



Communication Skills Education through Games for Elementary School Students

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 22 July 2023	In Vietnam, implementing the new general education curriculum focuses on nurturing students' competencies and character development. A significant emphasis does place on fostering communication and collaboration skills among students. Consequently, the role of communication skills education within schools is paramount. This article presents various strategies for imparting communication skills through engaging games designed for elementary school students.
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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancements in science, technology, and engineering in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have brought about a significant transformation. These advancements pose a potential risk of artificial intelligence replacing certain professions. Consequently, the role and significance of human workers are increasingly crucial and require constant upgrading and validation.

Within primary education, fostering communication skills holds great importance as it serves as a foundation for the holistic development of young students. However, the direct integration of communication skills into the primary school curriculum or extracurricular activities needs to be improved. A general approach in contemporary primary education involves integrating communication skills into specific subjects directly linked to the learning objectives of those subjects (e.g., [9], [18], [15], and so on).

For primary school students, play is an essential and intrinsic need as vital as eating, sleeping, and studying in their daily lives. Playing games allows students to harness their physical abilities, concentration, intelligence, and creativity. As a result, games have become widely employed in teaching various subjects and extracurricular activities at the primary school level. However, despite their regular and widespread use, teachers at this level often need more theoretical knowledge surrounding play, games, and their potential impact.

This lack of clarity hampers the full realization of games' educational benefits.

Teaching communication skills through collaborative learning within subjects, employing approaches such as group work, discussions, project-based learning, and integrated themes, has yielded promising results. However, these studies have yet to understand communication as a fundamental learning skill. They tend to focus more on imparting knowledge related to these skills than fostering their development and practice. Furthermore, the specific issue of communication skills in primary school still needs to be addressed. The utilization of games for teaching communication skills has received limited research attention, despite numerous studies demonstrating the effectiveness of games in fostering intelligence, cognitive abilities, physical coordination, communication behavior, and language skills in preschool and primary education contexts [1], [8], [10], [12], [14], [19], [20], [21].

Considering these considerations, we study "Teaching Communication Skills through Games for Primary School Students" to shed light on the current situation and theoretical aspects of integrating games to teach communication skills to fifth-grade students. Furthermore, we propose practical solutions that will further enhance communication skill development for students and elevate the

overall quality of communication skill education within primary schools.

This article has two parts. Part 1 deals with Research Methodology, Part 2 introduces the results, and The Final Part is the conclusions.

1. Research Methodology

1.1 Theoretical Research Methods

Historical-logical analysis method: involves analyzing historical and logical aspects through the scientific literature to gain insights into the research landscape and relevant issues related to the dissertation topic.

Synthetic reasoning method: This method is employed to construct a comprehensive system of scientific literature and a theoretical framework for the research.

Generalization method: This method does utilize to identify key concepts, tools, and theoretical perspectives, shaping the methodological approach for the study.

1.2 Practical Research Methods

Survey method: This method encompasses using questionnaires, interviews, observations, and the analysis of teaching records to evaluate the current status of communication skill education and the application of games for enhancing communication skills in primary schools.

Pedagogical experiment method: This method aims to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of educational interventions for communication skill development through game-based approaches.

1.3 Other Methods

The expert opinion method involves soliciting expert opinions to investigate the current situation, develop measures, and assess the necessity and feasibility of the proposed interventions in the dissertation.

Statistical analysis: Mathematical statistical formulas, supported by SPSS software version 20.0, are employed for data processing, enabling an evaluation of the current state and facilitating the organization of experiments to examine the viability of the educational interventions proposed in the dissertation.

2. Results

2.1 Studies on Communication Skills Education through Games

Games have become valuable and practical teaching tools for young learners, including primary school students. As a result, numerous researchers have

devoted their attention to exploring the use of games in educational settings. Notable studies in this field include the works of Janet Moyles (2005) [11], D.P. Elkonin (1984) [4], Johnson, James E (1976) [13], Mullineaux, Paula Y. and Lisabeth F. Dilalla (2009) [23], Wolfgang Charles H, Stannard Laura L, Johnes, Ithel (2001) [24], Chalufour, Ingrid, Cindy, Hoisington, Robin, Moriarty (2004) [2], Christie, James F, Johnsen, E. Peter (1987) [3], Dorothy D. Sullivan, Beth Davey, Dolores P. Dickerson (1978) [6], A.A. Leonchiev (1980) [16], D. Bergen (2002) [5], and others. These studies have carefully examined the use of games in educational contexts, aiming to create engaging and compelling learning experiences.

Furthermore, a wealth of research focuses on the significance of play in children's development. Psychologists such as K. Gross and C. Kroll emphasize the biological nature of space and view it as a means for children to release excess energy, drawing parallels between children's play and that of animals [22]. Elkonin suggests that space evolves alongside societal changes and reflects the changing roles of children within society [7]. A.X. Macareno underscores the crucial role of play in children's development, enabling them to learn and acquire essential life skills and work-related abilities [17].

Current international research predominantly centers on general communication theories and children's play, yielding noteworthy outcomes. However, most of these studies primarily focus on early childhood, and there still needs to be more comprehensive research on communication skills among primary school children, particularly in developing and honing these skills through games.

In Vietnam, since 2018, the VVOB - Education for Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training and other relevant agencies, has undertaken the Iplay Project "Learning through Play" across various provinces and cities. "Learning through Play" encompasses an educational approach wherein students engage in interactive, experiential, exploratory, and problem-solving activities within an enjoyable learning environment. Teachers link learning objectives with play-based activities to foster student participation and autonomy, developing students' character and competencies. Educational play entails enjoyment, meaningfulness, active involvement, ample opportunities for experimentation, and social interaction (Zosh, 2018).

Overall, while communication skills education for students across different age groups adopts diverse and rich

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approaches, limited research focuses explicitly on using games to develop children's communication skills. Existing studies have addressed specific aspects of communication skills education, examining communication realities in children's psychology, presenting a range of individual games, and proposing strategies to enhance communication skills. However, a systematic design process for teachers to facilitate communication skill development through games still needs to be studied. This research gap provides ample room for future studies to delve into designing and implementing communication skills education through fun, empowering teachers to foster comprehensive communication skill development among students.

2.2. Current Status of Communication Skills Education for Primary School Students in Hanoi, Vietnam

2.2.1. Communication Skills

Our survey revealed that teachers are intensely aware of the role and benefits of communication skills for students and their significance in modern society. Consequently, they have implemented various educational activities to foster student communication skills. These initiatives include integrating communication skills into classroom subjects, engaging students in extracurricular activities, organizing field trips, outdoor events, and utilizing educational games. However, despite these efforts, the evaluation suggests that the level of communication skills among fifth-grade and primary school students, in general, still needs improvement. Therefore, specific strategies are required to enhance communication skills in these student populations.

2.2.2. Game Design and Utilization

One prominent challenge teachers face in educating fifth-grade students on communication skills is designing and implementing educational games. Teachers often need help with developing games that effectively serve the purpose of communication skills education. Moreover, selecting appropriate games from the wide range of options available is not straightforward, as not all educational games align with the specific goals of communication skills education. Additionally, organizing game-based activities within a crowded classroom with limited instructional time poses further challenges.

Similarly, incorporating extracurricular activities proves demanding, as it requires integrating multiple objectives into the allotted timeframe.

2.2.3. Communication Skills Education through Games

The initial implementation of communication skills education through games in primary schools needs to clarify its purpose sufficiently. This lack of clarity is evident in teachers' lesson plans and schools' educational records. Consequently, the subsequent stages of incorporating communication skills education through games face limitations regarding effectiveness and efficiency.

2.3. Measures for Educating Communication Skills for Primary School Students.

2.3.1. Establishing the Design Technique for Communication Skills Education Activities with Games.

As game content is a part of the lesson, game activities integrate into the overall lesson progression. The timing of game activities can vary depending on the lesson structure, either as the first or final activity in the lesson process.

Step 1: Designing Lesson Objectives.

The lesson's objectives also reflect the game's objectives, as the game is an organized component within the class. Apart from demonstrating purposes related to the competencies of the lesson, the lesson objectives can also incorporate the goals of communication skills education. The educational objectives of communication skills can be designed as part of the activity objectives.

Step 2: Designing Teacher and Student Preparations.

Teachers need to clarify the materials required for both themselves and the students. Identifying the necessary materials ensures accurate and complete preparation.

Step 3: Designing Teaching and Learning Activities.

Designing the lesson with games (where the game content is part of the lesson) involves the following components:

- Lesson title
- Objectives
- Teacher and student preparations
- Essential teaching and learning activities:

Teacher's activities	Students' activities
Activity 1: Warm-up - Duration: The objective of Activity 1: Steps to conduct the activity:	During the learning process, students actively perform tasks as instructed by the teacher: Maintain organization and orderliness. Listen to instructions carefully. Form teams/groups as required. Actively participate in carrying out duties as recommended by the teacher. Follow the rules of the game.
Activity 2: Exploration - Duration: The aim of Activity 2: Efforts to complete the training:	
Activity 3: Practice and Application: The objective of Activity 3:	

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Steps to conduct the activity: Activity 4: Application and Consolidation - Duration: The aim of Activity 4: Efforts to complete the training:	Evaluate the results and provide feedback on individual and team performance.
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During the learning process, students actively engage in tasks as required by the teacher:

- Maintaining organization and orderliness
- Listening attentively to instructions
- Organizing into teams as instructed
- Actively participating in functions as required by the teacher
- Following the game rules
- We are evaluating individual and team performance and providing feedback.

Games can do used in warm-up activities to introduce lessons and in exploration or practice activities as an integral part of the teaching content. Moreover, teachers can also incorporate games in the application phase to reinforce and consolidate lesson knowledge.

2.3.2. Guiding using selected educational games for communication skills

For elementary school students, a significant portion of their time does dedicate to subject-based learning. Therefore, integrating games into various subjects to foster communication skills is the most suitable and practical approach. Games can do utilized consistently and continuously to promote communication skills development. All subjects in elementary school, which aim to develop general and specialized skills, can leverage games to achieve their objectives. Among these subjects, the Vietnamese language enhances students' communication skills. Hence, teachers should use this opportunity to incorporate fun into their teaching methodology to foster students' communication skills.

Educational games can do categorized into three groups: lesson Introduction, acquiring new lesson content, and reviewing and consolidating.

(1) Games used for lesson introduction (Warm-up activities) To ensure a successful lesson right from the start, the "Lesson Introduction" activity is deemed crucial and is carried

out by the teacher within a short timeframe, typically lasting between 2 to 5 minutes before commencing the new lesson. Although this introductory part consumes relatively little teaching time, it significantly impacts students' initial engagement in the study. Therefore, when selecting or designing games, teachers should be mindful of setting clear objectives, managing time effectively, and accomplishing the goal of introducing the lesson while stimulating student interaction and communication to foster their interest.

For the Introduction, teachers can employ simple crossword puzzle games to present the theme or lesson or conduct "reporter" interview games to introduce the study. Choosing a suitable match for the lesson introduction depends on the specific content.

For instance, when teaching the lesson "Expanding Vocabulary about the Motherland" in Grade 5, teachers can organize a crossword puzzle game to introduce the study and develop communication skills. This game can serve as an introduction, teach new content, or be used to review and consolidate the lesson or theme.

Here is an example of the game's organization:

1. 1. Preparation: A4 paper with six crosswords, markers, three flags, and hints.
2. Task and gameplay rules:
 - Divide the class into three teams in three rows of desks. Each team captain holds a flag. The teacher reads the prompts, and the team that raises their flag first can answer. If the response is incorrect, the chance does pass to the remaining two groups. Each correct word in a horizontal row earns one point, while each right word in a vertical column earns five points.
1. Game execution:
 - The teacher reads each prompt for each crossword square. *. Horizontal rows represent missing words in the following sentences:

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1. Non nước hữu ...
2. yêu ... quốc, yêu đồng bào.
3. Cáo chết ba năm ... đầu về núi.
4. ... nước nhớ nguồn.
5. Đoàn kết là ..., chia rẽ là chết.
6. Giang sơn gấm ...

1		T	Ì	N	H
2	T	Ó			
3		Q	U	A	Y
4		U	Ó	N	G
5	S	Ó	N	G	
6	V	Ó	C		

b. Recording from the vertical columns.....

*. The vertical column is: "TỔ QUỐC"

1. Evaluation criteria
 - The team with the highest score wins.
 - The teacher provides feedback and praises the winning team.

Teacher's Introduction: "TỔ QUỐC" (The Motherland) refers to the nation, the country that our ancestors have left for our people. Today, we will explore the topic of "Expanding Vocabulary about the Motherland."

Teachers should remember that when designing the crossword puzzle, the selected words should align with the student's experiences and knowledge so that they can answer and find the vertical column "TỔ QUỐC" that the teacher wants to introduce.

(2) Games used for introducing new lesson content (Exploration and practice activities) Using games to teach new lesson content is a common and effective teaching method in elementary school. The choice of a game depends on the specific lesson and the range of the activities.

For example, the game "Who Listens Best" can be conducted alongside a reading exercise to help students develop focused listening skills. Here is how the competition does organize:

1. Preparation: Pre-printed reading passages on paper, A4 papers for each group, playing location: in the classroom.
2. Task and gameplay:
 - Divide the class into groups, with 4-6 students in each group.
 - Each group listens attentively as a classmate reads the assigned reading passage and follows the game instructions: Rewrite the names of the flowers mentioned in the course and create a sentence for each word.
 - One student reads the assigned reading passage "A Story of a Small Garden" from the Vietnamese textbook, Grade 5, Book 1, pages 102-103.

- After game time, each group shares their sentences with the class, with each student contributing one sentence until all corrections have do transmitted.
3. Game rules:
 - Read the passage aloud once at an average pace.
 - Groups listen and write down the names of the flowers mentioned.
 - No asking questions or looking at other groups.
 - Create a sentence for each recorded flower name.
 - Game time: 10 minutes.
 1. Evaluation criteria: Groups follow the game rules and adhere to the designated time. Writing down and creating complete sentences with the names of the flowers, using proper grammar, determines the winning group.

(3) Games used for review and consolidation Games used in review and consolidation activities aim to summarize a lesson, a theme, or a specific topic. When incorporating games into review and consolidation activities, focusing on the core content that needs does reinforce is crucial. The time allocated for these activities is typically 3-5 minutes. For instance, when teaching the topic of pronouns in the "Pronoun Practice" lesson, teachers can organize the game "Quick and Accurate" to systematize pronouns based on specific issues.

Here is an example of a game to reinforce the lesson "Pronouns (Week 9 - TV5-T1)":

To reinforce the knowledge of pronouns and develop communication skills, the teacher can organize the game "Quick and Accurate." The game does play as follows:

Preparation: Utilize the classroom board and chalk. Game rules, gameplay, task, and evaluation criteria: Divide the class into three teams arranged in vertical rows. Each team takes turns filling in the board with pronouns. Students take turns filling in one pronoun at a time. The team with the most correctly filled-in pronouns wins. Game time: 3 minutes.

Through this game, the teacher reinforces pronouns for students while fostering communication, information exchange, encouraging peers, and providing feedback.

CONCLUSION

"Learning through games" is a modern educational trend that aligns with the psychological characteristics of elementary school students. Developing communication skills requires a long-term, continuous, and ongoing student training process. Therefore, integrating communication skill development through games should be a regular practice in various subjects and experiential activities at school. Based on theoretical research and the current state of communication skills education through games for elementary school students in Vietnam, this article proposes measures to promote communication skill development through fun. These measures were tested for effectiveness through evaluation experiments conducted in practical school teaching situations.

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