

# APPLYING SPENCER KAGAN'S TEAM BUILDING STRUCTURE IN TEACHING SPECIALIZED SUBJECTS TO ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** Cooperative learning (CL) has been widely applied in the world and has been considered as a new trend of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Trinh Van Bieu, 2011). Notably, Spencer Kagan's cooperative learning structures are believed to have the potential to encourage more interactions among students and maximize the improvement of each student's learning process, thus having a positive impact on teaching in classrooms. In Kagan's cooperative learning structures, the Team Building structure is one of seven key concepts which encourages students' interaction and promotes self-study. Therefore, teachers can use this structure in their classes, especially for English-majored subjects. This article shows how to apply Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure in teaching specialized subjects to English majored students. The data of this mixed method study were collected through questionnaires with 176 informant students and semi-structured interviews with eight teachers at Hanoi University of Industry. The findings from the questionnaire and interview depict a significant enhancement in teaching and learning English-majored subjects. In addition, the study also gives teachers some useful suggestions on applying Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure to improve their English teaching.

**Keywords:** cooperative learning; Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure; specialized English; English-majored students

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## 1. Introduction

In the present era of global economic and cultural integration, the utilization of foreign languages, particularly specialized English, within professional settings has gained paramount significance. However, the teaching of specialized English modules in certain universities in Vietnam currently faces various challenges and proves to be less effective. One primary factor contributing to this issue is the heavy emphasis on theoretical content and its inherent difficulty within the course materials. Moreover, the predominant teaching approach employed by lecturers revolves around a teacher-centered methodology, thereby neglecting the learner-centered perspective.

This article proposes the application of Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure as a potential solution to enhance the teaching of specialized English subjects for students majoring in English. By incorporating this pedagogical framework, it aims to improve the overall quality of English instruction in universities, with a specific focus on the context of Hanoi University of Industry.

By exploring the implementation of Kagan's Team Building structure, the study endeavors to address the aforementioned shortcomings in the current teaching practices of specialized English. The article seeks to highlight the potential benefits and outcomes of incorporating this innovative approach into the existing curriculum, ultimately fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment for English major students.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Definition of cooperative learning

The theory of cooperative learning appears in many theories in the West, originating from the point of view of a learner-centered method with learning activities as the center. According to Johnson

and Johnson (2017), cooperative learning is an educational method that divides learners into small groups to learn together in order to promote the learning efficiency of both individuals and groups. Brown and Thomson (2000) defined cooperative learning as “a teaching method that organizes classroom activities by arranging students in small groups so that they can support each other’s learning” (p. 105). While Jacobs et al. (1997) provided the definition of cooperative learning, the concepts and methods used in cooperative learning aim to optimize students’ cooperation for mutual benefits. As a result, a student seeks an outcome beneficial to himself and his team. According to research by Roger and Johnson (2002), cooperative learning activities are all learning ones that learners do together in small groups to accomplish common goals. There are five decisive factors for collaborative learning: positive interdependence, a sense of responsibility for each individual, frequent interaction between individuals and groups, social skills and reflection on the process of teamwork. Similarly, according to Slavin, Robert and Hurley, Eric and Chamberlain, Anne (2003), planning, structuring the interaction among team members; individual responsibility and the group’s common goals are the two factors having a lot of influence on cooperative learning. In “Cooperative Learning”, Spencer Kagan (2009) emphasized the importance and practical significance of cooperative learning in teaching English. In particular, the author has pointed out four negative problems leading to the educational crisis of traditional teaching methods with the role of teacher as the center as follows: (1) Achievement, (2) Achievement gap, (3) Race relations, (4) Social skills. (Spencer Kagan, 2009, p.2.1). According to the author, “cooperative learning is essential if we want to maintain values such as respect, kindness or adaptability and maintain positive social relationships” (Kagan, 2009, p.2.16).

What primarily distinguishes Spencer Kagan cooperative learning from the other approaches is the emphasis on simple structures that

can be used as part of any lesson. Other approaches of cooperative learning emphasize ways to design cooperative learning lessons while the Kagan model focuses on making cooperative learning part of every lesson, not doing cooperative learning lessons. There are many advantages to this approach. Because the approach relies on simple structures, takes no special materials, no special preparation, and no change in lesson design or content, cooperative learning becomes integrated into every lesson. This is quite in contrast to methods that would have teachers throw out their traditional lessons, design new cooperative learning lessons, and do those lessons on an occasional basis. With the Kagan approach, there is consistent, sustained implementation because teachers and students find the structures easy to use, full of fun and effective. Because the Kagan approach is an integrated approach, the structures are used as part of every lesson, so students are actively engaged much more of the time, multiplying the benefit of cooperative learning. This is also the reason why we chose Spencer Kagan's cooperative learning approach, especially his Team Building structure to experiment with teaching specialized English courses for English majors at Hanoi University of Industry.

### ***2.2. Spencer Kagan's cooperative learning structures***

Kagan (2013) showed that the use of structures in teaching is one of the differences between Kagan's cooperative learning and other cooperative learning approaches. These structures can be used to make concepts and theories become everyday classroom procedures. In fact, Kagan (2009: 53) defined structure as "a series of iterative instructions to support the student's teamwork process, helping them to implement the basic principles of cooperative learning". Next, Kagan (2013:6) extended the definition of the structure by stating: "Kagan cooperative learning structures are instructional strategies that help teachers and learners teach and learn different topics. The structures can be used again and again to create new activities. All Kagan structures are

carefully designed step-by-step to foster interaction between learners, content, and instructors.”

Kagan (2013) created more than 200 structures, each of which includes certain steps that help teachers achieve lesson goals. Some popular and effective Kagan's structures commonly used in learning environments are as follows:

- **Think-pair-share structure:** This is a three-step cooperative learning structure. In the first step, each learner thinks about a question posed by the teacher. In the second step, learners pair up and exchange ideas. In the third step, pairs share their answers with other pairs, other teams, or the whole class.
- **Three-step interview structure:** Learners are assigned to work in pairs. In step one, the learner interviews his or her friend about a certain topic. Learners then switch roles and repeat the first step. Next, pairs will discuss with each other, sharing what participants have learned from the pair work activity.
- **Jigsaw structure:** The lesson content is divided equally among all members of the group to study. Upon completion, learners will share what they have learned for the whole group.
- **Inside-outside circle structure:** The teacher's role in this structure is to support and guide the discussion. The teacher divides the class into two groups corresponding to two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle. Learners in the inner circle will stand facing the learners in the outer circle. At this point, the teacher asks a question and the learners have time to think about it. After thinking, each learner in the inner circle shares his opinion with the learner in the outer circle and vice versa. When finished, the teacher asks the learner to take a step left, continuing a quick discussion with a new learner. The teacher arranges a reasonable time so that the learners can jot down new ideas.

### **2.3. Spencer Kagan's Team Building Structure**

Kagan (2009) stated that Team Building is one of the seven keys to the success of the cooperative learning approach. The author specifically defines Team Building as: “the process of transforming a group of heterogeneous members into a collective group of homogeneous members who interact and engage with each other” (Spencer Kagan, 2009, p.54). According to him, Team Building structure is considered as a catalyst, promoting the interaction process, helping us discover common ground, common goals and contributing to make the relationship between group members more durable and tighter.

Spencer Kagan has outlined 5 specific aims to help the Team Building structure achieve success:

- Aim 1: Getting Acquainted: Getting acquainted activities help team members get to know each other so they are no longer strangers, no longer feel anxious and gradually get acquainted on a deeper level, resulting in familiarity, acceptance, and friendship.
- Aim 2: Team Identity: A team forms an identity by defining itself in a unique way such as creating its own name, cheer or solution to a problem. When students are active in forging their team identity, they feel a solidarity with teammates and a belonging to the team.
- Aim 3: Mutual Support: The activities are designed to help team members realize the role and importance of interactive support to help other group members.
- Aim 4: Valuing Differences: The activities clarify an individual's own values. They demonstrate that different individuals have different values and that there are no right or wrong values – that values of others are to be understood and respected.
- Aim 5: Develop Synergy: Synergy refers to the increased energy released when individuals are working in cooperation.

Because of the synergistic effect, the group product can be better than the product of even the best individual working alone. The sum of parts interacting is greater than the sum of the parts alone. Interaction causes stimulation and refinement of ideas.

Kagan (2009) suggested some types of activities in the classroom that are suitable for the above 5 aims. Here are some typical examples:

#### *Three questions - Three-step Interview*

Three important questions are selected for members to ask each other. In pairs, members ask each other the three questions and record their partner's answers. Using questions such as: 1) *What is your favorite free-time activity?;* 2) *If you could switch places with anyone for a day, who would you switch places with?;* 3) *How would you describe your personality to someone who's never met you before?*

#### Team names

When teams are first formed, they are asked to make up a team mural that features their team name. Three simple rules for the group process are stated: 1) *Each team member must have a say;* 2) *No decision can be reached unless everyone consents;* 3) *No member consents to the group decision if he or she has a serious objection.* These rules set the tone for future group processes, which must include participation, consensus, and respect for individual rights.

#### Team handshakes

Members develop a team handshake to celebrate team successes. The handshake can symbolize their team name or they can say or chant their name while doing the handshake. Below is one example of team handshakes:

*Go Team.* All teammates put a hand in the center of the team, stacking their hands palm down, one on of another. They chant, "Gooo Brainiacs (substitute team name)!"

### Blind Caterpillar

Teammates stand in a line, each with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. The leader has his or her eyes open and leads the others who keep their eyes closed. The leader talks to the teammates while leading them around the room, telling them where they are in the room, and providing support. At intervals, the leader calls “Switch!” and the person in front goes to the back. This activity produces feelings of trust. After each member has been a leader, teammates return to their seats and reflect on how they felt as the leader and as a follower.

### Where do I stand - Value lines

Members mark their position on a set of value lines indicating their preferences. Later, members discuss their responses with their teams to discover and appreciate individual differences.

### RoundTable Consensus

In RoundTable Consensus, members cannot write a response or make a contribution to the team project unless they all agree. This structure releases synergy because one member may have one idea; another member has a different idea and the structure requires that they reach consensus. In the process, they find something with which they all agree. Often the result is a higher-level synthesis; incorporating the best of everyone’s input into a new, more differentiated idea. For Team Building, use RoundTable Consensus to have teams build a team project or write a team story.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research questions

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Team Building structure for English-majored students when studying



specialized English subjects. Therefore, the researchers focus on two research questions below:

- *How does Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure improve English-majored students' learning of specialized English modules?*
- *What are the students' opinions about Spencer Kagan's Team Building structure?*

### ***Research setting & Participants***

The study was conducted at School of Languages and Tourism (SLT), Hanoi University of Industry. At SLT, most of the specialized English courses have applied the Blended learning method, which means beside face-to-face lessons with teachers in class, students can access the lesson resources for free on the learning management system (LMS) at <http://eop.edu.vn> or <http://sv.dhcn.vn> to actively acquire and equip language knowledge and background knowledge of the lessons (at a low level of acquiring - understanding - applying). Teachers can control the online learning process of students through reports, mini-tests, and activities performed in class. The specialized English courses are deployed in classrooms that are fully equipped with teaching-learning equipment such as projectors, screens, speakers, etc.,

A group of 176 third and fourth-year students majoring in English and eight teachers participated in the survey. Most students have had the opportunity to experience the Team Building structure in English classes with at least 2 face-to-face lessons per week. In addition, the teachers participating in the study are all enthusiastic, highly specialized ones with three to five years of teaching experience or more. They all know as well as have been applying Kagan's Team Building structure in their lectures. Additionally, two subjects that the researchers decided to teach using Kagan's Team Building structure

are “Phonetics and Phonology” and “English and American Literature”. In this research, the Kagan’s Team Building structure is used as an intervention to the current teaching situation to see if it was effective or not.

### **3.3. Research design**

In order to answer the research questions, the researchers used mixed methods of data collection for accuracy namely questionnaire and interview. This mixed method is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Team Building as an intervention to the current teaching situation.

### **3.4. Questionnaire**

This survey questionnaire was applied as the main instrument to evaluate the effectiveness of Spencer Kagan’s Team Building structure. Cohen, et al. (2018) states that questionnaire is “a useful instrument for gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, opinions, behaviors and experiences-both in past and present time”. The survey questionnaire – the poll is designed on Google Forms. The types of questions used in the survey-poll questionnaire are closed-ended ones. The structure of the survey-poll questionnaire is divided into two parts: (1) Basic personal information of students participating in the survey and (2) Students’ opinions and evaluations of Spencer Kagan’s Team Building structure.

### **3.5. Interview**

To obtain in-depth information collected from the survey questionnaires, the researchers conducted random direct interviews with eight teachers. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2012) defined a qualitative interview as “unstructured, exploratory, open-ended, and

typically in-depth so that several topics can be explored effectively.” The interview questions were designed and developed according to the semi-structured interview type based on the list of questions mentioned in the small group survey questionnaire.

### **3.6. Data collection and Analysis**

The data collected from the survey questionnaire - poll tool is processed by using Excel software to form percentages and average values. Data are presented in the form of graphs or statistical tables for the purpose of creating favorable conditions for finding results and answering research questions. Consent forms were also sent to both students and teachers to ask for the permission to use their information for the purpose. In addition, eight teachers who are invited to participate in the study will be coded in the order of Teachers No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 to ensure their privacy and increase the security of the study.

## **4. Findings & Discussion**

### **4.1. Results from questionnaire and interview**

Overall evaluation about activities following Kagan's Team Building structure that were employed in the semester.

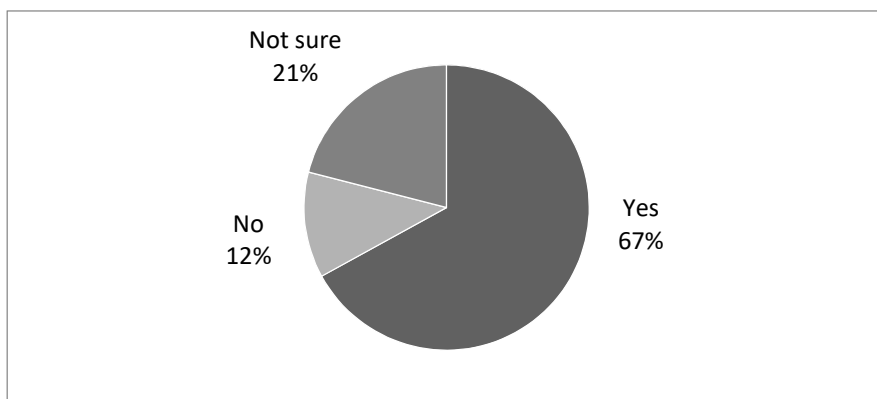
#### **4.1.1. Aim 1's result: Getting acquainted**

A glance at the chart depicted that 67% of students gradually got familiar with English majored subjects exploiting Kagan's Team Building structure. Some students (21%) were not sure and only a few of them (12%) felt that they couldn't get acquainted with the subjects. Participants who chose “No” or “Not sure” might be lower-level ones so they at first found it quite hard to follow the lesson.

Similar to the questionnaire, eight teachers who took part in the interview said that thanks to activities that followed Kagan's Team

Building structure, their students had been more familiar with the lessons.

**Figure 1:** The percentage of students getting familiar with the subjects using Kagan's Team Building structure

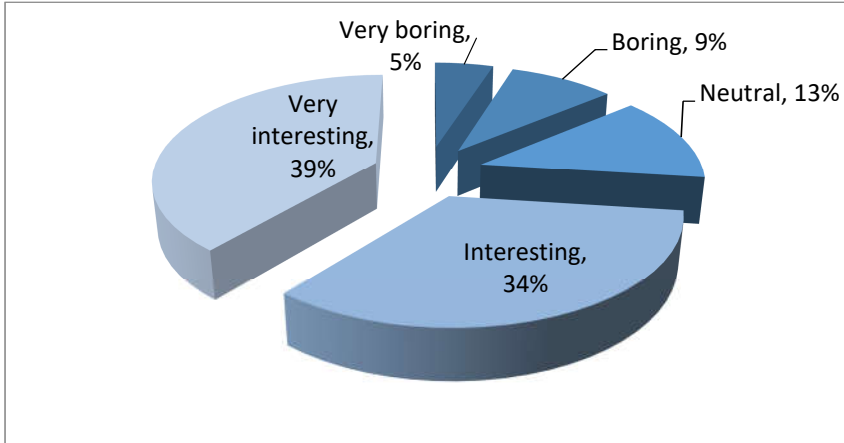


In addition, when being asked to evaluate “Three questions-Three-step interview” activity, most respondents revealed that this activity could help learners feel encouraged and get more positive energy. Moreover, in the interview, teacher No. 6 pointed out that “*I teach Phonetics and Phonology and this subject is really difficult. Therefore, in the first module, I have applied the “Three questions-Three-step interview” activity. I ask my students some questions such as “What have you known about the Phonetics and Phonology course?”, “What do you expect to learn in this course?”, “What are your plans to complete this course successfully?”. My students feel eager to answer those questions and they think that this activity can help them get more familiar with the subject.*”

In conclusion, based on the results of the survey questionnaire and interview, it can be concluded that the activity following Aim 1 in the first lesson has promoted interaction among class members and created a more friendly and positive learning environment.

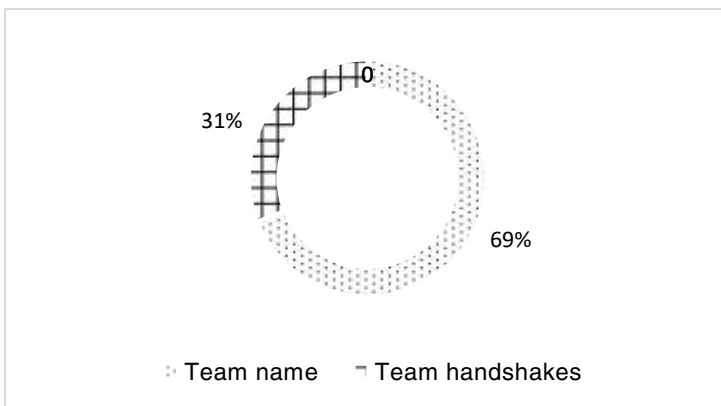
4.1.2. Aim 2's result: Team identity

Figure 2: Students' overall evaluation about the lessons following aim 2



As can be seen from the diagram, participants showed their positive attitudes after attending activities that followed Aim 2. To be more specific, 39% of students found the lesson very interesting, 34% found it interesting and 13% chose the “neutral” level. Only 9% and 5% of students respectively were unsatisfied and very unsatisfied with the lesson.

Figure 3: Students' preferred activities



To receive lots of positive feedback from learners as above, it is impossible not to mention the implementation of two activities

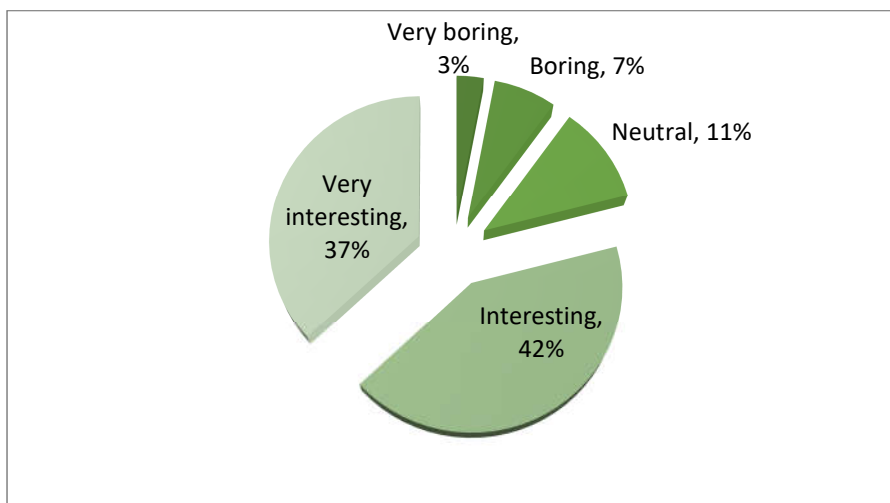
called “Team name” and “Team handshakes”. It can be seen from figure 3 that “Team name” ranked first (69%), followed by “Team handshakes”(31%). In addition, the activities which were used in identifying the group as above helped students to be aware of the members that they will work with during the whole semester.

Additionally, findings from the interview illustrated that students were very active and enthusiastic in contributing ideas and opinions during the lesson. Teacher No. 1 shared that “ *In this semester, I am assigned to teach English and American Literature. In my class, I use some activities but “Team name” and “Team handshakes” are those that my students like the best. Truthfully, those activities help them show the group’s distinctive features.*”

To sum up, from the results above, activities following Aim 2 have made an important contribution in supporting team members to show their distinctive features.

#### 4.1.3. Aim 3’s result: Mutual support

**Figure 4:** Students’ overall evaluation on the lessons following aim 3

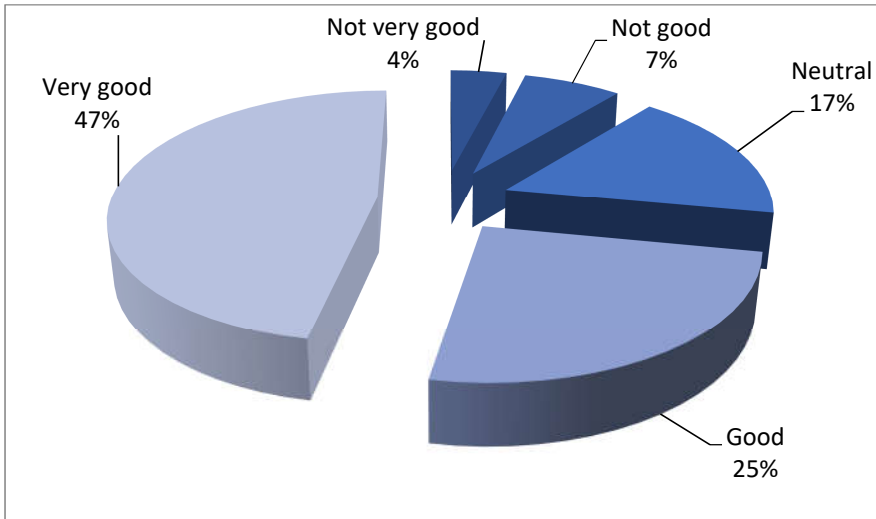


As can be seen, most students felt satisfied or very satisfied with the lesson (42% and 37% respectively). Meanwhile, 11% of students

selected the “Neutral” option and the remaining few were unpleasant (7%) or very unpleasant (3%) with the lessons.

Figure 5 is the result of students’ feedback on the spirit of mutual support between members when attending “Blind caterpillar” activity. In general, individuals gave positive feedback on this activity, with 72% choosing the “Good” (25%) and “Very good” (47%) levels. Only 17% of the students selected the “neutral” option and few of them (4% and 7% respectively) felt unhappy with the lessons.

**Figure 5:** Students’ evaluation on Mutual support using “Blind caterpillar” activity



At the same time, results from the interview pointed out that students have a high sense of responsibility with their group. When being asked, teacher No. 5 stated that *“I teach Phonetics and Phonology in this semester. I have exploited “Blind caterpillar” by asking my students to work in groups. Thanks to this activity, learners clearly understand the importance of supporting other group members so as to create a solid bond.”*

In a nutshell, based on the results of the data, it can be summarized that thanks to activities in Aim3, the team’s spirit has

been enhanced which creates a link between members and a sense of common goal.

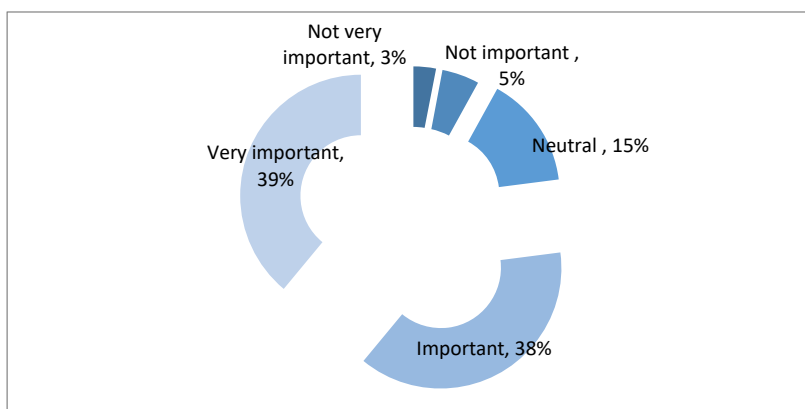
#### 4.1.4. Aim 4's result: Valuing Differences

In order to get the result of aim 4, the activity called “Where do I stand-Value lines” was implemented. According to Kagan (2009), the implementation of the activity following goal 4 is mainly designed with the aim of helping team members to be aware of their distinctive roles in the group. Therefore, they can understand and respect other members' duties.

Therefore, in Aim4, the researchers designed purposeful open-ended questions to explore:

- students' thoughts about the differences among members' opinions during group discussion. Specifically, according to students' responses, disagreements often caused conflict and disunity. In order to resolve those troublesome issues, individuals need to respect each other's points of view to find a common goal.

**Figure 6:** Students' evaluation on the role of valuing differences in group



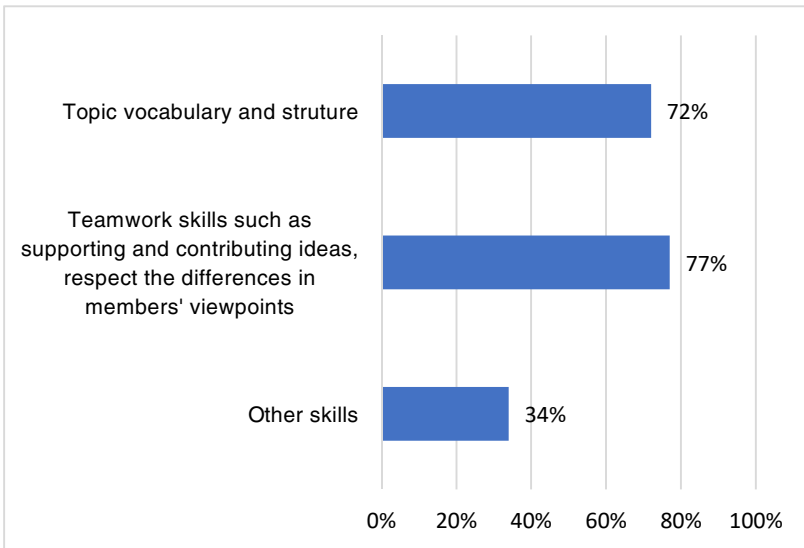
- students' viewpoints about the importance of valuing differences among members. To be more specific, as can be seen from chart 6 below, most participants recognized the importance of



respecting the differences among group members (38% chose the “Important” level and 39% chose the “Very important” level). Meanwhile, 8% (3% selected the “Not very important” option and 5% selected the “Not important” option) of students thought that it was not necessary to value group differences.

- the effectiveness and benefits that students can obtain from in-class activities. Specifically, in Figure 7 below, the majority of learners had learned some teamwork skills and had been able to memorize topic vocabulary and structure (77% and 72% respectively). What’s more, 34% of them were capable of accumulating other skills.

Figure 7: The benefits that students can get from activities following Aim 4



At the same time, when interviewing, teacher No. 7 also said that “When students work in groups, they have different ideas and opinions, so it leads to conflicts among team members. Nevertheless, thanks to teacher’s guidance and leaders’ instruction, they know how to listen attentively and respect others’ viewpoints”. One more thing, after applying Kagan’s Team Building structure, teacher No.4

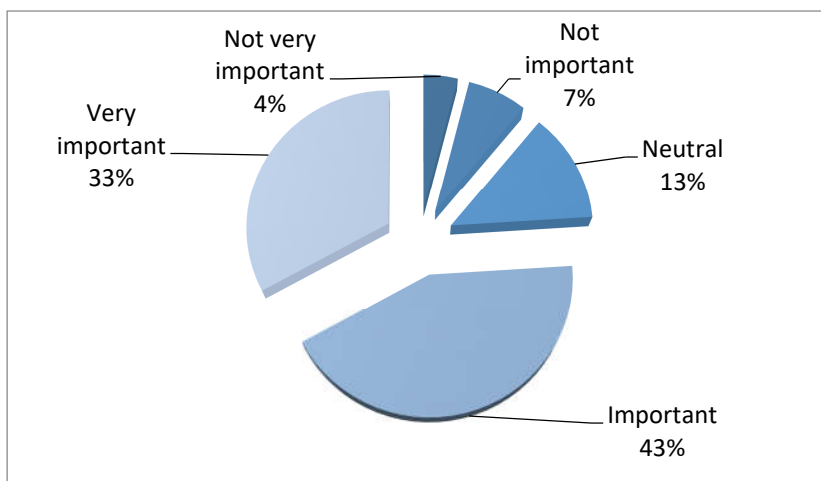
expressed that “*I think most lessons are useful with many interesting activities. They can help students expand their understanding of the subject, improve teamwork skills and critical thinking skills.*”

All in all, results from survey questionnaires and interviews conclude that activities in Aim4 enhance learners’ awareness of the differences in members’ viewpoints. Thanks to this, students learn how to value others’ opinions to reach a common aim.

#### 4.1.5. Aim 5’s result: Develop Synergy

In this part, “RoundTable Consensus” is the activity that was applied to find out students’ attitude about the role of interaction among team members. Similarly, to aim 4, purposeful open-ended questions were designed to identify:

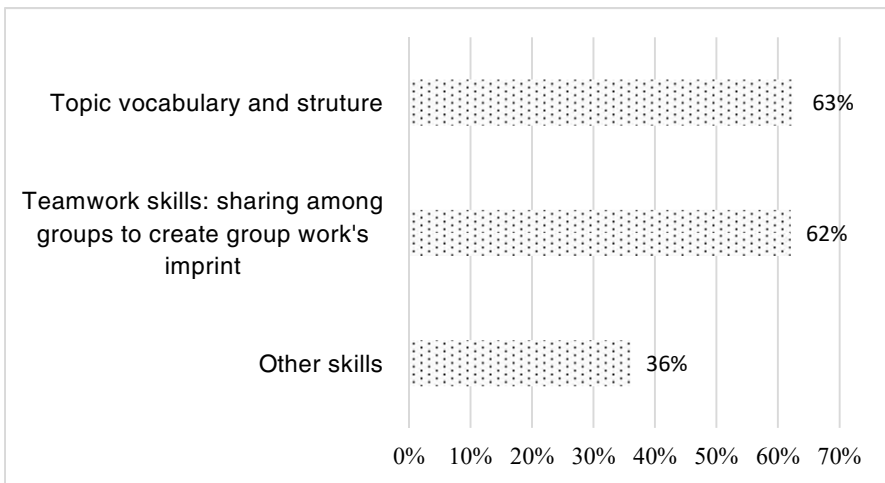
- *students’ perspective about the role of interaction among group members.* The majority of learners stated that sharing among groups is really vital. When each member respected and exchanged viewpoints, group work could be completed smoothly.



**Figure 8:** The importance of interaction among members to create a distinctive group work product

- *students' viewpoints about the importance of interaction among members to create a distinctive group work product:* As can be seen from diagram 8 below, respondents gave positive answers on this part, with 76% of them selecting the “Important” and “Very important” option. Furthermore, 13% chose the “neutral” level and very few students (7% and 4% respectively) thought that developing synergy was not important and not very important.
- *the benefits that students can gain from in-class activities:* To be more specific, in Figure 9 below, while most participants had remembered topic vocabulary, structure and enhanced teamwork skills (about 63%), 36% could obtain other skills.

**Figure 9:** The benefits that students can get from activities following Aim 5



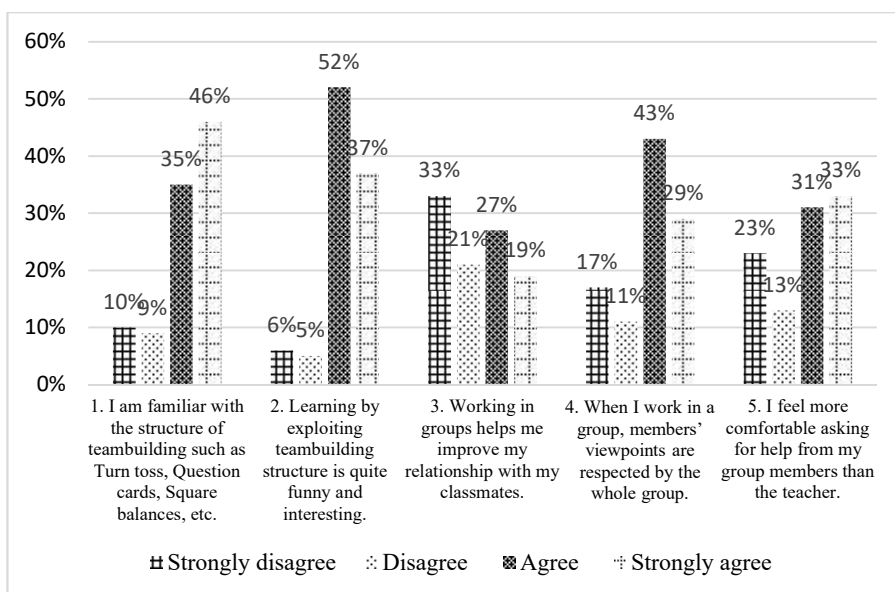
Especially, in the interview session, teacher No. 4 pointed out that “*Actually, sharing among group members is very necessary. All members need to contribute something to the group work. If they don't discuss, they cannot complete their assignments or projects. Thanks to “RoundTable Consensus”, learners are aware of the importance of group's interaction.* Interestingly, teacher No. 5 showed that “I

usually set time for each activity, so my students can even learn time-management skills.”

To sum up, all the findings above illustrate students’ positive perception of developing synergy to the success of group work.

#### 4.2. Students’ attitude towards Kagan’s Team Building structure

Figure 10: Students’ opinion of Kagan’s Team Building structure



From the chart above, it can be seen that the majority of learners expressed the benefits outweigh the limitations of Kagan’s Team Building structure. Specifically, 81% of the respondents (35% agree and 46% strongly agree) were familiar with the structure of Team Building such as Team Names, Question Cards, Blind Caterpillar, etc., in English-majored subjects. Besides, 89% (52% agree and 37% strongly agree) of learners felt that learning with Team Building structure was quite funny and interesting. Similarly, the factor “*When I work in a group, members’ viewpoints are respected by the whole*

group” also received a high degree of agreement from the participants (72%). In addition, 64% agreed with the view “I feel more comfortable asking for help from my group members than the teacher”. However, 54% (33% completely disagree and 21% disagree) of learners disagreed with the idea “Working in groups helps me improve my relationship with my classmates”. This can be explained by the fact that some low-level or distracted students had not focused on group work, leading to some groups not uniting in the learning process.

When conducting an interview with the question: “What is the main purpose of implementing Kagan’s Team Building structure in classroom?”, teacher No. 2 answered “*In my opinion, the main purpose of implementing this structure is to help learners improve their teamwork skills, problem solving skills, and communication skills. At the same time, learners know how to express their views and respect group members’ opinions.*”

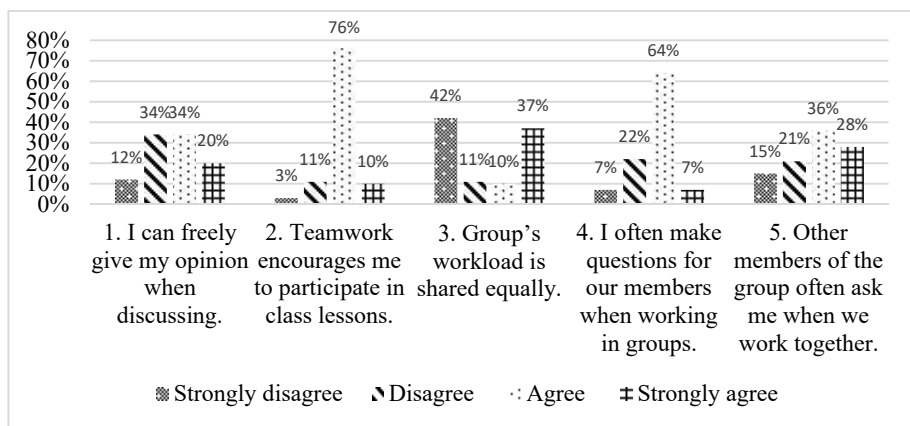
#### **4.3. Learners’ opinions on the level of participation in lessons that apply Kagan’s Team Building structure**

It can be clearly understood that the first factor “I can freely give my opinion when discussing” reached the rate of 46% of learners strongly disagree and disagree, 54% of learners agree and totally agree. Next, the statements with high percentage of students agreeing and completely agreeing were “Teamwork encourages me to participate in class lessons” (86%), “I often make questions for our members when working in groups” (71%), “Other members of the group often ask me when we work together” (64%). However, 53% disagreed with the idea “Group’s workload is shared equally”.

When being asked the question: “What benefits does the application of the Kagan’s Team Building structure to learners?”, teacher No. 1 said that “*In my class, there are different students’ levels.*

However, when I employ Kagan's Team Building structure, most learners can keep up with the lesson, even some low-level ones. Moreover, students can enhance their ability to use a variety of languages. It is a very important factor to help them improve themselves". In addition, teacher No. 4 also pointed out that "Team Building structure makes my class more active, and individuals feel more excited when participating in the lesson".

**Figure 11:** Learners' opinions on the level of participation in lessons that apply Kagan's Team Building structure



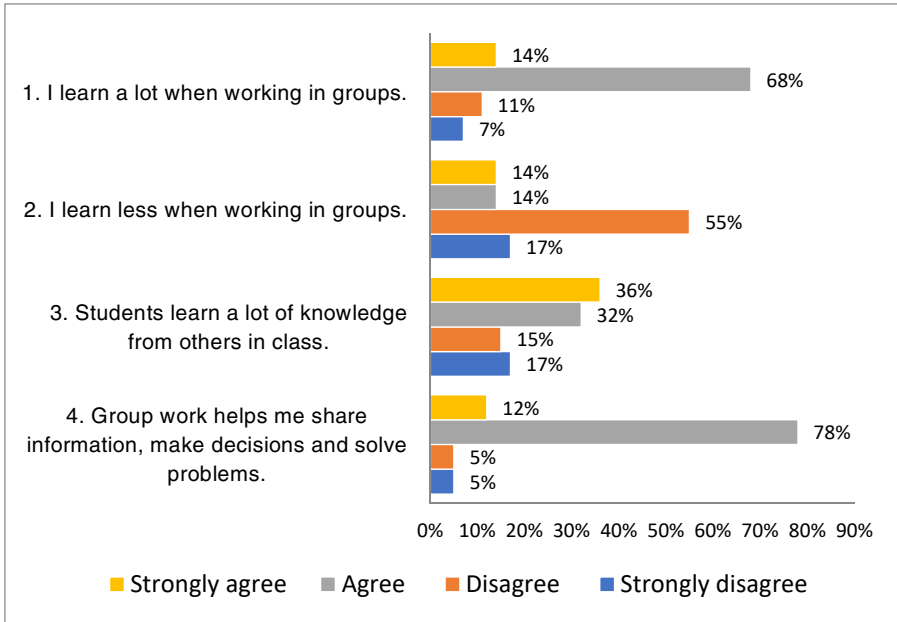
#### 4.4. Learners' opinions on the effectiveness of Kagan's Team Building structure in learning English majored subjects

A glance at the diagram revealed that "Group work helps me share information, make decisions and solve problems" (90%), "I learn a lot when working in groups" (82%), "Students learn a lot of knowledge from others in class" (68%) were three factors that students chose the most. Especially, 72% of the participants disagreed with the view "I learn less when working in groups".

In the interview session, with the final question: "What are the disadvantages of implementing Kagan's Team Building structure in the classroom?" Teacher No. 6 and No. 8 both said that the program of English majored subjects is quite long, which greatly affects the

application of Team Building structure. Teacher No. 8 also recommends editing and reducing the subject's curriculum so that it can be easier to integrate Kagan's Team Building structure.

**Figure 12:** Learners' opinions on the effectiveness of Kagan's Team Building structure in learning English majored subjects



### 5. Discussion

It can be summarized that Kagan's Team Building structure has brought certain effects to students. First, regarding the syllabus, Kagan's Team Building structure has made an important contribution in forming lessons' structure with purposeful goals. Moreover, activities applying Team Building structure are really exciting which can reduce the boredom of lessons and encourage learners to study. Second, for each leader in the group, Team Building structure enables them to learn how to monitor and orient his or her group. By this way, leaders can connect team members to build up the group's unity. Third, thanks to Kagan's Team Building structure, group members can not only widen subject knowledge, but they can also master some

skills such as communication skills, teamwork skills, critical thinking skills, and other social skills.

Additionally, Kagan's Team Building structure is believed to bring several benefits to students. In the first place, learners can improve their ability to use language in natural contexts. By collaborating in groups, students are required to employ English to articulate their thoughts and ideas to their peers. Such interaction is believed to facilitate language acquisition and natural contextual use of language.

Secondly, the Team Building structure helps individuals increase their learning motivation. When studying together, learners can share their thoughts, understanding and experiences freely and equally. This helps them improve their solid points and notice their weaknesses. Therefore, they will feel excited to contribute their ideas to the group's success.

Thirdly, students can enhance social skills when participating in Kagan's Team Building structure. Learners, especially the shy ones, have the opportunity to express their opinions openly without the fear of losing face. What's more, they can also learn from other team members in terms of knowledge, social experiences and soft skills. That is to say, students will improve their communication skills and they will better integrate into the group.

Finally, learners have enhanced their ability to use diverse languages by employing Kagan's Team Building structure. Individuals stand a chance to raise their own views and opinions to contribute to the group work. This enables them to learn how to use the language of other members, thereby helping to expand their vocabularies. Finally, students have more time to show off themselves when participating in Kagan's Team Building structure. Through weekly lessons, team members can express their opinions so that they will build up confidence daily.



## 6. Conclusion & Implications

In general, this study has succeeded in answering two research questions. It can be seen that Kagan's Team Building structure boosts students' learning of English-majored subjects. Specifically, this structure brings lots of benefits to learners such as reinforcing the ability to manage language in natural contexts, learning motivation, social skills and the competence to use diverse languages. What's more, individuals have favorable conditions to express themselves and receive support from team members. In addition, learners have a positive perception towards Kagan's Team Building structure because this method helps them increase their interest and willingness to participate in the lesson, have more time to interact and improve their communication skills, teamwork skills, and critical thinking skills.

With great efforts to complete the study, the researchers have some suggestions and recommendations as follows:

- **For teachers:** Kagan' Team Building structure really has a significant impact on the teaching process for language learners. The structure will be more and more effective if teachers spend time using it during the semester. Therefore, teachers should design lessons exploiting the five objectives of Team Building structure in accordance with the course they are assigned to teach. Before class, it is of great importance that teachers need to prepare lessons carefully and remind students about what they are going to study. In class, teachers should give proper instructions and pay more attention to low-level students.
- **For learners:** During the process of mastering a second language, Kagan's Team Building structure promotes self-confidence and increases learning interests among students. Moreover, this method makes teaching and learning activities more accessible and comfortable than traditional methods. Therefore, English majored subjects should be applied with this structure for students' better learning.

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