



INTEGRATING DIDACTIC GAMES INTO THE CURRICULUM AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17950623>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 13th December 2025

Accepted: 14th December 2025

Online: 15th December 2025

KEYWORDS

didactic games, curriculum integration, communicative interaction, primary education, learner-centered learning, game-based instruction, classroom communication

ABSTRACT

The integration of didactic games into the primary school curriculum has become an increasingly important strategy for enhancing communicative interaction among young learners. Communicative interaction plays a vital role in learners' cognitive, social, and emotional development, particularly at the primary level where language and social skills are actively formed. This article explores the pedagogical value of integrating didactic games into the curriculum as a means of fostering communicative interaction among primary school learners. It examines the theoretical foundations of game-based learning, the role of the teacher in curriculum integration, and the pedagogical conditions necessary for effective implementation. The study highlights that systematically planned didactic games promote learner engagement, cooperation, and meaningful communication. The findings suggest that curriculum-based use of didactic games significantly enhances communicative interaction and supports learner-centered instruction in primary education.

Introduction. Communicative interaction is a core objective of modern primary education, as it directly influences learners' academic achievement, socialization, and overall development. In contemporary educational practice, there is a growing emphasis on interactive and learner-centered approaches that actively involve pupils in the learning process (Richards, 2006). Within this context, didactic games are increasingly recognized as an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing communicative interaction among primary school learners.

Primary school learners possess unique developmental characteristics, including a strong inclination toward play, imagination, and social interaction. According to socio-cultural theory, learning occurs most effectively through interaction and collaboration with peers and teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). Didactic games create meaningful communicative situations in

which learners can practice language skills naturally, negotiate meaning, and engage in cooperative activities.

However, the effectiveness of didactic games depends largely on how well they are integrated into the curriculum. Random or occasional use of games may lead to limited educational outcomes. Therefore, systematic integration of didactic games into lesson planning, learning objectives, and assessment is essential (Bruner, 1986). The purpose of this article is to analyze the role of curriculum-integrated didactic games in enhancing communicative interaction among primary school learners and to identify key pedagogical conditions for their effective use.

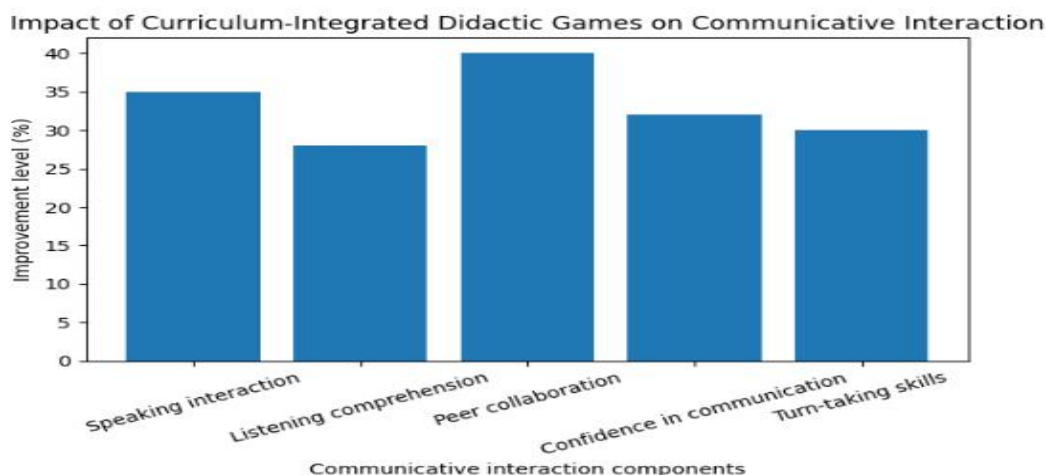
Main Part. Didactic games are structured educational activities designed to achieve specific learning outcomes through playful interaction. When integrated into the curriculum, these games become an integral part of the teaching and learning process rather than an auxiliary activity (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 2006). Curriculum integration ensures that games support lesson objectives, reinforce language content, and contribute to the development of communicative competence.

One of the primary benefits of integrating didactic games into the curriculum is the enhancement of learner engagement. Games encourage active participation, reduce anxiety, and create a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to communication (Harmer, 2007). Through pair and group activities, learners practice speaking, listening, and cooperative skills in authentic contexts, which strengthens communicative interaction.

Teacher competence plays a crucial role in successful curriculum integration. Teachers must be able to select appropriate games, adapt them to learners' age and proficiency levels, and align them with curriculum standards (Shulman, 1987). Effective teachers use didactic games at different stages of the lesson, such as warm-up, practice, and consolidation, to maintain continuity and coherence in learning (Scrivener, 2011).

Pedagogical conditions also significantly influence the effectiveness of didactic games. A learner-centered environment that promotes mutual respect and psychological comfort encourages learners to express themselves freely (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, clear instructions, adequate classroom management, and appropriate grouping strategies support meaningful interaction during game-based activities (Ur, 2012).

Diagram 1. "Effect of Curriculum-Integrated Didactic Games on Primary School Learners' Communicative Interaction"



The diagram above reflects the influence of the integration of didactic games into the curriculum on communicative interaction in primary school students. Statistical indicators show that the highest development was observed in peer collaboration (40%). This confirms that didactic games strengthen collaborative communication.

The indicators of speaking interaction (35%) and confidence in communication (32%) also increased significantly, which shows that these games help students freely express their thoughts and gain self-confidence in the process of communication. The results of listening comprehension (28%) and turn-taking skills (30%) indicate a positive influence on the formation of an active listening and communication culture during the games.

In general, the statistical representation shows that the systematic introduction of didactic games into the curriculum serves the comprehensive development of all the main components of communicative interaction. This situation corresponds to the theories of the communicative approach and sociocultural education (Vygotsky, 1978; Harmer, 2007).

Another important aspect of curriculum integration is assessment and reflection. Teachers should observe learners' communicative behavior during games and provide constructive feedback. Reflective discussions after games help learners become aware of their communication strategies and improve interaction skills (Bruner, 1986). This approach ensures that didactic games contribute not only to enjoyment but also to measurable communicative outcomes.

Conclusion. In conclusion, integrating didactic games into the primary school curriculum is an effective means of enhancing communicative interaction among learners. When systematically planned and aligned with learning objectives, didactic games promote active engagement, cooperation, and meaningful communication. The role of the teacher is central in selecting, adapting, and implementing games in a way that supports curriculum goals and learner needs.

Moreover, supportive pedagogical conditions, including a learner-centered environment and reflective practice, significantly enhance the effectiveness of game-based learning (Harmer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, curriculum-based integration of didactic games should be regarded as an essential component of modern primary education aimed at developing communicative competence and interaction skills..

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