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Exploring Students' Perceptions of the Application of STAD Cooperative Learning in English Learning at SMK Bajang NWDI Ajan

Amrullah, Baiq Nadia Tiara Rizki, Nely Harfina, Septina mulyana Parida
Prodi Pariwisata, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Hamzanwadi, Indonesia
amrullah@hamzanwadi.ac.id, nadiatiararizki988@gmail.com, nelyharfina@gmail.com, lacibolala0@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to expploring students' perceptions of the implementation of the Student Achievement Division (STAD) Cooperative Learning in English learning. 42 students from grade 10 were involved in this study, selected through random sampling. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews analyzed using the Miles & Huberman interactive model. This model involves presentation, drawing conclusions, and data reduction. The results of this study indicate that STAD increases activeness and self-confidence, makes learning more interesting, and helps students understand the material through group discussions. However, several obstacles arise related to group dynamics, such as imbalanced member contributions and a less conducive discussion atmosphere. This study shows that a good group arrangements, clear work instructions, and teacher control are essential for better use of STAD to improve the quality of learning.

Key words: cooerative learning, STAD, Students' Perceptions, group dynamic

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana persepsi siswa terhadap penerapan model Cooperative Learning tipe Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMK Bajang NWDI Ajan. Stud i ini melibatkan 42 siswa dari kelas X yaang dipilih melalui random sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui hasil observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-struktur kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Kiles & Huberman. Model ini melibatkan penyajian data, penarikan kesimpulan dan reduksi data. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa STAD meningkatkan keaktifan dan kepercayaan diri peserta didik, membuat pembelajaran lebih menarik, dan membantu siswa memahami materi melalui diskusi kelompok. Namun, beberapa kendala muncul terkait dinamika kelompok, seperti ketidakseimbangan kontribusi anggota dan suasana diskusi yang kurang kondusif. Penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa pengaturan kelompok yang seimbang, aturan kerja yang jelas, dan kontrol guru sangat penting untuk menggunakan STAD dengan lebih baik untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Kooperatif, STAD, Persepsi siswa, Dinamika kelompok

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introduction

Learning is an interactive process between teachers and students that involves methods, media, and strategies to achieve learning objectives effectively. The learning process is considered successful if it can foster motivation, activity, and behavioral changes in students continuously (Hudia, 2023). In the vocational secondary education context, English language learning plays a crucial role in forming students who are able to communicate in the era of globalization. Therefore, it is important to use a learning method that encourages student participation and involvement in learning (Harahap, 2013).

However, in fact, English language learning mostly focused on one-way lectures, making students become passive, lacking the courage to ask questions, and only focused on memorizing without understanding the material. These conditions lead to low participation, motivation, and learning outcomes, including English skills that require communication, cooperation, and interaction among students (Fauz, 2013).

One of the learning approaches that can be used to solve this problem is the cooperative learning STAD method. Cooperative learning STAD is a learning method where students work in a small group to learn a topic and are rewarded for their group work. This aligns with (Lathifa et al., 2024), which stated that cooperative learning STAD is a learning process where students work together in small groups to study material and are given rewards for their group's work. This method emphasizes students to help each other understand the material, discussion, exchanging opinions, and solving problems collaboratively, making the learning process becomes more effective (Aminulloh, 2024). The STAD model also requires students to collaborate to master the material, work in teams, complete worksheet or assignment, take individual quizzes, and receive group rewards (Misbah & Rasyid, 2022).

Various studies have shown that the application of the cooperative learning STAD has a positive impact on student learning, activity, and motivation. A study by (Fauz, 2013) on students at Galih Agung Ponpes Darularafaah Raya found that the application of STAD based workbooks was able to incrase students' conceptual understanding and learning activity significantly.

Similar findings by (Tambunan et al., 2020) show that the application of Cooperative Learning STAD has proven to be effective in improving the mathematical problem-solving abilities of 10th grade students effectively at Angkola Selatan 1 Public High School. Another study by (Lehan et al., 2023) shows that the implemention of Flipbook based on the Cooperative Learning STAD has proven in improving the learning outcomes of fifth-grade students effectively at Oebaji Publick Elementary School. These findings show that STAD is a learning model that consistently has positive effects on improving learning quality in various subjects. In the context of English Learning in Vocational High School, STAD is highly relevant for being implemented.

SMK Bajang NWDI Ajan, as a Vocational High School, is expected to prepare graduates who are both competent and adaptive to the demands of the labour market, including in terms of their English Language Proficiency. Based on preliminary observations and interviews with the teachers, English Language Learning at this school tends to rely on lecturing and individual excercises, so it has not fully met the needs of active learning and collaborative group work. As part of the Teaching Assistance Program, the supervisor and the pre-service teachers attempted to implement the Cooperative Learning STAD in English Language at SMK Bajang NWDI Ajan. This implementation is not only intended to improve learning outcomes, but also to create enjoyable learning experiences, encourage student participation, and build collaboration among students in the classroom. However, the efficacy of a learning method is not only measured based on academic achievement, but also from students' perceptions of the method, whether they feel supported, motivated, comfortable, and enjoyable when learning using STAD (Prananingrum, 2017). Positive students' perception would be an important

Argopuro: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Bahasa
Vol 11 No 6 Tahun 2025
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indicator of whether the learning method used is suitable for their needs and characteristics (Aprilita & Handican, 2023; Pramitasari et al., 2011).

Based on the description above, this study was conducted to explore students' perceptions of the implementation of STAD in English Language Learning during the Teaching Assistance Program. The results of this study are expected to provide English teachers and schools with information to help them in choose and develop learning methods that are more effective, interesting, and relevant to the needs of vocational school students.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which allows researchers to comprehend students' perceptions and experiences about the application of the STAD method in English Language learning. The research was conducted over two weeks, from November 17th to 29th, 2025, involving 42 tenth-grade students from three different majors, consisting of X DKV (Desain Komunikasi Visual), X TBSM (Teknik Bisnis Sepeda Motor), and X TTB (Teknik Tata Busana). The participants were selected using random sampling, so every student who had participated in learning using STAD method had the same opportunity to become a respondent. This allowed for a more diverse range of perspectives that represented the students' experiences equally.

Researchers utilized two instruments to collect data: observation and interviews. Observations were conducted directly in the classroom to observe how students worked together in groups, interacted with teachers, and participated in STAD-based learning activities. In order to gain a deeper understanding, researchers also conducted semi-structured interviews with two students from each major, resulting in a total of six students interviewed. These interviews helped researchers understand students' personal experience, how they felt during the learning process, and the challenges they faced. By integrating observation and interviews, this study was able to describe students' perceptions of STAD implementation in a comprehensive and insightful approach.

The results of this study were analyzed by Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which included data reduction, data presentation, and inference. This method of data analysis allowed all findings to be processed thoroughly and provided a comprehensive overview of how students perceived the use of STAD in the classroom.

Result

Main Theme	Subtheme/ Focus Findings	Representative Data (Summaryofstudents comments and responses)	Meaning Interpretation
1. student's Initial attitudes & experiences of STAD	Initial attitudes towards English language	"happy", "grateful", "it's fun", "easy to understand"	Students have basic interest which positive before using STAD
	Experiences during STAD	"exiting", "quickly to understand", "increasing knowledge", "like to discuss"	Some students feel the benefits of STAD trough cooperative and discussion
	Negative experiences	"Work alone", "less conducive group members", "friends are not serious"	The effectiveness of STAD is very influenced by group dynamics

Argopuro: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Bahasa
Vol 11 No 6 Tahun 2025
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2. comparison between STAD and Conventional learning	Student's thought of STAD	"More exiting", "not boring", "can discuss more freely"	STAD is considered more engaging and interactive.
	Student's thought on conventional learning	"Lecture method is boring", "passive"	Lecture learning method is less engaging for students
	Critical responses	"it's easier to study alone", "the group is too noisy and crowded"	Some students feel that the STAD method is suitable if groups are could not be controlled
3. the impacts of STAD on comprehension & engagement	Understanding the material	"it's faster to understand discussions make it easier", "can help each other"	Collaboration in STAD improves student's understanding
	Initiative and courage to speak up	"More active", "make more confident", "a little brave "still a little bit shy"	The STAD encourage the activity, but the impacts can be different for each student
	The impacts on value	"Increasing the value", "strengthening capabilities", "not increased value too much"	The impact of STAD on academic was evident, but not evenly distributed across all classes
4. challenges & suggestions for STAD development	Implementation challenges	"Sometimes friends don't help", "many different opinions", "the group are not focused"	The obstacles and challenges arise from group cooperation, not from the STAD model
	Without challenges	"Nothing obstacles"	Some students can work well together
	Suggestions for improvement	"The group formed randomly", "the rules are more clearly explained", "don't give too many tasks in one meeting", "teachers must control and guide more"	Students want more balanced groups and strict rules

Table1. *data display*

1. **Student's Initial Attitudes and Experiences in Participating in STAD**

In general, students showed positive initial attitudes toward English language lesson. Lot of students felt happy, comfortable, and felt easier to understand the material. Some student felt that learning more exciting when they participate in STAD, and others also felt STAD method increases their knowledge because they can discuss and work together (Ebe, 2020). However, there are also students especially those from

Argopuro: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Bahasa
Vol 11 No 6 Tahun 2025
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X DKV and X TTB who felt uncomfortable because the group is not conducive and some of their friends are not serious to study. This variation shows that students' experiences in STAD are greatly influenced by the dynamics of each group.

2. Comparison of STAD with Conventional Learning

Students consider that STAD more interesting than the conventional lecture-based learning they usually receive. They felt that STAD makes learning more interactive, less boring, and gives them the opportunity to discuss (Nurul hikmah & Kristin, 2019). Traditional learning is considered more passive and quickly becomes tedious. However, some X TTB students felt that individual learning is easier to understand the material because it makes, they more focus, meanwhile STAD group is often noisy and crowded. Even so, they still acknowledge that STAD is more enjoyable because it provides space for cooperation.

3. The Impacts of STAD on Comprehension, Activity, and English Language Skills

Most students stated that STAD helped them comprehension the material easier and quickly through discussion and sharing answers with each other. They also felt lively and more confident in speaking, although each student's level of courage is varied. Some student felt that their English skills and grades had improved. However, in the X TTB class, some students felt that they had not improved because the group atmosphere was not focused and concentrated on the task. These findings shows that STAD is effective, but the result are highly dependent on the regularity of the group and the role of the teacher in managing the situation (Ebe, 2020).

4. Challenges and Suggestion for Future Implementation of STAD

The challenges that appeared were mainly related to group dynamics, such as inactive members, difficulity inreaching agreements, and an unsupportive discussion atmosphere (Hariyanti et al., 2019). A few students stated they had to work alone their peers did not contribute enough. To be improved, students suggested that group assignments be made more equitable, group work rules be clarified, and teachers be more assertive in monitoring the discussions. Some students requested that group remain the same as before because they were comfortable with their peers. Overall, students still wanted STAD to be used again with some adjustments to make learning more effective and fairer (Sihombing et al., 2021).

The Observation results also indicate that STAD learning was quite active in the classroom. Students in DKV and TSM appeared to be more focused and worked well together. They discussed, helped each other, and completed group assignments quite smoothly. Additionally, some teachers watched each group and provided explicit instructions. But in the TTB class, things were different. Some of them were careless, made jokes, and struggled to stay focused during the lesson. This made group work less than optimal. These differences show that the success of STAD strongly depends on classroom conditions and student discipline. Generally, the observations support the interview results that STAD can make students more active, but it still requires stronger control so that all teams can work optimally.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that STAD Cooperative Learning could be create a more active and interactive learning atmosphere (Hali, 2019). Students from X DKV and X TSM experienced the benefits of group discussions because it helped them to understand the material more easily. These findings are consistent with the theory of Johnson & Johnson and Smith (2014), which states that cooperation allows students to share ideas to each other, thus strengthening their understanding (Switri, 2025). Previous research from (Zuhroh et al.,2024)

Argopuro: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Bahasa
Vol 11 No 6 Tahun 2025
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also mentions that STAD can enhance student motivation and participation in language learning, and the result of this study support these findings.

On the other hand, data from X TTB students reveal different findings. They felt it was difficult to focus because the discussion was not conducive. Some of group members were not serious enough, so the work process was not running effectively. These differences were likely influenced by class character, discipline levels, and unbalanced member contributions. According to the findings (Mubadillah & Sa'adah, 2025), group structure and all students' active participant are essential for the successful implementation of STAD.

These discoveries have a number of significant of implication. To guarantee that students contributions are devided more fairly, teachers should arrange groups more evenly and make sure that every student has a role. To maintain a positive environment, teachers need to more control the conversation, particularly in courses with easily distracted pupils like X TTB. In addition, the result of this study adds a new perspective that STAD is not automatically effective but is highly influenced by classroom conditions and group management. Overall, this study confirms that STAD has great potential to improve students understanding and engagement. However, it's implementation must be well organized so that all groups can work together effectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings about students perceptions on cooperative learning STAD at SMK Bajang NWDI Ajan, it can be concluded that the STAD method helps students in their learning process and experiences generally. However, the group performances in each class affect its effectiveness.

First, students showed positive responses toward English language learning. They found that learning became more enjoyable and gave them the chance to speaks and work together. Unfortunately, a few students had unpleasant experiences when the group was not cooperative and contribution of members uneven. This shows that the effectiveness of STAD is highly dependent on interactions and relations among students within the group.

Second, students considered the STAD method more interesting, interactive and less boring than lecture-based learning. They have the opportunity to share opinions and they feel more involved in the learning process. Despite this, some students said that individual learning is easier to understand when the group situation is too noisy. This shows that students' perceptions of STAD are also influenced by their preferences and classroom characteristics.

Thirds, it has been appeared that STAD enhance student activity, understanding of the material and their confidence, especially in DKV and TSM classes. Group discussions help students' comprehensions the material thoroughly and support each other during the learning activity. Due to a lack of attention, the improvement was unequal in TTB classes. The results show that the active participant of each member is very important for the success of the STAD.

Fourth, the primary challenges to use STAD is group dynamics. This includes passive members, difficulty achieving agreement and unfocussed discussion. Students recommended changes like more equal participation, precise regulations, and stringent instructor oversight. This shows that STAD can improve the quality of learning, it requires good organization and supervision to be successfully applied.

Overall, this study found that the STAD cooperative learning model can increase students' understanding, motivation and activity in English language lessons. However, the effectiveness of the model heavily depends on group management, students characteristic and the teacher's role in facilitating the discussion. STAD can be a learning model that creates a fun learning environment with a proper management.

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Vol 11 No 6 Tahun 2025
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