



TEACHER COMPETENCE AND PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The development of communicative skills in primary school learners is a crucial objective of modern education, as it forms the foundation for successful social interaction, academic achievement, and lifelong learning. In this context, didactic games are regarded as an effective pedagogical tool that enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and language use in authentic situations. However, the effectiveness of didactic games largely depends on the teacher's professional competence and the pedagogical conditions under which these games are implemented. This article examines the role of teacher competence in organizing and managing didactic games and identifies the key pedagogical conditions necessary for their effective use in developing communicative skills in primary school students. The study highlights such components of teacher competence as methodological knowledge, pedagogical creativity, classroom management skills, and the ability to adapt games to learners' age and language proficiency.

Introduction. In recent years, the development of communicative skills has become one of the central priorities of primary education, as effective communication is essential for learners' academic success and social integration. Modern educational reforms emphasize learner-centered approaches, interactive methods, and innovative teaching tools that actively involve pupils in the learning process (Richards, 2006). Within this framework, didactic games are increasingly recognized as an effective means of developing communicative competence among young learners.

Primary school students possess specific psychological and cognitive characteristics, such as a strong need for play, imagination, and emotional engagement, which make game-based learning particularly effective at this stage (Vygotsky, 1978). Didactic games create meaningful communicative situations where learners can practice language naturally, interact with peers, and express their thoughts freely. However, the successful use of didactic games in

the classroom is not automatic and requires a high level of teacher competence and well-organized pedagogical conditions.

Teacher competence plays a decisive role in selecting appropriate games, integrating them into the lesson structure, and managing classroom interaction effectively (Harmer, 2007). In addition, pedagogical conditions such as a supportive learning environment, clear instructional goals, and alignment with curriculum objectives significantly influence the outcomes of game-based activities (Bruner, 1986). Therefore, studying the relationship between teacher competence, pedagogical conditions, and the effective use of didactic games is highly relevant.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the components of teacher competence necessary for the effective use of didactic games and to identify pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of communicative skills in primary school learners.

Main Part. Didactic games are defined as structured educational activities that combine learning objectives with elements of play in order to facilitate active participation and meaningful learning (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 2006). In primary education, such games serve not only as a motivational tool but also as a means of developing speech, listening, cooperation, and social interaction skills. Through games, learners engage in dialogic speech, negotiate meaning, and use language in context, which enhances their communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

One of the key factors influencing the effectiveness of didactic games is teacher competence. Teacher competence includes methodological knowledge, pedagogical skills, psychological awareness, and professional creativity (Shulman, 1987). A competent teacher understands how to choose games that correspond to learners' age, language level, and lesson objectives. For example, role-play games, information-gap activities, and language puzzles are particularly effective in developing speaking and listening skills when applied appropriately (Harmer, 2007).

Methodological competence enables teachers to integrate didactic games seamlessly into different stages of the lesson, such as presentation, practice, and consolidation (Scrivener, 2011). Games should not be used merely for entertainment; they must serve a clear communicative purpose. When teachers clearly explain the rules, model language use, and provide feedback, games become a powerful tool for language development (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Another important component of teacher competence is classroom management. Effective management ensures that all learners are actively involved, discipline is maintained, and time is used efficiently during game-based activities (Ur, 2012). Teachers must be able to organize pair and group work, monitor learners' interaction, and support weaker students without interrupting communication. This requires flexibility, observation skills, and the ability to respond to unexpected situations during games (Bruner, 1986).

Alongside teacher competence, pedagogical conditions play a crucial role in the successful implementation of didactic games. One of the most important conditions is a learner-centered learning environment where students feel safe to express themselves and make mistakes (Vygotsky, 1978). Psychological comfort and positive teacher-student relationships encourage learners to participate actively in communicative games.

Another essential pedagogical condition is the alignment of didactic games with curriculum goals and communicative outcomes. Games should be carefully planned to reinforce specific language skills, vocabulary, or grammatical structures (Wright et al., 2006). Additionally, the availability of teaching materials, visual aids, and sufficient classroom space supports the effective organization of games in primary classrooms.

Table 1. Teacher Competence and Pedagogical Conditions for the Effective Use of Didactic Games in Developing Communicative Skills

Teacher competence components	Pedagogical conditions	Didactic games used	Developed communicative skills
Methodological competence (lesson planning, goal setting)	Alignment with curriculum objectives	Language puzzles, vocabulary games	Vocabulary usage, sentence formation
Pedagogical creativity and flexibility	Learner-centered classroom environment	Role-play and simulation games	Speaking fluency, dialogic speech
Classroom management skills	Positive and supportive learning atmosphere	Pair and group games	Interaction, turn-taking, cooperation
Psychological awareness (age characteristics)	Psychological comfort and motivation	Action-based and competitive games	Confidence in communication, listening skills
Reflective and assessment skills	Continuous feedback and reflection	Information-gap games	Meaning negotiation, pragmatic competence

Table 1 illustrates the interrelationship between teacher competence components, pedagogical conditions, types of didactic games, and the communicative skills developed in primary school learners. The table clearly demonstrates that the effectiveness of didactic games in developing communicative skills is not determined by the games themselves, but by the teacher's professional competence and the pedagogical environment in which these games are implemented.

The first row emphasizes the importance of methodological competence in lesson planning and goal setting. When didactic games are aligned with curriculum objectives, such as vocabulary acquisition and sentence formation, learners are more likely to achieve measurable communicative outcomes. Language puzzles and vocabulary games, when used purposefully, help learners internalize lexical items and use them in meaningful contexts (Wright et al., 2006). This confirms the idea that games must serve a clear educational function rather than act as a form of entertainment.

The second row highlights pedagogical creativity and flexibility as key aspects of teacher competence. In a learner-centered classroom environment, role-play and simulation games

create authentic communicative situations that promote speaking fluency and dialogic interaction. Such games allow learners to express personal meanings, negotiate roles, and use language spontaneously, which significantly contributes to communicative competence (Harmer, 2007).

The third row focuses on classroom management skills and their connection to a positive learning atmosphere. Pair and group games require effective organization and monitoring to ensure equal participation. When teachers manage interaction efficiently, learners develop essential communicative skills such as turn-taking, cooperation, and interpersonal interaction. This supports the view that classroom management is a crucial factor in sustaining productive communication during game-based activities (Ur, 2012).

The fourth row addresses psychological awareness and age-related characteristics of primary learners. Action-based and competitive games, implemented in psychologically comfortable conditions, increase learners' motivation and confidence. As young learners feel less anxiety and fear of making mistakes, their listening skills and willingness to communicate improve significantly (Vygotsky, 1978).

The last row underlines the role of reflective and assessment skills in ensuring continuous improvement. Information-gap games, combined with regular feedback and reflection, foster meaning negotiation and pragmatic competence. This indicates that reflection enables teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of didactic games and adapt their strategies to learners' needs (Scrivener, 2011).

Overall, the table analysis confirms that teacher competence and pedagogical conditions function as interdependent factors. When these elements are harmoniously combined, didactic games become a powerful pedagogical tool for developing communicative skills in primary school education.

Regular reflection and assessment are necessary pedagogical conditions. Teachers should evaluate the effectiveness of games in developing communicative skills and adjust their strategies accordingly (Scrivener, 2011). This reflective practice contributes to continuous professional development and improved learning outcomes.

Conclusion. In conclusion, didactic games represent a powerful and effective tool for developing communicative skills in primary school learners when used under appropriate pedagogical conditions. The success of game-based learning largely depends on teacher competence, which includes methodological knowledge, classroom management skills, pedagogical creativity, and psychological awareness. A competent teacher is able to transform games into meaningful communicative activities that support learners' language development.

Moreover, favorable pedagogical conditions such as a learner-centered environment, curriculum alignment, and supportive classroom atmosphere significantly enhance the effectiveness of didactic games. When these conditions are met, learners become more motivated, confident, and communicatively active.

Therefore, improving teacher competence and creating supportive pedagogical conditions should be considered key priorities in primary education. The effective integration of didactic games not only develops communicative skills but also fosters learners' social, cognitive, and emotional growth, contributing to their overall educational development.

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