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The Implementation of Play-Based Learning in English Vocabulary Learning at Kindergarten Learners Level

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Abstrak

Masa kanak-kanak awal merupakan fase penting bagi perkembangan bahasa dan interaksi sosial. Meskipun *Play-Based Learning* (PBL) telah lama diakui mampu mendukung kreativitas dan pertumbuhan emosional, potensinya dalam penguasaan kosakata bahasa kedua masih jarang diteliti. Di RA Anak Emas, pengajaran bahasa Inggris telah diintegrasikan melalui penerapan PBL. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bagaimana PBL mendukung pembelajaran kosakata anak usia dini. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian melibatkan 18 anak berusia 4–6 tahun yang diamati selama delapan minggu melalui observasi nonpartisipan terstruktur. Analisis menggunakan tipologi permainan *Edwards Open-ended, Modeled Play*, dan *Purposefully-Framed Play* dengan fokus pada penggunaan kosakata dan keterlibatan sosial, seperti giliran berbicara, kerja sama, dan produksi bahasa spontan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga jenis permainan mendorong partisipasi aktif, penggunaan kosakata secara kontekstual, dan kolaborasi antar teman sebaya. Selain itu, muncul perilaku berulang yang mencerminkan empati dan inisiatif kognitif yang tidak tercakup dalam kerangka Edwards. Untuk itu, peneliti mengusulkan kategori baru, yaitu *Interpersonal Constructive Play*, yang menekankan interaksi kaya emosi dan berbasis ide, yang kerap terabaikan dalam taksonomi permainan tradisional. Kontribusi ini memperluas kerangka teoretis PBL dengan menegaskan pentingnya keseimbangan antara permainan terstruktur dan ruang bagi ekspresi spontan, empati, serta keterlibatan kognitif. Temuan ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pendidik dan perancang kurikulum dalam menciptakan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih holistik dan inklusif bagi anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: anak usia dini, , kosa kata bahasa inggris, kualitatif, play-based learning

Abstract

Early childhood is a critical stage for language development and social interaction. While Play-Based Learning (PBL) is widely recognized for fostering creativity and emotional growth, its specific potential in supporting second language vocabulary acquisition remains underexplored. At RA Anak Emas, where English instruction has long been integrated into classroom activities, PBL has been systematically implemented. This study aimed to explore how PBL supports kindergarteners' vocabulary learning within this context. Adopting a qualitative descriptive approach, the study observed 18 children aged 4–6 years over eight weeks through structured non-participant observation. Guided by Edwards' typology Open-ended, Modeled Play, and Purposefully-Framed Play the analysis focused on indicators of vocabulary use and social engagement, including turn-taking, cooperation, and spontaneous language production. Findings revealed that the three types of play fostered active participation, contextual vocabulary use, and peer collaboration. Notably, recurring behaviors reflecting empathy and cognitive initiative emerged beyond Edwards' framework. To capture this dimension, the researchers propose an additional category: Interpersonal Constructive Play, which highlights emotionally rich, idea-driven interactions often overlooked in traditional play taxonomies. This conceptual contribution extends the theoretical landscape of PBL by emphasizing the importance of balancing structured activities with opportunities for spontaneous, empathetic, and cognitively active

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engagement. The study offers practical implications for early childhood educators and curriculum designers seeking to create holistic and inclusive English learning experiences for young learners.
***Keywords**: Play-Based Learning, Qualitative, English Vocabulary, Early Childhood*

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Introduction

Early childhood education is a critical period for basic development, especially in the areas of language acquisition and social interaction. Young children demonstrate natural curiosity and enthusiasm, making them highly responsive to immersive and experience-based learning approaches. One of the most developmentally appropriate and effective methods at this stage is PBL (Play-Based Learning) (Meaney et al., 2024), which encourages active participation, intrinsic motivation, and meaningful involvement through play (Davis et al., 2019). While play is often associated with social-emotional and motor development, it also offers significant potential for language learning, particularly vocabulary acquisition in a second language such as English. At this age, children build vocabulary not through mechanical memorization, but through contextual, engaging, and repeated exposure to words during play activities. Integrating English vocabulary into play-based scenarios helps young children form connections between words and real-life experiences, leading to better retention and usage.

In second language acquisition, vocabulary is not typically acquired through rote memorization but rather through repeated, contextualized, and engaging exposure. Embedding vocabulary into play allows children to connect words with lived experiences, enhancing retention and use in authentic situations. Edwards (2017), categorizes play into three types: open-ended, modeled, and purposefully framed. Each form provides different opportunities for language and social development, ranging from spontaneous peer-led conversations to teacher-scaffolded and goal-oriented tasks.

Modelled play, where teachers participate and demonstrate language use, introduces new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. These supports the scaffolding process, where learners gradually internalize and use new words observed during modelled interactions. Purposely designed games, guided by specific learning objectives (such as naming colors or identifying actions in English), allow for targeted vocabulary instruction while maintaining the excitement and social involvement of the game. These types of games not only provide rich language input but also create opportunities for interaction, turn-taking, and cooperative problem-solving (Welding, 2022). Moreover, the dynamic nature of play allows for multisensory engagement, which is essential for young learners who thrive through hands-on and experiential activities. When children are physically, emotionally, and socially involved in an activity, their learning becomes more meaningful and long-lasting. Through imaginative and symbolic play, they can simulate real-life scenarios that enrich their understanding and support language use in authentic situations. For example, acting as a shopkeeper or a doctor not only enhances social interaction but also encourages the spontaneous use of new vocabulary. Incorporating storytelling, singing, and thematic props in play sessions helps reinforce language patterns while building the children's confidence to speak.

In such playful environments, children feel safe to make mistakes, try new words, and express themselves freely. Peer interactions also play a significant role in supporting language growth, as children naturally absorb and practice vocabulary during meaningful conversations with their friends. These peer exchanges often occur spontaneously, creating real-time opportunities for language development. Therefore, integrating vocabulary instruction into engaging play experiences enables children to use new words contextually, helping them retain and apply the language in a way that is both enjoyable and effective. When vocabulary

instruction is integrated into interactive social games, children are more likely to engage in meaningful communication, practice using new words, and reinforce their understanding through collaboration with peers (Astutik et al., 2022).

Several empirical studies underscore the positive role of play in vocabulary development. Howell (2024) demonstrated that guided play in pre-primary classrooms significantly boosts sight word recognition and incidental vocabulary acquisition. Newman (2019) found that adult-supported play, including guided and directed play following shared book reading, produced greater gains in both receptive and expressive vocabulary compared to free play; the improvements persisted over a two-week delay. In a comparative study in Taiwan, Tang (2020) found that game-based learning supports autonomous English vocabulary acquisition among preschoolers, particularly effective when introducing a limited number of words daily.

This study was conducted at RA Anak Emas, an early childhood education institution in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, which consistently integrates English instruction into its curriculum through Play-Based Learning (PBL). The school was selected because PBL is systematically embedded in daily learning activities, providing an authentic context for examining how vocabulary is acquired through different types of play.

This school was selected because it has regularly implemented English instruction as part of its early childhood curriculum, making it a relevant setting for investigating vocabulary learning in young learners. Integrating vocabulary learning into game-based activities offers an alternative that is more developmentally appropriate and engaging for young students (Davern, 2019). PBL has been widely recognized for promoting creativity, emotional regulation, and social development (Hill, M., & McCoy, 2018), but its potential as a tool for language acquisition, especially in the context of a second language, remains underutilized in early childhood education settings. Most existing literature emphasizes cognitive or emotional outcomes without explaining how a structured, yet enjoyable environment can enhance language and interpersonal development (Ayling, 2012). This study aims to address this gap by exploring how integrating English vocabulary instruction into various forms of classroom games affects both language mastery and social interaction among kindergarten students. This research focuses not only on vocabulary development but also on the nature of children's involvement, peer relationships, and communicative competence in a play-based learning environment. By exploring the intersection of social and linguistic development through the lens of PBL, this study aims to provide practical insights for early childhood educators in designing effective and holistic learning experiences. Specifically, this study will answer the question: How does Play-Based Learning support English vocabulary learning among kindergarten students?

Method

This study used a Descriptive Qualitative research design to explore how play-based learning activities support the development of English vocabulary and social interaction among kindergarten learners. This approach enables detailed observation of naturally occurring behaviors in classroom settings, with attention to how different types of play contribute to students' linguistic and social development. The research was conducted at RA Anak Emas, involving 18 students aged 4–6 years old and 2 classroom teachers. The school was selected due to its consistent implementation of English instruction within a play-based framework. While English has been taught for several years at the institution, this study focused specifically on the integration of vocabulary learning into play-based activities, guided by the framework of Edwards, (2017): Open-ended play: spontaneous, child-led play. Modelled play: play activities demonstrated or scaffolded by teachers. Purposefully-framed play: structured play with explicit learning goals.

Data were collected exclusively through non-participant classroom observation, using a structured observation table adapted from the typology of play by Edwards (2017). The observation instrument was developed to document specific indicators across two key domains: Vocabulary development including indicators such as: Spontaneous use of English vocabulary during play, repetition and retention of newly introduced words, use of words in contextually appropriate situations. Social interaction including: Turn-taking and cooperation, verbal negotiation and expression, conflict resolution and peer assistance. Observations were conducted three times per week over a period of eight weeks. Each observation session lasted approximately 30

minutes and took place during classroom activities designed to represent one or more types of play (open-ended, modelled, or purposefully-framed). The observation table was validated by early childhood education experts to ensure relevance and clarity of the behavioral indicators.

Data analysis in this study followed several systematic steps to ensure clarity and relevance. First, the observation checklist data were rewritten into descriptive narratives to capture detailed behaviors during play activities. This data was then categorized according to Edwards' typology (2017) of open-ended play, modeled play, and purposefully framed play - based on the nature of the observed interactions and vocabulary use. An editing process was applied to filter out unrelated behaviors, focusing only on indicators of English vocabulary acquisition and social interaction. The filtered data was then summarized and analyzed to identify patterns of how different types of games facilitated communication, cooperation, and language use.

Results and Discussion

Results

To gain a deeper understanding of how Play-Based Learning affects children's social interactions and their English vocabulary development, a series of classroom observations were conducted over a three-week period. These observations were based on a structured checklist instrument, developed in accordance with Edwards typology of play, which includes open-ended play, modeled play, and purposefully designed play. Additionally, two emerging aspects, empathy and cognitive initiative, were included as potential extensions of this framework, conceptualized within the proposed Interpersonal-Constructive Play dimension. The observation tool not only recorded the presence of specific behaviors but also documented the richness of children's actions, expressions, and verbal interactions during play. This approach allows for a broader depiction of how play not only facilitates involvement and enjoyment but also meaningful peer relationships and language use in an authentic classroom environment. Table 1 summarizes the aspects observed in Play-Based Learning and illustrates how various forms of play support student developmental progress over a three-week period.

Table 1. Observed Aspects of Play-Based Learning in Relation adapted from (Edwards, 2017) Play Framework

No	Aspects of PBL	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Function of PBL	Examples of Activities / Utterances
		Game Type				
		Role Modeling (Market, Tailor-Customer)	Playing blocks, puzzles	Snake ladder, forming something from sand		
		Vocabulary Theme				
		Fruits & Colors [apple, banana, red, green, shirt, pants]	Toys & Common [block, doll, puzzle, crayon, bag, pen]	Shapes & Latters [circle, square, triangle, letter A, letter B]		
Open-Ended Play						
1	Student involvement in play activities	✓	✓	✓	Students seem enthusiastic, energic in every game, especially when role-playing.	“I'm the seller, you buy it, ya”
2	Students' emotional involvement (expressions of happiness, satisfaction, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	Children seem happy, often smiling and laughing while playing.	The child laughs when he sees his friend's block falling

3	Cooperation and collaboration in groups	✓	✓	✓	Students share tasks in construction games and role-playing.	"Please, hold my blocks, ya"
4	Verbal and nonverbal interaction between students	✓	✓	✓	Interaction increases as group play begins.	The child points to a puzzle and invites his friend to put it together
6	Nonverbal communication (gestures, facial expressions)	✓	✓	✓	Enthusiastic gestures and happy expressions are often seen during play.	Child measures waist to measure clothes
Modelled Play						
7	Courage to take an active role	✓	✓	✓	Children confidently choose roles and perform in front of friends.	"Miss, I want to build a tower"
8	Ability to listen to teacher instructions	✓	✓	✓	Children listen to the teacher's instructions with focus during the play session.	The teacher said "Shape square from sand" child makes without repetition
Purposefully Framed Play						
9	Active involvement in game roles	✓	✓	✓	Children actively choose roles and follow the rules of the game.	"I'm a trader, jualan sayur ya, Miss?
10	Focus and concentration during play	✓	✓	✓	Children can focus for 15–20 minutes per game session.	Children focus on building a building out of blocks for 15 minutes
11	Willingness to wait for a turn to play	✓	✓	✓	Children can queue and wait patiently for their turn.	Queue to pay at checkout
Interpersonal-Constructive Play						
12	Concern about the feelings or needs of friends (potensi novelty)	✓	✓	✓	Children show empathy when friends are struggling.	"I'll help you to membangun the blocks, ya."
13	Activeness in asking questions or giving new ideas	✓	✓	✓	Some children give new game ideas during group play sessions.	"Let's play puzzle, Miss"

Table 1 presents the implementation of the observation over three weeks; it appears consistently that children show active involvement as well as high social-emotional participation in various game-based learning activities. The variety of activities range from imaginative role-playing, such as pretending to be a market trader or tailor, to more structured games such as arranging blocks, solving puzzles, playing snake and ladder, and forming sand. Each activity provides a unique context to observe how students interact, communicate, and respond emotionally and cognitively to the assigned tasks. Children actively take the initiative in setting roles, inviting playmates, sharing toys, and expressing joy and empathy throughout the session. For example, one child confidently says, *"I'm the seller, you buy it, ya"* while another helps

his friend build a tower block by saying, *"Please hold my blocks, ya"* Their facial expressions, laughter, and spontaneous conversation indicate a lively social environment and support the natural development of language and social competence through play. All these findings were documented using structured observation sheets adapted from Edwards' game typology (Edwards, 2017) and supplemented with contextual field records. From this series of observations, certain behavior patterns began to appear that showed a variety of interactions and learning strategies influenced by the type and structure of the game carried out. These behaviors are then classified based on three categories of play according to (Edwards, 2017): open-ended play, modelled play, and purposefully-framed play. However, there were also two additional behavioral patterns that consistently appeared in each session, namely empathy for peers and spontaneity in proposing new ideas. These two characteristics cannot be fully included in the existing typological category, thus giving rise to the need for further theoretical reflection on the unique contribution of this form of involvement to the child's learning process.

Open-Ended Play is characterized by interactions that are entirely initiated by the child, with flexibility in taking on social roles. Children are given the freedom to create narratives, set the flow of the game, and set their own rules without adult intervention. This type of game encourages independence, peer-to-peer negotiation, and emotional expression. For example, when a child laughs at the sight of their friend's block tower collapsing or invites their friend to solve a puzzle together, they are engaging in a spontaneous but meaningful social exchange. These findings are in line with the concept of open play from (Edwards, 2017), which emphasizes exploratory learning that arises naturally from children's own interests and interactions.

In contrast, Modeled Play reflects a form of interaction facilitated by teachers, where guidance is provided through demonstrations and verbal instruction. The results of the observation showed that students were able to pay close attention to the teacher's directions and showed increased confidence when taking active roles. For example, when the teacher gives the instruction*, "Shape square from sand,"* the children do so without the need for excessive repetition of commands, demonstrating their ability to apply the modeled actions independently. This supports the view that modelled games serve as a scaffolding tool for cognitive and linguistic development, especially in the early stages of vocabulary acquisition.

On the other hand, Purposefully Framed Play involves more structured activities with clear rules and specific learning objectives. Activities such as role-playing games that involve turn-by-turn or board games with rules encourage children to focus, follow directions, and use language intentionally. For example, students learn to wait their turn patiently while role-playing as cashiers and customers, using polite expressions, and obeying the rules of the game. These moments reflect (Edwards, 2017) description of directional play as an effective means of combining learning objectives with fun involvement.

Outside of these three categories, the study identified patterns of behavior that were repetitive and prominent but not accommodated within (Edwards, 2017) framework, namely the expression of empathy and the child's initiative in creating new ideas during play. Children actively provide support to friends who are struggling and propose new activities, such as *"I'll help you membangun the blocks,"* and *"Let's play puzzles, Miss."* These behaviors are not entirely spontaneous or structured but rather reflect a form of play rooted in relational sensitivity and cognitive leadership. To illustrate this phenomenon, we propose an additional category called Interpersonal-Constructive Play which is a form of play that emphasizes empathic interaction, collaborative creation of meaning, and the contribution of ideas that arise naturally in the social context of play.

In addition to observing different types of play, this study also tracked students' vocabulary development across specific thematic units introduced weekly. The following description highlights how students progressed in acquiring and using English words related to fruits & colors, toys & common objects, and shapes & letters. In the fruits & colors theme, children were initially hesitant to name the fruits in English. However, by the third and fourth sessions, they began using words like "apple", "banana", and "red" confidently, especially during role-play as market sellers and buyers. These words were used both in naming and in simple phrases like "This is red." In the toys & common objects theme, students demonstrated progress by recognizing and naming classroom items during puzzle and drawing activities. For

example, words such as “book”, “crayon”, “doll”, and “bag” became part of their expressive vocabulary. They also used them to offer or request items during peer interaction, showing functional use. The shapes & letters theme was introduced through sand play and structured drawing games. At first, students only followed shapes nonverbally, but over time they began saying terms like “circle”, “square”, and even attempting to pronounce letter names such as “A” and “B” during their creative activities. This suggests early phonological awareness alongside vocabulary recall. Overall, vocabulary improvement was not only seen in individual word recall but also in the students’ ability to use these words contextually, both while interacting with peers and responding to teacher prompts.

The addition of this category expands (Edwards, 2017) typology by including developmental aspects that combine emotional intelligence and cognitive initiative, two important elements that are very real in the context of early childhood education, but are underrepresented in existing game frameworks. By recognizing Interpersonal-Constructive Play, educators gain a deeper lens to identify as well as facilitate the high-level social-cognitive competencies that develop through play. Pedagogically, this shows that a game-based learning environment should not only support autonomy, guidance, and structure, but also deliberately foster empathy, leadership, and collaboration of ideas. In the context of learning English vocabulary, this kind of environment becomes increasingly valuable because it allows language to grow through emotionally meaningful interactions, supported by peers, and initiated by the child's own initiative. Therefore, *Play-Based Learning*, which is designed and interpreted reflectively through established and new frameworks, provides a holistic pathway to encourage language development, social competence, and interpersonal growth in early childhood.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Play-Based Learning (PBL) approach is simultaneously able to encourage the development of English vocabulary and improve social interaction skills in early childhood. During the three-week classroom observation process, it was seen that the children were actively involved in various forms of play, both directed by the teacher and those that emerged spontaneously from student initiative. Activities such as role-playing, arranging blocks, playing sand, and board games such as snakes and ladders, have proven to be effective mediums in creating natural interactions (Hatfield et al., 2016), using vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and fostering the value of cooperation and empathy between children (Mpella et al., 2019).

These findings provide reinforcement to the results of previous studies that stated that learning through play contributes not only to cognitive aspects, but also to support social and emotional development integrally (Kroll, 2017; Hansmann, 2022; Ali et al., 2018). In the context of play, children gain the opportunity to expand their vocabulary, practice active listening, respond to social situations, share, and resolve conflicts independently. Research conducted by LaGamba (2018) and Tilbe & Gai (2022) also emphasized that classroom routines that integrate play provide a natural opportunity for children to acquire new languages through repetition in meaningful contexts. The results of observations in this study support these findings, where students are more enthusiastic and expressive in using English when playing compared to during formal instructional activities. The analysis of the results of the study using the game typology framework proposed by Edwards (2017), which includes Open-Ended Play, Modelled Play, and Purposefully-Framed Play, shows that each type of play, plays an important role in the child's learning process. In open-ended play, it appears that students demonstrate the ability to lead the game independently, negotiate, and communicate without direct intervention from the teacher. These results are in line with the views of Moore et al., (2014), who stated that free play encourages self-expression and social exploration at large. In modelled play, students show a positive response to the teacher's stimulation through imitation of verbal expressions and actions, indicating the existence of a deep scaffolding in the language acquisition process. Edwards (2017) stated that the role of teachers in modeling games can form a more directed learning structure. Meanwhile, in purposefully framed play, children are seen actively following the rules of educational games, such as snakes and ladders used to introduce numbers and instructions in English. Research by Parker & Thomsen (2019) also supports the idea that structured play can develop social and academic competence simultaneously.

In light of these findings, it becomes increasingly clear that the integration of vocabulary instruction into play activities fosters a form of experiential learning that combines emotion, cognition, and interaction. Notably, children were found to engage more confidently with new words when they had autonomy in the play process. For example, during child-initiated games, students often repeated vocabulary modeled by the teacher but with their own variations and in their own contexts, suggesting deeper internalization. Additionally, emotional cues such as laughter, encouragement, or problem-solving expressions were often accompanied by language use, indicating a strong connection between affective engagement and vocabulary production. This also highlights how language learning in early childhood should be viewed not only from a cognitive perspective but also through a socio-emotional lens. In educational practice, this means that vocabulary teaching should be embedded in interactive, affect-rich environments. This is supported by constructivist theories which argue that children build knowledge actively and socially. Hence, teachers should not only guide play through specific learning targets but also act as co-players and facilitators who scaffold vocabulary in moments of social interaction. In this way, learning becomes a collaborative journey, grounded in mutual trust, engagement, and communicative purpose.

However, the study also found dimensions of the play experience that were not fully covered in all three categories of play according to Edwards (2017), especially in the aspects of empathy and thought leadership shown by children. In this context, students not only play, but also show emotional attention to friends as well as the ability to propose game ideas reflectively. For example, they often offer help or suggest new games that can be played together. Therefore, the researcher proposes an additional dimension called *interpersonal-constructive play*, which is a form of play that emphasizes empathetic, collaborative, and initiative thinking from within the child. This concept reflects that play is not just a social activity, but also a space for the formation of affective relationships and cognitive initiative that are an important foundation for the development of 21st-century skills (Kesäläinen et al., 2022; Charles & Mumuni, 2018). The theoretical contribution of this study also enriches the discourse on the importance of *intentional teaching* in the context of play-based learning. This is in line with the opinion of Hedges & Cooper (2018) and Edwards (2017), who highlight the importance of a balance between spontaneous play and clear learning goals. In this case, *interpersonal-constructive play* can be seen as a form of link between children's freedom of expression and the pedagogical structure designed by educators. These findings are reinforced by Lamrani & Abdelwahed (2020) and Farida & Rasyid (2019), which concluded that the effectiveness of PBL is highly dependent on the quality of social interaction and emotional involvement that children experience in play activities.

In terms of practical implementation, the results of this study provide direction for early childhood educators to design a learning environment that is not only rich in games but also provides space for the emergence of student empathy, creativity, and initiative. The PBL approach needs to be understood comprehensively as a pedagogical strategy that includes cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic aspects in a balanced manner (Wood, 2014; Mardell et al., 2016; Irvin, 2017). In a broader framework, national education policies and curricula also need to pay more attention to this approach in order to be optimally integrated into daily educational practices. In conclusion, this study not only strengthens the existing theory, but also expands it by introducing a new category in the typology of games. The *interpersonal-constructive play* dimension is expected to be a starting point for further research, as well as provide inspiration for curriculum development, teacher training, and learning design that is more contextual, inclusive, and in accordance with the needs of children in this modern era.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Play-Based Learning (PBL) provides a developmentally appropriate context for supporting English vocabulary use and fostering social interaction among kindergarten learners. Through systematic observations at RA Anak Emas, it was found that various types of play open-ended, modeled, and purposefully framed offered natural opportunities for children to engage in meaningful communication, peer cooperation, and emotional involvement. Notably, children demonstrated initiative, empathy, and spontaneous language production during play activities, suggesting that play serves not only as a pedagogical approach

but also as a social space that nurtures interpersonal growth. The study also identifies the emergence of a new dimension, Interpersonal Constructive Play, which highlights children's ability to express empathy and generate new ideas, extending beyond Edwards' (2017) established play typology. Rather than claiming effectiveness, this research emphasizes that PBL creates rich and authentic environments where children's vocabulary learning intertwines with social and emotional engagement. These findings contribute conceptually by broadening the theoretical framework of PBL, and practically by offering insights for educators to design classroom settings that balance structured learning goals with opportunities for spontaneous, empathetic, and cognitively active interaction. Future studies may further investigate how these play dimensions shape children's long-term linguistic and socio-emotional development across varied contexts.

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