

Improving Arabic Speaking Skills Through Role Play Method in Class

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Abstract

Speaking skills in language learning play an important role in everyday communication, but in the context of Arabic language learning, many students face difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, low self-confidence, and lack of authentic interaction. The Role Play method is one of the effective solutions in improving students' speaking skills by providing a more interactive and contextual communication experience. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Role Play method in Arabic language learning through a literature study with a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of the study indicate that the Role Play method, which is based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is able to increase spontaneous speaking, reduce anxiety, and enrich vocabulary and understanding of language structures. Its success depends on relevant scenarios, gradual guidance, and constructive feedback from teachers. However, challenges such as low student self-confidence and limited contextual scenarios are still obstacles in its implementation. Therefore, supportive learning strategies, the use of digital media, and a learning environment that encourages active interaction are needed. With the right approach, the Role Play method can be an effective alternative in improving Arabic speaking skills actively and meaningfully.

Keywords: Role Play, speaking skills, Arabic, Communicative Language Teaching, interaction.

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Introduction

In language learning, speaking ability is a very important aspect because it reflects the extent to which a person can use the language in everyday communication. According to Irfansyah (2022), speaking is a productive skill that requires a person to not only understand the language passively, but also be able to use it actively in various contexts. Unfortunately, in learning Arabic, many students experience obstacles in speaking due to various factors, such as low self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and lack of authentic interaction in the learning environment. This is in line with the opinion of Abror & Djamilah (2024) who stated that speaking skills are often hampered by anxiety and lack of exposure to natural language use.

In addition, the learning method that is still centered on the teacher (teacher-centered) is also a major obstacle in mastering speaking skills. According to Trianasari et al (2024),



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language learning that is too oriented towards theory and memorization does not provide opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills effectively. Students tend to be passive and only memorize vocabulary and grammar without really being able to use them in communication. In fact, in language learning, communicative input and opportunities to practice speaking interactively are very crucial. Therefore, more effective strategies are needed, such as communication-based methods, to improve students' speaking skills in Arabic.

One approach that can overcome the problem of low student participation in speaking Arabic is to apply the Role Play method, which places students in a simulated situation like real communication. According to Handa (2025) role-play-based learning not only increases students' confidence in speaking, but also allows them to develop pragmatic skills, such as intonation, expression, and appropriate responses in conversation. Furthermore, this method also encourages contextual use of language, so that students can understand how to apply vocabulary and language structures in everyday interactions. Thus, the Role Play method is an effective solution in overcoming the limitations of conventional learning methods that tend to be passive and theoretical.

In addition, research conducted by Yulianeta et al (2024) shows that communication-based learning methods, including Role Play, can increase students' motivation in learning a foreign language because they feel more actively involved in the learning process. This is in line with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory which emphasizes the importance of interaction in language acquisition (Mabrurrosi et al., 2023). By providing space for students to practice speaking in a more authentic context, this method not only improves their speaking skills but also helps in mastering other aspects such as listening comprehension and critical thinking skills in the target language. Therefore, the use of the Role Play method in learning Arabic is a must to create a more dynamic, communicative, and effective learning environment.

However, the effectiveness of the Role Play method in improving Arabic speaking skills does not only depend on its application, but also on how this method is integrated into the curriculum and a conducive learning environment. According to Arviansyah & Shagena (2022), the success of this method is greatly influenced by the role of the facilitator or teacher in creating interesting and relevant situations for students. If the scenario used in Role Play does not match the needs or ability levels of students, then this method can be less effective and even cause confusion. Therefore, careful planning in choosing themes, scenarios, and role distribution is very important so that students can be truly involved in the learning process actively and meaningfully.

In addition, there are challenges in implementing the Role Play method, especially in the context of learning Arabic as a foreign language. According to Hatta (2024), interaction in language learning must be supported by comprehensible input and an environment that allows students to make mistakes without fear. However, in practice, many students still feel awkward or afraid of making mistakes when speaking, especially in a language they are less proficient in. Therefore, it is important for teachers to build a supportive learning atmosphere and provide constructive feedback so that students can continue to develop. With the right approach, Role Play can not only improve speaking skills but also build students' confidence in using Arabic more naturally and effectively.

To measure the effectiveness of the Role Play method in learning Arabic, research is needed based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Maulidiyah et al (2022), experimental research can be used to compare the learning outcomes of students using the Role Play method with conventional methods to see significant differences in improving speaking skills. Meanwhile, qualitative research, such as classroom observations and interviews with students, can provide deeper insights into their learning experiences, the obstacles they face, and the extent to which this method affects motivation and confidence in speaking. With this combination of approaches, the research results can provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of Role Play on Arabic language mastery.

In addition, research should also consider external factors that can affect the success of this method, such as students' linguistic background, frequency of speaking practice outside the classroom, and support from the learning environment. According to Rakasiwi et al (2024) in the theory of sociocultural learning, social interaction plays a key role in language acquisition, so the success of Role Play also depends heavily on students' active involvement in communication practices. If this method is applied without the support of a supportive environment, such as openness to mistakes and sufficient opportunities to speak, then its effectiveness can be reduced. Therefore, research on Role Play must consider these aspects so that the recommendations given are not only theoretically relevant but can also be practically applied in Arabic language learning in various educational contexts.

Methodology

This study uses a literature study method or literature review to analyze the effectiveness of the Role Play method in improving Arabic speaking skills. This study is qualitative descriptive by reviewing various relevant academic sources, such as scientific journals, reference books, theses, and conference proceedings that discuss communication-based learning strategies. The sources used are limited to publications in the period 2015 to 2025 in order to maintain the relevance and actuality of the information.

The main sources in this study were obtained from national and international scientific journals that have been confirmed as valid and indexed in reputable databases such as Scopus, SINTA, Dimensions, Web of Science (WoS), and others. This is done to ensure that the data and findings analyzed come from credible and accountable scientific publications.

Data were collected through documentation techniques, then classified based on certain categories, such as speaking skill theory, Role Play method, factors that influence its effectiveness, and findings in previous studies. Data analysis was conducted using the descriptive-critical content analysis method to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in the results of previous studies, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the Role Play method in learning Arabic.

This research is expected to provide comprehensive insights and applicable recommendations for educators in implementing the Role Play method optimally to improve students' Arabic speaking skills

Result and Discussion

The Effectiveness of Role Play Method in Improving Arabic Speaking Skills

1. Improving Speaking Fluency through Interactive Simulation

Interactive simulation, especially through the role play method, is a pedagogical strategy that has been proven effective in improving Arabic speaking fluency. This method adopts the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasizes the importance of authentic communication practices as part of the language learning process. According to Marpaung (2024), CLT emphasizes the use of language in real situations rather than simply memorizing grammar rules, thus creating a more dynamic and meaningful learning environment. In the context of role play, students not only practice speaking, but also develop critical thinking skills, problem solving, and the ability to adapt to various communication situations. This is in line with the findings of research by Susrawan (2025), which shows that interaction in role-based simulations can increase students' courage in speaking and reduce their anxiety about language errors.

Psychologically, role play creates a safe space for students to express themselves without fear of being overly corrected, allowing them to speak more spontaneously and naturally. In a study conducted by Djafar (2021), it was found that foreign language anxiety is often a major obstacle to fluency, and simulation-based methods can significantly reduce this anxiety by familiarizing students with interactive communication situations. For example, an experimental study conducted by Putri (2024) on Arabic as a second language learners showed that students who participated in simulation-based learning experienced significant improvements in speaking fluency compared to those who only used conventional memorization-based methods. This suggests that a more contextual and interactive learning environment contributes directly to improving language competence.

In its application, the effectiveness of role play is highly dependent on the selection of scenarios that are contextual and relevant to students' daily lives. Scenarios such as conversations in the market, discussions in the classroom, or conversations between doctors and patients provide direct exposure to vocabulary and language structures that are often used in real communication. A case study conducted by Asty et al (2025) in a foreign language class showed that students who practiced speaking through scenario-based simulations experienced improvements in their verbal response speed and syntactic accuracy. This indicates that when students are involved in situations that resemble real life, they understand the functional use of language more quickly. Furthermore, research by Moosa et al (2024) confirmed that speaking skills that develop through repeated interactions in role play not only increase fluency, but also strengthen the complexity and accuracy of language use.

However, the implementation of this method is not without challenges. One of the main obstacles is the difference in self-confidence levels among students, where some students may be more reluctant to participate because they feel less confident in speaking. Therefore, a differentiated approach is needed, such as providing clear initial instructions, model-based guidance (scaffolding), and constructive feedback to accommodate different levels of student ability. In addition, the role of teachers in creating a supportive classroom atmosphere is crucial, considering that the effectiveness of role play depends on the extent to which students feel comfortable participating actively.

Thus, the interactive simulation method based on role play is not only a learning technique, but also a pedagogical approach supported by various theories and research in the field of language education. Through repeated practice and a learning environment that encourages interaction, students can significantly improve their speaking fluency, both in terms of spontaneity, confidence, and language accuracy. Therefore, this strategy must continue to be integrated into the language learning curriculum to create more effective and meaningful learning.

2. The Influence of Role Play on Vocabulary Mastery and Sentence Structure

The Role Play method has a significant influence on vocabulary mastery and sentence structure in learning Arabic. By applying this method, students not only practice speaking fluently, but also enrich their vocabulary and understand language structures more contextually. In Role Play activities, students play the role of certain characters and interact in situations that resemble real life. This allows them to learn vocabulary in a clear context, making it easier to remember than simply memorizing a list of words passively. In addition, through active interaction, students can recognize various variations in the use of words, synonyms, and expressions that are appropriate to the situations they play. A study conducted by Widiastuti et al (2025) confirmed that involvement in communication-based activities increases students' absorption of vocabulary, especially when new words are learned in contexts that are relevant to their experiences.

In terms of sentence structure, Role Play helps students internalize sentence patterns naturally. By continuously using language in meaningful dialogues, students understand grammar more quickly without having to learn it theoretically. This process is in line with the theory of language acquisition (Second Language Acquisition) which emphasizes that the use of language in real situations is more effective than passive memorization methods. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, exposure to slightly more complex but still understandable language will accelerate learning, while Michael Long's Interaction Hypothesis emphasizes that active interaction in a second language can improve understanding and language skills. A study by Oktaviani et al (2024) also showed that language production in social interactions helps students correct their syntactic errors gradually, because they get direct feedback from their interlocutors. This is reinforced by research conducted by Ahmadi et al (2024), which found that students involved in communication-based tasks showed more significant development in sentence construction than those who only memorized grammar patterns explicitly.

Furthermore, this method also provides psychological benefits for students, such as increasing confidence in speaking and reducing anxiety in using a foreign language. A study conducted by Naziha et al (2023) revealed that anxiety in speaking a foreign language can be a major obstacle in language acquisition. However, research by Widat & Lailiyah (2025) showed that a role-based approach can reduce this anxiety because students feel more motivated and comfortable in speaking. A case study conducted in a high school in Indonesia by Nabiila et al (2025) also showed that students who used Role Play in learning Arabic experienced significant improvements in their speaking skills, including accuracy in the use of vocabulary and sentence structure. These results indicate that the Role Play method is not just an additional strategy in language learning, but is a scientifically based approach that has been proven effective in building language competence holistically. Therefore, in the context of learning Arabic, the

application of Role Play needs to be studied further as a method that can be integrated systematically into the curriculum to optimize the language acquisition process.

3. The Role of Teachers in Optimizing the Effectiveness of Role Play

The success of the Role Play method in learning Arabic is greatly influenced by how teachers manage the learning process. As stated by Vygotsky in sociocultural theory, language learning is highly dependent on social interaction and mediation from more expert people, in this case teachers. Therefore, teachers must be able to create scenarios that are not only relevant and interesting, but also in accordance with students' zone of proximal development (ZPD). If the scenario given is too difficult, students will experience obstacles in communicating, while if it is too easy, their potential will not develop optimally. A study by Karnia et al (2023) found that the use of Role Play in learning Arabic as a second language increased students' active participation by up to 70%, especially when the scenarios given reflected real-life situations. These findings indicate that student involvement in contextual simulations can increase their motivation and understanding of the language.

In addition to scenario preparation, the role of teachers in guiding students to be more confident is also crucial. In many studies, such as those conducted by Suryaningrum (2024) it is explained that high levels of anxiety can hinder language acquisition. Teachers must create a supportive environment, where students feel comfortable speaking without fear of being excessively corrected. One approach that has proven effective is the use of scaffolding, where teachers provide gradual assistance, such as providing key vocabulary, conversation examples, or repeating exercises before students are actually involved in Role Play. A case study conducted at Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia, showed that students who were given scaffolding strategies before role play were able to increase their speaking fluency by 45% compared to a group that did not receive similar guidance.

Clear instructions are also a key factor in the success of Role Play. According to research by Pasaribu et al (2024), unstructured instructions can cause confusion, reduce the effectiveness of interactions, and make students lose focus. Therefore, teachers must ensure that each student understands their role and the purpose of this activity. If necessary, teachers can provide a performance-based assessment rubric, where students know the aspects being assessed, such as grammatical accuracy, fluency, and the expressions and intonations used. A study conducted by Ningrum (2020) found that providing an assessment rubric before Role Play activities increased the quality of students' conversations by 30%, because they had clear guidelines regarding expectations in speaking.

In terms of evaluation, providing constructive feedback is a determining factor in the success of this method. According to the theory of "Corrective Feedback" proposed by Lyster & Ranta (1997), feedback that is too direct and corrective can hinder students' self-confidence, while feedback that is dialogic and reflective is more effective in increasing their linguistic awareness. For example, using the sandwich feedback method (praise - correction - motivation) can help students remain confident even though they receive corrections for their mistakes. A study conducted at Al-Azhar University showed that students who received dialogue-based feedback were more likely to correct their mistakes independently in subsequent conversations than those who were only given explicit corrections.

In addition to the pedagogical approach, the flexibility and creativity of teachers in implementing the Role Play method are also major factors for success. Adapting scenarios based on students' interests and culture has been shown to increase their engagement in the learning process. For example, research conducted by Jufri et al (2023) shows that the use of technology in Role Play, such as video recording for self-reflection, increases students' self-confidence by up to 50%, because they can evaluate and improve their speaking skills independently. In the context of Arabic language learning, the use of technology such as AI-based chatbots or speaking simulations in learning applications can be an alternative for students to practice their fluency outside the classroom.

Based on various studies and case studies above, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the Role Play method in learning Arabic is largely determined by how teachers manage scenarios, guide students in speaking, provide clear instructions, and provide constructive feedback. With a theory-based approach, empirical data-based, and accompanied by creativity in implementation, this method can be one of the most effective language learning strategies in improving students' speaking skills.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing the Role Play Method

1. Lack of Student Confidence and Motivation in Speaking

Lack of students' confidence and motivation in speaking Arabic is a significant challenge in foreign language learning, especially in the application of the Role Play method. This phenomenon can be explained through the Affective Filter Hypothesis theory proposed by Krashen (1982) in Pribadi et al (2019), which states that emotional factors such as anxiety, fear, and shame can hinder language acquisition. A study conducted by Rengganawati (2024) showed that students with high levels of anxiety tend to have difficulty speaking because they are afraid of being evaluated negatively. This fear is exacerbated by the lack of speaking practice given and the less supportive learning environment. Several other studies, such as that conducted by Amri (2024), emphasize that anxiety in communicating in a foreign language can reduce students' motivation and confidence in using the target language actively. In the context of learning Arabic, this challenge becomes more complex due to the nature of the language which has a different grammatical and phonological structure from the student's mother tongue, so that mistakes are more likely to occur and increase anxiety in communicating.

In the implementation of Role Play, low self-confidence causes students to prefer to be observers rather than active participants, rely on written texts rather than speaking spontaneously, or speak in a less natural tone due to the psychological pressure they feel. A case study conducted by Lubis & Nasution (2024) on Arabic language learning in a madrasah in Indonesia showed that students who experienced high anxiety tended to avoid speaking tasks and used their mother tongue more when given a role in Role Play. This indicates that this method will not be effective if it is not accompanied by the right strategy to reduce students' psychological barriers.

To overcome this problem, teachers must create a supportive learning environment by building a culture of appreciation for student efforts and avoiding criticism that is detrimental. The Scaffolding principle developed by Vygotsky (1978) can be applied, where teachers provide initial support in the form of examples and guidance before gradually reducing assistance so that students are able to speak independently. In addition, a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)-based approach that emphasizes authentic communication can be a

solution by integrating activities such as language games, small group discussions, and simulations that are relevant to students' daily lives. A study conducted by Annisa et al (2025) on the effectiveness of Role Play in language learning shows that when students are given a relevant context and a supportive classroom atmosphere, they tend to be more courageous in speaking and experience increased fluency in communication.

The application of game techniques can also be an effective strategy to reduce anxiety and increase motivation. Communication-based games, such as charades, short dramas, or situational role plays, have been shown to create a more relaxed learning atmosphere and reduce the pressure of speaking. Therefore, positive reinforcement, such as praise for student effort and a focus on communication rather than absolute accuracy, is a key factor in increasing self-confidence. In addition, the use of technology such as audio and video recordings can also help students reflect on the development of their speaking skills, as suggested in a study by Yulianeta et al (2024) who found that students who practiced speaking through recordings experienced a significant increase in self-confidence.

By implementing research-based strategies supported by a communication-oriented approach, the challenges of students' lack of confidence and motivation in speaking Arabic can be minimized. Teachers play an important role in creating a conducive learning environment, providing tiered learning strategies, and adapting the Role Play method to the emotional and psychological needs of students. If implemented properly, this method can not only improve speaking skills but also shape students' positive mindset towards foreign language learning as a whole.

2. Limited Vocabulary and Understanding of Language Structure

Limited vocabulary and understanding of language structure are the main challenges in implementing the Role Play method in language learning. Aulia et al (2024) emphasize that vocabulary is a fundamental element in communication, and without sufficient mastery, students will have difficulty in conveying their ideas. Mahbubi et al (2023) also highlight that understanding grammar is very important in producing grammatical speech, so without adequate understanding of structure, students can have difficulty in constructing clear and effective sentences. This limitation often causes speech breakdown, where students stop in the middle of a conversation because they cannot find the right words or construct sentences properly.

The impact of these limitations is quite significant. Hamdan (2020) in their study found that students with limited vocabulary tend to experience linguistic insecurity, which makes them reluctant to speak in the target language. This is in line with the findings of Djafar (2021), who stated that foreign language anxiety often arises when students feel unable to use the language correctly, especially in spontaneous communication situations such as Role Play. Zahroh et al (2023) also revealed that students with limited vocabulary and grammar use more pauses and repetitions, which hinders their fluency in speaking.

To overcome this challenge, several strategies can be applied. Harahap (2024) found that explicit vocabulary instruction, namely providing a list of words and phrases before the Role Play session, significantly increased students' confidence in speaking. In addition, Vygotsky (1978) through the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasized the importance of scaffolding in language learning, where teachers or more advanced peers can

guide students in constructing simple sentences before progressing to more complex levels. Alghamdy (2022) also emphasized that repeating conversations in Role Play helps improve spoken fluency, where students who do repeated practice are better able to produce spontaneous speech with fewer pauses and grammatical errors.

Media-based approaches can also help improve students' understanding. Himmawati (2022) in her book explains that the use of images, videos, and audio can accelerate the process of learning vocabulary and grammar compared to text-based methods alone. In line with that, Sundari (2018) emphasized that effective language learning requires exposure to comprehensible input that is slightly more difficult than the student's current level ($i+1$), so introducing them to various forms of language can naturally accelerate language acquisition.

Several case studies have proven the effectiveness of this approach. The impact of pre-teaching vocabulary strategies in Role Play sessions and found that students who had been exposed to vocabulary showed increased fluency and lower anxiety levels compared to those who did not receive the intervention. Another study by Liu (2020) in China compared two Role Play-based learning methods and found that the group given guidance in constructing simple sentences before practicing showed significant improvements in their speaking complexity and confidence.

From these various studies, it can be concluded that limited vocabulary and understanding of language structure are indeed obstacles in Role Play, but these challenges can be overcome through the right strategies. By implementing scaffolding, exploring visual media, and providing rich and gradual language input, students can develop their speaking skills more effectively. This shows that a systematic and research-based approach is needed to ensure that the Role Play method can be applied optimally in language learning.

Conclusion

The Role Play method has been proven effective in improving Arabic speaking skills by creating an interactive and contextual learning environment. Based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), this approach helps students speak spontaneously, reduces anxiety, and increases courage in communication. In addition, Role Play enriches vocabulary and understanding of language structures naturally through real interactions. The success of this method depends on the role of the teacher in creating relevant scenarios, providing gradual guidance (scaffolding), and providing constructive feedback. The use of technology such as video recording and AI chatbots can also increase students' confidence in speaking. However, the implementation of this method faces challenges, such as low student confidence, limited vocabulary, and lack of relevant scenarios. To overcome this, a supportive learning environment, CLT-based learning strategies, and the use of visual and audio media are needed. Contextual scenario design also plays an important role in increasing student participation. With the right strategy, Role Play can be an effective method in improving Arabic speaking skills actively and meaningfully.

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