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## The Role of Role Playing in Enhancing Students' Speaking Ability: A Review of Literature in Bahasa Indonesia Education

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**Kata Kunci:**

Role Playing, Keterampilan Berbicara, Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia

**Abstrak:** Keterampilan berbicara merupakan salah satu komponen penting dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia yang memiliki peran besar dalam mengembangkan kemampuan komunikasi, berpikir kritis, serta kepercayaan diri peserta didik. Namun, dalam praktiknya, pembelajaran berbicara di sekolah masih sering menggunakan metode konvensional yang kurang memberikan kesempatan bagi siswa untuk terlibat secara aktif. Kajian literatur ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas metode *role playing* dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui peninjauan sistematis terhadap berbagai sumber ilmiah, baik nasional maupun internasional, yang berkaitan dengan penerapan metode *role playing* dalam konteks pendidikan bahasa. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa metode *role playing* efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa, memperkaya kosakata, memperbaiki pelafalan, serta menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri dalam berbicara di depan umum. Selain itu, metode ini juga mampu menciptakan suasana belajar yang aktif, interaktif, dan menyenangkan sehingga mendorong partisipasi siswa secara optimal. Oleh karena itu, *role playing* dapat dianggap sebagai strategi pembelajaran yang sangat tepat untuk diterapkan dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara Bahasa Indonesia, terutama pada jenjang pendidikan dasar. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi bagi para pendidik dalam memilih pendekatan pembelajaran yang inovatif dan berpusat pada siswa.

**Keywords:**

Role Playing, Speaking Skills,  
Bahasa Indonesia Learning

**Abstract:** Speaking skill is one of the essential components of Bahasa Indonesia learning, playing a significant role in developing students' communication abilities, critical thinking, and self-confidence. However, in practice, speaking instruction in schools often relies on conventional methods that provide limited opportunities for student engagement. This literature review aims to analyze the effectiveness of the role playing method in enhancing students' speaking skills in Bahasa Indonesia learning. Data were collected through a systematic review of national and international scholarly sources related to the application of role playing in language education. The findings indicate that role playing is effective in improving students' speaking ability, enriching vocabulary, refining pronunciation, and fostering confidence in public speaking. Moreover, this method creates an active, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment that stimulates students' participation. Therefore, role playing can be considered a highly applicable instructional strategy to enhance speaking skills in Bahasa Indonesia, particularly at the elementary education level. This review is expected to serve as a reference for educators in selecting innovative, student-centered teaching approaches.

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## PENDAHULUAN

In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, speaking skills have become one of the most essential abilities that every individual must possess. Speaking is not merely a means of communication but also a medium for expressing ideas, thoughts, and emotions in various aspects of life. In today's interconnected world, communication is no longer limited to face-to-face interactions but also occurs across numerous digital platforms such as social media, video conferencing, and online forums. Therefore, the ability to speak effectively is a key factor for adapting to and succeeding in academic, professional, and social contexts (Suprihatien et al., 2024). In the midst of this dynamic era, good speaking skills also serve as an indicator of social intelligence and critical thinking ability in navigating the challenges of modern life.

In the field of education, speaking is one of the four core language skills, alongside listening, reading, and writing. These four skills are interrelated and mutually supportive in forming comprehensive language proficiency. Among them, speaking holds a particularly significant role because it requires quick thinking, vocabulary mastery, clarity of articulation, and confidence in expressing ideas orally. The teaching of Bahasa Indonesia at the elementary level plays an important role in developing these speaking skills so that students can communicate effectively and appropriately, using language as both a tool for thinking and self-expression. As the national language, Bahasa Indonesia has a strategic function in shaping students' character, thought patterns, and communication abilities (Anjelina & Tarmini, 2022).

Despite the importance of speaking skills in language education, the reality in classrooms shows that teaching Bahasa Indonesia still faces several challenges. Many teachers continue to rely on conventional teaching methods such as lectures and written assignments, which tend to be teacher-centered. Such methods make the learning process monotonous, less engaging, and fail to provide students with opportunities for active participation. As a result, students often become passive, lack the confidence to express their opinions, and rarely have chances to practice speaking in class (Sari, 2020). This situation hinders the development of students' speaking competence, even though oral communication skills are crucial for their academic and social success.

Teachers play a vital role in creating active, creative, and enjoyable learning environments. In 21st-century learning, teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also facilitators who help students construct understanding through meaningful experiences. Therefore, it is essential to employ teaching methods that promote active student participation, collaboration, and self-confidence in speaking. Elementary school students tend to enjoy play-based, movement-oriented, and imaginative learning activities. Based on these characteristics, learning methods that incorporate elements of play are highly effective in fostering speaking skills. One such method is the *role playing* approach (Rifa'i & Baihaqi, 2025).

The *role playing* method is an active learning strategy that provides students with the opportunity to learn through assuming roles in specific situations. Through this

activity, students not only practice speaking naturally and contextually but also develop critical thinking, imagination, and empathy toward the roles they perform. This method creates an enjoyable learning experience that encourages students to speak confidently in front of others without feeling pressured. Furthermore, *role playing* enables students to understand lesson content through direct experience rather than mere memorization of theory. Consequently, this method develops not only cognitive but also affective and social aspects of learning. It fosters cooperation among students, promotes responsibility, and builds confidence in expressing ideas (Nurahma et al., 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the *role playing* method in improving students' speaking abilities. Astuti (2023) reported that students who learned through *role playing* showed significant improvement in fluency and confidence compared to those taught using lecture-based methods. Similarly, Rahayu and Prasetyo (2022) found that applying the *role playing* technique in Bahasa Indonesia learning for fourth-grade students enhanced their speaking ability from a fair to a good level. Meanwhile, Wahyuni et al. (2024) stated that *role playing* not only improved speaking competence but also increased students' learning motivation and cooperative behavior. These findings suggest that *role playing* can serve as an effective alternative for improving the quality of language teaching, particularly in developing speaking skills.

However, most previous research on *role playing* has focused on its use in teaching foreign languages or in secondary education contexts. Studies specifically examining the implementation of this method in Bahasa Indonesia learning at the elementary school level remain limited. This is despite the fact that elementary school is a critical stage for developing students' language abilities and confidence in public speaking. Furthermore, earlier research has rarely explored the impact of *role playing* on aspects such as motivation, student engagement, and social interaction during the learning process. These gaps highlight the need for further investigation into the effectiveness of the *role playing* method in teaching Bahasa Indonesia to young learners.

Good speaking skills among elementary school students not only reflect their linguistic competence but also their cognitive development, social skills, and character formation. Through speaking activities, students learn to organize their ideas logically, articulate them clearly, and appreciate the perspectives of others. Hence, Bahasa Indonesia instruction should be designed to provide students with ample opportunities to practice speaking actively and creatively. The *role playing* method is an appropriate approach because it integrates elements of play and learning. Through this method, students can learn to speak spontaneously, develop linguistic proficiency, and build confidence in communication.

In the Indonesian educational context, implementing innovative teaching methods such as *role playing* is essential to transform traditional teacher-centered instruction into student-centered learning. Active student participation fosters a more dynamic, enjoyable, and meaningful classroom environment. Through *role playing*, students learn not only from textbooks but also from direct, contextual experiences. Thus, learning

Bahasa Indonesia becomes more than a theoretical exercise; it becomes a process that strengthens students' communicative competence and critical thinking skills.

Based on this discussion, the *role playing* method has great potential for improving students' speaking skills in Bahasa Indonesia learning at the elementary level. However, given the limited number of studies that specifically address its effectiveness in this context, further research is needed. The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the *role playing* method in enhancing students' speaking skills, as well as to explore its influence on students' confidence, motivation, and social interaction during the learning process. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of creative, communicative, and student-centered strategies for teaching Bahasa Indonesia and to provide practical recommendations for teachers in improving the quality of teaching and learning in elementary schools.

## METHOD

In conducting a literature review, the first step taken is to determine the topic to be discussed in this case, the effectiveness of the role-playing method in improving speaking skills in Bahasa Indonesia learning. At this stage, information is collected from various sources related to the research topic, including academic databases and online libraries, by using appropriate and specific keywords. Literature selection becomes the next essential step, in which an evaluation is carried out to identify, filter, and select works that are most relevant, recent, and supportive of the research focus. The selected literature is then analyzed to identify key findings, methodologies, and relevant results that directly relate to the main topic of the study.

Once the analytical stage is completed, the structure of the literature review is organized in a clear and coherent manner. The introduction presents the background of the topic as well as the objectives of the literature review. The reviewed sources are then organized based on specific themes or aspects related to the research focus, allowing readers to understand comparisons and contrasts from various perspectives or viewpoints. The literature review concludes with a summary that synthesizes all the research findings discussed in the previous sections of results and discussion. Finally, the compilation of a comprehensive reference list citing all research articles and scholarly works included in the review serves as an essential component of the literature review methodology.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Speaking skill is one of the most essential components in language learning because it reflects a learner's ability to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively through oral expression. In the process of education, students are expected to develop this ability not only to share information but also to express their knowledge, opinions, and reasoning clearly. According to Harianto (2020), speaking skill represents an effort to teach students in such a way that they achieve the desired learning outcomes

based on specific learning conditions. During the teaching and learning process, students must be able to convey the knowledge they possess orally, articulate logical arguments, explain problems, and offer appropriate solutions while maintaining the attention and interest of their audience. This communicative ability is not only central to academic achievement but also to the formation of confidence and critical thinking, both of which are key components of modern education.

In the context of Bahasa Indonesia learning, speaking occupies a strategic role because it functions not only as a linguistic skill but also as a means of intellectual development and social communication. However, the reality in many classrooms still shows that students often experience difficulties in expressing themselves verbally. They tend to be passive, shy, and hesitant to speak due to a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, or monotonous instructional approaches. When language learning relies heavily on teacher-centered lectures and rote memorization, students are deprived of opportunities to practice speaking naturally. This condition underscores the importance of innovative and engaging learning methods that can make the classroom more interactive and student-centered. One such method that has shown considerable promise is the role-playing method, which combines experiential learning with creativity and social interaction.

Previous research by Navarro-Espinosa et al. (2022) revealed that interactive and playful learning activities can create a more enjoyable atmosphere that encourages student engagement. A pleasant learning environment plays a significant role in stimulating students' interest in learning Bahasa Indonesia, as enjoyment reduces anxiety and fosters intrinsic motivation. When students are relaxed and motivated, they are more willing to participate in speaking activities, take risks in expressing themselves, and make mistakes as part of the learning process. This finding aligns with the constructivist theory of learning, which asserts that students construct knowledge through active participation and meaningful experience. Similarly, Pandita and Kiran (2023) emphasized that a positive classroom atmosphere directly contributes to improved speaking performance because motivation and participation are deeply interconnected. When students enjoy the learning process, they invest more effort in mastering the language and improving their fluency. Puspitoningrum et al. (2024) further found that the integration of educational games in Bahasa Indonesia instruction not only makes learning more enjoyable but also enhances students' speaking competence by fostering interaction, imagination, and collaboration.

Consistent with these studies, Jusman et al. (2023) reported that educational games designed to strengthen speaking skills in Bahasa Indonesia have consistently yielded positive outcomes. Activities such as language-based puzzles, group storytelling, and role-playing tasks were proven to enrich various dimensions of speaking proficiency. Through these playful activities, students improve their vocabulary, comprehension of context, and fluency in communication. These findings resonate with Vygotsky's concept of the *Zone of Proximal Development*, which highlights the importance of social interaction

and guided participation in language learning. When students engage in role-playing, they collaborate, negotiate meaning, and construct understanding through shared experiences, thereby internalizing linguistic structures more effectively. The teacher's role as a facilitator becomes crucial in guiding, observing, and providing constructive feedback that enhances language development.

The role-playing method, as demonstrated in numerous studies, provides a valuable approach to teaching speaking skills because it offers students opportunities to engage in real-life communication scenarios within a structured environment. Nasution et al. (2023), in their research titled *Analysis of the Application of Role Playing Method in Developing Speaking Skills in Bahasa Indonesia Learning*, found that the use of this method significantly enhanced students' fluency, confidence, and engagement. The data, collected through classroom observations and interviews, showed that students who participated in role-playing activities were more expressive, responsive, and communicative than those taught using traditional approaches. Role playing allows learners to act out roles, simulate real-life dialogues, and express emotions while speaking, which deepens both their linguistic and emotional understanding of the language. This finding aligns with the principles of experiential learning, where knowledge is constructed through direct experience rather than passive reception.

Similarly, Suhardiman et al. (2023) argued that the role-playing method represents an engaging alternative in the process of learning Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers emphasized that when students interact within simulated real-life situations, they develop practical communication skills that extend beyond the classroom. Such practical engagement helps students improve pronunciation, intonation, sentence organization, and the ability to respond spontaneously. In contrast to conventional instruction, which tends to emphasize memorization and repetition, role playing encourages learners to use the language functionally and meaningfully. This shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning reflects a broader pedagogical movement toward communicative competence and active learning. Students become the primary participants in their learning journey, while teachers assume the role of guides who facilitate the construction of knowledge through dialogue and practice.

Lustia and Liansari (2025), in their study titled *The Effectiveness of the Role Playing Method on Elementary Students' Speaking Skills*, demonstrated that role playing contributes significantly to students' oral performance by enhancing creativity, imagination, and expressiveness. The findings indicated that students who engaged in role-playing activities were able to articulate ideas more coherently and with greater confidence. This method enables learners to imitate roles, explore different perspectives, and practice public speaking in a supportive environment. Asriani (2022) supported these conclusions by noting that role playing stimulates creativity by encouraging students to express themselves through character-based interactions. When students embody a role, they not only practice linguistic structures but also develop empathy and

social awareness, as they must understand and convey the thoughts and emotions of the characters they represent.

The creative and imaginative nature of role playing makes it an especially effective method for improving speaking skills in elementary education. Children at this stage are naturally inclined toward play, curiosity, and imagination, making role playing a developmentally appropriate strategy. When students are encouraged to act out dialogues or dramatize stories, they engage their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously. This holistic involvement leads to deeper retention of language and more authentic use of vocabulary and sentence patterns. Moreover, role playing helps reduce speaking anxiety one of the most common barriers in second language learning because students become so absorbed in the activity that they forget about judgment or evaluation. As a result, speaking becomes an enjoyable and meaningful experience rather than a stressful task.

In comparison to traditional teaching methods such as lectures or textbook-based instruction, role playing offers a dynamic, participatory, and interactive learning environment. Conventional methods often position students as passive recipients of information, while role playing transforms them into active participants who construct meaning through communication. This aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the functional use of language in authentic contexts. Role playing allows students to practice initiating conversations, maintaining dialogue, and concluding interactions in a way that reflects real-world communication. Through this process, students develop both accuracy and fluency, as well as pragmatic competence the ability to use language appropriately in social situations.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are significant. Role playing offers a practical framework for integrating speaking practice with creativity, collaboration, and social interaction. Teachers who apply this method can create supportive environments that encourage students to express ideas freely, cooperate with peers, and reflect on their performances. However, implementing this method effectively requires careful planning. Teachers must design scenarios that are relevant to students' lives and aligned with their language proficiency levels. Classroom management also plays a crucial role, as each student must be given opportunities to participate and speak. Furthermore, evaluation should not only focus on grammatical accuracy but also consider fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and interactional ability.

Despite its many advantages, challenges remain in applying the role-playing method consistently across classrooms. Some teachers may lack the training or confidence to facilitate interactive learning, and in large classes, organizing role-playing sessions can be time-consuming. Additionally, assessment in speaking-focused activities can be subjective unless clear rubrics are established. Therefore, professional development programs for teachers should include training in creative language pedagogy, scenario design, and performance-based assessment. Collaboration among

educators, especially in sharing best practices and teaching materials, could help sustain the effective implementation of this method across schools.

Overall, the synthesis of previous research confirms that role playing is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing students' speaking abilities in Bahasa Indonesia learning. The consistent results from multiple studies (Nasution et al., 2023; Suhardiman et al., 2023; Lustia & Liansari, 2025) provide strong empirical support for its application, particularly at the elementary level. Beyond improving linguistic performance, role playing also contributes to social and emotional learning by fostering empathy, teamwork, and confidence. It transforms language learning into a meaningful and enjoyable experience, allowing students to use language not just for academic tasks but for real communication. In this way, the role-playing method supports the holistic development of students and aligns with the educational goals of the Indonesian national curriculum, which emphasize communication, creativity, collaboration, and character formation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the application of *the Role Playing* method is very effective in developing language skills, especially speaking skills in Indonesian learning for students. So this can be an alternative in developing language skills, especially speaking skills in students. Because of the creation of a pleasant atmosphere, it plays an important role in stimulating students' interest in learning Indonesian.

This research opens up opportunities for the continuation of the application of *the role playing* method in the context of learning other languages, both *role playing methods* in the context of learning other languages, both regional and foreign languages, to strengthen the evidence of the effectiveness of this method across languages and cultures.

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