THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING ROLE PLAY METHOD TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF CHILDREN AGED 7-10 AS EFL STUDENTS AT EBISIE ENGLISH COURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the efficacy of the role-playing method in improving speaking skills in children who are studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at Ebisie English Course and range in age from 7 to 10. This study aims to find out how well role play helps young EFL students in developing speaking skills, how role-play activities impact students' motivation to use English, and whether there are any challenges that might prevent role play from being used successfully in the classroom. The study uses a qualitative methodology, evaluating the effect of role play on motivation and speaking skills through observations and both teachers and students' opinions. According to research, role play greatly improves students' speaking abilities by creating a lively and attractive learning environment that also increases intrinsic motivation. In addition to improving language learning, role play also encourages social interaction and minimizes levels of stress in learners, according to the discussion of the data. This study offers a conceptual and empirical contribution by highlighting the importance of active learning methods in learning a language and providing examples of successful teaching methods for young EFL students.

Keywords: EFL education, motivation, role play, speaking skills, young students

INTRODUCTION

For students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), achieving fluency in spoken English can open a wide array of such opportunities, as academic achievements and better job opportunities. Furthermore, proficient speaking abilities contribute to overall language competence, which can improve the skills in listening, reading, and writing. Many students think their progress in language improvement and the quality of their English skills by considering how much they believe they have enhanced their speaking skills (Sayin, B. A., 2015). In learning a new language, speaking is a skill which is essential, especially for children as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who are learning English.

In this modern world, it is important to be able at communication, and if you have skill in it, your career will be succeed. Out of all the language skills, speaking is the most important one for effective communication in our global society (Rao, P. S., 2019).

It might be challenging for students aged between 7 and 10, especially to involve them in speaking activities. Children's interests are often not captured by using the conventional teaching approaches, which decrease their motivation and participation. At Ebisie English Course, like many other English learning institutions, teachers face the ongoing challenge of creating engaging and effective methods to help children develop their speaking abilities. Teaching young learners (YL) is very challenging. Teaching young students can be quite tough. Teachers need to know different teaching methods, but they also have to be skilled and good at what they do (Arifin, M. N., 2018).

Role play, which is dynamic and interactive, offers an effective alternative for providing an interesting environment where children practice speaking in real-world situations is used at Ebisie English Course as one of the methods to allow young students to practice English in a contextualized and meaningful way while maintaining their interest and motivation. Experts recommend role-play as a valuable means of active learning. It engages students who typically do not participate, makes the classroom more exciting, and helps everyone remember what they've learned better (Stevens, R., 2015).

This research examines the effectiveness of the role play technique in enhancing the speaking abilities of EFL students at Ebisie English Course. Even **English** though speaking becoming increasingly important, many young EFL struggle verbal students with communication. **Traditional** teaching methods usually don't provide enough chances for real-world speaking practice. It is essential to investigate alternative approaches, such as role play, that can promote a more engaging and supportive educational environment. The main issues which are faced by young students are having a lack of confident in speaking English, limited opportunities for real conversation practice, fear of making mistakes, insufficient vocabulary and lack of interest in speaking English.

Although earlier research has emphasized the advantages of role play in learning a foreign language, few of it have been done especially to look at how well it works for young EFL students. By investigating how role play can improve the speaking abilities of children ages 7 to 10 who study at Ebisie English Course, this study aims to fill this gap. This research has

some objectives, there are: to analyze the effectiveness of the method of role-play is in helping young EFL students, ages 7 to 10 to improve their speaking abilities; to examine the relationship between the activities of role play and the motivation of the children as young students to engage in speaking English; and to identify the challenges which influence the effective implementation of the role play method for young students.

This research is significant for several reasons, such as helping the teachers to develop better teaching methods, showing how play and language learning work together, improving teaching at Ebisie and other English courses and helping to create better speaking activities for young students.

The theoretical framework for this study consists of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes real-world activities that encourage language usage. TBLT is recognized for boosting students' confidence and fluency in language use, which makes it an important method in language learning (Willis, J., 1996); Social Constructivism which was developed by Lev Vygotsky stresses learning through interactions; social and Experiential Learning Theory which highlights that people learn best when they have experiences and react on them. Based on Kolb (1984), young students find this kind of instruction more engaging and easier to keep what they have learnt.

There are also some previous studies used to complete this research relating to role play method. Using role play helps create a comfortable space for students to practice their language skills. It lets them experiment with new words and phrases without the fear of real-life consequences (Ladousse, 2019). In EFL contexts, role

play allows children to use English in a fun and engaging way, promoting active learning and reducing the stress often associated with speaking in a foreign language. Using role play method in teaching is not only "a play" but it is structured and purposeful based on the real situations (Brown, 2018). In the context of young students, role play involves active interaction which has clear learning goal.

Related to speaking skill, Luoma (2004) in his study said that speaking skill is a skill that includes things like how well you pronounce words, how smoothly you speak, the words you know, and how you can have interesting conversations with others. Related to EFL students, Cameron (2021) said that EFL Young Students are children who live in non-English speaking countries and have limited exposure to English outside classroom. In completing the knowledge about the effectiveness of Role-Play in language learning, the study from Hidayat, R (2018) was used which said that role play also develops creativity and critical thinking, which are important for learning a new language. His study is supported by the study of Dörnyei (2005) that said role play makes learning fun and something they will remember.

Many research projects have shown that role play method can improve the students' motivation when learning a new language. When teachers use role play in their classes, more students become more interested and excited about learning the language. First, Intrinsic Motivation which is when someone enjoy the learning process because they find it interesting and enjoy it naturally, not because of external rewards or pressure. The other motivation is Social Interaction and Learning. People can make chances to learn languages for themselves and others by talking and interacting with

each other (Kääntä, L., Jauni, H., Leppänen, S., Peuronen, S., & Paakkinen, T., 2013).

This research is also conducted to know the challenges in using role play method with young EFL students, such as: limited language proficiency. Some children may have difficulties with language that make it hard for them fully understand lessons or express themselves. the teacher has to find the right way to teach each student based on what they can do. In one classroom, the students had all sorts of English abilities, which made it hard for the teacher to make sure everyone got the help they needed (Fan, H., 2020). The other challenge is lack of confidence which has related with the students' struggle to prepare the scripts with a limit ability in using English communication, when they focus too much on preparing scripts, they may not engage spontaneous speaking, which important for developing their communication skills (Fan, H., 2020). Classroom management where the teachers often have to deal with classroom management, which means keeping everyone focused and behaving well, so learning can happen smoothly is the other challenge faced by the teachers. Good classroom management is really important because it makes sure there's enough time for role-play activities and that everyone can easily switch back to the lesson afterward (Ly, C. K., 2024). The next challenge is cultural differences issue, which Child, E. (1983) said that different cultural and class groups seem to be starting to shape how kids act, what drives them, and how they get along with others, even when they are in preschool.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research looks at how using role play can help young students, aged 7 to 10,

improve their speaking skills in English at Ebisie English Course. Role playing means acting out different characters in real-life situations, which makes learning fun and engaging. Many children struggle with speaking English because traditional teaching methods can be boring and do not encourage them to practice speaking. By using role play, teachers can create a more exciting classroom environment where students feel comfortable using English and can practice their speaking skills without fear of making mistakes.

Over a period of two weeks, a small group of five students are the subject of the research. The students engaged in exercises where they practiced introducing themselves and speaking with each other in English during this period of time. In order to understand how the students felt about role play and how it affected their confidence and motivation to speak English, the study used a qualitative method for collecting data through observations and interviews. Previous studies have shown that role play can help improve language skills by allowing students to use English in a practical way, making learning more enjoyable (Hidayat, R., 2018).

Teachers at Ebisie English Course and other similar institutions find benefit in the research's conclusions. This research aims to help teachers to create better methods of teaching that keep young students' focus and participation by showing how role play can enhance their speaking skills. Teachers can create positive conditions to encourage language practice by having an in-depth comprehension of the challenges young students face when speaking English. The research underlines the importance that interactive methods of instruction like roleplaying are for increasing children's confidence as English speakers.

Five students from the Ebisie English Course's Basic 1 class participated in this study. The ages of these students were between seven and ten. Each student had different levels of ability in English; some might talk more fluently and with greater confidence than others. The variety of abilities were useful in the study's understanding of how role play might help individuals with different backgrounds and abilities in learning English. The study's specific focus helped it to provide a full understanding into how every student interacted with the role-playing activities. These five students participated in roleplaying activities that focused on selfintroduction during the course of study. The activity was important because it gave children a safe and enjoyable environment in which to practice speaking. Children could act out real-life scenarios through role-playing, which made learning more engaging and less stressful. In addition to conducting interviews to find out the students' opinions and feelings regarding the use of role play for improving their speaking skills, the study observed how the students engage with one another during these exercises. By collecting this data, the study intended to show the importance of role play for young students who had only recently started learning English. In this research, data collection conducted through interviews and observations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Each of the five students took part in a semi-structured interview following the role-playing activities. They were asked open-ended questions about their role-playing experiences by the researcher. The students discussed how they think role-playing helped them in developing the ability to speak. During the activities,

students talked about how they felt more comfortable introducing themselves or using new phrases. These interviews are crucial because they provide details about the students' individual experiences and define the ways in which role-playing affects their studies (Hidayat, R., 2018). Observations were the second method to gather data. Through the role-playing activities, the researcher made observations of the students and evaluated their ability to interact one another. The researcher was able to identify the improvements in students' speaking abilities, including the improvement of fluency or pronunciation, by seeing them in action. For example, it was recorded when a student who started out quiet began to talk more openly during role-playing. During weeks observation, the students of the Basic 1 class at Ebisie English Course learned about introducing themselves in role play activities. During these activities, students always took turns acting out different characters while practicing their selfintroductions.

A complete understanding of how role play helped young students to improve their speaking abilities was realized according to the combination of observations and interviews. While observations provided evidence of the students' improvement in speaking English, interviews gathered the students' opinions and feelings regarding what they had learned.

The procedure for this research involved several key steps to ensure that students effectively learned through role play. First, there was an introduction to role-playing. During this phase, the teacher explained what role play was and how it worked. The focus was on the theme of "introducing ourselves." The teacher guided the students on how to introduce

themselves in English, including important details like their name, age, and favorite activities. This introduction was crucial because it set the stage for the students to feel comfortable and prepared for the upcoming activities. Next, the students participated in role-play activities over a period of two weeks. Each week, they engaged in different scenarios where they practiced introducing themselves in various contexts. For example, one scenario might involve meeting new friends at school, while another could be a family gathering where they introduce themselves relatives. These activities allowed students to practice speaking in a fun and interactive way. This variety helped keep the students interested and motivated to participate. After completing the role-play activities, the next step was conducting interviews with each student. The researcher asked questions about their experiences during the role-play sessions. Students shared their thoughts on how role playing helped them improve their speaking skills and whether they felt more confident speaking English afterward. These interviews were important because they provide personal insights into the students' feelings and experiences, helping to understand the impact of role play on their learning (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). For example, a student might express that they enjoyed pretending to be someone else, which made it easier for them to speak without feeling nervous.

Throughout this process, the researcher also conducted observations during the role-play sessions. Observing students as they engaged in these activities allowed the researcher to see how actively they were involved and how well they interacted with each other. For instance, if a student who was shy at first starts speaking more confidently during role play, this change

could be noted as a positive outcome of the Observations activity. help provide concrete evidence of improvements in speaking skills and engagement levels among students (Stevens, R., 2015). This combination of interviews and observations created a comprehensive understanding of how effective a role play was in enhancing In this research, theme speaking skills. analysis was used to analyze information collected through observations and interviews. Finding important themes or patterns in the responses and reactions given by the students during the roleplaying activities was the goal of this method. Finding common opinions and feelings that the students shared about their role-playing experiences was the goal. An important theme would be identified, for example, if many students said they felt more confident following role-playing. It is easy to understand how role playing helps young students improve their speaking abilities by using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Students discussed how role-playing improved their speaking abilities through the interviews. They discussed certain occasions when they were proud to speak English or when they chose new words. The researcher found common patterns like boosted confidence, love of learning, and improved communication abilities by looking at these responses. This qualitative data offers deep understanding into the students' opinions of what they have learned and the effect of role-playing on language development (Hidayat, R., 2018). Observations also offered useful data for analysis in addition to interviews. The researcher observed how students engaged during role-playing exercises and recorded how they progress in speaking. One observation that could be connected to the subject of greater confidence was when

a previously shy student began to participate more actively in discussions. By observing students in real time, the researcher could get data of their behaviour and speaking changes which might not be gained through interviews only.

combining observations By interviews, a thorough understanding of how role play affects young EFL students will be produced. By combining these many data sources, the researcher can more clearly show how role play improves speaking abilities and encourages students to participate in more English language learning activities (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). This strategy is in line with educational research that underlines how crucial it is to collect various kinds of perspectives in order to comprehend complex learning processes.

In general, the researcher is able to make beneficial conclusions on the efficiency of role play as a teaching strategy for young students at Ebisie English Course through the use of theme analysis. By identifying the essential themes from both interviews and observations, the study aims to provide insights that can inform future teaching practices and improve language learning experiences for children (Rao, P. S., 2019).

From interviews the and the observations, it was found that there were three important themes related to the students' experiences with role-playing in English found through learning interviews, such as increased confidence, enjoyment of learning, and improved vocabulary usage. During the interview session, researcher asked those five students 3 questions related to the activities their experiences to find effectiveness of using role playing method in learning language. The results were:

Table 1. The students' response related to their confidence

Quation		D 4	Age (years	Criteria		
Question		Respondent	old)	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Are you confident	1.	Divya Viveka	7	$\sqrt{}$		
in speaking	2.	Dwi	7	$\sqrt{}$		
English?	3.	Rafa	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	4.	Gusdek	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	5.	Agus Nanta	10	$\sqrt{}$		
2. Are you happy in	1.	Divya Viveka	7			
joining this role	2.	Dwi	7			
play activities?	3.	Rafa	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	4.	Gusdek	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	5.	Agus Nanta	10	$\sqrt{}$		
3. Do you still	1.	Divya Viveka	7	$\sqrt{}$		
remember the word used introducing yourself?	2.	Dwi	7	$\sqrt{}$		
	3.	Rafa	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	4.	Gusdek	8	$\sqrt{}$		
	5.	Agus Nanta	10	$\sqrt{}$		

The most important theme was increased in confidence. Each of the five students said that after taking part in the role-playing exercises, they felt more comfortable speaking English. One of the things they noted was that they felt more comfortable talking English in front of their classmates after practicing their introductions. This finding aligns with study by Hidayat, R.

(2018), which shows that role play can improve students' development of speaking confidence by providing an enjoyable and safe environment for practice.

Another theme that found from the interviews was enjoyment of learning. Here is the result of the reasons why they enjoyed learning English using role play method.

Table 2. The students' response related to their enjoyment

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Question	Dognandant	Age (years	Criteria		Daggar	
	Respondent	old)	Yes	No	Reason	
Are you confident in speaking English?	Divya Viveka	7	$\sqrt{}$		I like to be some one else like in the picture I choose	
	Dwi	7	$\sqrt{}$		I can speak better and I am happy	
	Rafa	8	$\sqrt{}$		It is fun to speak English	
	Gusdek	8	$\sqrt{}$		It is fun	
	Agus Nanta	10	$\sqrt{}$		It is funny	

Students said they had a great time during the role-playing exercises and that they made learning enjoyable and less stressful. One student said, "I like to be like someone else; I can speak better." The other three students said," It is fun to speak

English." And the other student said," It is funny.". Students are more likely to participate and actively engage in class when they find learning enjoyable, therefore this enjoyment is important (Stevens, R., 2015). Based on Dörnyei &

Csizér (1998) said that Engaged and enjoyable students are more likely to remember language and speak more fluently.

The third theme identified was improved vocabulary usage. When participating in the role-playing activities which was about self-introduction, those

five students said that they learned new words and phrases. Instead of saying "hello, my name is" they were likely to use "Hi, I am" and "Hello, I am". The other example, as they practiced introducing themselves, they learned words about family members and hobby too.

Table 3. The students' vocabulary usage in greeting

The phrase of greeting used	Respondent	Age (years old)	The phrase which the students used
Hello, my name is	Divya Viveka	7	Hello, my name is Divya
	Dwi	7	Hi, my name is Dwi
	Rafa	8	Hi, my name is Rafa
	Gusdek	8	Hi, I am Gusdek
	Agus Nanta	10	Hello, I am Agus

This practical application of language helps students communicate better in real-life situations (Luoma, 2004). Research by Rao, P. S. (2019) supports this idea, showing how interactive techniques like role-playing can improve young students' vocabulary development.

Based on these findings suggest that role play is an effective method for helping young EFL students develop their speaking skills. Teachers can increase their students' motivation and engagement by providing an enjoyable and supporting environment for them to practice speaking English (Cameron, 2021).

In order to practice speaking in a lively and interactive way, students were taking turns introducing themselves and asking questions while playing their parts and actively participating in discussions. Students may use English in real-life situations, which makes this interaction important to language development. These important findings were discovered while watching the Basic 1 class's role-playing activities. The study by Stevens, R. (2015) mentioned that role play can make

classrooms more exciting and encourage students who usually do not participate to join in.

Another important finding was that pronunciation and students' fluency improved significantly as they practiced speaking in various contexts. For example, students became more comfortable with the language when they introduced family members or met new friends, which made it easier for them to speak clearly and students repeated their easily. As introductions and responses during role play, they learned how to express themselves more effectively in English.

Furthermore, the observations showed role-playing created an ideal environment for students to improve their skills in public speaking. Many students who were concerned or embarrassed at first started to speak up more as they participated in the activities. This reduction in anxiety is essential for young students, as it encourages them to participate actively and build their confidence in speaking English. It showed that Social skills and teamwork were encouraged by the interactions between students during roleplaying. Students engaged with one another and helped one another with their language practice when they collaborated in pairs or small groups. This collaborative aspect of learning is important because it helps students learn from each other and feel more connected in the classroom (Kääntä et al., 2013). Students who interact with their peers not only become more proficient speakers but also create social bonds and friendships that enrich their educational experience in general.

In conclusion, students were actively involved, enhanced their fluency and pronunciation, were motivated in a less uncomfortable environment, and developed social skills through teamwork, according to observation insights from role-playing activities. These results imply that role play is a useful teaching strategy for helping young EFL students at Ebisie English Course to improve their speaking skills while having fun during the process of learning (Hidayat, R., 2018).

Although the majority of the response was good, there were certain difficulties with teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to young students, ages 7 to 10, which could have an impact on their speaking abilities. These are the primary obstacles to learning English on the Ebisie English course, along with how they relate to this age group, such as Limited Vocabulary. It means that it might be challenging for several students, especially in these ages, to describe their ideas clearly because of their limited language. Students frequently struggle to use new words correctly and have a limited vocabulary. Students often mispronounce sentences, spell them incorrectly, and have difficulty understanding complex terms, according to this research. Because they might not be able to develop sentences without the use of resources like dictionaries, their limited vocabulary can make it difficult for them to communicate effectively. In learning a language, knowing more vocabulary is really important because it is the basic building block that helps you understand and use it effectively (Rosyada-AS, A. & Apoko, T. W., 2023).

The next challenge is nervousness, which means that some students initially feel nervous about performing in front of their peers. It means that among young students, nervousness is another common problem. Speaking in front of others makes many people nervous or shy, which keeps them from engaging in speaking activities. But research shows that confidence has been strengthened by practice. Roleplaying, for example, allows students to act out fun scenarios without worrying about making mistakes. That's why the role of the teacher in understanding the students' habits in creating the condusive learning process is important (Alawiyah, B. A., & Efransyah., 2024).

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the research, the role-play method is highly effective in helping younger students of English as a foreign language (EFL) improve their speaking abilities. During role-playing, students act out different situations, which makes speaking practice enjoyable and interesting. This practical method allows students to use their language skills in reallife situations, which helps them keep and use what they have learned. Increasing students' confidence is one of the most significant advantages of role-playing. Speaking in English makes a lot of young students nervous, especially when they are around their peers. But when individuals engage in role-playing activities, they often feel more confident and are more motivated to speak up. Children are more likely to engage in active participation in class when they feel more confident about their speaking abilities.

The fact that students' vocabulary usage has improved is another significant conclusion from this research. Students can learn new words and phrases in the real-life environment through role-playing. Research by Hidayat, R. (2018) supports this idea, showing that students are better able to remember and use new words correctly later on when they learn them in context. Therefore, role-playing is not only a fun way to study but also a useful tool for improving your vocabulary.

The findings of our study, considered as a whole, emphasize the value of interactive teaching strategies like role-playing in language learning. By creating an enjoyable environment where students may practice speaking without worrying about making mistakes, teachers can help their students develop into more competent and confident speakers. As we continue to investigate successful teaching methods for young English as foreign Language students, it becomes clear that role-play is important for improving their confidence and competence in the language.

According to the study, the Ebisie English Course's young students learn well through role-playing. It makes studying more engaging and enjoyable by enabling students to role-play various situations. Role-playing allows students to practice speaking English in an enjoyable environment, which encourages them to use the language actively rather than just repeating or listening to what they hear. They become more engaged as a result, and they keep the material better. Teachers can do some activities related to real-life situations, like introducing themselves or ordering food. This connection helps students see how their learning applies to everyday life. They learn how communicate effectively in social situations and improve their speaking abilities by role-playing in similar situations. The interactive method motivates students to participate more actively in class and makes learning English feel valuable. Many children feel shy when speaking in front of others, but role play makes it easier and more enjoyable to practice without the stress of formal tests. As they get comfortable acting out different roles, their confidence increases. It means that role playing also improves confidence among young students. Teachers can help students develop their confidence and speaking skills by creating an engaging and encouraging learning environment. Roleplaying is an effective method to improve language learning while also making it enjoyable for children.

In conclusion, the use of role play in the Basic 1 class at Ebisie English Course creates a love of learning in young students, in addition to improving their speaking abilities. Through enjoyable exercises like self-introductions, teachers can emphasize practical communication while providing an enjoyable environment for students to develop their language and confidence. According to this study, interactive teaching strategies are crucial for young students because they help them develop a solid foundation in English as they progress through the language.

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