

# The Impact of Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) on Grade 9 Students towards English Language Learning

Contemporary Education and Teaching Research

2021 Volume 2 (1)95-100

DOI: [10.47852/bonviewCETR2021020206](https://doi.org/10.47852/bonviewCETR2021020206)



Thinley<sup>1\*</sup>, Kezang Dorji<sup>1</sup>, Dil Maya Ghalley<sup>1</sup> & Dawa Tshering<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kamji Central School, Chukha, Bhutan.

**Abstract:** English subject has become very important in the context of Bhutanese education system. Owing to its importance in the era of modernization, the education ministry of Bhutan is providing professional development program in a form of training and workshops for all the English teachers to grow oneself professionally. Therefore the purposes of this study were to examine the learning achievement and investigate opinions of grade 9 Bhutanese students towards English subject by incorporating Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS). The study was an experimental research and consisted of two groups pre-test post-test design at Kamji Central School under Chhuka district, Bhutan. A cluster random sampling was used to select two sections out of three sections with 38 students each in the experimental and the control groups. The quantitative data was analyzed using a pre-test and post-test scores while students' reflective journal was analyzed using a coding system. The findings of the study showed a remarkable difference in the post-test scores. The mean scores of the control group and of the experimental group were 9.5 and 11.5 respectively. In addition, the student's reflective journals revealed that the Kagans Cooperative Learning structure (KCLS) was interesting, provided with equal opportunities, enhanced active participation, and the brain breaks and cheers helped them keep themselves alert and boost retention level of learning.

**Keywords:** Cooperative Learning Structure; English; Learning achievement; Opinion

## Introduction:

In the era of modernization and change in educational reforms, instructional strategies have become very important in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers are highly encouraged to design the teaching strategy with innovative ideas that can foster learner's academic excellence. According to Rabgay (2018) teachers do not use creative teaching strategies and classroom teaching is circled as teacher centered that restricts students to share their opinions and opportunities for interaction. It is a matter of fact that most of the educators these days are still practicing traditional way of teaching. Creativity and innovation in teaching and learning is hardly used thus affecting the learners' academic achievement. The study carried out by Royal Education Council of Bhutan, REC, (2009) indicated that teachers in the Bhutanese classrooms are found to be a dictator rather than facilitating

student learning through student involvement. Teachers use lecture method while teaching, which is rampant in all the Bhutanese classrooms. Thus, the time has changed whereby all the educators of 21st century should equip oneself with the strategies that would suit and meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Most of the researchers have pointed out that the use of inventive teaching strategies can directly or indirectly influence the academic achievement of students. For instance, the study conducted by Thinley (2016) revealed that the use of fieldtrip teaching strategy over traditional teaching has high significance on students learning achievement. The students who were taught using fieldtrip teaching strategy showed higher level of learning achievement when compared to the learning achievement of students who were taught in a traditional way. On the other hand Majoka (2007) also preferred cooperative learning strategy over traditional teaching method and

Corresponding Author: Thinley, Kamji Central School, Chukha, Bhutan.

Email: [thinley88@education.gov.bt](mailto:thinley88@education.gov.bt)

© The Author(s) 2021. Published by BON VIEW PUBLISHING PTE. LTD. This is an open access article under the CC BY

License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

found that the low achievers of experimental group and the control group excelled exceptionally well in academic achievement and cooperative learning strategy was explicitly appropriate for low achiever when compared to high achievers.

Similarly, Singay (2018) also conducted the study on The Effects of Modified Kagan Cooperative Learning Model on English Oral Communication Ability of Bhutanese Students and found that there was significant difference between experimental and controlled group on oral communication ability test and performance based assessment after treating the students with Modified Kagans structure . Abdullah & Nalini (2017) also acknowledged Kagans' Cooperative Learning Structure as effective as it possess conducive learning environment that strengthen language learning particularly ESL writing.

Therefore, to boost learning achievement of the students, innovative teaching strategies should be incorporated especially in Bhutanese classrooms . Many researchers claimed that one of the best teaching strategies in the classroom is the use of Kagan's cooperative learning structure . Rabgay (2018) highlighted that academic achievement can be enhanced if the teacher adopts learning as learner centered so as to strengthen imagination, creative skills and critical thinking resulting towards excellent instructional objectives. Since not many researches were carried out in the Bhutanese context using Kagan's cooperative learning structure, this study was especially designed to evaluate the impact of Kagan's Cooperative learning structure over conventional classroom lesson on learning achievement and Opinion of Ninth grader Bhutanese students of Kamji Central School towards English subject.

## Objectives of the Study

1 . To examine the learning achievement in English of grade 9 Bhutanese students in an experimental group applying Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) and of the ones in a control group using a traditional teaching method.

2. To investigate grade 9 Bhutanese students' opinion towards English lessons by incorporating Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS).

## Research Questions

1. Would the learning achievement in English of grade 9 Bhutanese students in an experimental group applying Kagan's

Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) be higher than of the ones in a control group using a traditional teaching method.

2. What would be grade 9 Bhutanese students' opinion towards English lessons by incorporating Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS).

## Literature Review

### 1. Cooperative Learning Structure

In general, Cooperative learning is a learning progression whereby every individuals learn something in a group with the help of their friends . These types of learning may be useful to everyone as learners need to bestow their cooperation and team work . According to Chapman, Meuter, Toy & Wright, 2006; Hirst & Slavik, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 1999 (as cited in Arumugam & Abdullah, 2017) Cooperative learning is a pedagogy that encompasses collaboration, active participation, discussions from different children with diverse perspective on the same topic. Such strategy might be essential when teaching becomes less lively and learners refuse to pay full attention towards the subject. Teachers may come across many obstacles in the process of teaching and learning. As such he/she need to change the teaching techniques so as to meet the desired outcome from the learners. Kristiawan (2013) also stated that "There are some ways that the teacher can use to make the students participate during the lessons. In order to keep the interaction going like what is expected, the teachers should use an appropriate technique such as Cooperative learning (p.86).

Learners will get motivated if the subject teacher can apply various teaching strategies while teaching a lesson. As per Patesan et al. (2016) Cooperative teaching approach needs extreme planning in english lessons resulting to achievement and building interpersonal relationship. Kagans' Cooperative Learning structure is favourable for all the learners as well as the teacher if carefully designed. Teacher might think they are implementing Kagans' structure when they group the students to fulfill the objectives. However, it is same as the traditional lesson since brighter students will play bigger role and the low achiever tend to remain unattained. In this regard, Kagans' Structure suggest the implementation of four critical principles of cooperative learning i.e Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, and Simultaneous Interaction in order to provide equal platform for all the learners irrespective of their learning ability.

## 2. Advantages of Cooperative Learning Structure in English Lesson

Cooperative learning strategy always had its benefit especially on students learning achievement. Many researchers are of the claim that cooperative learning structure greatly influence students learning and improved academic excellence. For instance Kristiawan (2013) investigated on the implementation of cooperative learning in English class and found that implementing cooperative learning in secondary high school was productive and successful as it has infinite advantages like increase in the students achievement and strength, use of delivery materials, active participation, boost creativity, enhancement of students as important tools for any of the planned activities and teacher as a source of facilitation, while it has disadvantages as it is a conventional method and it is curriculum based.

Besides academic achievement, Cooperative learning structure is also used in the classrooms having mixed population in order to promote active interaction among the students and also consider as an effective approach whereby it can facilitate racial integration (Datson, 2001). At the same length Ngubane (2013) conducted a study on The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning in an English Additional Language Classroom and stated that cooperative learning activities promotes and consolidates towards optimum interactions, supports EFAL skills, inspires learning because of learner-learner and teacher learner interactions.

### Ethical considerations

Upon the acceptance of action research proposal by the Ministry of education, Bhutan, the researchers obtained an approval from the research committee, class teachers of respective classes and principal of Kamji Central School, Chhukha Bhutan to conduct the research. The researchers then prepared instruments and conducted the study for four months.

### Research methodology

Research methodology of this study was a mixed method study. In the quantitative approach, the researcher used pre-test and post- test scores to collect the data . On the other hand, students ' journals were used to collect the data for the qualitative approach in this study.

## Population and Sample

Total population comprised of 114 students from 3 sections of 9th grader students at Kamji central school under Chhukha District, Bhutan . Each section consisted of 38 students and with mixed gender and mixed ability in English language. The researcher applied a cluster random sampling to select two sections as the sample groups for this study . Section 'A' was used as control group and Section "B" as the experimental group.

### Research Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect the data in this study. The quantitative data was collected from pre- test and post- test scores administered in the experimental and control groups. Moreover, the qualitative data was collected from the students ' reflective journals.

### Quantitative Data Collection Instrument

#### Learning Achievement tests

A total of 25 multiple choice questions were prepared from class 9 English Reading and Literature weighing 25% . In the first place, the researchers conducted pre- test for both the groups . After that, controlled group was taught in a conventional way while experimental group was taught by incorporating Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) to prepare for the post- test. Finally, Post- test was conducted for both the controlled and experiment group with the same question . The researchers aimed to compare the learning achievement in the experimental group and in the control group before and after the treatment was given.

### Qualitative Data Collection Instruments

#### Student journals

The research participants in the experiment group were asked to write a reflective journal on what they have learned and their opinion towards English lesson when taught using Kagan Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) . The researchers also briefed the guidelines on how to write a reflective journal beforehand . The aim of student 's journal was to examine their opinion towards English lesson after

incorporating Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS).

Data analysis

The data obtained from pre- test and posttest scores of both the groups were compared in terms of mean ( $\bar{x}$ ). Further, the data collected from student ’ s reflective journal was analyzed by using a coding system (open, axial, and selective) based on the Grounded Theory of Strauss and Corbin, (1998). The results of the study are explained as follows.

**Analysis of Learning Achievement Test (Controlled and Experimental group)**

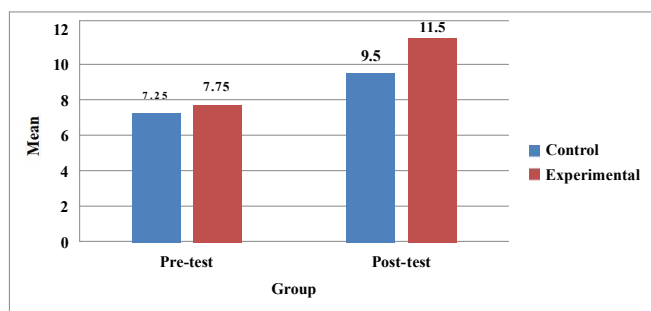


Figure 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test between the groups.

The above figure shows comparative analysis of mean scores by the two groups before and after the treatment . It is depicted that the learners in the experiment group who were treated with Kangans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) showed a higher level of learning achievement when compared to the learners in the control group who were treated in a traditional teaching method . Furthermore, it is clearly explained as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test between the groups

Test	Group	Mean	Mean difference
Pre-test	Control	7.25	0.5
	Experiment	7.75	
Post-test	Control	9.5	2
	Experiment	11.5	

As indicated in Table 1, the mean score for Pre-test of the control group was 7.25 and 7.75 for the experiment group with a mean difference of 0.5 . It shows that the students in both the groups had almost equal learning ability at the beginning. However, in the post-test, there was some remarkable difference in the mean scores of the control group and of the experimental group. The mean score of the control group was 9.5 and 11.5 for the experimental group with a mean difference of 2 . This indicated that the test scores in the post- test of both control

and experimental groups were different. In other words, the post- test score of the experimental group is remarkably higher than the post-test score of the control group.

**Analysis of the participant’s reflective journal**

The second objective of this study was to investigate 9 th grade student ’ s opinions in English lesson when taught by incorporating Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (LCLS). The data collected from participants reflective journal was analyzed by using a coding system (open, axial, and selective) based on the Grounded Theory of Strauss and Corbin, (1998). Firstly in the open coding, the data from participants ’ reflective journal was organized systematically . Then the data was identified and categorized using axial coding. Finally selective coding was used to categorize and interpret the data collected from the participants. The researchers used five following core themes from the participant ’ s reflective journal as explained below:

1. The lesson is interesting.

The participants were of the opinion that use of Kagan’s Cooperative Learning Structure is thought provoking because students were able to share their opinions by taking turns and students imitate new ideas . The students were optimistic in sharing views that added variety to the lesson. Even the teacher became stimulated to hear infinite responses from different students that fascinated the entire teaching and learning process.

2. It provided equal opportunities.

The participants claimed that use of Kagan’s Cooperative Learning Structure provided students with equal opportunities to learn and share opinions . Meanwhile in the process of activities, high achiever brought thoughtful ideas in which low achiever could grab the ideas. This method ensured that every student was actively involved. Since the Kagan Cooperative Learning Structure had number heads, all students irrespective of their intelligence and confidence, children equally had opportunities to participate in the teaching learning process which would ultimately enhance better academic performance.

3. It enhanced active participation.

The students were of the view that Kagan Cooperative Learning Structure definitely enhanced active participation. This method ensured that every student was actively involved during the teaching learning process. Meanwhile this method definitely boosted student ’ s confidence and retained their interest in classroom interaction as well as it increased

motivation, and maintained attention through vibrant participation. Consequently, Kagan Cooperative Learning Structure emphasized that teacher was a facilitator, and the lesson coverage was mostly based on student's participation.

4. The students used brain break and cheers.

The students discovered that teaching and learning was joyful as Kagan Cooperative Learning Structure encompassed different activities and one of them was the rampant use of brain break and cheers. The lesson became relatively smart which helped the students to refocus and become ready to learn again. The use of brain break enhanced alertness that would definitely boost retention level of learning.

5. Group task enabled better learning.

The teaching and learning process was decentralized among the groups with the clear instructions from the teacher, so the children were found fully engaged. The active engagement in groups was a path towards discussion, analyzing, argument which enabled student's intellectual growth. Group task obviously ensured that students learned the values of acceptance, patience and respect. In short, group task helped better learning.

## Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to examine the learning achievement and investigate student's opinion on Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) in teaching an English lesson. The results derived from this study showed that students in the experimental group who were taught using Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) performed better than the students in the control group who were taught in a conventional way. The students in the experimental group also exhibited positive attitude towards Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS). The students' reflective journals also revealed that English lesson was thought provoking, joyful, interesting and decentralized way of teaching and learning. It also helped them enhance active participation whereby students were engaged in groups to discuss, analyze, and argue which enabled student's intellectual growth.

Thus this result supported the findings of Datson, (2001); Kristiawan (2013); and Ngubane (2013) who carried out similar studies using Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS). They found that Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) was an alternative teaching approach that boosted student's interest and active participation in the process of teaching and learning an English subject in particular.

Last but not least, in the 21st century education, incorporating Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) in English language pedagogy may be an alternative method that will yield fruitful outcomes. The time has changed and the world has become a technology-based society whereby the educators should play a proactive role to nurture students to know how to learn with true interest, participation and positive opinion. All of these will definitely contribute to more and effective English language learning.

## Recommendations

Despite researchers claiming the effectiveness and impact on the learning achievement of the learners, this study also found that the use of Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) has greater impact on learning achievement in English lesson and boost students' interest. Therefore, based on the findings the following recommendations have been made.

1) English teachers in Bhutan can use Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) while teaching an English lesson in order to achieve academic excellence and to boost students' interest in English subject.

2) English subject can be taught using Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) as it gives an opportunity for students to interact, share opinions and get engaged throughout the lesson.

3) Kagans Cooperative Learning Structure (KCLS) can also be used in other subjects as it creates platform for the learners as well as the teacher.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

## References

- Abdullah, F., & Arumugam, N. (2017) *Cooperative Language Learning in the Tertiary ESL Writing Classroom: Students' Views in Diverse Settings. Malaysia.*
- Dotson, J. *Cooperative Learning Structures Can Increase Student Achievement. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing. Kagan Online Magazine, Winter 2001. www.KaganOnline.com*
- Kagan, S. *The "P" and "I" of PIES: Powerful Principles for Success. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing. Kagan Online Magazine, Fall/Winter 2011. www.KaganOnline.com*
- Kristiawan,. (2013) *The Implementation of cooperative learning in English class offavorite School of secondary high school.*

*International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 5(6), 85-90. DOI: 10.5897/IJEAPS2013.0316

Majoka, M., Saeed, M., & Tariq (2007) Effect of Cooperative Learning on Academic Achievement and Retention of Secondary Grader Mathematics Students. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 10 (1), 1-56. Dept of Education IUB, Pakistan.

Patesan, M., Balajiu, A., & Zechia, D. (2016) *International Conference on Knowledge-Based Organization*. xxii(2). 478- 483. DOI: 10.1515/kbo-2016-0082, Romania.

Royal Education Council and Idiscoveri Education, (2009) *The Quality of School Education in Bhutan: Reality and Opportunities*. Bhutan

Rabgay, T. (2018). *The Effect of Using Cooperative Learning Method on Tenth Grade Students' Learning Achievement and Attitude towards Biology*. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(2), 265-280.

Singay . (2018) *The Effects of Kagan Cooperative Learning Model on English Communication Ability of Bhutanes e Students*. *International Conference on English Studies: Innovation in English Language Teaching and Learning*. Payap University, Thailand.

Strauss, A., & Cobin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thinley. (2016) *Using Fieldtrip Strategy to enhance Learning achievement and Interest of Seventh grade Bhutanese students towards History*. (Master thesis) Rangsit University, Pathumthani, Thailand.