International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies
ISSN(e): 2306-0646
ISSN(p): 2306-9910
DOI: 10.55493/5019.v11i2.4514
Vol. 11, No. 2, 85-96.

URL: www.aessweb.com

EFFECTS OF THE STAD METHOD ON CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Zhang Yingting[1+]
Subadrah Madhawa Nair[2]
Walton Wider[3]

[1,2]*Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, City University Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.*
[1]*Email: sarahzyt@qq.com Tel: +0086-15819829858*
[2]*Email: subadrah.nair@city.edu.my Tel: +6016-4982439*
[3]*Faculty of Business and Communication, INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.*
[3]*Email: walton.wider@newinti.edu.my Tel: +6014-9104733*

(+ Corresponding author)

Article History
Received: 15 March 2022
Revised: 6 May 2022
Accepted: 23 May 2022
Published: 10 June 2022

Keywords
Chinese college students
English communicative competence
Listening
Speaking
The STAD method.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate effects of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) method in enhancing college students' English Communicative Competence. This quantitative study adopted a quasi- experimental design. The sample chosen intact groups consisting of 80 first-year non-English majors from two different classes of Chinese vocational colleges. The students were divided into two groups, i.e. the Experimental Group and the Control Group. The teaching of the Experimental Group, was based on the STAD method while the conventional teaching method was adopted in the Control Group. Each group was made up of 40 students. The questions used in the tests before and after the intervention were adapted from IELTS speaking and listening test. SPSS 25 was applied to analyze the data using ANCOVA test. The research findings conspicuously revealed that when the STAD method was utilized the Experimental Group improved significantly in their overall performance in English communicative competence.

Contribution/ Originality: This study found out that STAD method was effective in improving English communicative competence of the students of Chinese vocational colleges and can be used as an alternative method in teaching. The STAD method was also found to be having a wide potential to improve other language skills as well.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

The cooperation among countries and regions increases along with the accelerating economic globalization (Zheng & Jia, 2017). English is considered as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world (Melitz, 2016). Recent years have seen the flourishment of English education. As the official language of most international organizations, English is dominant as the first foreign language on all levels of different education systems (Pennycook, 2017). It is also used as the major communication tool in nearly 70 countries, which gives an implication that English is widely used in the daily life of these places (Baker, 2015).

As for China, the past few decades have seen the continual reform and opening up of the country who has rapidly expanded cooperation with other countries. Thus, the demand for internationalization in the field of education is highly urgent (Yang, 2018). The goal of English language instruction is for students to gain the

knowledge and to be able to use it in real-life communicative situations (El-Dakhs & Amroun, 2021; Woods & Cakır, 2011). One of the most significant teaching aspects in college is to grow learners with English skills and communicative competence, which has become a consensus in the foreign language education in China (Wei, Lin, & Litton, 2018). However, it does not mean the problem of English teaching is solved. It is a large concern for decades that English language teaching has not improved as much as expected (Lin, 2016). Most students still cannot communicate the language even after graduation (Lin, 2016). The number of learners who realize the importance of it has kept rising (Fang & Baker, 2018). Many students have mastered a certain level of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and have passed the corresponding –language proficiency test, yet they still complain about the difficulties to communicate in English. Gottlieb (2011) suggests research on language policy must fully take into account the ideological context in which language plays an important role. What's more, language ideology can work as a mediator and even directly influence policy formulation (Gottlieb, 2011). The major reason mainly lies on the fact that both English teachers and learners emphasize too much on linguistic knowledge but neglect communicative competence.

English courses offered to non-English majors in Chinese vocational colleges aim at integrating the cultivation of language skills and communicative competence. It was the objective of developing students' English communicative competence that brought about a strong motivation of this research to examine whether the STAD method would be effective or not. The goal of this study was therefore to see how the STAD approach affected students' English expressive abilities.

1.2. Research Questions

This study carried out the formulation of six research questions which are listed as follows:

RQ1. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the overall performance of English communicative competence between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

RQ2. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on fluency and coherence between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

RQ3. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on lexical resource between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

RQ4. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on grammatical range and accuracy between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

RQ5. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on pronunciation between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

RQ6. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on listening between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The STAD method is a cooperative learning model. Its full name is known as Student Teams Achievement Division which was introduced by Slavin (1978) in Johns Hopkins University in the United States. This method is a cooperative learning strategy for organizing students to carry out learning in the classroom (Slavin, 1978; Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013). First, it is necessary to form a group of students with varying levels of learning.

The group learning of students mainly refers to the communication and cooperation between the group members to achieve a certain learning goal (Majoka, Dad, & Mahmood, 2010; Slavin, 1978). The STAD cooperative learning method is considered to be the most valuable, simplest, flexible among all the cooperative learning methods because this method can accommodate the integration with almost any subject (Slavin, 1978). It is established on the basis of teaching practice (Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013). It is used to meet teaching goals. Under the guidance of this learning strategy, there are a group of learners of different levels who get together to complete a common learning target (Majoka et al., 2010; Slavin, 1978).

The STAD method not only embodies the innovation of teachers' teaching and students' learning methods, furthermore it enables teachers to become the instructors of students' learning (Wang, Wu, & Hao, 2011). Students' learning is more purposeful and exploratory, it also helps build collaborative learning ability and confidence of students (Wiener, 1986). Promotion enables every student in the group to realize their own value (Ghaith, 2004). Only when their grades are improved can they win honors for the group (Rakhman & Syatroh, 2015; Warawudhi, 2012). The contribution of each member is very important to the group (Rakhman & Syatroh, 2015; Wang et al., 2011). Therefore, it can effectively promote the achievement of teaching goals, improve the classroom learning atmosphere, and enhance students' learning ability in an all-round way (Khan & Inamullah, 2011; Rattanatumma & Puncreobutr, 2016; Tarim & Akdeniz, 2008). Through teaching experiments, Irawan, Sutarsyah, and Sudirman (2014) concluded that the STAD teaching method improved students' speaking ability, as evidenced by the improvement in students' average score.

In addition, students' speaking ability is significantly improved by using STAD method in English teaching. Fitriyasni (2020) compared the test scores before and after the intervention between the Experimental Group where the STAD method was adopted and the Control Group where the conventional teaching method was employed. The research subjects selected by Fitriyasni (2020) were first-year students for the 2017/2018 academic year at STAI Tapaktuan in Indonesia. His research concluded that students taught by the STAD method made more significant progress in English speaking than those taught by the traditional method (Fitriyasni, 2020) Comparing the teaching effects of the STAD method on students' English fluency learning outcome with that of the conventional method, Mudofir, Imron, Maaliah, and Maftuh (2019) and Yunita (2016) found that the STAD method was more effective in improving students' fluency in English speaking. It was proved that the STAD method was a more suitable teaching strategies in enhancing students' English speaking pronunciation (Mudofir et al., 2019; Sanaee, Zarein, & Roozbehi, 2013; Wardani & Sandy, 2016).

The study of Ilyas (2017) examined whether the STAD method helped students effectively acquire vocabulary knowledge. Because it was confirmed by Ilyas (2017) that the STAD method was effective in enhancing the vocabulary of students, the research findings were soon widely used. Similarly, other studies like Ishtiaq, Ali, and Salem (2017) and Shafiee and Khavaran (2017) indicated that the STAD method was effective in improving students' performance in mastering English vocabulary. Therefore, a reasonable conclusion can be reached that the STAD method is a suitable teaching method to improve students' mastery of English vocabulary. Moreover, studies by Monica (2014) and Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018) agree that the STAD method can help students improve their performance in grammatical correctness while speaking English. On the whole, the STAD method has a positive influence on English learners' listening comprehension (Khansir & Alipour, 2015; Ni'mah, Ismiatun, & Kurniasih, 2018; Puspitasari, 2011).

2.1. Communicative Competence

"Communicative competence" gained its initial definition from Hymes (1972). He believes that one's potential competence includes both language knowledge and the competence to use language (Hymes, 1972). It was regarded as a further development of "language competence" which initially appeared in Chomsky's transformational generative grammar theory (Spolsky, 1989). Hymes (1972) holds the opinion that the "language competence"

brought up by Chomsky only takes grammar into consideration; hence, it presents only one-sided picture of the issue. It is the perfect language competence under ideal conditions. It fails to take into account other factors except those closely related to grammar in actual communication situations.

Hyme's "communicative competence" includes four aspects: (1)Grammaticality focuses on examination of grammatical elements such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, to check whether a sentence has followed the grammatical rules or not; (2) Judgement of feasibility concerns whether the expression is accepted by the listener, or conforms to social language habits; (3) Judgment of appropriateness evaluates whether it is expressed in an appropriate way or conform to the identity of the speaker in a specific language environment; (4) Reality means that although some expressions meet the grammatical rules, but they are no longer used in real life, and such expressions are not suitable for communication (Hymes, 1972). From the above four aspects it can be seen that language knowledge and mastery of the language make up Hymes's communicative competence model which undoubtedly had a huge impact on the field of linguistic study at that time (Johnstone & Marcellino, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative approach to embrace data collection and analysis. The selected sample was 80 students from two different classes of first-year non-English majors. The intact group or non-random sampling was adopted to select two groups of students. The STAD method was adopted to teach the Experimental Group. At the same time, the conventional teaching method was employed to teach the Control Group. Every 40 students were divided into a group. Random sampling was not allowed because it would have interrupted regular teaching plan. The questions for the tests before and after the experiment were adapted from IELTS speaking test and listening test. The test questions included 3 speaking tasks and 40 listening tasks. SPSS Program for Windows version 25 was applied to analyze the data using ANCOVA test. Pre-test was used as a covariate to eliminate the differences between the groups prior to the intervention.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative data analysis was carried out by applying ANCOVA test to examine six null hypotheses, and answer the corresponding six research questions. This data indicated the subjects' mean scores of English communicative competence and comprised speaking and listening skills.

RQ1. Does the study find a statistically significant difference in the overall performance of English communicative competence between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the Control Group, which used the traditional teaching method?

Ho1: The study does not find a significant difference in the overall performance of English communicative competence between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method.

The aim of this question was to see the effect in the overall performance for English communicative competence between the Experimental Group and its counter parts prior and after the experiment. The ANCOVA test was applied to make a comparison for students' overall performance of English communicative competence before and after the experiment. Table 1a and Table 1b reveal the findings of this question.

Table 1a. The mean score of students' overall performance in the pre-test and post-test of English communicative competence.

Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Experimental	68.45	8.180	79.05	7.984
Control	69.60	6.130	70.68	6.421

Findings in Table 1a indicates that in pre-test the average score of overall performance of the Experimental Group in English communicative competence is 68.45 and the mean score for the Control Group is 69.60 which is almost the same. The Experimental Group (Mean=79.05, SD=7.984) scored significantly higher than the Control Group (Mean=70.68, SD=6.421) on the post-intervention test.

Table 1b. The results of the ANCOVA test on overall performance in English communicative competence.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Overall performance after the experiment					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	6327.765[a]	2	3163.882	2491.373	0.000
Intercept	22.459	1	22.459	17.685	0.000
Pre-Overall	4016.515	1	4016.515	3162.771	0.000
Group	2809.989	1	2809.989	2212.702	0.000
Error	97.785	77	1.270		
Total	440666.000	80			
Corrected Total	6425.550	79			
a. R Squared = 0.985 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.984)					

Note: The alpha level is at $p<0.05$.

Table 1b shows that, when compared to the Control Group, the Experimental Group's total performance in English communicative competence is significantly higher ($F = 2212.702$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.000$). As a result, the findings failed to approve Ho1. Hence, the Research Question 1 is answered.

It can be inferred that the STAD method worked effectively in enhancing overall performance scores of the Experimental Group. On the other hand, the scores of the Control Group taught with the conventional teaching methods were lower. The above findings confirmed the statements proposed by Irawan et al. (2014) and Fitriyasni (2020) which indicated that the implementation of the STAD method had significantly improved students' English communicative competence.

As stressed by Wiener (1986) the STAD method helps to build collaborative learning ability and confidence of students. While working in groups students get an opportunity to learn from their peers. In addition, the utilization of the STAD method provides a conducive learning environment and enhances students' learning ability (Khan & Inamullah, 2011; Rattanatumma & Puncreobutr, 2016; Tarim & Akdeniz, 2008).

RQ2. Does the study find a significant difference in the mean scores on fluency and coherence between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

Ho2: The study does not find a significant difference in mean scores on fluency and coherence scores between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group, which used the traditional teaching method.

The intention of this question was to compare the performance of the treatment group and the control group in terms of fluency and coherence of speaking abilities before and after the intervention. The ANCOVA test was used to look at the differences in speaking fluency and coherence before and after the trial. Results for this question are shown in Table 2a and Table 2b.

Table 2a. The mean score of students' Performance in fluency and coherence of speaking skills in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Experimental	70.28	9.086	80.08	8.411
Control	70.63	8.298	71.11	8.746

Findings in Table 2a reveal that the average score of the Experimental Group for their performance in fluency and coherence of speaking skills is 70.28 and for their counterparts it is 70.63 which is nearly the same. In the test

taken after the intervention, the Experimental Group (Mean=79.05, SD=8.411) scored much higher than its counterpart (Mean=71.11, SD=8.746).

Table 2b. The results of the ANCOVA test on performance in fluency and coherence of speaking skills.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Score of fluency and coherence					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	5949.843[a]	2	2974.921	620.539	0.000
Intercept	80.925	1	80.925	16.880	0.000
Pre-Fluency & Coherence	4496.330	1	4496.330	937.890	0.000
Group	1653.718	1	1653.718	344.949	0.000
Error	369.145	77	4.794		
Total	579061.000	80			
Corrected Total	6318.988	79			
a. R Squared = 0.942 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.940)					

Note: The alpha level is at p<0.05.

Results of the ANCOVA test demonstrated in Table 2b imply that in terms of oral fluency and coherence, compared to its counterpart, the Experimental Group obtained a higher score (F=344.949, df=1, p=.000). Accordingly, the results failed to accept Ho2 and the Research Question 2 is answered.

The research results showed that the impact of the STAD method on the Experimental Group's performance in fluency and coherence of speaking skills is more significant than that of the conventional method on the Control Group. These results support findings by Mudofir et al. (2019) and Yunita (2016) which indicated that concerning the learning outcomes of speaking fluency, the students trained using the conventional teaching method did not perform as good as those who were taught using the STAD learning strategy. This is because the STAD method positively affects the self-esteem of students and motivate them to learn (Wiener, 1986).

RQ3. Does the study find a significant difference in the mean scores on lexical resource between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

Ho3: The study does not find a significant difference in the mean scores on lexical resource between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method.

This purpose of this question was to find out whether there was a difference between the effects of Experimental Group and its counter group in improving the mean scores on lexical resource before and after the experiment. Thereby, the ANCOVA test was applied to examine the effect on performance in lexical resource of speaking skills before and after the intervention. The results for the questions are presented in Table 3a and Table 3b.

Table 3a. The mean score of students' performances in lexical resource of speaking skills in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Experimental	72.48	9.331	81.10	9.058
Control	73.03	10.063	74.28	11.241

Results in Table 3a suggest that the average test score of the Experimental Group before the experiment in terms of lexical resource of speaking skills is 72.48 and the average score for its counter group is 73.03 which is almost equal. However, after the experiment, the Control Group (Mean=74.28, SD=11.241) lagged far behind the treatment group (Mean=81.10, SD=9.058).

Table 3b. The results of the ANCOVA test on performance in lexical resource of speaking skills.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Score of fluency and cohesion					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	227.470[a]	2	113.735	325.347	0.000
Intercept	7.358	1	7.358	21.049	0.000
Pre lexical	171.357	1	171.357	490.180	0.000
Group	59.040	1	59.040	168.889	0.000
Error	26.918	77	0.350		
Total	23137.000	80			
Corrected Total	254.387	79			
a. R Squared = 0.894 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.891)					

Note: The alpha level is at p<0.05.

Findings of the ANCOVA test presented in Table 3b imply that the Control Group failed to defeat the Experimental group in their performance in lexical resource of speaking skills (F = 168.889, df = 1, p = 0.000). On this account, the results failed to accept Ho3 and the answer to research question 3 was obtained.

The findings clearly show that compared with the Control Group who were taught utilizing conventional methods, the application of the STAD method affects the Experimental Group's mean score in lexical resource in a greater way. However, the reason for the better performance of the treatment group was that this group's students were more motivated due to the new teaching strategy (i.e. the STAD method) than their counterparts in the other group. These findings are in agreement with those of Ilyas (2017); Ishtiaq et al. (2017) and Shafiee and Khavaran (2017) which emphasize that the STAD approach is a suitable choice for improving students' vocabulary mastery. As stated by Ghaith (2004), the utilization of the STAD method greatly promotes students' motivation in making their contribution to group achievement and hence improving their own learning performance.

RQ4. Does the study find a significant difference in the mean scores on grammatical range and accuracy between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group, which used the traditional teaching method?

Ho4: The study does not find a significant difference in the mean scores on grammatical range and accuracy between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method.

This question intended to find out whether there was a difference between the effects of Experimental Group and its counter group in improving the mean scores on grammatical range and accuracy before and after the experiment. Thereby, the ANCOVA test was applied to examine the effect on performance in grammatical range and accuracy of speaking skills before and after the intervention. The results for the question are presented in Table 4a and Table 4b.

Table 4a. The mean score of students' performances in grammatical range and accuracy of speaking skills in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Experimental	63.24	17.797	74.60	13.690
Control	62.69	19.098	63.80	18.803

Findings exhibited in Table 4a reveal that in the test taken before the intervention, the Experimental Group scored an average of 63.24 in grammatical range and accuracy of speaking skills and the mean score for the Control Group is 62.69 which is almost the same. In the test after the intervention, the Experimental Group (Mean=74.60, SD=13.690) thus defeated the Control Group (Mean=63.80, SD=18.803) by gaining a much higher score.

The ANCOVA test results shown in Table 4b demonstrate that the Experimental Group greatly surpass its counter group in their performance in grammatical range and accuracy of speaking skills (F=190.447, df=1, p=0.000). Hence the results failed to accept Ho4.

Table 4b. The results of the ANCOVA test on performance in grammatical range and accuracy of speaking skills.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Score of grammatical range and accuracy					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	23147.718[a]	2	11573.859	726.265	0.000
Intercept	1170.816	1	1170.816	73.469	0.000
Pre Grammar	19870.918	1	19870.918	1246.910	0.000
group	3034.996	1	3034.996	190.447	0.000
Error	1227.082	77	15.936		
Total	396474.000	80			
Corrected Total	24374.800	79			
a. R Squared = 0.950 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.948)					

Note: The alpha level is at $p<0.05$.

The answer to Research Question 4 was thus acquired. These results also reveal that, in comparison with the Control Group taught using the conventional method, the utilization of the STAD method in college English teaching improved more significantly the performance of the Experimental Group in grammatical range and accuracy. However, apart from many of the other reasons mentioned above, students in the Experimental Group had a more interesting learning experience with the STAD method than students in the Control Group who were into a routine work. As a result, the Control Group did not perform as good as their counterparts in the Experimental Group in grammatical range and accuracy.

These results are in support of the findings by Monica (2014) and by Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018) which claimed that the STAD method applied by the English teacher successfully helped students to improve their English grammar. Besides, the STAD method encourages every member to participate in group activities and improves interaction among students and encourages them to win more honors and awards for group achievement (Rakhman & Syatroh, 2015; Warawudhi, 2012).

RQ5. Does the study find a significant difference in the mean scores on pronunciation between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

H05: The study does not find a significant difference in the mean scores on pronunciation between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method.

This question tried to find out whether there was a difference between the effects of the Experimental Group and its counter group in improving the mean scores on pronunciation skills before and after the experiment. Accordingly, the ANCOVA test was applied to examine the effect on performance in pronunciation before and after the intervention. The results for the question are presented in Table 5a and Table 5b.

Table 5a. The mean score of students' Performance in pronunciation in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Experimental	63.24	17.797	74.60	13.690
Control	62.69	19.098	63.80	18.803

The results in Table 5a clearly show that the average score of the Experimental Group in pronunciation before the intervention was 63.24 and the mean score of the Control Group was 62.69. It can be inferred that there is only a negligible difference between the score of the Experimental Group and that of the counter group. However, in the test after the intervention, the Experimental Group (Mean=74.60, SD=13.690) greatly exceeded the Control Group (Mean=63.80, SD=18.803).

Table 5b. The results of the ANCOVA test on performance in pronunciation

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Score of pronunciation					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	14659.712[a]	2	7329.856	1328.700	0.000
Intercept	0.874	1	0.874	0.158	0.692
Pre Pronunciation	12117.200	1	12117.200	2196.513	0.000
Group	2792.359	1	2792.359	506.177	0.000
Error	424.775	77	5.517		
Total	403035.000	80			
Corrected Total	15084.487	79			
a. R Squared = 0.972 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.971)					

Note: The alpha level is at p<0.05.

The ANCOVA test results shown in Table 5b confirmed that the treatment group obtained greater score than the counter group in their performance in pronunciation (F=190.447, df=1, p=0.000). Thus, the results failed to accept Ho5 and the Research Question 5 was answered.

The findings disclosed that the use of STAD method in English teaching colleges improved the scores of the treatment group in pronunciation skills in a much greater way as compared to the counter group taught using the conventional method. Students belonging to the Experimental Group worked in a team and were free to discuss and share with their teammates, in which the Control Group had little chance to be involved. These findings are parallel with findings by Mudofir et al. (2019); Sanaee et al. (2013) and Wardani and Sandy (2016) which indicated that students achieved better learning outcomes in English pronunciation because of the STAD method. Moreover, students of different proficiency level work together towards a sharing goal to enhance their overall performance of the group work. Thus, it created a platform for every student to improve individually through collaborative learning (Majoka et al., 2010; Slavin, 1978).

RQ6. Does the study find a significant difference in the mean scores on listening between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method?

Ho6: The study does not find a significant difference in the mean scores on listening between the Experimental Group which used the STAD approach, and the control group which used the traditional teaching method.

The aim of this question was to make a comparison of the performance of the Experimental Group and its counter group in improving the mean scores on in improving listening prior to and after the intervention. The ANCOVA test was carried out to examine the influence on performance in listening before and after the experiment. The results for the question are demonstrated in Table 6a and Table 6b.

Table 6a. The mean score of students' performance in listening in the pre-test and post-test.

Group	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Experimental	66.44	10.363	77.53	9.974
Control	68.48	8.030	70.08	8.247

As can be seen from Table 6a, in the pre-test, the Experimental Group scored 66.44, while the Control Group scored 68.48. As a result, there is little difference between the two groups in listening. However, the average score of the Experimental Group after the intervention (Mean=77.53, SD=9.974) significantly outnumbered that of the Control Group (Mean=70.08, SD=8.247).

Results of the ANCOVA test provided in Table 6b highlight the illustration that the Experimental Group significantly outperformed its counter group in listening (F=912.489, df=1, p=0.000). Hence, the results failed to accept Ho6 and Research Question 6 was answered. The findings rejected Ho6, and answer to research question 6 was also obtained.

Table 6b. The results of the ANCOVA test on performance in listening.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Score of listening					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	8459.496[a]	2	4229.748	1265.780	0.000
Intercept	71.419	1	71.419	21.373	0.000
Pre-listening	6275.446	1	6275.446	1877.969	0.000
Group	3049.185	1	3049.185	912.489	0.000
Error	257.304	77	3.342		
Total	426900.000	80			
Corrected Total	8716.800	79			
a. R Squared = 0.970 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.970)					

Note: The alpha level is at $p<0.05$.

These results showed that the use of the STAD method in college English teaching cause a more significant improvement for the Experimental Group in listening. On the contrary, the Control group where the conventional teaching method was employed, scored lower in listening. These findings are consistent with those of Khansir and Alipour (2015); Ni'mah et al. (2018) and Puspitasari (2011) who found that the conventional teaching method was far less effective than the student team achievements division in improving English learners' listening comprehension. Moreover, it was also accepted that the STAD method fully supported students' listening strategy especially during group work and collaborative learning (Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013).

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings have conspicuously revealed that students of the Experimental Group where the STAD method was adopted improved more significantly in their overall performance in English communicative competence. Furthermore, it dramatically improved their speaking and listening skills. However, students of the Control Group, where the conventional teaching method was employed, were outperformed by those of the Experimental Group, since they could not show improvement in their communicative competence. As a result, conclusion can be drawn that by using the STAD method in colleges, English instruction can help to enhance students' communicative competence.

However, there were a few limitations in this study. The first limitation was the duration of the intervention because it lasted only 8 weeks. Therefore, future researchers can carry out the experiment for a longer period to investigate the retention of knowledge on students' English communicative competence after using the STAD method. Secondly, the sample of this study only consisted of students from one Chinese higher vocational institution. Therefore, the results of the study can only be generalized to a similar sample. It is hoped that a larger sample from different levels of educational institutions in China can be selected for future studies. Thirdly, this study only focused on quantitative research design. In future research, qualitative design should be included. Finally, this study was generally limited to determining the extent to which the STAD approach influenced students' overall English communicative competence. The impact of the STAD approach on reading, writing, and listening can be included in future research.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

REFERENCES

Baker, W. (2015). Culture and complexity through English as a lingua franca: Rethinking competences and pedagogy in ELT. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, 4*(1), 9-30.

El-Dakhs, D. A. S., & Amroun, F. P. (2021). The relative contributions of explicit and implicit instruction in the learning of EFL apologies. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, *9*(2), 122–151.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.73.2021.92.122.151.

Fang, F., & Baker, W. (2018). 'A more inclusive mind towards the world': English language teaching and study abroad in China from intercultural citizenship and English as a Lingua Franca perspectives. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(5), 608-624.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168817718574.

Fitriyasni, F. (2020). Implementation of student teams achievement divisions (STAD) technique: Impact on undergraduate students' English speaking skill. *ACCENTIA: Journal of English Language and Education*, *1*(2), 53-62.

Ghaith, G. (2004). Correlates of the implementation of the STAD cooperative learning method in the English as a foreign language classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *7*(4), 279-294.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050408667813.

Ghasemi, Z., & Baradaran, A. (2018). The Comparative effect of student team-achievement division and cooperative integrated reading and composition on EFL learners' speaking complexity. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *7*(3), 67-72.Available at: https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.3p.67.

Gottlieb, N. (2011). *Language policy in Japan: The challenge of change*: Cambridge University Press.

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. *Sociolinguistics*, *269293*, 269-293.

Ilyas, M. (2017). STAD: A suitable technique for increasing students' vocabulary mastery. *J-SHMIC: Journal of English for Academic*, *4*(1), 51-61.Available at: https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2017.vol4(1).506.

Irawan, N. A., Sutarsyah, C., & Sudirman, S. (2014). *The implementation of stad to increase studentsâ€™ speaking ability*. Doctoral Dissertation, Lampung University.

Ishtiaq, M., Ali, Z., & Salem, M. (2017). An experimental study of the effect of student teams achievement divisions (STAD) on vocabulary learning of EFL adult learners. *Arab World English Journal*, *8*(3), 356-375.Available at: https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no3.23.

Johnstone, B., & Marcellino, W. (2010). Dell Hymes and the ethnography of communication. *The SAGE Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, 57-66.Available at: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200957.n5.

Khan, G. N., & Inamullah, H. M. (2011). Effect of student's team achievement division (STAD) on academic achievement of students. *Asian Social Science*, *7*(12), 211-215.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v7n12p211.

Khansir, A. A., & Alipour, T. (2015). The impact of students team achievement divisions (STAD) on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*(8), 1710-1715.Available at: https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0508.23.

Lin, L. (2016). *Investigating chinese HE EFL classrooms*. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

Majoka, M. I., Dad, M. H., & Mahmood, T. (2010). Student team achievement division (STAD) as an active learning strategy: Empirical evidence from mathematics classroom. *Journal of Education and Sociology*, *4*, 16-20.

Melitz, J. (2016). English as a global language in the Palgrave handbook of economics and language (pp. 583-615). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Monica, O. (2014). *The implementation of STAD used by the English teacher in teaching grammar at Smkn 1 Kepanjen*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

Mudofir, I., Imron, A., Maaliah, E., & Maftuh, M. F. (2019). STAD vs. conventional and learning modality towards English speaking pronunciation learning outcome. *International Journal of Learning and Change*, *11*(1), 66-77.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1504/ijlc.2019.097169.

Ni'mah, D., Ismiatun, F., & Kurniasih, K. (2018). The implementation of student teams achievement divisions (STAD) and authentic materials (AMS) to improve students' listening skill. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, *3*(2), 97-105.

Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Puspitasari, Y. (2011). *Implementing STAD with podcast materials to improve students' listening ability*. Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Negeri Malang.

Rakhman, A., & Syatroh, I. L. (2015). The analysis of students' team achievement divisions (STAD) used in learning practice of translating and interpreting. *Scientific Journal of P2M STKIP Siliwangi*, *2*(1), 19-30.

Rattanatumma, T., & Puncreobutr, V. (2016). Assessing the effectiveness of STAD model and problem based learning in mathematics learning achievement and problem solving ability. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *7*(12), 194-199.

Sanaee, M. Z., Zarein, D. S., & Roozbehi, A. (2013). The effects of cooperative learning on improving English pronunciation and comprehension of medical students. *Educational Research in Medical Sciences*, *2*(2), 3-8.

Shafiee, S., & Khavaran, S. R. (2017). Effects of cooperative learning on vocabulary achievement of reflective/impulsive iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, *5*(17), 11-24.

Slavin, R. E. (1978). Student teams and achievement divisions. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, *12*(1), 39-49.

Spolsky, B. (1989). Communicative competence, language proficiency, and beyond. *Applied Linguistics*, *10*(2), 138-156.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/10.2.138.

Tarim, K., & Akdeniz, F. (2008). The effects of cooperative learning on Turkish elementary students' mathematics achievement and attitude towards mathematics using TAI and STAD methods. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, *67*(1), 77-91.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-007-9088-y.

Tiantong, M., & Teemuangsai, S. (2013). Student team achievement divisions (STAD) technique through the moodle to enhance learning achievement. *International Education Studies*, *6*(4), 85-92.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n4p85.

Wang, Z., Wu, C., & Hao, C. (2011). An empirical study on the optimization of college English vocabulary teaching by stad cooperative learning mode. *Journal of Hebei Agricultural University (Agriculture and Forestry Education Edition)*, *3*, 301-303.

Warawudhi, R. (2012). English reading achievement: Student teams-achievement division (STAD) vs. Lecture method for EFL learners. *Journal of Institutional Research Journal of Institutional Research South East Asia South East Asia*, *10*(1), 5-24.

Wardani, R. P., & Sandy, D. M. (2016). *Improving the tenth grade students'speaking ability by using Stad at Smkn 5 Jember*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Education (IECO) FKIP UNMUH JEMBER.

Wei, L., Lin, H.-H., & Litton, F. (2018). Communicative language teaching (CLT) in EFL context in asia. *Asian Culture and History*, *10*(2), 1-9.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v10n2p1.

Wiener, H. S. (1986). Collaborative learning in the classroom: A guide to evaluation. *College English*, *48*(1), 52-61.Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/376586.

Woods, D., & Cakır, H. (2011). Two dimensions of teacher knowledge: The case of communicative language teaching. *System*, *39*(3), 381-390.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.07.010.

Yang, Y. (2018). An English translation teaching model based on interactive reading theory. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *13*(8), 146-158.Available at: https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v13i08.9047.

Yunita, W. (2016). Improving students'speaking skill by using STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions). *AL-ISHLAH: Journal of Education*, *8*(1), 136-153.

Zheng, X., & Jia, L. (2017). An empirical study on the economic effect of financial cooperation among countries of the "silk road economic belt". *Engineering Economics*, *28*(5), 542-551.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.ee.28.5.19189.