

Teachers' and Students' Perception and practice of Cooperative Learning in English Classes: The Case of Assosa Secondary School in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate teachers' and students' perception about the role of cooperative learning. Descriptive study was employed to establish the existence of phenomenon by explicitly describing them. Five EFL teachers' and 100 grade nine students' were involved in the study. Questionnaires, classroom observation and interview were used tools to obtain the data. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed to analyze the data, and random sampling technique was employed. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers and students have perceived cooperative learning positively. In spite of their good perceptions, the findings indicated that there was no uniformity among EFL teachers' perception and practice of cooperative learning. Teachers' and students' tendency to traditional teaching method, lack of student's interest, and large class size were the major challenges which impeded the implementation of cooperative learning at the school. Furthermore, the correlations were examined through Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). To determine the strength of a correlation, the cut-off points suggested by Cohen were applied. Thus, the coefficient of determination was computed to see the correlation which the students' perception about the role of cooperative learning in English language learning with their English language competency. The Pearson r demonstrated that there was a strong positive correlation between the students' use of cooperative learning method in English language learning and their English language competency. The coefficient of determination also revealed that the students' use of cooperative learning method in English language learning predicts their English language competency at above 69.2224%.

Keywords: cooperative learning, perception, practice, correlation, factors

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I. INTRODUCTION

Effective teaching and learning require the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of the learners. Many scholars have formulated hypothesis through experiments on students. They have formulated various teaching and learning methods as well. Out of many language learning methods, cooperative learning is the one which has been used in many countries including Ethiopia. It is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and other learning (Brubacher et al. 1990, p 69). This method is introduced to the teaching learning process to avoid the traditional seeing of learners as passive consumers (Hopkins, 2002). In cooperative learning method, students work in small groups to help each other. The groups have high, average, and low achievers; boys and girls; students of any ethnic groups in the class; and students with any disabilities. The students are responsible for one another learning as well as their own and the success of one student helps other students to be successful (Slavin, 1994, p1). Similarly, Johnson and Johnson (1990, p21) state that students learn content through group activities when they interact with each other, exchange information, and knowledge and work as a team to achieve the learning goals.

According to Diribsa et al. (1999), cited in Beyene (2008), the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ethiopian educational settings can be associated with the introduction of modern education in the country. In Ethiopia, modern education was introduced at the turn of the 20th century and it officially commenced in 1908 with the opening of Menelik II School in Addis Ababa after a long history of church education in the country. The history of foreign language teaching, therefore, is traced back to early 20th century. Similarly, in grade nine English textbook and teacher's guide all the macro-skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking and listening) and the micro-skills (Grammar and vocabulary) have been incorporated. The textbook consists of

12 units. There are at least three reading lessons and productive skills (writing and speaking) lessons in each unit. These activities almost half of them have been presented in the context of cooperative learning. Nevertheless, nearly all the grammar and vocabulary lessons have been treated without any context. The grammar lessons have been presented in questioning and answering form. Instead, the vocabulary items were left to the students to look them up individually from the dictionary rather than presenting in groups so as to make them easy to understand.

Therefore, the places of CL activities in grade nine student's English text book and teacher's guide have not been treated sufficiently. Rather these texts mostly contain aforementioned teaching activities. Thus, these teaching methods to some extent can promote cooperative learning method in English language learning.

However, when we see teaching of English in Ethiopian educational settings particularly Assosa secondary school, we can observe many problems affect students not to be active participants in their English learning. These problems could be related to not applying the principles of cooperative learning. As the result, the investigation was conducted on this area.

II. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study was to explore teachers' and students perception and practice of implementing cooperative learning.

2.1. Specific Objectives

In order to achieve the major objective, the following specific objectives were formulated.

- I. To assess English language teachers' and students' perception and practice of cooperative learning.
- II. To identify the major factors affecting the implementation of cooperative-learning.
- III. To examine the relationship between students' perception of cooperative learning in English language learning and their English language competency.

2.2. Research Questions

1. To what extent do teachers perceive and practice cooperative-learning in teaching English language?
2. What are the main factors affecting the implementation of cooperative-learning in teaching English language?
3. Is there any relationship between students' perception of cooperative learning in English language learning with their English language competency?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Research Design

In this study descriptive research design which applies qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection (mixed approach) was used. The researcher employed this method mainly because he believed that it was suitable and relevant for the study which looks into what actually happens in the classroom in the teaching learning process. This kind of research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation (Shahomy 1989). It is used to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describe them.

3.2. Research subjects

Benishangul Gumuz Regional State is one of the nine regional states established in 1994 by the new constitution of Ethiopia that created a federal system of governance. In the Benishangul Gumuz National Regional State particularly, in Assosa zone, there are two General secondary schools in Assosa town from which the researcher taken Assosa secondary school purposively to make the study more manageable and complete within the available time. Therefore, the subjects of the study were grade nine students, and their EFL teachers.

3.3. Samples and Sampling Technique

Based on the information given by the department of English at Assosa Secondary School, the numbers of teachers that are currently teaching English in grade nine are five and they all were included in the study. The reason was that the data that obtained from them was manageable for analysis. Grade nine students are allocated into sixteen sections and five sections were taken randomly. Accordingly, out of a population of 1090 students 100 students were taken as a sample size. However, in this study, more than one sampling technique employed to select samples from the population. Firstly, convenient sampling technique employed. As to Dornyei (2007) convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique which is used in research when a member of the targeted population is selected for the purpose of the study when they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time and ease accessibility. So, convenience sampling technique used to select the study area. Secondly, comprehensive sampling technique was used to take all English language teachers teaching grade 9 students in the selected secondary school for the interview. Thirdly,

random sampling technique was employed to select 3 sections out of 16 sections for carrying out observations. Thus, the total sample sizes were five English language teachers and 100 students, overall 105 participants.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used to collect data for the study were interviews, questionnaires, and, classroom observation. These instruments were selected because of their suitability for gathering important data for the study. Each of these instruments is briefly described below.

3.4.1. Interview

Interview is a means of interaction in which the interviewees give information orally. The information gained by interview is personal and it helps to get detailed information (Lynch, 1996). It is used to get information concerning feeling, attitude, or emotion to certain questions which is not possible to answer through questionnaire and classroom observation (Koul, 1984 and Shahomy, 1989). Thus, to the current study, semi-structured interview was prepared for all the five grade nine EFL teachers who were teaching at Asosa secondary school to get information about their perception of cooperative- teaching and the challenges that they faced for practicing it.

During the interview the researcher recorded their responses with Tape Recorder for future analysis. Since, this kind of recording process helped the researcher to avoid or minimize loss or miss interpretation of information during the write up phase of the research. Thus, all the teachers were interviewed as well.

3.4.2. Questionnaire

Questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large groups of individuals within a short period of time, and it is also easy to administer to a number of subjects in one place at a time (Best and Kahan, 1989) and Sharma, 2000). In the current study, to get additional information to the data obtained from the teachers through the interviews, questionnaires were used as data collection instruments and were designed to collect relevant data from the sample students of the school. Using this instrument some aspects such as the perception of cooperative- teaching, the role of the teachers and students during cooperative- learning sessions, strategies teachers used in cooperative- teaching were gathered.

3.4.3. Observation

As to Kumar (1996), observations are important tool that can be employed in descriptive research and other qualitative research types for gathering genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting. In the current study, the researcher used this data gathering tool as supplementary instrument to collect the available information for the study. To this end, the researcher prepared classroom observation checklist in order to collect additional data and substantiate the results obtained through questionnaires. The checklist was prepared based on the objectives of the study which was focused on classroom instructional activities or techniques which were employed by teachers.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

In the course of collecting data for the current study, all the necessary procedures were followed. First, the researcher asked permission from the school principal and explained the purpose of the study before conducting that instruments. Accordingly, after getting permission from the school principal, each participant was informed how to complete the questionnaire accurately and classroom observation was employed three times each at the different times. Then after holding the teachers' class room observations, the interview was held for all grade nine EFL teachers about their perceptions, practices and challenges while implementing cooperative-learning. All the teachers were interviewed one by one. Finally, the questionnaires were distributed for grade nine sample students of the school.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

For the current study, the researcher employed mixed method (data were analyzed through both quantitative & qualitative methods) to see the issue under study both from quantitative and qualitative perspective. The responses of close ended items of the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed, and described quantitatively in frequency and percentage values. Since, these statistical tools are important for this study as they provide information about the average participants score on a measure. However, the analysis of the data collected using the interview, and observation items were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis through using narrative form and in an interpretive manner.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Table 4.2 Frequency, Percentage and mean values of students' Perception of Cooperative Learning

The following tables show that frequency, percentage and mean values of students' perception about the role of cooperative learning.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
		frequency	frequency	frequency	frequency	frequency	total	mean
1	I feel the role of cooperative learning in small group work can develop interpersonal relationships among classmates	45(45)	42(42)	5(5)	3(3)	5(5)	100	4.19
2	I feel cooperative learning can enhance my English language skills	45(45)	35(35)	12(12)	8(8)	0(0)	100	4.17
3	My teacher always encourages me to do activities cooperatively	30(30)	45(45)	13(13)	10(10)	2(2)	100	3.91
4	I am interested in doing activities individually in English classes	15(15)	25(25)	15(15)	34(34)	11(11)	100	2.99
5	My English teacher organizes the group and tells us about the role of cooperative learning	20(20)	25(25)	25(25)	24(24)	6(6)	100	3.29
6	cooperative learning helps students to learn language skills better	50(50)	35(35)	5(5)	5(5)	5(5)	100	4.2
7	cooperative learning makes me to discuss freely with my groups	40(40)	40(40)	10(10)	7(7)	3(3)	100	4.07
8	cooperative learning makes the teaching and learning process to be enjoyable	41(41)	40(40)	12(12)	5(5)	2(2)	100	4.13
9	cooperative learning enhances students accountability and positive interdependence	30(30)	40(40)	15(15)	12(12)	3(3)	100	3.82
10	I think cooperative learning increases my participation in English classes	35(35)	30(30) 10(10)		20(20)	5(5)	100	3.7

As can be seen from Table 4.2 above, Item 1 states "I feel the role of cooperative learning in small group work can develop interpersonal relationships among classmates". In responding to this item, 45% of the students showed their strong agreement whereas 42% of them expressed their agreement. About 5% of them undecided; 3% of the respondents responded disagree and 5% of them said they strongly disagree with the idea. The mean value of this item is 4.19, which is a point between 'strongly agree' and 'agree' with regard to the scale. It seems to generalize that large number of students have high and positive degree of perception towards the role of cooperative learning that can develop interpersonal relationships among classmates.

Item 2 says "I feel cooperative learning can enhance my English language skills". In responding to the related item, a total of 87% (45% strongly agree and 42% agree respondents accept the idea. On the other hand, 12% and 8% of the respondents undecided and disagree to the view respectively. When this value is described in terms of mean, it has the mean value of 4.17. Based on this result, we can conclude that majority of students have positive perception that cooperative learning can enhance their English language skills.

Item 3 says: "My teacher always encourages me to do activities cooperatively". This point indicates that majority of the respondents (30% and 45%) supported that their teachers always encourage them to do activities cooperatively. However, 10% and 2% disagree and strongly disagree to the idea forwarded. Besides, 13% reported that they did not establish a position on the issue. Item 4 states: "I am interested in doing activities individually in English classes" The statement is not supported by majority of the respondents. 34% of the respondents showed their disagreement and 11% of them strongly disagreed with the idea. Similarly, 15% of the respondents are remained neutral. However, a small number (15% and 25 %) of the respondents responded strongly agree and agree respectively. The mean value of the respondents has 2.99. This seems to generalize that most of them have the assumptions that doing activities individually has nothing to do with their learning.

Item 5 says, "My English teacher organizes the group and tells us about the role of cooperative learning". Also, in response to this item, a total of 45% (20% strongly agree and 25 % agree points) of the respondents with the mean value of 3.29 accept the idea that their English teacher organizes the group and tells them about the role of cooperative learning. Besides, 25%, undecided, 24% disagree and 6% strongly disagree to the points respectively. From this result, we can infer that majority of teachers did not organize the group and tell their students' about the role of cooperative learning. Regarding this perspective, Exley and Dnnick (2004:4), cooperative learning is essential for the development of intellectual understanding, professional abilities, communication skills and group working skills. Thus, teachers are responsible to organize the group and tell to their students' about the role of cooperative learning.

Item 6 states: "cooperative learning helps students to learn English language skills better". With regard to this item, large number of respondents (85%) answered that (50% strongly agree and 35% agree) they agree. Nevertheless, 5% undecided; 5% disagree and 5% strongly disagree with the points. The mean value of this item is 4.2. Thus, based on this result, we can say that most of them accept the idea that cooperative learning helps them to learn language skills better.

On the other hand, Item 7 of the same table says, "Cooperative learning makes me to discuss freely with my groups". In response to this item, a total of 80% (40% strongly agree and 40% agree) point of the respondents with the mean value of 4.02 believed on the idea that cooperative learning makes them to discuss freely with their groups. However, 10%, 7% and 3% of the respondents' responded undecided; disagree and strongly disagree to the above points. This shows majority of students have positive and strong perception about the role of cooperative learning.

Item 8 says "cooperative learning makes the teaching and learning process to be enjoyable". Regarding to this item, 41% and 40% of the respondents responded strongly agree and agree respectively that cooperative learning makes the teaching and learning process to be enjoyable. However, small number of participants said that 12%, undecided, 5% disagree and 2% of the respondents answered strongly disagree with the mean value of 4.13 accept the idea. This shows majority of students showed their strong agreement that cooperative learning makes the teaching and learning process to be enjoyable.

Item 9 states: "cooperative learning enhances student's accountability and positive interdependence". This item clearly shows 30% strongly agree and 40% of the respondents agree and accept the issue with the mean value of 3.82. However, 15% undecided; 12% disagree and the remaining 3% replied strongly disagree. According to this, Falchikov, (2005) states in the principle of positive interdependence, each group member efforts are indispensable for group success. Also, each group member has a unique contribution to make the joint effort because of his or her resources and task responsibilities. Thus, cooperative learning helps students to develop positive interdependence and to be responsible towards their learning.

Item 10 says, "I think cooperative learning increases my participation in English classes". Majority of the respondents that means 65% (35% strongly agree and 30% agree) accept the idea that cooperative learning enhances their participation in English classes. While 10%, 20% and 5% of them undecided; disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The mean value of the students' response has 3.7% which is a point between

strongly agree and agree with regard to the scale. Based on this result, we can conclude that most of the students have positive and good perception about the role of cooperative learning.

Generally, concerning teachers' and students' perception about the role of cooperative learning, there are some difficulties that have been faced teachers' and students' in implementing cooperative learning effectively. However, most teachers' and students' perception was positive about the role of cooperative learning.

Table 4.3: Correlation of Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning in English language Learning and their English language ability

The following table demonstrates the results of Pearson's r correlation coefficient computed to examine the correlation between the students' perception about the role cooperative learning in English language learning and their English language competency.

students' perception scores	Pearson Correlation	1	.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	99	99
students' English scores	Pearson Correlation	.832**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	99	99

Table 4.3 above shows the correlation of the students' perception of cooperative learning in English language learning and their English language ability. Hundred students of English subject result in 2017/18 was taken to employ the correlation of cooperative learning with their English language competence. The table shows that the r-value is .832**. Thus, the r-value is closer to 1.000. The p-value is .000, and the correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed). This reveals that there is a strong positive correlation between students' perception about the role of cooperative learning in English language learning with their English language competency. It seems to generalize that as use of cooperative learning increases, students English language ability increases as well; those students who employ cooperative learning method more frequently obtain better results in English language. The coefficient of determination computed indicates that the students' use of cooperative learning method predicts their English language ability at 69.2224%.

4.4. Discussion of the Results of the Observations

The number of students who were learning English in the school mentioned above at Grade Nine during the main study was 1090. They were allocated into sixteen sections. The researcher observed three English classes with number of students in average of 75-80 in each class. The classrooms are not wide enough to occupy the students and the chairs are not easy to move from place to place when needed. In addition, the windows were situated at high levels which did not allow the fresh air to come in. In like manners, the descriptions, interpretations and discussions of the observations are presented as follows

When the researcher observed the activities done in the classroom with the principles of cooperative learning, the researcher observed that firstly the teacher did not make clear the objective of the day's lesson to students. Secondly, during the introduction and explanations sessions, the teacher did not elicit information from the background knowledge of the students. Thirdly, the teacher did not record students' errors and explained the correct form to the whole class by the end of the period. This shows that the teacher did not give due attention to the lesson. In other words the class was not conducted in line with the theoretical framework of cooperative learning. However, the teacher allowed students to work in groups and look for answers to the class work task.

Moreover, the teacher was moving around each group to assist students who had problems. When the researcher explored the activities done by the teacher, however, the researcher observed that students were made to work in groups and learn from each other. This implied that the teacher tried using cooperative learning strategies in this aspect. In general, from the activities performed, it is possible to suggest that most portion of the class was teacher-led though there was an attempt in making some of the portion active.

The researcher also observed that the teacher had changed his technique of teaching to some extent. For example, the teacher elicited background information from the students when he was introducing and explaining the day's lesson. Moreover, he made students discuss in groups.

He was supervising students' participations while students were doing activities in groups. Above all, one interesting thing that the researcher had observed was that the teacher brought a stool from his house,

though the object was familiar to students starting from lower grades, and showed them as an example of Ethiopian traditional object. This implied that the teacher had the interest to make his teaching as practical as possible. However, when the researcher examined the detail of the classroom performances, the teacher did not let the students forward their ideas, opinions and comments freely in classroom. Of course, this may be due to the nature of the task developed in the textbook. The other shortcoming was that no room was given to self or peer corrections. Thus, in conclusion, most of the activities are similar to those discussed. In other words, few of them are in harmony with cooperative learning principles and most of them were in conformity with teacher-led teaching method.

However, when the researcher examined the detail of the classroom performances, the time allotted for group discussion was not enough and there was little report from each group. The other shortcoming was that no time was given to self or peer corrections. When the class time came to end the teacher faced difficulty to conclude the lesson because the teacher did not manage the class time properly. The teacher simply organized the class in to groups but didn't take the nature of the lesson into consideration. Thus, in conclusion, few of the activities were accomplished in line with active learn them were performed in connection with teacher-led teaching method. In addition to this, the class was not conducted in line with the theoretical framework of cooperative- learning.

However, the teacher allowed students to work in groups and look for answers to the class work task. Moreover, the teacher was moving around each group to assist students who had problems. When the above activities investigated, however, the researcher observed that students were made to work in groups and learn from each other. This implied that the teacher was using active learning strategies in this aspect. In general, from the activities performed, it is possible to suggest that large portion of the class was teacher-led though there was an attempt in employing cooperative learning.

The researcher also tried to explore those activities found in the lesson did not correspond with the guidelines of cooperative learning. For instance, the researcher checked that the teacher did not encourage students to forward their ideas, opinions and comments during the introduction and explanations sessions.

Secondly, most of the students were not actively engaged in the group discussion during the lesson as the teacher's attention was in correcting the previous day's homework. Thirdly, the teacher did not record students' errors and explained the correct form to the whole class by the end of the period. Fourthly, the teacher did not explain anything about ways of giving opinions or types of expressions used when opinions are given during his input session.

In general, from the activities performed, it is possible to deduce that the class time was partially devoted to teacher-led approach and the other 50% to cooperative learning strategies.

Majority of the students were not attempting to participate in expressing their ideas/opinions for fear that they might make mistake or lack of back ground knowledge on the topic of the lesson. Due to this, the students didn't actively involve in group discussion during the lesson and report the whole class. No self and peer correction among students.

Generally, the class room performance of the students was good; however, there were constraints that hinder students from active involvement in group discussion during the lesson. To enhance the communicative competence of the students, it is better to let students forward their ideas, opinions and comments freely but the teacher didn't do this. The whole class time was used for explanation. Overall, the teacher implemented teacher-led approach in the class room rather than student- led.

There were a lot of students in the classroom on different seats. They were passive listeners.

No one was actively engaged in the activities during the lesson. They were not responsible for their learning and solve problems. During my observation, most of the students did not follow the instructions given by the classroom management. In sum, the class was totally dominated by teacher's performance. The students were not seen to attempt their level best in solving problems, which were really significant in developing the habit of independent learning.

As the researcher observed the teacher classroom, theming paradigm to some extent and most of teacher fully used teacher- led approach in the classroom. No room was given for the learning strategies that help students. It was expected that students play a great role in implementing cooperative learning strategies in class room by participating actively during different activities in a lesson, but no students were participated actively in the activities during the lesson.

Generally, on the basis of the above explanation, it is possible to suggest that the teacher's lesson presentation did not give much attention to the implementation of cooperative learning strategies

As it was mentioned above, the teacher used teacher centered approach in the classroom that kept students from participating in different activities so that the students were simply passive listeners. No students' participation was boldly seen in the classroom. The students simply copied down what the teacher wrote on the blackboard. In addition, the classroom performance was dominated by the teacher and no cooperative learning strategies were fully employed in the classroom during the lesson.

To wind up, the researcher observed the classroom performance and most of the class time was used writing notes and explaining it on the blackboard. As a result, problems were observed dominantly. The first one was, considerable amount of class time was used up in writing notes and explaining it on the blackboard. Students were also simultaneously copying the notes to their exercise books.

This kind of lesson presentation was so teacher-centered approach that it invaded up on the students' time that should have been used for participating actively during the lesson.

The researcher observed that most students were in problem to finish writing the notes from blackboard on time because not all students had equal speed to copy down notes and activities from the blackboard and solve them according to his instruction.

As it could be seen from the above explanations, it is possible to come up with the conclusion that though there were activities which help to implement cooperative learning strategies. This implied that the strategies of cooperative learning were not being implemented in its totality. In cooperative learning classroom students are the main role players and teacher is director that facilitates the students.

V. DATA OBTAINED THROUGH TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS

The teachers were asked how they perceive the role of cooperative learning to teach English language. In response to this question, four of the five interviewees responded that they were perceived as CL has a positive effect on classroom climate which leads to encourage student's participation towards their learning. They also added that cooperative learning enhances student's better performance in problem solving and to improve their English language skills as well. Therefore, it provides valuable advantages for high achiever, medium achiever and lower achiever of the learners. However, one of the interviewee discussed that even though cooperative learning enables students to communicate with one another, to gain in self-confidence and to develop social skills, there are causes of difficulty in implementing cooperative learning. It can be affected by different factors like student's willingness, low or high self-esteem, language ability, lack of time and so forth.

The second question that the teachers were asked if they believed using cooperative learning method has advantages for the teaching learning process. All of respondents responded that if cooperative learning is implemented effectively and properly it makes the teaching learning process too attractive and enjoyable. The interviewees discussed this in terms of the benefits that the students got from learning cooperative lessons. Firstly, they said that learning the lessons in the context of CL made students' learn how CL method is useful to improve their English language skills, and thus they could significantly improve their participation. Secondly, they stated that CL can enhance students' positive interdependence; it develops their social skills and can develop their self-confidence as well.

The interviewees were then asked if they practiced CL method or not in their classroom and how they practiced it. Regarding to this question, all the teachers discussed that ways of practicing CL in their classroom. Moreover, they stated that before the actual implementation of cooperative learning they were carried out their responsibilities; during presentation stage, they introduced the daily lesson to the students clearly, and then they formed heterogeneous groups of four or five, they informed students the time allowed to their cooperation and encourage them to learn each other actively. During practice, they moved from place to place to observe students' progress, help them whenever they faced a problem and ensure all students are equally participated and actively engaged without the domination of one or two members in the group. At the end stage, they evaluated students' understanding by raising some questions.

Moreover, the participants were asked how they could treat if challenges faced while the implementation of cooperative learning. All the interviewees replied that the nature of cooperative learning lessons, indeed, made their learners learn from one another through discussions. So, obviously challenges are faced while they implemented cooperative learning. Most importantly, the problems were that raised by the respondents, some of the learners couldn't cope with the cooperative learning lessons as they have variable English language proficiency and lack of interest. To this end, most of students have not good abilities in the target language to express their idea. Besides, making mistakes in front of other group members make them feel inferiority. As a result, they become hesitant.

Nevertheless, when there is a difficulty they tried to considerer group size in order to avoid some kind of disturbance (noise) there should be space between groups and they made chairs and related materials of the classroom attractive for discussion.

Furthermore, the participants were asked if they would respond that cooperative learning method differ from traditional teaching method. The interviewees responded that cooperative learning provides mutual learning among students those who have different English language abilities mixed on one or more of number of variables including religion, ethnicity, personality, age and sex. They went on to explain that CL has a direct contact or relation with the concept of student-centered approach since it can make learners to be active participant. Instead of this they discussed that traditional teaching method as a teacher-centered which everything is carried out by the teacher. Thus, the students are simply recipients.

To sum up, as the large majority of the interviewees responded, in cooperative learning method the students' learn how the method is useful to improve their English language skills, and thus they enjoyed learning the lessons in that way. Thus, they continued to make use of the method in various contexts appropriately to help their students successfully accomplish their CL tasks. These results, thus, match with the results of the questionnaire above in which using CL method lessons through assist students interest significantly improved their use of English Language skills.

5.1. Challenges Affecting the Implementation of cooperative Learning

The last item that was raised by the researcher was: regarding the challenges that they faced while implementing cooperative learning in the classroom during the lesson, all of the respondents were of the challenges that they faced while implementing cooperative learning. When one further investigates the above responses, some students might be demotivated because they expected that everything should be done by the teacher. In addition, the school administrators did not support the Grade Nine English teachers to apply it in the classroom and did not support the teachers with creating conducive environment. The other challenges that the teachers raised were, the classroom condition such as, the chairs are not easily moved from place to place and the windows could not let fresh air from outside. Moreover, the classrooms were not organized with different facilities which help the teaching/learning process.

As it is seen from the above investigation, grade nine English teachers faced a lot of challenges that hinder them implementing cooperative learning. For instance, lack of students interest, lack of cooperation of the school administrators with teachers, lack of classroom organization, poor English language background of the students due to their mother tongue influence etc. Thus, identifying factors that affects the implementation of cooperative learning is better to go towards the solution.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

- ❖ This study concludes that there is a strong positive correlation between students' use of cooperative learning method in English language learning and their English language competency.
- ❖ Although teachers' and students' lack the necessary commitment in implementing cooperative learning, they seem to be aware of the importance of cooperative learning. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of teachers' and students' perceived cooperative learning positively.
- ❖ All the teachers complain about the large number of students in each class which is inconvenient for them to make their learners participate in the cooperative activities and monitor them closely..
- ❖ The findings of this study revealed that despite students' and EL teachers' positive perception about the role of cooperative learning, all teachers retain some fear of adapting cooperative learning as an instrumental method because of perceived disciplinary problems related classroom practice.
- ❖ To summarize, the overall findings of the study shows that in spite of the fact both teachers and students have positive perception about the role of cooperative learning, in reality they failed to practice it in EL classroom effectively.

6.2. Recommendations

From the discussions given above and the conclusions reached, the researcher forwards the following recommendations:

- i. If CL is to be successful, teachers need to be properly in-serviced on CL theories and methods. They also need practical knowledge with examples. It is not enough to simply give teachers a textbook. Teachers should know that CL works in similar situations to their own. Otherwise, they will continue to use what they see as reasonably successful in their own classroom without understanding what CL can do for their students.
- ii. Having appropriate class size may not always be possible. Therefore, the implementers of cooperative learning should see alternative solutions such as, dividing students into two groups, using halls, language laboratories and fields..
- iii. As English is the medium of instructions, teachers should urge their students to discuss the cooperative learning lessons in English rather than in other languages during CL. Teachers should serve as facilitators and encourage their students to be interdependent during CL. They should also observe and monitor what is going on, and if necessary, intervene during discussions. Moreover, a great attention should be given by EL teachers to improve students' use of cooperative learning method so that students would be able to improve their English language performance.

- iv. To sum up, it is recommended that teacher education programs, which aim at in-depth training about language teaching methodologies should properly dealt with both the strength and weakness of CL as an instructional method running from basic principles to specific techniques of the role of cooperative learning. This is because the current teaching method is recommended to be student-centered approach.

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Appendix

Participant students' in the close ended questions English language subject scores in the first semester of 2017/18 academic year

Students' Code	Perception Scores of Students	First semester 2017/18 academic year English language subject scores
1	56	45
2	87	78
3	68	54
4	92	98
5	56	51
6	54	40
7	56	39
8	69	65
9	64	43
10	81	65
11	60	59
12	59	48
13	93	91
14	90	93
15	78	69
16	74	63
17	88	71
18	55	30
19	81	76
20	61	52
21	58	59
22	58	54
23	68	61
24	90	83
25	63	48
26	51	44
27	88	66
28	65	41
29	63	40
30	74	69
31	88	86
32	88	63

33	68	41
34	70	50
35	63	49.5
36	70	57
37	69	62
38	74	53.5
39	62	62
40	69	43
41	60	45
42	92	87
43	78	59
45	88	76
46	88	71
47	68	45
48	80	70
49	80	70.5
50	80	77
51	73	46
52	78	72
53	71	67
54	65	58
55	67	59
56	80	64
57	60	43
58	55	65
59	67	67
60	56	56
61	60	49
62	88	80
63	65	47
64	90	90
65	90	75
66	66	59
67	66	59
68	68	58
69	63	46
70	89	76
71	92	84
72	78	65
73	69	48
74	78	73
75	67	49
76	69	55
77	63	41
78	64	54
79	53	44
80	80	77
81	79	58
82	81	60
83	88	74
84	88	73
85	49	35
86	93	87
87	60	55

88	88	67
89	78	56
90	72	72
91	56	40
92	56	67
93	69	66
94	74	61
95	60	44
96	90	83
97	90	71
98	90	77
99	67	67
100	88	85

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