

## Abstract

This comparative experimental research study seeks to explore and compare the effectiveness of Cooperative Team-Based Learning (Cooperative T-BL) and Competitive Team-Based Learning (Competitive T-BL) Methods with Traditional Lecture Method (TLM) on Iranian and Indian undergraduate learners': (a) reading comprehension in English, (b) language learning strategies, (c) attitudes towards English language learning and the select teaching methods, and (d) retention of information. All these objectives have been addressed with respect to different-level achievers of the target groups with the help of field studies and experiments in Iran and India. Twelve hypotheses were developed to see the effectiveness of the select three teaching methods with respect to the objectives of the study.

One hundred and ninety-two second-year Engineering students from two colleges – one in Iran and another in India -- served as the subjects of the study for nine weeks in three groups in each country. All the groups were subjected to a reading course with the same schedule of instruction and the teacher. While positive interdependence was encouraged in the Cooperative T-BL classes in order to ensure inter-group collaboration for the attainment of groups' shared learning goals, inter-group competition was patterned in the Competitive T-BL classes so as to motivate teams' members to work together and compete against other teams in course of pursuing their teams' outcomes. And neutral interdependence was highlighted in the TLM classes to encourage learners to follow their learning goals.

The reading section of International English Language Testing System, "IELTS 2" textbook (Kohonen, 1992), was employed as pretest and posttest in order to assess the effects of the select teaching methods on reading comprehension of the target groups. Participants' scores on the reading pretest were also used to divide them into three groups in each country. They were likewise applied for forming teams in cooperative learning classes. To find out the effects of the select teaching methods on

the participants' language learning strategies, they were asked to complete the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) survey, developed by Oxford (1990), before and after the experiments. Likewise, the Language Learning and Class Structure Questionnaire, developed by this researcher, was used as pretest and posttest in order to measure the effects of the methods on the attitudes of the target groups. A delayed free-recall test was conducted after the experiments to determine the effects, if any, of the methods on the retention of information by the learners involved in the present study.

Analyses of the select parameters were done using Statistical Presentation System Software (SPSS) package (SPSS, 2006 December). Analysis of Variance was used to determine the significance of the findings of the study with reference to each of the select dependent variables. It became evident from the analyses of the data gathered that the two select cooperative learning methods served to (a) increase acquisition of text materials, (b) widen repertoire of language learning strategies, (c) generate positive attitudes, and (d) improve the retention of information, on the part of the target groups more significantly than the TLM. The results also indicated that whereas Cooperative T-BL method was substantially more effective in developing the reading skills of the participants, Competitive T-BL method was more successful in developing their metacognitive and affective strategies. It was also noted that Competitive T-BL method, rather than Cooperative T-BL method, contributed more to the improvement of the participants' retention of information. It was also found that Cooperative T-BL method was somewhat more successful in Iran. But, in India, it was Competitive T-BL method. In conclusion, the researcher has discussed the pedagogical implications of using cooperative learning methods, and accordingly, has made certain recommendations. Based on his findings, he has also made a few suggestions for further research in the arena of cooperative learning methods.

**Key Words:** Constructivist Teaching; Cooperative T-BL; Competitive T-BL; Reading Comprehension; Language Learning Strategies; Attitude, and Retention.

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