



## Role-playing Method for Language Development in Elementary School

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore and analyze the use of the role-playing method as a means of children's language development in primary schools. The study examined the impact of the role-playing method in improving speaking skills in children aged 6-8 years. In the study a qualitative research methodology. the research design was devised by selecting relevant participants, such as elementary school students and teachers involved in learning role-playing at State Elementary School 3 Pardasuka. The results showed that the role-playing method significantly contributed to children's language development in elementary schools. Active participation and social interaction in role-playing activities help improve children's speaking skills by being more confident and expressive. In addition, children develop better listening skills by acting as active listeners. The content analysis results showed improved vocabulary and understanding of language concepts through the role-play experience. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to developing more effective and enjoyable learning methods in supporting children's language development in primary schools.

**Keywords:** *Elementary School, Language Development, Role-playing Method*



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## INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role as a tool of communication, learning, and interaction with the surrounding environment (Tulasih, Yussof, & Kristiawan, 2022). The developmental stages of a child's language during this period are marked by numerous changes in language skills that form a fundamental basis for their academic and social success in the future. The language development of children aged 6-8 years represents a significant phase in their cognitive and social growth. Language is a primary instrument for communication, learning, and interaction with the world around them (Neumann, 2020). During this period, children undergo significant changes in language skills that lay a crucial foundation for their future academic and social achievements (Rohman, Suhono, & Marliana, 2023). However, several issues may arise during this phase, necessitating attention from parents, educators, and educational experts. Some of these issues include language development delays. Some children between 6 and 8 may experience language developmental delays (Nobrega, Opice, Lauletta, & Nobrega, 2020). Such delays could manifest as limited vocabulary, difficulties constructing grammatically correct sentences, or general language comprehension issues. Language developmental delays can hinder their ability to communicate effectively and impact their academic performance at school (Kokkalia, Drigas, Economou, & Roussos, 2019). Some children might experience speech and language disorders such as speech impediments, language comprehension, or expressive language disorders (Rochanah, 2021). These disorders can be either physical, such as speech impediments or hearing impairments, or developmental, linked to the communication system within the brain. Language disorders necessitate specialized intervention from speech therapists to help children overcome these barriers (Kurniawati, 2018).

Environmental factors play a pivotal role in a child's language development. If a child lacks language stimulation in their surroundings, such as insufficient interaction with parents or limited access to reading materials, their language development may be restricted. A language-rich environment and opportunities for speaking, listening, reading, and writing are vital to stimulate a child's language development. Some children might experience speech disorders due to habits like thumb-sucking or tongue-biting (Nur Tanfidiyah & Ferdian Utama, 2019). Such habits can lead to changes in jaw and tongue positions, affecting sound production and pronunciation. Speech disorders can influence a child's communication clarity and require intervention to address these habits (Nurhuda, Fatinova, & Wildan, 2020). Additionally, some children may encounter language disorders due to health issues or neurological disorders such as autism spectrum disorders, developmental disorders, or brain injuries. These disorders can impact a child's ability to understand and use language effectively.

Issues in the language development of children aged 6-8 years require appropriate attention and intervention to help them overcome these challenges. Children age 6-8 years old enter the formal education stage equivalent to Primary School. By supporting children's language development through positive interactions, adequate language stimulation, and suitable interventions, children can achieve their full language potential and succeed in various aspects of life. Furthermore, suitable learning processes contribute to supporting a child's language development. As children reach the age of 6-8 years old, their academic activities primarily occur in

school and social environments (Utama, 2017). As observed in the case of students at Pardasuka Elementary School, some children experience language development delays.

In the learning process, every teacher needs to analyze the barriers and challenges experienced by children to provide solutions that foster their language development (Anwar, 2020). This is paramount due to the potential consequences of language development delays, which can lead to difficulties in expressing ideas, and struggles in articulating cognitive concepts. Regarding academic curriculum, the learning approach for children aged 6-8 years in primary school still revolves around thematic lessons. Incorporating role-playing as a learning method is deemed necessary for primary school children (Fawzi & Dodi, 2022).

The role-playing teaching method is a valuable and essential approach in the learning process for primary school children. Role-playing involves children assuming specific roles or characters and enacting them in given situations or contexts (Emiliana Darsri Winarti, 2013). This approach offers numerous positive benefits to a child's development, particularly their language skills. Role-playing teaching greatly benefits a child's language development within the primary school learning process. Through role-playing, children engage in authentic and relevant communication scenarios, which contribute to enhancing their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The significance of fostering a child's language development in primary school students through the role-playing method underscores the research problem addressed in this study – how the role-playing method contributes to the development of language aspects in primary school children. Consequently, this research aims to explore how the role-playing method can facilitate the language development of elementary school students.

## METHODOLOGY

In the study "Role-playing Method for Language Development in Elementary School," a qualitative research methodology was used to explore and explain the phenomenon of children's language development through the role-playing method in depth. A descriptive and exploratory approach was used to understand this method's effects better. The initial stage involved determining the research topic and formulating the research questions to be answered (Lexy J. Moleong, 2019). Next, the research design was devised by selecting relevant participants, such as elementary school students and teachers involved in learning role-playing at Pardasuka State Elementary School 3. Data was collected through classroom observation, interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis related to the implementation of the role-playing method. The collected data were analyzed through transcription, coding, categorization, and thematic analysis to identify patterns and main themes. The validity of the findings was checked through data triangulation. The results of data analysis were interpreted in the context of relevant theories and expressed in a research report that included all stages of research, findings, interpretations, and conclusions. This qualitative methodology is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of the role-play method in children's language development in elementary schools.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Child Language Development

Child development encompasses the crucial phase of a child's life from birth to approximately 8 years old. Children undergo rapid physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional advancement throughout this period. It's important to recognize that each child follows a unique pace of development, with some achieving specific milestones faster than others, which is entirely normal. Parents, Teachers or caregivers play a vital role in offering suitable encouragement and engagement tailored to a child's requirements and interests, fostering optimal growth during this developmental phase (Ansorida, 2022). This research delves explicitly into the child progression of language 6-8 years old. The examination centers on children's language development and the means to bolster this developmental aspect during the early years.

Language development during early childhood constitutes a intricate and essential progression within a child's developmental journey (Lestari, Lestari, Jasiah, Rizal, & Syar, 2023). Throughout this developmental phase, children acquire and enhance their ability to communicate verbally, utilizing language as a means to express thoughts, emotions, and wishes. It's worth noting that early childhood language development can be categorized into distinct stages based on age (Utama & Tanfidiyah, 2019). It commences with the pre-language stage (0-12 months), during which infants initially convey their needs through crying, gestures, and body language. (Rochanah, 2021).

Initially, infants employ non-verbal methods such as crying, gesturing, and employing body language as their primary means of communication. These avenues serve as primary channels for babies to express their messages and requirements to adults or caregivers. Among these, crying emerges as babies' earliest and predominant mode of communication. Crying functions as a multifaceted tool through which babies convey a range of messages, such as hunger, fatigue, discomfort, or a need for attention and affection. Crying is an innate response, a natural reflex exhibited by babies in response to their unease or unfulfilled necessities (Nurjanah, 2022). As infants develop a greater awareness of their surroundings, they might employ additional bodily movements or vocalizations alongside crying to attract attention or signify their needs. For instance, infants might emit laughter, wriggle their limbs, or adjust their postures to express their wishes. Right from birth, infants possess the capacity to engage in communication through body language. They express themselves by moving their limbs, extending their arms to request being held, or displaying the grasping reflex as a means of interaction with those in their vicinity. (Utama, 2017).

Adults who provide extensive care for babies often become adept at recognizing various cues and expressions from their little ones, enabling them to discern the baby's wants and needs. By understanding the baby's body language and signals, caregivers can respond promptly and attend to the baby's requirements effectively. Besides non-verbal communication, it is paramount for parents and caregivers to interact with the baby constantly. Even though babies may not comprehend the words initially, being exposed to regular language usage aids in developing their language comprehension and lays the foundation for their later verbal language skills. A deep emotional bond can be nurtured between the baby and the caregiver through attentive observation and responsive interactions. During this process, babies begin to familiarize themselves

with the various sounds and intonations of the language prevalent in their environment. Consequently, the language learning journey initiates as the baby keenly observes and actively listens to the people around them. This reciprocal communication plays a pivotal role in the baby's early language development, laying the groundwork for their linguistic skills and further enriching their connection with those caring for them.

The subsequent stage is the early language stage, spanning from 1 to 2 years of age. During this phase, the child starts using their first words, typically single words to express desires or emotions. It's during this period that children actively develop their speaking skills by utilizing their initial words to convey simple wishes and feelings. This developmental phase is characterized by active imitation of the sounds and words heard from the people around them. The process of imitation plays a significant role in strengthening and expanding their vocabulary. Hence, adults and family members who care for the child have a vital responsibility in modeling appropriate and rich language. The child tends to imitate what they hear, making the supportive environment crucial for fostering their language development during this child language stage.

Additionally, between the ages of 1 to 2 years, toddlers begin to establish the capacity to comprehend basic words and commands. They can grasp simple instructions like "sit," "eat," or "don't." While they are not yet able to formulate complete sentences, their ability to comprehend these words and commands serves as a crucial groundwork for their future language development. Parents and caregivers play a pivotal role in this stage by providing support and positive feedback to children's efforts in speaking. Encouragement and positive reinforcement help boost the child's confidence and motivation to further develop their language skills. Using simple words and speaking softly also aids in making the child feel more engaged and involved in the communication process. With the right support and stimulation, children at this stage will continue to progress in their speaking and language comprehension, paving the way for further linguistic development. Consistent and nurturing interactions from caregivers contribute significantly to the child's language growth during this critical period of early childhood development.

In the Single Language Stage (2-3 years), children's language development experiences a significant acceleration. During this period, they progress from using individual words to constructing simple sentences. They skillfully combine several words to express their thoughts and emotions. For instance, they may say "mama is coming" or "I am hungry." Their vocabulary expands rapidly as they learn to name objects, things, and people in their immediate environment. At this stage, children become adept at using nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs more accurately within their sentences. This enables them to communicate more clearly and effectively, conveying their messages with increasing precision. During the Single Language Stage (2-3 years), children not only improve their sentence formation but also acquire the capability to express their emotions and desires more effectively through language. They become proficient in using appropriate words to convey a range of feelings, such as happiness, sadness, anger, or fear. This newfound ability greatly enhances their communication skills, enabling them to interact more meaningfully with others and articulate their emotions and needs. By expressing themselves through language,

children can establish stronger connections with those around them and develop valuable social and emotional communication skills.

Absolutely, during the Single Language stage, parents and caregivers play a crucial role in supporting and encouraging the child's language development. Engaging the child in regular conversations and attentively listening to what they say provides the necessary motivation for them to continue developing their language skills. Interacting with the child about objects in their surroundings, reading books together, and discussing pictures help enrich their vocabulary and expand their comprehension of language. The Single Language Stage is a critical phase in a child's language development as it marks the establishment of stronger language foundations. The child becomes more adept at communicating using more complete words and sentences, setting the stage for further linguistic growth and communication abilities in the future. By actively participating in language-rich activities and fostering a supportive environment, parents and caregivers can significantly contribute to their child's language progress during this important stage.

Indeed, the early sentence stage (3-4 years) represents a significant advancement in children's language development. During this phase, children's ability to speak undergoes rapid growth, enabling them to use longer and more intricate sentences to express ideas and messages in a more structured manner. They become adept at using question words like "what," "who," and "when," which allows them to inquire and gather information about the world around them. Furthermore, at this stage, children begin to construct simple stories and discuss past events. They can vividly recall and describe experiences that occurred in the past, expressing themselves more clearly and in detail. This developmental milestone signifies a crucial step in a child's language progress, as they acquire more mature language skills, leading to improved and more effective communication. Parents and caregivers continue to play an essential role during this stage by providing ongoing support and stimulation for children's language development. Engaging in regular conversations, reading books together, and creating opportunities for communication in everyday activities will further foster their language skills. By offering a nurturing environment and encouraging them to express themselves, children will continue to enhance their language abilities and grow into more confident communicators..

Certainly, the Compound Sentence stage (4-5 years) marks a significant advancement in children's language development. During this phase, children begin to utilize compound sentences, amalgamating multiple ideas within a single sentence. Their speaking skills become more fluid and expressive, characterized by a wide range of intonations and facial expressions. As children start using compound sentences, they can combine two or more ideas or items of information into a single coherent sentence. This enables them to communicate more intricate and multifaceted concepts. For instance, they can depict simultaneous events or convey a sequence of actions. During this stage, children's speaking skills further evolve as they employ various intonations and facial expressions, adding a layer of expressiveness to their communication. This enhanced ability allows them to effectively convey emotions and emphasize points in their sentences, contributing to more effective interactions with others.

Parents and caregivers can play an instrumental role by offering numerous opportunities for conversation, engaging in joint reading activities, and discussing everyday experiences with the child. Through such interactions in a supportive environment, children will continue to refine their speech skills and gain confidence, becoming more adept and competent communicators. By providing encouragement and fostering a language-rich atmosphere, parents and caregivers contribute significantly to the child's language development during the Compound Sentence Stage, laying the foundation for their future language capabilities and fostering strong communication skills that will serve them well in various aspects of life.

You've provided an excellent summary of the pre-language stage (5-6 years) in early childhood language development. During this stage, children's language skills are maturing and getting closer to adult language proficiency. Some of the key developmental features at this stage include:

1. **Advanced Speaking:** Children can speak clearly and fluently, using more complex sentences to convey ideas in greater detail.
2. **Understanding Abstract Language:** Children begin to comprehend more abstract language, understanding the meanings of words beyond concrete objects or events, and grasping complex ideas and concepts.
3. **Reading and Writing Development:** Children start to develop simple reading and writing skills, enabling them to read simple words and sentences and write using letters or more structured writing.
4. **Expanding Vocabulary:** The child's vocabulary grows with the addition of more diverse and extensive words, allowing them to communicate with a wider range of word choices.
5. **Effective Communication:** In the pre-language stage, children become more skilled communicators, conveying their ideas and emotions with clarity and precision, leading to better interactions with others.

During this stage, it remains important for parents, teacher, and caregivers to provide continued support and stimulation in children's language development. Engaging in regular conversations, reading books together, and encouraging active communication with the child will further enhance their language skills. By creating a supportive environment and allowing children to express themselves, their vocabulary and language comprehension will continue to flourish, making them more confident and competent communicators. Providing regular opportunities for conversation, reading books together, and engaging in daily interactions create a nurturing environment for children to thrive linguistically. Through this supportive setting and appropriate stimulation, children will continually enhance their language skills and grow into more confident and competent communicators. During the language development process, active support from parents and caregivers is crucial. Regular talking and reading books with children promote a richer vocabulary and improved language comprehension. Additionally, allowing children ample time to express themselves fosters their language development even further.

Language development in children aged 6-8 years marks a significant stage in language acquisition (Aguilar-Mediavilla, Buil-Legaz, López-Penadés, Sanchez-Azanza, & Adrover-Roig, 2019). At this age, children have achieved more complex language skills and tend to be more fluent in speaking and understanding language

(Peets, Yim, & Bialystok, 2019)v. Here are some important aspects of language development in 6-8 year olds:

1. Rich Vocabularies: Children aged 6-8 years have developed a richer vocabulary, mastering thousands of words. They can use a variety of words to describe objects, feelings, events and more abstract concepts.
2. More Complex Syntactic Understanding: Children of this age begin to use more complex sentences and understand syntax rules better. They are able to use compound sentences, passive sentences, and sentences with bound clauses.
3. Fluent Speaking Ability: At this age, children can speak fluently without too many stops or pauses in conversation. Their articulation and intonation become clearer and more precise.
4. Group Speaking Skills: Children aged 6-8 years are able to speak and communicate well in groups. They can follow instructions, ask questions, and contribute to conversations with peers and adults.
5. Deeper Understanding of Meaning: Children of this age begin to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of words and sentences. They can identify double meanings, word games, and simple jokes.
6. Developing Reading and Writing Skills: At this age, children are usually already learning to read and write at school. They develop their reading skills by understanding more complex texts and improve their writing skills by composing more complete sentences and paragraphs.
7. Language Skills in Various Contexts: Children aged 6-8 can adapt to various communication contexts, be it in informal conversations with peers or formal conversations with adults or teachers.
8. Creativity in Language: At this age, children begin to express themselves more creatively through language. They can create stories, poems and game scenarios based on their imagination.

In the language development stage of 6-8 year olds, social interaction and a supportive environment remain important in enriching their language skills. Parents and teachers can actively engage with children in reading stories, playing word games, and facilitating conversations that allow children to continue to improve their language skills positively and creatively.

By acknowledging the importance of active involvement, encouragement, and giving children the space to communicate, parents and caregivers contribute significantly to their child's language development journey. With a positive and supportive approach, children will build upon their language skills and become effective communicators, well-equipped for successful interactions and future language achievements.

### **Role Play Method for Children's Language Development**

The analysis results in this study revealed some significant findings related to role-playing methods in children's language development in elementary schools. First, the data analysis from interviews with teachers and students indicated that using the role-play method positively influenced children's language development. Teachers reported that children showed improvement in speaking, listening, reading and

writing skills after engaging in role-playing activities. Students also stated that they felt more eager to learn language as the method was more interesting and interactive.

Secondly, the classroom observation analysis revealed that the children were actively involved in role-playing and showed great enthusiasm in carrying out their roles. They engaged in social interactions with peers and teachers, which helped improve their communication and collaboration skills. In addition, through role-play scenarios, children have the opportunity to practice new vocabulary and understand the context of language use in meaningful situations.

Thirdly, the thematic analysis of the interviews and document analysis revealed that the role-play method helps children better understand and internalize language concepts. They can experience the context of language use and develop a deep understanding of the meaning of words and expressions in real situations.

As role play has been applied, for example, the role play method can be used to develop the language of elementary school children with the title Adventure in the Magic Garden. The expected Learning Objectives develop children's speaking, listening and language creativity skills through role play. The steps that can be taken are as follows:

1. Material Preparation and Setup  
Prepare the scenario and attributes to create a magical garden atmosphere. Organize the classroom into a garden with the help of tables, chairs and simple decorations.
2. Role Selection  
Divide the children into small groups. Each group will have a different role in the magical garden adventure, such as explorers, garden guides, magical animals, and so on.
3. Character and Scenario Introduction  
Have the children sit with their groups. Tell them the scenario of the adventure in the magic garden, where they have to interact with different characters and situations. Give a description of the characters and the tasks they have to perform.
4. Division of Roles and Understanding the Characters  
Distribute roles to each child in the group. Discuss together the character they are portraying, including how the character speaks, thinks and acts.
5. Role Play  
The children begin to play their roles in the scenario. They interact with each other according to the character they are portraying. Let them improvise within the given situation.
6. Discussion and Reflection  
After the role-play, hold a discussion session among the group. Children share their experiences, what they learned, and how they played the role of the character by speaking and acting.
7. Story Development  
Invite the children to develop a follow-up story to the magical garden adventure together. They can collaborate to create storylines, conflicts, and resolutions.
8. Performance or Presentation

Each group can do a short performance based on the story they developed. This allows them to speak in front of the group using creative language.

#### 9. Final Reflection

After the performance, have a reflection session together. Discuss what they learned, how they felt during the role-play, and what they can do better in the future.

Through the example activities above, children can actively develop their language skills through role play. They will engage in social interactions, practice new vocabulary, and develop their creativity and imagination. This method of role-playing also increases confidence in speaking in front of a group. However, the analysis also revealed some challenges in implementing the role-play method. Some teachers face obstacles in designing role-play scenarios that are appropriate to the subject matter and learning objectives. In addition, the use of this method requires more thorough preparation and effective classroom management to ensure the active participation of all students.

The analysis of this study indicates that the role-playing method has significant potential in children's language development at Negeri 3 Pardasuka elementary school. Through social interaction, vocabulary application and understanding of language contexts, this method effectively promotes the development of various language skills in children.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the role-playing method proved highly effective in facilitating language development in SD Negeri 3 Pardasuka children. From the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that this method not only helps improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, but also positively impacts children's social skills and creativity. Active participation in role-playing allows them to interact directly with language in a real context, profoundly impacting language comprehension and acquisition. In addition, play in the learning process creates an interesting and exciting learning atmosphere, so children are more motivated and excited in developing their language skills. Therefore, the role-play method has the potential to be a valuable asset in language education in primary schools, integrating meaningful, interactive and holistic learning.

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