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Table of Contents

1. A Study on Students' Perspective Towards Cooperative Learning in the ESL Classroom	1
2. Asymmetric Effect of Oil Price Change on Economic Growth: Evidence from Indonesia	11
3. Coaching for Leaders in the Hybrid Work Environment.....	26
4. Determinant of Tax Non-Compliance Among Taxpayer.....	34
5. Growing Gigs: A Conceptual Report on Job Autonomy and Work Engagement on Gig Workers' Performance.....	49
6. Islamic Leadership, Citizenship Behaviour and Work Ethics: The Roots of Academic Performance	62
7. Manufacturing Flexibility: Perception and Meaning Among Malaysian Manufacturing Practitioners	73
8. Meiji Japan and The Imperial Rule: A Symbiotic Encounter.....	80
9. Should We Apply Didactic Discussion Activities in the Thai Literature Classroom? Comparative Perspectives Between Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers	91
10. The Perceived Credibility of Instagram Influencer and the Impact of Beauty Products Unboxing Videos on UTAR Students	98
11. Alam Anti Materi Bukti Saintifik Kewujudan Lauh Mahfuz	105
12. Cabaran Pengaplikasian Pendekatan Didik Hibur Dalam Pengajaran Guru Bahasa Melayu Dari Aspek Kemahiran Membaca Dalam Talian	122
13. Elemen Kolaborasi Dalam Pengajaran Guru Pendidikan Islam Melalui Pendekatan Heutagogi.....	137
14. Implikasi Pelaksanaan Seni Bahasa Dalam Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu di SJKT Semasa Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran Di Rumah (PdPR)	152
15. Kaedah Pelaksanaan Cukai Tanah Terbiar Bagi Menggalakkan Pembangunan Tanah Terbiar.....	160
16. Kesan Kos Input Pengeluaran Terhadap Perubahan Harga Minyak Masak Sawit: Analisis Input-Output Sektor di Malaysia	174
17. Pendekatan Bermain dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu bagi Murid Sindrom Down.....	187
18. Percampuran Kod Guru Bahasa Melayu dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Secara dalam Talian.....	204
19. Tekanan dan Prestasi Kerja Semasa Pandemik Covid 19.....	215



A Study on Students' Perspective Towards Cooperative Learning in the ESL Classroom

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Abstract: *In this era, there are varieties of approaches to teach English as Second Language (ESL) learners and there have been many researches done to test the effectiveness of these approaches. This research aimed to examine the students' perspectives towards cooperative learning in the ESL classroom. Cooperative learning refers to a variety of instructional practices that encourage students to work together as they apply course material to answer questions, solve problems, or create a project. Therefore, cooperative learning is different as compared to the traditional learning approach because it expands the second language acquisition by providing room for both language input and output. This study employed the quantitative approach where 107 Diploma students from Sultan Idris Education University who were undergoing a compulsory English course were requested to participate in a survey after completing the activities, which incorporated cooperative learning. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous research to ensure the reliability in collecting data. Then, the data was tabulated using SPSS software. It focused on the students' perspectives in learning experience, comprehension and interaction. The findings revealed that most of the students had positive perspective towards cooperative learning in the ESL classroom.*

Keywords: Cooperative learning, ESL learners, second-language acquisition

1. Introduction

Learning a new language requires high level of motivations and many efforts. Oxford & Shearin (1994) as cited by Alizadeh (2016) mentioned that motivation is considered as one of the keys towards the success in developing second language or foreign language. By having high motivation in learning new language, learners will actively involve in the language learning. In an ESL classroom, learners have their own distinguished abilities and intelligence that have significant effects towards their learning strategies. Cassady (2010) as cited by Ismail & Al Allaq (2019) mentioned that peer pressure, competition, and self-consciousness often weigh downed the ESL learners. Thus, by using cooperative learning especially in learning new language, it provides friendlier learning environment as different learners will perceive different learning strategies in order to develop and improve their second language. Therefore, cooperative learning is one of the most commonly used learning strategies in classroom.

In an ESL classroom, the teaching and learning process might face certain degrees of difficulties and challenges especially during the conduct of the classroom activities. Teachers may use various teaching strategies to fit in with the students learning strategies and abilities. Among of the