# Effects of Cooperative Learning on Grade Eleven Students' Paragraph Contents: Fitche Preparatory School in Focus

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**ABSTRACT**

*The target of this research was to examine whether or not the effects of implementing cooperative learning (CL) on grade eleven students' paragraph writing in contents. The quasi-experimental research design was employed and the sample was taken from two sections of eleventh grade. CL method was implemented in the experimental group after the students had been made aware of the method whereas, in the control group, the students were taught their lessons through the conventional method in which the elements and theoretical perspectives of the method were not implemented. Data were collected through tests. Dependent samples t-tests were employed to test whether or not there were significant intra-group differences in paragraph writing at 0.05 risk levels whereas independent samples t-tests were used to check if there were significant inter-group differences in paragraph writing at 0.05 alpha levels. The analyses of paragraph writing pre-tests of the inter-groups showed that both groups had similar backgrounds of contents in writing paragraphs at the initial stage of this research. Nevertheless, after the treatments had been given to the experimental research participants, the analyses of the data indicated that the experimental group outscored significantly (p<0.05) the control group on contents in paragraph writing post-test. This indicates that the implementation of the CL method based on social interdependence, motivational and cognitive perspectives, and the elements of the method, i.e. positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, collaborative skills, and group processing brought about changes in the experimental group. Therefore, the major findings of this study reveal that the method enabled the participants in the experimental group to show improvements in content in paragraph writing skills.*

Keywords. Cooperative learning, paragraph writing, contents, EFL

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent studies in the field of language teaching accentuate the importance of the learning process and the central role of students. This situation is realized, among other things, when students are provided opportunities to learn cooperatively. Long and Porter (1985) as quoted in Berhanu (2000) argued that one of the main reasons for students' low English language achievement is that a teacher sets the same instructional pace and content for everyone by lecturing, explaining a grammatical point, leading drill work, or asking the whole class oral questions. Moreover, Chekering and Gamson (1987) as cited in Bonewell (2000) said that learning is not a spectator sport, i.e. students do not learn much just by sitting in class, listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and talking out answers. In contrast to this, when they are actively involved in their groups, they talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

Meyers and Jones (1993) explained that (CL) could provide students with opportunities to meaningfully talk and listen, write, read, and reflect on the content, ideas, issues, and concerns of an academic subject since the method, with regard to Johnson and Johnson (1978) as cited in Kirk (2005), is based on positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, social skills and group processing. It has also some other qualities that make cooperation proceed and work well.

For the success of any CL, Johnson et al., (1993) argued that the five essential elements of CL, which have been stated above, have to be included in each lesson. The writers remarked that when all the elements are appropriately implemented in the teaching-learning process, the outcome is learning together. Thus, when CL is implemented, the experimental group participants' skills in composing narrative, expository, descriptive, and argumentative paragraphs in terms of content, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Recent studies in the field of language teaching emphasize the importance of the learning process and the central role of the students (Leila, 2010). The learning process and the central role of the students could be realized when students can engage in CL in Ethiopian schools (Abiy, 2015). Therefore, Stevahn and King (2005) argued that by using CL, students learn better and develop a greater understanding of others with diverse social, interpersonal, and learning needs. Despite the

benefits of CL stated above, implementing it has been a challenge that many teachers find difficult to accomplish (Cohen, 1994). Ambaye (1999) found that many teachers in Ethiopia lack the critical determinations of effective teaching; that is, they lack the pedagogical content knowledge and motivation although they are in the front line of education reform programs. Ambaye further explained that teachers in the current training institutes of Ethiopia predominantly use traditional teaching methods that they are familiar to them perhaps even the ones that they experienced when they were students at schools.

In support of Ambaye's ideas, Marshal (1990) as cited in ICDR (1999) raised educational problems in Ethiopia by saying that teachers use only a small number of methods, typically teachers' talk, question and answer, and textbook assignments. The problems raised by Ambaye have also been heard when students complained about CL. They said that they have organized to use the method since the beginning of the academic year. Though this is a good initiation, the method is not always implemented in the teaching-learning process. Instead, the teachers ordered the students to use the method mainly for assignment purposes. The assignments that are supposed to be treated cooperatively through the method are most of the time done by better students and the rest members put their names on the paper.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) contended that CL that does not focus on the learning process and the central role of the students fosters competition rather than cooperation. In CL, Cuban (1983) argued that 70% of the time is being talked by the teacher while the students are sitting and listening to their teachers passively without talking or engaging with their classmates. This might, according to Rutherford and Stuart (1978), result in students' attention decreasing as lectures progress.

Cooperative learning has changed classrooms from being teacher-centered where the focus is on the teacher imparting knowledge to the pupils to student-centered where the students are expected to take a more active part in their learning. In cooperative classrooms, students remain in charge of their discoveries and can become truly excited about the learning process (Tsai, 1998 ). In contrast to the participatory nature of cooperative learning, English language teachers at Fitche Preparatory School complained that most of their students were not good at the English language in general and paragraph writing skills in particular. They said that their students did not have proper participation in their respective groups. Rather, some students did some activities unrelated to the objective of the lessons and others usually sat idle. They also said that the students were most of the time taught in

line with the traditional ways of teaching where the most important thing was the outcome of instruction rather than the process. As the researcher thought, the teachers might not comprehend what cooperative learning is and the students seemed to be confused probably for not knowing what to do with the writing tasks in the textbook.

Different foreign and local researchers carried out studies about the effects of cooperative learning on the students' paragraph skills. Kitchakarn (2012) investigated the impact of cooperative learning on students' writing skills at Bangkok University, Thailand. The objectives of the study were to determine how cooperative learning affected the writing abilities of 35 students who took EN 111 courses. The study was a one-group pre-post-test design. The instruments employed were in-class exercises, writing tests, and a questionnaire. The pre-post-test scores were compared using a dependent samples t-test measure, and the data collected from the questionnaire were calculated for descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the students' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores at .05 alpha levels. The results of the investigation were positive. However, as the researcher used a one-group pre-post-test research design, the findings might lack external validity. It might have been better if the researcher had used pre-post-tests of group design to compare and contrast the mean scores of the control and experimental groups.

Najar (2012) conducted a study on teaching writing skills via cooperative learning at Princess Alia University College. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of cooperative learning on second-year students' paragraph writing. To achieve the purpose of the study, pre-post-tests were constructed to measure students' achievements in paragraph writing. The sample of this study consisted of 119 second-year students. The experimental group was taught writing using cooperative learning while the control group was taught writing through the traditional method. Inferential statistical analyses were used for the pre-post-tests of the students and the findings of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the post-test between the inter-groups in favor of the experimental group who was taught paragraph writing through cooperative learning.

Local studies have also been carried out to examine the effects of cooperative learning on writing skills in EFL classrooms in Ethiopia. This might be an indicator that the researchers have been aware of the relevance of this method in triggering students' achievements in learning the English language. Their works are stated as follows.

Mohammed (2009) also researched the structures of group work writing activities in a grade eleven English textbook. The main objective of the study was to analyze the extent to which pair and group work writing activities in grade eleven English textbooks were structured well in a way that they could promote cooperative learning. He gathered data through textbook analyses, classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. His findings reveal that the elements of cooperative learning were limited to the pre-writing activities and there were no clear and specific procedures that encouraged and guided the students to work cooperatively in the pair and group work writing activities.

As to the knowledge of the researcher, the foreign researchers seem not to deem the effects of cooperative learning on writing skills in EFL/ESL classes. There also seem to be a few local researchers who have used cooperative learning as methodological panaceas to minimize the students' problems in paragraph writing skills. Bennett (1994) as cited in Jolliffe (2005) pointed out that although cooperative learning has a respectable theory, the effectiveness of which ought to be backed up by systematic research: a few studies have considered how best to put it into practice in classrooms. Thus, the present researcher studied the effects of cooperative learning on eleventh graders' paragraph writing skills.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research was to examine whether or not an appropriate implementation of cooperative learning in line with the literature could improve the experimental group participants' paragraph-writing skills in terms of content.

The specific objectives of the study were to examine:
A. The effects of the conventional method on the control group's paragraph writing skills after the post-test.
B. The effects of CL on the experimental group's paragraph writing skills after the post-test.

1.3. Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the research objectives, the following null hypotheses were devised:

Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups after the implementation of CL on paragraph writing post-test in contents.

Ha: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups after the implementation of CL on paragraph writing post-test in contents.

## 2. Rationales for Using CL in the EFL Classroom

CL has positive effects on the teaching-learning process and it could be applied to all language skills (Stewart, 1988; Webb, 1998). They focused on the rationales of incorporating it into writing skills as stated below.

1. Forces the writer to put tacit decisions about his/her writing process into words.

2. Allows students to learn from each other as confident students will model successful writing practices for struggling students.

3. Allows students to work on complex projects that may otherwise be too large in scope for an individual author to tackle over the course of the semester.

4. Fosters relationships among a community of writers as it takes away the loneliness of the writing act.

5. Focuses on the generation of many possible points of view/solutions to a problem, which ultimately leads to more complex conclusions.

Thus, to make students users of this method, attention should be given to what they can do to initiate and manage their learning through cooperation. This is more feasible, according to Ingleton, et.al (2000), when teachers organize the groups instead of allowing the students to self-select. Despite the positive effects of the method in EFL/ESL classes, it has some drawbacks as discussed in the next section.

## 3. Elements of Cooperative Learning

The elements of CL are important to make cooperation proceed and work well. For the success of any CL, Johnson et al., (1993) argued that the five elements of CL should be included in each lesson to make cooperation effective. The researcher employed them as components of the method to see the extent to which they were implemented when the experimental group participants were taught the contents in paragraph writing skills in the EFL class. The elements are further discussed in the section given below.

3.1. Positive Interdependence: It involves the giving of a clear task and group goal so that students believe that they sink or swim together. It is the building block and the glue that holds the group together. Trivial misbehavior issues are eliminated if positive interdependence is sufficiently strong (Johnson et al., 1993).

Jonson and Johnson (2009) clarified that positive interdependence exists when the students perceive that they are linked with group mates in such a way that they cannot succeed unless they coordinate their efforts with the efforts of their group mates to complete a task. In other words, Kirk (2005) said that there must be the presence of a "one for all and all for one" attitude. This relationship does not happen automatically but must be continually encouraged by the teacher.

3.2. Face-to-face interaction: It refers to the physical setup of the group. To obtain meaningful face-to-face interaction, the size of the groups needs to be small with two to five members (Johnson and Johnson, 1998). Students need to be clustered in a group, facing each other, to have the kind of interchange necessary to accomplish the task. In other words, the students are provided with abundant face-to-face interactions where they orally explain how to solve problems, teach their knowledge to others, check for understanding, discuss concepts being learned, and connect present with past learning (Liang, 2002; Tuan, 2010).

3.3. Individual and Group Accountability: It refers to structuring a level of accountability into cooperative lessons. The group is accountable for achieving its goals, and each member must be accountable for contributing a fair share of the work toward the group goal. No one can be dependent on the work of others. The performance of each individual must be assessed and the results given back to the group to ascertain who needs more assistance and encouragement in learning (Ames and Ames, 1985; Johnson, et al, 1993).

3.4. Group Processing: Group processing exists when group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships. Groups need to describe what member actions are helpful and unhelpful and make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change. Continuous improvement in the process of learning results from careful analyses of how members are working together and determining how group effectiveness can be enhanced. This may take five minutes or a whole lesson; it can happen immediately after the classroom interaction or on

their next meeting. Thus, during the group processing, both teacher and students should be equally involved (Burden and Williams, 1997; Johnson and Johnson, 1985).

3.5. Social Skills: Students who have never been taught the prerequisite social skills which encompass communicating, trust building, leadership, conflict resolution, group management, giving and receiving feedback, active listening skills, etc. cannot be expected to work together effectively (Johnson et al., 1993). These skills for effective cooperative work do not magically appear when cooperative lessons are employed. Instead, they must be taught to students as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Schultz (1999) argued that social skills should be explicitly taught to the students so that they could work among themselves, not only in terms of cooperation but also without hostility and the teacher's authority. However, Johnson and Johnson (1994) warned that placing socially unskilled students in a group and telling them to cooperate does not guarantee that they have the ability to do so effectively.

### 3.6. Approaches in Teaching Writing

Due to the complexity of writing for the students' cognitive capability, approaches are adopted to make teaching writing an effective pedagogical practice (Harmer, 2005). The following approaches can be adopted in teaching writing.

### 3.6.1.The Product Approach

The product approach to writing advocates the structural linguistics' view that language is a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning and a behaviorist view that language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). So, most of the time the approach encourages learners to imitate, copy, and transform models provided by teachers or textbooks (Siti Khatijah, 2004).

Teachers focus on what a final piece of writing will look like and measure it against criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use, mechanical considerations, content, and organization (Brown, 1994). However, there is no much focus on ideas and meanings (Zamel, 1985). The normal procedure used by teachers is to assign a piece of writing, collect it, and then return it for further

revision with the errors either corrected or marked for the student to do the corrections (Raimes 1983).

3.6.2. The Process Approach. It gives due emphasis on how writers write. Writers are seen as active thinkers who employ strategies to compose texts. The strategies focus on generating, reviewing, evaluating, structuring, and drafting ideas (Arndt and White, 1991). The writing process is seen as both a cognitive process (Flower and Hayes, 1981) and a socio-cultural activity (Freedman and Headway, 1994). The cognitive model of writing is, on the one hand, seen as a mental process involving decision-making and problem-solving (Chandrasegaran, 2004). On the other hand, Siti Hamin (2004) stated that the skills in writing are not acquired but culturally transmitted. This is to mean that the student's writing skills do not come naturally but are cultivated through much practice and conscious effort.

In the process approach, a teacher is no longer the authority figure in a writing class but acts as a consultant and an assistant in assisting the students to produce coherent, meaningful, and a creative piece of writing. The teacher's role has changed from an evaluator of the written product to a facilitator and co-participant in the process of writing (Arndt and White, 1991). Moreover, the role of the teacher is to provide a learning environment that enables the students to learn about writing, engage in writing, and feel enthusiastic about writing (Siti Khatijah, 2004)

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This researcher has advocated the post-positivism paradigm and quantitative research method research approach. Based on this, the study employed a quasi-experimental research design, i.e. the pre-post-test comparison group design whereby one group received a treatment while the other did not receive the treatment. The quasi-experimental research design was chosen because experimenting means that at least one independent variable is manipulated and its effect is measured by some dependent variables while other factors are controlled in various ways (Seliger& Shohamy, 1989). So, the design employing comparison groups enabled the researcher to compare the treatment effects between the control and experimental groups of eleventh graders.

As the research participants were not assigned to the experimental and control groups based on random assignment, threats to internal validity were likely to occur (Basit, 2010). These threats

include selection bias, maturation, instrumentation, regression to the mean, and history (Creswell, 2009, 2012). Since the experimental and control groups were given pre-post-tests, one English language teacher taught the experimental and control groups, and the experiment was made to cover the same time for all research participants, the threats listed above are unlikely to be internal-validity problems (Ary, Jacobs and Razavien, 2002). So, the results of this quasi-experimental design are credible.

Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) said that convenient samples often involve people whom the researcher knows or people who live close to the research site. Of the many preparatory schools found in Addis Ababa, the researcher, based on Vanderstoep and Johnston's notion, used the convenient sampling technique to choose grade 11 students at Fitche Preparatory School where the researcher lived. Moreover, teachers' qualifications, number of students in the class, nature of classrooms, and materials used for the teaching-learning process were similar to other governmental preparatory schools in Addis Ababa.

### 4.1. Paragraph Writing Tests

Tests are useful to assess subjects' knowledge and capacity to apply this knowledge to new situations. They may require respondents to choose among alternatives, produce short answers, or write extended responses (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The researcher prepared paragraph writing pre-post-tests based on Oshima and Hogue's (1991) notions to check the students' abilities in writing content.

Dependent and independent samples t-tests were applied to analyze the intra- and inter- groups' scores. That is, descriptive statistics was employed to summarise the findings by describing the general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores. Moreover, inferential statistics was used to attest or refute the already set research hypotheses in the study. The following part of this section discusses how the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 20

### 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to examine whether or not the implementation of the CL brought changes to the EFL paragraph writing skills of eleventh graders at Fitche Preparatory School. So, the

paragraph writing was used as a dependent variable whereas the CL was employed as an independent variable which was used as a method of instruction. The effects of the independent variable on the dependent variables are discussed below based on the already-stated research hypotheses.

Table 1. Independent Samples T-Test Results of the Experimental and Contro Groups on Paragraph Writing Pre-Test (N=86)

| Groups | Mean | SD | SE Mean | T | DF | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 9.54 | 2.11 | .322 | -.389 | 84 | .698* |
| Experimental | 9.70 | 1.75 | .267 | | | |

*p >0.05 level

Table 4.1 discloses a comparison of the control and experimental groups on paragraph writing pre-test. The descriptive statistics in the table given above indicated that the mean score of the control group on the paragraph writing pre-test is 9.54 and that of the experimental group is 9.70. The table also shows that the standard deviations of paragraph writing scores for the control and experimental groups are 2.11 and 1.75, respectively.

The independent samples t-test for equality of means in the same table reveals that the p-value is .698 which is greater than the alpha level. So, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the inter-groups on the paragraph writing pre-test at 0.05 risk level. Moreover, the effect size for this comparison is 0.08 which shows that the difference that exists between the two groups in achieving paragraph writing pre-test is trifling. This implies that both groups had similar backgrounds in writing paragraphs at the initial stage of this research.

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the mean score of the control group is 9.72 (std. 2.44) whereas the mean score of the experimental group is 11.63 (std. 2.13). So, the mean score of the experimental group is greater than the mean score of the control group.

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test Results of the Control and Experimental Groups on Paragraph Writing Post-Test (N=86)

| Groups | Mean | SD | SE Mean | T | DF | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 9.72 | 2.44 | .373 | -3.860 | 84 | .000* |
| Experimental | 11.63 | 2.13 | .324 | | | |

* p <0.05

Table 2 also reveals that the p-value is .000 which is smaller than the alpha level. Hence, the independent samples t-test for equality of means shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on paragraph writing post-test at 0.05 alpha level taking the side of the experimental group. Thus, it could be understood that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test. The change might have come because of the treatment offered to the experimental group. The effect size of both groups is 1.03, which shows that the extent of the difference between the two groups in achieving paragraph writing post-test is strong. In the next section, the paragraph writing pre-post-tests of the control and experimental groups in terms of contents is described.

Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test Results of the Control Group on Paragraph Writing Pre-Post-Tests in Terms of Contents (N= 43)

| Variable | Tests | Mean | SD | SE Mean | T | DF | Sig. (2- tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contents | Pre | 1.84 | .58 | .088 | -.725 | 42 | .472* |
| | Post | 1.96 | .98 | .149 | | | |

*p >0.05

As in Table 3, the control group research participants' mean scores on contents are slightly different. As can be seen in the table, the mean score of the paragraph writing pre-test for content is 1.84. On the other hand, the mean scores of the same group on paragraph writing post-test for that of

contents is 1.96. Moreover, the SD of the post-test for the research participants in the control group is slightly higher than their score in the pre-test. This indicates the presence of  gaps in the research participants' scores on the post-test.

The figures in the content, i.e. t=-.725, df =42, p=.472 show that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group at 0.05 alpha level on paragraph writing pre-post-tests in terms of contents. The effect sizes of the content paragraph writing pre-post-tests is 0.15 which means that the difference in the mean scores of paragraph writing pre-post-tests in terms of contents is trifling.

Table 4: Paired Samples T-Test Results of the Experimental Group on Paragraph Writing Pre-Post
          Tests in Terms of Contents (N= 43)

| Variables | Tests | Mean | SD | SE Mean | T | DF | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------|-------|------|-----|---------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| Content | Pre | 1.88 | .70 | .106 | -2.439 | 42 | .019* |
|         | Post | 2.26 | .88 | .134 | | | |

*P<0.05

Table 4 depicts the mean scores of paragraph writing pre-post-tests in terms of contents of the experimental group. The experimental group research participants' mean scores on the contents of paragraph writing pre-test is 1.88 while the post-test result is 2.26. These reflect higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test. The standard deviations of the post-test also disclose that the research participants' scores have greater dispersions than those of the pre-test. Hence, the experimental group's paragraph writing pre-post mean score is different.

As in Table 4, the paired samples t-test of content is=-2.439, df=42, p=.0.19, and these divulge that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on paragraph writing pre-post-test at 0.05 alpha level in terms of content. The effect size of the contents is 0.52 which means that the difference in the mean score of contents in paragraph writing pre-post-tests is moderate.

## 6. DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to see whether or not the effects of appropriate implementation of CL based on the literature brought about changes in the experimental group research participants of eleventh graders' paragraph writing. To this end, it had already been hypothesized whether or not there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the inter-groups on paragraph writing post-tests). Thus, the generated results in this study are elucidated in the sections given below.

The paragraph writing pre-test was administered to see whether or not the research participants in the control and experimental groups had equivalent skills in terms of content at the initial stage of this research. So, the statistical analyses indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the inter-group comparisons on pre-test results. Nevertheless, the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly on post-test in terms of contents. The result disclosed that the difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on paragraph writing post-test was statistically significant at 0.05 alpha levels.

Therefore, the already stated hypothesis which says, "There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on paragraph writing post-test" was rejected. This finding is in agreement with Kitchakarn's (2012) research result which showed that the CL was effective in improving the EFL research participants' writing skills at Bangkok University, Thailand. Kitchakarn's study revealed that the research participants' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores. The finding of this research is also consistent with Chatupote, et (2010) research finding that unearthed that the research participants who learned writing through CL had achieved higher levels of writing skills than those who studied through the conventional research method.

The finding of this research is; therefore, in favor of the alternative hypothesis since the incorporation of the CL based on the literature into paragraph writing tasks could help the experimental group participants get various pieces of information through discussions that enabled them to improve composing paragraphs. The finding is also in consonant with Najar's (2012) research. According to Najar's research, the experimental group was taught paragraph writing using the CL while the control group was taught paragraph. The finding of Najar's study indicated that

there were statistically significant differences in the post-test between the control and experimental groups in favor of the latter group who showed improvement in composing paragraphs after the students had been taught paragraph writing via the CL.

Furthermore, the research participants in the experimental group were made to practice positive interdependence, i.e. the sense of "sinking or swimming together" while they were learning paragraph writing tasks. That is to say, via CL, the experimental group research participants pondered that they could attain their learning goals only if the other research participants in the learning group also worked. Thus, it is possible to say that CL could contribute to triggering the research participants' paragraph writing skills in the experimental group.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the statistical analyses and descriptions of the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made in line with the research hypotheses of the study. The paragraphs writing post-test results analyzed through independent samples t-tests indicate that the experimental group significantly surpassed the control group. This occurred because the research participants in the experimental group were made to practice paragraph writing skills through CL in which the elements of CL and its theoretical framework were incorporated. In other words, the social theorists suggested that when students do a given task cooperatively using methods like CL, they can operate within one another's zone of proximal development (ZPD). A cooperative goal structure motivates individual members to achieve their respective goals. This kind of learning among the research participants in the experimental group would help them compose appropriate paragraphs that are important in their classrooms and daily lives. Thus, the null hypothesis that was stated as there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on paragraph writing post-test regarding contents was discarded as the difference between the mean scores of the inter-groups was significant at 0.05 alpha level.

On the whole, CL which was implemented in line with the literature has given opportunities to the experimental group research participants to review what they had written together, i.e. peer criticism aids students sharpen their knowledge about contents that are supposed to be written in paragraphs. It also provides the students with the chance to evaluate their work, demonstrating more confidence in writing and decreasing their apprehensions towards learning writing skills.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this research, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. EFL teachers should be encouraged to make use of CL in their classrooms. To this end, they should be provided with training on CL so that they create awareness as to how this method could be implemented in their classes to build up their students' writing skills.

2. Potential dangers like dependency might happen to students when they are in teams. To circumvent the problem, EFL teachers should employ CL effectively while teaching writing skills in their classes.

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