

“Effectiveness of Co-operative Teaching-Learning Method to Enhance English Communication Skills at Undergraduate Level”

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Abstract

The present research article tends to explore co-operative teaching-learning method. Hitherto, either teaching or learning aspect of ELT has been explored that to primary and secondary level. Tertiary level has always been less explored domain of research in respect to co-operative teaching-learning method. Theoretical teaching-learning of a language either mother tongue or a foreign language has its own limitations. It requires situational, participatory engaging teaching-learning strategies. Hence, it is the need of the time to inculcate pragmatic aspects into the curriculum. It certainly fosters creativity, critical thinking ability, communication skills etc. like soft skills. The present research paper intends the same.

Keywords: ELT, EAP, Teaching-learning methods, Co-operative method, Social Interdependence theory.

1. Introduction:

English, the most practiced language globally, has been regarded as the lingua-franca of the globe. However, it has evolved as a global language during the era of globalization. From linguistic imperialism to linguistic globalization, the percentage of English language users has drastically increased. Consequently, it became a language of international trade and commerce, science and technology etc. English is a native language or mother tongue in countries like the USA (ENL); in the countries like India, English is an official language (ESL); in the rest of the countries, it is only a foreign language (EFL). It is imperative that at present it is not only a link language but also a language of career opportunities and world affairs too.

1.1. ELT in India

English, as a medium of instruction was introduced in India by Britishers during the colonial period through Lord Macaulay's 'Minutes of Education' in 1835 and 'Charles Wood's Dispatch' in 1854. It was confined to primary education, which later resulted in the phenomenal development of the English medium in secondary and higher secondary education system. In 1964, Kothari Commission, appointed by Government of India, suggested the 'Structural Approach to Teaching English'. India, since colonial times, has had the following fundamental approaches to studying English namely:

1. English for Academic Purpose (EAP)
2. English for Occupational Purpose (EOP)
3. English for Specific Purpose (ESP) (3)

It was Lord Macaulay who wanted the people Indian in blood and English in taste and opinion. Later, the Secondary Education Commission emphasized that 'English, must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature, humanistic, scientific and technical'. In 1958, The Central Institute of English was started in Hyderabad along with regional institutes at Bangalore and Chandigarh. Multiple ELT methods have been practiced that are achievement-oriented, not

performance oriented. Eventually Communicative ELT approach was introduced during the 1980s. Nowadays, Blended approach is widely popular. Even though, the fellow learners fail to achieve mother-tongue-like competence in English language to the large extent. And the question remains unsolved that how to make classrooms more interactive, inclusive, and performance-oriented. Indeed English language has become an important area of investigation since its inception as an official language. Indian classrooms are less-equipped, or ill equipped, therefore inclusive teaching-learning method is required at all levels. Moreover, NEP 2020 emphasizes ‘the importance of universal access to knowledge, and it is indeed the English language that provides global career opportunities and skills of English language to every learner. Therefore flexible, learner-centric, and inclusive ELT strategies should be implemented in the ELT classes to satisfy learners’ needs. Cooperative teaching-learning method is a strategic method to strengthen India as a global knowledge superpower in the world.

2. Objectives

1. To identify the content useful for implementing co-operative teaching-learning method.
2. To identify and implement co-operative teaching-learning methods for undergraduate students in order to enhance their English communication skills.
3. To find out effectiveness of cooperative teaching-learning method at tertiary level.

3. Research Methodology

Out of the colleges affiliated , 05 colleges will be selected for the present research purpose. Using the purposive sampling method. A target class from art, commerce and science will be selected. Thenceforth, controlled and experimental groups will be segregated to meet the objectives set for this research. Then the syllabi of the select target class will be analyzed. Afterwards, a diagnostic test will

be conducted for the select target class to assess their English language skills. The researcher will refer standard English language teaching-learning methods used for undergraduates during this process. Accordingly, experiment will be carried out on the target group using co-operative teaching-learning method. Based on observation, pre-test and post-test, evaluation and analysis of the collected data will be done. Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

4.Data Collection and Analysis:

For the present research purpose, the data will be collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include:

1. Pre-test and post-test
2. Observation
3. Questionnaire
4. Interactions

While secondary sources include:

1. Reference Books on ELT and Cooperative method
2. Research articles and journals on ELT and Cooperative learning
3. Internet, blogs, etc.

Further, the researcher will seek help from the experts in the field of ELT.

The collected data will be evaluated, interpreted and analyzed through qualitative, quantitative measures. In addition to that, tables, Statistical tools, diagrams, charts, etc., will be used as per requirements.

5. Hypothesis

A cooperative teaching-learning method is efficient enough to enhance communicative skills in English at undergraduate level.

6.Review of Literature:

Incredible research is done in the field of ELT in India. It is quite a great change from teacher dependence to learner interdependence, from teacher tutoring to peer tutoring, and from learning by collecting to learning by sharing; thus,

learners and teachers need to be patient and persistent as they explore ways to use the power of cooperation (Baloche, 1998). In his article 'Cooperative Learning: Review of Research and Practice, Australian Journal of Teacher Education 41(3) (2016), Gillies R M explores the cooperative learning method of the English language. Besides, Patel Dharmeshkumar Fatesinh's work 'Effectiveness of cooperative learning approach on English language teaching in ELT' (2016) has contributed to cooperative learning strategy. Devi Archana Mohanty and Basuprada Roy, in an article 'Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning in Indian Language Classroom: A study, mentions that, when students work cooperatively together, they show increased participation in group discussions, demonstrate a more sophisticated level of discourse, engage in fewer interruptions when others speak, and provide more intellectually valuable contributions (Gillies, 2006; Webb & Farivar, 1999). By working cooperatively, students develop an understanding of the unanimity of purpose of the group and the need to help and support each other's learning which, in turn, motivates them to provide information, prompts, reminders, and encouragement to others' requests for help or perceived need for help (Gillies, 2003a; Gillies & Ashman, 1998). Ross and Smyth (1995) describe successful cooperative learning tasks as intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended, and involve higher order thinking tasks. Research also suggests that cooperative learning brings positive results such as deeper understanding of content, increased overall achievement in grades, improved self-esteem, and higher motivation to remain on task. Cooperative learning helps students become actively and constructively involved in content, to take ownership of their own learning, and to resolve group conflicts and improve teamwork skills. Cooperative learning strategies have been shown to improve academic performance (Slavin, 1987), lead to great motivation toward learning (Garibaldi, 1979), to increase time on task (Cohen & Benton, 1988), to improve self-esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), and to lead to more positive social behaviors (Lloyd, et.al, 1988). Simmi from Jamia Milia University has done

a significant research on 'Effectiveness of Cooperative learning strategies in developing English language skills of students at secondary level' in 2019, in which she argues that cooperative learning approach requires right planning and time management to get fruitful results. Aruna, in her thesis entitled 'Effectiveness of cooperative learning through individually prescribed instruction in relation to achievement of fifth grade learners in English' (2019) in which she asserts that 'cooperative learning is a teaching strategy which is the part of Inclusive education. It is useful in increasing higher achievement, higher self-esteem, greater collaborative skills and helping the students to add more engaged learners'.

All these attempts reveal the significance of cooperative teaching-learning approach at all levels. However, the effectiveness of Cooperative teaching-learning for English Language acquisition at undergraduate level has not been studied so far in Indian context. It is highly required to develop an inclusive and performance-driven approach that strengthens English language communication skills among the learners. Co-operative method has proved its effectiveness in acquiring any new knowledge or skill thereof. There is need to implement co-operative teaching-learning strategies for the undergraduate students and study its effectiveness. So, the present study is proposed to address this need.

7.Co-operative learning: A conceptual Framework

Together we stand, divided we fall.

---Watchword of the American Revolution

Paul Grice introduces the cooperative learning principle in his Pragmatic theory, wherein he argues, 'make your contribution such as is required, at the state at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged'. He further divides the cooperative principle into four maxims of conversation namely Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, which are effective in pursuit of communication skills.

Researchers have also defined cooperative learning as, 'Cooperative learning exists when students work together to achieve joint learning in groups'. A big portion of studies indicate that the use of cooperative teaching-learning techniques can lead to positive attitudes towards cooperative learning and increased speaking skills (Suhendan & Bengu, 2014; Ning and Hornby, 2010; Ning, 2011; Pattanpichet, 2011; Yang, 2005).(7) along with that Classroom social interaction, according to Mackey (2007) and Ellis (2003), is beneficial to overall language development.

Cooperative learning is a type of group work and is defined as the instructional use of small groups to promote students working together to maximize their own and each others teaching (Johnson. et al., 2008). It has been observed that students who interact and speak achieve better oral skills in most cases than those who always keep silence. (Khadidja, 2010).

Each definition mentioned above emphasizes the existence of cooperative, responsible, positive, participatory and active involvement of learners to achieve common goals. Cooperative learning methods, which differ from traditional learning methods as shown in below table:

Table1: Cooperative vs Traditional learning

Cooperative	Traditional
• Positive interdependence • Individual accountability • Heterogeneous - Teacher selected groups • Cooperative skill instruction - Concern for peer learning - Shared leadership - Task and maintenance emphasized - Student reflection and goal setting	• No positive interdependence • No individual accountability • Homogeneous • Student selected groups • No cooperative skill instruction • Little concern for peer learning - One appointed leader - Only task emphasized - No student reflection and goal setting

• Teacher observation and feedback • Group problem-solving interactor. • Equal opportunity for success	• No teacher observation and feedback • Group problem-solving intervener • Uniform standard for success
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Traditional teaching methods are teacher centric while cooperative learning is learner centric approach in which learner is more active. However it has been regarded as creative and effective teaching theory and strategy. Cooperative learning helps all the participants to enrich their abilities. Now it is widely adopted and highly recommended teaching method at all levels of learning. All the participants are active in the learning process. Each is responsible to achieve common goals. Cooperative learning inculcates the abilities like listening, empathy, negotiation, transferring their abilities and knowledge to others. It has two major properties; they are positive interdependence and individual's responsibility. In this process, the participants have to internalize the idea of 'we either swim together or sink together'. Group achievement is more important than the individual achievement. (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

Thus, inclusiveness aspect of cooperative method has productive outcomes. Hence cooperative method of teaching-learning is an effective method in heterogeneous classes to enrich language skills from primary to undergraduate level.

8.Social Interdependence Theory:

Social Interdependence theory is the foundation upon which cooperative learning is built. Social Interdependence Theory is based on Gestalt's Psychology and Lewin's Field Theory; however it was formally conceptualized by Morton Deutsch. He has extended Lewin's theory as he asserts 'the basic premise of social interdependence theory is that how participants' goals are structured, determines how they interact, and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the

situations'(Deutsch, 1949a, 1962). The work of Piaget and related theorists are based on the premise that when individuals cooperate in the environment, socio-cognitive conflict occurs that creates cognitive disequilibrium, which in turn stimulates perspective-taking ability and cognitive development. While Vygotsky and related theorists' contribution is based on the principle that 'knowledge is social, constructed from cooperative efforts to learn, understand, and solve problems'. The behavioral theory perspective focuses on the impact of group reinforcement and rewards on learning. Moreover D. W. Johnson & Johnson asserts that 'social interdependence exists when the outcomes of individuals are affected by each others actions'.

Thus, the cooperative approach is by and large, productive for language learners as it rests upon social interdependence principle. Proper ambience is created by the facilitator in cooperative method wherein participants express themselves without hesitation. They perform better and learn the best as participants are accountable for each others' actions and their own also.

Conclusion

Traditional English language teaching practices terrify students to learn English interestingly and creatively. Hence there is a great scope to reform ELT practices. The words teaching and learning may be separately used, but the teaching learning process may not be separated. However, hitherto either effective teaching or learning strategies have been studied. It is therefore envisioned by the researcher to study the Effectiveness of cooperative teaching-learning method to sort out the issues related to the English language skills at undergraduate level. Cooperative method is widely acknowledged ELT method up to tertiary level, however its outcomes are productive, hence researcher has great scope to implement this approach for quality of education through English. Even, in NEP 2020 it is envisioned to impart education practically. So that OJT like concepts have emerged. Assigning a task or activity is a sort of OJT wherein students learn from real life

experience instead of theoretical lessons. When the learners are engrossed in the activity, their self-confidence, belief, presentation style etc. like personal and professional attributes are sharpened. Phobia of using language is reduced to the greater extent. They feel comfortable to share their thoughts, feelings, opinions etc. before the students of their age group. Teacher's role is reduced to an observer and learners role is extended as presenter.

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