The Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning on Developing Communicative Strategies in English for Specific Purpose Tour Guide Language Training Course at Tertiary Level

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of collaborative learning on learners' communicative strategies in English for specific purpose (ESP) tour guide training course. The 12-week study was conducted using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test, following the instruction of twelve topics in the ESP language training course. A total of 60 ESP language learners participated in the study. The experimental group was instructed using collaborative learning in the ESP tour guide language training, and the control group was taught using a lecture-based approach. Data from the communicative strategies questionnaire were collected to assess the effectiveness of collaborative learning on learning communicative strategies in the ESP context. The results of the study showed that the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group on both the oral problem coping strategy scale and the listening problem coping strategy scale of the communicative strategies scale in the ESP environment. Based on the findings of the study, collaborative learning is effective in enhancing the language learners' communicative strategies in tour guide training courses. Moreover, the study suggests that there should be a critical reflection on the ESP training course currently offered for tour guide language learners.

Keywords: *Collaborative learning, communicative strategies, ESP tour guide training course, quasi-experimental design.*

Introduction

Language based on social functions or specific communicative purposes is an important practical contrivance with which interpersonal communication can be performed (Cheng et al., 2019). Communication is inseparable from any spoken or written type of language. As an international language, English has become the most important tool for English-speaking people to earn a living (Kim et al., 2018). With the rapid growth of the global economy, the improvement of living standards and the advancement of societies have led to the rapid development of tourism, and tourism revenues have become an important economic source for many countries (Lee et al., 1996). With tourism promotion at its heart, it has the potential to become an effective strategy to boost local economic development (Warren et al., 2021). The tourism industry often relies on professional guides to explain and enhance the visitor experience in order to attract more visitors (Weiler & Ham, 2002). In fact, in any tourism industry as well as other fields or circles, such as business, medical and nursing care, and law court, better comprehensible communication or relevant communicative strategies or skills are actually in demand (Bosher & Stocker, 2015; Cheng et al., 2019; Chou, 2011; Kwan & Dunworth, 2016; Shyliaeva, 2018; Tsai, 2019).

However, many employees in non-English speaking countries do not have the English language skills to meet the demands of their jobs. This is especially true now with the rise of international tourism, where the English language requirements are even more demanding (Prachanant, 2012). The government of a certain country announced that 45,000 college graduates were unemployed due to poor English proficiency (Kassim & Ali, 2010). Therefore, it is important that the learners who want to take an ESP class have prior knowledge of English. In line with that, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) highlighted the purpose of ESP, that is to accommodate learners' specific need in particular fields or

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disciplines. Thus, ESP uses a different approach from GE (General English) as it focuses on some activities in a particular area of study.

Kostantinov (2021) found that the use of communicative strategies in curriculum teaching was effective in addressing communication problems and misunderstandings. Therefore, communicative strategies provide significant pedagogical benefits. Learners with low oral skills can utilize communicative strategies to maintain speaking fluency (Nakatani, 2010), and the use of such strategies has been shown to improve the naturalness of oral expressions (Heidary, 2021). Communicative strategies consist of two types: oral problem response strategies' and 'auditory problem response strategies' (Nakatani, 2006). Therefore, in order to enhance the communicative strategies of learners in the ESP tour guide training course, it is essential for teachers to improve their language skills and English-speaking ability to convey messages accurately.

Collaborative learning is an approach to teaching and learning in which groups of two or more individuals work collaboratively to create meaning, explore a topic, or improve skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1978). Collaborative learning can increase learners' motivation, knowledge retention, and comprehension (Law, 2011). Furthermore, collaborative learning creates opportunities for learner interaction and increases communication between learners, which in turn helps to develop their oral language skills and reduces learner anxiety (Gillies & Ashman, 2000). Pan and Wu (2013) suggested that a collaborative learning classroom environment helped to promote learners' sense of personal responsibility, develop interpersonal skills, and provide equal opportunities for success. Collaborative learning holds promise as a new teaching strategy to enhance learner outcomes (Yang & Wu, 2012). This study suggested that collaborative learning is one of the areas where efforts should be made to enhance learners' communicative strategies in the ESP tour guide training course.

Currently, there are more studies on the effects of collaborative learning on learners' English expressive skills, but few studies on the effects of communicative strategies on learners' English expressive skills (Gao, 2011; Moghadam et al., 2013; Pan & Wu, 2013; Pattanpichet, 2011). In summary, this study contributes to the study of collaborative learning by examining the impact of collaborative learning on the communicative strategies of learners in the ESP tour guide training course through quasi-experimental design.

Literature Review

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is a form of learning in which learners have a clear division of responsibility for accomplishing a common task. It encourages learners to work together for the benefit of the group and for their own personal benefit. In the process of completing a common task, learners can realize their own ambitions (Johnson et al., 2000). Collaborative learning can help educational institutions to improve student learning outcomes (Balta & Awedh, 2017). According to Kagan (1994), collective learning is a group learning activity. It is organized in such a way that learning relies on the exchange of socially structured information between learners in a group. Each learner is responsible for his or her own learning and has the motivation to facilitate the learning of others with similar abilities (Sheppard et al., 2018). Researchers have conducted extensive studies on the positive effects of collaborative learning on learners' language learning and its impact on learners' classroom interactions (Banat, 2021; Ghaith, 2003; Ng et al., 2020). Collaborative learning is widely used in teaching English language skills (Gao, 2011; Jiang et al., 2022; Pattanpichet, 2011; Yavuz & Arslan, 2018; Zarei & Layeq, 2016). Therefore, exploring the impact of collaborative learning on learners was an important aim of this study.

Student team achievement (STAD) is one of the teaching strategies of collaborative learning, which refers to learners' responsibility for the learning of their teammates as well as their own learning, and emphasizes that team goals depend on the collaborative learning of all team members (Slavin, 1990). The student team approach to achievement has been widely used in research related to collaborative learning (Lee et al., 2002; Sharan, 2002). Therefore, this study used the student team achievement method (Slavin, 1990), which is divided into four parts: 1. Direct Teaching: teachers gave direct teaching to learners of the ESP tour guide training course. 2. Group Learning: heterogeneous grouping where group members practice the content taught by the teacher. 3. In-class tests: Teachers conduct in-class tests to assess learning outcomes. 4. Group recognition: Each individual's progress score is calculated and converted into group points, and the group with the most points is finally recognized. The findings of Moghadam et al. (2013) suggest that STAD is a practical teaching strategy that is effective in improving and correcting learners' pronunciation of English. It creates motivation for learners to achieve correct pronunciation, leading to the conclusion that collaborative learning helps to receive timely feedback from group members, which in turn enhances the learning outcomes of the learners.

Communicative Strategies in ESP Milieus

Communicative strategies refer to the alternatives that two interlocutors choose to convey the message they want to convey when they encounter communication difficulties (Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1980,). Tarone argued that communicative strategies involve the attempts made by two interlocutors to reach a consensus on meaning in the face of semantic and structural inconsistencies, emphasizing the communicative dimension of communicative strategies,

which includes attempts to avoid any communication disruptions. Communicative strategies are strategic skills that involve the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies to prevent communication breakdowns due to learners' lack of appropriate knowledge of the target language (Canale & Swain, 1980). Kung (2016) demonstrated that the development of media literacy facilitates learners' oral communicative competence through practical and genuine linguistic input. Moreover, the development and training of specific communicative strategies can complement learners' learning of the target language, thereby enhancing language competence (Dörnyei, 1995). Sleigh and Vayena (2021) pointed out as communication artefacts, visualizations use rhetoric to engage their audience. Thus, like verbal communication, communicative strategies can be understood and analyzed through the standard components of an argument. Communicative strategies are the strategies that learners of the ESP tour guide training course can use to compensate for their lack of proficiency in English when they encounter language difficulties, in order to facilitate interactive communication.

Corder (1983) suggested that communicative strategies were effective in increasing learners' language use. Politzer (1983) developed a self-report scale for communicative strategies with three dimensions: general behavior, classroom behavior, and interactive behavior. Based on previous research, Politzer and McGroarty (1985) developed a verbal communicative strategies scale, which was divided into three dimensions: individual learning, classroom behavior and extra-curricular oral communication strategies. In the current empirical research on communicative strategies, Nakatani (2006) developed a scale that was divided into two subscales: the Oral Language Problem Response Strategy Scale and the Auditory Problem Response Strategy Scale. This classification is considered to be more complete and most frequently used in this study (Nakatani, 2010, 2012; Yaman & Kavasoğlu, 2013).

Collaborative Learning and Communicative Strategies for Language Learners

Collaborative learning provides more opportunities for second language learners to develop their language skills than traditional language teaching (Olsen & Kagan, 1992). The use of communicative strategies can help learners bridge the language knowledge gap, improve communication efficiency, and help learners communicate meaningfully, which in turn increases learners' ability to use strategies and interact with each other (Nakatani, 2010). In a quasi-experimental design of collaborative learning with 105 Canadian university students, Han (2015) found that collaborative learning provided learners with more opportunities to learn and improved their language fluency as well as their oral language skills. Some researchers have also found that the introduction of collaborative learning techniques resulted in significant development of learners' oral language skills when using 90 university students in Iran as subjects (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Other researchers, such as Pattanpichet (2011), found that collaborative learning facilitated the improvement of learners' oral language skills in a study of 35 university students in basic English courses in Thailand. Meanwhile, Al-Tamimi and Attamimi (2014), in a study of 60 university students in the Yemeni Republic, suggest that teachers should use collaborative learning appropriately in their teaching to develop learners' oral language skills and attitudes. Similarly, Dabaghmanesh et al. (2013) and Talebi and Sobhani (2012) studied 54 Iranian university students and 40 Iranian university students enrolled in the IELTS oral language course respectively, and found that the introduction of collaborative learning increases the diversity of the teaching and learning environment and enables learners to become more active and willing to express their ideas and communicate with each other in the classroom, thereby enhancing their language skills and developing them significantly. Collaborative learning has a significant impact on the communicative strategies of learners at different stages of learning. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the effect of collaborative learning on the communicative strategies used by the ESP tour guide training course learners.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design to examine the effect of collaborative learning on the communicative strategies used by learners of the ESP tour guide training course. Based on the evaluation of ESP learners' use of communicative strategies, 12 high-frequency topics were selected from the Taiwan English Tourist Guide Exam (Ministry of Examination, 2013). All the participants were expected to learn about communicative strategies, the authority and responsibilities of a tour guide, and training topics, including basic knowledge of tour guide, such as guide commentary, tour leader skills, travel safety, and emergency in ESP circumstances（See Table 2）. The topics for the ESP tour guide language training 12-week course were shown as follows. Each topic was taught weekly for two hours.

Table 1. 12-Week Course

Weeks	Topics
Week 1	To run a tour guide's commentary in English for specific purposes
Week 2	To introduce first-class tourist attractions in Taiwan
Week 3	To introduce the ancient distinct sightseeing streets in Taiwan
Week 4	To introduce traditional Taiwanese music
Week 5	To introduce the must-see plants and animals in Taiwan

Table 1. Continued

Weeks	Topics
Week 6	To introduce the famous mountains in Taiwan
Week 7	To briefly introduce the cultural antiquities and Relics at the National Palace Museum
Week 8	To introduce Taiwan's special cuisine
Week 9	To introduce Taiwan's famous souvenirs
Week 10	To introduce Taiwan tea culture
Week 11	To introduce Taiwanese Aboriginal celebrations
Week 12	To introduce major festivals in Taiwan

Two groups in this research were made. One group was the experimental group and the other group was the control group. The experimental group practised collaborative learning, and the control group employed lecture-based teaching. Both groups were pre-tested and post-tested using the communicative strategies scale.

Table 2. Course Content

Teaching Contents	
Course content	Learn about authority and responsibilities of English tour guide.
Teaching activity time	2 hours
Week Course Progress	Week 1: Introduction of tourism industry Week 2: Qualification of tour leaders Week 3: Basic business knowledge of travel agencies Week 4: Tour of aboriginal tribes Week 5: Tour guide interpretation skills Week 6: Guiding presentation skills Week 7: Travel safety and crisis management Week 8: Tourism psychology and behavior Week 9: Immigration laws and practices Week 10: Air Ticketing Week 11: International etiquette Week 12: Tourism administration and regulations

Participants

The EFL learners attending this selective English course of an ESP tour guide language training program at a national hospitality and tourism university in Taiwan. In this study, the cohort consisted of 60 learners of the ESP tour guide training course, who were selected for the study by means of intentional sampling. The participants were divided into two groups, one being the experimental group and the other being the control group. Those who were composed of the participants of this study had similar English abilities as indicated by their TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication; Educational Testing Service) placement scores, as marked B1. There were 23 male students (76.7%) and 7 female students (23.3%) in the experimental group, and 26 male students (80%) and six female students (20%) in the control group, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Basic Information on Research Subjects

Basic Information	Group	Experimental Group (n=30)		Control Group (n=30)	
		Number of People	Effective Percentage	Number of People	Effective Percentage
Gender	Male	23	76.7%	24	80%
	Female	7	23.3%	6	20%

The purpose of the program those participants were enrolled in was to develop their employment of English communicative strategies to enable them to work as professional tour guides in the international community. All ESP language learners in both groups were required to take the course for a duration of twelve consecutive weeks. The experimental group specifically focused on developing speaking and listening fluency, communicative strategies, and the application of those strategies in question to promote effective communication with other interlocutors. On the other hand, the control group focused on listening to lectures in class, taking structured notes, asking and answering questions, and interacting with the teacher. The teacher followed the same relevant course curriculum in both groups. The teaching goals, textbook, and assessment procedures were consistent for all participants throughout the program, but the instructional methods differed between the two groups.

Instruments

The oral language communicative strategies scale developed by Nakatani (2006) was used for this study. The seven-point Likert scale was used, with higher scores indicating more frequent use of communicative strategies. The total scale was divided into two subscales: a 32-question oral language problem response strategy scale and a 26-question listening problem response strategy scale, with a total of 58 questions. The scale has been used several times and has good validity (Nakatani, 2010, 2012; Yaman & Kavasoğlu, 2013).

First, a project analysis was conducted with a pretest sample of 171 learners from the ESP tour guide training course. Based on the results of the project analysis, the questions with critical ratio (C. R.) values > 3 and p >.05 were deleted. After the deletion of the questions, there were 29 questions on oral problem response strategies and 26 questions on auditory problem response strategies, making a total of 55 questions. Second, the reliability of the formal sample of 60 learners from the ESP tour guide training course was analyzed and the oral problem response strategies scale had a Cronbach's alpha =.905. The auditory problem response strategies scale had a Cronbach's alpha =.934, indicating that the reliability of the two subscales was good.

Procedures

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design in which a pre-test and a post-test were employed. Each class meets once a week. Each lesson is divided into two sessions, totaling 24 lessons. Each session is set for 60 minutes, 120 minutes per week, for a total of 1440 minutes. The total experimental period is 12 weeks. Learners in the experimental and control groups were asked to complete a pre-test on the Communicative Strategies Scale before the first session and a post-test on the Communicative Strategies Scale at the end of the 12th week of the course. The impact of collaborative learning on the communicative strategies used by learners in the ESP tour guide training course was examined.

The course materials and the accompanying quizzes were the same for both classes, and both classes were taught in the same classroom. During the teaching of the control group classes, the teacher conducted didactic teaching for 60 minutes. Afterward, learners completed the task and checked their answers individually for 20 minutes, followed by a 20-minute follow-up test. Finally, based on the answers provided by the teacher, learners took 20 minutes to correct each other and record the results of the accompanying test. The total time spent was 120 minutes.

In the experimental group, teachers used collaborative learning and group achievement differentiation during teaching. Prior to implementation, learners were heterogeneously grouped based on their scores in the 12 high-frequency topics chosen from the Taiwan English Tourist Guide Exam. The grouping was based on the learners' scores on the 12 high-frequency topics chosen from the Taiwan English Tourist Guide Exam and was divided into five levels from A to E. There were six groups, each consisting of five learners. The specific teaching process of STAD was indicated as follows. 1. Direct Instruction: Based on the syllabus, the teacher conducted a direct lesson for all learners, taking about 30 minutes. 2. Small group learning: according to the learning sheets provided by the instructor, group members learned from each other and worked together to complete the sheets, checked the answers, and were assigned roles within the group, including group leader, timer, observer, checker, and recorder. Roles could be rotated to provide learners with different learning opportunities, taking about 40 minutes. 3. Drop-in test: each learner completed the test independently and it took about 20 minutes. 4. Group praise: with the answers provided by the teacher, members of the group corrected each other and calculated their individual grades. The teacher recorded the individual results and compared them with the previous week's testing results to calculate the individual improvement points and converted them into group points (no negative points were given for retrogression). The results of the first drop-in test were compared with the learners' test scores from their entry assessments. See Table 4 for the conversion method. The time required was approximately 10 minutes. Finally, the teacher gave oral recognition to the group that had made the best progress and awarded them with prizes. The group members shared their achievements, feelings, and feedback on the group's experience, which would be used as a basis for the group's learning and improvement in the future, taking approximately 20 minutes.

Table 4. Group Points Conversion Table

Individual Progress Points	Group Points
5 points for progress	5 extra points
10 points for progress	10 extra points
15 points for progress	15 extra points
20 points for progress	20 extra points
25 points for progress	25 extra points
30 points for progress	30 extra points

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the raw and corrected means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups. Covariate analysis was used to examine whether there were significant differences between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups on the oral problem response strategies scale and the auditory

problem response strategies scale. Finally, post hoc comparisons (LSD) were used to analyze the detailed differences between the experimental and control groups.

Results / Findings

Quantitative Results

The normality of all continuous variables for statistical analysis was tested prior to data analysis. Absolute skewness values for all items ranged from 0.011 to 1.341, while absolute kurtosis values ranged from 0.003 to 5.577. The results met the criteria for absolute values of skewness < 2 and kurtosis < 7, indicating the normality of the data (Curran et al., 1996). The raw and corrected means and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups on the pre-test and post-test of the oral problem response strategies scale and the auditory problem response strategies scale are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Pre-test/Post-test Measures of the Study Subjects on the Oral Problem Response Strategies and the Auditory Problem Response Strategies

Subscales	Group	Pre-test		Post-test (before adjusted means)		Post-test (adjusted means)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Oral problem response strategies	Experimental Group (n=30)	3.402	.337	4.256	.416	4.256	.067
	Control Group (n=30)	3.340	.279	3.540	.305	3.540	.067
Auditory problem response strategies	Experimental Group (n=30)	3.496	.359	4.340	.404	4.340	.070
	Control Group (n=30)	4.464	.320	3.577	.351	3.577	.070

Note: Adjusted means refer to the means produced by ANCOVA procedures, which represent the means of each group once the covariate(s) has been controlled.

As indicated in Table 6, the F-check for homogeneity of regression coefficients did not reach significant levels ($F = 1.194$, $p > .05$). The result was consistent with the basic assumption of homogeneity of regression coefficients within groups, and therefore the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) could be continued.

Table 6. Summary of Homogeneity of Intra-group Regression Coefficients for Oral Problem Response Strategies

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F	p
Group	.025	1	.025	.183	.670
Pre-test	.019	1	.019	.139	.710
Group* Pre-test	.161	1	.161	1.194	.279
Error	7.549	56	.135		
Corrected Total	15.382	59			

As shown in Table 7 and Table 5, the main effect of the group in the covariate analysis model for the oral problem response strategies scale was statistically significant ($F = 56.696$, $p < .001$). That is, there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the ESP tour guide training course learners between the experimental and control groups on the oral problem response strategies. The post-hoc comparison analysis in this study was conducted using the LSD method, and it revealed that, it could be seen that the post-test corrected mean of the experimental group (4.256) was significantly higher than that of the control group (3.540). This indicated that collaborative learning was significantly more effective in improving the oral problem response strategies of the ESP tour guide training course learners in this study.

Table 7. Summary of the ANCOVA Analysis of the Groups on Oral Problem Response Strategies

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F	p	LSD Post Hoc Comparison
Pre-test	.004	1	.004	.030	.864	
Group	7.670	1	7.670	56.696	.000	Experimental Group > Control Group
Error	7.710	57	.135			
Corrected Total	15.382	59				

As revealed in Table 8, the F-check for homogeneity of regression coefficients did not reach significant levels ($F = .561$, $p > .05$). The result was consistent with the basic assumption of homogeneity of regression coefficients within groups, and therefore the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) could be continued.

Table 8. Summary of Homogeneity of Intra-Group Regression Coefficients for Auditory Problem Response Strategies

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F	p
Group	2.637	1	2.637	.000	.989
Pre-test	.000	1	.000	.002	.962
Group* Pre-test	.083	1	.083	.561	.457
Error	8.23	56	.147		
Corrected Total	17.051	59			

Table 9 and Table 5 show that the main effect of the group in the covariate analysis model of the auditory problem response strategies scale was statistically significant ($F = 59.561$, $p < .001$). That is, there was a significant difference in the posttest scores of the ESP tour guide training course learners between the experimental and control groups on the auditory problem response strategies. The post-hoc comparison analysis in this study was conducted using the LSD method, and it revealed that the mean post-test corrected score of the experimental group (4.340) was significantly higher than that of the control group (3.577). This indicated that collaborative learning was significantly more effective in improving the ESP tour guide training course learners' auditory problem response strategies in this study.

Table 9. Summary of the ANCOVA Analysis of the Groups on Auditory Problem Response Strategies

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F	p	LSD Post Hoc Comparison
Pre-test	.003	1	.003	.018	.893	
Group	8.694	1	8.694	59.561	.000	Experimental Group >
Error	8.320	57	.146			Control Group
Corrected Total	17.051	59				

Qualitative Results

Students' opinions on cooperative learning were collected through semi-structured interviews, and the impact of cooperative learning on learners' communication strategies was analyzed and summarized. Overall results showed that participants expressed positive perceptions of the cooperative learning employed in this study. Their responses highlighted their views on cooperative learning in enhancing communication strategies. However, some students also raised issues that should be considered when learning through collaborative learning.

Responses to the Influence of Cooperative Learning on Communication Strategies

Many learners reported significant improvement in their English communication strategies through cooperative learning, especially in the parts of memorizing words and dialogue comprehension. Practicing English communication and expression through mutual imitation of tour guides and guided tours by classmates could indeed improve their English speaking and listening skills. From the interviews, it was found that the students were very interested in learning communication strategies through the cooperative learning method.

- I think cooperative learning is very good. You can use communication strategies to increase your ability to express and understand. It is completely different from the previous teaching. It is more interesting to interact with your classmates. (S27)
- Learning communication strategies through cooperative learning also helped me a lot in vocabulary learning. Studying with high-achieving classmates has made me better at remembering words and how to use them correctly. (S16)
- Through cooperative learning, I use communication strategies in groups to solve problems together with peer learners, so I no longer feel bored when learning English. (S12)
- I am more interested in learning English to communicate because my communication strategies have improved a lot through cooperative learning. (S5).
- "Through cooperative learning, when there are some sentences that I don't know how to express, the students in the same group will guide me patiently and teach me how to use communication strategies to complete the tour." (S20)

In general, learners' preference for cooperative learning methods was consistent, and most learners prefer the cooperative learning method model. Some learners said that the basic knowledge of courses that low-achieving learners originally lacked could be enhanced through group interaction between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners. Therefore, mutual supportive learning is one of the important factors that cooperative learning can help learners to improve their communication strategies. In addition, some learners said that through cooperative learning, they could increase their interest in learning English and improve the use of communication strategies.

In addition, while the students enhanced the application of communication strategies through cooperative learning and improved their communication skills in guided tours, some suggestions were also made as follows.

- Cooperative learning is fun, but when I suddenly start practicing communication strategies, I don't know what to say. So, I hope the teacher can first explain different communication strategies and provide guidance on how to practice them. (S25)
- I feel that sometimes doing cooperative learning is a waste of time. Because one of the group members may be asking a lot of questions, or they may need more explanation, which will delay the practice of communication strategies, the teacher should intervene in time to assist. (S7)
- Some team members did not concentrate on practicing communication strategies because they were not familiar with other students. Therefore, the teacher should sometimes patrol to understand the learning status of each group member. (S19)
- I really want to practice more, but the hints provided are not enough and the time is a bit short. I hope the teacher can assist in the practice. (S2)

In addition, some students reported that the study unit could not be completed at all times. Therefore, if students are given sufficient group study time and sufficient practice, they will become more familiar with the content they have learned, and they will also understand the teacher's questions better, thereby increasing the accuracy of their answers. To sum up, the students suggested that teachers should give explanations and inspections and give enough time to practice in a timely manner.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the impact of cooperative learning on the communication strategies of learners of English guide training courses. The quantitative results showed that the learners of the English guide training course in the experimental group scored significantly higher than those in the control group in terms of communication strategies, which was consistent with the findings of Moghadam et al. (2013) and Pattanpichet (2011), suggesting that cooperative learning had a positive effect on students' learning engagement, positive learning outcomes, social behavior, and interactive communication. The results of this study affirmed the value of cooperative learning in the education of English guide training courses. There are several possible reasons for the findings. The possible reasons for these findings would be as follows: firstly, when teachers use cooperative learning to provide high-quality learning experiences for learners, it has a positive impact on learners (Al-Tamimi & Attamimi, 2014). Secondly, cooperative learning as a teaching method changes the traditional teacher-centered teaching model to a student-centered one, which promotes the formation of a positive learning attitude in cooperative learning, and enhances students' social communication and language skills. (Treleaven & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2001). Moreover, cooperative learning could increase the diversity of learning environments, encourage students to participate and share their ideas in class, enhance a sense of learning achievement, and thus promote language proficiency (Dabaghmanesh et al., 2013). Furthermore, research by Gillies and Ashman (2000) and Pan and Wu (2013) pointed out that cooperative learning as a teaching strategy creates opportunities for learners to interact through group learning, increases communication between learners, reduces learners' anxiety, and trains communication skills between peers.

Based on the qualitative feedback, the cooperative learning model has brought about positive changes in learners as compared to traditional teaching methods, resulting in learners' positive feedback and higher participation. Specifically, the results were similar to those revealed in the qualitative study conducted by Van Leeuwen and Janssen (2019), which showed that cooperative learning could improve learners' language communication skills. Additionally, it is consistent with the results of another qualitative study which showed that cooperative learning would help learners face challenges and use strategic approaches to problem-solving (Koivuniemi et al., 2018). The possible reasons for these findings are as follows: firstly, cooperative learning could enhance learners' autonomy in learning, facilitate interaction with peers, and promote communication ability, leading to enjoyable learning experiences (Kageto & Kageto, 2016). Secondly, cooperative learning would provide learners with an environment for mutual learning, where group learning could lead to higher learning outcomes than individual tasks (Chen et al., 2018). Moreover, studies by Campbell (2020) and Laal and Ghodsi (2012) have shown that cooperative learning could help learners get to know each other, improve communication, encourage one another, and collaboratively develop problem-solving strategies, ultimately enhancing students' learning experiences and sense of achievement. This shows that cooperative learning could have a significant impact on the communication strategies of learners of English guide training courses.

In conclusion, cooperative learning, as a teaching method, can effectively enhance learners' motivation and oral communication abilities in English guide training courses, indicating its significant and essential role in English language teaching. The contribution of the present research is the proposed cooperative learning model for teaching communication strategies to learners of English guide training courses, providing new perspectives for universities and English tour guide training institutions.

Conclusion

This study found that collaborative learning improved the use of communicative strategies by learners of the ESP tour guide training course. English can be used not only as a lingua franca between non-native tourists and tour guides of different L1 backgrounds in ESP communication through useful communicative strategies but also as a language for specific purposes among non-native speakers who come from the same first language community (Bosher & Stocker, 2015).

Recommendations

Therefore, the following suggestions are made in this study: the tour guide training institutions can promote the use of collaborative learning to assist ESP tour guide language learners to develop communicative strategies by teachers so that they can have a better understanding of the benefits and advantages of collaborative learning and can master the essentials, thus enabling collaborative learning to be widely used in ESP contexts. For teachers, firstly, in order for collaborative learning to start smoothly, teachers should be well prepared before the start of collaborative learning, from teaching tools and scoring sheets to the formulation of teaching plans and syllabuses. Secondly, teachers should reasonably divide the students into heterogeneous groups and assign roles to each member, so as to promote mutual help among group members and enhance the sense of cooperation. Thirdly, teachers need to check the quality of the test papers by analysing the difficulty, discrimination, and eligibility of the questions. Fourthly, teachers can provide verbal praise and appropriate material rewards according to ESP language learners' needs, so as to promote learners' learning interest and interactive learning.

Limitations

Although this study adopted a quasi-experimental design to study the use of communicative strategies, there were some limitations. First of all, the participants in this study were the ESP tour guide training course learners, so the generalizability was limited. It is hoped that future research could be extended to cover different types of learners and learning environments, expand the range of experimental objects and environments, and conduct quasi-experimental design on collaborative learning. Secondly, the duration of the experiment of this study was 12 weeks. It is hoped that future researchers would conduct longer experimental studies to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of collaborative learning on the use of communicative strategies and the related outcomes.

Ethics Statements

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Dhurakij Pundit University. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

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