

HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS' ATTITUDE ON THE APPLICATION OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract:

Cooperative learning (CL) has gained significant popularity in the field of education and now it has become essential in the teaching and learning. The students have become more acquainted with this model.. The current study aims to understand the attitudes of hearing-impaired (HI) students towards educational activities. The study used a survey research design and a quantitative approach to address the research questions. Students in elementary school were the study's subjects. A survey was used to collect the data. SPSS 26 was utilised for the data analysis. According to the study's findings, attitudes on the use of CL to enhance reading comprehension in the classroom were positive.

Key words: *Hearing Impaired Students' , Attitudes , Cooperative Learning, Reading Comprehension*

Introduction:

Small groups of students collaborate to accomplish common learning objectives as part of the instructional strategy referred to as cooperative learning (CL). Although CL has been extensively researched in general education, there is still growing interest in its applicability and efficacy for students who are hearing-impaired (HI). To build inclusive classrooms that encourage cooperation, social integration, and reading engagement to improve reading comprehension, it is essential to comprehend how HI students feel about CL. By encouraging both academic and social development, cooperative learning can be a useful teaching method for improving the reading comprehension skills of hearing-impaired students (Polvanov, 2023). This method promotes socialisation, interaction, and knowledge acquisition by emphasising shared learning experiences. Research indicates that cooperative learning can help students with hearing impairments overcome the drawbacks of conventional teaching techniques. Reading comprehension abilities may be impacted by the language and/or speech delays that many students with hearing impairments experience. These delays have a significant impact on social interaction, personal responsibility, and positive interdependence (Bajenioa et. al., 2020).

According to Loewen, & Sato (2018) CL has several beneficial qualities, including the ability to facilitate realistic second language acquisition through interactions between students and teachers. The process of learning a language and actually using it differs greatly. Despite taking several classes in traditional classrooms covering all facets of the language, students lack practical proficiency when it comes to using it. As the interactive exercises provide additional examples of language objects and communication strategies, CL improves the teaching methodology (Kaymak et.al., 2018). Additionally, CL builds a healthy affective environment in the classroom by

enhancing students' enthusiasm and reducing stress (Ashrafzade et.al., 2023). Stress can arise from learning and using a second language. In the teacher-led classroom, questions are presented to the class as a whole. Some children do not respond correctly or speak, and this is seen to be a threat to language development. Put differently, studies think that stress negatively impacts learners' attitudes and language acquisition (Lasagabaster, 2017). The utilisation of cooperative learning methodologies also has a number of benefits, according to Sharmin (2024), including increased critical thinking, enjoyment, and interaction.

There are many different teaching approaches available these days, and effective educators can select those that complement teaching practical subjects because they demand a lot of work, particularly in the practical area, which necessitates intensive training to improve the performance of HI students. Thus, employing a novel approach to teaching reading comprehension that relies on interdependence, information gathering, and discussions in addition to practice instruction may enhance their performance. In the same vein, teachers should be fully aware that while allowing HI learners to use the language is a primary objective of most language programs, there is no one teaching approach that is seen to be the best and that can always fulfil the needs of all students.

We are still searching for the most effective approach that can teach behaviour as complex as a foreign language in less time and effort, even though there have been ways to do so in the last quarter of the century (Seven, 2020). In the meantime, the Cooperative Learning Approach gives HI students the chance to enhance their interpersonal and group interaction skills, which are essential in today's society. However, the conventional methods of instruction, where the teacher speaks and the pupils either listen passively or intelligently, fail because the students are not truly engaged in the lessons (Schultz, 2009).

Similar to this, the cooperative learning approach encourages HI students from various backgrounds to get to know one another as individuals and offers them daily chances for meaningful interpersonal interaction. Additionally, according to Ramadan Elbaioumi Shaddad, & Jember (2024), CL enhances group interactions, boosts self-esteem, and cultivates a positive attitude towards education. In somewhat regulated learning activities, students take responsibility for themselves and others; they are always willing to provide a hand when needed and are generous with their encouragement and assistance (Stanley, (2008). In conclusion, it is preferable to consider anything new. This is because, as Eaton (2010) points out, our inability to ultimately determine the most effective method of language learning or instruction may mean that we will constantly need to consider shifting trends. The current study intends to examine hearing-impaired students' attitudes towards using a cooperative learning approach to improve their reading comprehension skills while taking into account the literature mentioned above.

One potential purpose for the study is to investigate how HI students feel about using a cooperative learning strategy to improve their reading comprehension. b) Providing insight into how students view the impact of this cooperative learning strategy on helping them become more proficient in language in general and reading comprehension especially, program or approach in the field of learning languages and teaching. c) Providing special education teachers with information on how to implement the cooperative learning method when teaching various courses.

METHODOLOGY:

The study was a single subject, post only subject design. The intervention time period was seven weeks.

Population and Sample:

The sample of this study includes 30 elementary level HI students of Government special education department, Punjab. Age range of students was 12 to 16 years irrespective of gender discrimination.

Instrument

The data was gathered via a questionnaire. The survey was taken from earlier research (Mohammad, 2018; Amedu et al., 2017). The questionnaire was created with the study's context in mind, and its validity was verified by sending it to three university faculty members. There were sixteen items on the survey. For assessing the way students feel about CL learning, a 5-point Likert scale was employed. Participants received the questionnaire via official email and WhatsApp groups. The excel file containing the coded replies from the students was exported. Lastly, a descriptive analysis of the data was performed using SPSS 21.

Procedure

In order to promote a cooperative learning environment, elementary level HI students were divided up into smaller groups for their regular classroom activities. The group's regulations were communicated to each and every participant. Every participant received instructions to participate in the group activities. Additionally, pairs of HI learners were established to complete the tasks. The duration of group projects varied from five to thirty minutes, depending on the type of task. Participants in this seven-week process were required to do the group activities twice a week at the elementary level. Groups were reorganised at the end of each week to prevent participants from losing interest in the activities.

Data Analysis:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
type	30	1.5000	.68229	1.745	.427
Cooperative learning increases my classroom participation	30	1.5333	.77608	1.067	.427
The lessons become more interesting with cooperative learning	30	1.6000	.81368	.889	.427
Cooperative learning helps me grasp more key idea from the text	30	1.6667	.92227	1.026	.427



Cooperative learning brings more pleasure to study	30	1.6667	.88409	1.057	.427
category	30	1.8000	.76112	.362	.427
I think reading the texts is easier if I study within a group	30	1.8000	.76112	.362	.427
I think studying in class for an exam with other students is better than studying alone	30	1.8333	.98553	.819	.427
Cooperative learning helps me more comprehensive understanding of the text.	30	1.8667	.86037	.618	.427
Cooperative learning helps me determiner the parts I don't really understand	30	1.8667	.81931	.662	.427
I like to work in groups with my fellows	30	1.9000	1.24152	.781	.427
I think sharing information about different readings help me learn	30	1.9000	1.12495	.831	.427
Working with other students on a problem gives me confidence to answer a question in the class	30	1.9667	.92786	.624	.427
Cooperative learning reminds me of neglected key points from the text.	30	1.9667	.85029	.427	.427
I think studying with other students can improve my English in the reading course more than studying	30	2.2000	1.18613	.383	.427
age	30	2.2000	.99655	.018	.427
In pairs, I feel more comfortable	30	2.2000	1.18613	.383	.427
Cooperative learning helps me improve my exam scores.	30	2.2000	1.18613	.383	.427
I enjoy the doing the activities	30	2.2000	1.18613	.383	.427
degree	30	2.3000	1.02217	.378	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Interpretation of the Table's Contents:

1. "Cooperative learning increases my classroom participation": Mean = 1.5333: Strong agreement is indicated by being very close to "Strongly Agree" (1) and "Agree" (2). The relatively low standard deviation of .77608 indicates that participants were in strong agreement on this subject. Skewness = 1.067: This indicates that the replies are significantly skewed in favour of agreement and is positive and significant ($1.067 / 0.427 \approx 2.49 > 2$).

2. "I like to work in groups with my fellows": 2. Mean = 1.9000: Slightly weaker than in the preceding case, but still suggestive of agreement. Standard Deviation = 1.24152: This is among the highest values. It implies a broader range of viewpoints about this particular assertion. Although the average response is "agree," people's preferences for group work vary more than other CL characteristics. Skewness = .781: substantial and positive ($0.781 / 0.427 \approx 1.83 < 2$, so probably not statistically significant, but positively skewed), indicating a tendency towards agreement, but possibly not as strongly as others.

3. "I think studying with other students can improve my English in the reading course more than studying": 1. Mean = 2.2000: Still inclined towards agreement, but not quite at "Strongly Agree." Normal. Deviation = 1.18613: Another large standard deviation, suggesting a wider range of perspectives on the precise effect of CL on reading comprehension in English. Although less skewed than some other items, Skewness = .383 is positive and probably not statistically significant ($0.383 / 0.427 \approx 0.89 < 2$).

Overall Conclusion:

These descriptive data show that, on the whole, the 30 participants had a favourable opinion of cooperative learning and concurred with the majority of its claimed positive aspects, including improving engagement, enhancing learning, and improving comprehension. There are differences in the degree of agreement, though, with some topics (such as overall enjoyment or the effect on English proficiency) displaying more divergent viewpoints among the respondents. Participants generally had a positive opinion on the use of cooperative approaches in the teaching and learning framework, according to the study's findings. This may be because they think they can rely on others to help them when the students collaborate, which gives them the motivation and self-assurance to take on challenges and feel enthusiastic about the improvement of learning.

Positive perceptions of the cooperative learning method will eventually affect students' attitudes towards language acquisition and arouse their desire to learn. CL is credited with many beneficial features, including offering chances for naturalistic methods of second language acquisition through student interactions. There are significant differences between learning a language and actually utilising it. Students take a lot of courses on the different facets of the language in the traditional classroom, but they lack functional fluency because of their tendency to use it. CL enhances the learning strategies as more examples of language artefacts and communication techniques are produced through the interactive process. Additionally, CL lowers stress and boosts student motivation to foster a supportive, flexible learning environment in the classroom.



Recommendations:

1. Our classrooms need to implement new strategies for teaching reading comprehension as cooperative learning.
2. New methods for teaching reading comprehension should be taught to college reading comprehension instructors and secondary school English teachers.

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