



Effectiveness of Co-operative Learning Approach on Motivation, Learning Strategy, Utilization and Grammar Achievement of English Language Learner

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Abstract:

Although there is a large body of literature on the positive effects of cooperative learning for native speakers of English, there is a gap in the literature regarding the implementation of peer-tutoring cooperative methods on the college level in Baroda. Do the benefits of cooperative learning that are generally found on native English speakers also apply to EFL students in a English Learning college EFL class? Could cooperative learning provide a solution to English Learning EFL educators who are striving to figure out a way to help students who are bored and struggling in a whole-class setting? This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing evidence that is needed to verify the existing studies so that English Learning EFL teachers can justifiably decide whether to use cooperative learning in their classrooms.

Keywords: Co- operative learning, EFL class, Effectiveness, Learning strategy

1. Introduction

The value of cooperative learning has been recognized throughout human history. Organizing individuals to work in support of one another and putting the interests of the group ahead of one's own are abilities that have characterized some of the most successful people of our time. Group learning, with its roots in ancient tribal customs, has traditionally been a part of educational practice. Its effectiveness has been documented through hundreds of research studies (Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Kagan, 1986; Slavin, 1988). Cooperative learning is now widely recognized as one of the most promising practices in the field of education. This study investigates the effects of cooperative learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting in Baroda. The study provides a systematic pretest-posttest comparison through achievement and motivational measures on the effects of cooperative learning with whole-class instruction. The effectiveness of cooperative learning has been supported by a large body of research across different grade levels and subject areas in countries such as the United States, Israel, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and Nigeria. After being implemented in American classrooms for over a century, this pedagogy has begun to gain attention and interest from EFL teachers in Baroda, where EFL instruction is still mostly whole-class, teacher-centered rote grammar-translation and often fails to motivate learning. Even though numerous efforts have been made to examine the effects of cooperative learning on Barodaese EFL learners, overall this pedagogy is still under-researched.

2. Theoretical framework

According to Slavin's model of cooperative learning (1995), cooperative learning ultimately results in gains in learning because the process of cooperation prompts motivation and consequential cognitive activities. This model is supported by two major categories of theories: motivational theories and social cognitive theories, e.g., Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1993), Covington's self-worth theory (1992), Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978), and Piaget's social transmission theory (1964). While competition sometimes sets up a stage for students to strive for success over the failure of others, cooperative learning aims to create an

arena for team members to have high expectancy of each other. If a teacher implements a cooperative learning method correctly, every learner, including low achievers and high achievers, is expected to be respected and cherished by their peers. Slavin's (1995) cooperative learning model is also supported by cognitive elaboration theories. Walling (1987) maintained that discussion of the subject matter by group members during the process of peer work helps students verbalize and elaborate their initial, immature thoughts. In the process of elaboration, a student apparently has chances to develop ideas from vague to concrete and from preliminary to sophisticated, which might not happen if a student just listens to a lecture and passively receives information.

2. Statement of the problem

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3. Objectives of the study

1. To study an interaction effect between instruction (CL vs. WC) and prior English ability level on motivation of self-efficacy and the cause of the interaction.
2. To study an interaction effect between instruction (CL vs. WC) and prior English ability level on out-of-class utilization of learning strategies and the cause of the interaction.

4. Definition of terms

For the purpose of the study the following terms have been defined:

- **Achievement Test:** An achievement test aims to assess what knowledge and skills students have learned from a particular course or set of materials. An achievement test is usually directly anchored in course objectives. It contrasts with a proficiency test, which aims to assess learners' general ability.
- **English as a Foreign Language (EFL):** EFL is the teaching and learning of English to non-native speakers of English in communities where the language is not commonly used for communication by the population at large.

5. Research design

Experimental pretest-posttest comparison group research design has been chosen for the study to compare the cooperative learning group with the whole-class instruction group in terms of motivational and cognitive outcomes. The Experimental design was selected due to the availability of the subjects. The design is represented below:

Class Pretest Method Posttest

A → ○ → X1 → ○

B → ○ → X2 → ○

6. Experimental pretest-posttest comparison group research design

The researcher manipulated the types of instruction: One class was the control group receiving whole-class instruction; the other was the experimental group receiving cooperative learning pedagogy. The treatment lasted for the duration of 6 weeks. Each class had same students. Both groups will be administered a selective version of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) as a pretest and posttest, a pretest on English grammar proficiency, and a posttest on English grammar achievement. The two groups were compared in terms of their performances on the with reference to self-efficacy.

7. Sampling method and procedure

The researcher sought instructors in a specific university in Baroda who volunteered to provide manipulated pedagogies based on the design of the study. One instructor was selected based on

factors including education (master's degree or above), teaching experience (5 years minimum in EFL), teacher evaluations (3 points or above on a 5-point scale), professional training (regular participation), fluent command of English, as well as study and travel experience in an English-speaking country. Two freshman classes of this instructor will be then used for the study. One was randomly assigned as the control group and the other as the experimental group. The instructor had experience in implementing both whole-class instruction and cooperative learning but had not solely used cooperative learning throughout a semester prior to the present study. The instructor indicated that overall she had no preference between cooperative learning and whole-class instruction.

8. Sample size of the study

The general rule in quantitative research is to use the largest sample possible so that the subjects' scores on measured variables could be more representative of population scores. Nonetheless, the number of subjects that can participate is often limited due to feasibility and financial concerns. Researchers hence select the minimum sample size needed for different research methods. In this present research 50 students from experimental and 50 students from the control group from the class nine from the secondary school were selected randomly during the year of 2013-2014.

9. Instrumentation

A questionnaire, a proficiency test, and an achievement test was prepared and used by the Investigator for the study and Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire measured the subjects' motivation and use of learning strategies. An English grammar proficiency test was administered as pretest. A grammar achievement test was administered as posttest to measure the achievement on the content of selected units covered in the duration of the study. The self-report MSLQ was design to be given in class. According to the constructors of the MSLQ, the selected scale was used collectively as an entire instrument or individually according to a researcher's or instructor's needs of the six scales in the motivation section of the MSLQ, the researcher selected the self-efficacy for learning and performance scale as measurement to narrow the focus of the study. Factors taken into consideration in the selection process include whether the scale has direct bearing to the research questions and whether it has reasonable reliability.

10. Findings of the study

An examination of the results in research indicated that the cooperative group's average posttest score on self-efficacy scale was significantly higher than that of the whole-class group

Table 1. One-Way ANCOVA on Self-Efficacy Posttest Scores with Self-Efficacy Pretest

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Pretest	86.57	1	86.57	64.835	Sig.
Group	19.29	1	19.29		
Error	28.86	97	0.2975		
Total	134.72	99			

All of the assumptions underlying the use of ANCOVA were satisfied. The assumption of normality was not tested as the procedure is robust to its violation. The assumption of independence of observations was assumed to be true. The covariate the pretest was measured without error. Even though the sample sizes were equal, the homogeneity of variance assumption was tested using Levene's statistic. The observed value was indicating equivalency of variances across the groups. Covariance was thus found and that the assumption of linearity met. In addition, the assumption of homogeneity of regression was tested. The observed value was ANOVA was 64.835, which is significant at 0.01 level of the significance level. The result showed that the lines of the dependent variable that had been regressed on the covariate within each group were parallel and the assumption of homogeneity of regression was met.

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