



Semarak International Journal of Current Research in Language and Human Studies

Journal homepage:
<https://semarakilmu.my/index.php/sijcrlhs/index>
ISSN: 3083-9572



Cooperative Learning in Primary ESL: What Teachers and Students Really Think!

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 April 2025
Received in revised form 27 April 2025
Accepted 10 May 2025
Available online 30 June 2025

Keywords:

Cooperative learning; English as a second language; primary education

ABSTRACT

English as a Second Language (ESL) education is essential in primary classrooms where foundational language skills are developed. Cooperative learning (CL) is an instructional approach that emphasizes student collaboration, engagement and active participation in learning. While CL is widely recognized for improving language acquisition and social interaction, its successful implementation depends on teachers' expertise, classroom management and students' attitudes. However, limited empirical data explores teachers' and students' perceptions of CL in primary ESL settings. This study investigates the perspectives of primary ESL teachers and students on CL integration in language learning. A mixed-methods approach was employed, collecting qualitative interview data from four ESL teachers and quantitative survey data from 100 students (Years 4–6) in a Manjung, Perak primary school. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data, while SPSS was used for quantitative analysis. Findings reveal that all participating teachers perceived positively towards the integration of CL in ESL classrooms. They also incorporated CL strategies, such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw Reading, Role Play, Presentation and Peer Review, in their lessons. Teachers acknowledged CL's benefits in fostering collaboration and improving language skills but noted challenges in applying it to listening skills. Students generally perceived CL positively, preferring group-based learning over individual activities. The findings reported that CL fosters their engagement in ESL classrooms, language acquisition and social collaboration. The study concludes that CL is an effective instructional strategy in ESL classrooms. These findings offer insights for enhancing ESL pedagogical practices and curriculum development.

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<https://doi.org/10.37934/sijcrlhs.3.1.113>

1. Introduction

In today's globalised society, proficiency in English has become essential, positioning English as a Second Language (ESL) education as a critical component of primary education. Establishing strong language skills during the early years is vital, as it lays the groundwork for future academic and social success. Educators are increasingly adopting innovative pedagogical approaches to achieve this, with cooperative learning (CL) emerging as a particularly effective strategy.

CL involves students working collaboratively in small groups to achieve shared learning objectives. This student-centred approach not only enhances academic performance but also fosters social interaction and language development. According to Johnson *et al.*, [1], CL strategy is a type of learning strategy that has gained highlighted recognition for its potential to strengthen students' engagement in learning, foster collaboration among themselves as well as support their language acquisition. Recent studies have demonstrated that CL significantly improves vocabulary acquisition, grammar proficiency and reading comprehension among ESL learners [2]. Moreover, it promotes a more inclusive and engaging classroom environment, encouraging active participation and reducing language anxiety [3-5].

Despite the documented benefits of cooperative learning in ESL education, there is a paucity of recent quantitative and qualitative data examining teachers' and learners' attitudes toward its implementation in primary ESL settings. Understanding these perceptions is crucial as they directly influence the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies. For instance, teachers' beliefs and attitudes can significantly impact the successful integration of cooperative learning in the classroom [6]. Similarly, students' experiences and attitudes toward group work play a vital role in their engagement and the overall success of cooperative learning initiatives [7].

Although numerous studies have investigated cooperative learning in classrooms, there is a scarcity of research that simultaneously examines both pupils' and educators' perspectives in a primary ESL educational setting. Recent studies have explored students' experiences with cooperative learning in ESL classrooms, highlighting its positive impact on engagement and language acquisition [8]. However, research on teachers' challenges in implementing cooperative learning remains limited, despite findings that educators perceive difficulties in structuring and facilitating effective group work [9]. Additionally, studies examining both teachers' and students' perspectives suggest variations in how cooperative learning is implemented, which may affect its overall effectiveness in ESL contexts [10].

Addressing this gap is essential for optimizing cooperative learning practices to meet the diverse needs of ESL learners. By exploring the perspectives of both educators and students, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform curriculum design, teacher training programs and classroom strategies, ultimately enhancing the quality of ESL education at the primary level. In conclusion, this study seeks to explore the perceptions of primary ESL teachers and learners regarding integrating cooperative learning in ESL classrooms, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of its implementation and impact.

1.1 Research Objectives

- i. To explore primary ESL teachers' perceptions of integrating cooperative learning in primary ESL classrooms.
- ii. To explore primary ESL students' perceptions of integrating cooperative learning in primary ESL classrooms.

1.2 Research Questions

- i. What are the teachers' perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms?
- ii. What are the ESL learners' perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning (CL) is a pedagogical approach that prioritizes student collaboration to attain common learning goals [11]. In the realm of Primary English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, comprehending the definitions, features and activities associated with CL is essential for efficient execution. According to Unjah *et al.*, [12], CL is one of the general principles of sustainability pedagogies which emphasises student-centred and interactive teaching and learning strategies. CL is an instructional technique in which small groups of students collaborate on a common task, with each participant contributing to the group's success. This method transitions the conventional teacher-centred classroom to a more student-centred setting, fostering active participation and mutual support among pupils. Pupils collaborate in small groups to address a topic or problem, accomplish a task or attain a common goal. In the ESL context, CL enhances opportunities for language utilization and practice, which are crucial for language acquisition. Fitrianti [13] claims that CL facilitates student participation in group conversations, hence improving their language proficiency through interactive learning.

2.2 Characteristics of Cooperative Learning

Several key characteristics delineate efficient cooperative learning. As pointed out by Harahap *et al.*, [14], cooperative learning distinguishes itself from other approaches by emphasizing group participation. It aids pupils in enhancing their academic performance while also promoting collaboration to comprehend the learning material fully. Ultimately, collaboration is the fundamental characteristic of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is an educational strategy that promotes collaboration among students in small groups to attain mutual learning goals. A fundamental trait is positive interdependence, wherein group members recognize that personal success is interconnected with the team's collective performance, promoting mutual responsibility [15]. A crucial component is individual accountability, guaranteeing that each student engages actively and meaningfully in the group's endeavours [15,16]. Moreover, in-person engagement is essential since it facilitates direct communication among students, enabling the development of both linguistic and social competencies [15]. Moreover, cooperative learning fosters interpersonal and small-group competencies, such as leadership, decision-making, trust-building and conflict resolution, which are vital for successful teamwork [15,16]. Finally, group processing promotes student reflection on their collaboration, highlighting strengths and areas requiring enhancement [15]. These characteristics synergistically foster an engaging and supportive educational atmosphere, wherein students actively engage, cooperate and cultivate both academic and social competencies. These features are crucial for establishing a supportive learning environment in which ESL students can authentically practice language skills. Nguyen *et al.*, [17] emphasize that educators acknowledge the significance of these components in promoting effective CL in language classrooms.

2.3 Cooperative Learning Activities

Numerous cooperative learning activities exist, each with distinct qualities and relevance to various curricular areas [18]. Hence, utilizing diverse cooperative learning activities may improve engagement and educational results in primary ESL environments.

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is a learning approach under collaborative learning (CL). Students can contemplate a question individually, engage in a conversation with a companion and subsequently present their insights to the broader group. Harahap *et al.*, [14] assert that the TPS learning model educates students in expressing and valuing diverse perspectives while maintaining harmony with established learning goals.

The Jigsaw approach provides distinct segments of a topic to each group member for individual study, thus facilitating peer instruction to enhance overall comprehension. Jigsaw approaches are an effective method to use in ESL classes since they provide an engaging learning environment for acquiring English language skills. Teamwork helps facilitate the expression of students' ideas and the presence of an advanced student in each group enhances their ability to think critically and communicate insights effectively [19].

Moreover, role plays, as a cooperative learning strategy, offer students the opportunity to simulate situations, facilitating contextual language practice while improving speaking abilities. Research proves that student participation in the preparation, execution and evaluation of role-playing minimizes some challenges associated with teaching [20].

In cooperative learning, presentation is a systematic activity whereby students work together in groups to prepare and convey a subject to their classmates. By incorporating discussion, cooperation and interactive learning, this method helps students improve their communication and critical thinking abilities while also allowing them to comprehend learning techniques more clearly and end the material better. This strategy promotes efficient peer interaction, enabling students to express their thoughts on techniques for learning with more clarity. Furthermore, the methodology enhances academic performance, as shown by a rise in student success from 76% in cycle one to 84% in cycle two in Djunaidi's research [21]. This enhancement demonstrates that collaborative learning via presentations not only fortifies communication and collaboration but also facilitates a deeper comprehension and mastery of the subject matter.

Peer evaluation in cooperative learning improves students' academic achievement, interpersonal abilities and autonomy as learners. Double *et al.*, [22] demonstrate its efficacy in enhancing educational achievements across various areas. Furthermore, Donia *et al.*, [23] also discovered that peer evaluation enhances communication and teamwork. Additionally, students perceive it helps them strengthen their skills, which encourages self-regulated learning [24]. Moreover, Cui *et al.*, [25] proved that it has a function in improving learners' writing skills in middle school. In short, peer assessment is an essential instrument in cooperative learning, fostering active involvement and enhanced engagement in the educational process.

These activities not only improve language competence but also cultivate confidence and promote a positive mindset towards learning. Research indicates that students participating in collaborative learning activities have heightened motivation and enhanced perspectives of their educational experiences [26].

In summary, cooperative learning provides a dynamic and effective approach for elementary ESL instruction by fostering cooperation, active involvement and practical language application. Comprehending its definition, understanding its characteristics and executing various activities may enhance learning experiences for both educators and learners.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to explore the perception of primary ESL teachers and learners toward integrating CL in ESL classrooms. A mixed-methods design is defined as a type of research that combines the elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches when one type of research design is not enough to answer the research questions [27,28].

3.2 Population and Sample

The study was conducted at a local primary school in Manjung, Perak. This study employed purposeful sampling to select participants. 4 primary ESL teachers were chosen based on their teaching experience, ranging from 3 to 20 years and their familiarity with CL. On the other hand, 100 learners from Year 4 to Year 6 were selected based on their prior knowledge in ESL classrooms.

3.3 Instrument

Two instruments were utilized in this research: semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire. The interview comprised three inquiries about teachers' perceptions toward the integration of CL in ESL classrooms. Meanwhile, the structured questionnaire consisting of 16 Likert-scale questions (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree) was adapted from previous research [7,29] to assess students' perceptions towards the integration of CL in ESL classrooms.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher conducted several data analyses, including thematic and SPSS analyses, to address the research questions. Data from interviews were analysed thematically to identify the recurring themes, whereas the data from the structured questionnaire were analysed using SPSS to determine trends and correlations. The data will be triangulated to ensure its validity and reliability.

4. Results

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Research question 1: What are the teachers' perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms?

- i. Theme 1: Perceived benefits of CL:
 - a) All four teachers highlighted that CL significantly enhances student engagement and motivation. T1 reported, "In my opinion, using CL can help to enhance students' engagement and motivation in learning English. For instance, when they work with their peers, they can communicate in English easily and participate more in the lesson." Similarly, T3 mentioned about "In my class, my students love CL. I could see that they are happy and enjoy the CL activities that I conducted in the class," signifies that using CL can create a comfortable environment for students to communicate in English and reduce their anxiety using English.
 - b) Based on the findings, it was found that students felt more comfortable communicating in English when working with peers, reducing anxiety and promoting

active participation. T3 mentioned that CL activities encourage the weak students to engage and participate actively in the class. Besides, the weak students do not feel that they are left out. These findings align with studies suggesting CL fosters a positive and interactive learning environment, making students more engaged in the learning process [30].

- c) On the other hand, teachers reported that CL provides increased opportunities for meaningful interaction, which is crucial for language development. T2 reported that when she paired the advanced students with the weak students, the advanced students could help the weaker students in mastering different English language skills such as reading, speaking and writing. T4 also mentioned that using CL activities can improve students' speaking skills, especially when they communicate with each other in English. Hence, by working in groups, students engage in peer discussions, reinforcing the acquisition of language skills and meaningful interaction with their peers. Another evidence is also shown by T3. T3 reported "I can see the progress, especially the weak students. Before this, they don't dare to participate in the learning activities because they are too shy to show to the other students that they are weak. Through CL activities, the advanced students will guide the weak ones. Thus, the weak ones feel the motivation and they are brave to engage in every activity."

ii. Theme 2: Common CL activities used by teachers:

- a) T1: "When I teach speaking, reading and writing skills, I usually use Think-Pair-Share, Peer Review and Presentation."
- b) T1: "My students like to do presentations where they can share their ideas and at the same time they can give and receive feedback."
- c) T2: "Same with T1, I will use Think-Pair-Share in conducting my English lesson. Other than that, I will use Jigsaw Reading and Role Play in my ESL classrooms."
- d) T2: "I use Think-Pair-Share for them to encourage them to think out of the box. Can see that they like it because they are allowed to talk about their ideas instead of spoon-feeding by the teacher."
- e) T2: "Role play is a must. I usually get the pupils to work in groups and discuss how to perform the best in the class. They will also bring props to school, which I think is very interesting."
- f) T3: "As for me, I use presentation when I teach speaking skills and Peer Review will be used when I teach writing skills."
- g) T3: "Presentation can give them a guide when it comes to writing, giving them ideas on what to write. At least they have some ideas here."
- h) T4: "I actually used Role Play and Jigsaw Reading to teach speaking and reading skills."

From the findings, it was found that the teachers commonly used Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw Reading and Peer Review as effective CL strategies. These methods allow students to actively process information, express their understanding and learn from peers. Previous research suggests that structured CL activities significantly enhance comprehension and critical thinking skills [31]. Besides, teachers also implemented role-playing and presentation tasks to promote oral communication and fluency, especially in teaching speaking skills. These findings align with studies that emphasize the role of group work in improving ESL speaking confidence [32].

- iii. Theme 3: Frequency of cooperative learning usage:
- a) T1: "I use CL to teach speaking, reading and writing skills."
 - b) T2: "During lesson planning, I ensure that there are CL activities for the kids, as I have different levels of English proficiency, which benefits all the students."
 - c) T2: "I use CL when I teach speaking and reading skills. I'm teaching lower primary, so I still have some students that can hardly recognize and read. Of course, reading comprehension is very hard for them."
 - d) T3: "For me, I will use CL to teach speaking and writing skills because I have a lot of students who hardly write. So, I use CL to get the advanced students to guide the weak ones."
 - e) T4: "Same with T2, I use CL to teach speaking and reading skills. When they work together, they can share their thoughts and I believe two brains can work better than one."

According to the findings of the interviews, it was found that all teachers used CL to teach speaking skills. Meanwhile, for reading skills, three teachers (T1, T2 and T4) reported that they used CL to teach reading skills. For writing skills, only two teachers (T1 and T3) used CL in teaching writing skills. However, none of the teachers had used CL to teach listening skills. One of the teachers (T4) explained that using CL for listening practice could be inefficient and time-consuming: "I once tried CL in my early teaching years to teach listening skills, but it took too much time and we couldn't determine whether it helped students improve. That's why I no longer use CL to teach listening skills."

4.1.2 Research question 2: What are the ESL learners' perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms?

4.1.2.1 Orientation toward the use of CL (questions 1-4)

Table 1 presents the findings of Questions No. 1 to No.4, which asked about the orientation towards the use of CL. According to the findings, 75% of students reported that they were familiar with CL, demonstrated that they are willing to participate in group activities and wish their teachers could use more CL activities in English lessons respectively. However, only 70.0% of them agreed that they liked working cooperatively in groups.

Table 1

Participants' reactions to question no. 1-4

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. I am familiar with Cooperative Learning (CL).	40.0% (40)	35.0% (35)	15.0% (15)	10.0% (10)
2. I like working cooperatively in groups	30.0% (30)	40.0% (40)	20.0% (20)	10.0% (10)
3. I willingly participate in group activities.	35.0% (35)	40.0% (40)	15.0% (15)	10.0% (10)
4. I wish my teacher could use more CL activities in English lessons.	38.0% (38)	37.0% (37)	15.0% (15.0)	10.0% (10)

4.1.2.2 Comparing CL to individual-based learning (questions 5-8)

Table 2 shows the result of the participants' comparison between CL to individual-based learning. According to the table shown, 75.0% of the participants agree that CL helps them to learn English easier if compared to individual-based learning. A very high percentage showed that 80.0% of the students demonstrated that CL makes English learning more interesting than individual-based learning. This can be proved that only 20.0% of the students do not agree that CL activities can help them to improve their English more than just learning from teachers. In addition, 75.0% of the students, which is more than half of the participants, prefer to have more CL activities rather than individual-based learning in English class.

Table 2

Participants' reactions to question no. 5-8

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
5. CL helps me learn English more easily than individual-based learning.	42.0% (42)	33.0% (33)	15.0% (15)	10.0% (10)
6. CL makes English learning more interesting than individual-based learning.	45.0% (45)	35.0% (35)	12.0% (12)	8.0% (8)
7. I think Interaction among CL activities can improve my English more than just learning from teachers.	50.0% (50.0)	30.0% (30)	12.0% (12)	8.0% (8)
8. I prefer to have more CL activities rather than individual-based learning in English class.	41.0 % (41)	34.0% (34)	15.0% (15)	10.0% (10)

4.1.2.3 The benefits of integrating CL (questions 9-16)

Table 3 shows the results of students on their perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms. Based on the data in the table shown, 80.0% and 78.0% of students agreed that CL helps them acquire the content knowledge needed for English lessons through working as a team and by working with team members, respectively. Besides, the data also shows that more than half of the students (80.0%) believe that CL engages them more in the English learning process. Most of the participants (77.0%) agreed that CL in English helps them, too, which enables them to participate in tasks that require information sharing, collective decision-making and problem-solving. 75.0% of the students come to the extent that they agreed with CL in English makes them feel intellectually challenged. The data also shows that 20.0% of the participants do not agree that CL gives them a more frequent chance of using English to communicate. However, 67.7% of them agreed with this statement. A high percentage of participants, 78.0%, demonstrated that CL trains them how to be a good leader and a good follower and 85.0% of the participants agreed that CL creates a good relationship among their group members.

Table 3

ESL learners' perceptions of integrating CL in primary ESL classrooms

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
9. CL helps me acquire the content knowledge needed for English lessons through working as a team.	44.0% (44)	36.0% (36)	12.0% (12)	8.0% (8)
10. CL helps me acquire the English language knowledge needed for English lessons by working with team members.	40.0% (40)	38.0% (38)	12.0% (12)	10.0% (10)
11. CL engages me more in the English learning process.	43.0% (43)	37.0% (37)	12.0% (12)	8.0% (8)
12. CL in English enables me to participate in tasks that require information sharing, collective decision-making, and problem-solving.	39.0 % (39)	38.0% (38)	13.0 % (13)	10.0% (10)
13. CL in English makes me feel intellectually challenged.	35.0% (35)	40.0% (40)	15.0% (15)	10.0% (10)
14. CL gives me a more frequent chance of using English to communicate.	42.0% (42)	38.0% (38)	12.0% (12)	8.0% (8)
15. CL trains me how to be a good leader and a good follower.	38.0% (38)	40.0% (40)	15.0% (15)	7.0% (8)
16. CL creates a good relationship among group members.	50.0% (50)	35.0% (35)	10.0% (10)	5.0% (5)

5. Discussion

5.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Integrating Cooperative Learning in Primary ESL Classrooms

The findings of this study reveal that primary ESL teachers generally perceive CL as a highly beneficial instructional strategy that enhances student engagement, motivation and language development. Teachers noted that CL helps reduce students' anxiety and boosts their confidence, particularly in speaking, reading and writing activities. T1 stated that CL encouraged students to communicate more freely in English, which facilitated better participation in lessons. T3 similarly observed that students enjoyed CL activities and weaker students felt more comfortable and motivated to engage in class. These findings are consistent with Fitrianti [13], who found that CL fosters a positive and interactive learning environment, particularly in primary ESL settings, making students more engaged and confident in using the language.

Another significant benefit reported by the teachers was the improvement in peer-assisted learning. T2 emphasized that pairing advanced students with weaker students helped bridge language gaps, particularly in reading, speaking and writing. T4 also highlighted how CL activities, such as peer review and role play, allowed students to assist one another, strengthening their language skills. This aligns with Bashir *et al.*, [33], who argued that CL not only enhances academic performance but also supports the development of social skills and teamwork. Teachers in this study observed that weaker students, who were often hesitant to participate in traditional, teacher-centred activities, became more engaged through collaborative learning. This suggests that CL helps create a more inclusive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to contribute to discussions and activities.

Moreover, the findings suggest that CL promotes a more collaborative classroom culture in which all students, regardless of their proficiency level, have a role to play. As T3 pointed out, weaker students often feel motivated when they see their peers guiding and supporting them. This finding reflects the research by Gunasagaran [34], which showed that CL reduces the feeling of isolation among struggling learners by encouraging peer collaboration. The teachers in this study also highlighted that CL helped students build stronger relationships with one another, improving both their academic performance and social skills. This is consistent with the work of Gillies [30], who

emphasized that CL fosters cooperation and mutual support, which are essential for both language acquisition and personal development.

In terms of specific CL strategies, the teachers reported using a variety of techniques, including Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw Reading, Peer Review, Role Play and Presentations. These strategies allowed students to process information actively, express their ideas and receive feedback from their peers. For instance, T1 and T2 both used Think-Pair-Share to encourage students to discuss their ideas before sharing them with the class, thereby promoting deeper thinking and participation. T4 found Jigsaw Reading particularly effective for enhancing reading comprehension, as it required students to engage with the text and collaborate with their peers to understand the material. These findings are supported by Gunasagaran [34], who found that CL activities such as Jigsaw Reading and Think-Pair-Share significantly improve ESL students' comprehension and speaking skills by providing structured opportunities for peer interaction.

However, despite the widespread use of CL for speaking, reading and writing skills, the teachers reported challenges in using CL for listening instruction. None of the teachers in this study used CL to teach listening skills, as they found it difficult to assess and time-consuming to implement effectively. T4 noted that while they had previously attempted to use CL for listening practice, it did not yield significant improvements and was too time-consuming. This finding resonates with the work of Hamzah *et al.*, [26], who identified similar challenges in integrating CL into listening instruction. While CL is highly effective for speaking and reading, its application to listening remains a challenge due to the nature of listening tasks and assessment issues. These findings suggest that more research is needed to explore how CL can be adapted to improve listening skills effectively in ESL classrooms.

5.2 Students' Perceptions of Integrating Cooperative Learning in Primary ESL Classrooms

The findings suggest that most students have a positive perception of CL, with many preferring group-based learning over individual-based learning. The study found that 75.0% of students were familiar with CL and 70.0% liked working cooperatively in groups. Furthermore, 75.0% of students willingly participated in group activities, indicating that CL provided a stimulating and dynamic learning environment. Students believed that learning in groups allowed them to exchange ideas, discuss problems and receive peer support, all of which contributed to their understanding of English concepts. These findings align with Namaziandost *et al.*, [35], who found that students in CL classrooms demonstrated greater motivation, confidence and enthusiasm in language learning compared to those in traditional teacher-centred settings.

In addition to making lessons more enjoyable and interactive, students reported that CL improved their grasp of English concepts. 75.0% agreed that CL made learning English easier, while 80.0% agreed that CL made lessons more interesting. These findings support Gunasagaran's research [34], which found that CL encourages active participation, allowing students to practice and retain language skills more effectively than passive learning methods.

Moreover, students recognized CL's role in developing essential life skills, such as leadership, teamwork and problem-solving. 78.0% of students agreed that CL helped them become good leaders and followers, while 85.0% stated that CL strengthened their relationships with peers, reinforcing the importance of collaborative learning beyond academic achievement [13].

Despite the generally positive perception, the study discovered that not all students were completely supportive of CL. Only 75.0% of students expressed a desire for additional CL activities, implying that learning preferences and group dynamics influenced their willingness to participate. Some students may prefer individual learning, possibly due to personality differences, comfort levels or prior negative experiences with group work. Furthermore, 20.0% of students believed that CL did

not provide enough opportunities to use English, implying that unequal participation or passive group members may impede their engagement. These concerns are shared by Hamzah *et al.*, [26], who observed that while CL promotes active learning for the majority of students, some may struggle with group dynamics, necessitating teacher intervention to balance participation and ensure inclusivity.

6. Conclusions

This study highlights the critical role of CL in enhancing ESL instruction at the primary level. The findings indicate that CL fosters student engagement, language acquisition and social collaboration. However, its success is contingent on effective implementation, requiring teacher training and strategic curriculum development. By understanding both teachers' and students' perceptions, this study provides meaningful insights for refining pedagogical strategies in ESL classrooms.

Future research should further explore the long-term impact of CL on language proficiency and learner motivation to strengthen its application in ESL education. As most existing studies are cross-sectional, capturing perceptions at a single point in time, longitudinal research is needed to provide deeper insights into how attitudes towards cooperative learning evolve over time and its sustained impact on language acquisition.

Moreover, Chua *et al.*, [36] stated that social media platforms and digital learning tools encourage and allow for seamless communication and collaboration between students themselves; future studies can focus on how digital learning tools can improve cooperative learning among the students.

Given the underrepresentation of listening skills in the study, future research should also explore the application of CL in enhancing ESL learners' listening proficiency. For instance, studies could develop and evaluate CL-based listening activities by investigating the effectiveness of structured CL strategies in improving listening comprehension among ESL learners. By addressing these gaps, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how CL can be leveraged to support all aspects of ESL development, including listening skills.

Acknowledgement

This research was not funded by any grant.

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