# "ENHANCING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY SKILLS THROUGH ROLE-PLAYING AND SPEAKING METHODS: A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT AT MIN 1 SOUTHEAST ACEH"

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# Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara STKIP Usman Safri Kutacane ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan kosakata siswa melalui metode bermain peran dan berbicara di MIN 1 Aceh Tenggara. Keterampilan kosakata merupakan elemen penting dalam penguasaan bahasa, terutama bahasa Inggris. Metode bermain peran memberikan kesempatan bagi siswa untuk mempraktikkan kosakata dalam konteks yang nyata, sementara metode berbicara mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan kosakata tersebut secara aktif dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Pelaksanaan kegiatan ini melibatkan 30 siswa kelas IV selama 4 Hari. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode ini efektif dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa. Siswa lebih percaya diri dalam menggunakan kosakata baru dalam situasi yang bervariasi, dan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam hasil tes kosakata sebelum dan sesudah kegiatan. Program pengabdian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi model yang efektif untuk diterapkan di sekolah-sekolah lain dalam rangka meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata Kunci: Kosakata, Bermain Peran, Berbicara, Penguasaan Bahasa, Pengabdian Masyarakat.

## **ABSTARCT**

This study aims to enhance students' vocabulary skills through role-playing and speaking methods at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh. Vocabulary skills are a crucial element in mastering a language, especially English. The role-playing method provides students with opportunities to practice vocabulary in real-life contexts, while the speaking method encourages students to actively use the vocabulary in everyday communication. This project involved 30 fourth-grade students over four Days. The results indicate that these methods are effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Students became more confident in using new vocabulary in various situations and showed significant improvement in vocabulary test results before and after the activities. This

community service program is expected to serve as an effective model for other schools aiming to enhance their students' English language skills.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Role-Playing, Speaking, Language Mastery, Community Service

#### INTRODUCTION

The significance of vocabulary acquisition in the context of language learning cannot be overstated. Vocabulary is foundational to the development of essential language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without a robust vocabulary, students often struggle to understand and engage in meaningful communication, which hampers their academic progress and overall language proficiency. This challenge is particularly pronounced in regions where English is taught as a foreign language, such as in Southeast Aceh, Indonesia. Despite the efforts made by educators, many students in this region still exhibit limited vocabulary knowledge, which affects their ability to perform well in English language tasks.

The community service project conducted at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh was initiated to address this issue. The project aimed to enhance students' vocabulary skills through the implementation of role-playing and speaking methods. These methods were chosen based on their effectiveness in creating an interactive and engaging learning environment. Role-playing, in particular, has been recognized as a powerful tool for language learning as it allows students to practice language in context, thereby improving their ability to use new vocabulary meaningfully. Speaking activities, on the other hand, provide students with the opportunity to practice pronunciation and fluency, which are crucial for effective communication.

The choice of MIN 1 Southeast Aceh as the location for this project was strategic. The school, which is located in a remote area, faces several challenges, including limited access to educational resources and a lack of exposure to the English language. As a result, students at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh have limited opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom. This project, therefore, aimed to provide these students with additional support to improve their vocabulary skills, which are essential for their academic success and future opportunities.

The project was implemented as part of a broader community service initiative by students of the Tadris Bahasa Inggris program from the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. This initiative was designed not only to enhance the students' vocabulary skills but also to foster a love for the English language and build their confidence in using it. By engaging students in role-playing and speaking activities, the project sought to create a more dynamic and participatory learning environment, which would motivate students to learn and use new vocabulary.

The effectiveness of role-playing and speaking methods in language learning is well-documented. These methods promote active learning, where students are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in the learning process. Through role-playing, students are placed in realistic scenarios that require them to use new vocabulary in context, which aids in the retention and recall of new words. Speaking activities, meanwhile, help students to develop their speaking skills, which are often neglected in traditional language classrooms.

In the context of this project, role-playing and speaking methods were used to create a series of lessons that focused on key vocabulary related to everyday topics. These lessons were designed to be interactive and student-centered, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning. The project also incorporated elements of cooperative learning, where students worked in pairs or small groups to complete tasks, which further enhanced their learning experience.

The results of the project were promising. Students who participated in the role-playing and speaking activities showed significant improvement in their vocabulary skills. They were able to use new words more confidently and accurately in both spoken and written tasks. Moreover, the project had a positive impact on students' attitudes towards learning English. Many students reported that they enjoyed the activities and felt more motivated to learn English as a result.

In conclusion, the community service project at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh demonstrated the effectiveness of role-playing and speaking methods in enhancing students' vocabulary skills. The project not only helped students to improve their language skills but also contributed to their overall development as confident and motivated learners. The success of this project highlights the

importance of using interactive and student-centered approaches in language teaching, particularly in regions where students have limited exposure to the language outside of the classroom.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research method employed in this study was empirical in nature, designed to investigate the effectiveness of role-playing and speaking methods in enhancing students' vocabulary skills at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh. The study aimed to gather data directly from the participants through observations and the administration of questionnaires. An empirical approach was chosen to ensure that the findings would be grounded in real-world data and reflect the actual experiences of the students involved in the project.

To achieve the research objectives, a quantitative research design was adopted, with data collection focused primarily on the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed to assess the students' vocabulary acquisition, their attitudes towards the role-playing and speaking activities, and the overall impact of these methods on their language learning experience. The questions were carefully constructed to capture both the cognitive and affective dimensions of vocabulary learning. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how these teaching methods influenced students' vocabulary development.

The participants in this study were selected from the student population of MIN 1 Southeast Aceh. A total of 60 students, ranging from grades 4 to 6, were involved in the project. These students were chosen because of their intermediate level of English proficiency, which made them ideal candidates for the intervention. Before the implementation of the role-playing and speaking activities, a pre-test was administered to assess the students' existing vocabulary knowledge. This pre-test served as a baseline against which the post-test results, administered after the intervention, could be compared.

The questionnaire was administered to the students at two key points in the study: once before the intervention and once after its completion. This pre-test and post-test design allowed the researchers to measure changes in the students' vocabulary skills and their perceptions of the learning activities. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions provided quantitative data that could be statistically analyzed, while the open-ended questions offered qualitative insights into the students' experiences and attitudes.

Data collection was conducted in a controlled environment to ensure the reliability of the responses. The students were given clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and the researchers were present to address any questions or concerns that arose during the process. The data obtained from the questionnaires were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the students' responses, while inferential statistics were used to determine the significance of the changes observed between the pre-test and post-test results.

In addition to the questionnaire data, observational data were also collected during the roleplaying and speaking activities. The researchers observed the students' participation in these activities, paying close attention to their use of new vocabulary, their level of engagement, and their interaction with peers. These observations were recorded in field notes, which were later analyzed to complement the questionnaire findings. The combination of quantitative data from the questionnaires and qualitative data from the observations provided a holistic view of the effectiveness of the teaching methods used.

The data analysis process involved several steps, including data cleaning, coding, and statistical testing. The closed-ended responses were coded numerically, and the data were entered into a statistical software program for analysis. Statistical tests, such as paired t-tests, were conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores and to determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant. The open-ended responses were analyzed thematically, with recurring themes identified and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives.

The results of the data analysis were then used to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the role-playing and speaking methods in enhancing students' vocabulary skills. The findings were interpreted in the context of existing literature on language learning and vocabulary acquisition, allowing the researchers to situate their results within a broader academic framework. The study's methodology ensured that the conclusions drawn were based on rigorous empirical evidence, providing valuable insights into the potential benefits of interactive teaching methods in language education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for the study on enhancing students' vocabulary skills through roleplaying and speaking methods at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh draws upon various theories and previous research in the fields of language acquisition, vocabulary development, and teaching methodologies. Vocabulary is a critical component of language proficiency and serves as the foundation upon which the other language skills are built. According to Nation (2001), a welldeveloped vocabulary is essential for both comprehension and communication in a second language. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners may struggle to understand spoken and written texts, as well as to express themselves effectively.

Role-playing as a teaching method has been extensively explored in educational research. It is widely recognized for its potential to create engaging and authentic learning experiences. Ladousse (1987) emphasizes that role-playing allows students to practice language in context, which helps them to internalize new vocabulary and language structures. This method also encourages students to step outside of their usual learning environment and engage in situations that mimic real-life interactions, thus enhancing their ability to use the language in practical settings. Moreover, role-playing promotes active participation and collaboration among students, which are key elements of effective language learning.

Speaking activities, another focus of this study, are equally important in vocabulary acquisition. As noted by Thornbury (2005), speaking is not only a medium of communication but also a means through which language learners can experiment with and refine their use of vocabulary. Through speaking exercises, learners can practice pronunciation, fluency, and the appropriate use of words and phrases in various contexts. The interactive nature of speaking activities also helps to reinforce vocabulary retention, as students are more likely to remember words and phrases that they have actively used in conversation.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of both role-playing and speaking methods in language education. For instance, a study by Huang and Hu (2016) found that role-playing activities significantly improved students' speaking and vocabulary skills in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. Similarly, research by Leong and Ahmadi (2017) highlighted the positive impact of speaking activities on vocabulary acquisition, noting that students who engaged in regular speaking practice showed marked improvements in their language proficiency. These findings support the premise that interactive, communicative approaches are highly effective in vocabulary development.

In addition to the pedagogical benefits, role-playing and speaking methods align with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT emphasizes the importance of interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In a CLT framework, language learners are encouraged to use the target language in meaningful ways, which naturally leads to the acquisition of new vocabulary. Role-playing and speaking activities are particularly well-suited to this approach, as they require learners to engage in communication that is both purposeful and contextually relevant.

The use of role-playing in language education has also been linked to increased student motivation. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in learning outcomes. Activities that are perceived as enjoyable and relevant to students' interests are more likely to foster intrinsic motivation. Role-playing, by its very nature, involves elements of creativity, imagination, and social interaction, which can make the learning experience more enjoyable and motivating for students. This increased motivation can lead to greater engagement with the learning material and, consequently, better vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, speaking activities provide opportunities for immediate feedback, which is essential for language learning. As highlighted by Gass and Mackey (2006), feedback helps learners to notice gaps in their language knowledge and to correct errors in real-time. In the context of speaking activities, feedback from peers and instructors can guide students in refining their use

of new vocabulary, leading to more accurate and fluent language use. This immediate reinforcement of correct language use is a key factor in effective vocabulary learning.

The integration of role-playing and speaking methods into vocabulary instruction also supports the development of communicative competence, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980). Communicative competence encompasses not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts. Role-playing scenarios, which simulate real-life interactions, provide an ideal platform for students to develop this competence. Similarly, speaking activities that require students to navigate different communicative situations can help them to build the pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills necessary for effective communication.

Despite the clear advantages of role-playing and speaking methods, some challenges have been noted in the literature. One potential issue is the need for careful planning and facilitation by educators to ensure that these activities are productive and focused on the learning objectives. As Harmer (2007) points out, role-playing and speaking exercises must be carefully designed to match the students' proficiency level and learning goals. Additionally, educators must be adept at managing classroom dynamics to ensure that all students are actively participating and benefiting from the activities.

In summary, the literature supports the use of role-playing and speaking methods as effective strategies for enhancing vocabulary acquisition in language learners. These methods not only provide opportunities for meaningful language use but also align with contemporary language teaching approaches that prioritize communication and interaction. The empirical evidence from previous studies, combined with theoretical frameworks in language education, underscores the potential of these methods to improve vocabulary skills and overall language proficiency. The present study builds on this body of research by applying these methods in the specific context of MIN 1 Southeast Aceh, with the aim of contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective language teaching practices.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section delves into the outcomes of implementing role-playing and speaking methods to enhance students' vocabulary skills, particularly within the framework of a community service project conducted at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh. The discussion explores both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project's impact, drawing on observations, assessments, and feedback from participants.

The project aimed to address the limited vocabulary skills observed among students at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh, which were identified as a significant barrier to effective communication in English. The implementation of role-playing and speaking activities was designed to create a more engaging and practical learning environment, where students could actively apply new vocabulary in various contexts. This hands-on approach was expected to foster not only vocabulary retention but also the ability to use the words in meaningful ways.

Throughout the project, students participated in a series of role-playing scenarios that mimicked real-life situations. These activities were carefully selected to align with the students' interests and everyday experiences, thereby making the learning process more relatable and enjoyable. The scenarios ranged from simple conversations in a marketplace to more complex interactions such as giving directions or discussing personal interests. This variety was crucial in ensuring that students were exposed to a wide range of vocabulary relevant to different contexts.

The use of speaking methods, particularly in conjunction with role-playing, proved to be highly effective in improving students' confidence in using English. By repeatedly practicing speaking in a safe and supportive environment, students became more comfortable with the language. This was evident in their increased willingness to participate in class discussions and their ability to express themselves more clearly and accurately. The gradual shift from hesitation to active participation highlighted the positive impact of the methods employed.

One of the key observations made during the project was the significant improvement in students' pronunciation and fluency. As students engaged in role-playing activities, they were encouraged to focus on the correct pronunciation of words and the natural flow of conversation. The continuous practice led to noticeable improvements in their speech patterns, with fewer pauses

and hesitations. This was an important milestone, as it indicated that students were not only expanding their vocabulary but also becoming more proficient in their overall language use.

The role-playing method also contributed to enhancing students' listening skills. As they interacted with their peers, students had to listen carefully to understand the context and respond appropriately. This active listening practice helped them to better recognize and comprehend spoken English, which in turn supported their vocabulary acquisition. The combination of listening and speaking exercises created a holistic learning experience that reinforced both receptive and productive language skills.

Another significant outcome of the project was the development of students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The role-playing scenarios often required students to think on their feet, make decisions, and come up with creative solutions to the challenges presented in the activities. This not only expanded their vocabulary but also encouraged them to use language in more dynamic and innovative ways. The ability to adapt language use to different situations is a key aspect of language proficiency, and the project successfully nurtured this skill among the participants.

The feedback from both students and teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Students reported feeling more motivated to learn English and expressed a greater sense of achievement as they noticed their progress. Teachers observed that the students were more engaged in lessons and demonstrated a higher level of enthusiasm for language learning. This shift in attitude towards English was a direct result of the interactive and participatory nature of the project, which made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating for the students.

In terms of vocabulary retention, the project yielded promising results. Assessments conducted before and after the project showed a marked improvement in students' ability to recall and use new vocabulary. This was particularly evident in the post-project assessments, where students were able to apply a wider range of vocabulary in both written and spoken tasks. The consistency of these results across different assessment formats underscored the effectiveness of the role-playing and speaking methods in enhancing vocabulary skills.

Moreover, the project highlighted the importance of creating a supportive learning environment. The encouragement and positive reinforcement provided by teachers played a crucial role in boosting students' confidence and willingness to experiment with new vocabulary. This supportive atmosphere was essential in helping students overcome their initial apprehensions and embrace the learning process.

The project also underscored the value of collaborative learning. As students worked together in pairs or small groups during the role-playing activities, they learned from each other and developed a sense of camaraderie. This collaborative approach not only facilitated peer learning but also fostered a sense of community within the classroom. The shared experience of learning and practicing new vocabulary strengthened the bonds among students and created a more cohesive learning environment.

Despite the successes, the project faced some challenges. One of the primary difficulties was the varying levels of language proficiency among students. While some students quickly adapted to the role-playing activities, others struggled to keep up. This disparity highlighted the need for differentiated instruction and additional support for students with lower proficiency levels. Addressing this challenge required careful planning and the introduction of supplementary activities to ensure that all students could benefit from the project.

Another challenge was the limited time available for the project. Given the constraints of the school schedule, the project had to be implemented within a relatively short period. While the results were encouraging, it is likely that a longer duration would have allowed for even greater improvements in vocabulary skills. Future iterations of the project could benefit from an extended timeline, enabling more in-depth exploration of vocabulary and more opportunities for practice.

In conclusion, the community service project at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh demonstrated that role-playing and speaking methods are highly effective in enhancing students' vocabulary skills. The project not only improved students' vocabulary retention and usage but also boosted their confidence, critical thinking, and overall language proficiency. The positive feedback from

students and teachers further validated the success of the project. However, the challenges faced during implementation suggest that future projects should consider the need for differentiated instruction and potentially longer timeframes to maximize the benefits for all students.

This project serves as a valuable model for similar educational initiatives aimed at improving language skills through interactive and participatory methods. By focusing on practical language use and creating a supportive learning environment, educators can significantly enhance students' vocabulary skills and overall language competence. The lessons learned from this project can inform the design of future language programs, ensuring that they are both effective and inclusive.

In conclusion, the community service project at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh has demonstrated the profound impact of employing role-playing and speaking methods to enhance students' vocabulary skills. The initiative was rooted in the understanding that traditional language learning methods often fall short in engaging students and facilitating the practical application of new vocabulary. By integrating role-playing into the curriculum, students were provided with a dynamic platform where they could actively practice and experiment with new words in real-life scenarios, significantly improving their language proficiency.

One of the most notable outcomes of the project was the observable increase in students' confidence when using English. Initially, many students displayed a reluctance to speak, likely due to fear of making mistakes or a lack of familiarity with the language. However, as the project progressed and students became more accustomed to the role-playing activities, their confidence grew. This was reflected in their increased participation in class discussions and their willingness to engage in English conversations outside of the structured activities. Confidence, as the project revealed, is a crucial component in language learning, as it encourages students to take risks and use the language more freely.

The project also highlighted the importance of context in language learning. By situating new vocabulary within familiar and meaningful scenarios, students were able to better understand and remember the words. This contextual learning approach proved to be more effective than rote

memorization, as students could see the relevance of the vocabulary in everyday communication. The ability to relate language learning to their own lives made the process more engaging and less abstract, which is often a challenge in traditional language education.

Furthermore, the project underscored the value of active learning. Unlike passive learning methods, where students primarily receive information, role-playing required them to actively engage with the material. This active involvement not only reinforced vocabulary retention but also fostered a deeper understanding of language nuances, such as tone, context, and cultural implications. By practicing language in an interactive setting, students developed a more comprehensive grasp of English, moving beyond basic word recognition to effective communication.

Another key takeaway from the project is the role of collaborative learning in language acquisition. The role-playing activities often involved group work, where students had to cooperate, negotiate, and support each other in completing tasks. This collaborative aspect not only enhanced their language skills but also built a sense of community within the classroom. Students learned from each other's strengths and weaknesses, which fostered a supportive learning environment and made the language learning process less intimidating.

The project's success also suggests the potential for broader applications of role-playing and speaking methods in other areas of the curriculum. While the focus was on vocabulary acquisition, the skills developed through these methods—such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication—are transferable to other subjects. This holistic approach to education, where language learning is integrated with broader cognitive and social skills, could be beneficial in developing well-rounded students who are prepared for a variety of challenges.

Despite the positive outcomes, the project also highlighted certain challenges that need to be addressed in future implementations. The varying levels of English proficiency among students required differentiated instruction, which was difficult to manage within the constraints of the project's timeline. Additionally, the limited duration of the project may have restricted the depth of language acquisition. These challenges point to the need for more sustained and individualized

language programs that can cater to diverse learning needs and provide ample time for skill development.

In sum, the community service project at MIN 1 Southeast Aceh serves as a compelling case study on the effectiveness of role-playing and speaking methods in language education. It not only improved students' vocabulary skills but also contributed to their overall language confidence, critical thinking, and collaborative abilities. The insights gained from this project can inform future educational practices, emphasizing the need for interactive, contextual, and student-centered approaches to language learning. By continuing to innovate and adapt teaching methods, educators can better equip students with the language skills necessary for both academic success and real-world communication.

#### CONCLUSION

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# **ACTIVITY DOCUMENTATION**



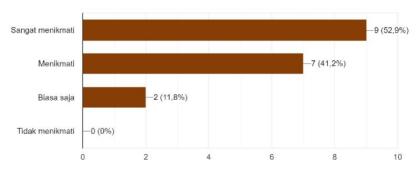




# QUIZ RESULTS

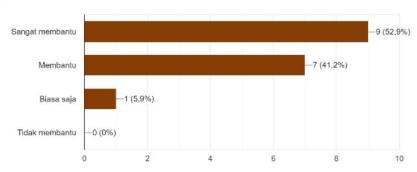
Apakah kamu menikmati pembelajaran bahasa Inggris melalui kegiatan role-playing (permainan peran)?

17 jawaban



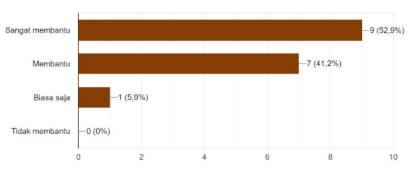
Apakah role-playing (permainan peran) membantu kamu untuk lebih memahami kosa kata baru dalam bahasa Inggris?

17 jawaban



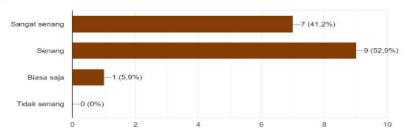
Apakah role-playing (permainan peran) membantu kamu untuk lebih memahami kosa kata baru dalam bahasa Inggris?

17 jawaban



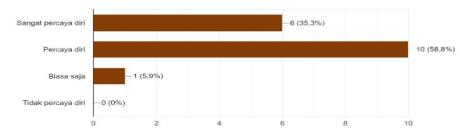
Bagaimana perasaan kamu saat berperan sebagai karakter dalam role-playing (permainan peran) bahasa Inggris?

17 jawaban

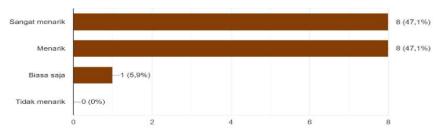


Apakah kamu merasa lebih percaya diri untuk berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris setelah melakukan role-playing (permainan peran)?

17 jawaban



Apakah role-playing (permainan peran) membuat pelajaran bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih menarik? 17 jawaban



Apakah role-playing (permainan peran) berhasil membantu kamu untuk menemukan, memahami, dan menghafal kosa kata baru bahasa Inggris?

17 jawaban

