

## Language Development and Building Character Early Children through Role Playing Method

Sesti Novalina<sup>1</sup>, Khairul Anwar<sup>1</sup>, Ria Maharani<sup>2</sup>, Dewi Suryani<sup>1</sup>, Diana Sari<sup>1</sup>, Rizki Hariandi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Agama Islam Tebo Jambi, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Ma'Arif, Indonesia

 [alkhair250@gmail.com](mailto:alkhair250@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explain the role-playing method in the process of language development and building children's character from an early age. Role playing is expected to be able to have an effect on the early childhood education process so that it contributes to the control of early childhood education in Indonesia. References are obtained through literature review in order to obtain sources related to the data needed for analysis and then conclusions. Role playing is able to develop language and build character, through the roles played by children it is easier to interact and have the opportunity to play various kinds of characters so as to provide appropriate learning to build character so that they are able to directly differentiate between good and bad roles. The rampant actions of children against parents, teachers and bullying and the lack of maximum implementation of character education values in children is the background for research and is a special concern and must be immediately taken seriously by educators.

**Keywords:** Language Development, Role Playing Method Building Character Children

### ARTICLE INFO

*Article history:*  
Received  
August 31, 2023  
Revised  
December 26,  
2023  
Accepted  
January 08, 2024

Published by

ISSN

Website

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CV. Creative Tugu Pena

2774-4299

<https://attractivejournal.com/index.php/bse/>

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### INTRODUCTION

The impact of a lack of character on children can be seen from the rampant bullying in the school environment, children's lack of sympathy and empathy for other people, dishonesty and disrespect and even disrespect for older people and peers (EBSCOhost | 101427249 | *No Child Left Behind and the Teaching of Character Education*, n.d.; Jhon et al., 2021). The sad thing is that news about child delinquency appears almost every day, both on social media and newspapers, where the victims and perpetrators are mostly children and teenagers (*A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s - James Gilbert - Google Buku*, n.d.; *Childhood Victimization: Violence, Crime, and Abuse in the Lives of Young People - David Finkelhor - Google Buku*, n.d.). Role playing is able to develop children's social and speaking skills through the characters they choose to play (Agustiawati, 2017; Hamzah et al., 2023). Role playing is an activity that can develop important aspects in children's development, including the development of children's social emotional stimulation. Vigotsky's theory states that role playing is a way for children to think and solve problems (Latif et al, 2013).

Role playing is a game that is played through the role of characters, objects and plants and animals (Nugraha and Rachmawati, 2011). This opinion can be analyzed that role playing is an activity of playing while learning where children are free to imagine, free to become a character or something that the child wants so that children learn to understand the causes and effects of what they are acting out. This is what makes the author interested in conducting research, so that through in-depth research the root of the problem and solutions can be found in building children's character, especially through role-playing methods and its relation to early childhood language development.

The role-playing method involves children directly acting out the characters in the story being acted out. In this way, children are directly involved in responding emotionally, such as communicating and responding to a condition (Chesler & Fox, 1966; *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performing Art - Daniel Mackay - Google Buku*, n.d.). Through the roles that children play, they are able to feel and be directly involved with the events that are being played, this is where the role of educators is to provide an understanding of each role that children play. It is best if the role played is an event that is close to the child's daily life. The teacher perfects the child's language and vocabulary according to the role. The most effective language ability of children is speaking, the role playing method can stimulate children's speaking abilities, this is because role playing has elements of communication and interaction so that relationships are formed as an effort to support language skills and build character. Role playing is the act of imitating the character and behaviour of someone different from the child's own self. When playing roles, children act and speak as if they are characters from various professions in the real and fictional world, even characters from the child's imagination (Altunışık Director & Margaret M Sönmez, 2015; Andersen & Schoenau-Fog, 2015). For children, becoming an adult is a fun thing, this is why children really like playing roles according to children's imaginations (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). If imagination continues to be sharpened, it will really help improve children's language skills, where when they act as other characters, children automatically speak like the characters they play, with the help of the child's teacher, they can compose sentences correctly and with the right intonation so that children's communication skills are also honed, they enjoy the learning process, then they play. The role of fostering empathy through the role of each child where during role play the child will pretend in different scenarios, situations like this make the child try to interact with other actors through movement, tone of voice, choice of words and facial expressions (Geiger et al., 2016; Mcdaniel et al., 2010).

Character Building of children from an early age is a conscious effort by educators who are expected to be able to overcome the problem of children's character deficiencies, where education influences character so that and the responsibilities of educators at school, every human being needs education considering the development of the times from time to time (Lapsley & Narvaez, n.d.). If it is not balanced with education, then as humans they will experience lagging behind in both quality of life and information. Character influences human life, people with character are needed rather than smart people, where people with character are better at placing themselves and socializing with the environment. Methods are part of an activity strategy as well as a tool to achieve activity goals. The method is chosen based on the activity strategy that has been selected and determined. A method is a way, which in its operation is a tool to achieve activity goals.

Through role playing children will learn to use the concept of roles, be aware of different roles and think about their own behavior and the behavior of others (Waskul & Lust, 2004). This role playing process provides life examples of human behavior which are useful as a positive means for children to:

1. Explore their feelings
2. Acquire inspiration and understanding that influence attitudes, values and perceptions.
3. Develop skills and attitudes in solving problems.
4. Understand lessons in various ways (Daniau, 2016;

Friedrich & Stein, 1975; *The Role of Play in Human Development* - Anthony D. Pellegrini - Google Buku, n.d.).

Character education, which is currently the main issue in education, is part of the process of forming the morals of the nation's children (Pritchard, 1988). Character education does not only start from basic education to higher education, but character education should start from early childhood where children are not yet familiar with the outside world (Hidayati et al., 2020; Tyas et al., 2020). Building a child's character must start from the smallest scope, namely starting from the family sphere (Berrueta-Clement & Weikart, 1984; *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* - Paul Tough - Google Buku, n.d.; Ismayyah et al., 2022). Making students intelligent is not enough in the world of education (Kinshuk et al., 2016). There is something more important, namely building students' character starting from an early age (*Building Resilient Students: Integrating Resiliency Into What You Already ...* - Kate Thomsen - Google Buku, n.d.). Early development and education of children in the family is a very basic momentum. Religious education, character, etiquette, and reading-writing-numeracy given early at home and the example of both parents will shape the child's basic personality and self-confidence which will color the next journey in life (*Digital Literacies for Learning* - Google Buku, n.d.; Verhoeven, 1994). To convey moral messages as a precursor to the formation of children's character at an early age, a medium or tool called language is needed (Hogan, 1973). Language as a system of sound symbols used to communicate and convey social messages from speakers also has a very important role because it is an agent that spreads positive viruses towards children's character and culture (*Language, Culture, and Communication: The Meaning of Messages* - Nancy Bonvillain, Bard College at Simon's Rock - Google Buku, n.d.; *Messages, Signs, and Meanings: A Basic Textbook in Semiotics and Communication* - Marcel Danesi - Google Buku, n.d.).

The Ministry of National Education, Director General of Early Childhood Education, Non-formal and Informal (PAUDNI) (Directorate of PAUD: 2011) issued guidelines for Character Education for Early Childhood which explains: in early childhood education character values which are considered very important are introduced and internalized. Their behavior includes love for God Almighty, honesty, discipline, tolerance and love of peace, self-confidence, independence, mutual help, cooperation and mutual cooperation, respect and courtesy, responsibility, hard work, leadership and justice, creative, humble, cares about the environment, loves the nation and the Motherland (Achadah et al., 2022; Widayati & Elizar, 2017). Currently, the growth and development of character education from an early age has become a new hope as stated in RI Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in Kindergarten as part of the formal PAUD institution (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; "Positive Youth Development in the United States: History, Efficacy, and Links to Moral and Character Education," 2008).

One effort to maximize character values in early childhood is role playing, where role playing as a method of language development is closely related to the child's character. When playing roles, children take advantage of situations, talk and act to produce situations both in real life and in the child's imagination.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a library research approach through various sources. According to Ajat Rukajat, literature study is a study that is used as material in obtaining theoretical data through searching for systematic and written information from experts so as to broaden thinking horizons (Rukajat, 2018). Library research aims to collect data and information through journals. Apart from that, data found through library research can become the main basis and tool for researchers (Mardalis, 2016). Library research or library study is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and taking notes and processing research materials (Zed, 2008). Research is research

conducted solely based on written work, including research results both that have been published and that have not been published (Amin, 2012). Library research is a form of structured investigation using certain methods, rules and techniques (George, 2008). In this research, researchers collect data from various articles, books and other sources that have accuracy in the information that will be quoted and analyzed by researchers. This literature study is carried out by describing the truth from various reference sources and then providing assessments and criticisms, conclusions and suggestions regarding the events obtained.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of writing this article is to find out how the process of building the character of early childhood through the role-playing method as language development influences the way young children interact. This is because young children are great role models, therefore this golden opportunity is used to invite young children to directly act out the characters that will be played. The role playing method can also make children participate more in the learning process, as well as provide good feedback for children. According to Dheini, role playing in the learning process is shown as an effort to solve problems (self, social) through a series of acting actions. Playing roles can train children to think critically, care about other people, and learn to understand other people, always be patient when waiting their turn, and always be responsible for their duties. Therefore, this role-playing method is very appropriate to apply to shape character in children. Role playing is not only used for interactive teaching in class but can also stimulate students in real life situations (Dela Octavia Ayuningtyas, Wulandari et al, 2019). Role play is one of the prominent teaching techniques for the teaching of speaking skills. It refers to all kinds of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom (Penny, 2006).

Character is also a way of thinking and behaving that is characteristic of each individual to live and work together, whether within the family, community, nation or state. Individuals with good character are individuals who are able to make decisions and are ready to take responsibility for any consequences of the decisions they make. Character in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (1991) is a mental, moral or ethical nature or characteristic that differentiates a person from others; character; character. Character is the value of human behavior related to Almighty God, oneself, fellow humans, the environment and nationality which is manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture and customs.

Character consists of 3 (three) interrelated parts, namely: knowledge about morals (moral knowing), feelings (moral feeling), and moral behavior (moral behavior). Good character consists of knowing the good (knowing the good), loving or desiring the good (loving or desiring the good), and doing good (acting the good) (Thomas Lickona in Megawangi, 2007). Therefore, according to Megawangi, the way to form a good character effective is by involving these three aspects. Moral knowing is an important thing to teach which consists of 6 (six things), namely: a) awareness (moral awareness, b) knowing moral values (knowing moral values, c) perspective taking, d) moral reasoning, e) decision making, and self-knowledge. (Lickona, 1992 in Megawangi, 2007).

Early childhood is a child who has just been born until the age of 6 years. Early age is the age where children experience rapid growth and development. Early age is referred to as golden age. This age is a very determining age in the formation of a child's character and personality. The legal basis related to the formation of children's character can be linked to Early Childhood Education (PAUD). In Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, stated: 1). Early childhood education is held before the basic education level, 2). Early childhood education can be carried out through formal, non-

formal and/or informal education channels, 3). Early childhood education in the form of formal education in the form of kindergarten (TK), raudatulathfal (RA), or other equivalent forms, 4). Early childhood education through non-formal education takes the form of play groups (KB), child care centers (TPA), or other equivalent forms and 5). Early childhood education through informal education takes the form of family education or education organized by the environment. This role-playing activity was carried out by the Prophet Muhammad SAW with his grandchildren, namely Hasan and Husen. Where Hasan and Husen played while riding on their Prophet's back as if they were fighting as horses (Imam Musbiin, 2010). From this explanation it can be concluded that role playing can build independence which is able to determine attitudes towards the game the child chooses.

The educational process not only provides cognitive values and skills to a child, but can also instill values that should be possessed in social life and be able to overcome problems faced wisely and judiciously (*Thinking and Learning Skills: Volume 2: Research and Open Questions - Google Buku*, n.d.). The values in question are ethical, moral or moral values. The term ethics comes from the Greek word ethos, in the singular form which means custom, in the plural form, ta etha, which means custom. (Lubis, 2009). Ethics according to Schumann in Lubis (2009) is more rooted in a person's disposition and character. Ethics is an expression or statement of what is hidden in the heart as well as determining real behavior towards others. The term "Ethics" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (1990) means the science of good and bad, about moral rights and obligations (akhlak), a collection of principles or values that are relevant to morals, and values regarding right and wrong held by a group or society.

## CONCLUSION

The role playing method influences the process of language development and builds character in early childhood. It is hoped that the role playing method can be applied by teachers with roles that become role models in children's daily activities, this was exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad as a role model in the world. The educational process is something that needs attention in its implementation so that the goals of education are achieved. Education is not just about making students get good grades, but no less important and main is making students have character and that starts from an early age. Teachers are advised to use the role playing method because apart from being able to develop children's language, it also really helps make it easier for children to develop social emotional intelligence.

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