

IMPROVING EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY THROUGH ROLE PLAY AND DIGITAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop an innovative English learning method aligned with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) by integrating role-play and YouTube as a strategy to enhance speaking proficiency among MKDU English students. Through active participation in recorded and published role-play activities, students improve contextual communication skills, confidence, creativity, and digital adaptability. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, the research evaluates the effectiveness of this method via pre- and post-tests and closed questionnaires involving Digital Business students at *Universitas Lancang Kuning*. Assessment focuses on five indicators: role appreciation, content mastery, cultural gestures, pronunciation, and scene graphic design. The results show measurable improvements: average speaking scores increased by 18% from pre- to post-test, with the highest gain in pronunciation (22%) and content mastery (20%). Questionnaire responses indicate that 87% of students felt more confident and collaborative in communicative tasks. These findings demonstrate that YouTube-based role-play not only strengthens linguistic competence but also directly supports OBE outcomes by fostering reflective, creative, and professional communication skills essential for workplace readiness.

Keywords: Role Play, Digital Media, Speaking Proficiency, EFL learners.

INTRODUCTION

To improve EFL learners' speaking proficiency effectively and sustainably, holistic and contextual instructional strategies are essential. Methods such as creative tasks, role-playing, cooperative activities, and drilling foster active engagement in meaningful communication. It emphasizes the integration of role-play and digital platforms as innovative approaches that not only enhance linguistic competence but also strengthen learners' confidence, collaboration, and adaptability in real-world communicative contexts (Negara, 2021).

Role-play is an effective strategy in language learning, enabling students to develop linguistic competence and social skills through real-life communication simulations. Its emphasis on authentic expression and emotional engagement makes it central to the study *"Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency Through Role Play and Digital Media."* When combined with digital media like YouTube, role-play offers interactive and contextual learning experiences that strengthen speaking proficiency and meet modern educational needs (Senda, 2023). Role-playing engages students in realistic communication simulations that build

language competence, empathy, and interpersonal understanding within a reflective environment. This approach underpins this study, where digital platforms like YouTube enhance authenticity and accessibility, fostering speaking proficiency alongside collaborative and adaptive skills for modern learning needs (Shravani, 2024).

Role-play enhances students' speaking skills by simulating real communication that develops functional language use, social skills, and interaction in a participatory environment. This strength underlies this study, where digital platforms like YouTube extend the authenticity and accessibility of role-play, reinforcing speaking proficiency and adaptability for modern learning contexts (Bahriyeva, 2021). Role-playing fosters active student involvement in real-life communication, developing language skills, critical thinking, empathy, and cooperation. This approach is supported by the study *"Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency Through Role Play and Digital Media,"* which finds that digital platforms like YouTube enhance authenticity and accessibility, strengthening speaking proficiency and preparing learners for modern

communicative demands (Widiasri et al., 2024).

The active involvement of non-English students in YouTube-based role-play effectively improves speaking fluency and communicative competence in a contextual and flexible manner, consistent with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles. This directly supports this study where the integration of digital platforms enhances the authenticity and accessibility of role-play, reinforcing learners' speaking

proficiency while aligning with OBE-driven learning outcomes:

1. What is the YouTube-based *role-playing method* material like in improving *speaking* skills in MKDU English?
2. What is the impact that occurs after students apply the YouTube-based *role-playing method* in improving their speaking skills in English at MKDU?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Role-play effectively develops speaking skills by training students to use language in real social contexts while fostering creativity, flexibility, and confidence. This approach in this study, where YouTube integration enhances authenticity and accessibility, strengthens learners' proficiency and adaptability for modern education (Fitriani & Susiati, 2025). The role-playing approach—scripted, semi-scripted, and unscripted—requires teachers to design structured activities and lesson plans. This framework supports this study, where YouTube integration enriches each technique, making role-play more authentic, accessible, and effective in enhancing

speaking proficiency (Yasmin et al., 2022). Role play functions as both a teaching strategy and an evaluative tool, enabling authentic assessment of students' proficiency in social contexts while supporting improvement through feedback. This dual role aligns with this study, where YouTube integration enhances authenticity and accessibility, strengthening learners' speaking skills in outcome-based learning (Dwiyanti & Lolita, 2023).

Role play in English learning promotes active group participation, improving speaking, expression, and confidence through interactive communication. This supports the study "*Improving EFL Learners' Speaking*

Proficiency Through Role Play and Digital Media,” where YouTube integration enriches collaboration and authenticity, making role-play more effective in strengthening learners’ speaking proficiency (Dimastoro et al., 2022). Role play enhances students’ speaking and critical thinking through real-life dialogues that foster spontaneous expression, collaboration, and social-cognitive growth. This aligns with this study, where YouTube integration enriches authenticity and accessibility, making role-play a powerful tool for strengthening speaking proficiency (Rashid & Qaisar, 2017). Students’ involvement in role-playing contextualizes learning, improving language fluency, conversational skills, and adaptive

communicative competencies through meaningful dialogue and social dynamics. This aligns with this study, where platforms like YouTube enhance authenticity and accessibility, making role-play a powerful medium to strengthen speaking proficiency in real-world contexts (Rao et al., 2025). Role-playing is an inclusive approach that helps all students—even the shy—practice conversation, build social identity, and gain confidence in varied contexts. This supports this study, where YouTube integration enhances authenticity and accessibility, making role-play more effective in strengthening speaking proficiency and confidence (Togimin, 2020).

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative descriptive method to measure the effectiveness of YouTube-based role play in improving the speaking skills of MKDU English students through the analysis of test results before and after treatment in the context of interactive digital learning. The steps of this research involve students of the Digital Business study program of the Faculty of Computer Science who take the MKDU English course in the odd semester

of the 2024/2025 academic year, serving as the population and sample. The instruments used consisted of oral tests in the form of pre-tests and post-tests to measure speaking ability, as well as closed questionnaires to assess students' responses to the learning methods applied. The assessment of the application of the role-playing method in the English MKDU includes five leading indicators, they are: role appreciation (performance) which

assesses the depth of verbal and nonverbal character representation; mastery of the material (content mastery) which can be seen from the ability to speak without a script; the use of gestures and imitation that reflect cultural understanding and communication context; pronunciation that

assesses the accuracy of sound and intonation; and scenario graphic design (Scene Graphic Design) that supports the atmosphere and meaning of visual communication, with the overall assessment using a scale of 1–5.

Table 1. Role-playing Method Assessment Indicators

No.	Assessment Indicators	Description of Assessment	5	4	3	2	1
1	Performance	Expression of emotions, intonation, and attitudes according to the character being played					
2	Content Mastery	Fluency in speaking without relying on the script, demonstrating an understanding of the material					
3	Gesture/Imitation	Gestures, facial expressions, and speaking style resemble real characters or situations.					
4	Pronunciation	Clarity of pronunciation, intonation, and voice pressure in English					
5	Design Scene Graphic	Creativity and relevance in designing visual backgrounds that support role play					

The assessment rubric above can make it easier for researchers to assess student videos. The scores obtained from the rubric will be described on the Likert scale, which is the scale used:

5 = Very amazing (perfect) → 90–100%

4 = Very good → 75–89%

3 = Good → 60–74%

2 = Not good → 40–59%

1 = Very bad → <40%

The percentage of eligibility is calculated using (Sugiyono, 2013)

$$\text{Eligibility percentage} = \frac{\text{count score}}{\text{criteria score}} \times 100$$

The assessment of role-play videos is carried out through five main aspects: *Performance* (expression of emotions and intonation), *Content Mastery* (fluency in speaking without script), *Gesture/Imitation* (gestures and expressions resembling real situations), *Pronunciation* (clarity of pronunciation and intonation), and *Design Scene Graphic* (creativity of visual backgrounds). Each aspect was assessed using a Likert scale of 1–5, where a **score of 5 (90–100%)** showed excellent performance, **4 (75–89%)** was excellent, **3 (60–74%)** was good, **2 (40–59%)** was poor, and **1 (<40%)** was very poor. With this system, researchers can quantitatively measure student achievement while providing a clear qualitative interpretation of the quality of their role-play videos.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Finding 1 (Research question 1)

1. Application of the role play method based on YouTube material in improving the speaking skills of MKDU English students

The application of the YouTube video-based role play method in MKDU English aims to improve students' speaking skills through contextual and interactive learning that encourages confidence, creativity, and cultural understanding in limited learning time.

Students' Performance Role Playing 1st Group

Scene 1

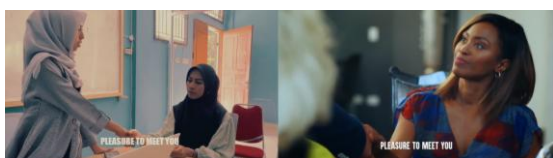


Role Play Method Result					
Indicator	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Performance</i>	✓				
<i>Content Mastery</i>	✓				
<i>Gesture/ Imitation</i>	✓				
<i>Pronunciation</i>	✓				
<i>Design Scene Graphic</i>	✓				

Sample in scene 1. The results of the role play method assessment showed that all indicators—*Performance*, *Content Mastery*, *Gesture/Imitation*, *Pronunciation*, and *Graphic Scene Design*—were in category **5 (Very**

Amazing/Perfect). Thus, students achieve an achievement rate of **90–100%** in each aspect measured. These findings reflect a very high quality of performance, characterized by emotional expression and intonation according to the characters, mastery of material without relying on the script, the use of gestures and imitations that resemble real situations, clarity of English pronunciation, and creativity in designing relevant visual backgrounds. Overall, the maximum achievement in all indicators confirms that the application of *the role play* method is not only effective in improving speaking skills but also able to provide an authentic and meaningful learning experience, thereby supporting the comprehensive development of students' communicative competencies.

Scene 2



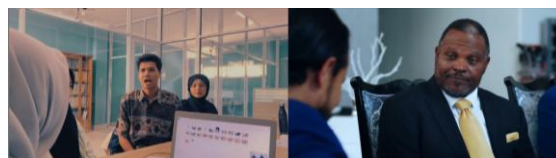
Role Play Method Result					
Indicator	5	4	3	2	1
Performance	✓				
Content Mastery	✓				
Gesture/ Imitation	✓				
Pronunciation	✓				
Design Scene Graphic	✓				

The results of the evaluation of the *application of the role play* method showed that all assessment indicators—

Performance, Content Mastery, Gesture/Imitation, Pronunciation, and Graphic Scene Design—were in category **5 (Very Amazing/Perfect)**. Thus, students achieve an achievement rate of **90–100%** in each aspect measured. This achievement reflects optimal performance quality, characterized by emotional expression and intonation according to the characters, mastery of material without relying on the script, the use of gestures and imitations that resemble real situations, clarity of English pronunciation, and high creativity in designing visual backgrounds that support the communication context.

Overall, these results confirm that *the role play* method is not only effective in improving students' speaking skills but is also able to provide an authentic, interactive, and meaningful learning experience. This shows that the integration of social simulation-based learning strategies can strengthen students' communicative competence comprehensively, while supporting the achievement of the goal of learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

Scene 3



Role Play Method Result					
Indicator	5	4	3	2	1
Performance	✓				
Content Mastery	✓				
Gesture/Imitation	✓				
Pronunciation	✓				
Design Scene Graphic	✓				

The results of the evaluation of the application of the role play method showed that all assessment indicators—*Performance*, *Content Mastery*, *Gesture/Imitation*, *Pronunciation*, and *Graphic Scene Design*—were in category **5 (Very Amazing/Perfect)**. This means that students achieve a **90–100% achievement rate** in each aspect measured. These findings indicate that students' speaking skills are not only significantly developed, but are also supported by emotional expressions that are appropriate to the character, mastery of the material without dependence on the script, the use of gestures and imitations that resemble real situations, clarity of English pronunciation, and creativity in designing visual settings that are relevant to the context of communication.

Academically, maximum achievement in all indicators shows the effectiveness of the *role-play* method as a comprehensive learning strategy. This method not only enhances the linguistic aspect but also strengthens students' social-cognitive competencies through authentic, interactive, and meaningful

learning experiences. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the integration of *role play* in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is able to produce an optimal improvement in speaking skills while supporting the achievement of learning objectives holistically.

Scene 4



Role Play Method Result					
Indicator	5	4	3	2	1
Performance	✓				
Content Mastery	✓				
Gesture/Imitation	✓				
Pronunciation	✓				
Design Scene Graphic	✓				

The results of the evaluation of the application of the role play method showed that all assessment indicators—*Performance*, *Content Mastery*, *Gesture/Imitation*, *Pronunciation*, and *Graphic Scene Design*—were in category **5 (Very Amazing/Perfect)**. This indicates that students achieve an **achievement rate of 90–100%** in each aspect measured.

Academically, this maximum achievement reflects the effectiveness of

the role-play method in improving students' speaking skills comprehensively. *The Performance* indicator shows the ability to express emotions and intonation that matches the character, while *Content Mastery* shows mastery of the material without dependence on the script. The *Gesture/Imitation aspect* emphasizes the suitability of gestures and communication styles with real situations, *Pronunciation* shows clarity of English pronunciation and intonation, and the *Scene Graphic Design* emphasizes students' creativity in presenting relevant visual backgrounds.

Overall, these results confirm that *the role play* method not only improves linguistic aspects but also strengthens students' social-cognitive competence and creativity. With the highest achievement across all indicators, it can be concluded that the integration of *role play* in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is able to produce optimal, authentic, and meaningful speaking quality.

This approach was developed to represent real challenges authentically, channel emotions constructively, and integrate psychological aspects such as attitudes, values, and beliefs to form contextual understanding, affective development, and student character (Premachandran & Navajyothi, 2025).

Roleplay is implemented in two types: script-based, for structured linguistic delivery, and textless, which emphasizes contextual improvisation. Both require careful preparation to support the effectiveness of learning and mastery of communication (Romadhona et al., 2023).

The application of role-playing techniques in language learning is carried out through systematic steps that include reading dialogue examples, role simulations, and providing feedback, thereby supporting practical learning while strengthening students' speaking, reflective, and collaborative skills (Fitriani & Susiati, 2025). The application of role-playing methods in language learning involves six strategic steps—from material selection, scenario design, instruction, role execution, conversation modification, to assessment—that, in an integrated manner, encourage participatory, reflective learning and the development of authentic communication skills (Carpio-Jiménez et al., 2023).

The implementation of role-playing methods in language learning is carried out through strategic planning, development of authentic materials, dialogue training, role simulation, and thorough evaluation to support the practical mastery of communication and

linguistic elements (Cherif, 2017). The role-playing approach places teachers as key actors who actively design, facilitate, and evaluate dynamic and reflective learning in order to encourage students' critical participation and competency development holistically in accordance with social and linguistic contexts (Rikmasari et al., 2021). In the application of the role-playing method, educators act as participants, facilitators, and assessors who actively guide, introduce new

vocabulary, and provide constructive feedback to support practical and contextual language mastery (Nguyen, 2024).

Response to the Application of the Role-Playing Method by Students

No	Statement	4	3	2	1
1	The task of acting out the video (<i>role-playing method</i>) is in accordance with the lecturer's explanation of the competency standards to be achieved	44,4%	50%	0	5,6%
2	The assignment given by the lecturer (<i>role-playing method</i>) is in accordance with my understanding of digital business English learning.	33,3%	61,1%	0	5,6%
3	The assignments given by the lecturer (<i>role-playing method</i>) have fulfilled the elements of the four skills (<i>Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing</i>)	44,4%	50%	0	5,6%
4	The assignments given by the lecturer (<i>role-playing method</i>) are in accordance with the topic of the field of digital business science.	33,3%	61,1%	0	5,6%
5	The assignments given by the lecturer (<i>role-playing method</i>) can achieve the learning goals of digital business English	22,2%	72,2%	0	5,6%
6	The assignments given by the lecturer meet the steps of making a <i>role-playing method</i>	27,8%	66,7%	0	5,6%
7	The <i>role-playing method</i> helped me with my listening skills because I had to listen to the original video over and over again before acting it out	38,9%	55,6%	0	5,6%
8	The <i>role-playing method</i> helped me with my skills because I had to pronounce the dialogue according to the original video before acting it out.	33,3%	61,1%	0	5,6%
9	The <i>role-playing method</i> helped me with my reading skills because I had to read the dialogue according to the original video before acting it out	38,9%	55,6%	0	5,6%
10	The <i>role-playing method</i> helped me with my writing skills because I had to rewrite the dialogue according to the original video before acting it out	27,8%	66,7%	0	5,6%
11	The <i>role-playing method</i> helps me work together in a team with 1 group of friends	33,3%	55,6%	5,6%	5,6%
12	The <i>role-playing method</i> is a fun learning method	33,3%	61,1%	0	5,6%

13	The videos presented meet the elements of similarity with English textbooks	44,4%	50%	0	5,6%
14	The videos presented meet the elements of illustration that are appropriate to the topic of learning English	38,9%	55,6%	0	5,6%

The application of *the role-playing method* in digital business English learning has shown a significant positive impact on students' understanding and skills. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the majority of students gave a high assessment of the effectiveness of the assignments given by lecturers through this approach. The results of the evaluation showed that the application of video acting tasks in digital business English learning was considered in accordance with learning standards and objectives. As many as 94.4% of students stated that the assignment was in line with the lecturer's explanation of competency standards, as well as in accordance with their understanding of the material studied. In fact, the same proportion assessed that this task was able to cover the four main skills in language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In terms of relevance, 94.4% of

respondents stated that the assignment is closely related to the topic of digital business science and supports the achievement of learning objectives. In terms of language skill development, this method has proven to be effective, with 94.5% of students feeling helped in listening, 94.4% in speaking, and 94.5% in reading and writing. In addition, 88.9% of students admitted that this method encourages teamwork, and 94.4% found this approach enjoyable. In terms of the quality of learning media, 94.4% of students stated that the videos used were in accordance with the learning books, and 94.5% rated the illustrations in the videos as relevant to the topic studied.

2. Finding 2 (Research question 2)

The impact that occurs after students apply the Role Play method based on YouTube

Scene	Performance					Content Mastery					Gesture/ Imitation					Pronunciation					Design Scene Graphic					Total	Grade
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1		
1	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
2	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
3	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
4	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
5	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
6	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
7	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					25/25	100
8	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					20/20	100
9		✓							✓					✓					✓					✓		20/25	80
10		✓							✓					✓					✓					✓		21/25	84
11		✓							✓					✓					✓					✓		17/25	68
12	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					20/20	100
13	✓					✓					✓					✓					✓					20/20	100

14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
23	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
28	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
29	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
31	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
32	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25/25	100	
<i>Rata - rata</i>								97,8

Recap of student performance values in *the practice of the role-play method*

No	Students' performance	Average Value
1	1 st Group	97,8
2	2 nd Group	92
3	3 rd Group	80
4	4 th Group	76

Discussion

Role play is more effective than traditional methods because it fosters interactive learning that holistically improves students' English fluency, confidence, and proficiency in authentic communication (Kamengko, 2024). Role-playing creates engaging, interactive language learning that fosters self-expression, confidence, social skills, and deeper language understanding across diverse contexts (Dimastoro et al., 2022). The *role play* method effectively creates active and meaningful language learning by training language aspects, emotional engagement, and student confidence in the context of authentic communication in a holistic manner (Fitriani & Susiati, 2025).

Fun-designed learning, such as *the role play* method, significantly increases student engagement, motivation, and understanding by creating a classroom atmosphere that supports curiosity, active participation, and the development of social and communication skills (Ruiz-Ezquerro, 2021). Role-playing is an

effective learning strategy that enriches vocabulary, improves communicative use, and builds students' confidence in active and structured speaking (Wahyuni et al., 2023). The role-playing method provides an authentic experience that strengthens students' confidence, communication skills, and professional readiness through real-life situation simulations that equip them with relevant competencies and meaningful learning memories (Zhang et al., 2025). The *role play* method has proven to be more effective than the traditional approach because it can significantly increase student involvement. Through this activity, students have the opportunity to organize dialogues independently, develop imagination, and convey ideas creatively and communicatively. The interactions that occur encourage confidence, expand knowledge, improve attitudes, and hone speaking skills. In addition, this approach fosters intrinsic motivation, encourages active participation, and reduces passive tendencies in foreign language learning (Putri et al., 2023).

Although students' English speaking skills are still limited, their enthusiasm and motivation can be maximised through interactive discussion forums that encourage practice, collaboration, and

constructive feedback to improve their confidence and speaking ability gradually (Kamaruzzaman & Maulida, 2025). Students' active participation in learning encourages collaboration that strengthens interpersonal communication, mutual

trust, and shared responsibility, thereby creating an inclusive environment that supports the simultaneous development of social and academic competencies (Artayani, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

The application of *the role play* method in English learning and digital business has been proven to make a significant contribution to improving student competence. This method not only serves as an innovative learning strategy but also as a means of strengthening communication skills that are essential in the modern business world. Through simulated roles that resemble real-life situations in a digital business environment, students are trained to develop four key language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in an integrated manner.

This activity encourages students to be more active, creative, and reflective in understanding the material, as well as increasing their confidence in communicating using foreign languages. More than just improving linguistic skills, *the role play* method also creates a collaborative space that fosters teamwork, problem-solving skills, and collective

decision-making. Students learn to listen to each other, strategize, and communicate ideas effectively in groups, which are important skills in the professional workforce.

Thus, these findings are in line with the topic "*Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency Through Role Play and Digital Media*", as it shows that the integration of *role play* with digital media not only improves EFL students' speaking skills but also strengthens cross-contextual communication skills, builds collaboration, and delivers authentic learning experiences that are relevant to today's professional needs.

The learning atmosphere created through the application of *role play* methods in the context of English and digital business tends to be more fun and interactive. This makes students emotionally and intellectually involved, so that learning motivation increases and the learning process becomes more

meaningful. The high level of student satisfaction with this method shows that *role play* is not only relevant but also practical in bridging theory and practice.

In relation to the topic "*Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency Through Role Play and Digital Media*", these findings confirm that *the role play method* is able to significantly improve EFL students' speaking skills by providing an authentic learning experience. Furthermore, the integration of digital

technologies, the diversification of scenarios, and the training of educators are important steps to optimize the application of these methods in the face of the challenges of 21st-century learning. Thus, digital media-based *role play* not only strengthens linguistic competence but also builds confidence, creativity, and collaborative skills that are essential for students in the global era.

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