



## The Implementation of Collaborative Learning in Teaching English at a Junior Secondary School in Soppeng

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**Abstract:** The research explores the implementation of collaborative learning in teaching English at a Junior Secondary School in Soppeng. This research was conducted at SMP Neg. 1 Watansoppeng, focusing on the teacher's methods, challenges, and teacher's perceptions of collaborative learning. It uses qualitative research to examine the teacher's strategies, challenges, and experiences in teaching English using this method. Interviews and observations were used to gain the data. The result of the data analysis showed that the teacher uses collaborative writing, peer tutoring, and consensus groups, allowing students to work together. However, challenges include time constraints, language proficiency issues, and managing group dynamics. The teacher views collaborative learning as an engaging approach that fosters creativity, independence, and problem-solving skills. The study suggests that teachers should monitor group dynamics and implement diverse strategies to improve English language instruction.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Collaborative Learning, Perception, Teaching English, Types of Collaborative Learning.

### 1. Introduction

Collaborative learning is one of the approaches in the teaching and learning process in which the students must work together to solve a problem and complete an assignment (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). This means that collaborative learning is an activity that must be done in a group. This aims to help passive students become active. Creating learning becomes more effective and fun to increase knowledge together. Collaborative learning helps students improve the learning process and provides a new reference for the implementation of the learning model.

In implementing this method, the teachers do not interfere with the group discussion. So that students can feel relaxed and free to express their opinions. Also, by limiting the members of a group, each student can have a chance to speak and give their opinion about the topic being discussed. This limitation can also help students who have anxiety about expressing their opinions in front of many people. By working together and discussing in a small group, students can be more relaxed and open in expressing their opinions. Warsaw et al. (2021) also state that collaborative learning is a learning strategy where two or more students are learning together in a learning process. In the learning process, the students in the group interact and discuss solving the problem together based on their prior knowledge during the teaching and learning process.

Many types of collaborative learning can be applied in the teaching and learning process. Yang (2023) divided collaborative learning into six types as follows:

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- a. Consensus Groups, also known as Classroom Consensus Groups, are a form of collaborative learning where the teacher organises students into groups and assigns them questions or problems to solve collectively. According to Achuonye (2014), in this method, students are divided into groups of three to five members and given specific assignments. The teacher does not intervene during the group discussions but ensures that they stay on track and fulfil the given tasks. Following the discussions, the teacher evaluates each group's outcomes. Finally, the groups present their findings collectively, allowing students who may not fully grasp the topic to gain additional insights and enhance their comprehension.
- b. Peer tutoring involves students helping each other learn, acting as both learners and tutors. It includes informal discussions on lectures, assignments, and exams, as well as formal collaboration on group projects. Peer tutoring comes in different forms, such as Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT), Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), and Cross-Age Peer Tutoring (CAPT), each with unique dynamics (Ali et al., 2015). This method enhances independent learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork skills, and deep understanding of concepts while also boosting self-esteem (Mustafa, 2017).
- c. Collaborative writing involves two or more individuals working together to produce a written text. Storch (2013) defines it as the joint authorship of a text by multiple writers. She outlines three key characteristics of collaborative writing: substantive interaction throughout all writing stages, shared decision-making power, responsibility for the final text, and the creation of a written document. This implies the active involvement of all group members in various stages of the writing process, including planning, topic selection, structuring, ideation, and revision.
- d. Reciprocal teaching is a reading method where students act as teachers, leading group discussions using summarising, generating questions, clarifying, and predicting strategies. Initially, the teacher models the process, then gradually transfers responsibility to the students. Ahmady and Gilakajni (2012) stated that this approach encourages meta-cognitive thinking and enables students to reconstruct the text's meaning socially. Teachers and students work in small groups, with the teacher initially leading discussions and gradually transitioning to a facilitator. This shift fosters student-centred learning over time.
- e. A learning community is a group of individuals with shared academic goals and attitudes who collaborate on class assignments. It is described as a community of practice by Riel & Fulton (2001), where individuals work together to build collective knowledge. Engstrom & Tinto (2008) emphasise joint registration as a fundamental aspect, enabling students to enrol in courses together, often guided by senior students. In educational settings, learning communities focus on specific topics, allowing students to exchange knowledge and support each other. Typically, students lead these communities, inspiring and motivating peers to work towards common objectives.
- f. Team-based learning is a collaborative learning approach aimed at enhancing student engagement and learning quality through a structured process. Gomez et al. (2010) define team-based learning as an instructional strategy organised around team activities, fostering active and effective learning through group interaction.

This method involves four key stages: individual preparation, assessment of learning readiness through individual and group quizzes, application of subject concepts via group activities, and final evaluation. Initially, students undergo individual readiness assessments via short quizzes at the start of each session, followed by group quizzes where members collaborate to match answers. Additionally, peer assessments consider individual readiness, class attendance, participation in group work, contribution to discussions, and interpersonal behaviour (Sisk, 2011).

The application of collaborative learning has been shown to increase students' motivation, active participation, and learning achievement. Various studies, such as those conducted by Hay and Pillay (2010), Arta (2019), Tram & Quyen (2020), Huang and Luo (2017), Chitchuen & Sanpatchayapong (2016), and MacKenzie (2015), have explored the benefits of collaborative learning across different language skills including speaking, writing, reading comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. These studies emphasise the positive impact of collaborative learning on students' language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and overall learning experience. Despite the existing research on collaborative learning, this study aims to investigate the implementation, challenges, and the teacher's perceptions of collaborative learning at SMP Negeri 1

Watansoppeng, Indonesia. The research seeks to understand the strategies used by teachers, the difficulties encountered, and the teacher's perceptions regarding collaborative learning in teaching English at the school.

## **2.1 Literature Review**

In the world of education, learning English is an important subject. Good English skills are needed to communicate with the international world. However, learning English often feels uninteresting. Therefore, exciting and effective learning models are needed to improve understanding and language skills.

## **2.2 Game-Based Learning**

One exciting learning model is using games. In English language learning, games can be an effective tool to increase student motivation and interest. Examples are word guessing or scrabble games that can practice vocabulary skills. Players have to think fast and use the right words in order to win. With this learning model, learning English will feel like playing, so students more easily absorb the material.

## **2.3 Collaborative Learning**

In addition to using games, English learning can also be done through cooperation between students. The collaborative learning model can be done by creating small groups in the classroom. Each group is given the task of carrying out various activities that require interaction between group members. For example, students may be asked to create a dialogue in English on a specific topic. Thus, the student not only learns on his own but also learns with his peers. This kind of learning can improve speaking, listening, and interacting skills in English.

## **2.4 Technology-Based Learning**

Along with the development of technology, English learning can also be done by utilising technology. An example is using interactive English learning applications or software. It can help students learn English more effectively. In addition, the use of social media and English learning websites can also be an attractive option. By using technology, learning English becomes more interesting and accessible to everyone.

## **2.5 Project-Based Learning**

Project-based learning models can also be an interesting alternative to English language learning. In this model, students are given the task of creating projects related to English, such as making a presentation video or writing a blog in English. By doing the project, students do not just learn English practically, but it can also improve creativity and logical thinking skills. This project-based learning can motivate students to learn English more seriously.

In its implementation, these English learning models can be adapted according to the needs and characteristics of students. Through an exciting and effective approach, learning English is no longer a boring thing but a fun and rewarding adventure. The English learning model is an approach or method used in the process of teaching and learning English. These models are designed to help students learn English skills effectively and efficiently. Each model has a different approach to teaching English, and each model also has its advantages and disadvantages.

## **2.6 Audiolingual Learning**

The audio-lingual approach is one of the English learning models that focuses on listening and speaking skills. The model aims to teach English similarly to the way children learn their native language. In the classroom, the teacher will explain the grammar rules, and students will practice using these rules by doing various exercises and dialogues.

### *a. Communicative Learning Model*

The communicative learning model emphasises communication skills in a variety of realistic situations. This model focuses more on content and situations than on grammar. Students will be given the opportunity to actively participate in conversations, discuss, or take part in simulations.

### *b. Grammar-Translation Learning Model*

The grammar-translation learning model is a more traditional approach to English language learning. This model focuses on studying grammar and translating texts that have been given. Students will learn grammatical rules and apply them in the practice of translating texts from the original language to the target language.

### *c. Technology-Based Learning Model*

The technology-based learning model uses computer technology and the internet as tools to teach and learn English. This model can include the use of multimedia, language games, and online learning platforms. Students can learn interactively and independently with the help of technology.

Alternatively, when viewed as a process, writing emphasises the different stages involved in the act of writing. According to Brown (2001), this includes the initial step of jotting down ideas and subsequently transforming those thoughts into written words. This perspective highlights the significance of the writing process itself rather than solely focusing on the final product.

Given that writing serves as a means of communicating with others through written language, it is essential for clarity to be maintained. Unlike in speaking, where non-verbal cues like gestures, body language, or facial expressions can aid in conveying the message, in writing, the message relies solely on the written form. Consequently, according to Yulianti (2014) stated that the researcher bears the responsibility of ensuring that the reader comprehends the conveyed message effectively.

## **2. Method**

This qualitative study explores collaborative learning implementation in teaching English at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng. It investigates teachers' strategies, challenges, and teacher's perceptions of collaborative learning. The research site was chosen due to the researcher's familiarity with the school and observed collaborative learning practices. Data collection involved observation and interviews. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes within the dataset, following six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report with a coherent argument.

## **3. Result**

### **4.1 Findings**

In this section, findings from observations and interviews were presented. The analysis categorised data into three parts based on research questions, aiming to elucidate the rationale behind classroom activities.

#### **4.1.1 The type of collaborative learning that the teacher implements in the teaching and learning process**

After conducting interviews and observations, the researcher identified several strategies used by the teacher to implement collaborative learning. Initially, the teacher diligently prepared lesson plans, modules, instructional materials, and assessments before each lesson to assess students' understanding of the materials.

##### **Extract 1**

*So, besides the lesson plan or modules, there will always be media. This is crucial for instructional media as well as assessment. So, the parts that I will assess are indeed prepared before conducting the learning. (teacher interview)*

Moreover, observations indicated that prior to entering the classroom, the teacher readied instructional media for use during the lesson. The teacher also curated and adapted texts according to the student's proficiency levels, including written materials, videos, and related resources.

According to the interview, the teacher predominantly employed two forms of collaborative learning, namely collaborative writing and peer tutoring, throughout the teaching and learning sessions.

#### Extract 2

*What I usually do is collaborative writing and also peer tutoring. It is the one I use most often in class. (Teacher interview)*

These approaches were selected as they enabled students to explore their skills more profoundly and provided support to classmates encountering difficulties with the content. Students grappling with certain concepts had the opportunity to seek guidance from peers who had a stronger grasp of the subject matter or the assignments provided by the teacher.

#### Extract 3

*Collaborative writing provides space for students to explore their abilities more. Then, they can help their less proficient friends. Furthermore, they can enhance their skills by sharing with their peers. Similarly, those who are less proficient are assisted because there is a friend who can guide them. Unlike if I were to do it, they would hesitate to ask or feel unwilling to appear wrong. However, with their peers, they feel more comfortable asking questions. (Teacher interview)*

During the observation, the researcher noted the teacher's implementation of collaborative learning methods. In collaborative writing sessions, the teacher divided students into groups after presenting the day's lesson, allowing them to create a piece related to the topic collectively. Each group then presented their work to the class. Peer tutoring naturally occurred within the groups, with students of varying comprehension levels working together. The teacher ensured heterogeneous group compositions to facilitate peer assistance. Additionally, consensus groups were employed, where students completed assigned tasks within their groups under the teacher's supervision. The teacher encouraged student engagement by posing questions and facilitating group tasks, with students autonomously organising their groups and assigning tasks.

#### Extract 4

*In collaborative learning, I sometimes only determine group leaders. However, the participants themselves divided their friends into other groups. They decide for themselves, dividing the tasks among each member of their group until all members of their group. Have an equal amount of work. So, none of them are active, while some are passive. Their duties are evenly distributed in each group. (Teacher interview)*

Finally, the teacher utilised formative assessments during lessons and summative assessments at the conclusion of learning units or chapters to gauge student comprehension. The summative assessments were designed to ascertain if students had met the criteria for achieving the learning objectives.

#### Extract 5

*I evaluate them individually and in groups. In my daily life, I still carry out formative tests and formative assessments during learning. I continue to assess things that need to be improved in learning. So, at every meeting, I do a formative assessment, and then at the end, I do a summative assessment by assessing at the end of the sub-material. There, I will determine students who have met the learning objective criteria. I carry out an assessment using learning objective criteria. (Teacher interview)*

#### 4.1.2 The difficulties that the teacher faced in implementing collaborative learning method in teaching English

The teacher encountered challenges throughout the implementation of collaborative learning, spanning from the preparation of teaching materials to the evaluation of students. During the preparation phase, the teacher meticulously planned and organised resources to enrich the learning experience. However, time constraints

arose due to additional responsibilities as a teacher and deputy headteacher, impeding the thorough preparation of instructional media.

Extract 6

*Actually, there are no difficulties; the only challenge sometimes is time. There is not much time available before learning. I feel like I still need time to prepare the media. Meanwhile, the learning is about to start, for example, like that. Due to the influence of school administration tasks that I also have to complete apart from teaching. (Teacher interview)*

Teachers encountered challenges due to students' limited English proficiency. They had to translate and reexplain lesson materials in Indonesian to ensure comprehension. During presentations, teachers demonstrated proper English intonation and pronunciation, correcting mispronunciations afterwards. However, they refrained from correcting pronunciation during students' presentations to avoid disrupting their concentration. Another challenge arose when students formed groups based on familiarity or similar abilities, hindering the desired heterogeneous group composition. Teachers intervened to ensure diverse groups, helping reorganise them when necessary.

Extract 7

*The difficulty or challenge we face is that if we give full space to students, sometimes there are things that, for example, when they gather with friends who have the same abilities, friends who have fewer abilities are sometimes difficult to share. Maybe some friends do not want to be in a group; for example, friends who have fewer abilities want to be in a group that has the same abilities. In fact, the group should be Heterogeneous. That might be the challenge. So, the teacher still has to be involved in this, in group division. Do not let the group be homogeneous. All those who have great abilities and high abilities are gathered, while all those who are weak are gathered. So that is what to avoid. (Teacher Interview)*

During group discussions, inadequate teacher supervision led to some students being less active and shifting responsibilities to more engaged peers, prolonging task completion time and affecting evaluations. Limited time for evaluation or presentations they prevented all groups from presenting on the same day.

Extract 8

*What I do is keep intervening. Even though I provide freedom, as a learning facilitator, I must still facilitate. Facilitate, for example, the formation of groups. I see whether what they are doing is correct. If not, there are things that I do not see enough, but I still argue that we should not join the smart with the smart and the weak with the weak. So, it remains under my supervision as a facilitator in class. (Teacher Interview)*

The only limitation in evaluating the students was the constraint of limited time. If the evaluation process could not be completed on that day, it would typically resume during the next session.

Extract 9

*Alhamdulillah, there were no significant difficulties, except that the formative assessment usually takes more time. If I do not finish at that meeting, I can continue at the next meeting. (Teacher Interview)*

It can be concluded that the teacher encountered various challenges while implementing the teaching method. Firstly, time constraints hindered the preparation of instructional materials. Additionally, students' limited English proficiency required explanations to be repeated in Indonesian for better comprehension. Organising group activities proved difficult, with some students showing indifference, resulting in their peers compensating for their responsibilities. Poor time management further prolonged task completion, often leading to limited opportunities for group presentations or evaluations on the same day.

#### 4.1.3 The teacher's perception of implementing collaborative learning in teaching English

According to the interview findings by the researcher, the teacher conveyed the view that through the adoption of collaborative learning, students gained greater autonomy in their learning and creative expression. They could independently strategise their learning approaches and task completion under the guidance of the teacher.

Extract 10

*In my opinion, the application of collaborative learning is interesting because the space given to students is larger. This means that they are given more opportunities to be creative, to express their creativity, and to determine for themselves the appropriate learning steps for them to take in class. Because they find the best way, determine.*

What is the best way for them to do it in their group? So, teachers do not always monopolise it. However, they are given more flexibility and opportunities to learn independently. Very student-centred. (Teacher interview)

## 5 Discussion

In this section, the analysis of observations and interviews will be presented to offer comprehensive insights into how collaborative learning is implemented in teaching English at Junior Secondary School in Soppeng.

### 5.1 The type of collaborative learning that the teacher implements in the teaching and learning process

The teacher implemented collaborative learning by preparing teaching materials, learning media, and teaching modules in advance, as required by Permendikbud No. 56 (2022). These modules contain objectives, steps, and assessments for each unit or topic, serving as instructional guides. Sugianto (2020) stressed the significance of lesson plans in guiding instruction towards desired outcomes. Media, an essential component in education, serves not only as a tool but also as a crucial part of the learning process. Masrudin (2014) highlighted the role of technology in delivering messages efficiently and increasing student engagement.

In the teaching process, the teacher employs three types of collaborative learning: collaborative writing, peer tutoring, and consensus groups. The teacher facilitates group dynamics, ensuring heterogeneity to aid comprehension and assigns diverse tasks. The teacher observes group discussions and offers assistance, examining results before presentations (Achuonye, 2014).

The teacher evaluates students through two types of assessments: formative and summative. Formative assessments occur during or at the end of lessons to gauge daily understanding. In contrast, summative assessments are conducted at the end of sub-topics to determine the achievement of learning objectives and guide subsequent actions.

### 5.2 The difficulties that the teacher faced in implementing collaborative learning method in teaching English

The teacher encounters various challenges in implementing the collaborative learning method. Firstly, time constraints hinder the preparation of materials and media due to additional administrative responsibilities as both a teacher and deputy headteacher. Secondly, students' limited English proficiency requires the teacher to translate explanations into Indonesian during lessons and demonstrate proper presentation techniques in English during student presentations.

Corrections are deferred until after presentations to avoid disrupting student concentration. Furthermore, group formation poses challenges as students tend to group with familiar peers, resulting in homogeneous groups. The teacher intervenes to ensure that heterogeneous groups are conducive to peer assistance. Despite granting student autonomy in group organisation, the teacher monitors and intervenes when necessary.

The teacher encountered challenges in supervising group dynamics, resulting in uneven participation among students. Common difficulties include task allocation, material provision, engagement monitoring, and time management during collaborative activities (Novita et al., 2020). Consequently, prolonged task completion times arose due to limited active participation, which impacted subsequent evaluations and presentations. To address this, the teacher postponed evaluations and presentations to the next session.

The teacher can address the challenge by modifying the group evaluation and presentation process. Instead of having each group present their work individually, the teacher can adopt the "window-shopping" method. This approach involves displaying group projects on a wall or window, with two group members overseeing their projects while others explore and evaluate projects from other groups (Sulistiyaratih et al., 2021). This method, based on group work, promotes active learning and stimulates creativity among students (Fatahillah et al., 2023). Additionally, it allows educators to optimise time and enhance efficiency in the teaching process.

### 5.3 The Teacher's Perception of Implementing Collaborative Learning in Teaching English

The teacher finds the teaching method discussed in the findings section highly engaging. Students are granted significant freedom to express creativity, ideas, and opinions in their learning process and task completion. Collaborative learning, as described by Ayala and Franco (2021), involves students of diverse performance levels working together towards shared objectives, assuming responsibility for their learning and that of their peers.

The implementation of this learning method allows students to support each other, share ideas, and participate in discussions within their groups to fulfil tasks assigned by the teacher. Song (2011) describes collaborative learning as a group-based approach where individuals collectively address problems and gain understanding through consultation, discussion, and competition. Lee & Hannafin (2016) found in their research that this method motivates learners to engage in discussions with peers, involving activities such as exchanging opinions, negotiating, and sharing

## 6 Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the teacher employs various strategies to implement collaborative learning. These include creating lesson plans and instructional materials, facilitating collaborative writing, peer tutoring, and consensus groups. The teacher assigns group leaders but allows students to organize themselves, intervening if groups appear too homogeneous. Students are given autonomy in task allocation and reference sourcing. The teacher conducts both formative and summative assessments to evaluate student understanding. Challenges include limited preparation time, language proficiency issues, and managing group dynamics.

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