

## The effectiveness of cooperative learning on writing skills for 9th graders at Binh Phu secondary school

Hiệu quả của phương pháp học tập hợp tác trong rèn luyện kỹ năng viết cho học sinh lớp 9 trường THCS Bình Phú

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**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu này xem xét hiệu quả của phương pháp học tập hợp tác đối với kỹ năng viết của học sinh lớp 9 tại Trường Trung học Cơ sở Bình Phú và tìm hiểu thái độ cũng như nhận thức của họ về học tập hợp tác. Một thiết kế nghiên cứu tình huống đã được sử dụng, kết hợp cả phương pháp thu thập dữ liệu định lượng và định tính. Các công cụ nghiên cứu bao gồm tài liệu và phỏng vấn. Phân tích trong nghiên cứu này dựa trên phương pháp chuỗi thời gian do Yin đề xuất [1]. Kết quả cho thấy học tập hợp tác đã cải thiện đáng kể kỹ năng viết của học sinh về mặt tổ chức, nội dung và sử dụng ngôn ngữ. Sự tiến bộ trong kỹ năng viết của học sinh được quan sát trong khoảng thời gian ba tuần. Trong quá trình kiểm tra lỗi cá nhân, học sinh đã xác định tổng cộng 102 lỗi. Tuy nhiên, trong quá trình kiểm tra lỗi nhóm, 331 lỗi đã được xác định, và 290 trong số 331 lỗi đã được sửa chữa thành công. Ngoài ra, học sinh bày tỏ quan điểm cá nhân tích cực về học tập hợp tác với 93% học sinh ủng hộ học tập hợp tác và 7% học sinh cho rằng học tập hợp tác không hiệu quả.

**Từ khóa:** Học tập hợp tác; Kỹ năng viết; Quy trình viết

**Abstract:** This study examines the effectiveness of cooperative learning on the writing skills of ninth-grade students at Binh Phu Secondary School and investigates their attitudes and perceptions of cooperative learning. A case study research design was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The research instruments included documents and interviews. The analysis in this study is based on the time series method proposed by Yin [1]. The findings revealed that cooperative learning significantly enhanced students' writing skills in terms of organization, content, and language use. The students' writing improvement was observed over a three-week period. In the individual error check, students identified a total of 102 errors. However, in the group error check, 331 errors were identified, and 290 out of 331 errors were successfully corrected. Additionally, students expressed positive personal views on cooperative learning with 93% of students supported cooperative learning and 7% of students found cooperative learning was ineffective.

**Keywords:** Cooperative learning; Writing skills; The writing process

### 1. Introduction

English, as a global language, is widely used for communication all over the world. According to Crystal [2], approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide are fluent in or capable of using English. It is the right language with a special role in more than 70 countries. The historical dominance of Britain in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th century has asserted its position as the primary language in global economics, politics and international

relations. Today, English is not only a medium of communication in global transactions but also a crucial tool for accessing academic knowledge.

According to the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) [3], English in the general education program not only helps students establish and develop communication competence but also enhances their overall competence to live, work more effectively, and better study other subjects. English has become a global communication tool, enabling

students to access advanced knowledge of science and techniques, exchange information, and learn about various cultures worldwide.

Students are expected to obtain the specific objective of learning English at the secondary level, which focuses on the basic language skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing (MOET) [3]. However, many students in general and the ones at Binh Phu Secondary School in particular have faced challenges in learning English, especially the writing skills. Richard and Renandya [4], which says that writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered among four skills because it requires the learners' ability of accurate grammar and coherent ideas. To produce a good quality writing product, some strategies are proposed to deal with the problems in writing process, as noted by Siregar [5].

Various solutions have been taken into consideration for students' writing improvement so far. D. W. Johnson et al. [6] discuss that there has been a significant increase in interest in Cooperative Learning over the last three decades. Cooperative learning in classrooms can assist students in developing social strategies and attitudes that are crucial to improve social relationship between students or among student groups. Many models of cooperative learning focus on promoting students' thinking and cognitive development, too. This helps them develop higher-level thinking abilities. Cooperative learning is regarded as a learning strategy to help students obtain more comprehensive and in-depth learning outcomes, according to Terwel [7]. Similarly, Loh and Teo [8] emphasize that Cooperative Learning is one of the important strategies of teaching and learning that meet the active learning requirement.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Writing skills**

Floyd et al. [9] define writing skill as a crucial aspect of language learning, and it involves the process in which words are encoded. Richards and Richard [10: 293] refer to listening, speaking, reading, and writing as the four language skills. Among them, speaking and writing are considered active or productive skills, while reading and listening are classified as passive or receptive skills. Writing is not merely about expressing ideas but also a process that enables learners to develop their ability to use language accurately and effectively. This viewpoint aligns with that of Sudrajat & Sari [11], who state that writing skills are the effort to reinforce words and enhance language and lexical features. Moreover, Deshpande [12] recommends that students who are not native speakers should have continuous opportunities to improve and develop their skills throughout the process of learning to write. Additionally, Turner et al. [13] suggest that essential writing skills for students include writing objectively, which involves using academic language free from personal bias; incorporating claims from the literature, which requires integrating information through paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing; writing citations and reference lists, ensuring that sources are acknowledged properly; constructing paragraphs around claims from the literature, focusing on logical paragraph structure and argument development; responding to the assignment task, which involves understanding and addressing academic requirements; organizing ideas and information, using methods such as lists, comparisons, evaluations, and arguments; planning before writing, identifying key points and outlining structure; and writing drafts, editing, and proofreading, which includes revising multiple drafts to improve structure and coherence, then proofreading for accuracy in citations, grammar, spelling, and overall clarity.

## **2.2. The Writing Process**

The writing process is described differently by various researchers. Oshima and Hogue [14] claim that the writing process consists of four main steps. Prewriting is the first step, which involves generating and organizing ideas before drafting, allowing writers to clarify their thoughts and establish a solid foundation for their work. Next, organizing focuses on structuring the information logically to ensure coherence and a clear flow of ideas. The third step is writing, and it entails developing the first draft based on the outlined plan, where writers expand on their ideas and create a well-structured, logically organized text with clear topic sentences, supporting details, and smooth transitions between paragraphs. Finally, the polishing stage, which includes revising and editing, helps refine the draft by improving clarity, coherence, and grammar, ensuring that the final product is well-crafted and free of errors. These four steps provide a structured approach to effective academic writing. Connelly [15] states the writing process consists of six steps. It starts with prewriting, where writers explore ideas, brainstorm, research, and organize their thoughts before drafting. Next is planning, where writers develop a thesis statement and arrange supporting details to create a clear structure. In the writing step, they put ideas onto paper without focusing too much on grammar or sentence structure. After drafting, the cooling step allows writers to take a break before revising. The revising step helps improve the draft by checking arguments, strengthening the thesis, and adding necessary details. Writers also remove unnecessary or repetitive ideas to make the text clearer and more engaging. Finally, in the editing step, writers correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors. Refining sentences by removing wordiness and rewriting unclear and weak sentences is also done by writers.

According to Nunan as cited in Apsari [16], it includes three stages: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. As noted by Rahayaan et al. [17], pre-writing is the stage where students are encouraged to write by stimulating their thoughts for the first draft. At this stage, students brainstorm, generate ideas, and gather information to begin their writing. Rahayaan et al. [17] added that writing is the stage where multiple drafts are revised before producing the final product. At this stage, the focus is not on grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft but rather on the fluency of writing. Accordingly, Apsari [16] defines this stage as the process of revising and editing writing. Writers may add some necessary ideas, but the most important task is to revise and edit for grammar, mechanics, spelling, and punctuation to ensure that the writing is fully understood in terms of both content and organization.

## **2.3. Cooperative learning**

Cooperative learning is a teaching method in which students are divided into small groups to work together. The goal of this method is to maximize not only individual learning but also mutual learning within the groups, as described by Johnson and Johnson [18]. Cooperative learning is a process where learners work together in small groups to support one another to achieve an objective. It emphasizes cooperation over competition, which is the opposite of the traditional education system, where students often compete with each other, as noted by Y. P. Singh and Agrawal [19]. Cooperative learning is an effective instructional strategy in which students work in small groups, consisting of members with different abilities. They use various learning activities to better understand a subject. Each member is responsible for learning the taught knowledge and simultaneously helping their teammates learn, as defined by Baliya [20]. The strategy of cooperative learning is effective for

language teaching and learning, as stated by Siddique and Singh [21]. The researchers describe cooperative learning as a teaching strategy that educators use to teach language skills. This strategy proves to be most effective when students work in a small group and are rewarded and recognized based on their group achievements.

#### **2.4. Benefits and drawbacks of Cooperative Learning**

Ghufron and Ermawati [22] pinpoint benefits from cooperative learning in writing class. Accordingly, cooperative learning helps students actively take part in the learning process, promotes motivation, reduces anxiety, builds self-confidence, makes students responsible for their tasks, enables them to express and share ideas easily, and helps them better understand the lesson. Nevertheless, implementing cooperative learning requires much more time, more preparation, and active engagement from both teachers and students. Additionally, classroom management can be challenging. According to Gillies [23], academic and social benefits of cooperative learning have been documented when students work together. Their academic results are better than those achieved through individual learning. Gillies [23] also discusses several advantages of various aspects of cooperative learning. One key advantage is that students' time is used more productively when they work with teammates. Students can learn more effectively, and teachers can instruct more students at once. Another key advantage is that cooperative learning positively impacts students' performance. Cooperative learning has proven to be an effective pedagogical practice for language teaching, as demonstrated in the research of M.A.Terfa [24], and for language learning, as shown in Zhang [25]. Terfa [24] states that working cooperatively offers students multiple

opportunities to exchange knowledge and enhance their cognitive growth. In addition, cooperative learning enhances learners' motivation by creating a supportive learning environment. The teacher acts as a facilitator and observes students' interactions. Anxiety is decreased, and confidence is increased since attention is turned to the entire group rather than an individual. Students are not criticized for making an error and it becomes a teaching tool instead. As a result, students feel comfortable expressing their language skills. The interactive process, according to Harris & Brown [26], is influenced by various factors such as motivation, empathy, self-esteem, and anxiety. Additionally, M.A.Terfa [24] argues that instructional activities also affect the process. Through cooperative learning, students have opportunities to learn different social skills and structured activities, which maximize their interactions. The strategy has been proven to enhance learners' academic achievement. Obviously, in a heterogeneous group, each individual is responsible for their own learning while also helping peers, thereby enhancing an atmosphere of achievement. This view is advocated by Zhang [25]. The researcher explains that students who work in groups engage in face-to-face interaction, and the interdependence of roles, rewards, and resources can support and encourage insecure students. As a result, they are motivated to achieve greater academic success. However, cooperative does not work for everyone. The view is advocated by Keramati and Gillies [27].

#### **2.5. Checklist**

Harris and Brown [26] state that a checklist is a frequently used tool that enables students to evaluate their own work before submission for feedback or grading.

Huynh and Tran [28] also emphasize the advantages of self-assessment checklists in identifying and correcting

errors, which highlights the significance of promoting metacognitive awareness among students learning to write. Furthermore, self-assessment activities that incorporate checklists have been shown to encourage active learning. When students use self-assessment checklists, they engage in evaluating various aspects of their writing, such as content, organization, and language use in their essays. Javaherbakhsh [29: 215] demonstrated that checklists, when used as a self-assessment tool, improved students' writing ability based on five aspects: "introduction, body, and conclusion (organization); logical development of ideas (content); structure; mechanics; style and quality of expression". Likewise, Ibnian [30: 190-191] concluded that a checklist incorporated into the story-mapping teaching technique enhanced students' writing skills "in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, language use, as well as skills emerging from creative abilities". Beyond improving structural and grammatical accuracy, checklists also encourage students to become more independent in the writing process.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

According to Yin [1], a case study is appropriate when the aim is to explore a phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, particularly when it is difficult to separate the phenomenon from its context. This study follows a case study design because evaluating the impact of cooperative learning on students' writing skills cannot be isolated from its specific educational setting. This study was analyzed through time-series analysis proposed by Yin [1] to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of cooperative learning on the 9th graders' writing skills at Binh Phu Secondary School. A mix-method approach was selected using both quantitative and

qualitative data collection in the study. The quantitative method approach was adopted to evaluate students' writing skills before and after the application of cooperative learning. In addition, the students' challenges and personal views were found through the qualitative method approach. Following Yin [1], a case study protocol is established to ensure reliability and replicability. This protocol includes clear procedures for sample selection, data collection, and analysis.

#### **3.2. Setting**

This study was conducted at Binh Phu Secondary School, a public educational institution located in Binh Duong Province, with a focus on 9th-grade students. The school offers English as part of its curriculum, and writing is one of the important skills at the secondary school level. The research setting was chosen based on the identified challenges students face in English paragraph writing and the feasibility of implementing cooperative learning since the researcher is currently teaching in this context.

#### **3.3. Sample and participants**

A sample of thirty-five 9th-grade students was purposefully selected to evaluate the impact of cooperative learning on writing skills. Additionally, three English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers were selected through purposive sampling technique to offer insights into the challenges students face in their writing. According to Denscombe [31], purposive sampling is used when the researcher has prior knowledge about particular individuals or events and deliberately selects cases that are most likely to yield valuable data. Thus, in this study, both students and teachers were intentionally selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, ensuring that the collected data would provide meaningful insights into the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' writing skills.

### 3.4. Instrumentation

Merriam [32] defines a case study as a type of qualitative research, while are a crucial source of data in case studies, particularly when investigating human affairs or actions. In this context, interviewees who directly teach and observe students' writing can provide valuable insights into common writing errors. Furthermore, Yin [33] emphasizes that interviews in case studies offer depth by not only providing explanations but also capturing personal perspectives such as participants' perceptions, attitudes, and meanings. In addition, Merriam [32] highlights that documents serve as valuable data sources, and they can be generated either by participants or researchers during a study. Accordingly, the error checklist adopted and modified by the researcher in this study aligns with this perspective.

Likewise, students' writing samples as participant-generated documents serve as essential data sources because they provide obvious evidence of students' writing performance. The error checklist was customized based on existing frameworks or prior research to categorize and measure the frequency of writing errors made by students during the post-writing stage in a cooperative learning context. In conclusion, this study employs two research instruments: documents, including the error checklist and students' writing samples, and interviews, consisting of both in-depth and structured interviews.

#### 3.4.1. Documents

According to Ferris [34], error feedback should prioritize the types of errors that students frequently make in order to decide which errors to correct. Accordingly, the researcher developed a 12-item error checklist based on the three criteria for a good paragraph outlined in section 2.2.3. The checklist included common error types identified through teachers' observations of students'

challenges and errors found in students' writing during the final exam of the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024. The 12-item error checklist (Appendix 1) was adapted from Singleton's [35] editing checklist to align with the research objectives. During the study, using a checklist with consistent items ensured reliability in identifying and correcting errors. Additionally, the English paragraphs that students produced in the early stage of the study were collected and analyzed as writing samples.

#### 3.4.2. Interviews

To create a comfortable atmosphere and enhance effectiveness, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews using a semi-structured format with three open-ended questions (Appendix 2) at a coffee shop. Three teachers participated in separate interviews on different days, with each session lasting 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in writing, as participants felt more at ease without recording devices, which also helped minimize potential bias due to misinterpretation. In addition to interviewing teachers to gain deeper insights into students' challenges, the researcher conducted a survey interview (Appendix 3) using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Khalifeh et al [36] and Piwchai [37] to evaluate students' attitudes and perceptions towards cooperative learning. It is a 10-statement questionnaire divided into two sections: Section 1 - Demographic Information and Section 2 - Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Cooperative Learning. The students' attitude section of the questionnaire was validated by Khalifeh et al. [36], with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.881, ensuring its internal consistency and reliability. Additionally, the students' perception section was validated by Piwchai [37] through an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) assessment,

which involved three experts reviewing the questionnaire and a pilot test with six students before the main study. This process ensured that the questionnaire was methodologically robust. Therefore, the questionnaire employed in this study is considered a methodologically rigorous and effective research instrument for evaluating students' attitudes and perceptions towards cooperative learning.

## **4. Research Procedure**

### **4.1. Preparation**

A writing task on the topic "Write a paragraph (about 100 words) about the eating habits of a classmate." was also designed before implementing cooperative learning. This topic was selected from page 7 of English 9, Episode 2 by Hoang et al. [38]. This task aimed to produce 32 writing samples for analysis, serving as baseline data to evaluate students' writing skills before implementing cooperative learning. In addition, a checklist consisting of 12 items covering three criteria for a good paragraph (organization, content and language use) adapted from Singleton [35] was prepared to evaluate the students' writing skills. The students used the Vietnamese version of the error checklist tool to make the checking process easier.

### **4.2. Data collection**

To evaluate the impact of cooperative learning, data was collected over three weeks from February 26th 2024 to March 11th 2024. In week 1 (February 26th, 2024), a total of 37 writing samples and 37 error checklists were collected from individual error checking. One student was absent due to illness, so only 37 sets were collected instead of 38. In week 2 (March 4th, 2024), 35 error checklists were collected for group error checking. Three writing samples were excluded because 2 students were absent and one student had not participated in the writing task in week 1. In week 3 (March

11th, 2024), 35 error checklists were collected for group-based correction. Additionally, 35 questionnaires were gathered throughout the week 3.

### **4.3. Data analysis**

#### **4.3.1. Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data from the three in-depth interviews was collected on February 22nd, 24th, and 25th, 2024. The data analysis that followed the qualitative data analysis method was proposed by Showkat and Parveen [39] to further explore challenges in students' paragraph writing skills at Binh Phu Secondary School. The researcher reviewed the field notes multiple times to code relevant and important information for the study. Next, the identified themes were categorized and named as Paragraph Criteria, Challenges in Writing, and Feedback and Error Detection. The researcher continued refining and organizing these themes to align with the research objectives. To ensure data reliability, the researcher invited the interviewees to review and confirm the accuracy of the categorized themes. Finally, the data was analyzed and presented under these themes.

#### **4.3.2. Quantitative data analysis**

Week 1 (February 26th, 2024): Students were required to do an individual writing task on the topic "Write a paragraph (about 100 words) about the eating habits of a classmate". The topic was selected from page 7 of English 9, Episode 2 by Hoang et al. [38]. Students identified and marked their errors using the error checklist tool. The researcher then rechecked and documented the number of writing errors on the checklist tool. The qualitative data from 35 writing samples was used to identify patterns of errors that the students made in their writings. The quantitative data from 35 error checklists was entered into Excel software to calculate frequencies. The quantitative data from error recheck of the researcher

was also quantified and compared with that of students' individual check.

Week 2 (March 4th, 2024): The early writing samples and error checklists were distributed to 7 groups, each consisting of 5 students. Under the teacher's guidance, group members discussed and worked cooperatively to identify errors using the error checklist tool. Within a group, students reached a consensus on the identified error types and marked them on the checklist. The quantitative data from 35 error checklists was calculated for error frequencies using Excel software. This data was compared with that from students' individual check to evaluate the students' ability to identify errors.

Week 3 (March 11th, 2024): The seven groups of students received their early writing samples and error checklists with identified and marked errors from week 2. Within each group, members discussed and reached a consensus on how to correct the errors. The groups rewrote the corrected errors in the margins of their writing. The frequencies of corrected errors were compared to the frequencies of identified errors to evaluate students' accuracy in error correction. To determine whether students' writing skills improved, both their ability to identify and correct errors was considered. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to 35 students who participated in cooperative learning to explore their perceptions and attitudes. The quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed for frequency and percentage using Excel software to determine whether students perceived improvement in their writing skills after applying cooperative learning and whether their attitudes toward the strategy were positive or negative.

#### **4.4. Validity and reliability**

##### **4.4.1. Validity**

Creswell [40] claims researchers validate findings using strategies such as triangulation and member checking. The

researcher selected the method of triangulation and member-checks to ensure the validity of the data in this study. The various sources of evidence were collected to construct validity of the study case. Multiple informants were invited to the interviews. The field notes were given back to the interviewees to review or add information for clarification. In addition to the researcher, one teacher also participated in verifying the number of errors from students' individual check and group-based correction.

The first teacher reviewed the number of errors of the individual check from March 1st to March 3rd, 2024, and then compared them with the results of teacher recheck that the researcher had completed on February 29th, 2024. From March 14th to March 15th, 2024, that teacher checked the number of corrected errors of the group-based correction again and compared them with the results of the teacher recheck had reviewed on March 13th, 2024. On March 16th, 2024, after comparing the results, the researcher and the teacher reached a final agreement.

This verification process helped increase the validity of the study. Yin [1] explains the external validity of a single-case study can be improved by using grounded theory. This study is based on a theoretical framework related to cooperative learning and the development of writing skills in that context. Theoretical frameworks have guided the researcher in coding, analyzing, and interpreting data scientifically. Yin [33] suggests that using the Logic Models analysis technique strengthens the research's internal validity.

This study also applies Logic Models to ensure logical and coherent reasoning in drawing conclusions. This approach helps avoid subjective interpretations and improves internal validity, as recommended by Yin [33]. While Flyvbjerg [41] argues that case studies

may lack clear measurement criteria, leading to potential researcher bias, this study ensures rigor by using multiple data sources, as suggested by Yin [33]. Therefore, this study is not only based on the theoretical frameworks but also uses scientific data analysis methods to ensure the validity of the findings.

4.4.2. Reliability

Quintão et al. [42] state that the reliability of case studies is related to the research protocol and case database. The protocol outlines the rules that researchers follow during the research process, while the database includes all the materials collected for the study. This case study clearly defines the research protocol based on Yin [1], ensuring that the data collection and analysis process is systematic, consistent, and replicable. Therefore, this study achieved reliability.

5. Findings and discussion

5.1. Findings from the teacher in depth interview

Table 1. Teacher Interview Questions

<b>Paragraph criteria</b>
What criteria do you remind your students to write an English paragraph?
<b>Challenges in writing</b>
What kind of errors do your students make in their paragraph writing?
<b>Feedback and error correction</b>
How do you provide feedback to help your students correct writing errors?

The teacher interview data revealed that students face challenges related to content, organization, and language use errors. Difficulties in paragraph organization align with Rass [43], Graham and Perin [44], and Rustipa [45], who pinpointed the paragraph organization is a common struggle for students. Findings on content errors are supported by Alsamadani [46], who stated that students struggle with syntactic and semantic acceptability in their writing. Similarly, sentence structure problems align with Afrin [47], who noted that

students frequently encounter difficulties in this area. Regarding grammatical errors, the findings are consistent with Ellis [48], who emphasized that grammatical problems affect students' written texts, and Swain and Lapkin [49], who argued that such errors hinder clarity and coherence in writing.

5.1.1. Findings from the questionnaire (Appendix 1: The frequencies of respondents to the survey interview)

The findings from the questionnaire indicated that a total of 33 students (94%) agreed that working in groups enhances their ability to edit errors related to organization, content, and language use while only 2 students (6%) disagreed. Similarly, 30 students (86%) supported cooperative learning, stating that it helps them improve writing skills by learning from their peers' errors, whereas 5 students (14%) disagreed. These findings align with Mahmoud [51] assertion that cooperative learning and peer feedback play a crucial role in enhancing students' writing skills. This is further supported by Rahayaan [17], who emphasized that students improve their writing when they engage in revision and rewriting to refine language use, organization, and content. A total of 34 students (97%) agreed that group activities using the error checklist tool make learning English writing easier while only 1 student (0.3%) disagreed. Similarly, 33 students (94%) agreed that cooperative learning with the use of an error checklist tool helps save time in learning English writing whereas 2 students (0.6%) disagreed. These findings align with Ghuftron and Ermawati [52], who emphasized that cooperative learning makes students' learning easier. Gillies [53] also supported the findings, stating that cooperative learning not only helps students save time but also enhances teaching effectiveness. Additionally, Vasu et al. [53] highlighted that the checklist tool reduces teachers' workload and time to provide feedbacks. There is a

high level of student support for cooperative learning, with 97% of students willing to participate in cooperative learning activities, while only one student (0.3%) expressed disagreement. Similarly, 34 students (97%) were satisfied with their teachers' application of cooperative learning with the use of the error checklist tool in writing instruction. Furthermore, 33 students (94%) realized that cooperative learning had a positive impact on their attitude toward learning to write, though a small percentage (0.6%) disagreed. These findings align with Zhang [25], who asserted that students engaged in cooperative learning feel more involved through face-to-face interaction. Additionally, Kagan (1994), as cited in Phan [53] emphasized that cooperative learning fosters a positive attitude toward writing. Cooperative learning plays a significant role in fostering positive relationships among students, with 31 participants (89%) acknowledging its effectiveness, while only 4 students (1.1%) disagreed. Additionally, 32 students (91%) realized that cooperative learning enhances class participation, whereas 3 students (0.9%) did not share the same view. Similarly, 32 students (91%) acknowledged that cooperative learning with improving their knowledge, self-confidence, and communication skills, though a small rate (9%) disagreed. These results align with Ghufon and Ermawati [22], who emphasized that cooperative learning encourages active engagement in the learning process, boosts motivation, reduces anxiety, and strengthens self-confidence. The findings from the questionnaire indicate that students hold positive attitudes and perceptions toward cooperative learning. The effectiveness of cooperative learning and the error checklist tool in enhancing students' writing skills was validated through the questionnaire data. The high agreement rate (93.1%) demonstrates that

students recognize the benefits of cooperative learning, both in terms of academic improvement and classroom engagement. Meanwhile, the low disagreement rate (6.9%) suggests that only a small number of students find cooperative learning ineffective, aligning with Keramati and Gillies [26], who noted that cooperative learning may not be work for everyone.

#### 5.1.2. Findings from individual error check and teacher error recheck in week 1

##### - *Findings from individual error check*

(Appendix 2: The frequencies of errors checked by the individuals)

##### - *Findings from teacher error recheck*

(Appendix 3: The frequencies of errors rechecked by the teacher)

The results from the individual error check indicated that students struggled to identify their own errors across all three error types: organization errors, content errors, and language use errors. In the individual error check, students identified a total of 102 errors, whereas the teacher found 491 errors during the recheck. Specifically, students identified 85 language use errors, while the teacher recognized 345 errors, which is 260 more than what students identified. Similarly, students only identified 12 organization errors, whereas the teacher found 123 errors, showing a difference of 111 errors and highlighting students' difficulty in identifying organization errors in their writing. Regarding content errors, students identified only 5 errors, whereas the teacher found 23 errors, further emphasizing that students struggled to identify content-related problems in their writing. Overall, the teacher identified nearly five times more errors than students did in the individual error check, confirming that students face difficulties in identifying their own errors. While they were able to identify language use errors, they identified very few organization and content errors. The findings coincide with

Rass [43], who stated that non-native students face challenges related to content and organization in their writing. Organization errors committed by students align with Graham and Perin's [44] research, while content errors correspond with the findings of Helala and Aboubou [54], who claimed that students make content errors when they write irrelevant sentences within a paragraph or go off-topic. Moreover, the findings indicate that language use errors in terms of sentence structure align with Afrin [47], whereas errors related to grammatical rules are consistent with the research of Ellis [48] and Swain and Lapkin [49].

#### 5.1.3. Findings from group error check in week 2

(Appendix 4: The frequencies of errors checked by groups)

Students identified significantly more errors in the group error check with the total of 331 errors compared to the individual error check with 102 errors, reflecting a considerable improvement in their ability to identify errors. The findings align with the studies of Zhang [25] and Gillies [23] where the researchers claimed that students' performance are better when they work in groups. Moreover, the findings are also in line with Mahmoud [50], Yusuf et al. [55] that when students work cooperatively, they can receive feedback from their peers to enhance their writing skills. Yusuf et al. [55] stated that students can gain a better understanding of the five criteria of the writing such as organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics when students are applied with cooperative learning. In this current study, students identified 41 organization errors in the group check, compared to only 12 in the individual check. This increase of 29 errors indicates that working in groups with the use of the error checklist tool and teacher's guidance enabled students to identify

organization errors in their writings more effectively. The findings are consistent with M.A.Terfa [56] who stated that cooperative learning fosters peer feedback and teacher support while checklists serve as a valuable tool to reduce educators' workload in providing feedback, as noted by Vasu et al. [53]. Although the content error was the one identified very few in both checks, students still demonstrated improvement in identifying them, increasing from 5 in the individual check to 11 in the group check. Their ability to identify language use errors showed a dramatic improvement when the students worked together with the checklist tool and teacher guidance. In the group check, students identified 279 language errors, which is 194 more than in the individual check.

#### 5.1.4. Findings from group error correction in week 3

(Appendix 5: The frequencies of errors corrected by groups)

The findings from group error correction in week 3 revealed that students were able to correct a remarkable number of errors in their writing after engaging in peer feedback activities during cooperative learning. A total of 290 errors were corrected across three error types, including 9 organization errors, 23 content errors, and 258 language use errors. The total number of corrected errors in week 3 (290 out of 331 errors identified in week 2) indicates that students gained a better understanding of organization, content, and language use by successfully correcting 41 errors through the activity of peer feedback in cooperative learning. These findings align with Konda and Tilwani [57], who stated that cooperative learning enhances students' ability to provide peer feedback on organization and grammar in writing. Similarly, they support Abeti's [58] perspective, which emphasizes that cooperative learning improves writing

skills in terms of organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, and mechanics. In week 3, students successfully corrected 9 out of 11 content errors identified in week 2. Likewise, they revised 32 out of 41 organization errors from the previous week's group error check. Additionally, 258 out of 279 language use errors were successfully corrected, demonstrating a substantial improvement in applying grammatical rules and sentence structure. These findings indicate that group error check and group error correction in weeks 2 and 3 significantly contributed to students' ability to edit their writing effectively, proving that cooperative learning are valuable strategies for enhancing writing skills. The most notable progress was seen in language use, while organization and content errors showed moderate correction rates. Students demonstrated clear improvement in the post-writing stage, refining their work through editing. However, this progress cannot be discussed without acknowledging the critical role of the error checklist, which helped students identify and correct errors in their writing process. This resonates with Huynh and Tran [28], who stated that checklists assist students in identifying and correcting errors as part of their learning to write. Specifically, this finding supports Javaheribakhsh [29], who emphasized that checklists enhance students' writing skills in organization, content, and sentence structure, and aligns with Ibnian [30], who argued that checklists contribute to improvements in organization, content, and language use.

## **6. Conclusion and suggestion**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of cooperative learning in improving the writing skills of ninth-grade students at Binh Phu Secondary School and examined their attitudes and perceptions toward cooperative learning. The findings

demonstrated that cooperative learning significantly enhanced students' writing skills, particularly in organization, content, and language use. The study revealed that students initially struggled with identifying and correcting their own errors, especially in organization and content. However, working in groups and using an error checklist helped them identify and correct errors more effectively. Over a three-week period, students showed notable improvements, with a significant increase in the number of errors identified and corrected during group activities. Additionally, students expressed positive personal views toward cooperative learning, with the majority realizing its benefits in enhancing their writing skills, fostering cooperation, and increasing confidence. Despite a small percentage of students finding it less effective, the overall response confirmed that cooperative learning improves engagement, facilitates peer learning, and enhances writing skills. In summary, cooperative learning proved to be a valuable strategy in teaching writing English.

### **6.2. Suggestion**

Based on the main findings presented earlier in this chapter, this section provides some suggestions to help teachers enhance their teaching effectiveness. According to the results of the study, students were less able to edit organization and content errors compared to language use errors. Therefore, the researcher would like to propose some pedagogical implications for improving students' writing skills. Firstly, teachers should provide clear explanations on how to develop a well-structured paragraph and guide students in organizing their ideas logically by using conjunctions and linking words effectively. Furthermore, teachers should assign various writing topics and encourage students to practice writing through the writing process approach. Additionally, timely feedback

plays a crucial role in developing students' writing skills. Teachers should provide feedback to help students identify their errors and avoid repeating them in future writing tasks. The findings also revealed that a small number of students did not show a positive attitude toward cooperative learning. Teachers should actively encourage students to engage in peer feedback activities and provide necessary support to help them build confidence in discussions. Furthermore, fostering a sense of responsibility and autonomy in learning can empower students to take ownership of their knowledge and writing progress.

Based on the main findings presented earlier in this chapter, this section offers some suggestions to help students enhance their writing skills. First of all, students should pay attention when teachers explain grammatical rules, sentence structure, content, and paragraph organization. Understanding these aspects is essential for improving their writing skills. Moreover, students should regularly practice writing with a focus on the three key criteria: organization, content, and language use. They should also develop the habit of self-editing their errors before submitting their written texts. By consistently applying the writing process and reviewing their errors, students can gradually improve their writing skills.

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**Ngày nhận bài: 05/12/2024**

**Ngày hoàn thành sửa bài: 19/12/2024**

**Ngày chấp nhận đăng: 21/12/2024**

**Appendix 1.** The frequencies of respondents to the survey interview

No	Questionnaire	Statements	Frequency		Percentage	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
1	When I work together I achieve improvement in editing errors related to organization, content and language use more than when I work alone.	S1	33	2	9.4%	0.6%
2	Group activities with the use of error checklist tool make learning English writing easier	S2	34	1	9.7%	0.3%
3	Cooperative learning improves students' knowledge, self-confidence, and communication.	S3	32	3	9.1%	0.9%
4	I willingly participate in cooperative learning activities.	S4	34	1	9.7%	0.3%
5	I am satisfied that my teachers apply cooperative learning with the use of error checklist tool in writing English.	S5	34	1	9.7%	0.3%
6	Cooperative learning improves my attitude towards learning to write.	S6	33	2	9.4%	0.6%
7	Cooperative learning enhances good working relationships among students.	S7	31	4	8.9%	1.1%
8	Cooperative learning enhances class participation.	S8	32	3	9.1%	0.9%
9	Cooperative learning helps me improve my writing by learning from my peers' errors.	S9	30	5	8.6%	1.4%
10	Cooperative learning with the use of error checklist tool helps save time in learning English writing	S10	33	2	9.4%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>			<b>326</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>

**Appendix 2.** The frequencies of errors checked by the individuals

Week 1		Types of Errors			The total number of errors
No	Gender	Organization	Content	Language	
1	M	0	0	4	4
2	M	1	0	3	4
3	F	1	0	1	2
4	F	1	0	3	4
5	M	0	0	5	5
6	M	1	1	3	5
7	M	0	0	3	3
8	F	0	0	1	1
9	F	0	1	1	2
10	F	0	1	2	3
11	F	1	0	2	3
12	M	0	0	3	3
13	M	0	0	2	2
14	F	1	0	2	3
15	F	0	0	3	3
16	F	0	0	2	2
17	M	1	0	3	4
18	M	1	0	3	4
19	M	0	1	2	3
20	F	0	0	4	4
21	F	1	0	3	4
22	M	0	0	1	1
23	F	0	0	2	2
24	M	1	0	3	4
25	M	1	1	1	3
26	M	1	0	3	4
27	M	0	0	2	2
28	M	0	0	3	3
29	M	0	0	1	1
30	F	0	0	3	3
31	F	0	0	1	1
32	F	0	0	2	2
33	M	0	0	2	2
34	F	0	0	3	3

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35	F	0	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	18 M 17 F	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>102</b>

**Appendix 3.** The frequencies of errors rechecked by the teacher

Week 1		Types of Errors			The total number of errors
No	Gender	Organization	Content	Language	
1	M	5	1	17	23
2	M	5	1	9	15
3	F	5	0	5	10
4	F	3	1	11	15
5	M	5	1	15	21
6	M	4	1	9	14
7	M	5	1	7	13
8	F	4	1	6	11
9	F	5	0	9	14
10	F	2	1	12	15
11	F	2	0	6	8
12	M	5	1	8	14
13	M	5	1	14	20
14	F	5	1	6	12
15	F	5	1	14	20
16	F	3	1	7	11
17	M	2	1	12	15
18	M	2	1	11	14
19	M	5	1	15	21
20	F	3	0	15	18
21	F	2	1	12	15
22	M	2	0	10	12
23	F	4	1	14	19
24	M	3	1	9	13
25	M	3	1	7	11
26	M	3	1	11	15
27	M	4	1	5	10
28	M	3	0	11	14
29	M	2	0	4	6
30	F	1	0	16	17
31	F	3	0	3	6
32	F	3	0	12	15
33	M	5	1	9	15
34	F	2	0	4	6
35	F	3	0	10	13
<b>Total</b>	18 M 17 F	<b>123</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>491</b>

**Appendix 4.** The frequencies of errors checked by groups

Week 2		Group	Types of Errors			The total number of errors
No	Gender		Organization	Content	Language	
1	M	Group 1	0	1	13	14
2	M		2	1	8	11
3	F		2	0	4	6
4	F		2	1	8	11
5	M		0	1	14	15
6	M	Group 2	1	1	6	8
7	M		1	0	6	7
8	F		2	0	4	6
9	F		0	0	8	8
10	F		0	1	8	9
11	F	Group 3	1	0	5	6
12	M		3	0	7	10
13	M		3	1	11	15
14	F		2	0	4	6
15	F		2	0	12	14
16	F	Group 4	3	0	7	10
17	M		2	1	8	11
18	M		2	0	9	11

19	M	Group 5	0	0	13	13
20	F		0	0	12	12
21	F		2	0	10	12
22	M		0	0	7	7
23	F		0	1	11	12
24	M	Group 6	2	0	8	10
25	M		2	1	4	7
26	M		1	0	10	11
27	M		0	1	5	6
28	M		1	0	10	11
29	M	Group 7	0	0	3	3
30	F		1	0	11	12
31	F		0	0	3	3
32	F		1	0	10	11
33	M		0	0	9	9
34	F	Total	1	0	4	5
35	F		2	0	7	9
		18 M 17 F	41	11	279	331

**Appendix 5. The frequencies of errors corrected by groups**

Week 3		Group	GROUP ERROR CHECK IN WEEK 2				CORRECTED ERRORS			
			Types of Errors			The total number of errors	Types of Errors			The total number of errors
			Organization	Content	Language		Organization	Content	Language	
No	Gender									
1	M	Group 1	0	1	13	14	0	1	13	14
2	M		2	1	8	11	2	1	8	11
3	F		2	0	4	6	0	0	4	4
4	F		2	1	8	11	0	1	8	9
5	M		0	1	14	15	0	1	14	15
6	M	Group 2	1	1	6	8	1	1	6	8
7	M		1	0	6	7	1	0	5	6
8	F		2	0	4	6	2	0	4	6
9	F		0	0	8	8	0	0	7	7
10	F	Group 3	0	1	8	9	0	1	8	9
11	F		1	0	5	6	1	0	5	6
12	M		3	0	7	10	1	0	6	7
13	M		3	1	11	15	3	1	11	15
14	F		2	0	4	6	2	0	4	6
15	F	Group 4	2	0	12	14	0	0	11	11
16	F		3	0	7	10	1	0	7	8
17	M		2	1	8	11	2	1	8	11
18	M		2	0	9	11	0	0	8	8
19	M		0	0	13	13	0	0	11	11
20	F	Group 5	0	0	12	12	0	0	11	11
21	F		2	0	10	12	2	0	8	10
22	M		0	0	7	7	0	0	7	7
23	F		0	1	11	12	0	1	11	12
24	M		2	0	8	10	2	0	6	8
25	M	Group 6	2	1	4	7	0	0	4	4
26	M		1	0	10	11	0	0	7	7
27	M		0	1	5	6	0	0	5	5
28	M		1	0	10	11	0	0	8	8
29	M		0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3
30	F	Total	1	0	11	12	0	0	10	10
31	F		0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3

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32	F	Group 7	1	0	10	11	1	0	7	8
33	M		0	0	9	9	0	0	9	9
34	F		1	0	4	5	0	0	4	4
35	F		2	0	7	9	2	0	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 M</b> <b>17 F</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>290</b>