



Cooperative Learning Strategies' Impact on Students' Comprehension of Reading in the English Language

Ali khan¹, Dr. Munir Khan², Farmanul Haq³

¹M. Phil Scholar, University of Malakand Chakdara, Pakistan, E-mail: alikhanelu10@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Malakand

E-mail: drmunirkhan71@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

³Ph.D. Scholar, AIOU Islamabad, E-mail: farmanulhaq893@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71145/rjsp.v3i1.81>

Abstract

The current study aims to examine the impact of cooperative learning practices on English language learners' reading comprehension. A true experimental research design is employed and the research is executed at Govt. Middle School Dadahara, Kabal, Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The sample consists of 52 students in the eighth grade. The experimental and control groups are formed by randomly assigning participants to them.

The cooperative group follows the cooperative learning strategies whereas the traditional group receives instruction through Grammar Translation Method. The experiment lasted for six weeks; each week consists of six sessions, each session lasting for 40 minutes. The results of pretests show no significant difference i.e., ($p > 0.05$). Posttest results between the experimental and control groups show a significant difference i.e., ($P < 0.05$) following the application of cooperative learning techniques with the experimental group. From the above facts, it can be concluded that when it comes to enhancing primary school students' English reading comprehension, cooperative learning methods are more effective than the Grammar Translation Method.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Cooperative Learning, Traditional Learning, Elementary School

Introduction

The importance of English transcends description, given its status as an international language and global lingua franca (Rao, 2019). Since English is a widely used medium of instruction at the college and university levels, it is also claimed that proficiency in the language is essential for higher education. It is the storehouse of all information because the vast majority of higher education publications are written in English, and reading English-language texts is now necessary to pursue higher education in the humanities or sciences (Rao, 2019). The English language has a significant influence in the rapid advancement and expansion of modern sciences. As a result, deficiencies in the English language cause one to fall behind the state of knowledge (Montgomery, 2013).

These days, several countries view English as their official language , in reality, the majority of multinational corporations hire those workers who speak English well (Mohamadsaid & Rasheed, 2019). Consequently, having outstanding academic credentials makes it easier for someone to land a decent job, have a fulfilling professional career, and have a wealthy life (John et al., 2021). The fundamental abilities for learning a foreign language are speaking, reading, writing, and listening. When studying any language, reading helps students advance their knowledge and communication abilities more quickly (John et al., 2021). Understanding is reading's primary goal. For pupils to effectively absorb information, they must be able to read and interpret written materials. They may simply obtain the information they require and omit the information that is irrelevant to them because of this skill (Clarke et al., 2013). Reading comprehension is getting meaning from a text (Cecil et al., 2017). Reading comprehension is important for both teachers and students since it helps pupils acquire languages more quickly and succeeds in both their academic and academic careers (Almutairi, 2018). Teaching methodologies are the important elements in teaching and learning (Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014). For improving English reading comprehension teaching strategies are important element (Erya & Pustika, 2021).

It is observed that traditional or grammar translation method failed to improve reading comprehension of learners (Hakim et al., 2013). GTM usually practices a lot of translation and grammar in teaching of English so learners do not take interest in class and remains passive (Day et al., 2016).

In teaching learning process cooperative learning methods have been using as active methods of teaching (Saad, 2017). Cooperative learning benefits both learners and teachers in reading comprehension (Buchs & Butera, 2015). Grammar Translation Method is thought to be less effective than cooperative learning methodologies. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's elementary school pupils have low reading comprehension of English, and this is because traditional teaching methods are being used (Tabassum et al., 2017). The Grammar Translation Method, which is used by teachers in most government schools in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hasn't helped pupils' understanding of reading in English (Haq et al., 2019). According to the evidence presented, there is no greater benefit from the Grammar Translation Method for enhancing English reading comprehension.

Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how cooperative learning practices affect elementary school students' growth in English reading comprehension.

Problem Statement

The majority of KPK's schools, particularly the government ones, teach English primarily utilizing the GTM technique. Hence the present research work was employed to examine the effect of cooperative learning practices i.e, peer tutoring, Jigsaw and Think Pair Share and on enhancement of student's English reading comprehension at district Swat.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the impact of cooperative learning techniques on the development of eighth-grade pupil' English reading comprehension.
- ii. To assess the impact of conventional instruction on the development of eighth-grade pupils' English reading comprehension at Elementary level.
- iii. To compare the impact of cooperative learning techniques and conventional teaching methods on reading comprehension in students in Grade VIII.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁ Cooperative learning practices, such as pair share, Jigsaw, and peer tutoring, do not appear to have a significant influence on eighth-grade students' progress in English reading comprehension.
- H₁ Cooperative learning practices (think pair share, Jigsaw, and peer tutoring) have a significant impact on eighth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement in English.
- H₀₂ Grammar Translation Method has no significant impact on eighth-grade pupils' reading comprehension performance in English.
- H₂ Grammar Translation Method has a significant impact on eighth-grade pupils' reading comprehension performance in English.
- H₀₃ The Pre and Posttest results for the Experimental group do not show any significant differences.
- H₃ The Pre and Posttest results for the Experimental group show a significant difference from each other.
- H₀₄ The pre- and posttest findings for the experimental group and the control groups do not show any significant differences.
- H₄ The experimental group's and the control groups' pre- and posttest results are significantly differ from one another.

Significance of the Study

By using cooperative learning techniques, the research may boost learners' comprehension of English reading. Introducing innovation into their teaching strategies may also be beneficial for educators. Administrators can run specific workshops to prepare in-service teachers to use cooperative learning techniques.

The current research can be carried out by other researchers, who can also expand it to cover various subjects and grades.

Delimitations of the Study

- i. Students from Government Middle School Dadahara Kabal in the Swat region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, who were in the eighth grade, took part.
- ii. Testing was done on the students' understanding of English reading
- iii. Peer tutoring, Jigsaw, and Think Pair Share were the methods used to provide the intervention.

Limitations of the Study

- i. Students who arrive late.
- ii Students absences.
- iii Failing to turn in homework assignments on time.

Study's theoretical Foundation

The traditional way of teaching, often known as GTM, is a style of instruction that is typically used to teach foreign languages through translation (Mondal, 2012). In Europe, this kind of instruction flourished in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Learning foreign languages, such as Latin and Greek, was considered essential for advanced studies and the source of knowledge in Western Europe. The so-called "classical method" of teaching these languages

involved memorizing passages, applying translations, grammatical rules, and witting texts (Kaharuddin, 2018). Conversely, cooperative learning, often known as CL, refers to instructional tactics or approaches in which students are divided into smaller groups in accordance with the teacher's instructions in order to learn together.

In cooperative learning, students are grouped in a way that encourages social interaction between them. Each student is accountable for learning a work that has been assigned to them, and they are also responsible for helping their fellow students become more motivated to study (Fatima et al., 2022). A number of scholars have identified five key components of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face or direct engagement, social or interpersonal skills, and group processing. They contend that these elements must be implemented in order to create a cooperative learning environment (Iyer, 2013; Li & Lam, 2013; Whitener, 2016). Cooperative learning (CL) has a history dating back more than a century. Marcus Fabius Quintilian introduced the idea of CL, according to which learners can benefit from it by studying (Aimin et al., 2010). The concept was also expressed in Talmud, a book of Jewish law, which said that having a partner while learning would make it more engaging, effective, and simple (Friedman, 2014). When Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell established schools at the end of the 18th century in England, they heavily utilized cooperative learning techniques and saw improvements in student performance (Zarei & Keshavarz, 2011). Colonel Francis Parker, the Massachusetts private school supervisor, recommended the implementation of CL in all schools during the common school era of the 19th century. John Dew later included cooperative learning into his renowned project technique in 1963. Cooperative learning techniques were widely used in American schools and were popular until the end of the 19th century (Saleh, 2012).

The two key publications on cooperative and competitive learning, which are regarded as the first laboratory investigations on these subjects, were published in the 1920s and 1930s (Johnson & Johnson, 2015). Vogotsky placed a high value on cooperative learning activities and emphasized their application (Slavin, 2011). Learning with peers is found to offer a greater chance for comprehension of the material as well as an opportunity for the learner to watch the learning techniques used by the peer (Topping et al., 2017). According to a study by Haq, Khurram, and Bangash (2019), students improved their reading comprehension through cooperative learning techniques. They employed experimental design research pretest and posttest in their investigation. Their experiment's findings showed that improving reading comprehension can be achieved by implementing a cooperative reading technique.

According to a study, "undergraduate learners' learning achievements are impacted by cooperative learning." 136 students participated in the study and were split equally into two-person experimental and control groups. The experimental group outperformed the students who got the standard teaching style in the experiment's outcomes (Keramati & Gillies, 2021).

The educational requirements of schools Using cooperative learning strategies makes it simple to reach kids (Atta & Siddique, 2013). Pupils who focus on group projects exhibit well-mannered behavior and provide prompt feedback, both of which are critical for academic success. Studies have indicated that cooperative learning approaches are more effective in promoting learning and achieving academic objectives. In addition to improving reading comprehension and motivating pupils, cooperative learning fosters moral and social growth in the classroom (Tsay & Brady, 2010). The study contrasted the cooperative and individualistic approaches to reading comprehension, and the findings suggested that the cooperative approach would be more successful (Behjat, 2011).The research described above highlight the benefits and possibilities of

cooperative learning in second language instruction. The effectiveness of various cooperative learning strategies for boosting English language training across linguistic and cultural boundaries still has to be evaluated, though. Thus, the goal of the current study was to determine how cooperative learning techniques affected students' knowledge of English literature.

Research Methodology

The study design used was a true experimental pretest and posttest with random assignment of individuals into experimental and control groups.

Participants

Participants in the study comprised all fifty eighth-grade students from Government Middle School Dadahara Kabal Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan during the 2022–2023 academic years. They were between the ages of 13 and 16.

The low, average, and high achiever were determined by the pretest. For equating the groups pretest scores were used.

A set of criteria was provided, according to which students with scores of 0–7 were classified as low achievers, those with scores of 8–14 as average achievers, and those with scores of 15–20 as high achievers. Using the randomization technique (head and tail), two groups were created for each category; one group was designated as the control group and the other as the experimental group. Each group was consisted of 25 students. The experiment was continued for six weeks following a weekend in each week. Duration of each period was 40 minutes.

Data collection Instruments

A piloted pretest that the researcher created was used to gather primary data for the study. The first three lessons from the Grade VIII English textbook, which they had previously been taught, served as the basis for the pretest. Following treatment, a follow-up exam known as the posttest was created using the identical materials as the pretest and was given to the students six weeks later.

Validity of the Tests

The 20 items on the pretest and posttest were identical in terms of format, but the item distributions varied. Two MPhil Scholars and three PhD Doctors in the field of education assessed the validity of both the pretest and posttest in order to increase their authenticity and validity. The tests were evaluated by PhD researchers and MPhil scholars before being employed as a research instrument to gather data.

Reliability of both Tests

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the two tests' reliability. A pilot study was conducted on a sample of twenty eight-graders from Government High School Swegalai Swat in order to verify the validity of the pretest. Following data entry into SPSS and Chronbach's Alpha analysis, the pretest scores showed a value of 0.723, over the threshold of 0.70, indicating strong reliability and potential utility as a research data collection tool.

In order to verify the validity of the posttest, data was collected from 20 Government High School Swegalai Swat eight grade students. Its reliability is better and it may be used as a research tool for data collection, as demonstrated by the value of the scores, which was 0.84 after the data, was entered into SPSS and the Chronbach's Alpha was applied.

Teaching Condition

The two groups received the same instruction. For both the cooperative and control groups, the same parameters applied: duration, location, subject matter, and instructor.

SPSS 16.0 was used to analyze the collected data. T-tests were used, including the independent sample t-test and the paired samples t-test. The 0.05 level was used to test whether there was a significant difference in the means of the scores for the cooperative and control groups on the pre and posttest variables.

Data Analysis

Following tables shows data analysis of the data.

Table 1. Score differences between the Control Group's pre- and post-tests

Control group	n	m	Standard deviation	Standard error Mean	T	p
Pretest	26	8.01	3.33	0.587	1.37	0.262
Post test	26	6.90	4.002	0.835		

Level of significance= 0.05

It was discovered that the computed value of p, or 0.262, was higher than the significance level at 0.05. Consequently, it shown there is no marked difference between the control group's pre-test and post-test results. So the null hypothesis no: H_{02} is accepted.

Table 2. Difference between the Experimental group's pre and posttest results.

Experimental group	n	m	Standard deviation	Standard error Mean	T	P
Pretest	26	8.00	3.001	0.821	4.238	.000
Posttest	26	9.76	4.830	0.954		

Level of significance= 0.05

The computed value of p, or 0.000, in the above table was judged to be less than the significance level at 0.05. The results thus demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the Experimental group's pre- and posttest scores. So the alternate hypothesis no: H_1 is accepted.

Table 3. Score differences between the Control and Experimental groups on the pretests.

Groups	n.	m.	Standard deviation	Standard error Mean	T	P
Pre-test Control	26	7.72	3.46	0.797	0.739	0.985
Pre-test Experimental	26	8.36	3.97	0.751		

Level of significance= 0.05

The table demonstrated that the computed p-value, or 0.985, was determined to be higher than the significance level at 0.05. Consequently, it demonstrated that there is no discernible difference between the experimental group's and control group's pre-test results. So the null hypothesis no: H_{04} is accepted.

Table 4. Difference between the Control and Experimental groups' posttest results.

Groups	n.	m.	Standard deviation	Standard error Mean	T	p
Posttest-Control	26	7.20	3.76	0.752	2.752	0.008
Posttest Experimental	26	10.48	4.61	0.923		

Level of significance= 0.05

It was discovered that the computed value of p, or 0.008, was less than the significance level at 0.05. As a result, it demonstrated that learners who were taught using CL methods and those who were taught using GTM differed significantly in their reading comprehension.

It means that the alternate hypothesis no: H₄ is accepted.

Findings of the Study

The analysis led to the following findings:

1. There was no significance difference, between the control group's pretest and posttest results in English reading comprehension.
2. The Experimental group's pretest and posttest results for English reading comprehension differed significantly.
3. There was no discernible difference between the experimental and control groups' pretest results.
4. There was a discernible difference between the experimental and control groups' posttest results.

Conclusion

It was discovered that the cooperative learning approach is more effective in raising elementary school pupils' reading comprehension of English.

Learners engaged in cooperative learning strategies showed better results as compared to GTM. So for improving English reading comprehension Cooperative learning methods should be adopted by teachers.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendations of the study:

1. No significant difference was found among the pre and posttests scores of the control group in improvement of the comprehension of English reading. Therefore it is recommended to avoid the use of GTM in English reading comprehension classes.
2. As the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies are proved in increasing English reading comprehension, so it is recommended for elementary school teachers to apply CL methods in the teaching of English.
3. It is recommended that administrators of schools should encourage and motivate teachers in the application of cooperative learning methods.

Recommendations for further Studies

1. The current study was restricted to a single school in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa district SWAT. It ought to be expanded to include additional school districts.
2. Only English reading comprehension was examined in this study; future research should look into how teachers and students feel about cooperative learning methods.
3. This study only included elementary school pupils. It is advised that researchers look at other grade levels as well.

References

- Aimin, S., Li, P., & Xiaoqin, Z. (2010). The teaching mode of college English cooperative learning. *Journal of Social Science of Hunan Medical University*, 4, 93-95.
- Almutairi, N. R. (2018). Effective reading strategies for increasing the reading comprehension level of third-grade students with learning disabilities.
- Atta, M. A., & Siddique, M. (2013). Effect of co-operative learning on the educational attainments of students at elementary school level. *Gomal University Journal of Research*, 29(2), 87-92.
- Behjat, F. (2011). Reading through interaction: From individualistic reading comprehension to collaboreading. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(3), 239-244.
- Buchs, C., & Butera, F. (2015). Cooperative learning and social skills development.
- Cecil, N. L., Gipe, J. P., & Merrill, M. (2017). *Literacy in grades 4–8: Best practices for a comprehensive program*. Routledge.
- Clarke, P. J., Truelove, E., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M. J. (2013). *Developing reading comprehension*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Day, R., Bassett, J., Bowler, B., Parminter, S., Bullard, N., Furr, M., . . . Robb, T. (2016). *Extensive reading, Revised edition-Into the classroom*. Oxford University Press.
- Erya, W. I., & Pustaka, R. (2021). STUDENTS'PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE USE OF WEBTOON TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILL. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 51-56.
- Fatima, H. G., Akbar, H., Khan, B. S., Amin, H., & Anjum, S. M. A. (2022). Cooperative Learning As An Innovative Method In Teaching Science At Elementary Level. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 879-889.
- Friedman, H. H. (2014). The art of constructive arguing: Lessons from the Talmud. *Available at SSRN 2472735*.
- Hakim, M. I., Anggani, D., & Sutopo, D. (2013). GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD THROUGH TEAM GAME TOURNAMENT TO IMPROVE STUDENTS'READING SKILLS. *English Education Journal*, 3(1).
- Haq, Z.-u., Khurram, B. A., & Bangash, A. K. (2019). Development of Reading Skill through Activity Based Learning at Grade-VI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 41(1), 85-104.
- Iyer, R. B. (2013). Relation between cooperative learning and student achievement. *International Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 3(1), 21-25.
- John, S., Guriro, S., & Halepota, J. (2021). The Role of English Language Skills in Career Growth: A.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2015). Theoretical approaches to cooperative learning. *Collaborative learning: Developments in research and practice*, 17-46.

- Kaharuddin, A. (2018). The communicative grammar translation method: a practical method to teach communication skills of English. *ETERNAL (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 4(2), 232-254.
- Keramati, M. R., & Gillies, R. M. (2021). Perceptions of undergraduate students on the effect of cooperative learning on academic achievement. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*.
- Li, M., & Lam, B. H. (2013). Cooperative learning. *The Hong Kong Institute of Education*, 1, 33.
- Mohamadsaid, A., & Rasheed, S. (2019). Can English Considered to be a Global Language? *Online Submission*.
- Mondal, K. (2012). English language learning through the combination of grammar translation method and communicative language teaching. *Academia Arena*, 4(6), 20-24.
- Montgomery, S. L. (2013). *Does science need a global language?: English and the future of research*. University of Chicago Press.
- Natsir, M., & Sanjaya, D. (2014). Grammar translation method (GTM) versus communicative language teaching (CLT); A review of literature. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 2(1), 58-62.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Research Journal of English*, 4(1), 65-79.
- Saad, I. (2017). The Role of Cooperative Learning Method in Teaching of Science Subject at Elementary School Level: An Experimental Study. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 39(2), 1-17.
- Saleh, M. I. (2012). The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning on EFL Proficiency: A Case Study of Grade Ten Female Classroom in the New Developed High School Project in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. *Master's Thesis*, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.
- Slavin, R. E. (2011). Instruction based on cooperative learning. *Handbook of research on learning and instruction*, 358-374.
- Tabassum, R., Iqbal, K., & Hussain, H. (2017). A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF READING SKILLS OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT MARDAN (KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA). *Pakistan Journal of social Sciences (PJSS)*, 37(1).
- Topping, K., Buchs, C., Duran, D., & Van Keer, H. (2017). *Effective peer learning: From principles to practical implementation*. Routledge.
- Tsay, M., & Brady, M. (2010). A Case Study of Cooperative Learning and Communication Pedagogy: Does Working in Teams Make a Difference? *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 78-89.
- Whitener, J. L. (2016). Using the elements of cooperative learning in school band classes in the United States. *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(2), 219-233.
- Zarei, A. A., & Keshavarz, J. (2011). On the effects of two models of cooperative learning on EFL reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 1(2), 39.