

# Assessing the Perception and Practice of Cooperative Learning of English Language and Literature Regular Students at Kabridahar University

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## Abstract

This research study was conducted on the assessing the perception and practice of cooperative learning in Kabridahar University English Language and Literature regular students. The study used a mixed method that involves quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaire, interview and document review were used to gather the necessary data for the study. The researcher used a lottery method technique for students and purposive sampling technique for instructors. In order to collect relevant data, questionnaire, and interview and classroom observation were used by researcher. The collected data through those instruments were analyzed and interpreted by qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. From this study, the researcher points out the following results. Lack of enough practicing and lack of department encouragements. Therefore, necessary recommendation is given to solve these problems. Students should exercise and practice in group in English anywhere, departments should encourage them to develop their English language skills and students always practice and give positive attitude to group learning in English language classroom.

## Keywords

Cooperative Learning, Perception, Group Discussion

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## 1. Introduction

The application of cooperative learning to classroom teaching finds its roots in the 1970s when Israel and United began to design and study cooperative learning models for class room context (Kessler, 1992). Now one-to-five cooperative learning is applied in almost all school context, and acceptance is increasing worldwide. Cooperative learning is an educational approach which aims to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. Cooperative learning has also been found to enhance social and intellectual development (Burto, 1987) and help students build interpersonal skills while promoting a sense of achievement, productive and psychological well-being (Nilsson, 1987). Slavin (1996) describes cooperative learning as a teaching method in which students work together in small groups to help one another to learning academic context. According to Ethiopian context, cooperative learning is a technique that allows students to learn from each other and gain important interpersonal skills. According to A. Pratama (2016; 2017), cooperative learning is an organized and structure way to use small groups enhances student learning and interdependence. According to A. Reynolds (2018), cooperative learning also

been linked to increased levels of student's satisfaction. Cooperative learning is reflected on the development of students' intelligence and non-intelligence. It requires students to learn to work together, which is an important skill for their future. Ministry of Education (MoE) (2016) states that, Education Sector Development Program: Program Action Plan. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Cooperative learning is one of main stream learning theories nowadays.

Having these characteristics, when it comes to foreign language classroom, it is claiming to be an effective teaching method (Chang, 1995). According to Johnson and Smith (1991), central elements of cooperative learning which are essential for language learning including positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skill and group processing. In general, term cooperative learning can be concerned as system of concrete teaching and learning methods in which students are active agents in the processes of learning through small group structures, so that students work together, to maximize their own and each other learning.

However, most reach finding point to the positive influence loss of group learning on academic performance, social behavior and affective development, they are difficult in many educational institutions in practicing this system of instruction method in classroom, especially in language classroom. Since group discussion is a system of concepts teaching and learning method helps students to be participatory. There are many researchers who conduct a study about a cooperative learning. From those researchers, Slavin (1983; 1989) conducted a research on the effectiveness of cooperative learning on elementary and secondary schools and researches by Johnson Etal (1981) have included the effectiveness of cooperative group learning in all education levels. The current researcher discusses the limitation gaps in relation to English language. So the researcher wants to conduct this study to fill the gap regarding on assessing the perception and practices of cooperative learning in English language class.

## 2. Objectives of the study

### General objective of the study

The main objective of this study was aimed to assess the perception and practice of cooperative learning of English language and literature regular students at Kebri Dehar University.

### Specific objectives of the study

- ✓ To assess the students' understanding of cooperative leaning.
- ✓ To identify the learners' practice of cooperative leaning in actual classroom.
- ✓ To assess the attitudes of students, affect the implementation of cooperative leaning elements.

This study would be aimed to answer the following questions:

- How do English major students understand about cooperative learning?
- Do learners practice cooperative learning in actual classroom?
- How does the attitude of students affect the implementation of cooperative learning element?

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employed a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods to get relevant data relating to know the status of the actual problem in group learning in English classroom. For qualitative research in the way of interpreting word to word, and for quantitative, percentage will have employed to analyze the respondents' responses.

### 3.2. Subject of the Study

The subject of the study was English language and literature students and selected English language and literature instructor at Kebridahar University.

### 3.3. Sample and Sampling technique

To obtain reliable data about a given population, it is obvious that using the whole population is better. But to financial and time constraints, a complete coverage of the population is not an easy task. So the researcher was used a lottery sampling techniques for students and purposive sampling techniques for instructors. The total number of English language and literature department students at Kabridahar University was 44 in 2021. And 7 groups were present. By using a lottery method, the researcher was taking one group from each class and among 14 English

language instructors by using purposive sampling technique the researcher was took 3 instructors because the researcher believe that are easier to obtain information.

### 3.4. Data Sources

Researcher used primary data sources to collect the data. A primary data source is an original data source which is one in that the data are collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research purpose. In a primary data, researcher collects information directly from the participant for the specific purpose of their study. Therefore, the present researcher used primary data source to collect relevant information directly from the participant through questionnaires, interviews, and also researcher used document review to gather additional information from writing instructors who have students' written document on writing task like assignment, test, quiz and final exam.

### 3.5. Data Gathering Methods

The three data gathering tools such as: questionnaires, observation and interview were used to gather relevant data.

### 3.6. Survey

The data were gathered by using questionnaires for English language and literature students. It was contained close ended type of questions. The researcher was prepared close ended questions to get clear answers from the respondents.

#### 3.6.1. Questionnaires

It helped to gather amount of data and within a short period of time. It offers greater anonymity. The researcher used close ended questions to get full information from the participants of the study.

#### 3.6.2. Observation

As a technique, it has directness advantage and used to getting real information.

#### 3.6.3. Interview

It has high validity helps to clarify complex questions and it is easy to record interview. In addition to these, it is suitable to get direct and it original answer for the provided questions. The researcher used semi structure (structure and unstructured) interview, it was better and used for instructors.

### 3.7. Data Collection Procedures

First, the questionnaires were administered for students in their in normal classroom. The reason for the researcher used questionnaire first is because the researcher expected that administering questionnaire before observation would help to identify the perception and practice of respondents regarding cooperative learning.

In addition to these, classroom observation was conducted to check the data gathered through questionnaires is reflecting or not. Finally, the interview conducted with teachers regarding on the practice of cooperative learning as well as perception of their learners towards this approach.

### 3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

After gathering the required data, the researcher organized the data and analyzed by using different kinds of analysis methods based on the gathered information. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was employed for this study.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation which was collected through questionnaires observation and interview. The data were canalized and interpreted in table form both frequency and percentage.

### Analysis of students close ended questions

**Table 1. Students participate in cooperative learning in English classroom**

NO	Item	Alternative	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Have you every participated in cooperative learning activities as English major students to improve English language skills?	Yes	14	82.35
		No	3	17.65
		Total	17	100%

Table 1, item number 1 showed that almost 14 (82.35%) of students say yes and they practice group learning inside and outside of regular classes. And also students replied that they practice group issues in any place without library they meet their members in space and other recreational program whether in cafe or other place. 3 (17.65%) of students say no. They believe that group learning is for clever students and also for the leaders. In case of this and lack of knowledge, they cannot practice in cooperative learning in English classroom. It is possible to say that majority of the students participate in cooperative learning activities as English major students to improve their English language skills.

**Table 2. Students have specific role in group?**

No	Item	Alternative	No of Respondent	Percentage
2	Do you have a specific role in your group?	Yes	15	88.23
		No	2	11.77
		Total	17	100%

Table 2, item number 2 showed that 15 (88.23%) of students said yes and 1/3 of them were group leaders 1/3 of them were writer, 1/3 of them were reporter and the remaining 2 (11.77%) of students were said no, they were ordinary group members in their respective groups. Is possible to say that more than 1/3 of the students have their own roles in their respective groups?

**Table 3. Typical size of group**

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondent	percentage
3	What has been the typical size of your group?	2-4	–	–
		5-7	10	100%
		6-8	–	–
		Total	10	100%

Table 3, item number 3 showed that 100% of students were replied that their group size range from 5-7, is possible to say that all group have typical size with 5-7 including group leader.

**Table 4. Group learning can help to develop self-confidence?**

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondent	percentage
4	Do you understand that group learning can help to develop self confidence in English language?	Yes	14	82.35
		No	3	17.65
		Total	17	100%

Table 4, item number 4 showed that 82.35% of students said yes and 17.65% of the students said that no. Based on table information is possible to say that more than 1/3 of students replied that group learning can help to develop self-confidence in English language.

**Table 5. Practicing Cooperative learning has benefits?**

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondents	percentage
5	Do you think that practicing cooperative learning in English language has benefit for students?	Yes	12	70.59%
		No	5	29.41%
		Total	17	100%

Table 5, item number 5 showed that 70.59% of the students say that practicing cooperative learning in English language has benefits, 29.41% of students replied that it has no benefits. Based on the table information, it is possible to say that more than 1/3 of the students replied that practicing cooperative learning has a benefits.

**Table 6. Cooperative learning build good image in English language?**

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondents	Percentage
6	Is cooperative learning build good image in English language for students?	Yes	14	82.35
		No	3	17.65
		Total	17	100%

Table 6, item number 6 showed that 82.35% of students said yes. So, cooperative learning builds good image in English language as English major students and the remaining 17.65% of students said no. It cannot build good image in English language as English major students. Is possible to infer that more than 1/3 of the students were replied that cooperative learning builds good image in English language?

**Table 7. Analysis of Observation**

No	Item	Yes	No
1	Are students participating in group learning activities to enhance their English language skills?	2	1
2	Do English language instructors motivated students participate cooperative leaning in English classroom?	3	-
3	Do students practice cooperative learning willingly?	2	1
4	Do the students interact face to face in group learning?	2	1
5	Does every student has a specific role to play in group during discussion time?	2	1

The observation was conducted to all batch English language and literature students in English classroom at 2:30, 4:30 and 5:30 in the morning, on Monday, 28/08/2010. The title of the lesson was sentence error: during the observation, the researcher observed every phenomenon that was actually going on in English class teaching method and learning process. In this classroom observation, most of the students were motivated by their instructors in order to discuss in group and answer the questions. In classroom, most of students were discussing in their group each other and other remaining are not discussing with other in the group. Some of the students were silent because they depend by leaders. Majority of the students showing a participation by answering question, writing, and reporting in classroom. All students are not equally participating in group learning. Instructors gave opportunity for students to practice and participate in group learning. Furthermore, the students interact face to face in group learning and most of the students have a specific role to play in group discussion except a few students.

### Analysis of instructors Interview

Item 1: Have you ever used cooperative learning methods in your class to improve students English language skills?

Based on interview three of interviewers said yes and explained that apply cooperative learning methods in every class to encourage students in order to share their experience in doing together, the instructor allow students to sit together and make discussion for the sake of subject matter.

Item 2: What are the cooperative learning strategies to develop students English language skills?

Instructor one responded that using an appropriate group size and having a good mode of atmosphere with in a manageable arrangement of students sitting style will have a great role for the success of each group in their academic performance as well as interpersonal interaction.

Both second the third interviewees added that arranging the seat of the group: that is comfort for classroom discussion and presentation as well as random questioning to the students and peer group discussion is a vital activity of the instructors to make students effective and active participants.

Item 3: What are the students' reactions while you use cooperative learning method? Are they happy or not?

Both the respondents said that the majority of students were interested to learn in group learning way to help each other. These students have positive attitude towards group learning when the instructors allow them sit together and order them in particular issue. But few of students are not interested to learning in group learning way to help each other's and they believed that it waits their time and make the loaded for them.

Item 4: What are the roles of instructors to improve students' participation in cooperative learning in English class?

The first respondent said that the roles of instructors to improve student's participation in cooperative learning in English class giving or facilitates the group asking different questions in each group.

Both the second and the third interviewees added that arranging the seat of the group, giving them extra activities to participate in their group and helping them in making micro teaching, presenting as well as reinforce or motivates them and avoid negative comments.

Item 5: Would you have some extra comments about cooperative learning in English language classroom?

For the above item, all instructors have positive attitude to encourage their students in the way of group learning in English classroom. They have recommended that cooperative learning has great advantages to be an effective learning in English and if they have willing to learn in cooperative learning they are make their self-active.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis made in chapter four, the following conclusion had been made. Regarding to learner's perception toward cooperative learning, the data showed that students had good image over cooperative learning to improve their English language proficiency and to cooperate each other's. Even though their knowledge on cooperative learning was one part of their perceptions, as the finding indicated that the majority of students' perceived cooperative learning willingly. But a few of students are not participated by their interest. Regarding to learners' practice on the elements' of cooperative learning in the actual classroom, the finding indicated that the magnitude of practicing the concept of cooperative learning in classroom was to be good in every point's whether in doing assignment or discussion in group. Some of the elements of cooperative learning, such as group processing, face to face interaction were applied. That means most of the elements of group learning like group formation, individual accountability and self-confidence were applied in good way in their group activities. On the other hand, the finding of the study indicated that the positive perception of the students towards cooperative learning develops the appropriate practice of the basic elements or concept of group learning were practiced as the way they should be practiced and the practice was nearly to the theory tells as in the review of related literature are less in actual classroom. In generally, majority of the students practice in one to five cooperative learning in their English classroom in good way except a few students.

## 6. Recommendation

Based on the study finding the recommendation is given as follows.

- The students should have more practice cooperative learning to help each other's and to develop their English language.
- The instructors should orient students about the concept, element and purpose of cooperative learning.
- The instructors should encourage about the benefits of using group learning methods properly.
- The department of English language and literature should implement strategies of cooperative learning to develop the awareness of students towards cooperative learning.
- The department should evaluate the instructors how often they use cooperative learning and teaching methods in their regular class.
- The students should avoid negative attitudes about cooperative learning.
- Instructors should follow the students while they do tasks in group.
- In generally, the department should give more attention over cooperative learning on evaluating the adequate practice and implementation of cooperative learning.

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