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The Impact of Role Play Method in Enhancing Communication Skills in Early Childhood

Yola Marcelita Dwi Putri[1], Isabella Hasiana[1]
[1] University of PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya, Indonesia
Correspondence: isabella@unipasby.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Communication skills are an important aspect of a child's development that affects their ability to interact with their social environment. The role play method is known as an effective approach to develop these skills as it allows children to express themselves freely through various roles they play. This study aims to examine the effect of role play method in enhancing communication skills in early childhood. This research uses an experimental design with a control group, where the experimental group is treated with role play activities, while the control group receives conventional learning. The subjects of this research were five to six years old children spread across several kindergartens, a total of 60 students. The instruments used in this study are observations and interviews to measure changes in communication skills before and after treatment. The results show that the role play method has a significant positive impact on improving communication skills in early childhood. Children who participated in role play activities showed improvement in speaking, listening, and interacting with their peers. This study concludes that the role play method can be an effective strategy for improving communication skills in early childhood, and thus can be applied in early childhood education institutions. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more interactive and creative learning methods to support children's communication skill development.

Keywords:
Communication skills, early childhood, learning methods, role play, social skills

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INTRODUCTION

Communication skills in early childhood play a key role in social, cognitive, and academic development. As children grow rapidly at ages 5 to 6, they begin to develop speaking, listening, and interacting abilities with others in a more complex manner, reflecting significant cognitive and linguistic development at this stage (Berk, 2015; Owens, 2016). Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to support the development of children's communication skills from an early age (Berk, 2015).

In early childhood, communication is not only about verbal expression but also involves non-verbal cues like body language, facial expressions, and eye contact (Yee et al., 2022). Children at this stage also start to learn the basics of effective communication, such as taking turns in conversation, understanding the perspectives of others, and using language to problem-solve or negotiate with peers (Berk, 2015). As children grow, their ability to engage in reciprocal communication strengthens, which helps build social connections and lays the groundwork for future academic and social success. Along with improved communication skills, children also develop greater emotional regulation, problem-sloving abilities and a deeper understanding of social cues, all of which are essential for forming healthy relationships and triving in various environments (Hermoyo, 2015; Wahono et al., 2022).

Effective communication skills in early childhood are crucial for cognitive, social, and emotional development. According to Owens (2016), communication skills are foundational for later literacy and academic success, as children with strong communication abilities are better equipped to express their ideas, understand instructions, and engage with others. Early childhood educators play a key role in fostering these skills through interactive activities, such as role play, storytelling, and group

discussions, which provide opportunities for children to practice speaking and listening in a supportive environment.

However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of communication skills, many early childhood education programs still rely on traditional learning methods that are passive and centered on verbal teaching by the teacher. These methods such as rote memorization, teacher-led instruction, and worksheet-based activities, often limit opportunities for children to actively engage in dialogue, express themselves, or collaborate with peers. As a result, children have fewer chances to develop communication skills optimally. Studies have shown that such conventional approaches do not sufficiently support the development of children's verbal expression, social communication, or critical thinking abilities (Purnama et al., 2022;Wood, 2020; Risyanindya et al., 2024 ; Hamidah et al., 2021). This creates a challenge in enhancing children's communication skills, which leads to lower abilities in interacting with peers and adults."

Based on data obtained from an initial survey conducted by the researchers in several early childhood education institutions in Surabaya in 2024, around 60% of educators at these institutions reported using the role play method in learning activities. However, only 30% of them felt that this method was applied consistently and effectively in developing children's communication skills. This indicates a significant potential to improve the implementation of this method in the early childhood curriculum.

Therefore, to address this challenge, there is a need for a more active, engaging, and interactive learning method. One approach that is gaining attention is the role play method. Role play gives children the opportunity to portray various characters in different social situations, both in everyday life and in imaginative contexts (Inten, 2017). Through role play activities, children not only learn to speak and listen but also learn how to interact, respond, and express ideas or feelings creatively and freely. This approach is considered one of the most effective ways to develop communication skills because it provides a more concrete and meaningful learning experience for children (Garvey, 1990).

In the Indonesian context, the use of role play is still limited, although it has been employed in various early childhood learning activities. Research on its impact on early childhood communication skills in Indonesia remains scarce. This creates a gap in the literature regarding the application of role play methods in the Indonesian educational environment, especially considering the cultural context that influences how children interact and communicate study by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 2017 highlighted the importance of developing communication skills in early childhood as the foundation for further literacy skills. However, despite growing awareness of the importance of communication skills, many educators still use traditional methods that do not sufficiently challenge children to interact and communicate actively. One factor contributing to the limitation in developing communication skills is the inability to adapt teaching methods that are more dynamic and relevant to the developmental needs of children (Qori'ah, 2019). In this context, the role play method can be an effective solution. Role play allows children to learn speaking, listening, and solving problems collaboratively with their peers in various social scenarios. However, the implementation of this method in early childhood education in Indonesia is still limited, and there has been no specific study examining the impact of the role play method on communication skills in early childhood in Indonesia. This creates a gap in the literature regarding the application of role play methods in the Indonesian educational environment, especially considering the cultural context that influences how children interact and communicate.

Research on the impact of role play on early childhood communication skills has been conducted in various countries, showing that this method is highly effective in improving speaking, listening, and interaction skills. A study by (Zare-Behtash et al, 2018) in Iran showed that children involved in role play activities showed significant improvements in their verbal abilities. These findings align with those of (Jayanti, 2022), who also found that role play can significantly enhance the speaking skills of young children. On the other hand, (Hamzah et al, 2023) showed that children who participated in role play activities had better listening skills compared to children who were not involved in such activities. These children were also more active in interacting with their peers.

In Indonesia, although role play has been used in various early childhood learning activities, research examining its impact on early childhood communication skills is still very limited. Research by Harefa and Suprihatin (2023) mentioned that early childhood institutions in Indonesia are still focused on traditional, passive teaching methods. This research also notes that while children in

Indonesia have great potential to develop through more active and interactive approaches, many educational institutions have not fully understood or implemented role play as a strategy for developing communication skills. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effect of role play on improving communication skills in early childhood in Indonesia, as well as examining how this method can be applied in a more specific cultural context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effect of role play on the improvement of communication skills in early childhood in Indonesia, as well as examining how this method can be applied in a more specific cultural context. A key gap in the literature on role play research is the lack of studies that specifically investigate its effect on improving communication skills within the context of Indonesian early childhood education. Many existing studies focus on social and emotional development, but there is limited research on how role play can specifically enhance children's speaking and listening skills in more localized settings.

This study offers novelty by examining the implementation of role play to improve communication skills in early childhood in Indonesia, with a deeper approach and a culturally relevant context. Another innovation is the focus on specific aspects of communication skills, such as speaking, listening, and interacting with peers, which are less frequently discussed in previous research. This study will also provide stronger empirical data regarding the impact of the role play method on the development of communication skills, especially in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia.

In early childhood education in Indonesia, the role play method has not been fully integrated into the curriculum, although some educational institutions have begun to implement this approach in the form of creative activities. Research by (Harefa & Suprihatin, 2023) mentions that early childhood institutions in Indonesia are still focused on traditional teaching methods that tend to be passive. This research also notes that although children in Indonesia have great potential to develop through more active and interactive approaches, many educational institutions have not fully understood or implemented role play as a strategy for developing communication skills. This study is expected to fill this gap and provide insight into how role play can be used as an effective method for enhancing communication skills in early childhood in Indonesia.

This study offers novelty by examining the implementation of role-play to improve communication skills in early childhood education in Indonesia, with a deeper approach and a culturally relevant context. Another innovation is the focus on specific aspects of communication skills, such as speaking, listening, and interacting with peers, which are less frequently discussed in previous research. Role play has been proven effective in enhancing communication skills in early childhood because it provides opportunities for children to express themselves through the roles they play, practice speaking with confidence, and enrich their vocabulary in enjoyable and realistic contexts; studies show that through role-playing activities, children who were initially passive can become active communicators, more confident in interactions, and able to develop social skills that support language growth (Sitorus et al., 2025; Yee et al., 2022). This study also provides stronger empirical evidence on the impact of the role-play method on the development of communication skills, especially in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. Thus, this study aims to examine the impact of role-playing on enhancing communication skills in early childhood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of communication in early childhood is a crucial aspect of growth, closely linked to their social and emotional development. According to Vygotsky (1978), children's language and communication development occurs through social interactions, in which children learn language by imitating and adapting to their social environment. Communication in early childhood includes the ability to listen, understand, and convey messages through both verbal and nonverbal language (Papalia et al., 2008). Therefore, stimulating communication skills from an early age is essential for laying the foundation of children's social skills. In addition, parents also play a crucial role in the development of children’s communication (Hasiana, 2021).

Communication is the skill of conveying messages through spoken language to others. The use of spoken language can also be influenced by various factors. Knowledge of spoken language includes the ability to listen to engaging and expressive conversations. Meanwhile, knowledge of written language involves reading and the ability to express oneself through writing (Prasanti & Fitriani, 2018).

An effective approach to developing children's communication skills can be achieved through the role play method (Sitorus et al., 2025). Role play is a component of drama play strategies in which children take on specific roles or find themselves in certain situations that are structured to promote interaction (Nugroho & Wijaya, 2025; Waroh et al., 2025). According to the theory of Piaget and Barbellnhelder (1966), role play is categorized as a form of symbolic play, where children use their imagination to represent objects and events that do not exist in reality. Through role play, children can practice language skills, express emotions, and train in constructing sentences and dialogues related to specific contexts.

Previous research has shown that role-playing activities have a positive impact on the development of communication skills. For example, a study conducted by Khairunnisa et al. (2025) found that children who actively participated in role play activities exhibited improvements in their speaking abilities and demonstrated increased confidence in interactions. A similar study by Nuryati and Rangganis (2022) also revealed that role play provides children with opportunities to develop new vocabulary and understand social rules in communication, such as taking turns in speaking and listening to others. Moreover, role-playing activities are effective in fostering empathy and understanding others' perspectives (Bodrova & Leong, 2024).

Several factors support the development of communication skills in early childhood, including: (1) Social Interaction: Interaction with parents, family, peers, and caregivers is crucial for the development of a child's communication skills. Through these interactions, children learn to recognize words, form sentences, and practice effective communication; (2) Stimulating Environment: A rich environment, such as frequent conversations between adults and children, helps children learn new words and expand their vocabulary; (3) Role of Parents and Caregivers: Parents and caregivers play a critical role in teaching children how to speak, listen, and respond effectively. Attentive parenting and open communication are essential in supporting a child's language development; (4) Engaging Educational Resources: Providing interesting books and other educational media, especially those that support communication skills such as songs, word games, or storytelling, contributes to the development of language; (5) Child's Desire to Communicate: A child's natural curiosity about the world around them and their desire to express ideas encourages faster and more effective communication learning. Additionally, communication experiences with parents and peers further help children improve their communication abilities. These factors work together to create a strong foundation for the development of communication skills in early childhood (Mawardani et al., 2025; Nur et al., 2024).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study aims to examine the effect of the role play method on improving communication skills in early childhood. To achieve this objective, the study uses an experimental design with a quantitative approach. The experimental method was chosen because it allows the researchers to observe the impact of an independent variable (the role play method) on a dependent variable (children's communication skills). The design used is an experimental design with a control group. This experimental research compares two groups: the experimental group that receives treatment with role play activities and the control group that uses traditional learning methods. The experimental group participate in role play activities, while the control group will follow conventional learning methods that are commonly applied in early childhood education institutions.

Participants

The population for this study consists of early childhood children aged 5 to 6 years enrolled in several early childhood institutions in Surabaya. The sample for the study consists of 60 children, divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Each group consists of 30 children who were randomly selected from the early childhood institutions that participated in the study. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, where children were selected based on certain criteria, such as age, educational status, and the willingness of parents to participate in the study.

Data Collection

The researchers measured children's communication skills using three instruments: direct observation of classroom interactions, teacher questionnaires assessing speaking and peer interaction, and a communication skills test designed to evaluate speaking, listening, and social engagement: (1) Direct observation: the researchers observe the children's interactions during learning activities in both the experimental and control groups. This observation includes verbal behavior, such as the ability to speak clearly, use appropriate vocabulary, and how children interact with peers; (2) Teacher questionnaires: this questionnaire is used to obtain information from teachers regarding the development of children's communication skills during the learning process. Teachers assess the progress of children in speaking and interacting with peers; (3) Communication skills test: this test, designed by the researchers, measures speaking, listening, and interaction skills relevant to children's communication abilities. The test consists of a series of tasks that children must complete to demonstrate their communication skills in various situations.

This study is carried out in three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Each stage is described in detail as follows:

Preparation

During the preparation stage, the researchers coordinate with participating early childhood institutions to inform them of the study's objectives and to obtain parents' permission for their children to participate. The researchers then develop a plan for the role-play activities and conventional methods to be used in the study. The role-play activities include various social situations, such as playing store and playing house, as well as other social interaction scenarios that involve appropriate language use.

Implementation

During the implementation stage, the experimental group participates in role-play activities for 4 weeks, with each session lasting 45 minutes. The activities are conducted twice a week, and the children are given different roles in each session. Meanwhile, the control group follows conventional learning methods that focus on passive communication instruction. The learning in the control group involves more verbal instruction from the teacher, with limited social interaction between the children.

Evaluation

After four weeks of activities, an evaluation is conducted to measure the communication skills of children in both groups. The assessment is conducted through direct observation, communication skills tests, and teacher-completed questionnaires. The results from observations and tests will be analyzed to determine if there are significant differences in communication skills between the experimental and control groups after the treatment.

Data Analysis

The data obtained analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to describe the sample characteristics and the level of children's communication skills before and after the treatment. Meanwhile, inferential analysis is used to test the study's hypothesis, which is whether there is a significant difference in communication skills between the experimental and control groups after the treatment. A t-test will be used to analyze the difference in average communication skills scores between the experimental and control groups. The t-test will examine whether there is a significant improvement in communication skills in children who follow the role-play method compared to those who use conventional learning methods.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from a four-week intervention in which the experimental group engaged in role-play activities while the control group followed conventional learning methods. The results indicate significant improvements in the communication skills of children in the experimental group.

Initial Data Description

Table 1 presents the average scores and standard deviations of communication skills in both groups before the intervention. The results indicate that both the experimental and control groups started with relatively similar levels of communication skills.

Table 1. Pre-treatment Communication Skills Scores

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental Group (Role-play)	55.3	8.4
Control Group (Conventional)	56.1	7.9

The data presented in Table 1 shows the pre-treatment communication skills scores for both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, which engaged in the role-play method, had a mean score of 55.3 with a standard deviation of 8.4. The control group, which followed conventional teaching methods, had a slightly higher mean score of 56.1 with a standard deviation of 7.9. These scores reflect the initial communication skill levels of the participants before any intervention took place.

The relatively close mean scores between the two groups indicate that both groups started with similar communication skill levels. However, the standard deviations suggest that there was slightly more variability in the communication skills of the experimental group compared to the control group. This data provides a baseline for comparison to assess the impact of the role-play method on communication skills after the treatment period.

Changes After Treatment

After the four-week intervention, the children's communication skills were reassessed. Table 2 displays the post-treatment scores for both groups.

Table 2. Post-treatment Communication Skills Scores

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental Group (Role-play)	82.5	7.2
Control Group (Conventional)	64.2	6.1

The data presented in Table 2 shows the post-treatment communication skills scores for both the experimental and control groups after a four-week intervention. The experimental group, which used the role-play method, had a mean score of 82.5 with a standard deviation of 7.2, indicating a significant improvement in their communication skills. On the other hand, the control group, which followed conventional teaching methods, had a mean score of 64.2 with a standard deviation of 6.1, showing a smaller increase in communication skills.

The mean scores highlight a substantial difference between the two groups after the treatment, with the experimental group showing a much higher mean score. The standard deviations suggest that the experimental group had slightly more variation in their scores compared to the control group, but overall, both groups demonstrated improvement. The data indicates that the role-play method was more effective in enhancing children's communication skills compared to conventional methods.

Comparison Between Experimental and Control Groups

To determine whether the differences in post-treatment scores were statistically significant, a t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. t-test Results for Post-treatment Comparison

Comparison	t-value	p-value
Experimental vs. Control Group	9.73	< 0.05

The data presented in Table 3 shows the results of a t-test conducted to compare the post-treatment communication skills scores between the experimental and control groups. The t-value of 9.73 indicates a large difference between the two groups, while the p-value of less than 0.05 confirms that this difference is statistically significant. This means that the improvement observed in the experimental group, which used the role-play method, is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The t-test results highlight a clear distinction in the effectiveness of the two approaches. The significant p-value suggests that the role-play method had a measurable and positive impact on children's communication skills compared to the conventional teaching methods used in the control

group. This statistical evidence strengthens the conclusion that the role-play method is a more effective strategy for enhancing communication skills in early childhood education.

Improvement in Communication Skills

Table 4 displays the amount of improvement in communication skills in both groups, calculated by the difference between pre- and post-treatment mean scores.

Table 4. Improvement in Communication Skills Scores

Group	Pre-treatment Score	Post-treatment Score	Improvement
Experimental Group (Role-play)	55.3	82.5	27.2
Control Group (Conventional)	56.1	64.2	8.1

The data presented in Table 4 illustrates the improvement in communication skills for both the experimental and control groups by comparing their pre- and post-treatment scores. The experimental group, which used the role-play method, showed a significant improvement of 27.2 points, increasing from a pre-treatment score of 55.3 to a post-treatment score of 82.5. In contrast, the control group, which followed conventional teaching methods, demonstrated a smaller improvement of 8.1 points, increasing from a pre-treatment score of 56.1 to a post-treatment score of 64.2.

These differences in improvement clearly show that the experimental group experienced a much larger gain in communication skills compared to the control group. The experimental group's higher improvement indicates that the role-play method had a more pronounced effect on enhancing communication abilities. Conversely, the more modest improvement in the control group suggests that the conventional methods were less effective in fostering significant development in communication skills.

Improvement by Communication Skill Aspect

In addition to the overall score, the researchers analyzed specific components of communication skills: speaking ability, listening ability, and social interaction. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Improvement by Aspect of Communication Skills

Communication Skill Aspect	Experimental (Pre)	Experimental (Post)	Control (Pre)	Control (Post)
Speaking Ability	5.2	8.4	5.5	6.3
Listening Ability	5.1	8.1	5.3	6.2
Social Interaction	5.0	8.0	5.2	6.0

The data presented in Table 5 shows the improvement in communication skills across three aspects speaking ability, listening ability, and social interaction—comparing both the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, the pre- and post-treatment scores reveal a noticeable increase in all three aspects. Speaking ability improved from 5.2 to 8.4, listening ability increased from 5.1 to 8.1, and social interaction rose from 5.0 to 8.0. These improvements are consistent across all aspects of communication skills, indicating significant gains following the role-play intervention.

In comparison, the control group showed smaller improvements across the same aspects. Speaking ability increased from 5.5 to 6.3, listening ability from 5.3 to 6.2, and social interaction from 5.2 to 6.0. Although the control group did experience improvements, the magnitude of the change was much smaller than in the experimental group. This suggests that while both groups showed progress, the role-play method led to a more substantial improvement in all aspects of communication skills.

Increase in Children's Confidence

The researchers observed changes in children's self-confidence as part of the outcome. Table 6 summarizes the comparison. The data presented in Table 6 demonstrates a clear difference in the improvement of children's confidence between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group showed a substantial increase in confidence, with a pre-treatment score of 4.3 rising to 7.8 post-treatment, resulting in an improvement of 3.5 points. This indicates a significant boost in confidence

over the course of the intervention. In contrast, the control group experienced a more modest increase, from 4.4 to 5.5, reflecting an improvement of only 1.1 points.

Table 6. Change in Children's Confidence

Group	Confidence (Pre)	Confidence (Post)	Improvement
Experimental Group	4.3	7.8	3.5
Control Group	4.4	5.5	1.1

These results clearly show that the experimental group, which participated in the role-play method, had a more pronounced improvement in confidence compared to the control group. The larger increase in confidence in the experimental group suggests that the role-play intervention was more effective in building children's self-assurance, which may have contributed to the observed improvements in their communication skills.

DISCUSSION

In addition to speaking, listening and social interaction skills also showed significant improvement in the experimental group. Based on the observations during the study, children involved in role play were more capable of listening attentively when their peers spoke, and they were able to respond in a more appropriate and relevant way. Good listening skills are crucial in communication because listening is the foundation for understanding the message being conveyed by others (Hamzah et al, 2023). Role play activities provide children with opportunities to practice listening and understanding the perspectives of others in the context of play.

Social interaction skills in the experimental group also showed better results. Children who participated in role play were more open in interacting with their peers. They not only learned to speak and listen but also learned how to cooperate, share roles, and negotiate while performing tasks within the play. This aligns with the findings of Meilasari & Diana, (2022), who stated that role play can strengthen children's social skills because they engage in decision-making and social interactions involving both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Self-confidence Improvement

One notable finding in this study was the significant increase in self-confidence observed among children in the experimental group. The data showed that children who participated in role play activities demonstrated greater confidence in speaking not only in front of their peers but also in front of adults. This rise in self-assurance is critical, as confidence plays a pivotal role in enabling children to express their thoughts clearly, participate actively in group discussions, and overcome anxiety when communicating in social contexts.

This finding aligns with previous studies that highlight the link between play-based learning and the development of self-confidence in early childhood. Rampeng et al. (2025) found that role play can create a psychologically safe space where children are more willing to engage verbally because they are speaking through characters, which reduces the fear of making mistakes. This process helps children internalize confidence and carry it into real-world communication scenarios. Likewise, Maulana et al. (2018) emphasized that engaging in imaginative play improves children's emotional readiness and public speaking comfort, especially in early childhood educational environments.

In the Indonesian context, Purnama et al. (2022) noted that creative storytelling and role-based activities empower children to become more expressive and self-assured during classroom interactions. These activities shift the learning atmosphere from teacher-centered to child-centered, allowing children to take initiative and lead dialogues. This supports the findings of the current study, where confidence is not only an outcome of improved communication skills but also a driving factor that enhances children's willingness to participate and interact.

Overall, these findings suggest that fostering confidence through role play is essential to holistic communication development. Confidence enables children to engage more freely, take verbal risks, and interact with a sense of purpose. Therefore, role play should be viewed not just as a tool for linguistic development, but also as a strategy for nurturing the self-confidence necessary for effective and meaningful communication in early childhood.

Research by Rampeng et al. (2025) also supports this finding, showing that role play can increase children's self-confidence in speaking and interacting with others. Role play gives children the chance to take on various roles, which allows them to feel freer and less burdened by social anxiety (Maulana et al., 2018; Purnama et al., 2022). This is crucial in the development of communication skills because children who feel confident are more likely to actively participate in interactions and express their ideas more clearly (Saputri & Katoningsih, 2023; Simatupang et al., 2024).

Comparison with Conventional Learning Methods

The conventional learning method used in the control group did result in some improvement in children's communication skills, but the gains were not as substantial as those observed in the experimental group. The control class followed a passive instructional approach, primarily consisting of teacher-centered activities such as direct instruction, rote memorization, and worksheet-based tasks. Children in this group received information through one-way communication and were rarely given opportunities to engage in open dialogue or collaborative learning. As a result, progress in communication was limited, particularly in terms of expressive language and social interaction.

In contrast, the experimental group participated in structured role play sessions over the course of four weeks. Children were assigned various social roles—such as doctor, shopkeeper, teacher, or family member—in carefully designed scenarios that encouraged verbal interaction. Each session lasted for 45 minutes and was conducted twice a week. During the activities, teachers acted as facilitators, providing guidance, modeling conversations, and offering real-time feedback. This approach created a dynamic, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment in which children were not only encouraged to speak but also to listen, respond, and communicate ideas spontaneously in relevant social contexts.

The stark difference between the two approaches highlights the effectiveness of role play in fostering holistic communication development. As Wood (2020) states, "Active learning approaches such as role play encourage children to explore, express, and extend language through meaningful social interactions." This reinforces the idea that language development is best nurtured through participation in authentic and interactive experiences.

Similarly, Inten (2017) emphasized that "role play provides a medium for children to practice verbal communication in a safe, imaginative, and enjoyable setting." This supports the findings of the current study, where the experimental group demonstrated significant gains in speaking, listening, and social engagement. On the other hand, traditional instructional practices often hinder children's communicative initiative. Suryana, (2016) concluded that "conventional, one-directional teaching limits children's communication potential by offering few opportunities for language exploration in social contexts." The control group in this study exemplifies this limitation, as their exposure to language was restricted to listening and repetition rather than active use.

In conclusion, the role play method proved to be more effective than conventional teaching in enhancing early childhood communication skills. Its strength lies in the creation of a dialogic, interactive, and developmentally appropriate learning environment that actively engages children in meaningful language use—something that traditional methods often fail to provide.

According to (Wood, 2020), learning methods that focus on more active and participatory activities, like role play, are more likely to facilitate the development of children's communication skills. These approaches provide more opportunities for children to speak, listen, and interact in contexts that

are relevant to their lives. On the other hand, conventional learning methods tend to provide less room for children to directly practice their communication skills, which leads to more limited changes.

Implications for Early Childhood Education in Indonesia

Based on the results of this study, there are several important implications for early childhood education practice in Indonesia. First, the findings of this study show that the role play method can be effectively integrated into the early childhood curriculum to improve children's communication skills. Through role play activities, children not only learn to speak but also learn to listen, interact with peers, and develop self-confidence. Therefore, it is important for educators need to use this method more frequently in daily learning activities in early childhood settings.

Second, this study highlights the importance of creating a learning environment that is interactive and supports the development of children's social and communication skills. Educators in early childhood should adopt more active approaches, such as role play, to provide children with enjoyable learning experiences based on real social interactions. This can help children develop better communication skills and increase their self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the role-play method in enhancing communication skills among early childhood learners. Based on the results, it can be concluded that role-play has a significant positive impact on the development of these skills. Children who engaged in role-play activities demonstrated notable improvements in key areas of communication, including speaking, listening, and peer interaction. These enhancements were particularly evident in the experimental group, which participated in structured role-play sessions, as opposed to the control group that followed conventional, more passive learning methods. The findings underscore the value of incorporating interactive, play-based approaches in early childhood education to support holistic language and social development.

The role-play method provides children with opportunities to engage in more active social interactions, which allows them to practice speaking, listening, and learning how to communicate more effectively in different social situations. The increase in children's self-confidence in speaking in front of others is also one of the significant positive effects of this method. In addition, the results of this study show that conventional learning methods, which are passive, do not have a significant impact on improving children's communication skills. Therefore, this study suggests that role-play should be more widely integrated into the early childhood curriculum to support the development of children's communication skills in Indonesia.

Despite the strong empirical findings, this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the sample was limited to a small number of early childhood institutions within a single urban area, which may affect the generalizability of the results to other regions or educational contexts. Future studies should include a more diverse sample that spans rural and multicultural settings to provide a broader understanding of the method’s effectiveness. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short—only four weeks—which may not fully capture the long-term impact of role-play on communication development. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial in determining whether these improvements are sustained over time. Additionally, variations in teacher facilitation styles, classroom environments, and children's individual characteristics were not deeply explored, yet these factors may influence the outcomes of role-play interventions. Future research is encouraged to consider these variables to better understand how role-play can be optimized across different educational contexts.

In light of the findings, this study offers important implications for early childhood education practice. For teachers, the results highlight the value of integrating structured role-play activities into daily learning routines to foster children's verbal expression, active listening, and social interaction. Educators are encouraged to design scenarios that reflect both real-life and imaginative situations to

promote language use in meaningful contexts. School leaders should support the implementation of play-based pedagogy by providing training, resources, and time within the curriculum for teachers to conduct role-play sessions effectively. Moreover, policymakers and curriculum developers should consider embedding role-play more explicitly into national early childhood education frameworks to support holistic development. Lastly, researchers are encouraged to continue investigating play-based learning strategies, particularly in relation to communication, to ensure that early childhood programs remain responsive to the developmental needs of young learners.

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