

**An Investigation into Using Kagan Cooperative Learning
Model to Enhance English Oral Communication Ability
of Bhutanese Students**

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Abstract

The present study investigates the effects of the Kagan cooperative learning (CL) model on the English oral communication ability of Bhutanese students. A quasi-experimental design was employed using two classes: the control group (n=22) and experimental group (n=23). The participants of this study were forty-five students of Tsheyang Higher Secondary School. The research instruments were the treatment and data collection instruments. The treatment consisted of seven lesson plans focused on the Kagan CL model, and the data collection instruments consisted of an English oral communication ability pretest and posttest, and a performance-based assessment of seven English oral communication ability tasks. The results revealed that the Kagan CL model was effective in enhancing the English oral communication ability of seventh-grade Bhutanese students. The results of the English oral communication ability pretest and posttest showed that the mean scores of the students in the experimental group were significantly higher than the control group. In addition, the results of the performance-based assessment indicated that the mean scores of the students in the experimental group were significantly higher than the

control group in five out of seven oral communication ability tasks.

Keywords: Kagan cooperative learning; Cooperative learning; English oral communication ability; Bhutanese students

Introduction

The modern education system of Bhutan was established in the early 1960s to start its “first five-year plan to address the basic educational needs, and develop human resources required for the socio-economic development of the country” (MoE, 2016, p.6). The introduction of English was deemed imperative to starting the first development activities in Bhutan. As a result, English was introduced as an official language for communication and medium of instruction in Bhutan (CAPSD, 2006a; CAPSD, 2006b; DDC, 2002).

Although English has been used as an official language of communication and medium of instruction in Bhutan for more than 50 years, the majority of Bhutanese students still struggle to speak English fluently and confidently. LaPrairie (2014) noted that a significant number of students at the university level are not able to communicate orally in academic and social situations. Similarly, a study by BCSEA (2013) shows that many Bhutanese students face difficulties in speaking and writing compared to listening and reading. This seems to indicate that English oral communication is a neglected skill in the Bhutanese classroom.

Additionally, there are three reasons why the development of learners’ English oral communication ability is impeded (LaPrairie, 2014; Wu and Liang, 2007). First, there is a lack of significance placed on English oral communication ability, which LaPrairie (2014) claims is due to the exclusion of listening and speaking as a part of the examination in Bhutan. The importance of English oral communication ability as a part of language learning and as a language skill to be mastered is not understood among teachers and learners. Second, there is a lack of

opportunity to communicate orally in English in the classroom. According to LaPrairie (2014), the majority of Bhutanese students who have completed secondary education still cannot communicate orally in English. This indicates that the students are not encouraged to engage orally in the classroom. Oral communication and classroom interactions are not given focus. Lastly, there are negative effects from adherence to outdated teaching approaches. Wu and Liang (2007) assert that language teaching modes and methods are one of the main factors that can affect a learner's English oral communication ability. Most Bhutanese classroom practices are characterized by teacher-fronted talk, long lectures and note-taking, and explanation of concepts, which are received passively by the students. As a result, students have limited opportunities to use English in the class for substantial conversation or classroom talk (Hayes, Christie, Mills, & Lingard, 2007). To sum up, the aforementioned factors contribute to the relatively small importance of English oral communication ability in Bhutanese classrooms.

One teaching strategy that has been widely used and employed to enhance students' oral communication ability is Kagan CL. Kagan CL is defined by Kagan (1994) as a teaching arrangement in which small, heterogeneous groups of students work together to achieve a common goal. It is implemented through a set of "highly structured, psychologically and sociologically based techniques" (Oxford, 1997, p. 444).

To date, a few studies have been carried out with Asian students to find out the effectiveness of cooperative learning (CL) to enhance English oral communication ability (e.g. Abuseileek, 2012; Al-Tamimi & Attamimi, 2014; Lin, 2014). Most of these studies were conducted to investigate the effectiveness of CL on a student's English oral communication ability. Some studies attempted to develop students' oral skills by implementing CL. However, the use of Kagan CL to enhance students' English oral communication ability has not been investigated in Bhutan. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the effects of the Kagan CL model on seventh-grade Bhutanese

students' English oral communication ability. This study is based on the following null hypothesis:

H01: The Kagan cooperative learning model has no significant effects on seventh-grade Bhutanese students' English oral communication ability.

The findings of this study could be useful and beneficial to both students and teachers. First, the current research validates the view that Kagan CL enhances social interaction among students, thus, the school that applies the recommended approach from the results of this study may see an improvement in the English oral communication ability of its students. Second, this study may act as a guideline for teachers of English who wish to implement Kagan CL to improve their students' English oral communication ability.

Literature review

The theoretical framework of Vygotsky's social learning theory, upon which Kagan CL is based, is associated with many positive outcomes. Vygotsky (1986) put forth the social learning theory, which focuses primarily on mediation rather than imitation, or how one learns by being taught. Vygotsky (1986) provided an extremely important way to conceptualize learning. His theory makes it clear that successful learning occurs when instruction is within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1986) defined a child's ZPD as "the discrepancy between a child's actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance" (p.187). Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD was fundamental to his perspectives on the social creation of one's intelligence and the academic advantages of working with others.

Kagan CL is different from other types of group work due to its four basic principles. These are positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). Positive interdependence is a well-established principle of Kagan CL. As noted by Kagan and Kagan (2009), when positive interdependence is in place, learners

are almost certain to cooperate. In the absence of positive interdependence, they may or may not cooperate.

Second, Kagan & Kagan (2009) state that each teammate must be held accountable for their own achievement and contribution in order to produce consistent achievement gains in the Kagan CL group work. In order to achieve a group's success, each group member must share and master his/her own part, because the purpose of Kagan CL is to promote a sense of individual responsibility among team members.

Third, Kagan CL encourages learners to participate in group activities. Active participation helps the learners to engage in learning aside from processing content. If learners do not participate, then learning is not guaranteed (Kagan & High, 2002).

Lastly, Kagan & Kagan (2009) note that during Kagan CL group work, learners are engaged in equal participation as well as with regular participation. As a result, simultaneous interaction is a major advantage for Kagan CL over other forms of classroom teaching, as in a conventional classroom structure, a single person usually the teacher speaks at a time, or occasionally the teacher calls on students.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of Kagan cooperative learning model

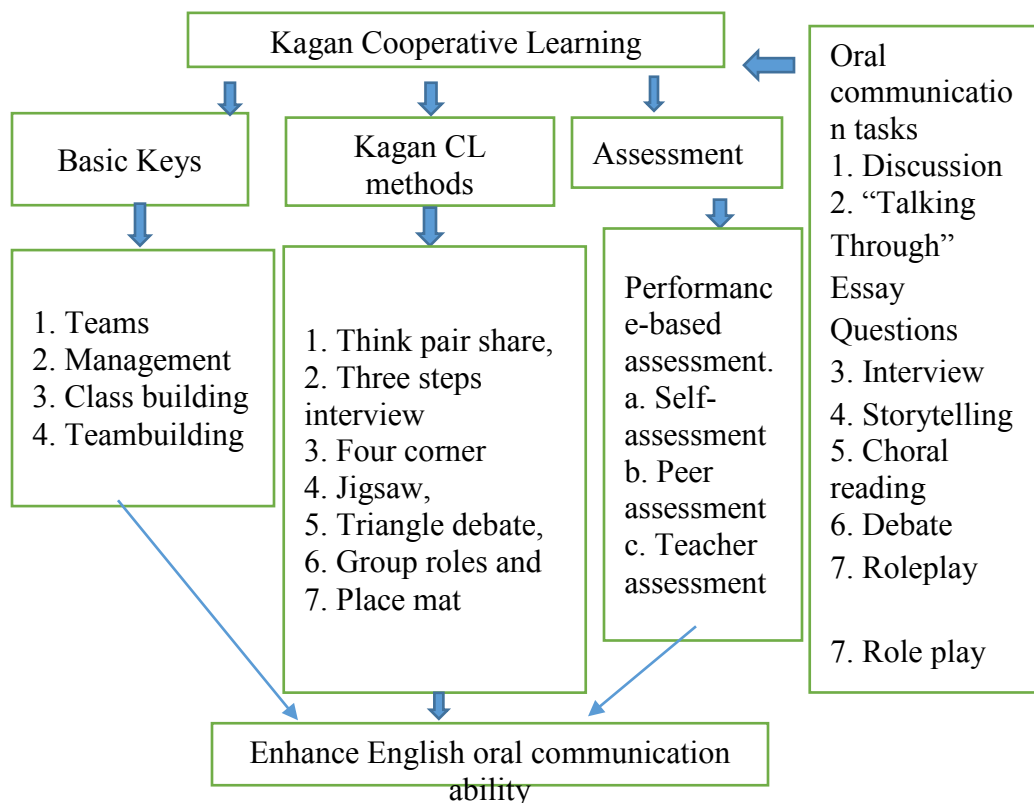


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of Kagan cooperative learning model (adapted from "Kagan Cooperative Learning" by Kagan, S., & Kagan, M. (2009))

The Kagan CL method involves three phases of teaching: a) using basic keys, b) using Kagan CL methods, and c) assessment (refer to Figure 1). The four basic keys of Kagan CL are teams, management, class building, and teambuilding. First, the implementation of Kagan CL in English language teaching involves appropriately grouping students into different levels as per their language ability so that peer interaction can be generated. The following five factors must be taken into account while forming a team: selection, composition, duration, and organization (Kagan, 1994; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1998). The heterogeneous group with four members in each team is recommended by Kagan CL (Kagan & Kagan, 2009) because it is

easier to work in pairs within a team with few members, which doubles active participation and communication. Therefore, small groups with four members are used because it is easy to be managed by the students and thus, promotes individual participation and accountability (Kagan & Kagan, 2009; Ning, 2010a).

Second, the Kagan CL models used in this study are: think-pair-share, three steps interview, four corner, jigsaw, triangle debate, group roles, and placemat.

Third, the performance-based assessment is used as an assessment strategy in this study. The assessment procedure involves the following steps. First, students are divided into groups; second, they work on a group product (for example, storytelling), or prepare a test together; and third, the student's performance is assessed separately or in groups. These assessment steps help to not only provide specific figures or scores, but also immediate clarification, suggestions, and feedback (Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Joliffe, 2007; Kagan & Kagan, 2009; Slavin 1995). In traditional assessment, the grades are simply decided by teachers (Ning, 2010b), whereas performance-based assessment provides an opportunity to assess self and peer. The performance-based assessments used in this study are self, peer, and teacher assessment.

Oral communication can be defined in different ways (e.g. Adelman, Ewell, Gaston, & Schneider, 2014; Morreale, Rubin, & Jones, 1998; Rhodes, 2010). These definitions depend on the purpose and types of communication used in different contexts or situations, such as small group discussions, interviewing, and oral presentations. Furthermore, different terms are used to define oral communication in different contexts, such as oral communication fluency, listening and speaking, effective communication, and oral communication ability (Roohr, Mao, Belur, & Liu, 2015). In this study, oral communication is defined as a two-way process between speakers and listeners and involves the ability to speak and understand. The speaker must encode the message to be transmitted in an appropriate language, while the

listener is helped by prosodic features, such as stress, intonation, facial expressions, body movements and gestures (Bygate, 1987). To summarize, oral communication abilities are the set of skills that enables an individual to be a confident and competent speaker. It helps students to efficiently comprehend, criticize and analyze information, and communicate clearly in a given situation. Oral communication encompasses speaking and listening.

Method

Research setting and participants

A quasi-experimental study was conducted at Tsheyang Higher Secondary School (not its actual name) in Bhutan. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants. The total number of participants were 45 students (N= 22 students in the control group, and N= 23 students in the experimental group). The participants' level of English oral communication ability level was determined with the pretest scores, and they were grouped into three subgroups of low, average, and high level. To achieve this, the researcher used an independent samples t-test to prove that both groups were statistically equivalent in their English oral communication ability before the treatment.

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups were 20 and 18.9, respectively; no statistically significant difference was found in the English oral communication ability pretest scores: $t(43) = -.735$, $p = .466 > .05$. This result indicates that both groups were at a similar level of English oral communication ability before the treatment.

Table 1. Independent samples t-test on English oral communication ability pretest scores of the experimental group and control group

	Experimental group N=23		Control group N=22		<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			
Oral Test	20	5.5	18.9	4.7	-.735	43	.466

Materials

Treatment (Kagan CL lesson)

The core curriculum of English for seventh-grade students from the CAPSD (2006b) publication and The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan (CERD, 2002) were used to set the main objectives of teaching and to survey the seventh-grade student's textbook in order to determine the contents that should be covered in each unit. The content for each unit was selected based on the learning objectives and aims of the present study, which was to enhance Bhutanese students' oral communication ability. Table 2 shows the topics of the seven English oral communication ability tasks. The seven topics were categorized into three themes: self: (who am I?), my world: (relationships & family), and our community: (what matters in my world). Under each theme, there were two to three topics. English oral communication ability tasks and Kagan CL structure were used for each topic. For example, choral reading and think-pair-share were used for the first topic entitled 'Youth Hotline'

Table 2: Topic of Each Task.

Thematic unit	Topic/oral communication tasks
Self: Who am I?	1. Youth Hotline - Bruce Vichert & Dr. Graham (<i>Choral reading</i>) 2. Be Proud of Who You Are - Lawrence B. Hookimaw (<i>Debate</i>)
My World: Relationships & Family	3. Somebody's Son - Richard Pindell (<i>Roleplay</i>) 4. Girl's-Eye View of Relatives by Phyllis McGinley (<i>Storytelling</i>) 5. Untrodden World of Lhops - Michael Chiramal (<i>interview</i>)
Our Community: What Matters In My World	6. Starfish – Anonymous (<i>"Talking Through" Essay Questions</i>) 7. People From Mars - Helena Norberg-Hodge (<i>Discussion</i>)

In collecting data, first, the teaching procedures were organized in the experimental and control group classes, followed by administering the pretest to both groups to determine the initial ability of English oral communication ability. After the lesson plans (see Appendix 1) were organized, the Kagan CL was implemented in the experimental group while the control group was taught using the conventional method. The performance-based assessment was used to assess students' English oral communication ability tasks, such as classroom discussion, "Talking Through" essay questions, interviews, storytelling, choral reading, debates, and role plays. Lastly, at the end of the treatment period, the posttest was administered to both groups in order to determine the effects of the treatment. The Kagan CL methods (think-pair-share, three steps interview, four corners, jigsaw, triangle debate, group roles, and timed pair share) were used in the experimental class. The control group was also taught the same content including English oral communication tasks but without using Kagan CL methods. Most of the activities in the control group were carried out in a small group consisting of four to five members.

English oral communication ability test

The English oral communication ability pretest and posttest were administered to assess each student's English oral communication ability before and after learning through Kagan CL. The test of spoken English validated by Powers, Schedl, Wilson, and Butler (1999) was reviewed and used as a guideline to construct the English oral communication ability test. The details of each part are discussed in the following sections.

Part 1: interview (7 minutes)

The first part consisted of an interview, which aimed at evaluating learners' English oral communication ability through spontaneous improvisation. The interview questions were related to topics that they were familiar with. There were five questions in total.

Part 2: storytelling (4 minutes)

In the second part, the students were provided with pictures and asked to narrate a story by looking at them. They were given a minute to look at the pictures and think about the story and had to complete the story within three minutes.

The English oral communication ability pretest and posttest were rated by four raters. To control inter-rater reliability, the students were divided equally into two groups. One group of students was assessed by one pair of raters and the other group by another pair of raters.

Performance-based Assessment

The other data collection instrument used was a performance-based assessment of English oral communication ability tasks in the classroom. Both control and experimental group learners' English oral communication ability was evaluated on an ongoing basis using scoring rubrics for each oral communication task employed in the classroom. The students were informed prior to the oral task about the criteria so that they could perform as required and so that they could use the criteria for self-assessment of their own performance. The criteria for assessing oral communication ability were grammar, comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The researcher used teacher, peer, and self-assessments to collect data for different oral communication ability tasks.

Validity

To verify the effectiveness of the lesson plan, evaluation forms for the lesson plan were constructed. Three expert teachers validated the lesson plans. The results obtained from the lesson plan evaluation checklist revealed that the lesson plans had content validity and the learning objectives were relevant to the classroom activities (see Table 3).

Table 3: Validity of lesson plans

Statement/ Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rationale	3.33	3.66	4	3.33	4	3.33	4
Learning objectives	4	4.33	3.66	4	3.33	4	4
Kagan CL/classroom management	4	4	4	3.33	4	4	3.66
Exercise and activities	3.66	3.66	4.33	3.66	4	4	4
Materials	4	3.33	4	4	3.66	3.66	3.33
Time allocation	3.66	4	4	4	4.33	4	4
Assessment	4	4.33	3.33	4.33	4	4	4.33
Average	3.80	3.90	3.90	3.80	3.90	3.85	3.90

In the same way, to determine the validity of the test for assessing the oral communication ability of the students (see Table 4), it was submitted to a language testing expert. As per the experts' suggestions, some items were modified or substituted for others and others were deleted. The expert agreed that the final form of the test was generally valid.

Table 4: The results obtained regarding the validity of English oral communication ability pretest and posttest.

Statement	Experts			
Statement	A	B	C	Avg.
Part 1: Interview (Television)	3	3	4	3.33
1: Greeting	5	4	4	4.33
2: Introducing	4	4	4	4
3: Describing habits	3	3	4	3.33
4: Giving an opinion	4	5	5	4.66
5: Expressing agreement and disagreement	3	4	4	3.66
Part 2: Storytelling	4	4	4	4
1. The directions are understandable.	3	3	4	3.33
2. The language is appropriate.	3	4	4	3.66
3. The pictures used are appropriate	4	3	3	3.33
Scoring Rubrics				
1. The description in the rubric is clear and understandable	3	2	4	3
2. The competences stated in rubrics are measurable	4	3	3	3.33

Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which a test is consistent. A test is considered reliable if it gives similar results, after application to other participants under the same conditions. The researcher gave the test to 23 students to determine the reliability of the test using an internal-consistency measure of reliability (Cronbach's coefficient alpha). The outcome of reliability and standard errors of measurement of the test are as follows.

Table 5: Reliability of oral communication ability test

Oral communication ability Test	Reliability
Cronbach's Alpha	.904
Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	.912

Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, the acceptable value should be more than 0.7. The alpha coefficient of the test was equal to 0.904. It can be concluded that the English oral communication ability test was reliable. Similarly, the inter-reliability was achieved through the Pearson Correlation Coefficient since there were four raters grouped into two with each intact classroom. The coefficient between each pair of raters is illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Pearson correlation coefficient of Inter-rater Reliability

Rater	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4
Rater1			
Rater 1	.855**		
Rater 2	.855**		
Rater 3			.925**
Rater 4		.925**	

Procedure

Table 7 describes the 7-week course plan for the Kagan CL model. The first week of the semester was devoted to introducing the course and starting with the first lesson, and last the week was to wind up the course.

Table 7: Length of time spent on each unit

Unit	Week	Length of times	Kagan CL model
Introduction	Week 1:1 period	120 mins	
Unit:1	week 2: 2 periods	240 mins	Think-pair-share and Triangle Debate
Unit:2	week 3-4: 2 periods	240 mins	Group roles and the Timed pair share
Unit:3	week 5-6: 3 periods	360 mins	Three steps interview, Jigsaw, and Four corners
Wrap up/closure	week 7:1 period	120 mins	

The modified Kagan CL models used were timed pair share, three steps interview, four corners, jigsaw, triangle debate, group roles, and think-pair-share. The modified Kagan CL models used in each lesson plan are described briefly below.

First, during timed pair share, the teacher asked students to prepare a ‘storytelling’ product on the poem “*Girl’s Eye View of Relatives*.” Students worked in pairs, facing each other. After they had prepared a story based on the poem, each student shared their story (one created based on the poem) for 5 minutes, while their partner listened. Afterward, the partners switched roles.

Second, during the three steps interview, students worked in pairs alternating between being the interviewer and the interviewee. Students were asked to write down ten-interview questions prior to the start of the activity. Once they had framed the interview questions, they then carried out the interview and recorded it on audiotape. Each team exchanged the tape with another team and evaluated the interview based on the criteria they learned. Then partners changed roles and the activity was repeated.

Third, during four corners, the teacher first created a statement that had the potential for varying degrees of agreement or preference (e.g. *Is change and modernization a good thing for Bhutan?*). The classroom was then organized into four areas (corners) and labeled with: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Each student was provided with an opportunity

to think about the question and take a stance. Once students decided their position on the matter, they were asked to move to the corner that best represented their stance. Finally, the students were asked to form groups of three to discuss the reasons for their choices.

Fourth, students took part in “Talking Through” essay questions using a jigsaw structure. First, the teacher gave one question to each “home” group members of five. Then, students formed “expert” groups, discussed their part, and answered the question assigned to each expert group. Finally, they went back to their home group and shared their conclusion with their team members.

Fifth, in triangle debate, the teacher used the format of a classroom debate to assist students in connecting personally with the text. First, the teacher divided the class into three groups and provided the debate question. An example of such as a debate question would be:

“Partying and playing Western music have become a common scene in most developing towns in Bhutan. In your view would you consider this trend to be a threat to our culture and traditions or not?”

After receiving the questions, the students were divided into three groups. Group 1 argued for the issue, group 2 argued against the issue, and group 3 prepared comments and questions about the issue.

Sixth, during group roles, learners were divided into groups based on the number of roles needed in the activity. These consisted of roles such as leader, manager, note-taker, reporter, and supporter.

Lastly, during think-pair-share, the teacher introduced the lesson by reading a poem aloud twice to the whole class. Next, the teacher divided the class into a team of four where students read the poem to each other.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using a paired sample t-test and independent samples t-test.

Results

To investigate the effects of the Kagan CL model on seventh-grade Bhutanese students' English oral communication ability, the results were analyzed quantitatively by using mean scores from the oral communication pretest and posttest, and performance-based assessment. The results obtained from multiple instruments are presented below.

English oral communication ability test

A paired-samples t-test was performed to compare the English oral communication ability test scores of the control group before and after the treatment. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the mean posttest scores compared to pretest scores ($M=22.52$, $SD=3.27$) and ($M=18.94$, $SD=4.71$); $t(21) = -6.067$, $p < .000$ as shown in Table 8. The results suggest that the English oral communication ability posttest scores have improved significantly compared to pretest scores.

Table 8: Paired sample t-test of the control group on pretest and post-test of the English oral communication ability test.

	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig
Pretest	22	18.94	4.71			
Posttest	22	22.52	3.27	-6.067	21	.000

Similarly, a paired-samples t-test was performed to compare the English oral communication ability pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group before and after the treatment. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of posttest scores compared to pretest scores ($M=26.18$, $SD=3.52$) and ($M=20.60$, $SD=5.56$); $t(22) = -8.633$, $p < .000$ (see Table 9). The results indicated that the Kagan CL had a substantial effect on the English oral

communication ability of the students. This analysis provided evidence that the Kagan CL model was effective in enhancing English oral communication ability among the seventh-grade students.

Table 9: Paired sample t-test of the experimental group on the pretest and post-test of the English oral communication ability test.

	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig
Pretest	23	20.06	5.56			
				-8.633	22	.000
Posttest	23	26.18	3.52			

Comparison between the experimental and control group in relation to improved scores

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine the difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of their improved scores after the treatment. The participants' improved scores were calculated using the following equation: improved scores = (posttest-pretest). As shown in Table 10, the mean scores of the experimental (M = 6.10; SD = 3.40) were higher than the mean scores of the control group (M = 3.59; SD = 2.77). The results indicated that there was a significant effect from Kagan CL on the experimental group at the $p < .05$ level compared to the conventional method's effect on the control group: $t(43) = -2.714$, $p = .010$. Taken together, the results demonstrated that the difference was statistically significant. Therefore, the results suggest that the experimental group achieved a higher English oral communication ability at the end of the treatment period compared to the control group.

Table 10: Independent samples t-test on English oral communication ability improved scores between the experimental group and the control group.

	Groups	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig
Improved scores	control	22	3.5909	2.77054	-2.714	43	.010
	experimental	23	6.1087	3.40356			

Performance-based assessment

The performance-based assessment, such as self, peer, and teacher assessment were employed to evaluate the various English oral communication tasks. An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups on the various English oral communication tasks. The results from each oral communication ability task are as follows.

Table 11: Independent samples t-test on the mean score of the performance-based assessment

OC Tasks	Variables	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Choral reading	Control	22	36.6	6.14	-1.58	43	.120
	Experimental	23	39.1	4.53			
Storytelling	Control	22	6.40	1.46	-12.8	43	.000
	Experimental	23	11.39	1.11			
Debate	Control	22	32.2	2.99	-6.91	43	.000
	Experimental	23	38.7	1.11			
Classroom discussion	Control	22	7.50	1.53	-4.96	43	.000
	Experimental	23	10.08	1.93			
Roleplay	Control	22	17.68	2.07	-4.20	43	.000
	Experimental	23	21.30	3.49			
Interview	Control	22	71.86	7.39	-1.51	43	.136
	Experimental	23	75.04	6.65			
Essay questions	Control	22	6.5	1.30	-4.62	43	.000
	Experimental	23	9.0	2.19			

Table 11 presents the results of independent samples t-test on the different English oral communication ability tasks. The results show that the participants in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group in storytelling, debate, classroom discussion, role play, and "Talking Through" essay questions. In contrast, a non-significant difference

in mean scores was found between the control and experimental group in the interview and choral reading. Therefore, the overall results suggest that the experimental group performed better compared to the control group in five oral communication tasks of seven.

Discussion

The data and results collected according to the research objectives are discussed in the following sections.

To investigate the effects of the Kagan CL model on seventh-grade Bhutanese students' English oral communication ability, the results from the English oral communication ability test and performance-based assessment were examined. They showed that students' English oral communication ability was enhanced after implementing Kagan CL in the classroom. This result supports the view that CL expedites the improvement of oral communication ability (Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Jacobs, McCafferty, & DaSilva, 2006; Kagan, 1994). The findings were congruent with Chen (2005), who claimed that the CL approaches are better than the conventional method for enhancing students' English oral communication ability. Furthermore, the significant gains of the experimental group on the oral task support Kagan and Kagan's (2009) standpoint that Kagan CL is a practice that can put the communicative approach into action. It promotes group interaction and likely helped the experimental group students perform better in terms of linguistic, discourse, strategic, and non-verbal communicative competence than the control group.

Through Kagan CL, students were provided with more comprehensible input and output such as classroom talk, listening tasks, and reading stories and essays. This input provided background knowledge, which encouraged students to use the language on their own. In addition, the Kagan CL model helped the students to improve their vocabulary to communicate orally (Cohen, Lotan, Whitcomb, Balderrama, Cossey, & Swanson, 1994). Furthermore, during Kagan CL, students asked questions and listened to each other, creating a natural interactive context.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) as theorized by Vygotsky (1978) supports these aforementioned points. The ZPD is defined as the difference between what learners can do without help and what they can do with help from peers and teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). When the learners are in the ZPD, they can perform certain tasks without assistance from teachers and peers. Therefore, learners can be encouraged to engage in individual learning when they are in the ZPD.

In the same way, Kagan CL promotes positive interdependence and individual accountability among group members and the whole class. When positive interdependence is in place, individuals are certain to cooperate. In the absence of positive interdependence, they may or may not cooperate (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). According to Kagan and Kagan (2009), the learners in a group contribute uniquely to the overall success of the group. The members of the group are interdependent and trust each other to achieve their goals. Therefore, each group member's effort is required and indispensable for group success. Both components of positive interdependence create cooperation and boost achievement. In the process, there is an improvement in oral communication ability. For instance, in this study, students were asked to perform different oral communication ability tasks and each member was assigned a different role to perform during the task. The individual took their role seriously and in the end, the experimental group was able to perform better compared to the control group. The control group likely could not perform better because they lacked positive interdependence within group members.

Likewise, Slavin (1983) stated that when individual accountability is in place, no one can make excuses. In other words, each member of the group is accountable for their achievement as well as for the group's achievement. It appeared that the students in the experimental group gained more individual accountability. For example, during timed pair share, students worked together in a pair and each student individually wrote their best answer to share with the team. As a result, each

member was held accountable to teammates for the overall success of the team. Moreover, when a learner's number is called, each learner must share the team's answer. Kagan CL provides a multitude of ways to hold students accountable to their peers for their performance. Students can be held accountable to the teacher, teammates, his/her partner, and even to their parents. They can be held accountable for achievement, for mastering a skill, for listening, for participating, or for making a decision.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that the Kagan CL can enhance students' English oral communication ability and that it has significant effects on the English oral communication ability of seventh-grade students in Bhutan. However, there are some limitations associated with this study. First, the participants were not randomly assigned to the experimental and control group; as a result, there might have been some differences in their oral language ability. Second, the present study used the treatment for only for seven weeks involved only two classes with 45 students within a single school. The sample size was small and the experimental duration was limited; other studies have lasted for 3 to 4 months or even a whole semester. However, studies undertaken for a longer period using a large number of participants can produce a more reliable and accurate result regarding the treatment. As a result, future research should be carried out with an extended treatment period of 10 to 15 weeks to generate more reliable and accurate result. Third, the English oral communication ability post-test took place immediately after the intervention and may have measured only the short-term effects of Kagan CL on English oral communication ability. However, due to a lack of time, the researcher could not employ a delayed posttest. Further experimental investigations are needed to estimate the longer-term effects of the treatment using a delayed posttest.

Recommendations

First, to improve the quality of the research and the generalizability of the findings, future researchers should pay attention to the following recommendations while conducting a comparative study between two teaching and learning approaches in the context of second language teaching. These recommendations are: 1) using a pre-test-post-test control group design, where participants are assigned randomly, 2) increasing the treatment period between pre and post-test from 10 to 15 weeks because a longer treatment periods will help to produce more reliable findings, and 3) including more schools and participants in the study, which will help to increase the reliability of the study.

Second, it would be interesting and helpful to conduct a study on the effects of Kagan CL with other language skills, such as reading and writing to shed more light on the effectiveness of Kagan CL on these skills.

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Appendix 1

Lesson Plan

Topic: Youth Hotline - Bruce Vichert & Dr. Graham Cotter

Genre: Non-Fiction (Advice Column)

Kagan Cooperative Learning model: *Think pair share*

Oral communication ability task: *Choral reading*

Lesson Objectives:

Students are expected to be able to:

1. Develop the art of choral speaking.
2. Employ text clues to speak accurately and fluently with expression.

Teaching Learning Materials:

1. Choral reading rubric
2. Textbook, and
3. Normal classroom materials

Exercise and classroom activities:

Stage	Procedure (What the teacher will do)	Tasks (What the students will do)	Aim(s)	Time
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The teacher will draw the students' attention to the box on the table and get them to guess what the box would contain. • The teacher will focus their attention on the label YOUTH HOTLINE and ask them what the words could mean. If students do not come up with an appropriate meaning, then the teacher will break up the words YOUTH and HOTLINE. The first word meaning is easy. If they struggle with the second word, the teacher will ask a student to look up the meaning in the dictionary a 'hotline' is a telephone number one can ring for help or information. The full meaning of HOTLINE, <i>it is a phone number that young people (like the students themselves)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The students will read two letters with questions written by young people just like them. •Students will also be privy to the answers provided by two experienced advisors called Mr.Vichert and Mr. Cotter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To activate background knowledge on the topic and introduce the title with its meaning. 	15 mins

Stage	Procedure (What the teacher will do)	Tasks (What the students will do)	Aim(s)	Time
	<p>can call to either ask for information on anything or ask for help for problems they might have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will explain that many different kinds of questions and answer columns exist in newspapers and magazines dealing with many different interests and concerns ranging from health, beauty, finances, politics, etc. 			
<p>Development</p> <p>Team formation</p> <p>Think- pair-share</p>	<p>Activity I: Choral Reading (<i>Think pair share</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will begin by reading the text “Youth Hotline” aloud twice. As this text is not a ‘difficult read’ to read. The teacher will divide the class into groups of four where students can read the text to one another. <p>During this process, the teacher will circulate throughout the groups, correct any errors in pronunciation, and coach the students’ intonation and modulation of voice where necessary. As the text contains lots of rhythms, the teacher will have students extend their reading to include a rehearsed Choral Reading of the text Youth Hotline. Youth Hotline is a wonderful text for Choral Reading but teachers should utilize this teaching strategy with many other texts as well.</p>	<p>Activity I: Choral Reading (<i>Think pair share</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the text <i>Be Proud of Who You Are</i>. Think/Pair/Share is based on information and ideas from a reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage students to think about a question, issue, or reading, and then refine their understanding through discussion with a partner. 	80 mins

Stage	Procedure (What the teacher will do)	Tasks (What the students will do)	Aim(s)	Time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students read a text <i>Youth Hotline</i>. • Think/Pair/Share activity, and plan for a pairing of particular learners that would further those goals. • Ask students to spend several minutes thinking about and writing down ideas. • Set clear expectations regarding the focus of thinking and sharing to be done. • Put students in pairs to share and clarify their ideas and understanding. • Monitor students' dialogue by circulating and listening. • Call upon some pairs to share their learning and ideas with the whole class. • Possibly extend the Think/Pair/Share with a further partner trade, where students swap partners and exchange ideas again. 	<p>selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate thoughts and ideas, writing them down as necessary to prepare for sharing with a partner. • Practice good active listening skills when working in pairs, using techniques such as paraphrasing what the other has said, asking for clarification, and orally clarifying their own ideas. • Identify any information that is still unclear after the pair discussion, and ask the class and teacher for clarification. • few pairs will come in front of the class and share their learning and ideas to the whole class 		
Closure/Assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will observe and evaluate their peers using a choral reading rubric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate students' oral communication ability using scoring rubric on choral reading. 	20 mins