



WAHANA PUBLIKASI



## **The Effect of the Implementation of Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) Cooperative Learning on Students’ English Learning Outcomes at SMK Negeri 1 Manado**

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<b>ARTICLE INFO</b>	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
Received: 21 Sept 2025	The increasing demand for English proficiency in vocational education requires the implementation of innovative teaching strategies that actively engage students in the learning process. This study investigates the effect of the Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) cooperative learning model on students’ English learning outcomes at SMK Negeri 1 Manado. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving twenty eleventh-grade students and one English teacher as research participants. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, documentation, reflective journals, and learning records. The implementation of STAD was conducted through heterogeneous group formation, class presentations, team study activities, individual quizzes, and team recognition sessions. The findings revealed that the STAD model significantly improved students’ participation, motivation, confidence, and engagement in English learning. Students demonstrated greater willingness to communicate in English, increased collaboration skills, and improved understanding of vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and speaking activities. The study further identified four major themes explaining the effectiveness of STAD: reduction of language anxiety, enhancement of intrinsic motivation, effectiveness of peer scaffolding, and development of social competencies. Despite challenges related to time management and unequal participation during the early stages of implementation, the model proved successful in creating a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. The findings suggest that STAD is an effective pedagogical approach for improving English learning outcomes in vocational schools while simultaneously fostering collaborative and communicative competencies required in
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## 1. Introduction

English has become one of the most important languages in the contemporary world. It serves as the primary language of international communication, business, technology, diplomacy, science, and education (Cummins, 2021). As globalization continues to influence economic and social interactions across countries, proficiency in English is increasingly recognized as a crucial competency for students seeking academic and professional success. This reality is particularly relevant in vocational education, where students are prepared not only for higher education but also for direct entry into the workforce. Vocational high schools in Indonesia are expected to equip students with practical competencies that meet labor market demands. In addition to technical expertise in specific vocational fields, graduates are required to possess communication skills, problem-solving abilities, teamwork competencies, and foreign language proficiency. Among these competencies, English language proficiency occupies a strategic position because many industries, particularly tourism, business, hospitality, information technology, and international trade, require employees who can communicate effectively in English (see Daiu & Mihali, 2025; Sejdiu et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, English learning remains a challenging subject for many Indonesian vocational students (Apridayani & Waluyo, 2025; Dagilienė, 2012). Research has consistently shown that students often encounter difficulties in mastering English skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These difficulties are frequently associated with limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient opportunities for authentic language practice, low self-confidence, and anxiety when communicating in a foreign language (Solikha & Rozak, 2020). Furthermore, many students perceive English as a difficult and intimidating subject, which negatively affects their motivation and engagement during classroom instruction. At SMK Negeri 1 Manado, similar challenges were identified prior to the implementation of this study. Preliminary observations indicated that many students experienced difficulties in understanding English learning materials and applying their knowledge in communicative situations. Students often hesitated to participate in classroom discussions, avoided speaking English in front of their peers, and demonstrated limited confidence when completing language tasks. Examination records and classroom observations further revealed that students' learning outcomes were below the expected standards in several English competency areas. One factor contributing to these challenges is the continued dominance of teacher-centered instructional approaches. Traditional classroom practices frequently position teachers as the primary source of knowledge while students assume passive roles as recipients of information. Such approaches provide limited opportunities for interaction, collaboration, critical thinking, and communicative language use. As a result, students may acquire theoretical knowledge about English without developing the practical skills necessary for effective communication.

Contemporary educational theories advocate for learner-centered instructional approaches that actively involve students in constructing knowledge through meaningful interaction and collaboration. Constructivist perspectives emphasize that learning is most effective when students actively participate in knowledge-building processes rather than passively receiving information from teachers. Within this framework, cooperative learning has emerged as one of the most influential instructional approaches for promoting active learning and improving educational outcomes (Gillies, 2016).

Cooperative learning refers to instructional strategies in which students work together in small groups to achieve common learning objectives (Tamimy et al., 2023). According to Johnson et al. (2000), cooperative learning promotes positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, social skill development, and group processing. These elements create learning environments where students support each other's academic progress while simultaneously developing interpersonal competencies (see Hao et al., 2019).

Among various cooperative learning models, Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) is one of the most widely researched and implemented approaches (Nazari et al., 2021; Patimah et al., 2018; Retnawati et al., 2025; Taloen & Susanti, 2023; Wahyudi & Hidayat, 2021). Developed by Slavin (2010), STAD organizes students into heterogeneous groups consisting of members with varying academic abilities, genders, and backgrounds. The model combines teacher instruction, collaborative group activities, individual assessments, and team recognition mechanisms to encourage both academic achievement and social development. The theoretical foundation of STAD is grounded in social constructivist principles, particularly Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), learners can achieve higher levels of understanding when they receive support from more knowledgeable peers or instructors. In STAD, peer tutoring and collaborative problem-solving provide opportunities for students to learn from one another, thereby facilitating deeper understanding and skill development.

The application of STAD in English language learning offers several potential advantages. First, it creates opportunities for authentic communication among students. Language learning is fundamentally a social process that requires interaction and meaningful use of language. Through collaborative activities, students can practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in supportive environments that reduce anxiety and encourage participation.

Second, STAD promotes motivation by linking individual achievement to group success. Students are encouraged to contribute actively because their efforts affect the performance of their teams. This structure fosters responsibility, engagement, and persistence in learning tasks. Furthermore, team recognition systems provide positive reinforcement that enhances students' enthusiasm and commitment to learning. Third, cooperative learning environments can address affective barriers that often hinder language acquisition. Foreign language anxiety has been identified as a significant

obstacle to successful language learning. Students who fear making mistakes may avoid participation and limit their opportunities for practice. STAD reduces such anxiety by creating supportive peer networks where students can learn collaboratively without fear of negative evaluation.

Previous studies have documented the effectiveness of STAD in various educational contexts. Research conducted by (Adl-Ammini et al., 2024; Afriani & Zaman, 2025; Alrayah, 2018; Alzubi et al., 2024; Bećirović et al., 2022; Endrawan & Aliriad, 2023; Novitasari et al., 2024) consistently demonstrates positive relationships between cooperative learning and improved academic achievement, motivation, communication skills, and social development. However, much of the existing literature focuses on quantitative outcomes, leaving limited understanding of the processes through which STAD influences learning experiences in vocational school contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of STAD cooperative learning in English language instruction at SMK Negeri 1 Manado and to examine its influence on students' English learning outcomes. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: How is the STAD cooperative learning model implemented in English learning at SMK Negeri 1 Manado? How do students' English learning outcomes change following the implementation of STAD? What effects does the STAD cooperative learning model have on students' English learning outcomes? The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of cooperative learning theory, provide practical recommendations for English teachers, and offer insights for educational institutions seeking innovative approaches to improve language learning outcomes in vocational education.

## **2. Method**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the implementation of the Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) cooperative learning model and its influence on students' English learning outcomes at SMK Negeri 1 Manado. A qualitative approach was selected because the primary objective of the study was not merely to measure changes in learning outcomes quantitatively but also to explore students' experiences, perceptions, interactions, and behavioral changes throughout the learning process. According to Miles et al. (2014), qualitative research enables researchers to obtain rich and contextualized descriptions of educational phenomena, making it appropriate for examining classroom learning processes and participants' lived experiences (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The study was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Manado during the 2024/2025 academic year. The school was selected because it represents a vocational education context where English proficiency is considered an essential competency for future employment opportunities. Furthermore, the school had expressed interest in implementing innovative student-centered learning approaches to improve English language instruction. The participants consisted of 20 eleventh-grade students and one English teacher who voluntarily participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select

participants who met specific inclusion criteria. Students were required to be actively enrolled in the selected class, participate consistently in STAD learning activities, attend at least five of six instructional sessions, and provide informed consent. The English teacher was selected because of her willingness to collaborate in implementing the STAD model and her extensive teaching experience in vocational education. The demographic composition of participants reflected the diversity typically found in vocational schools. The student participants included twelve female students and eight male students aged between sixteen and seventeen years. They represented diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Minahasa, Sangihe-Talaud, Bolaang Mongondow, Gorontalo, and other ethnic groups in North Sulawesi. This diversity contributed to the richness of classroom interactions and provided opportunities for heterogeneous group formation, which is a fundamental characteristic of the STAD model.

The implementation of STAD followed the procedures proposed by Slavin (2010). First, students were organized into heterogeneous groups consisting of five members with varying levels of English proficiency, gender, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Four groups were formed and assigned names representing international cities: London, Sydney, Toronto, and Dublin. The heterogeneous composition was intended to facilitate peer tutoring and collaborative learning.

The instructional process consisted of six learning meetings. Each meeting followed the STAD sequence. The first stage involved teacher presentation, during which the teacher introduced learning objectives, explained English language materials, and provided examples related to vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, speaking activities, and writing exercises. The second stage involved team study, where students worked collaboratively within their groups to discuss learning materials, solve problems, and support one another's understanding. The third stage consisted of individual quizzes designed to assess students' comprehension independently. The final stage involved calculating team scores and providing recognition for group achievements.

Multiple data collection techniques were employed to ensure methodological triangulation and increase the credibility of findings. The first method was classroom observation. Observations were conducted throughout all instructional sessions and focused on student participation, communication patterns, collaborative behaviors, problem-solving activities, and classroom dynamics. Field notes were recorded systematically to capture both verbal and non-verbal interactions. The second method involved semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with the English teacher and selected student participants before, during, and after the implementation of STAD. Interview questions explored participants' perceptions of English learning, experiences with cooperative learning, challenges encountered during implementation, and perceived changes in learning outcomes. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The third method consisted of documentation analysis. Relevant documents included lesson plans, classroom records, students' assignments, reflection journals,

attendance records, learning assessment results, and teacher notes. These documents provided supporting evidence regarding the implementation process and students' academic development. Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures. The process began with data reduction, during which researchers reviewed all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents to identify relevant information. Coding procedures were then conducted to classify meaningful segments of data into categories representing emerging themes. Similar codes were grouped into broader thematic categories reflecting participants' experiences and perceptions.

After coding, data were displayed in narrative and thematic formats to facilitate interpretation. Relationships among themes were examined to identify patterns explaining the influence of STAD on English learning outcomes. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous comparison between data sources and theoretical frameworks.

To ensure trustworthiness, several validation techniques were employed. Data triangulation involved comparing information obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Prolonged engagement in the research setting enabled the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics. Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted with academic supervisors to enhance analytical rigor and minimize researcher bias. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms and codes instead of participants' real names. All collected data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The findings of this study provide substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) cooperative learning model in enhancing students' English learning outcomes. The results align with cooperative learning theory, social constructivist perspectives, and previous empirical studies demonstrating the benefits of collaborative learning environments (Yang, 2023). The transformation of classroom dynamics observed in this study reflects the principles proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1999), who argue that meaningful learning occurs when students actively participate in knowledge construction through interaction with peers. Before STAD implementation, learning activities were dominated by teacher-centered instruction. Following implementation, students became active participants who engaged in discussion, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative problem-solving. This shift indicates movement toward learner-centered pedagogy, which contemporary educational research identifies as essential for effective learning. The increase in student participation supports previous findings reported by Slavin (2010), who emphasized that cooperative learning structures encourage active engagement by creating positive

interdependence among learners. Students in this study demonstrated greater willingness to ask questions, contribute ideas, and participate in English language activities because their contributions influenced group success. This finding suggests that cooperative learning can address common participation problems frequently observed in foreign language classrooms (Sitompul et al., 2025).

A particularly significant finding concerns the reduction of language anxiety. Foreign language anxiety has long been recognized as a major obstacle to language acquisition (Aparece & Bacasmot, 2023; Jin et al., 2021; Thompson & Khawaja, 2016). Students who fear making mistakes often avoid participation and miss opportunities for language practice. The present study found that STAD created supportive peer environments that reduced fear of negative evaluation. Students perceived group discussions as psychologically safer than whole-class participation, enabling them to take linguistic risks and communicate more freely.

This reduction of anxiety can be explained through social support mechanisms inherent in cooperative learning. Positive peer relationships foster trust and encourage learners to view mistakes as natural components of the learning process. Consequently, students become more willing to experiment with language and engage in communicative activities. These findings support affective theories emphasizing the importance of emotional factors in language learning success. The development of peer scaffolding observed during STAD implementation is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners can achieve higher levels of performance with support from more knowledgeable individuals. In this study, higher-achieving students frequently assisted peers in understanding vocabulary, grammar, reading texts, and speaking tasks.

Importantly, peer tutoring benefited both tutors and learners. Students providing assistance reinforced their own understanding through explanation and elaboration. Meanwhile, students receiving support gained access to explanations that were often more accessible than teacher-centered instruction. This reciprocal learning process illustrates how cooperative learning creates opportunities for shared knowledge construction (Nguyen & Oanh, 2025). The findings further demonstrate the motivational benefits of STAD. Self-determination theory suggests that motivation increases when learners experience competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The STAD structure supports all three dimensions. Students experienced competence through academic achievement, autonomy through active participation, and relatedness through positive group interactions. Team recognition systems additionally reinforced motivation by acknowledging collective effort and progress.

The improvement of English language skills across speaking, listening, reading, and writing domains highlights the multidimensional benefits of cooperative learning. Language acquisition requires meaningful interaction and authentic communication opportunities. STAD provides these opportunities by encouraging students to use English for practical purposes during collaborative activities. Consequently, language

learning becomes a social and communicative process rather than merely an academic exercise. The development of social competencies represents another important contribution of STAD. Vocational education aims not only to develop academic knowledge but also to prepare students for future employment. Contemporary workplaces increasingly require teamwork, communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. The collaborative experiences provided by STAD contributed directly to the development of these competencies. Despite the positive outcomes, the challenges identified during implementation warrant consideration. Time management difficulties suggest that teachers require careful planning when implementing cooperative learning activities. Similarly, unequal participation highlights the importance of monitoring group dynamics and ensuring accountability mechanisms. These challenges do not diminish the value of STAD but rather indicate areas requiring thoughtful facilitation.

Overall, the findings support the conclusion that STAD functions as a comprehensive pedagogical approach capable of improving academic achievement, enhancing motivation, reducing anxiety, and fostering social development. The model is particularly suitable for vocational school contexts where both language proficiency and collaborative competencies are essential.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The findings demonstrate that STAD positively influenced students' academic performance, classroom participation, motivation, confidence, and social development. The implementation of STAD transformed English learning from a predominantly teacher-centered process into a collaborative and student-centered learning environment. Students became more actively engaged in discussions, problem-solving activities, and peer tutoring interactions. The model successfully encouraged learners to assume greater responsibility for their own learning while simultaneously supporting the learning of their peers. Four major themes emerged from the findings. First, STAD reduced language anxiety by creating supportive learning environments where students felt comfortable making mistakes and practicing English communication. Second, the model enhanced intrinsic motivation through positive interdependence and team recognition mechanisms. Third, peer scaffolding facilitated deeper understanding of English learning materials and promoted collaborative knowledge construction. Fourth, STAD contributed to the development of important social competencies, including communication, teamwork, leadership, and responsibility. The findings also indicate improvements in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Students became more confident in using English and demonstrated greater willingness to participate in communicative activities.

Furthermore, collaborative interactions provided meaningful opportunities for authentic language practice that extended beyond traditional instructional approaches. Although challenges related to time management, unequal participation, and adaptation to cooperative learning were identified, these obstacles decreased as students became more familiar with STAD procedures. Effective teacher facilitation played a critical role

in addressing these challenges and maintaining productive group dynamics. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that STAD is an effective instructional model for improving English learning outcomes in vocational schools. The model not only enhances academic achievement but also supports the development of interpersonal competencies required in contemporary educational and professional contexts.

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest

### Authors' contribution

The authors make substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors take responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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