

The Effects of Cooperative Learning in English Presentation Classes

Myeong-Hee Shin¹ and Kwang-Hwan Kim^{2*}

¹Department of General English, Hannam University, South Korea; scindy@hnu.kr

²Department of Hospital Management, Konyang University, South Korea; kkh@konyang.ac.kr

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of cooperative learning in English presentation classes. Data were collected from pre and post questionnaires, class observations, and interviews. This research focuses on the effect of cooperative learning strategies, peer evaluations, and student satisfaction. The results of the study were positive; 1. Cooperative learning strategies were statistically very significant. 2. Peer evaluation had no significant effects on students' presentation skills. 3. Cooperative learning had significant effects on students' class satisfaction. These results show that cooperative learning is one of the most valuable methods that leads student centered learning and effective teaching methods for students who want to improve their English presentation skills. Also it shows that students' group activities help students promote their social relationship including self-regulated learning strategies and self-efficacy.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning Strategies, Peer Evaluation, Self-efficacy, Self-regulated Learning, Students' Academic Achievements, Student-centered Learning

1. Introduction

The size of English classes in Korea has been reducing since the improvement of communication ability was focused in English learning. Students do not have many chances to participate any class activities and they easily can be passive learners. In the large English classes, lots of cramming and competition environment in Korean English classes. Most English teachers in Korea teach English through a Teacher - centered rather than a Student-centered methodology. We should have special emphasis laid on improvement of four basic language skills, such as, listening, speaking, reading and writing in English education. Moreover, the method has been led for students not to have any motivation or self-confidence in learning English. This method was ineffective because the students are not really involved and only the teacher seems to be the master of the class. We should focus that be aware that the classes we teach are not for the teacher him/herself, but for the students themselves. The reasonable teacher's role in the class should be a kind of helper¹. It is very challenging for teachers to teach in a

large class. Habeshaw² points out that it is very difficult for students to get the individual help they need, especially in large classes. Learning is not merely delivering some knowledge, but it can be the place where students doing something to learn. Students should express themselves in their classes without any fear or hesitation. In order to improve their communication skills, students do not worry about making any mistakes and using target language conveniently. However, how can we do it for that? Teaching English through the Cooperative Learning Method can be one of the effective teaching strategies which help English teaches and also students may overcome these teaching situations. Slavin points out that the history of cooperative learning can be traced back as far as the seventeenth century³. Recently, Cooperative Learning Method has been emphasized in the situation where teamwork and cooperation are highlighted. It has been starting cooperative learning in classes realizing that it emphasizes peer interaction and is conducive to develop cooperative abilities⁴. Cooperative learning is the idea of working together expressing, exchanging students' idea and training students' cooperative sprits. Moreover,

*Author for correspondence

the cooperative classroom is consistent with students' needs. Teachers can encourage students to be interested, to be involved, and creatively in their classes. As Michael Reynolds says, it is the view that people learn more when they are involved and enjoying themselves⁵.

Similar to Problem Based Learning Method, there are of course more obvious reasons for using groups when the aim is to learn about group processes, to develop the skills necessary in working with others in problem solving or planning, to gain an understanding of the difficulties which can arise in groups, or to develop self-confidence through expressing and defending one's own ideas⁶.

Because of the traditional competitive classes, students are lack of being sociable living in a world which increasingly demands highly developed social skills. The cooperative classroom, however, is the perfect chance for students to foster their social skills from their classes.

Most people are not good at evaluating someone or something well and get confused between evaluation and criticism. However, instructive evaluation in the class room is very helpful for students to improve their social skills positively. Peer evaluation is at the heart of keeping students accountable to their teammates for their preparation and contribution to team activities. It is a good idea to carefully explain the evaluation process to the students and perhaps give them a formative opportunity to give each other feedback before the end of the course⁷.

The techniques that support basic knowledge acquisition and rehearsal are not sufficient to promote these kinds of higher order structure call for cooperative techniques that are less structured in order to permit the kinds of interactions that will result in the desired outcomes. Cohen⁸ distinguishes between individual and group tasks. According to Cohen⁸, a group task is one that "requires resources (information, knowledge, heuristic problem-solving strategies, materials, and skills) that no single individual possesses so that no single individual is likely to solve the problems or accomplish the task objectives without at least some input from others". Slavin³ found that in eleven of fifteen studies, cooperative learning produced bigger increases in some aspect of self-esteem (general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, social self-esteem) than the non-cooperative method with which it was compared.

Students who learn cooperatively tend to be more highly motivated to learn⁹ because of increased self-esteem, the pro-academic attitudes of group mates, appropriate attributions for success and failure, and greater on-task

behavior. They also score higher on tests of achievement and problem solving and tend to get along better with classmates of different racial, ethnic, and social class backgrounds¹⁰. This last outcome should be of particular interest to those of you who expect to teach in areas marked by cultural diversity.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Cooperative Learning Method to improve students' communication skills. The following research questions were investigated:

- Will the student learning by Cooperative Learning Strategies improve more than the student who studies by the Traditional Method in their English presentation classes?
- Will peer evaluation in Cooperative Learning affect students' motivation in learning English?
- Are there any differences in cooperative learning class satisfaction compared to that of traditional classes?

2. Methods

2.1 Subjects

During spring semester of 2014, a survey sample of 80 students was chosen for this study. These 80 students took the 2 hour course of English presentation (original title of the course is English interview) as an elective one.

2.2 Methods and Instrument

A student questionnaire was employed to survey the students' current ideas and notions using standardized self-administrated questionnaire. Also observations and interviews were done. For the research analysis, 80 students answered pre and post questionnaires.

In a group activity of Cooperative Learning, equal participation and simultaneous interaction are very important. Therefore, the task should be designed so that everyone involved must participate and interact both within and among teams.

Sharan and Sharan's teaching and learning model in which students make several small groups, make their own study plans, collect data, discuss, and finally give a presentation was suggested for this study.

2.3 Instrument

Academic descriptive statistics and ANCOVA were used to identify the effects. For peer evaluation analysis, pared

t test was done. For the students' satisfaction analysis, 8 questions of Likert 4 point scale were used. Students' satisfaction questions were done at the end of the semester.

3. Results

The results of the study were positive; 1. The cooperative learning strategies were statistically very significant. 2. Peer evaluation in the cooperative learning had no significant effects on students' motivation to learn English. 3. Cooperative learning had significant effects on students' class satisfaction. These results show that cooperative learning is one of the most effective teaching methods for students who want to improve their English presentation skills. Also it shows that students' group activities help students promote self-regulated learning strategies and self-efficacy.

3.1 Cooperative Learning Strategies

Compared to the control group, academic achievement average and standard deviation of the experimental

Group after cooperative learning strategies shows significantly high. The Experimental group of students learning by Cooperative Learning Method will improve more than the Control group of students learning by the Traditional Learning Method in their English presentation classes.

Table 1. Average and standard deviation of cooperative learning strategies

		Average	Standard Deviation
Pre test	Control(n=40)	4.66	0.68
	Experimental (n=40)	4.39	0.66
	Total(n=80)	4.52	0.68
Post test	Control(n=40)	4.55	0.68
	Experimental (n=40)	4.65	0.76
	Total(n=80)	4.66	0.72

Table 2. ANCOVA analysis of cooperative learning strategies

Variate	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Average	F
Covariate	73.95	1	73.95	345.65**
Intergroup	2.70	1	2.70	12.64**
Error	53.70	78	0.21	
Total	5637.58	80		

**p < .01

Table 1 shows that the experimental group's average standard, from 4.39 to 4.65 in Cooperative Learning Strategies during the classes is higher than that of control group, from 4.66 to 4.55.

After ANCOVA analysis, the result is statistically significant as $F = 12.64$ ($p < .01$). According to students' interview, students feel very comfortable express themselves in a group cooperative situation. When students have any question in classes, it was very helpful for them to share the ideas freely. However, they had hard times self- controlling or listening other opinions when they discuss. According to the observation of the class, students in the experimental group seemed uncomfortable and lacked negotiating some ideas because of having been passive students in teacher-centered classes for a long time. Students from the interview said that they were well motivated discussing ideas with their group members. However, they didn't know how to deal with those much idea to arrange or organize for the next steps.

3.2 The Peer Evaluation in the Cooperative Learning

The peer evaluation in the cooperative learning had no significant effects on students' presentation skills. It was expected that the peer evaluations in the Cooperative Learning provides students with the opportunity to have interests in learning English before the experiment.

Table 3 shows that the experimental group's average standard as 78.37 and control group's average stands as 78.03 had no differences in the pre test. In the result of the post test, however, there is still no significant difference between them as $p = 0.649 > .05$, even though both of the average standards are higher than those of their pre test. The peer evaluation is not much affected to the student's motivation to learn English. According to the observations in class, there has not been proper evaluation among peers. Students do not know how to evaluate critically, and feel uncomfortable to do that since they didn't have any

Table 3. The Peer evaluation in the interests of cooperative learning

	group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Pre test	Experimental	40	78.37	9.70	68	.141	.888
	Control	40	78.03	10.57			
Post test	Experimental	40	80.54	8.35	68	.457	.649
	Control	40	79.37	12.65			

**p < .05

opportunities to evaluate others in their classes before. Also it was found that students were very careful not to give bad effects on their group's score. Therefore evaluation was not easy for the students. However, the result of student' interviews shows that students' participation and behaviors are much more promoted positively rather than that of the control group.

For the peer evaluation analysis, 6 questions were used Table 4. First students write the name of each of the group members in a separate column. For each person, indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement on the left, using a scale of 1 – 4 (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree). Finally students fill out total numbers in each column.

Students should evaluate their peers during or every after class both written with these specific forms and spoken without any forms. In the written form, there are 3 more questions which students write feedback on team dynamics: 1. How effectively did your group work? 2. Were the behaviors of any of your team members particularly valuable or detrimental to the team? Explain. 3. What did you learn about working in a group from this project that you will carry into your next group experience?¹¹.

This form and contents are adapted from a peer evaluation form developed at Johns Hopkins University.

Table 4. The Peer evaluation form for group work

Evaluation	Group member	Group member	Group member
Attends group meetings regularly and arrives on time			
Contributes meaningfully to group discussions.			
Completes group assignments on time.			
Prepares work in a quality manner			
Demonstrates a cooperative and supportive attitude			
Contributes significantly to the success of the project.			
Total			

Table 5. Students class satisfaction in cooperative learning

	N	M	SD	t	P
Experimental	40	53.52	9.49	3.042	.003**
Control	40	46.25	9.25		

**p<.05

3.3 Students' Class Satisfaction in Cooperative Learning

Table 5 shows that students' class satisfaction in cooperative learning is statistically significant as 0.003 (p<.05).

According to the student interviews, students were satisfied with the process of problem solving while they were group working. When students made the plan, collected data, discussed the issues, and expressed themselves actively, the satisfaction was high rather those of doing passively. Students felt confidence when they share the ideas and can help others. Also an individual student can foster social relationship dealing with issues that their group members suggested or cooperating each other constantly for the final goals.

4. Discussion

I carried out an experiment by dividing the students into two similar classes to prove which the Cooperative Learning Method was more effective than any other method. The students in the experimental group were taught by the Cooperative Learning Method focused on Student-centered and the students in the control group by the Traditional Learning Method on Teacher-centered. This study has significant effects of the Cooperative Learning Method by small group activities.

Results of the data analysis indicated that the experimental group's average and standard deviation in cooperative learning are higher than those of the control groups. It was found from students' interviews that students feel very comfortable express themselves in a group cooperative situation without teacher's order. Also they were well motivated discussing ideas with their group members.

In case of the peer evaluations, various evaluations promoted students' participation and behaviors positively. In the result of post test, however, there has still no significant difference between them as $p=.649>.05$. Most of the present studies of the peer evaluation show that

it has an influence for students' attitude or motivation¹². However, this study shows the different result. It depends on the class environment such as students' age, English level, and situations including their affective things. According to the students' personal interviews, students were uncomfortable because of the peer evaluation first, but as time goes by they felt that it was really helpful to correct their attitudes, participation, and caring for others¹³.

The cooperative learning had significant effects on students' class satisfaction. In a group activity of Cooperative Learning, participation and simultaneous interaction are very important¹⁴. Therefore, the task should be designed that everyone involved must participate and interact both within and among teams. The students in the experimental group are satisfied with a series of process which they get some ideas, collect data, and solve problems for their final decisions while they were group working¹⁵. The Student can promote social relationship dealing with issues that their group members suggested, and controlling them or cooperating each other constantly for the final goals.

These results show that cooperative learning is one of the most valuable methods that leads student centered learning and effective teaching methods for students who want to improve their English presentation skills. Also it shows that students' group activities help students promote self-regulated learning strategies and self-efficacy.

The current study is somewhat limited in its generalization. First and foremost, the sample of 80 students was quite narrow in terms of size and academic level.

There will be many kinds of methods for applying to Cooperative Learning, but it depends partly on the environment such as, the students, the teacher, and the classroom.

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