

Efficacy of Cooperative Learning for Developing English Language Skills at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh

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Cooperative learning, English language aptitude, Development, HSC Level Bangladesh

Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of co-operating learning for developing English language aptitude at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. This study employed a mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) research approach making an investigation on the effectiveness of cooperative learning. The study was conducted from January to March 2019. 50 students (25 for the cooperative group and 25 for the non-cooperative group) from Shailokupa City College, Shailokupa, Jhenaidah, Bangladesh were chosen as the participants of this study for collecting data. Two types of instruments (questionnaire and interview) were used to obtain the data of this study. Data of this study were presented by using charts and interpreted descriptively. The findings of this study reflected that the performance of the cooperative group was better than that of the non-cooperative group.

Introduction

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning for developing English language aptitudes at the HSC level in Bangladesh. The cooperative method is a method of teaching and learning in which the students are divided into several small groups. And these small groups work together to improve their language skills or other proficiencies in a language. In this approach, one group comate with another group in an assigned task. Jacob (1999) says; "cooperative learning is an approach of having systematic, structured and diverse types of instructional methods in which small groups of students work together and aid each other in completing academic tasks." Jacob et al (2006) state that in the cooperative learning process, the learners get the opportunity of enhancing social strategies. Millis (2912) states that the learners can enhance their ability to solve problems and can get the opportunity of developing any kind of aptitude. In the same way, the method of cooperative teaching and learning approach can improve the learners' proficiency of English language aptitudes. Considering such an important phenomenon of developing English language aptitudes, this study has examined the effectiveness of a cooperative learning approach for developing English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh.

Justification of this Study

In Bangladesh, students learn English for twelve years from class 1 to class 12. In most cases, these students also do a mandatory course on the English language at their under-graduation level in University (Hamid, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2020). Yet, their performances do not show an optimum level of ability in the language. Hamid and Baldauf et al. (2012) argue that despite the students' learning the language for more than 10 years at different stages, students' functional competence in the language remains very limited and that the performance of the students is below the standard. Because of such failures of the existing approach, it sounds imperative to find out an

effective approach to learning English. Hence, the present study explores if collaborative learning works in helping students to learn the language. It is to be mentioned that some researches have been done on the cooperative learning approach in many other parts of the world but this field of research is still much ignored in Bangladesh. Hence, this present study sounds carrying significance as its findings can be inspiring both for the learners and the other bodies involved in the teaching-learning process to feel encouraged to apply this approach in a real situation.

Objectives of this study

This study has formed some objectives to find out the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing the learners' proficiency in English language aptitudes at higher secondary level in Bangladesh. The main objective of this study is to find out the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. And the specific objectives of this study are:

- (i) To understand the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' listening proficiency.
- (ii) To understand the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' speaking proficiency.
- (iii) To understand the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' reading proficiency.
- (iv) To understand the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' writing proficiency.

Research Questions

This study has formed some questions to achieve the objectives of the research. The questions are as follows:

- (i) What is the effect of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' listening proficiency?
- (ii) What is the effect of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' speaking proficiency?
- (iii) What is the effect of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' reading proficiency?
- (iv) What is the effect of the cooperative learning approach for developing learners' writing proficiency?

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning for the development of English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. The sample size of this study consisted of 50 higher secondary level students from Shailokupa City College, Shailokupa, Jhenaidah, Bangladesh. The participants of this study comprised of two groups, 25 participants for the cooperative group and 25 participants for the non-cooperative group. One group of learners was taught cooperatively and another group was taught in a non-cooperative way for eight weeks. Then, two types of instruments, survey questionnaire and interview were employed to obtain data for this study.

The survey questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data and an interview was used to obtain qualitative data of this study. The quantitative data of this study were presented by using graphs and then interpreted descriptively. The qualitative data of this study were analyzed inductively. It used computer Microsoft excel for analyzing the data.

Literature Review

Researchers from different parts of the world have talked much about different aspects of the cooperative learning approach for developing English language aptitudes. Chen and Wang (2011) state that, in a cooperative learning approach, the learners can develop language aptitude in different ways. They also tell that the learners can develop their language aptitude and at the same time, they can learn to work unitedly which help them create useful attitudes among them to enhance their ability.

Agarwal et al. (2011) state that the cooperative learning method is such an approach that develops one kind of positive interdependency among the learners. Regarding the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach, Farmer (2017) states that the learners improve their attitude, ability to work unitedly, and self-esteem if they learn through the cooperative learning approach. Keshavarz et al. (2014) say; "social interdependence theory contends that the learners can learn best in cooperative learning approach rather than that they can learn in competition approach." Many pieces of research, done in other parts of the world, have shown the positive effects of cooperative learning approaches for developing English language aptitudes.

However, the positive impact of the cooperative learning approach for developing English language aptitudes at the intermediate level has encouraged the researcher of this study to research in the context of Bangladesh. So, this study has been conducted to examine the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

This section has presented detailed findings of this study regarding the effectiveness of cooperative learning for the development of English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. It has presented the participants' development progress in four aptitudes of English language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Findings from Survey Questionnaire

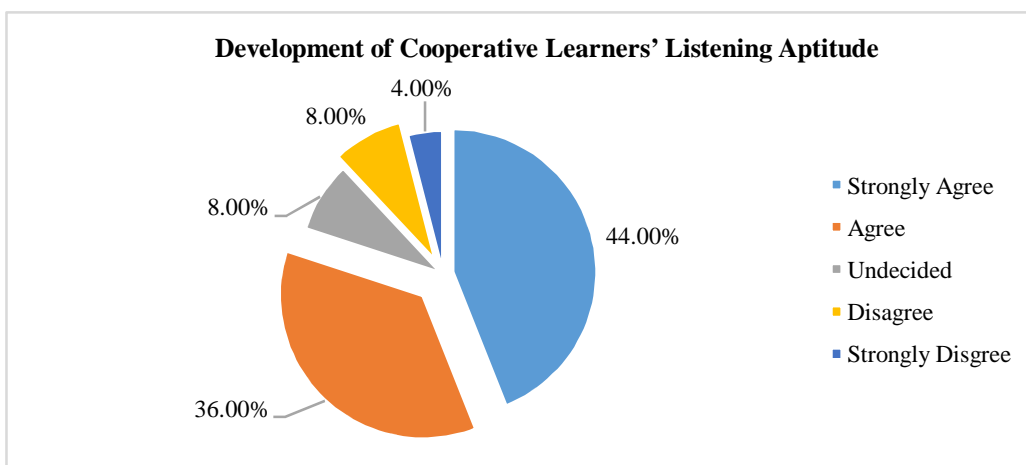


Figure 1. Development of Cooperative Learners' Listening Aptitude (Viewed by co-operative group)

Figure 1 shows the development of cooperative learners' listening aptitude in the English language. 80% of participants of the cooperative group could enable to develop their listening aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

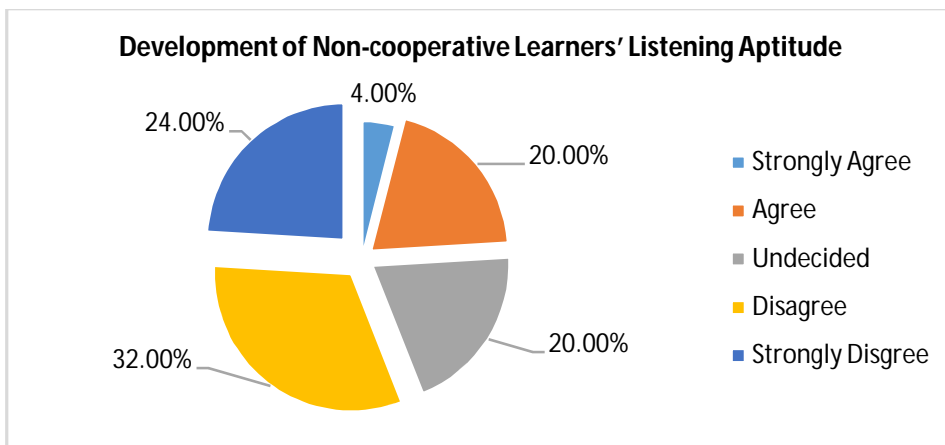


Figure 2. Development of Non-Cooperative Learners' Listening Aptitude (Viewed by Non-cooperative group)

Figure 2 shows the development of non-cooperative learners' listening aptitude in the English language. 24% of participants of the non-cooperative group could enable to develop their listening aptitude in the English language without practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

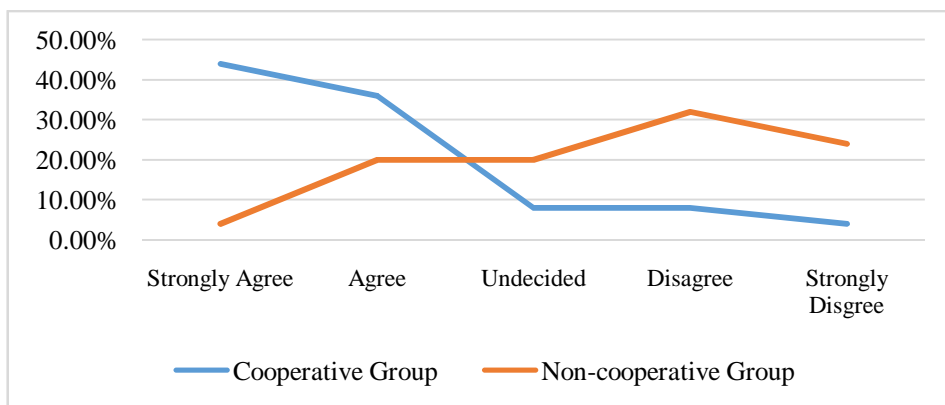


Figure 3. Development of Listening Aptitude of Cooperative and Non-cooperative Groups

Figure 3 shows cooperative and non-cooperative groups' improvement of listening aptitude in the English language for practicing and not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning. The majority of participants of the cooperative group have shown their positive responses regarding the development of listening aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes, while very few participants of the non-cooperative group have shown positive responses regarding the development of listening aptitude in the English language for not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes.

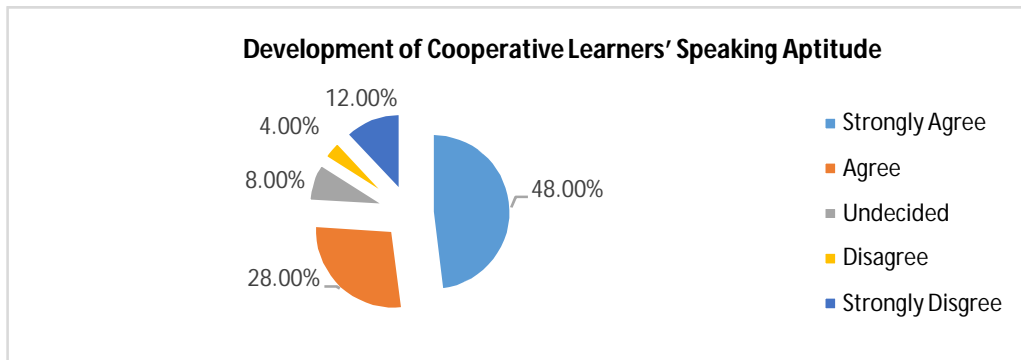


Figure 4. Development of Cooperative Learners' Speaking Aptitude (Viewed by Cooperative group)

Figure 4 presents the development of cooperative learners' speaking aptitude in the English language. 76% of participants of the cooperative group could enable to develop their speaking aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

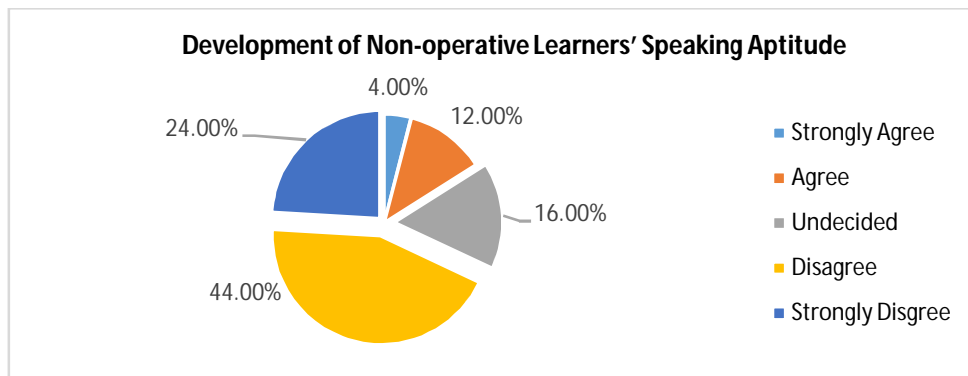


Figure 5. Development of Non-operative Learners' Speaking Aptitude (Viewed by Non-operative group)

Figure 5 presents the development of non-cooperative learners' speaking aptitude in the English language. 16% of participants of the non-cooperative group could enable to develop their speaking aptitude in the English language without practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

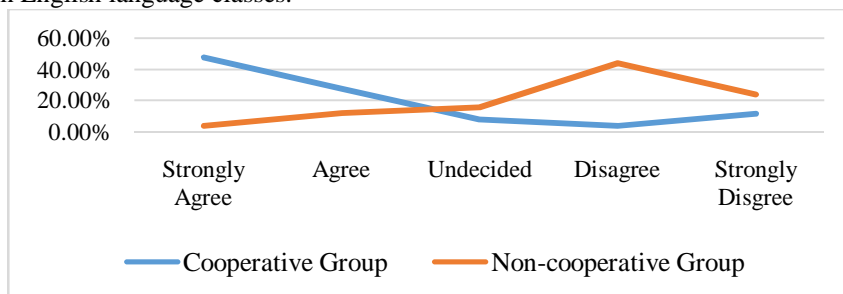


Figure 6. Development Progress of Cooperative and Non-cooperative Groups' Speaking Aptitude

Figure 6 reflects cooperative and non-cooperative groups' improvement of speaking aptitude in the English language for practicing and practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning. Most of the participants of the cooperative group have shown their positive responses regarding the development of listening aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes, while some participants of the non-cooperative group have shown positive responses regarding the development of speaking aptitude in the English language for not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes.

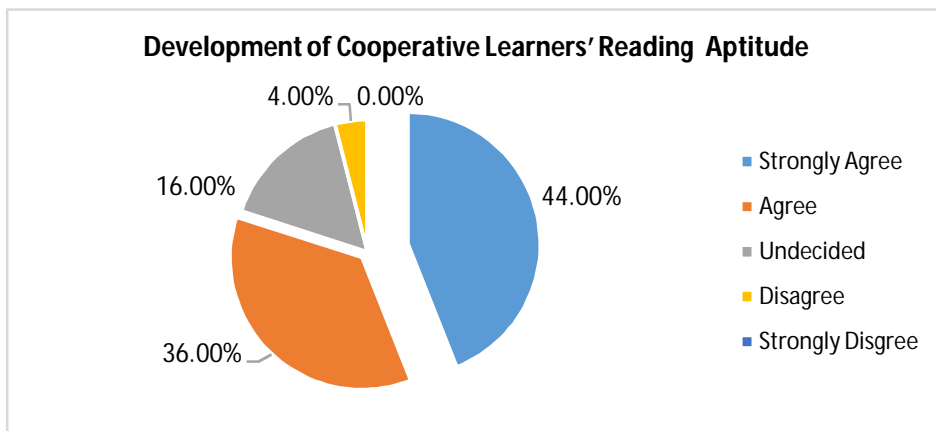


Figure 7. Development of Cooperative Learners' Reading Aptitude (Viewed by co-operative group)

Figure 7 reflects the development of cooperative learners' reading aptitude in the English language. 80% of participants of the cooperative group could enable to develop their reading aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

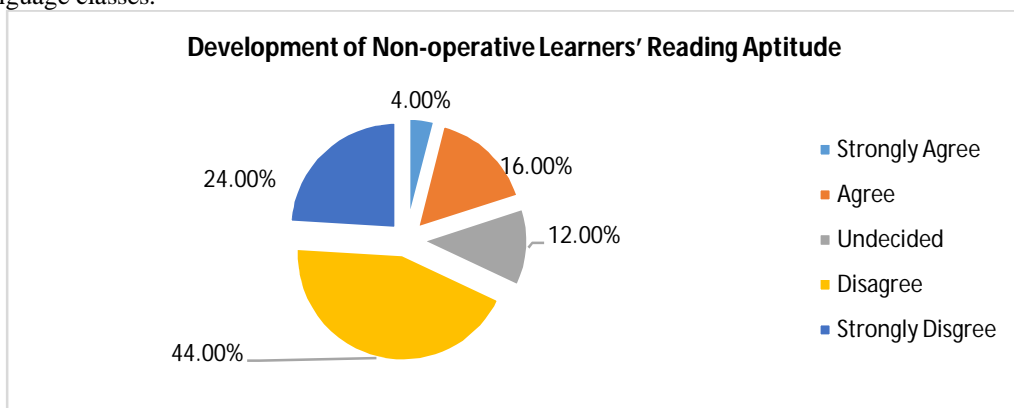


Figure 8. Development of Non-cooperative Learners' Reading Aptitude (Viewed by Non-operative group)

Figure 8 reflects the development of non-cooperative learners' reading aptitude in the English language. 20% of participants in the non-cooperative group could enable to develop their reading aptitude in the English language without practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

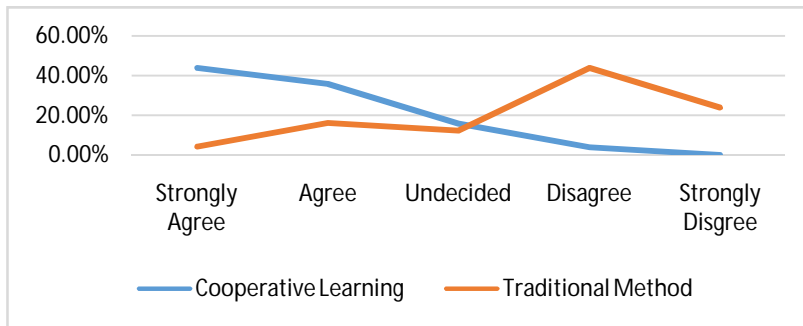


Figure 9. Development Progress of Cooperative and Non-cooperative Groups' Reading Aptitude

Figure 9 shows cooperative and non-cooperative groups' improvement of reading aptitude in the English language for practicing and not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning. Most of the participants of the cooperative group have shown their positive responses regarding the development of reading aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes, while few participants of the non-cooperative group have shown positive responses regarding the development of reading aptitude in the English language for not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes.

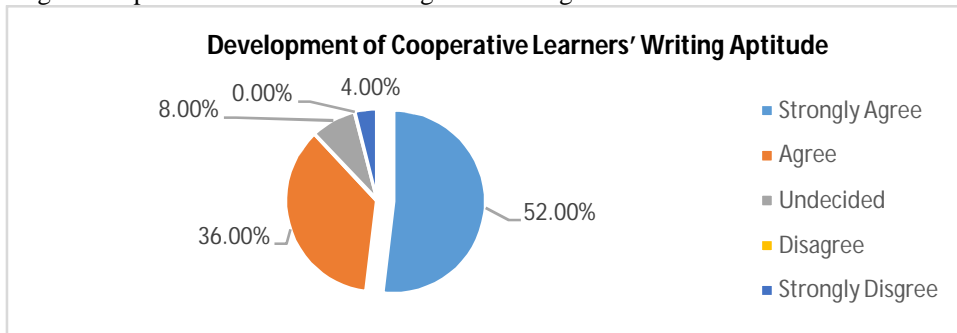


Figure 10. Development of Cooperative Learners' Writing Aptitude (Viewed by co-operative group)

Figure 10 shows the development of cooperative learners' writing aptitude in the English language. 88% of participants of the cooperative group could enable to develop their writing aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

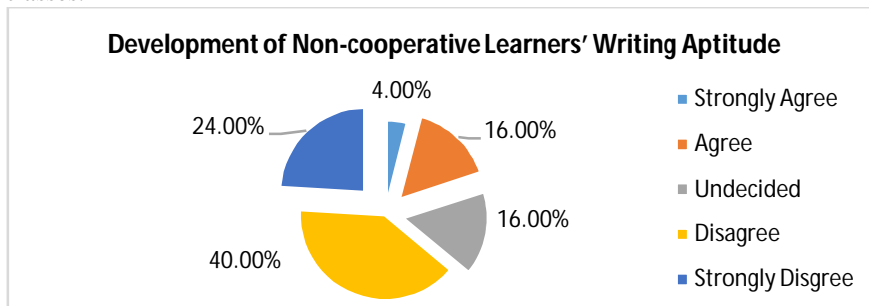


Figure 11. Development of Non-cooperative Learners' Writing Aptitude (Viewed by Non-operative group)

Figure 11 presents the development of non-cooperative learners' writing aptitude in the English language. 20% of participants of the non-cooperative group could enable to develop their writing aptitude in the English language without practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approach in English language classes.

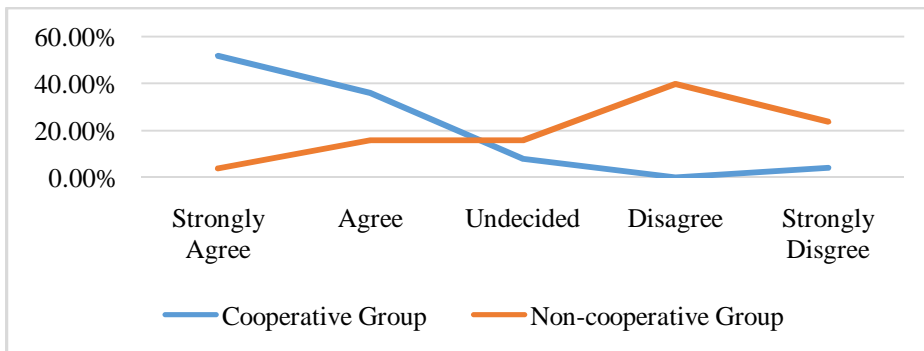


Figure 12. Development Progress of Cooperative and Non-cooperative Groups' Writing Aptitude

Figure 12 shows cooperative and non-cooperative groups' improvement of writing aptitude in the English language for practicing and practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning. Most of the participants of the cooperative group have shown their positive responses regarding the development of writing aptitude in the English language for practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes, while some participants of the non-cooperative group have shown positive responses regarding the development of writing aptitude in the English language for not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning in classes.

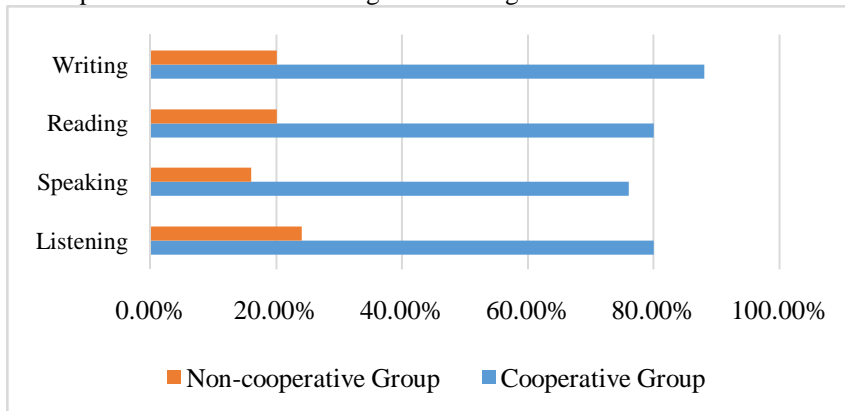


Figure 13: Learners' Overall Development Proficiency in English Language Aptitudes

Figure 13 shows the overall development of both cooperative and non-cooperative groups in English language aptitudes for practicing and not practicing the cooperative method of teaching and learning approaches in English language classes at higher secondary level in Bangladesh. In all cases, it is found that the cooperative group of the participants of this study provided positive attitudes regarding the development of English language aptitudes. Thus, the statistical findings show that the

cooperative method of teaching and learning approaches is much effective in the purpose of developing English language aptitudes at higher secondary level in Bangladesh.

Findings from Interview

This study has interviewed four participants, two participants from the cooperative group and two participants from the non-cooperative group inconsistent with the statistical findings. The participants of the cooperative group have told that their continuous practice in the cooperative learning approach has developed their English language aptitudes. They have added that cooperating learning approach is an important and useful way of developing the learners' proficiency in English language aptitudes. They have also told that it has helped them face challenges in the field of learning English language aptitudes. The participants of the cooperative learners have also suggested adopting a cooperative learning approach for developing proficiency in English language aptitudes. They have told that they have seen the performance of the cooperative group. To the interview participants of this study, the cooperative learning approach is better than the traditional approach. To them in the traditional approach, they have only the opportunity of listening to their teacher. In a traditional class, they sit motionlessly without taking any participation or cooperation with their classmates.

Discussions on findings

After the presentation and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data of this study, it becomes evident that the cooperative learning approach is much effective for developing English language aptitude at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. It helps the learners to improve their overall proficiency including listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the English language. And it is found that the result of this study is much related to the literature review. This study has been conducted with a small group of respondents but future researchers, taking ideas from this research and some other researches, are expected to do more comprehensive researches as the issue sounds interesting and pragmatic.

Conclusion

This longitudinal study, based on quantitative and qualitative research approaches, aimed to examine the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach for developing the learners' English language aptitudes at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh successfully investigated the determined objectives. The findings of this study indicate that the cooperative learning approach is an effective way of teaching as means to develop overall proficiency in the English language in Bangladesh. Thus, this study provides insightful information for further research and is helpful for both the teachers and the learners at every level of the education sector for improving English language aptitude in Bangladesh.

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