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DEVELOPING DIALOGIC SPEECH IN INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL GROUPS THROUGH ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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Abstract. The development of dialogic speech is an essential component of communication, social interaction, and early learning in preschool children. In inclusive preschool groups, children may have different linguistic abilities, communication needs, developmental characteristics, and levels of social participation. Therefore, teachers need flexible and accessible strategies that encourage every child to participate in meaningful communication. This article examines the potential of role-playing games as a pedagogical tool for developing dialogic speech in inclusive preschool education. The study employs a qualitative, literature-informed analytical approach to explore the relationship between role-play, verbal interaction, turn-taking, questioning, listening, and cooperative communication.

Keywords: inclusive education, preschool children, dialogic speech, role-playing games, communication skills, social interaction.

INTRODUCTION

he development of dialogic speech is an important aspect of preschool education because it enables children to communicate their needs, express ideas, ask questions, respond to others, and participate in social activities. Dialogic speech involves more than the production of individual words or sentences. It requires children to listen to their communication partners, understand the context of a conversation, take turns, and maintain meaningful interaction.

In inclusive preschool groups, the development of dialogic speech requires particular pedagogical attention. Children may differ in their vocabulary, speech fluency, comprehension, confidence, and preferred ways of communicating. Some children may need additional time to formulate responses, while others may benefit from visual prompts, gestures, simplified instructions, or alternative forms of communication. An inclusive learning environment should recognize these differences and provide opportunities for every child to participate. Play is a natural context for young children's learning and social development. Through play, children explore social roles, imitate everyday situations, express emotions, and interact with peers. Role-playing games are especially relevant because they create situations in which communication has a clear purpose. For example, when children play a shop, hospital, family, or restaurant, they need to ask questions, provide information, make requests, and respond to the actions of others.

The theoretical foundations of this approach can be related to Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in children's development. In addition, Parten's work on social participation in play provides a useful perspective for examining how children engage with peers during play activities. These perspectives support the

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pedagogical value of organizing collaborative and developmentally appropriate play experiences. Although role-playing games are widely used in early childhood education, their purposeful application to dialogic speech development in inclusive preschool groups requires systematic planning. Activities should be designed not only to encourage children to speak but also to promote reciprocal communication, active listening, and participation among children with different communication needs.

The aim of this article is to examine how role-playing games can be organized and adapted to support the development of dialogic speech in inclusive preschool groups.

The article addresses the following research questions:

What dialogic speech skills can be encouraged through role-playing games?

How can role-playing activities be adapted to the diverse communication needs of preschool children?

What pedagogical strategies can teachers use to support meaningful interaction during inclusive play?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of social interaction in children's cognitive and language development. From a sociocultural perspective, communication with adults and peers provides opportunities for children to develop new language skills through guided participation. This theoretical approach is relevant to role-playing games because children communicate while negotiating roles, exchanging ideas, and responding to others within shared activities.

Bruner (1983) also highlighted the importance of interaction between children and adults in language acquisition. His work suggests that language develops through meaningful communicative experiences rather than through the memorization of isolated linguistic forms. In preschool settings, role-playing games can create such experiences by encouraging children to use questions, responses, requests, and expressions of preference in familiar social situations.

Research on play-based learning further supports the educational value of collaborative activities. Bodrova and Leong (2007) discussed the significance of play in early childhood development, particularly its relationship with self-regulation and the internalization of social rules. From this perspective, role-playing activities can provide opportunities for children to practise communication while learning to follow shared rules, coordinate actions, and maintain interaction with peers.

Research conducted by scholars in Uzbekistan has also addressed the relationship between play and speech development. Normatova (2022), in the article The Role of Play in the Development of Speech in Preschool Education, examined the use of didactic games in preschool speech development. The study provides a useful basis for considering games as a means of enriching children's language experiences and supporting speech-related learning activities. However, its focus on speech development through didactic games differs from the specific emphasis of the present article on dialogic interaction in inclusive groups.

Bakirova (2023), in Methods of Teaching Dialogic Speech to Preschool Children, examined approaches to teaching dialogue to older preschool children and discussed the gradual development of conversational skills. This work is particularly relevant because it addresses

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dialogic speech directly. Its pedagogical focus supports the need to organize communication systematically and to provide children with opportunities to practise conversational exchanges. The present article extends this discussion by considering how role-playing games can be adapted to children's diverse communication needs in inclusive environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis identifies several ways in which role-playing games may support dialogic speech development in inclusive preschool groups. These findings represent a conceptual analysis of pedagogical possibilities rather than experimentally verified outcomes. Role-playing games place language within familiar social situations. Instead of repeating isolated words, children use language to achieve specific goals, such as requesting an object, obtaining information, offering help, or expressing a preference.

For example, during a restaurant game, a child acting as a waiter may ask, “What would you like to eat?” The customer may respond, “I would like some soup.” The waiter may then ask, “Would you like some water?” This sequence encourages children to connect questions and answers within a shared context. Such activities can provide opportunities to practice vocabulary, sentence construction, listening, and conversational responsiveness. Repeated participation also allows children to become familiar with common conversational patterns.

Dialogic communication requires children to recognize when to speak and when to listen. However, some preschool children may find it difficult to wait for their turn, follow another speaker's message, or respond in a way that maintains the conversation. Role-playing games can make these expectations more concrete. Teachers may introduce a visual speaking card that children pass to one another, indicating whose turn it is to speak. Picture sequences and simple rules can also help children understand the order of interactions.

For example, during a family game, one child may ask, “What shall we cook today?” Another child can suggest a meal, and a third child can respond by offering an additional idea. The teacher encourages children to listen to each other's suggestions before making decisions. These strategies may help establish predictable communication routines and encourage more balanced participation.

An inclusive approach does not require every child to participate in exactly the same way. Instead, it provides different routes to meaningful participation. The following table presents examples of adaptations that teachers may use during role-playing activities. The teacher plays an important role in creating an environment in which children feel comfortable communicating. Effective facilitation involves modelling conversational expressions, introducing useful vocabulary, encouraging peer interaction, and responding positively to children’s attempts to communicate. However, excessive teacher intervention may reduce opportunities for children to communicate independently. Instead of providing every answer, the teacher can use open-ended prompts such as:

“What would you like to do next?”

“How can you ask your friend for help?”

“What do you think your friend wants?”

“What could you say to continue the conversation?”

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The teacher can also extend children's utterances without criticizing their speech. If a child says, "Apple," the teacher might respond, "You would like an apple. You can say, 'I would like an apple, please.'" This approach provides a language model while preserving the child's communicative intention. Observation is equally important. Teachers should record whether children initiate communication, respond to peers, use new expressions, and participate in turn-taking. Such records can inform the selection of subsequent activities and the level of support provided.

Role-playing games offer a practical way to create meaningful communication opportunities in inclusive preschool groups. By participating in familiar social situations, children can practise initiating conversations, asking and answering questions, taking turns, expressing preferences, and responding to their peers. The analysis highlights three essential conditions for effective implementation: purposeful communication tasks, flexible adaptations for individual needs, and teacher support that encourages rather than replaces children's interaction. Activities such as "At the Shop," "At the Restaurant," and "At the Hospital" can be integrated into everyday preschool routines. Their educational value can be strengthened through visual prompts, accessible materials, clear conversational roles, and systematic observation of children's participation.

An important principle of inclusive practice is that successful communication should not be assessed exclusively through the length or grammatical complexity of spoken responses. Children's intentions, responsiveness, participation, and use of different communication methods should also be considered.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, role-playing games can be incorporated into a broader pedagogical framework for developing dialogic speech in inclusive preschool education. Future studies should test the proposed framework in real preschool settings, using clearly defined indicators and appropriate pre- and post-intervention assessments to establish its effectivenes.

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