

## Enhancing English Speaking Confidence Through Role-Play Activities: a Case Study at SD 111 Botto, Wajo Regency

Rampeng<sup>1\*</sup>, Achmad Fajar Muhammad<sup>2</sup>, Dahlia D. Moelier<sup>3</sup>, Nurwidayanti<sup>4</sup>,  
A.Rizal<sup>5</sup>

Universitas Bosowa, Makassar

**Corresponding Author:** Rampeng [rampeng@universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:rampeng@universitasbosowa.ac.id)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Role-Play, English Speaking Confidence, Young Learners

*Received :* 10, April

*Revised :* 25, April

*Accepted:* 26, May

©2025 Rampeng, Muhammad, Moelier, Nurwidayanti, Rizal :

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of role-play to enhance English-speaking confidence among students at SD 111 Botto, a rural primary school in Wajo, Indonesia. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student feedback, the qualitative case study found that role-play activities boosted student engagement, reduced speaking anxiety, and improved fluency. Despite challenges such as limited time, materials, and teacher training, the study recommends integrating role-play into the curriculum and investing in teacher development and resources to support more effective English language learning.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in English has become an essential skill for academic and professional success. English is not only the international language of business, science, and technology but also a critical tool for global communication. As a result, English proficiency has gained prominence in educational curricula worldwide, particularly in non-native English-speaking regions (Caniago & Nesa, 2024). For young learners, developing speaking confidence in English is crucial, as it lays the foundation for effective communication and fosters a positive attitude toward language learning. However, many primary school students in non-native English-speaking regions, such as Wajo Regency, Indonesia, still face significant challenges in achieving fluency and confidence in speaking English. These challenges are often exacerbated by limited exposure to English outside the classroom, traditional teaching methods that prioritize grammar and rote memorization over practical communication, and a lack of engaging, interactive activities that encourage active participation (Susanti, Putra, & Aisyah, 2022). As a result, students often struggle to express themselves confidently in English, which hinders their overall language development and can discourage them from pursuing further language learning opportunities.

The significance of enhancing English speaking skills at an early age cannot be overstated. Research has consistently shown that young learners are particularly receptive to language acquisition due to their cognitive flexibility and natural curiosity (Pinatih, 2021; Capera Conde, 2023). Unlike older learners, young children have an innate ability to absorb new languages, making early language development crucial for their long-term success. By equipping students with strong speaking abilities at an early age, educators can empower them to participate confidently in academic, social, and professional contexts later in life. Effective communication in English enables students to access a broader range of educational and career opportunities, both locally and internationally. Therefore, it is essential to address the barriers that prevent young learners from developing speaking confidence in English and to explore innovative strategies that can enhance their language skills in engaging and meaningful ways (Alvarez, 2024).

One such innovative strategy that has gained traction in language education is the use of role-play activities. Role-play has emerged as a highly effective pedagogical tool for enhancing English speaking confidence among young learners, particularly in settings where traditional language teaching methods may not fully address students' needs (Rohmiyati & Asiah, 2024). By simulating real-life scenarios, role-play allows students to practice speaking in a low-stakes, interactive environment. These activities encourage students to engage creatively with language, making the learning process both enjoyable and meaningful (Moosa, Shareefa, & Hammad, 2024). Role-play also fosters teamwork and peer collaboration, as students work together to perform tasks and communicate in English. Through these activities, learners not only improve their linguistic competence but also develop critical social interaction skills, such as negotiation, problem-solving, and active listening. Furthermore,

role-play helps reduce the anxiety that many students feel when speaking a foreign language, offering them a safe space to make mistakes and learn from them without fear of judgment (Ishak & Aziz, 2022).

In addition to enhancing language skills, role-play activities promote a shift from traditional, teacher-centered classrooms to more learner-centered, participatory environments. As noted by Habibah and Asmiyah (2022), role-play encourages authentic communication, enabling students to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts rather than simply memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. This shift to more interactive, communicative language practice aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of student engagement and active learning. Role-play, therefore, offers a compelling alternative to conventional language teaching methods that often focus primarily on written exercises or structured drills, which can be disengaging for young learners (Caniago & Nesa, 2024; Pinatih, 2021).

This study specifically focuses on the implementation of role-play activities at SD 111 Botto, a rural primary school in Wajo Regency, Indonesia. SD 111 Botto faces unique challenges in English language instruction, including limited resources, varying levels of student proficiency, and a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. Despite these obstacles, the school's educators are committed to exploring innovative teaching strategies that can make English language learning more accessible and engaging for their students. Given the resource constraints of rural schools, it is especially important to find cost-effective and scalable solutions that can be implemented in similar contexts. Role-play activities, with their emphasis on experiential learning and creativity, present a promising solution to these challenges, offering an engaging and flexible approach to language instruction (Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024).

The objectives of this study are threefold: first, to assess the effectiveness of role-play activities in enhancing speaking confidence among young learners; second, to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students during the implementation of role-play activities; and third, to explore practical solutions for overcoming these challenges. This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, involving classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student feedback, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how role-play activities affect students' English speaking confidence. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader body of knowledge on English language teaching (ELT) for young learners and offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to foster speaking confidence in their classrooms. Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of creating a supportive and interactive learning environment where students feel encouraged to express themselves without fear of judgment or making mistakes (Utami, 2023).

By demonstrating the potential of role-play activities to transform English language instruction, this study highlights the need for innovative, learner-centered approaches in ELT, particularly in rural and resource-limited contexts. The research findings will offer valuable insights for educators,

curriculum developers, and policymakers aiming to implement effective teaching strategies that enhance English speaking skills among young learners. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on how to best prepare young learners for success in a globalized world where English proficiency is increasingly essential.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Role-Play as a Pedagogical Strategy in Language Learning***

Role-play is widely recognized as an effective pedagogical method to support the development of speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Alvarez (2024) emphasizes that role-playing enhances linguistic confidence and fluency, especially among university students, by simulating authentic conversational situations. Through controlled improvisation, students are encouraged to practice language in meaningful contexts, thereby reducing fear and increasing engagement.

Similarly, Ishak and Aziz (2022) in their systematic review highlight role-play as a versatile method that improves communication skills across various ESL learning environments. The review indicates that role-play fosters student-centered learning by encouraging active participation, risk-taking in language use, and spontaneous verbal interaction.

### ***Role-Play and Student Confidence in Speaking***

Several studies have shown that role-play directly contributes to reducing speaking anxiety and increasing learners' confidence. Habibah and Asmiyah (2022) conducted a case study in a Surabaya public high school and found that students involved in regular role-play activities showed notable increases in speaking confidence. Capera Conde (2023) also identifies role-play as a strategy that improves both self-confidence and vocabulary usage, which are essential for effective oral communication.

Additionally, Subekti and Goram (2022) found that even in online learning settings, role-play helped students reduce speaking anxiety, making it a resilient approach adaptable to various instructional formats.

### ***Role-Play for Fluency and Motivation Enhancement***

Moosa, Shareefa, and Hammad (2024) explore the correlation between role-play and fluency, reporting that learners involved in role-playing tasks exhibit more spontaneous and fluid speech. This finding is supported by Caniago and Nesa (2024), who examine role-play in the Indonesian context and find it significantly enhances speaking fluency through repetitive and contextual language exposure.

Utami (2023) and Pinatih (2021) also note that role-play encourages motivation by creating a collaborative and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, where students are more willing to communicate and learn from peers. Rohmiyati and Asiah (2024) support this by emphasizing the role of motivation in language learning, stating that role-play helps align student interest with learning goals.

### ***Role-Play Combined with Multimedia and Digital Tools***

Recent studies suggest that the effectiveness of role-play can be amplified when integrated with digital tools. Susanti, Putra, and Aisyah (2022) show how combining YouTube videos with role-play activities improved students' motivation and speaking proficiency. Likewise, Ridayani and Purwanto (2024) highlight the synergistic effect of role-play and multimedia technology, which provides diverse stimuli and richer contextualization for language practice.

### ***Implications of Role-Play in 21st-Century Education***

In the context of 21st-century skills, role-play aligns well with the demand for communicative competence, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Pinatih (2021) asserts that role-play is particularly effective for modern learners, as it offers dynamic opportunities for interaction that mirror real-world communication challenges.

### ***Supporting Theories and Broader Perspectives***

The theoretical underpinnings of role-play in education can also be associated with broader psychological and behavioral concepts. Diener (2000) discusses subjective well-being, which is relevant when considering how role-play reduces anxiety and fosters positive learning emotions. This positive affect contributes to greater learner confidence and performance.

Additionally, while not directly related to language learning, studies on behavioral change and confidence building (e.g., Haerani et al., 2019; Lusardi et al., 2010; Sabri & MacDonald, 2010) provide insight into the role of self-efficacy and exposure in shaping skills and habits. These studies reinforce the idea that consistent practice and contextual learning—core elements of role-play—are essential for skill development and confidence.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate the implementation and impact of role-play activities in enhancing English speaking confidence among young learners at SD 111 Botto, Wajo Regency. Data collection methods include classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and feedback from students. Classroom observations are conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how role-play activities are implemented and to observe student participation and engagement in real-time. Teacher interviews provide insights into the challenges and strategies involved in designing and facilitating role-play activities, while student feedback highlights their perceptions of and responses to these activities. The qualitative data collected is analyzed thematically to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices. The study also considers contextual factors such as resource availability, teacher training, and classroom dynamics to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of role-play in this setting. By integrating these methods, the research aims to produce actionable recommendations for educators seeking to enhance English speaking confidence through innovative and learner-centered approaches.

## **RESULT**

This study highlights the significant role of role-play activities in enhancing English speaking confidence among young learners at SD 111 Botto. The evidence suggests that role-play not only increases student engagement but also fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel more comfortable using English.

### ***Observational Insights***

Classroom observations revealed a clear transformation in students' speaking behavior. Initially hesitant learners became more active participants as they engaged in role-play scenarios such as shopping, visiting a doctor, and self-introductions. These contexts, familiar and practical, allowed students to practice English in realistic settings, thereby reducing anxiety and increasing enthusiasm. Students showed a noticeable decrease in fear of making mistakes, which enabled them to transition from relying on scripts to improvising their dialogues. This shift demonstrates an improvement in their spontaneous thinking and speaking abilities.

### ***Teacher Perspectives***

Interviews with teachers provided further insights into the effectiveness of role-play activities. Teachers reported seeing a marked improvement in students' fluency and willingness to speak, especially among those who had previously been disengaged or shy. Role-play activities broke the monotony of traditional language drills, making learning more dynamic and enjoyable. Teachers noted that students worked collaboratively, helping each other construct sentences and correct mistakes, which promoted peer learning. Despite these positive outcomes, teachers highlighted challenges such as limited classroom time, the need for additional training in role-play facilitation, and a shortage of materials tailored to these activities. Teachers emphasized the importance of professional development to enhance their ability to facilitate role-play effectively.

### ***Student Feedback***

Students' feedback echoed these observations, with many describing role-play as their favorite part of English class. They found it enjoyable and appreciated the chance to speak in real-life scenarios. Many students reported feeling more confident and less afraid of making mistakes during the activities, with several stating that they enjoyed the interactive and playful nature of the sessions. However, some students faced challenges in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and forming sentences. This feedback highlights the need for pre-teaching vocabulary and providing sentence starters to support comprehension and active participation.

### ***Thematic Analysis and Key Success Factors***

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data identified key factors contributing to the success of role-play activities:

1. **Teacher Preparation:** Successful role-play sessions require careful planning, including selecting scenarios that match students' proficiency levels and are culturally relevant.
2. **Engagement Strategies:** The use of visual aids, role cards, and prompts helped maintain student interest and facilitated comprehension, making it easier for students to engage in the activities.
3. **Supportive Learning Environment:** A classroom culture that views mistakes as learning opportunities is essential. This approach fosters a safe space where students can experiment with language without fear of failure.

### ***Broader Implications and Recommendations***

The findings of this study underscore the potential of role-play activities to transform traditional English language classrooms into dynamic, learner-centered environments. However, challenges such as limited classroom time and the scarcity of teaching materials need to be addressed for these activities to be fully effective. Integrating role-play into the regular curriculum, rather than as an occasional activity, could amplify its benefits, making it a more consistent part of students' language development.

Moreover, teachers would benefit from additional training in facilitating role-play, particularly in adapting it to different proficiency levels and classroom contexts. Policymakers should consider investing in resources that support the integration of role-play into the curriculum, ensuring that the benefits of this teaching strategy can be sustained and scaled across classrooms.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study confirms the value of role-play in enhancing English speaking confidence among young learners. By providing a practical, engaging, and supportive environment, role-play activities not only boost fluency but also foster a culture of peer support and positive risk-taking. The findings contribute to the growing body of research advocating for experiential learning approaches in language education, offering practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance teaching and learning outcomes in English language classrooms.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has demonstrated the transformative potential of role-play activities in enhancing English speaking confidence among young learners at SD 111 Botto. The findings highlight that role-play not only engages students actively in language practice but also fosters a supportive and collaborative classroom environment where students feel more confident using English. Through practical, relatable scenarios, students were able to reduce anxiety, engage in spontaneous conversation, and improve their fluency, even those who were initially hesitant to speak.

The perspectives shared by both teachers and students underscore the effectiveness of role-play in making learning more dynamic and enjoyable.

Teachers observed significant improvements in student participation and collaboration, while students reported increased confidence and enjoyment during role-play sessions. However, challenges such as limited classroom time and the need for better materials and teacher training were identified, suggesting areas for further development.

Incorporating role-play into the curriculum as a regular practice, coupled with targeted teacher training and resource development, could maximize its benefits and ensure sustained success. The study emphasizes the importance of adopting learner-centered, experiential teaching strategies that prioritize communication, engagement, and peer learning.

Ultimately, this research contributes valuable insights into the role of innovative teaching methods in fostering English speaking confidence. It advocates for a broader implementation of role-play as an effective tool to prepare young learners for future success in a globalized world, where communication skills are crucial.

## REFERENCES

- Alvarez, C. (2024). The Impact of Role-Playing Exercises on Conversational English Proficiency among University Students: A Study in Linguistic Confidence and Fluency Enhancement. *Research Studies in English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(2), 66-74.
- Caniago, F. T., & Nesa, D. (2024). Exploring the Efficacy of the Role-Play Method in Enhancing Indonesian Speaking Skills: A Comprehensive Study in Language Education. *L'Geneus: The Journal Language Generations of Intellectual Society*, 13(1), 11-18.
- Capera Conde, V. (2023). Role play: an EFL strategy to foster self-confidence and vocabulary in oral communication.
- Habibah, J. F., & Asmiyah, S. (2022). ROLEPLAY AND STUDENTS'CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING IN ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN SURABAYA. *BOARDS OF EDITOR*, 88.
- Ishak, S. A., & Aziz, A. A. (2022). Role play to improve ESL learners' communication skills: A systematic review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(10), 884-892.
- Moosa, S., Shareefa, M., & Hammad, A. (2024). Boosting Fluency and Confidence: The Impact of Role-Play Activities on Speaking Skills of ESL Learners. *The International Journal of Literacies*, 32(1), 21.
- Pinatih, I. G. A. D. P. (2021). Improving students' speaking skill through role-play technique in 21st century. *Journal of Educational Study*, 1(2), 95-100.
- Ridayani, R., & Purwanto, M. B. (2024). Enhancing Speaking Skills Through Role Play and Multimedia Technology. *Refleksi: Jurnal Penelitian Tindakan*, 2(2), 33-43.
- Rohmiyati, Y., & Asiah, N. (2024). Exploring motivation and improving English speaking proficiency: A literature study on role-play method. *Cendikia: Media Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 14(5), 458-465.
- Subekti, A. S., & Goram, S. G. (2022). Role-play and speaking anxiety: A case study in an online English speaking class. *JLA (Jurnal Lingua Applicata)*, 6(1), 33-43.
- Susanti, D., Putra, A. S., & Aisyah, N. (2022). IMPROVING STUDENTS'SPEAKING SKILLS MOTIVATION USING YOUTUBE VIDEO AND ROLE PLAY. *JOEL: Journal of Educational and Language Research*, 1(9), 1303-1310.
- Utami, I. L. P. (2023). Enhancing English-Speaking Attitude through Role Play: A Lecturer-Teacher Collaborative Research Project. *Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies*, 6(2).
- Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.34>
- Haerani, S., Parmitasari, R. D. A., Aponno, E. H., & Aunalal, Z. I. (2019). Moderating effects of age on personality, driving behavior towards driving outcomes. *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJHRH-08-2017-0040>

- Lusardi, A., Mitchell, O. S., & Curto, V. (2010). Financial literacy among the young: Evidence and implications. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 358–380. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w15352.pdf>
- Sabri, M. F., & MacDonald, M. (2010). Savings Behavior and Financial Problems among College Students: The Role of Financial Literacy in Malaysia | Sabri | Cross-cultural Communication. *Crosscultural Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020100603.009>