



IMPLEMENTING JIGSAW COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR CORRESPONDENCE: STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND CLASSROOM INSIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Student-centered learning has become increasingly important in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses to encourage active participation and collaborative knowledge construction. However, classroom instruction in correspondence writing often remains teacher-centered, limiting students' opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction and peer learning. This study explored how a cooperative learning strategy was implemented in an undergraduate correspondence course by examining students' learning experiences and classroom interaction. A descriptive qualitative design was employed involving two undergraduate classes at Applied English Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the learning activities enabled students to collaboratively develop their understanding of request letters and complaint letters through structured peer teaching and group discussion. Students reported positive learning experiences, highlighting improved understanding of the lesson, increased responsibility for learning, and greater confidence in explaining concepts to peers. Classroom observations further showed active interaction characterized by discussion, questioning, knowledge sharing, and peer feedback throughout the learning process. These findings suggest that cooperative learning provides a practical approach for creating a more interactive and collaborative learning environment in ESP correspondence courses while supporting meaningful student engagement and peer-assisted learning.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, English for Correspondence, ESP, Jigsaw, Qualitative study

A. INTRODUCTION

Effective written communication has become an essential competence for university students, particularly those preparing for academic and professional careers in increasingly globalized workplaces (Kowalewski & E. Halasz, 2019; Soraya et al., 2024; Tarigan et al., 2024). Among the various English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses offered in higher education, English for Correspondence plays a significant role in equipping students with the knowledge and skills required to produce various forms of professional written communication, including business emails, inquiry letters, request letters, complaint letters, application letters, and other workplace correspondence. Beyond mastering grammatical accuracy and appropriate vocabulary, students are expected to understand the communicative purposes, organizational structures, language



conventions, and pragmatic features of different correspondence genres to communicate effectively in authentic professional contexts.

Despite its practical importance, English for Correspondence instruction often remains dominated by teacher-centered approaches, where lecturers primarily explain the characteristics of each correspondence type before asking students to complete individual writing tasks (Wajdi et al., 2025; Yunus & Latief, 2023). Such instructional practices may limit opportunities for students to actively construct knowledge, exchange ideas, and learn collaboratively from their peers (Kartikowati et al., 2026; Nazarova, 2024). Consequently, students may develop only a partial understanding of various correspondence genres while relying heavily on lecturer explanations rather than engaging in meaningful discussion, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving during the learning process.

Contemporary language education increasingly advocates student-centered pedagogies that encourage active participation, collaborative knowledge construction, and meaningful social interaction (Mat & Jamaludin, 2024). One instructional approach that aligns with these principles is Jigsaw Cooperative Learning, a cooperative learning model in which students first become "experts" on a particular segment of learning materials before teaching the content to their peers in their original groups. This approach encourages positive interdependence, individual accountability, peer teaching, and collaborative problem-solving, enabling every student to contribute actively to the learning process while simultaneously developing communication, teamwork, and critical thinking skills (Afifah & Mulis, 2025). Rather than functioning solely as information recipients, students assume dual roles as both learners and knowledge contributors throughout classroom activities.

Preliminary classroom observations conducted prior to this study revealed similar conditions. During correspondence lessons, classroom interaction was largely dominated by the lecturer, while students tended to depend on direct explanations before completing individual tasks. Only a small number of students actively participated in discussions, and opportunities for students to explain ideas, exchange perspectives, or learn from one another were relatively limited. Consequently, learning was primarily focused on task completion rather than on collaboratively developing an understanding of correspondence concepts. These classroom conditions highlighted the need for a more interactive instructional approach that actively engages students in constructing knowledge through collaboration.

One instructional approach that has the potential to address these challenges is Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. As a cooperative learning strategy, Jigsaw requires students to become "experts" on a particular segment of the learning material before teaching it to members of their home groups. This structure encourages positive interdependence, individual accountability, peer teaching, and collaborative problem-solving, allowing students to learn through meaningful interaction rather than relying solely on lecturer explanations (Slavin, 2015). From a social constructivist perspective, such collaborative activities enable learners to construct knowledge through dialogue, negotiation, and shared learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in English language education across various learning contexts. Research has reported positive outcomes in improving reading comprehension, speaking performance, vocabulary acquisition,



classroom participation, learning motivation, and collaborative engagement (Afifah & Mulis, 2025; Ardani & Lolita, 2025; Kiuk et al., 2021). These studies consistently indicate that Jigsaw activities foster active interaction among learners and create supportive learning environments that encourage peer-assisted learning. However, most existing studies have concentrated on general English courses or language skills such as reading, speaking, and grammar. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining how Jigsaw Cooperative Learning is implemented in English for Correspondence courses, where students are required to learn multiple correspondence genres, analyze authentic communication purposes, and collaboratively construct professional written texts. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how students experience Jigsaw activities within this specific ESP context and how classroom interactions develop throughout the implementation process. Moreover, previous studies have largely emphasized learning outcomes using quantitative approaches, leaving limited qualitative evidence regarding how Jigsaw Cooperative Learning is implemented, how students experience the learning process, and what patterns of classroom interaction emerge in ESP contexts.

Addressing these gaps, this study explores the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in undergraduate English for Correspondence classes. Specifically, the study examines how the instructional strategy is implemented, how students experience the collaborative learning process, and how classroom interaction develops throughout the activities. By employing classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the learning process from both instructional and student perspectives.

The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on cooperative learning in ESP by providing empirical evidence from an English for Correspondence classroom. In addition, the study offers practical insights for English lecturers seeking to design more interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning environments that support meaningful engagement and peer-assisted learning.

B. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in an English for Correspondence course. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to understand classroom practices, students' learning experiences, and classroom interactions during the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in a natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted in two undergraduate English for Correspondence classes at Applied English Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Both classes implemented Jigsaw Cooperative Learning, in which students worked in home and expert groups to learn different correspondence topics before sharing their knowledge with peers and completing collaborative learning tasks.

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observation served as the primary data source, focusing on the implementation of Jigsaw activities, students' participation, peer teaching, collaborative discussion, and classroom interaction. To complement the observational data, short semi-

structured interviews were conducted with randomly selected students from both classes to explore their learning experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges during the activities. In addition, document analysis was carried out using students' collaborative worksheets, correspondence writing tasks, presentation materials, and instructional documents to provide further evidence of the learning process.

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were first reviewed repeatedly to gain familiarity with the data. Initial codes were then generated and organized into broader themes that reflected recurring patterns across the three data sources. The themes were subsequently reviewed, refined, and interpreted to address the research questions.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed by comparing evidence obtained from classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. The integration of multiple data sources enabled a more comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and classroom practices during the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The Implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in English for Correspondence Classes

Classroom observations showed that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning was systematically implemented in both English for Correspondence classes. The lesson focused on request letters, with students learning different subtopics, including the definition and purpose, characteristics, language focus, and sample request letters. Following the Jigsaw procedure, students first worked in expert groups to discuss their assigned subtopics before returning to their home groups to teach their peers.

The observations indicated that students actively collaborated throughout the learning process. During expert-group discussions, they exchanged ideas, clarified concepts, and prepared explanations for their home groups. After returning to their original groups, each student became responsible for explaining one component of the lesson, while other members listened, asked questions, and completed their notes. Throughout the activities, the lecturer primarily acted as a facilitator by monitoring discussions and providing clarification when needed.

Document analysis further supported these observations. Students' collaborative worksheets demonstrated that each group successfully integrated information from different subtopics into a complete understanding of request letters. The worksheets reflected contributions from multiple group members, indicating that the learning outcomes were achieved through collaborative knowledge sharing.

The interview findings also confirmed the implementation process. Most participants stated that dividing the lesson into smaller subtopics helped them focus on one component before learning the remaining parts from their classmates.

One participant explained:



"I only needed to focus on one part first. After discussing it with my expert group, I felt ready to explain it to my home group." (Participant 4)

Another participant shared:

"When everyone shared their topics, we could understand the whole lesson step by step instead of learning everything by ourselves." (Participant 8)

Overall, evidence from classroom observations, document analysis, and interviews consistently showed that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning was implemented according to its intended instructional sequence. The structured use of expert groups and home groups encouraged students to actively participate, share knowledge, and collaboratively develop their understanding of request letters.

Students' Learning Experiences during Jigsaw Cooperative Learning

The interview findings revealed that students generally perceived Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as a positive and engaging learning experience. Most participants reported that actively learning and explaining the materials helped them better understand the lesson. Rather than relying solely on lecturer explanations, students became responsible for mastering one subtopic before sharing it with their peers.

Many participants identified peer teaching as the most beneficial aspect of the learning activities. Preparing to explain the materials encouraged them to study more carefully and develop a deeper understanding of their assigned subtopics.

One participant explained:

"I had to study my topic carefully because I was responsible for explaining it to my group. If I didn't understand it, my friends would also have difficulty understanding it." (Participant 2)

Another participant shared:

"Teaching my friends helped me remember the lesson better because I had to explain it in my own words." (Participant 6)

Students also reported that collaborative discussions created a comfortable learning environment where they could ask questions and clarify misunderstandings more freely than in lecturer-led discussions. This finding was consistent with classroom observations, which showed active participation through questioning, discussion, and idea sharing in both expert and home groups.

Despite these positive experiences, some participants initially lacked confidence when explaining the materials, while differences in participation were occasionally observed among group members.

As one participant stated:

"At first, I was afraid of explaining the wrong information, but after discussing it with my expert group, I became more confident." (Participant 9)



Document analysis further showed that students collaboratively completed the learning tasks by integrating information from all assigned subtopics into a comprehensive understanding of request letters.

Overall, evidence from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis indicates that students experienced Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as an engaging and collaborative learning process that encouraged responsibility, peer learning, and active participation, despite minor challenges related to confidence and participation.

Classroom Interaction during Jigsaw Cooperative Learning

Classroom observations revealed that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning created an interactive learning environment characterized by active communication and collaboration among students. Throughout the activities, students exchanged ideas, asked questions, clarified concepts, and worked together in both expert groups and home groups to complete the learning tasks.

During expert-group discussions, students collaboratively explored their assigned subtopics and prepared explanations for their home groups. After returning to their original groups, each student presented one component of the request letter while other members listened, asked questions, and provided feedback. As a result, classroom interaction shifted from lecturer-centered instruction to student-led discussion.

The interview findings supported these observations. Students reported that discussing the lesson with classmates created a more comfortable learning environment and encouraged them to participate more actively.

One participant remarked:

"When someone explained something that I didn't understand, another friend usually added another explanation or gave an example. It helped me understand the lesson better." (Participant 1)

Another participant stated:

"Our discussion was not only about answering questions. We also shared ideas and corrected each other before presenting to the group." (Participant 10)

Document analysis further showed that students' collaborative worksheets and presentation materials reflected contributions from multiple group members, indicating that the learning products were developed through collective discussion and knowledge sharing.

Although differences in participation were occasionally observed, every student contributed by presenting their assigned subtopic during the home-group discussions. Overall, evidence from classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis indicates that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning fostered active classroom interaction through discussion, peer explanation, questioning, feedback, and collaborative knowledge sharing.



Discussion

Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as a Student-Centered Pedagogy in English for Correspondence

Classroom observations revealed that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning was implemented through a collaborative learning activity focusing on request letters and complaint letters. Students were first divided into several home groups, and each group was assigned a different subtopic related to request letters, namely the definition and purpose, characteristics, language focus, and sample request letters. This arrangement allowed each group to become responsible for mastering a particular aspect of the topic before sharing it with their peers.

Students initially discussed their assigned subtopics within expert groups to develop a comprehensive understanding of the learning materials. During these discussions, they identified key information, exchanged ideas, and prepared explanations that would later be delivered to members of their home groups. After completing the expert-group discussions, students returned to their original groups, where each member presented and explained their assigned subtopic. Through this process, every group gradually developed a complete understanding of request letters by integrating knowledge contributed by all members.

The classroom observations further indicated that students actively participated in explaining concepts, asking questions, and clarifying information throughout the discussions. Rather than depending primarily on lecturer explanations, students learned collaboratively by exchanging knowledge and supporting one another in understanding different components of request letters. The lecturer mainly functioned as a facilitator by monitoring group discussions, providing clarification when necessary, and encouraging balanced participation among group members.

The implementation observed in this study reflects the essential principles of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning, where each learner is individually responsible for mastering a specific segment of the learning materials before teaching it to peers. This instructional sequence promotes both individual accountability and positive interdependence, which are fundamental characteristics of cooperative learning (Slavin, 2015). From a social constructivist perspective, the learning process also illustrates how knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue, peer explanation, and collaborative interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

The present findings are consistent with recent studies reporting that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning encourages active participation and meaningful collaboration by positioning students as both learners and peer instructors. For example, a classroom-based qualitative study by Hind and Astuti (2024) found that the Jigsaw technique created structured opportunities for students to discuss learning materials, exchange explanations, and support one another's understanding through expert-group and home-group discussions. The study also highlighted that the success of Jigsaw largely depended on well-organized learning procedures and active student participation throughout each stage of the activity.

Similarly, recent empirical research has shown that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning strengthens collaborative engagement because students become mutually responsible for achieving shared learning goals rather than working individually (Afifah & Mulis, 2025; Hoerunnisa & Suherdi, 2017; Nawaz et al., 2025). As each member contributes unique knowledge to the group, collaborative discussion becomes an essential mechanism for constructing a complete

understanding of the learning materials. Such collaborative interactions have been reported to improve students' participation and cooperation during classroom activities.

Within the context of English for Correspondence, the Jigsaw procedure provided an effective instructional structure for learning request letters. By dividing the topic into manageable subtopics and requiring students to teach one another, the learning process shifted from passive reception of information toward collaborative knowledge construction. Consequently, students became active contributors to the learning process while simultaneously developing a comprehensive understanding of request letters through peer teaching and collaborative discussion.

Peer Teaching and Students' Learning Experiences

The interview data indicated that students generally perceived Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as an engaging and meaningful learning experience. Most participants reported that learning request letters and complaint letters through peer discussion enabled them to understand the materials more easily than listening to lecturer explanations alone. They appreciated the opportunity to exchange ideas, ask questions freely, and receive explanations from classmates using more familiar language.

Besides improving their understanding of request letters, students acknowledged that the activity encouraged greater responsibility for their own learning. Since each student was assigned a different subtopic, they realized that their group members depended on them to provide accurate explanations. Consequently, they prepared more carefully before joining the expert-group discussion and actively participated when returning to their home groups.

However, the interviews also revealed several challenges. Some students initially felt anxious about explaining the materials to their peers because they were uncertain about their English proficiency. Others reported that differences in participation occasionally occurred, with a few group members contributing less actively during discussions. Nevertheless, most participants agreed that the collaborative nature of the activity helped them overcome these challenges as discussions progressed.

The findings suggest that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning promoted a positive learning experience by encouraging students to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Through peer teaching and collaborative discussion, students developed a greater sense of ownership over their learning while simultaneously supporting one another's understanding of request letters.

These findings are consistent with recent research highlighting the educational benefits of cooperative learning in EFL classrooms. For instance, Andriana and Kalisa (2026) found that students perceived cooperative learning positively because it reduced learning anxiety, increased peer support, and strengthened self-confidence during classroom activities. The study further emphasized that well-structured group interaction and equitable participation were essential factors influencing students' learning experiences.

Similarly, Alzubi et al. (2024) reported that collaborative learning created meaningful opportunities for EFL learners to enhance both language learning and social interaction through group discussion, peer collaboration, and active classroom participation. The study concluded

that collaborative learning environments foster richer learning experiences when students are encouraged to interact, exchange ideas, and learn from one another.

Within the context of English for Correspondence, these findings indicate that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning not only facilitated students' understanding of request letters and complaint letters but also encouraged responsibility, confidence, and peer-supported learning. The requirement for each student to master and teach a specific component of the lesson transformed learning into a shared responsibility, allowing students to construct knowledge collaboratively while developing communication and interpersonal skills that are essential in both academic and professional contexts.

Classroom Interaction as Collaborative Knowledge Construction

Classroom observations demonstrated that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning created an interactive classroom environment in which students actively exchanged ideas, asked questions, and provided feedback throughout the learning process. Unlike conventional teacher-led instruction, classroom communication was primarily driven by students as they discussed different components of request letters within expert groups and later shared their understanding with members of their home groups. This interaction encouraged students to negotiate meaning collaboratively before reaching a shared understanding of the learning materials.

During expert-group discussions, students worked together to identify key concepts related to their assigned subtopics. They compared interpretations, clarified misunderstandings, and selected the most relevant information to present to their home groups. After returning to their original groups, each student assumed the role of a peer instructor by explaining one component of the request letter and complaint letter. The remaining group members actively listened, asked follow-up questions, and responded by connecting the newly learned information with other components of the lesson. This reciprocal exchange transformed the classroom into a collaborative learning community where knowledge was constructed through continuous interaction.

The interview data further confirmed these observations. Students emphasized that the discussion process encouraged them to communicate more actively because every member had an important role in completing the group's understanding of the topic.

One participant stated:

"Everyone had different information, so we needed to listen carefully to each other. If one person didn't explain, our group wouldn't understand the whole topic."
(Participant 4)

Another participant commented:

"We discussed many things before presenting to our group. Sometimes we corrected each other's explanations, so we became more confident when teaching our friends." (Participant 6)

These responses illustrate that classroom interaction extended beyond simply exchanging information. Students collaboratively evaluated ideas, negotiated explanations, and provided constructive feedback before presenting the materials to their peers. Such interactions fostered



mutual support and encouraged students to participate more actively throughout the learning process.

The findings align with the principles of social constructivism, which emphasize that knowledge is developed through social interaction and collaborative dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). They also reflect the essential elements of cooperative learning proposed by Slavin (2015), particularly positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, and individual accountability. The Jigsaw procedure required every student to contribute unique knowledge, making interaction an indispensable part of achieving the group's learning goals.

The present findings are supported by recent studies on cooperative learning. For example, Johnson and Johnson (2018) argue that effective cooperative learning environments are characterized by meaningful interaction, shared responsibility, and promotive communication among group members, all of which contribute to deeper learning and stronger interpersonal relationships. These interactional processes enabled learners to become more engaged and confident while constructing knowledge collectively.

In the context of English for Correspondence, classroom interaction played a significant role in helping students develop a comprehensive understanding of request letters and complaint letters. The structured exchange of ideas among expert and home groups enabled students to integrate different aspects of the topic—including the definition, characteristics, language focus, and sample request letters and complaint letters—into a coherent understanding. Consequently, Jigsaw Cooperative Learning functioned not only as a strategy for organizing classroom activities but also as a mechanism for promoting meaningful interaction and collaborative knowledge construction in ESP learning.

D. CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning in an undergraduate English for Correspondence course through classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. The findings confirmed that the Jigsaw strategy was successfully implemented through structured home-group and expert-group activities, enabling students to collaboratively learn different components of request letters while actively sharing knowledge with their peers. The study also found that students generally perceived Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as a positive learning experience. Peer teaching and collaborative discussions enhanced their understanding of the learning materials, encouraged greater responsibility, and promoted active classroom participation despite some challenges related to confidence and unequal participation. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning fostered meaningful classroom interaction through discussion, knowledge sharing, and peer feedback. Overall, the study confirms that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning is a valuable student-centered instructional approach for promoting collaborative learning and interactive classroom practices in English for Correspondence.

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