# Speaking, Playing, Learning: Unveiling the Potential of Role Playing Models in Differentiated Elementary Education

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**ABSTRAK**

*Kurangnya kepercayaan diri siswa dalam keterampilan berbicara di sekolah dasar seringkali disebabkan oleh kurangnya eksposur dan praktik aktif serta pendekatan pembelajaran yang tidak mendukung keberagaman gaya belajar siswa. Hal ini berdampak negatif pada pengembangan kemampuan berbicara mereka. Maka penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas model role playing dalam pembelajaran berdiferensiasi terhadap keterampilan berbicara dan hasil belajar siswa kelas IV di Sekolah Dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode quasi eksperimen dengan desain nonequivalent control group, yang melibatkan 56 siswa kelas IV sebagai sampel. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah tes dan observasi dengan menggunakan instrumen penelitian berupa lembar tes dan observasi. Setelah data dikumpulkan kemudian dianalisis dengan uji independent sample t-test. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan model role playing secara signifikan meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dan hasil belajar siswa dibandingkan dengan metode konvensional. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa, model role playing efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dan hasil belajar siswa. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting dalam mengembangkan strategi pembelajaran yang lebih inovatif dan berorientasi pada kebutuhan siswa.*

**ABSTRACT**

Students' lack of confidence in speaking skills in primary schools is often caused by a lack of exposure, active practice, and learning approaches that do not support students' diverse learning styles. This hurts the development of their speaking skills. So, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of role-playing models in differentiated learning on speaking skills and learning outcomes of grade IV students in elementary school. This study used a quasi-experimental method with a nonequivalent control group design, involving 56 grade IV students as samples. The data collection methods used were tests and observations using research instruments like tests and observation sheets. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using an independent sample t-test. The results showed that role-playing models significantly improved students' speaking skills and learning outcomes compared to the conventional method. So, it can be concluded that the role-playing model is efficacious in improving students' speaking skills and learning outcomes. This study's results significantly contribute to developing more innovative and needs-oriented learning strategies for students.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a key element in the formation of social and cultural identity. In the context of Indonesia, the Indonesian language not only functions as a tool of communication but also as a symbol of national unity. As outlined in the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 32 of 2013, language is the core of culture that can unite various ethnic and regional backgrounds in the country. According to structuralism theory, language learning requires a systematic approach that includes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which must be learned sequentially to achieve effective mastery (Pemerintah Pusat, 2013; Ratminingsih, 2021; Robillos & Bustos, 2022). Speaking skills, in particular, are considered active skills that enable individuals to articulate and convey thoughts and ideas creatively and persuasively. Therefore, the development of speaking skills in primary education becomes crucial for shaping competent communication abilities among students (Aladini & Jalambo, 2021; Costigan

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& Brink, 2020; Pérez et al., 2019)(Moh. Ayuub Alamsyah & Nurdin, 2023; Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra, 2024). Despite its importance, the teaching of speaking skills in elementary schools often faces obstacles, especially related to students' confidence (Annisa et al., 2023; Moh. Ayuub Alamsyah & Nurdin, 2023; Ratnasari, 2020; Ummah et al., 2020; Ying et al., 2021). Observations at Jatisari Public Elementary School, Mijen, Semarang City, indicate that many students feel insecure when asked to speak in front of the class. This can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of exposure and active speaking practice in the classroom, as well as a lack of learning approaches that support the diversity of students' learning styles. This issue is exacerbated by monotonous teaching approaches that need to take individual differences into account, making students feel disengaged or unmotivated to participate in the learning process actively. One effective approach to addressing learning problems is through the role-playing model in the context of differentiated learning, which allows students to achieve optimal learning outcomes. In differentiated learning, role-playing plays an important role in developing the 4C skills, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Through in-depth simulations, students are invited to engage in various scenarios that demand effective communication skills according to specific contexts and roles related to the learning material. This process not only increases students' confidence but also motivates them to be more actively involved in learning. The steps, include grouping students by the teacher, scripting practice sessions, providing learning materials, discussing role distribution, role practice under the teacher's guidance, role-playing practice, and reflection with the teacher to evaluate practice and integrate the learned material. With this approach, students can more effectively hone their speaking skills in various learning situations (Damaševičius & Sidekerskienė, 2024; Ernawati, 2023; Mascarenhas et al., 2021).

Students' lack of confidence in speaking skills in primary schools is often caused by a lack of exposure, active practice, and learning approaches that do not support students' diverse learning styles. This hurts the development of their speaking skills. So, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of role-playing models in differentiated learning on speaking skills and learning outcomes of grade IV students in elementary school. This study used a quasi-experimental method with a nonequivalent control group design, involving 56 grade IV students as samples. The data collection methods used were tests and observations using research instruments like tests and observation sheets. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using an independent sample t-test. The results showed that role-playing models significantly improved students' speaking skills and learning outcomes compared to the conventional method. So, it can be concluded that the role-playing model is efficacious in improving students' speaking skills and learning outcomes. This study's results significantly contribute to developing more innovative and needs-oriented student learning strategies (Parker et al., 2022; Puzio et al., 2020; Saptono et al., 2020). This research introduces a new approach to using the role-playing model in the context of differentiated learning at the elementary school level. Uniquely, this study combines the use of role-playing not only as a tool to increase learning motivation but also specifically to enhance speaking skills and learning outcomes in various subjects. This expands our understanding of how interactive techniques like role-playing can be integrated into the standard curriculum to facilitate deeper and more comprehensive learning, making it significant in bridging the gap between theory and effective, enjoyable educational practice at the primary level. This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using the role-playing model in differentiated learning on speaking skills and learning outcomes of fourth-grade students at Jatisari Public Elementary School.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to overcome barriers to effective speaking skills teaching in elementary schools, which are a crucial foundation for advanced literacy and future communication skills. By identifying whether role-playing can significantly improve students' speaking skills, this research contributes to the development of more adaptive and inclusive teaching methodologies in the primary education environment.  The results of this research are expected to provide new insights into effective teaching strategies to improve speaking skills among elementary school students. Additionally, these findings can serve as a basis for revising or developing curricula that better support the diversity of students' learning styles and accommodate individual student needs. Therefore, the ultimate contribution of this research is the improvement of the quality of primary education, especially in Indonesian language learning, which will affect the success of national education in the future.

## 2.  METHOD

This research employs a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experiments are a type of experimental research. Quasi-experimental designs have control groups, but they cannot fully control external variables that affect the experiment. The design used in this research is

the nonequivalent control group design. The research was conducted at Jatisari Public Elementary School in Semarang. The sample for this research was taken from two fourth-grade classes at Jatisari Public Elementary School. The first class, consisting of 28 students, served as the experimental group. The second class, also consisting of 28 students, served as the control group. Data collection techniques included tests and observation. The test is a data collection technique used to measure students' learning achievement (Arikunto, 2021; Sugiyono, 2019). The tests were administered twice: once before the treatment or learning (pretest) and once after the treatment/learning (posttest). Observations were conducted to monitor the implementation of the learning strategy. Data analysis techniques included the independent sample t-test.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Result**

The study produced data on classes IVA and IVB, each with 28 pupils, at Jatisari State Elementary School in Semarang. utilizing a role-playing paradigm, class IVB functioned as the experimental class and class IVA, utilizing a traditional methodology, as the control class. The following table displays the findings of the research's data analysis. Descriptive statistics of speaking skills in the experimental class are presented in Table 1, Descriptive statistics of learning outcomes in the experimental class are presented in Table 2, Speaking skills in the control class are presented in Table 3, Descriptive statistics of learning outcomes in the control class are presented in Table 4, The results of the normality test of speaking skills data are presented in Table 5, The results of the normality test of learning outcomes data are presented in Table 6, The results of homogeneity of speaking skills data are presented in Table 7, The results of the homogeneity test of learning outcomes data are presented in Table 8, and The results of the T test of the role-playing model on students' speaking skills are presented in Table 9.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Skills in the Experimental Class

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Experimental | 28 | 48 | 68 | 1598 | 57.07 | 5.003 | 25.032 |
| Posttest Experimental | 28 | 76 | 96 | 2412 | 86.14 | 5.275 | 27.831 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

There were 28 students in the experimental class, with a total pre-test score of 1598, a minimum pre-test score of 48, a maximum pre-test score of 68, and an average pre-test score of 57.07, according to the descriptive statistics table of speaking ability in the experimental class. The overall score increased to 2412 after the intervention, which included the use of role-playing learning paradigm. The lowest score was 76, the highest score was 96, and the average score was 86.14.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Learning Outcomes in the Experimental Class

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Experimental | 28 | 50 | 73 | 1727 | 61.68 | 6.470 | 41.856 |
| Posttest Experimental | 28 | 77 | 97 | 2430 | 86.79 | 5.547 | 30.767 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

There were 28 students in the experimental class, with a total pre-test score of 1727, a minimum pre-test score of 50, a maximum pre-test score of 73, and an average pre-test score of 61.68, according to the descriptive statistics table of learning outcomes in the experimental class. The overall score increased to 2430 after the intervention, which included the use of role-playing learning paradigm. The lowest score was 77, the highest score was 97, and the average score was 86.79. There were 28 students in the control class, with a total pre-test score of 1652, a minimum pre-test score of 48, a maximum pre-test score of 68, and an average pre-test score of 59.00, according to the descriptive statistics table of speaking ability in the control class. After the implementation of the role-playing learning model as an intervention, the overall score increased to 2156, with a minimum of 68, a maximum of 88, and an average of 77.00.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Skills in the Control Class

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Control | 28 | 48 | 68 | 1652 | 59.00 | 5.617 | 31.556 |
| Posttest Control | 28 | 68 | 88 | 2156 | 77.00 | 4.944 | 24.444 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics of Learning Outcomes in the Control Class

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Control | 28 | 50 | 73 | 1716 | 61.29 | 6.312 | 39.841 |
| Posttest Control | 28 | 70 | 90 | 2204 | 78.71 | 5.283 | 27.915 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

There were 28 students in the control class, with a total pre-test score of 1716, a minimum pre-test score of 50, a maximum pre-test score of 73, and an average pre-test score of 61.29, according to the descriptive statistics table of learning outcomes in the control class. With a minimum score of 70, a maximum score of 90, and an average score of 78.71, the total score increased to 2204 after the intervention, which included the use of role-playing learning paradigm. The detailed statistics of speaking ability and learning outcomes of students in the experimental and control groups are shown in the following Figure 1.
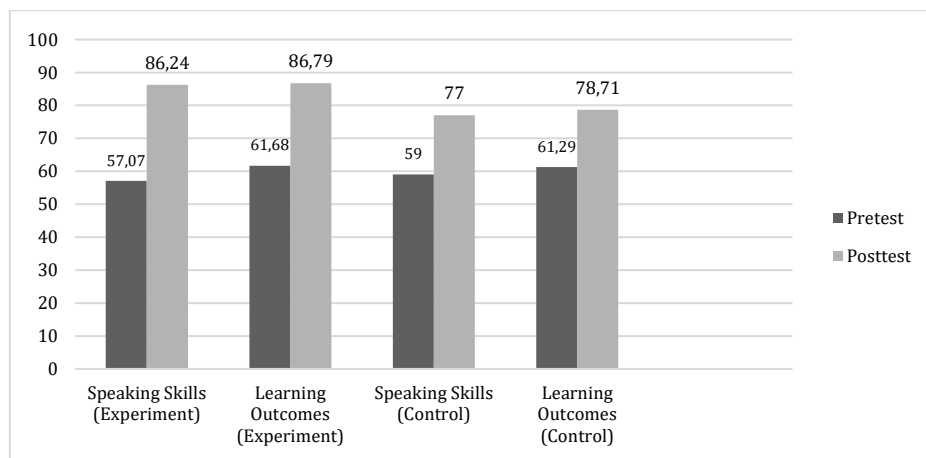


**Figure 1.** Recapitulation of Learning Outcomes of the Control Class

**Table 5.** Normality Test of Speaking Skills Data

|  | Kolmogorov-Smirnov | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Pretest Control | 0.142 | 28 | 0.155 | 0.941 | 28 | 0.117 |
| Posttest Control | 0.157 | 28 | 0.077 | 0.943 | 28 | 0.135 |
| Pretest Experimental | 0.156 | 28 | 0.078 | 0.949 | 28 | 0.187 |
| Posttest Experimental | 0.158 | 28 | 0.072 | 0.939 | 28 | 0.105 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on Table 5, which presents the results of the Normality Test of Speaking Skills Data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk methods, it is shown that all data have a normal distribution. In further analysis, the significance value for the pretest of the control class, which uses the conventional learning model, shows 0.155 on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and 0.117 on the Shapiro-Wilk test, both of which are greater than 0.05. The same applies to the posttest of the control class, with a significance value of 0.077 and 0.135 on the respective tests. Meanwhile, for the experimental class using the role-playing learning model, the significance value of the pretest is 0.078 on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and 0.187 on the Shapiro-Wilk test, as well as 0.072 and 0.105 on the posttest. All these results indicate that the data

from both classes, both control and experimental, are normally distributed, so further statistical analysis can be carried out with this assumption.

**Table 6.** Normality Test of Learning Outcomes Data

| | Tests of Normality | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Pretest Control | 0.139 | 28 | 0.179 | 0.949 | 28 | 0.189 |
| Posttest Control | 0.163 | 28 | 0.055 | 0.948 | 28 | 0.176 |
| Pretest Experimental | 0.158 | 28 | 0.071 | 0.940 | 28 | 0.113 |
| Posttest Experimental | 0.145 | 28 | 0.135 | 0.956 | 28 | 0.274 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on Table 6, which provides the normality test results for learning outcomes data, it can be seen that all data groups, both control and experimental, show a normal distribution. This is evidenced by the significance values from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, all of which are greater than 0.05. For the pretest in the control class using the conventional learning model, the significance values are 0.179 for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and 0.189 for the Shapiro-Wilk test. In the posttest of the control class, the significance values are 0.055 and 0.176, respectively. Meanwhile, the pretest in the experimental class applying the role-playing learning model shows significance values of 0.071 for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and 0.113 for the Shapiro-Wilk test. For the posttest in the experimental class, the significance values are 0.135 and 0.274, respectively. All these significance values confirm that the data from both groups in both test conditions have a normal distribution.

**Table 7.** Homogeneity Test of Speaking Skills Data

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Posttest Speaking Skills | Based on Mean | 0.254 | 3 | 108 | 0.858 |
| | Based on Median | 0.270 | 3 | 108 | 0.847 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.270 | 3 | 105.035 | 0.847 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 0.248 | 3 | 108 | 0.863 |

Based on the SPSS output regarding the homogeneity test above, it can be stated that the significance value based on the mean is 0.858 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data on students' speaking skills are homogeneous.

**Table 8.** Homogeneity Test of Learning Outcomes Data

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learning Outcomes | Based on Mean | 1.046 | 3 | 108 | 0.375 |
| | Based on Median | 0.835 | 3 | 108 | 0.478 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.835 | 3 | 106,798 | 0.478 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 1.045 | 3 | 108 | 0.376 |

Based on the SPSS output regarding the homogeneity test above, it can be stated that the significance value based on the mean is 0.375 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data on students' learning outcomes are homogeneous. The calculated t value is greater than the t table value, 6.691 > 1.674, as can be seen from the SPSS output of the t-test above. As a result, Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected, indicating that there is a difference in the average speaking skills assessment results between the experimental class (the role-playing model) and the control class (the conventional model). Furthermore, it is evident that the two-tailed significance value is 0.000 < 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental group (the role-playing model) and the control group (traditional model).

**Table 9.** T-Test of the Role-Playing Model on Students' Speaking Skills

| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Posttest Speaking Skills | Equal variances assumed | 0.335 | 0.565 | 6.691 | 54 | 0.000 | 9.143 | 1.366 | 6.403 | 11.882 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 6.691 | 53.774 | 0.000 | 9.143 | 1.366 | 6.403 | 11.883 |

**Table 10.** T-Test of the Role-Playing Model on Students' Learning Outcomes

| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Learning Outcomes | Equal variances assumed | 0.064 | 0.801 | 5.575 | 54 | 0.000 | 8.071 | 1.448 | 5.169 | 10.974 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 5.575 | 53.873 | 0.000 | 8.071 | 1.448 | 5.169 | 10.974 |

The calculated t value is greater than the t table value, which is 5.575 > 1.674, as seen from the SPSS t test results above. Thus, Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected, which indicates that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes between the experimental class (role-playing model) and the control class (conventional model). Furthermore, it can be seen that the two-sided significance value is 0.000 <0.05, which indicates a statistically significant difference between the experimental group (role-playing model) and the control group (traditional model).

**Discussion**

Research findings indicate a significant improvement in speaking skills and learning outcomes among students in the experimental class. Descriptive data show an increase in the average scores from the pretest to the posttest in both speaking skills and learning outcomes. The average speaking skill score in the experimental class increased from 57.07 in the pretest to 85.14 in the posttest. Meanwhile, the average learning outcome score increased from 61.68 to 86.79. This indicates that the interaction and simulation involved in role-playing facilitate the enhancement of verbal competence and material comprehension. The control class also showed improvement, but not as significant as the experimental class, with the average speaking skill score increasing from 59.00 to 77.00 and the learning outcome from 61.29 to 78.71. Although there was improvement, the significant difference between the experimental and control classes indicates the superior effectiveness of the role-playing model in enhancing skills and learning outcomes. These findings reinforce previous studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of the role-playing model in education. As revealed in earlier studies, simulation-based activities like role-playing can facilitate deeper conceptual understanding and better verbal skills. For instance other researchers, found that the use of interactive simulations in learning provides opportunities for students to apply theory in realistic practice, which not only enhances active learning but also strengthens material retention. This study adds empirical evidence supporting the use of role-playing as an effective pedagogical strategy for developing speaking skills and learning outcomes, providing additional insight that the consistent application of this method results in significant improvements compared to traditional methods (Bring & Lyon, 2019; Harris & Bacon, 2019; Maertens & Cheli, 2023; Wang et al., 2021). The t-test conducted confirms these findings, where the t-value for the mean difference in speaking skills and learning outcomes between the two classes shows statistical significance, with a p-value (2-tailed) of less than 0.05. This indicates that the observed differences are not by chance but are the result of the differentiated instructional model application. Thus, the application of the role-playing model in the

experimental class not only significantly enhances students' speaking skills and learning outcomes but also demonstrates how active and participatory learning methods can be more effective than conventional methods in improving competence and material understanding among young students. This is supported by the findings of other researchers, which show that active learning methods like role-playing can increase student engagement and motivation. They found that students engaged in active learning tend to have a better understanding of the material and higher skills compared to those learning through conventional methods. Research by other researchers also supports this, stating that learning involving simulation and participatory activities can significantly improve learning outcomes. Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) study on the zone of proximal development (ZPD) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process, which aligns with the principles of learning through role-playing (Berry & Kowal, 2022; Dastpak et al., 2017; Heinimäki et al., 2021; Hendrickson, 2021; Oueriagli et al., 2023; Slavin, 2018).

By leveraging social interaction and participatory activities, the role-playing model allows students to learn in contexts closer to real life, which in turn deepens their understanding and skills. Overall, the application of the role-playing learning model proves to be effective in enhancing students' speaking skills and learning outcomes. This study has advantages over the previous three studies in terms of using the role-playing model, which not only significantly improves speaking skills but also learning outcomes. Unlike first researcher, who only looked at the relationship between learning interest and science learning outcomes, this study shows a tangible improvement in speaking skills and learning outcomes through interactive methods. This study is also more specific in testing the effectiveness of active learning methods compared to first researcher, who focused on more general literacy differentiation. While also second researcher used the role-playing model, this study delves deeper into the improvement of speaking skills and learning outcomes, with statistical results showing a significant difference between the experimental and control classes (Parker et al., 2022; Puzio et al., 2020; Saptono et al., 2020). The results of this study provide an important contribution in developing more innovative and student needs-oriented learning strategies. Thus, with empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the role-playing method, schools and teachers can be more confident in applying this approach to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. Although this study shows positive results, there are areas for improvement to be noted, namely the limitation in the duration of the study, which does not reflect the long-term effects of using the role-playing model. Information about other control variables that could influence the results needs to be explained in detail. These findings imply that the application of the role-playing learning model can significantly improve students' speaking skills and learning outcomes compared to conventional learning methods. This shows that the social interaction and simulation involved in role-playing can facilitate better material comprehension and verbal competence development. Therefore, educators and educational institutions should consider integrating the role-playing method into their curriculum to create a more interactive and participatory learning environment, which not only increases student engagement but also strengthens material retention and conceptual understanding. This study also supports Vygotsky's theory on the importance of social interaction in the learning process and shows that active and participatory learning can be more effective than traditional methods. However, further research with a longer duration is needed to understand the long-term effects of applying this method.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the use of the role-playing learning model is significantly more effective compared to conventional methods in enhancing the speaking skills and learning outcomes of fourth-grade students at Public Elementary School Jatisari. The results demonstrate that the experimental class using the role-playing model experienced a higher average increase in speaking skills and learning outcomes compared to the control class. The limitations of this study include its limited duration, which may not reflect the long-term effects of using the role-playing model, and the lack of explanation regarding other control variables that could affect the results. Solutions for future research include extending the duration of the study and considering other control variables to provide a more comprehensive overview of the long-term effectiveness and factors influencing the outcomes of implementing the role-playing learning model.

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