

# A Survey on Implementing Role-play as Teaching Activities for Preschools Children in Learning English During Circle Time

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**Abstract---** *Role play has been proven as one of the best activities in learning English to achieve children's development in the area of social and emotion, language, as well as cognitive. Circle time by implementing role play in learning English for preschools children has been explored by researchers in this study as the aim was to determine on how far the preschools teachers implementing role-play as teaching activities in learning English during circle time. The survey used the qualitative approach whereby five preschools teachers in Johor Bahru have been interviewed to collect data. A thematic approach was used to analyse the data. As a result, some activities enhancing children in learning English during circle time and several challengers in implementing role play for improving English during circle time were identified. This survey found that preschool teachers agreed that role play is an interesting activity but not to implement due to few challengers as what have been explained by participants.*

**Keywords---** *Role-Play, Teaching Activities, Preschools Children, Learning English, Circle Time.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Circle-time is considered as addressing re-schoolers' social and emotional needs (Mosley,1996). Mosley describes circle-time as a well-prepared lesson, a plan of action designed to achieve overall aim that can encourage positive relationships and enhance self-esteem through the sharing of thoughts and feelings. In many sessions, circle-time is filled up by variety of activities promote positive behaviour and to improve children's social skills, including cooperative and effectively communicate emotions. (Lang & Mosley, 1993). Furthermore, children can learn and practice social and emotional learning skills such as interact well with others, expressing oneself, respecting friends, leadership qualities, courteous and confidence, within a loving and independent environment (Mosley, 2009).

It has obviously seen that the great preschool experiences can build language and literacy, sciences, mathematics and social studies competencies which finally lead and support high academic achievements (Hennessey,2007). In addition, kindergarten can assist children develop interpersonal interaction and social emotional skills regarding self-regulation. (Durlak, 2011)

As many previous researches have proven the quality session during circle time, the researchers interested to survey of implementing role-play in learning English during circle time among pre-schoolers. This survey conducted to get an overview from pre-schools teachers on how far they conducting their circle time based on certain activity

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and subject. Choosing of implementing role-play in learning English during circle time has resulted from the needs of Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Pre-school to Post-secondary Education) which highlighted eleven shifts to transform the system of Education. Shift 1 provide equal access to quality education of an international standard where one of the mission is to have emphasized on raise quality of all preschools (in all aspects) and encourage universal enrolment by 2020, whereas shift 2 to ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English language due to the only 28% of students achieved a minimum credit in the 2011 SPM English paper against Cambridge 1119 standards. (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). Looking at this existing issue, the researchers decided to choose English as a specific subject.

Apart from that, role play has been chosen as this activity able to enhance children's cognitive, social, and emotional competences (Lee, 2001). Previous studies have shown that role-play enhances communication skills (Altun, 2015), understanding of the specific subject area, such as history, science and math, and children's languages learning and as a cognitive domain. Furthermore, role-play develops interpersonal problem solving, expressing their own feelings, understanding others' feelings, being empathetic to others, self-awareness, and controlling their emotions (Kessler, 2000) as a social and emotional competence.

Previous research in Irish had focused on circle time which widely used in primary schools. It involves children sitting in a circle with their teacher using method-specific techniques and strategies to promote self-esteem, develop skills and support positive classroom relationships (Collins,2011). Research finding indicates that teachers build children's confidence and self-esteem. In addition, children also able to develop personal and social skills. However, challenges include the difficulty of assessment, inappropriate or controversial contributions from children, and the potential exposure of both children and teachers. Based on that previous research, the researchers would like to explore how preschool teachers in Malaysia able to utilized circle time by implementing role play in learning English.

Therefore, the researchers found that the present study aims to investigate the implementation of role play as teaching activities for preschools children in learning English during circle time. The researchers have explored the experience of preschools teachers in conducting circle time by implementing role play as teaching activities in learning English. At the same time, identifying the activities enhancing children in learning English and identifying the challengers in implementing role play for learning English during circle time also have been highlighted as the objectives of this study.

## **II. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This is a qualitative research in which interviews were used as it aims to explore the experience of preschools teachers in implementing role play as teaching activities in learning English during circle time. This preliminary study used qualitative research interview which seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in conducting interviews are to understand the meaning of what the interviewees share and cite. (Kvale,1996). A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (Kvale,1996).

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with five preschool teachers from Johor Bahru and have more than 5 years experiences. This approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analysed and compared. (Searle,1999) All the five preschool teachers were female and were from different Islamic kindergartens as this survey need to get an overview how certain Islamic kindergartens able to conduct effective circle time compared to others. The following questions were asked to the preschool teachers as the researchers would like to explore whether role-play has been used as part of activity in learning English:

1. Does role play become part of your circle time activities?
2. If yes, why do you implement role play during circle time?
3. Are there any guidelines used for implementing role play during circle time?
4. What are your sources or references in conducting role play during circle time?
5. If No, why role play does not been implemented during circle time?
6. Are there any activities during circle time enhancing children in learning English?
7. What are some of the challenges in implementing role play for improving English during circle time?

Thematic analysis was used as the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned as ‘it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis’. A further advantage, especially in a perspective of learning and teaching, is that it is a method rather than a methodology (Braun & Clarke 2006). It means that, unlike many qualitative methodologies, it is not stick to a specific epistemological or theoretical perspective. Hence, this is a very flexible method, a considerable advantage given the diversity of work in learning and teaching.

### III. RESULTS

Table 1 below shows the findings summary resulted from the semi-structured interviews with five Islamic preschools teachers in Johor Bahru as to fulfil a survey on implementing role play as teaching activities for preschools children in learning English during circle time.

Table 1: Findings Summary

Research Question	Yes	No
1. Does role play become part of your circle time activities?	2 out of 5	3 out of 5
Research Question	Sub-Themes	Themes
2.1 If yes, why do you implement role play during circle time?	- children’s involvement - helping children	Beneficial
	- enjoyable activity - enjoyable performance	Entertaining
	- positive element - give co-operation - children feel motivated	Positive Outcomes
	- love acting and play specific role - interesting activities - bonding with children - acting	Love interesting Activity
2.2 If No, why role play does not been implemented during circle time?	- don’t have enough time. - a lot of work to prepare - not easy to handle children	Difficulties in implementing role play
	- no specific book or guidelines	Need specific book or

	- find any simple and easy activities	guidelines
3. Are there any guidelines used for implementing role play during circle time?	- list of social skills development - determine few social skills - instil social skills among children.	List of social skills development
	- children learn positive attitude - encourage teamwork and social interaction - lead to immense enjoyment.	Instil positive attitude
4. What are your sources or references in conducting role play during circle time?	-Identify character and act according to their role - implement role play after read a story book	Based on story books
	- teacher believes that the activity will work - provide necessary support to implement role play.	Teacher efficacy
	- team work - give co-operation - children involvement - explain the instructions - there is interaction	Social Interaction
5. Are there any activities during circle time enhancing children in learning English?	- communicate with their friends in English according to their role. - use certain vocabs in conversation - Use simple sentences to participate in daily conversations	Communication Activities
	- fun and interesting activities will help students in increasing their vocabulary in English.	English Fun and interesting activities
6. What are some of the challenges in implementing role play for improving English during circle time?	- repeating instruction so many times - It needs extra time and practice to help children - not enough time - limited time	Time consuming
	- teacher should master on what steps to take in implementing role play - teachers need to master on how to conduct the session. - teachers need guidelines such as steps to conduct role play in a limited time - Enough guidelines and preparations - teachers need to join any courses in improving themselves	Training and guidelines for teachers

Based on the finding summary above, out of five participants, only two have implemented role play during circle time. A thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Participants' answers have been analysed and grouped in sub-themes and themes as researchers aim to articulate the meaning of each theme and make assumptions with implications for each theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Teachers choose to implement role play during circle time can be seen in several themes namely beneficial, entertaining, positive outcomes and love interesting activities. Whereas those who did not implement it was due to difficulties in implementing role play and the needs for specific book or guidelines.

As the researchers interested to know what are the guidelines used for implementing role play during circle time, two themes were identified which are list of social skills development and the need to instil positive attitude. Besides, sources or references in conducting role play during circle time also have been asked as the researchers interested to know what help teachers in conducting this session. Story books, teacher efficacy and the importance of social interaction are three important themes in explaining the sources. Teacher efficacy is included as participant 4 mentioned, ... "if the teacher believes that the activity will work and the necessary support is provided, it can be

very successful.”. The two teachers which had experienced in conducting circle time have been asked if there are any activities during circle time enhancing children in learning English. Based on their answers, the two themes are identified which are communication activities and fun and interesting activities. Some of the communication activities are communicate with friends in English and use simple sentences to participate in daily conversations.

The last question asked by researchers was some of the challenges in implementing role play for improving English during circle time. All participants have mentioned variety of challenges and based on what have been said, time consuming and the needs of training and guidelines for teachers become two important themes. As participant 2 said... “teachers need guidelines such as steps to conduct role play in a limited time. If not, objectives of learning English through role play activities will not be achieved.”

In conclusion, a result of the survey found that teachers did not implement role play during circle time not because they did not like the activity to be implemented. However, the reasons are more likely challenges for them as teachers have to manage the session wisely.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

This is a survey on implementing role play as teaching activities for preschools children in learning English during circle time. Interviews with five preschools teachers were conducted to explore their experience in this matter. All data then have been analysed to see the themes for every question asked. Two out of five teachers implemented role play during circle time. These two teachers agreed that implementing role play during circle time are beneficial, entertaining, has positive outcomes and love interesting activities. Previous research stated that introduce children with role play in the early stage can expose children to different situations they are likely to face in their future career (Shankar et al, 2012). The themes resulted from the survey agreed as this activity are beneficial and has positive outcomes.

Based on the result, teachers able to implement role play during circle time due to specific guidelines they were referring to. The list of social skills development was used as this document provides variety of children’s skills to be instilled. Thus, researchers agree with this as previous researcher also have found the same result. It was said that circle time provides a conducive platform where preschools children able to learn and experience social and emotional learning skills such as listening, respecting others, expressing oneself and problems solving within a caring, inclusive and democratic environment (Mosley, 2009).

Circle-time is frequently portrayed as a particular time when activities can be implemented to promote positive behaviour and to improve children’s social skills, including cooperative and turn taking skills (Lang & Mosley, 1993). As some teachers in this survey said that social interaction during circle time instil children to experience team work, co-operation and children involvement in activities.

As this survey explore how far teachers implement role play during circle time in enhancing children in learning English, researchers found that teachers have implemented communication activities and English fun and interesting activities as their options. Therefore, role play is preferable to be implemented. Role-play strategies have proven their effectiveness in teaching English to children, as role-play can increase students' enthusiasm, self-confidence,

and empathy, and encourage critical thinking. Using role-play can educate children exposing to language, which is considered as the key factor to speed up the process of learning language. Moreover, conducting role-play activities can provide an enjoyable learning environment where children enjoy using the vocabs and language.

The use of role-play activities develops communication skills and children are encouraged to understand and memorize vocabulary learning through conversational activities. Children find difficulty in learning English language vocabulary due to limited vocabulary, words are wrongly used, inappropriate terms and poor pronunciation (Afdillah, 2015). The researchers agree with previous findings due to participants answer in interview which implement certain communication skills and practise English by asking children to communicate with their friends in English according to their role, use certain vocabs in conversation and use simple sentences to participate in daily conversations

It is important for the researchers to explore more on how to handle certain challengers and obstacles given by participants during interview sessions. The problem of time consuming and the need for guidelines and training were among the themes being highlighted by them for not implementing role play during circle time.

## V. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this study fulfilled its objectives. The findings through the qualitative method were expected to clarify a survey on implementing role play as teaching activities in learning English during circle time. The result of this survey become part of the researchers' preliminary study.

Circle time is seen as one of the best sessions during the lesson. Therefore, teachers prepared variety of interesting activities to trigger children's attention and interest. To make sure the circle time succeed, preparing content of circle time is a good start for preschools teachers. Having systematic guidelines and proper sources will be able to help teachers in implementing any activities including role play during circle.

To sum up, this survey is beneficial for the researchers as the result will help them to come up with suggestive activities and interesting strategies on how to conduct circle time in preschools. Helping preschools teachers in educating children also will be the important part in education. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the preschools teachers to seek for sources and guidelines in implementing activities during circle time to ensure the upbringing children of their pre-schoolers.

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