The Role Of Cooperative Learning In The Writing Abilities Of Undergraduate Students Of Villupuram District

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Abstract: We have numerous instruction approaches and methods existing in the field of language teaching. Starting from Grammar-Translation to the widely spread communicative approach, the field has experienced countless modifications and improvements. Yet, second language teaching remains challenging considering factors like learner variations, learning environments, learning styles, materials management, time length so on. Majority of the learners experience difficulty in communicating their ideas clearly and it is not surprising to find such learners lacking proper writing skills. If learners are not exposed to regular training and practice there is no chance of making them competent in the target language. Taking such things into consideration, I am interested to identify and analyze the language problems especially focusing at the undergraduate level. Since Cooperative Language Learning method have been supported by many language teaching experts and found to be highly successful and effective among the learners, as for my research project I would like to adopt and apply the cooperative techniques with undergraduate learners to find out how this method could be helpful in enhancing the writing skills of the learners. I have attempted to include innovative writing activities and exercises as part of my research work.

Index Terms: Cooperative Learning, Language, Grammar Translation, Communicative Approach

1. Introduction

Every species in this world are linked to one another through a medium of some sort that helps to understand and react to their environment either positively or negatively. They make use of their senses to communicate through sounds and nonverbal behaviours. In this way, humans, as the most superior of all living beings, have been blessed with a brilliant form of medium to communicate which we have termed as the language. Language helps us to generate our feelings into appropriate forms of meaningful words thereby providing an opportunity for the listener to grasp our intention, expectation and purpose of our communication. It helps us to share and transform abstract feelings into easily understandable ideas.

Society can never exist without meaningful communication exchanges. In order to maintain and lead an optimistic lifestyle, we have to make use of language in a socially acceptable and contextually suitable way. Hence, language learning could be viewed as an art which ought to be learnt artistically. Learning a language is a challenge. It is a field filled with constant changes and surprising outcomes.

Communication does not end with speech alone. It is the fusion of all the skills. When we speak of communication, it includes verbal and non-verbal skills. Here, the researcher has focused on improving the writing skills of learners at the tertiary level through cooperative learning strategy. The researcher has made an attempt to focus on the effectiveness of cooperative language learning method specifically in improving the writing skills. In order to be clear and concise with the subject, the researcher has provided below a short note on the application of cooperative language learning at college level highlighting its merits and demerits in general.

Basically, we have not yet altogether got rid of the teacher-centered approach of learning. Even now in many institutions around the world learners are being victims of the traditional teacher-dominated approach. Just recently we have realised the importance of the student-centered teaching methodologies. There was a need for a little communication, a little liveliness and an interactive environment where students could communicate comfortably. This was the need of the hour. And eventually the communicative principles had brought in a great transformation in the field of learning and teaching.

It was through the introduction of the communicative approach the entire model of language learning and teaching experienced an astounding change. Learners are given opportunities to interact and work out exercises on their own with less teacher intervention. Teachers have allowed their learners to be independent and creative in their learning ways. Integration of real-life situations into the classrooms has really made learning something wonderful. Above all this, the cooperative strategy has proved so successful among the learners of all levels making team communication a most remarkable thing in the history of language teaching.

Cooperative language learning has made it possible for the learners to avoid competitiveness among them and has led a
way to act in academically collaborative way. Students have learnt to interact in groups in a positive way and motivate their team mates to enrich their performance.

The ultimate aim of cooperative learning strategy is to train the learners to operate in small groups and to communicate in teams helping each other in achieving the common goal so that it paves way to improve the performance of the weaker learners when grouped with higher achieving learners. This not only enriches individual participation, but also enables the group members to communicate confidently with the support of their team. Cooperative learning helps us in creating an environment for active, participatory and exploratory learning.

Cooperative learning has been suggested as the solution for an astonishing array of educational problems; it is often cited as a means of emphasizing thinking skills and increasing higher-order learning; as an alternative to ability grouping, remediation, or special education; as a means of improving race relations and acceptance of mainstreamed students; and as a way to prepare students for an increasingly collaborative work force (Slavin, 1991).

Working in cooperative groups has been highly recommended by many great theorists and language teaching experts. One could achieve a better result within a short period of time working under a cooperative environment. It all started when language experts like Turner in England and Tripplet in the United States began to research on cooperation and competition in the late 1800s. But, the actual credit of relating cooperative learning to college classrooms is associated with Deutsch’s work that focused on the power of cooperative learning in a psychology class at MIT in the late 1940s.

In 1970s innumerable research materials were available on cooperative learning focussing on education. It was during this time many experiments were conducted on the effects of cooperative strategies by using college students as participants. And by 1990s cooperative language learning had reached its peak popularity as the most well received and widely implemented learning methodology.

At the same time there exist some disadvantages too in making cooperative language learning work. One such reason would be that the lack of teacher education or development has resulted in poor performance of the faculty. Many teachers in the colleges are unaware of the latest developments in the field and mainly they have failed in understanding the theoretical frameworks. In order to create a successful cooperative group, a teacher has to master the dynamics of putting the students into structured cooperative teams. They could achieve this only when they have an adequate knowledge of the theory and about the differences existing between normal and cooperative groups.

The success of language learning not only depends on the language teaching experiments, but also on the learners themselves in making them use the target language as confidently as possible. It is a common belief of many researchers and educators that in order to acquire mastery over a language that we are trying to learn, we have to live in an environment in which the target language is spoken. Unless we are regularly exposed to the particular target language, it is impossible to develop competence in it.

2. Related Works

Literature review is not just the process of gathering information from other sources, but it is a critical and in-depth evaluation of previous research. It summarises the ideas of others related to the area of research.

The term “literature” refers to the works that were consulted in order to understand and investigate the research problem. The literature review helps us to understand and widen our knowledge about the variety of both past and present research works and paves way to explore up-to-date research findings. In this way it helps the researcher to be familiar with the works that have already been done in the field.

Here, the researcher has attempted to present some definitions and research studies carried out by experts in the field of cooperative learning. Cooperation is not a new concept. It existed thousands of years ago and great thinkers, philosophers have explained this very well. Quintillion remarked that students could benefit from teaching one another. Comenius found out that students benefited from teaching each other and being taught by students. Many have researched on the concept of cooperative or collaborative learning. Proponents like Slavin, Johnson and Johnson, Taylor, Kagen have contributed so much for the growth and popularity of the concept.

Kessler (1992) emphasised that cooperative learning is the process of grouping students normally of different levels of proficiency in second language thereby allowing them to interact with one another and learn to work together on specific tasks in such a way that everyone learns something out of the cooperative experience.

In a study carried out by Prema (1996) stressed that cooperative language learning improved academic learning of the learners through allowing them to attain higher level thinking skills leading to spiritual development.

Shevin (1999) found that cooperative learning allows us to learn through the trial and error method. Though it requires some understanding and practice initially, it could be a wonderful way to teach.

Cooperative learning is one of the most effective instructional approach (Slavin 1996) that enhances social and academic development among learners (Deen, Bailey, & Parker, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Slavin, 2000).
Mai Neo (2004) concluded in the study appearing in Australian Journal of Educational Technology that cooperative learning environment could be highly beneficial for learners to understand each other well, make plans regarding their task, find solutions for problems easily. In the study regarding a web based multimedia project, students showed great interest in designing the web based multimedia project by working together, assisting each other in the process. The study was highly successful.

Mariam and Napisah (2005) suggested that when peer interaction was integrated in learning writing, the students produced ideas and constructed sentences helping each other. Thus, this will lead to a better understanding of the topic that they are required to write on. The students will also be able to write concrete, accurate and creative piece of writing (Mariam & Napisah 2005)

Harmer (2006) ascertains that writing in groups is effective in genre-base and process approach. Learners were highly interested and found the activity to be motivating in terms of the writing itself.

Yamarik (2007) stated that by comparing and testing traditional lecture method and cooperative technique with intermediate macroeconomics. The results seemed to be very positive for those who were exposed to cooperative instructional approach. By measuring the outcomes of the learners using multivariate regression analysis, it was found that the students taught by cooperative learning achieved greater academic performance in the form of higher exam scores.

Mandal (2009) sees cooperative learning as an instructional approach where the students are given opportunities to write, to revive, and rewrite what they have framed. This method of language learning provides the students with the opportunity of evaluating their own work. This is definitely an interesting approach for second language teaching/learning. The learners working with their partners depend on one another for help and encourage each other for the completion of the common goal. The learners will show high level of enthusiasm, curiosity and interaction when taught through cooperative methodology

3. Data Analysis

3.1 Data Collection and Analysis in English Language Teaching

Data collection refers to the process of acquiring information to support or prove a particular research problem. Data are necessary for the researcher to get a broad understanding about the subject area. The researcher by analysing such data would be able to identify the problems associated with the research and provide suitable solutions. These data could be studied from different angles in order to explore new facts. Data could be collected through variety of ways which has been broadly classified into following types: qualitative and quantitative.

3.2 Qualitative Analysis

The process of analysing data such as words, pictures or objects is said to be qualitative analysis. This could also include data collected from interview, video so on. Qualitative analysis gives a complete, detailed description of the study or research. In qualitative analysis, it is normally the researcher himself who must gather the data.

3.3 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis involves analysis of numerical data. In quantitative analysis, researcher makes use of tools such as questionnaire or equipment to collect the required data. Normally, data in quantitative analysis is in the form of numbers and statistics. Once the necessary have been collected, it is important for the researcher to analyse the collected data. Analysis generally refers to the studying of the material in order to discover inherent facts. By analysing the data, the researcher will be able to get a deeper insight into research problem.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

One of the most important aspects of the research study is the data collection. Data has to be collected as accurately as possible for research to be successful. Inaccurate data collection can spoil the research and lead to incorrect results.

In this study, the researcher has identified inadequacy among the tertiary level learners, specifically in writing skills. The students hardly know to construct sentences in English. They find it difficult to express their thoughts in proper writing. It is this inability to communicate in writing has leaded the researcher to focus on adopting cooperative language learning strategy to improve their writing skills.

The researcher after much observation has found out that there is indeed a lack of ability to communicate among the learners of the tertiary level. In order to rectify the problem, the researcher had to choose suitable candidates and analyse them through tests and evaluate them based on their performance. For this purpose thirty students from B.A. English Literature were
chosen as samples for the study.

The aim of the study is to analyse the student’s ability in writing. These students were given a pre-test and were evaluated based on their performance basically by providing simple topics on which they were supposed to write essays. Then the researcher collected the papers individually and evaluated them to provide them their individual scores. In this way the researcher was able to analyse how each student had performed on their own.

Once the pre-test results were evaluated the researcher had to introduce the learners to cooperative language learning strategy and train them to communicate in groups. The students were given sufficient training to work in group and fulfil the language tasks. They were taught how to work together in groups and to discuss and depend on their partners. In this way the post- test was designed to provide the learners with good exposure to team environments. And like the pre-test, in the post-test students had to form into groups of four or five and complete the language task working as a team. The students were taught the basics of working in groups. Here, the students completed the language tasks in teams and they were given scores according to their performance as a team.

3.5 Testing and Evaluation

Testing generally refers to the process of finding out how well something works or operates. In terms of human being, testing normally reveals what the level of knowledge or skill has been acquired. In this way teaching is done to measure the quality, performance and reliability of something before putting it into wide spread use or practice. In simple terms, testing reveals the strengths or capability of a particular person or product. Language testing refers to the process of measuring one’s proficiency in a particular language. These tests could provide proof of how capable a person is in communicatim in the target language.

Evaluation generally refers to the process of determining the value or worth of a program or course. Evaluation could help the teachers to figure out students’ knowledge level and at the same time be useful for modifying the teaching material or content by obtaining the feedback.

3.6 Sampling Methods and Design

Sampling methods classified into two types. They are probability and non-probability. Probability method includes random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling. In non-probability sampling, members are selected in some non-random manner. These include convenience sampling, judgement sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. In probability sampling we could calculate the sampling error. By sampling error we mean the degree to which a sample might differ from the population. But in non-probability sampling, the degree to which the sample differs from the population remains unknown.

In this study, the researcher had made use of random sampling. Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. In random sampling, each number of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected. The researcher had collected the activities in such a way that each student has involved and cooperated with the team members. The researcher has made sure that in the sampling every student has contributed his/her share for the performance of the group. Therefore, random sampling method proved to be highly beneficial for the researcher as well as the students to be cooperative and participatory.

3.7 Analysis Methods Used in the Study

The collected data were thoroughly analysed using pre-post test methods. In the pre-test it was found out that the students were unable to communicate well in writing when completing the language tasks individually. Students’ knowledge in grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary was analysed. Thus, the researcher identified that the students need to develop their writing skills in particular. Since writing is one of the most prominent and unavoidable skills. It was necessary and vital to train the students, to increase their competence in writing. And the researcher found that it was also necessary to train the students to take up the tasks in groups.

The researcher had trained the students for about two weeks on cooperative language learning strategy to show and train them the art of working in groups. After this exercise, the students were in a position to create a group structure, understand one another, make use of the shared knowledge while discussing and deciding about the topics, cooperate, facilitate and encourage each other throughout the process. In the post test, the students working in cooperative groups were able to score better and there was significant change in their ability to write.

3.8 Quantitative Measures and Methods in English Language Teaching

Quantitative measurements are any measurements that could accurately represent in numeric form. Normally they could
involve mathematical measurement, statics analysis of the numerical data, surveys, etc. Quantitative research makes use of observations, structured interviews, and surveys.

Quantitative research methods are highly beneficial and remarkable way of measuring the results. It is one of the most dependable measuring tools in the field of language teaching. Quantitative research methods could deliver concrete numerical data. Educators and researchers generally pay more importance to the results of quantitative measurements, since it gives an elaborate and accurate idea about the research samples.

3.9 Mistakes done by the students

The researcher had identified the mistakes in the areas like grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. They are as follows

- Today’s youth miss using the purpose of mobile phones.
- The usage of the people creates many advantages and disadvantages.
- In olden days people was not found about mobile phones.
- Today world has very important thinking in women’s education.
- The women in educated in the society her knowledge in increase.
  Her family is good and happy life.
- Some keep their mobile phones to their hears.
- If we attend a call even we may get heart attack.
- When people use the phone in raining time also it cause many problems.
- Now we are expected for every moment.

3.10 Teaching the technique

Initially when the researcher began the study, students were in a state unable to communicate with confidence. This was due to shyness and fear. The researcher made it a point to train the learners to overcome their difficulties by providing practical sessions and making them to be prepared for any task. Such practical sessions were important to the study because, students had to participate in several or such language activities later on.

As it was important to develop interaction among the students, the researcher had initially concentrated on simple tasks that would initiate interaction among the learners. The next step was to make the students feel comfortable during these exercises. Good interaction takes place only when the environment could be comfortable and friendly. The researcher instead of being dominant was acting as a facilitator, monitoring the students’ performance. This allowed the researcher to identify the students’ language difficulties and helped them through proper motivation.

Once the researcher found the students to be eligible, the required tasks for the study were introduced. The students were given training for period of two weeks and their performance level was noted in the post test. A significant difference was seen at this level in the writing skills. Students when performing in groups get more opportunities to interact, discuss the subject or the content and complete the writing tasks in a successful way.
Chart 1 shows team A’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar, team A have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax, they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling, they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In vocabulary, they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

Chart 2 shows team B’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team B have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 3 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test.

Chart 3 shows team C’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team C have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 3 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test.
Chart 4 shows team D’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar, team D have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test, and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

Chart 5 shows team E’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar, team E have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test, and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test.
Chart 6 shows team F’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in group activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team F have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test.

Chart 7 shows team A’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in pair activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team A have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3.5 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.
Chart 8 shows team B’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in pair activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team B have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3.5 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 3.5 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

**Pair Activity Chart – 9**

In Chart 9 Each item carries five marks. In grammar team C have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 3 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

**Pair Activity Chart - 10**

Chart 10 shows team D’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in pair activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team D have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.
Pair Activity
Chart - 11

Chart 11 shows team E’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in pair activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team E have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test.

Pair Activity
Chart - 12

Chart 12 shows team F’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in pair activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team F have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3.5 marks in post-test.

Interview Activity
Chart – 13

Team A
Chart 13 shows team A’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team A have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test.

Interview Activity
Chart – 14

Team B

Chart 14 shows team B’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team B have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in posttest. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

Interview Activity
Chart – 15

Team C

Chart 15 shows team C’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team C have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3.5 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in posttest. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test, In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test.
Chart 16 shows team D’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team D have scored 2 marks in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test. In spelling they have scored 2.3 marks in pre-test and 5 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 3 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test.

Chart 17 shows team E’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity. Each item carries five marks. In grammar team E have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in post-test. In syntax they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in posttest. In spelling they have scored 2.5 marks in pre-test and 4 marks in post-test. In vocabulary they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and 2.5 marks in post-test and in group performance they have scored 1 mark in pre-test and marks in post-test.

Chart 18 shows team F’s usage of grammar, syntactic structure, spelling, vocabulary and performance in both pre-test and post-test in interview activity.
3.7 Findings

The researcher after conducting the pre test identified that there was no cooperation between the learners. The learners were lacking the required communicative abilities to interact with each other and express their ideas. The researcher observed that the learners wanted to shine as a individual candidates rather than, as a group. The writing skills of the candidates was tested and scores revealed it to the below acceptable standards. The researcher inferred that improvisation had to be done on the learning styles and upgrading of their knowledge level. Hence the necessary remedies to improve cooperative language learning were applied to the target group.

- Charts 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 shows the scores of the group activity given to the six teams. It reveals their grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary and group performance were much higher in the post test than in the pre test.
- Charts 7,8,9,10,11 and 12 shows the results of the pair activity conducted for six teams. It shows a gross improvement in grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary and group performance. The performances were higher in the post test when compared to the pre test
- Charts 13, 14,15,16,17 and 18 shows the result of the interview activity conducted for six teams. The learners showed a marked improvement in their grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary and group performance. The performances were higher in the post test when compared to the pre test.
- By sufficiently training the students to participate in group tasks, language difficulties were reduced. The charts 1 to 6 show the gradual improvement in the language items among the learners.
- Student centered methodology helped students to communicate freely and made them completely responsible individuals. The activities were designed in such a way that teacher intervention is less and student responsibility is more. That is to say the activities were student centered. The charts 1 to 12 indicate the above mentioned point.
- Students were able to communicate comfortably, share their learning material among the team mates and get a clear understanding of the topic when they worked together in groups.
- Students were interested to participate in a variety of tasks and encouraged others to do the same.
- By dividing the language tasks among themselves, the students were able to deal with the learning process confidently and effectively.
- The students saw the learning process as a group work and each one of them had to be individually accountable for the success or the failure of the entire team. This variation could be seen in all the charts (1 to 18).
- Through cooperative learning activities the students’ enhanced their language competence.
- Students learnt and mastered the art of group dynamics. This could be seen in the following charts 5, 7, 8,10, 11, 16.

3.8 Result of the Study

The results of the study proved that by training the learners adequately and exposing them to effective cooperative learning environment, a significant improvement could be seen in the learners’ ability to write. It was found out that by providing more opportunities, learners tend to gradually improve their writing. Unlike independent learning, learners in cooperative environment sit together, review the assigned task, discuss and plan about designing their projects and eventually work together to produce works of good quality. Thus, there is no doubt that teaching through this method would be equally interesting both for the teacher and the students.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative language learning method to enhance the writing skills of the students at tertiary level. Cooperative language learning method has enabled the learners to overcome their hesitation and has made them to interact comfortably and confidently. Through proper training the learners have improved in terms of writing. There seems to be noticeable changes in terms of group interaction among the learners. The learners had developed a positive and constructive relationship between each other making cooperation a success. The researcher has also identified that cooperative learning strategy has shown considerable amount of improvement in student participation. The learners feel motivated and show good progress working under a cooperative environment.

REFERENCES


