or a control group would help clarify how much of the observed language progress is specifically attributable to the role-playing method itself.

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The implementation of the role-playing method at RA Al-Istiqomah Pemenang was carried out comprehensively through the planning stages (RPPH and media), implementation (6 stages of guidance and macro interaction), and evaluation (direct observation). This method has a significant impact on the development of 9 indicators of expressive and receptive language in children aged 5-6 years, especially in terms of vocabulary enrichment, interactive communication, and self-confidence. Children's enthusiasm and the availability of media are the main driving factors, while the heterogeneity of children's abilities and passive nature are obstacles that are successfully overcome through an individual approach by teachers. Specifically,

the greatest gains were observed in vocabulary enrichment (naming profession-related objects and actions), interactive two-way communication between role partners (e.g., seller–buyer, doctor–patient exchanges), and self-confidence in speaking in front of peers, while gains in articulation and eloquence were comparatively more gradual. The teachers overcame the heterogeneity of children's abilities and passive tendencies mainly through individualized scaffolding, such as providing extra dialogue prompts and pairing shy children with more expressive peers during macro role-play sessions.

Suggestion

For teachers, it is recommended to expand the variety of local themes (such as fishermen and farmers) and utilize recycled materials as additional teaching aids. For school principals, allocating funds for professional costume enrichment and training programs to improve teacher competency is highly recommended. For future researchers, it is recommended to use a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of interventions or expand the scope to include the 4–5-year-old age group.

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