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Implementing Group Work as a Motivational Technique to Improve students' Oral Proficiency

The case of First Year Students of English at Mohamed Kheider

University of Biskra

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master

Degree in Sciences of Language

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My dear Mother Messouda and my idol my Father

KhelifiSaad

My Brothers HoussamAddin, khairddin and Sisters

Ibtissam, Ilham, Hayat and Khadija

My dear uncles Brahim, Mohammed and Ahmed and aunts

My Nieces and Nephews

All the extended Family and Friends

To my dearest sisters HamdiBesma and Bsikri Sonia and

AmiedDjouhaina

To the women who replaced my mother in many situations

OukilKarima

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Abstract

This study aims to discover the effects of cooperative group work on improving learners' oral proficiency and communicative skills. This concernsforming small groups to improve learners' oral production. It also attempts highlight the importance of creating a good environment to get learners to use the language much comfortable which will help them to be creative. The hypothesis adopted in this study sets that promoting the use of cooperative group work techniques in foreign language teaching classroom will provide learners with a large amount of language use and classroom oral production. The method used in this research is descriptive. The work describes two variables: cooperative group work and its role in improving learners' oral proficiency variable. The data were gathered through self completion questionnaires administered to first year LMD students at the Department of English, Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The results proved that cooperative group work is the appropriate technique for increasing learners' level of speaking and classroom oral participation which affects learners' oral proficiency. On the basis of these results, the hypothesis was confirmed, students must be provided with technique needed to develop their speaking skill and use language in a comfortable without hesitation.

Key words: Group work, cooperative work, oral proficiency, speaking

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General introduction

Introduction

Mastering the language is the goal of all EFL learners, who aim to speak the language fluently and communicate language easily. Most of teachers and learners agree that the speaking skill is the most diffecult among all skills that students can face when they are learning the language. As we know learning a language is an interactive process that involves students and teachers, the active participaction of both can creat a successful invernment for better learning.Creativity in the language field has been stimulated by a special concern for learning through an active and collaborative setting. The common view that language is best learned when students are interacting and communicating with each other in groups to learn a content or resolve real life issues where their focus should not be directed towered the language itself, except when it is necessary. Many researchers were interested on the importance of investigating the use of collaborative work as a motivational factor to improve students' oral proficiency.

Statement of the problem

The main objective of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in that language. Yet, we observed that EFL learners have difficulties in communicating in English because of their inability to learn effectively from a block of tasks, when most of time is spent on doing exercises which do not involve students interactions the kind of methodology chosen by the teacher has a great influence on students' oral proficiency. It means that working in pairs or small groups will lead to develop students' oral proficiency

Significance of the study

The present study emphasizes the use of group work as a motivational factor to improve oral proficiency by EFL learners of Biskra University. The study will also include appropriate strategies and methods which give students the opportunity to interact and communicate and improve their speaking skills. It presents students' weaknesses and how to overcome these weaknesses by dividing the class into small groups so they can interact and be more comfortable in dealing with their teachers and classmates. It also provides teachers with a certain techniques that helps them to reduce time and make a good lesson plans.

Aims of the study

This study aims to contribute to the improvement of students' poor productions in English through the use of cooperative group work language learning. It aims to investigate how cooperative learning language can be used in improving first year students' speaking skills also to enhance learners' communicative skills in the department of English.

Research questions

Throughout our study we would like to answer the following questions

➢ What are the main cooperative learning methods?

➢ What are the problems that face learners when they try to speak orally?

➢ What are the main techniques for oral proficiency?

➢ How can using group work improve students' oral proficiency?

Hypothesis

In our study we hypothesize that if researchers use cooperative learning and design appropriate classroom techniques, learners will use English orally, spontaneously and flexibly to negotiate and exchange information.

Limitations of the study

We believe that adapting this method to foreign language teaching in general and oral expression in particular will hopefully provide learners with extensive oral production and developed communicative competence, learners will be much comfortable and more confident when using foreign language in and outside classroom.

Methodology

In this study we intend to use the descriptive method to gather data for this dissertation. Moreover we plan to take information from any source related to the study. In addition we will use a data collection which is a questionnaire introduced to first year students of Mohammed khieder university department of English. Students were selected randomly (33) were selected from a population of (842) student. The results of the data analysis of the questionnaire will be included in the dissertation.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool is:

- The questionnaire:The questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work, aims to show how group work can make a different impact on students' oral production improvement.

Structure of the study

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first the chapter outlines some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of speaking and oral communication. It also deals with the relationship between speaking and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the reasons of students' inability to speak in English. We also mentioned oral performance and motivation. In this chapter, different techniques for developing oral proficiency are presented, and their implication to teaching the oral skills and assessing speaking are also considered.

The second chapter provides a better understanding of cooperative language learning and learning in small groups; it includes an overview of the cooperative language learning, a discussion about the general issues on cooperative learning, definition of cooperative language learning, followed by different methods about learning in small groups, some of the characteristics, and the goals of cooperative learning will be discussed. The roles of the teachers and the learners, and also some of the benefits and pitfalls of group work are also considered finally recommendations for improving group work.

The last chapter deals with data analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of learners' questionnaire. It will help us to see whether the results go in the same direction of our hypothesis.

CHAPTER ONE
SPEAKING

Introduction

One of the teachers' main concerns while working with English Language learners is to enable them to communicate effectively through oral language. Teachers concerned with teaching the oral expression must keep in mind this question: Why is it so difficult to teach oral proficiency?

To a large extent, it is because teachers are willing to teach in the classroom what is best learned outside it. The classroom is the only place for providing information and developing educational skills. However teachers concern is not only to inform but also to improve learners' ability to use the target language for communicative purposes.

In this chapter, we will deal with speaking skill; definition of speaking, the relationship between speaking and the other skills, problems that causes students' inability to speak in English and some techniques for teaching speaking, oral performance and motivation, assessing speaking is also considered.

1.1 What is speaking?

As it was noted at the introduction of this work the main objective behind learning a foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language. We communicate in order, to be sociable, because we want something, because we want someone to do something, to respond to someone else, to express our feelings and thoughts, to exchange information, to refer to an action or an event in the past, present, or future and others. Speaking is learned at the early stages of a child's life.

Speaking is one of the four skills that students should master well. It has an important role in communicating. While speaking, students face some difficulties even though they have a lot of vocabularies and have written them well. The problem is the fear of making mistakes.

1.2 The nature of oral communication

According Kramsch (1983: 367) speaking is defined as: "Anticipating the listener's response and possible misunderstanding, clarifying one's own and the other's intentions, and arriving at the closet possible match between intended, perceived and anticipated meaning".

Speaking is an interactional process between speaker and listener. The speaker has to encode the message he wants to convey in an appropriate language, while the listener has to decode the message. The speaker's message usually contains more information that is redundant, it does not necessarily correspond the listener interpretation. The listener is helped by some features, such as stress, intonation, facial and bodily movements such as gestures. Inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most common used skills. That is why speaking in a classroom demands interacting with the teacher and peers, it depends on how classroom activities are organized. Teachers who do more oral interaction activities in the classroom have more opportunities to develop their students' oral production. Activities should involve Spontaneous practice of the target language.

When someone speaks to another, there will be a relationship. The relationship itself is a communication Wilson (1983:5) defines speaking as development of the relationship between speaker and listener.

Byrne (1986:8) states that: "Oral communication is tow-way process between speaker and listener (or listeners) and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding)". Oral communication involves the negotiation between two or more persons; it is depends on the context in which it occurs, and the participants, their experiences, ideas, the environment, and the purpose behind that speech. Speaking is an interactive process both speaker and listener has its own role of building meanings, receiving and sending messages or exchange information.

Brown and Yule (1983: 13) compare between two language functions; transactional function and interactional function. The transitional function is concerned with the transfer of information. On the other hand, the interactional function, in which the main purpose of speech is communication.

Brown and Yule (1983: 19-20) state that:"The teacher should realize that simply training the students to produce short turns will not automatically yield a student who can perform satisfactory in long turns. It is currently fashionable in language teaching to pay a particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns …It must surely be clear that students who are capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language"

Brown and Yule suggest that if someone speaks, he/she should understand what the speech is about, the speaker should clarify his ideas or introduce topics to be talked and to make other responds to what he says.

1.3 Speakingsub-skills

Speaking has sub-skills different from the other skills. The speaker must have the ability to build this arrangement of skills to become a good communicator. According to Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983:140), learners have to:

- Think of ideas they wish to express, either initiating a conversation or responding to a previous speaker.

- Change the tongue, lips and jaw position in order to articulate the appropriate sounds.

- Be aware of the appropriate functional expressions, as well as grammatical, lexical, and cultural features to express the idea

- Be sensitive to any change in the "register" or style necessitated by the person(s) to whom they are speaking and situation in which the conversation is taking place.

- Change the direction of their thoughts on the basis of the other Persons' responses.

In speaking, the learner has to acquire these sub-skills of knowing what, how, why, to whom and when to say something. The teacher's role is to monitoring the students' speech to know what skills and they already gain and what are the once needed to development.

2. The relationship between speaking and the other skills

The objectives behind language teaching courses are defined in terms of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The teacher emphasize on one skill at a time. In a lesson the attention is paid to speaking and to writing in another lesson on rading and writing and so on. This reflects the needs of the learners and the objective of the course, and the method followed by the teacher.

Although, they treated separately most of the time, the four skills are related.

Spoken Language

Understanding   Speaking

Receptive skills   productive skills

Reading   Writing

Written language
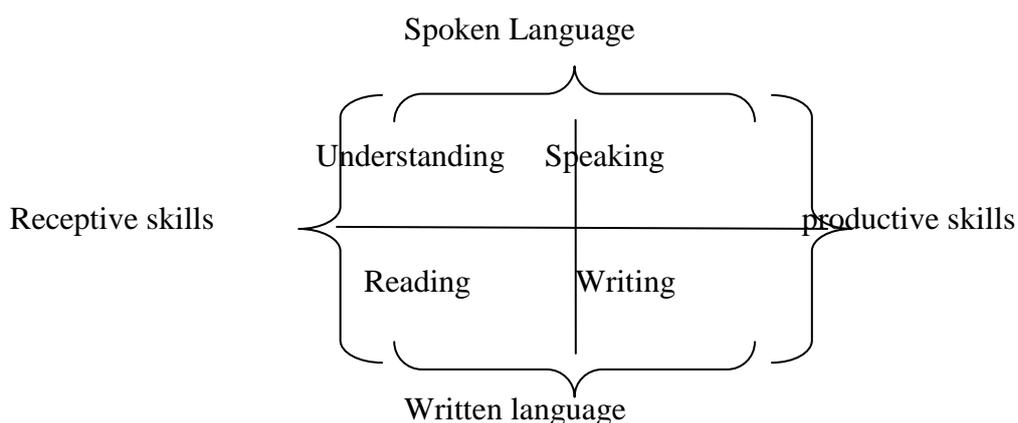
Diagram 1: Inter − relationship of the four skills (Donn Byrne 1976)

What is commonly known is: Listening and reading are called "receptive skills", speaking and writing are "productive skills". The first two are sources of experience; speaking and writing are a production of certain processes.

2.1 Speaking versus writing

Brown and Yule (1983:20) asserted in their research about the nature of speaking the differences between spoken and written language. They point out that the history of teaching language focused on written language. Its main concern characterized by well-formed sentences and well-structured paragraphs. Speaking, on the other hand, consists of short utterances, pronunciation, a great deal of repetition and overlap between one speaker and another.

Harmer (2005) defines some differences between speaking and writing. He claims in writing the readers are not always present and most of time they are unknown audience. When we write, it is essential that all information must be on the page. The reader cannot stop and ask for clarification. In speaking, we have the ability of interacting, whether we know them or not. This is one of the speaking advantages because the speaker can changes his speech according to his participants'. Another difference between these two skills which is: durability. Writing is more durable because when we speak, our words live for few moments. Unlike when we write, our words may live for years or even centuries.

Although speaking and writing differs they also have similarities. Lindsay and Knight (2006:60) state that we speak depending on whom we are speaking to and for what reason. Same as in written language, we write depending on whom it is written for and why.

2.2 Speaking versus Listening

Good teachers need to know that most of class time should be devoted to develop oral skills. In their book on listening, Avery and Ehrlich (1992:36) distinguish between reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. The non- reciprocal listening refers to activities such as listening to the radio or formal lectures the transfer of information is directed from the speaker to the listener.

On the other hand reciprocal listening refers to those listening activities where the listener has the opportunity to interact with the speaker directly.

Byrne (1976:8) states that the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill, because both the speaker and listener have a specific role to perform. Because the communication process cannot exist without the relationship between the speaker and the listener.Nunan (1989:23) states that: "We do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our background knowledge".

The listener has to identify the speech signals from the sounds, to translate these signals into words, to analyze syntax and extra meaning and focus on facial expressions, stress, intonation etc then respond appropriately to what has been said. The listeners' attention will be focused on the meaning rather than the form.

Listening processes involve two models: bottom-up and top-down model. Bottom-up models work on the message, it starts with listening to the sounds, join this sounds together to make syllables and words, combine these words to form phrases, clauses and sentences than combine them to form a conversation. Top-down models use background knowledge to comprehend the message; making use of your own knowledge and situation, context, texts and conversations to understand what you hear.

However, we can depend on mother tongue experience. Consider what will happen when the learners try to use the target language outside the classroom and where they are exposed to a real situation. There will be no understanding. This misunderstanding may result problems of anger from the other side. Byrne (1976:9) suggeststwo main reasonswhythisishappened:

- The learners' ability to understand need to be considerably extensive in order to be comfortable in a foreign language and therefore to communicate effectively. Thus, the teacher has to provide learners with a broad receptive base.

- The learners need suitably varied models of natural speech. Thus, the listener has to be taught to listen as well as to speak.

In the communicating, we have to emphasize on both the listening and the speaking skills. To conclude, the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill because to communicating face to face must be developed both.

3. Students psychological problems

The main goal of teaching the oral skill is to improve communicative competence. "In fact, when learners try to express themselves there is hesitation; cliché expressions which fill in pauses, much repetition and frequent indefiniteness as the speaker seeks the most convenient combination of element to express his intended meaning" (Rivers, 1968:192-8). These difficulties are due to a lack of interest in the subject, poor listening practice, deficient vocabulary, or lack of self confidence and the fear of making mistakes.

3.1 Lack of interest in the subject

In the classroom, the student may often prefer to stay silent because he/she has nothing to say. The teacher may have chosen a topic which is not interesting to him/her or does not know too much about it, and as a result they have nothing to say in English. The student must have the desire to communicate something to someone or a group of persons. If the student does not have a good relationship with his teacher, or feel comfortable with his classmates, he may feel that what he would like to say can be not interesting to them.

3.2 Poor listening practice

Since speaking is an interaction between two or more people listening plays a major role. The student may have acquired the skill in which he can express himself in the foreign language, but he hasn't practice in understanding the oral language when it is spoken in a conversation situation. The student therefore does not comprehend sufficient elements in the

message. Students need much practice in listening to the target language functions which will provide them with the breathing space necessary for oral performance.

3.3 Deficientvocabulary

Students find themselves struggling to find appropriate words where their choice of expression is severely limited when they are trying to express their thoughts. When students are learning a foreign language, they are unable to express their thoughts in orally mature vocabulary. Thus, they find themselves limited to expressing themselves in childishly simple language, they feel frustrated and uncomfortable. The teacher must be aware of this psychological factor and he must be aware of the fact that, although they are they are limited in their powers of expression; they are not really the immature persons this deficiency might make them appear to be.

3.4 Lack of self confidence and the fear of making mistakes

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves when if they feel that their oral participation may cause unpleasantness and embarrassment, while others hesitate when participating in the discussions because they are afraid of being continually corrected by the teacher for every slip they make. However, students' mistakes must be corrected, but when the student finish his presentation and complete his message he should be interrupted as little as possible. Instead, the teacher should note one or two errors of pronunciation or grammar which would affect communication or be unacceptable to a native speaker, and brings these to the attention of the whole class for a later practice.

4. Oral performance and motivation

The term motivation is derived from the Latin "movere", meaning "to move", and is commonly defined as a cluster of factors that energizes behavior and gives it direction. Words

like "choice", "persistence" and "effort" can be associated with motivation and it is connected to why people decide to do something or for how long and hard they will pursue a task. There are many issues that concerned with motivation in the speaking skills since it can affect students oral performance. Babu (2010) asserted that "The lack of motivation in learning causes students' hesitation to speak English in the classroom" (p.50)

Teachers should have passion, creativity and interest in their students. They are advised to offer a good atmosphere.

4.1 Motivational types

There are two motivational types that motivational theorists describe when trying to explain how students learn and what can provide the best classroom environment.One motivational type can be described as external or extrinsic motivation. It is rooted from the motivational theory come from the behaviorist B.F. Skinner's research on behavior modification and the systematic use of rewards. Those who believe that motivation to learn is prompted by external rewards believe that people are basically passive. The other motivational type is intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by autonomous or self-directed learning, where the student is in control of their own learning. Enhanced motivation is reliant on innate (intrinsic) factors that cause people to challenge themselves, just as young children do when exploring or encountering a new object for the first time. According to Dickinson, intrinsically motivated students become more inclined to set their own goals and monitor their own progress which benefits not only themselves, but the other language learners in the class with whom they interact in small group and paired work. Intrinsically motivated students therefore tend to be more creative and resourceful in using a second language because they are less reliant on the teacher and rather personalize their own learning because the learning involves their natural interest.

5. Teaching techniques for oral proficiency

Effective teachers usually use techniques as group work, role-play, problem solving and discussion which encourage students to take communicative initiatives. Thus, they can provide them with a wide and experience of using the language as much as possible.

5.1 Group work

The use of group work has been emphasized as another interactional dynamics of language classroom .A group work is a classroom situation where students are working with in smaller units or groups. Through interacting with each other in groups, students can be given the opportunity to oral exchange. For example, the teacher might want students to predict the content of reading a text of five paragraphs. Then, they are divided into five groups the dynamics of group size is an important component of group work. A small group is often considered to consist of three or more people (Beebe & Masterson, 2003). Groups of two are called dyads and are not encouraged for group work because there are not a sufficient number of individuals to generate creativity and a diversity of ideas (Csernica et al., 2002). In general, it is suggested that groups of four or five members tend to work best (Davis, 1993). However, Csernica et al. (2002) suggests that three or four members are more appropriate. Larger groups decrease each members opportunity to participate and often results in some members not actively contributing to the group. In situations where there is a shorter amount of time available to complete a group task, such as an in-class collaborative learning exercise, it is suggested that smaller groups are more appropriate. The shorter amount of time available, the smaller the group should be (Cooper, 1990; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). . Each group selects a paragraph of the text just reads and prepares to answer the questions put by the other groups. Each group has to scan a paragraph of the text for detailed comprehension and formulate questions to test the comprehension of the other groups. The aim is to get the students involved in oral interaction: asking and answering questions, agreeing or disagreeing on certain points of paragraph and proposing modifications. Indeed, it is through this kind of

tasks that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed (Bright &McGregor, 1970)

Group work is a meaningful activity because the students need to focus on meaningful negotiation and information exchange.

For this reason, students should be familiar with the discussion topic. The main concern of the teacher is, of course to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination.

Advantages: There are six advantages to working in a group:

1. Group has more information than an individual. Groups have a greater well of resources to tap and more information available because of the variety of backgrounds and experiences.

2. Groups stimulate creativity. In regard to problem solving, the old adage can be applied that "two heads are better than one."

3. People remember group discussions better. Group learning fosters learning and comprehension. Students working in small groups have a tendency to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same material is presented in other instructional formats (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005; Davis, 1993).

4. Decisions that students help make yield greater satisfaction. Research suggests that students who are engaged in group problem solving are more committed to the solution and are better satisfied with their participation in the group than those who were not involved.

5. Students gain a better understanding of themselves. Group work allows people to gain a more accurate picture of how others see them. The feedback that they receive may help them better evaluate their interpersonal behavior.

6. Team work is highly valued by employers. Well developed interpersonal skills were listed by employers among the top 10 skills sought after in university graduates (Graduate Outlook Survey, 2010).

Disadvantages: Although working in groups has its advantages, there are also times when problems arise. Beebe and Masterson (2003) list four disadvantages.

1. There may be pressure from the group to conform to the majority opinion. More people do not like conflict and attempt to avoid it when possible. By readily acquiescing to the majority opinion, the individual may agree to a bad solution just to avoid conflict.

2. An individual may dominate the discussion. This leads to members not gaining satisfaction from the group because they feel too alienated in the decision making process

3. Some members may rely too heavily on others to do the work. This is one of the most problems that face groups. Some members do not pitch in and help and do not adequately contribute to the group (Freeman &Greenacre, 2011). One solution to this problem is to make every group member aware of the goals and objectives of the group and assign specific tasks or responsibilities to each member.

4. It takes more time to work in a group than to work alone. It takes longer to accomplish tasks when working with others. However, the time spent taking and analyzing problems usually results in better solutions.

3.2 Roleplay

Many students derive a great benefit from role-play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purpose (ESP). Role-play is an authentic technique because it involves language use in real interactive contexts. It provides a format for using elements of real-life conversation and communication (Forrest, 1992)

Revel (1979), sees role-play as: "an individual's spontaneous behavior reacting to other in a hypothetical situation."(p.16).This means that role-play encourage students to speak through a real identity in an imagined situation to present the view of a person without necessarily sharing them. Role-play involves an element of "let's pretend"; it can offer two main choices:

a) They can play themselves in an imaginary situation.

b) Or they can be asked to play imaginary people in an imaginary situation. (Byrne,1976)

Students usually find role-playing enjoyable, for example, they might be given the role of an angry mother waiting the late return of her sixteen years old daughter from a night party. Another student could be given the role of the daughter. Therefore, students have to prepare a dialogue for their presentation. Because role-play imitates real life, the range of language functions that might be used expands considerably. The role relationships among students call for practicing and developing sociolinguistic competence to use the language skills that are appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

3.3 Problemsolving

Barker and Gaut (2002:160) defined problem solving as follow: "A problem-solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings"

It is grouping together a range of activities which require the learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds. Duff (1986; in Nunan, 1989: 44) discovered that problem solving tasks prompted more interaction than debating tasks.

Problem solving can be divided into two kinds: short-term task and long-term task or project. The former can be done in course of one class session while the latter is more time consuming that may take many sessions and longer. An example of a short-term problem-solving task includes putting items in categories. For this kind of activities, the students have

either to classify items according to categories given by the teacher or to identify them by themselves. The students are given at list of 10-15 items and asked to locate them under heading according to different features. Like, physical/ mental work. Such short-term activities are task-centered and can be presented in a relatively simple way (i.e. they do not require a lot of explanation in order to set up nor do they generally need any support materials). It can be comfortably done in one class session of 20-30 minutes. However, some teachers regard any activity which involves individual or group research over period of time as project work. Very often this kind of activity is topic-centered and results in the production of a piece of written oral report or both.

These activities provide a frame work language use in a range of communicative function that is likely to occur. Learners also develop greater skills for managing the interaction, e.g. signaling disagreement or interrupting without offence.

3.4 Discussion

Discussion is exchange of ideas and opinions either on a class with the teacher's role as a mediator and to some extent as participator, or within the context of a group, with the students talking among themselves. It may last for just a few minutes or it may continue for a whole lesson.

It is a technique for developing oral expression through exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments and points of views. We can say that this technique is student–directed and teacher–guided discussion (Byrne, 1976). For example, all students can be asked to read a single book or story which can be discussed in one session.

Discussion groups (also called literature circles and book clubs) can last from one to two or three sessions depending on the length of the book.

One of the reasons that make discussions fail is that students are reluctant to give an opinion in front of the whole, especially if they cannot think of anything to say and are not

confident of the language they might use to say it. Many students feel extremely exposed classroom in discussion (Barnes and Todd, 1977: 81). Teachers have to keep in mind that topics for discussion are not selected at random. The first step toward successful discussion is that the teacher has to respect the following:

- Provide the students with a variety of sources of input news papers, video-recording, or simply text so that they can have something to say and the language with which to say it.

- Offer choices relevance to professional / educational level of the students to feel comfortable with the topic chosen from several choices. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs rather than how to combat pollution.

- Set a goal of discussion as group product, such as a letter to the editor.

- Use small groups instead of large groups or whole class discussion as large groups can make participation difficult.

- Give 8-15 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop if run out of things to say.

- Allow students to participate in their own way. Do not expect all of them to contribute to the discussion, some students may feel uncomfortable to talk about certain topics.

- Do "report back" session to report the main results of their discussion.

6.1.Assessingspeaking

The term assessment refers to more than tests and grades. Actually, Haley and Austin (2004: 117) state that "[it] involves development of materials, processes, activities and criteria to be used as tool for determining how well and how much learning is taking place". Also, Lindsay and knight (2006) state that:"Assessment is the process of analyzing and measuring knowledge and ability, in this case, the learner's knowledge of the language and ability to communicate."(p.121)

In foreign language teaching, it is important to assess all learner language skills and not just their use of grammar or vocabulary. In speaking, assessment involves the learners' knowledge of the language and the ability to use this knowledge for communication. Thornbury (2005:124) states that speaking assessment can be done either formally or informally. Informal assessment can be used at the beginning or at end of the language courses as well as during the course itself by asking questions to check whether the learners have understood or not. On the other hand, format assessment can be done through tests-using placement, diagnostic, progress or development tests –and examinations.

Testing influence the teachers' works with his learners. However, testing speaking is not an easy task because of the complexity of the skill. The problem, however, with including an oral component in a test is that it complicates the testing procedure in terms of practicality and the way assessment criteria can be reliably applied. Making a written test of grammar test is so easy and time-efficient. A test of speaking, on the other hand, is not. As an example; when we test speaking by using an oral presentation about certain topic. During the test, all the learners of a class have to perform individually, the stress caused, and the time taken, may seem to be greater than the benefits.

Moreover, "the teacher may have different criteria or standards for judging speaking" Thornbury (2005:125).

It may be difficult for the teacher to be objective in grading his learners. The teacher may use a variety of rating systems. A holistic rating when the teacher is interested in the students' overall performance. On the other hand, analytic rating captures the learners' performance on only one aspect, say fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, stress, etc...(Lindsay and Knight, 2006: 124). So, the use of these standards will be taken in to account when the teacher gives the final mark. There are other times when speaking skills can be assessed.

Almost any activity designed to test speaking are generally the same as the kinds of activities designed to teach speaking, e.g. role-play, pair work, discussions, etc...

Although students afraid of getting bad this can be motivated sometimes, they feel much powerful when they assessing themselves.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we highlight the fact of teaching speaking, this skill and its relationship with other skill and how it affect and be affected by them, some of the problems that faces students when they are presenting an oral activity; and how they come over these problems. We also talked about how motivation can enhance students' oral performance and give them a chance to improve their level of speaking. It is mentioned also that teachers should provide learners with effective oral practice clearly teachers have to adopt a wide range of techniques and procedures through which oral proficiency can develop. Such techniques should involve learners into real communication. Finally how teachers should assess their students and the importance of the assessment.

Chapter Two

GROUP WORK

Introdction

Cooperative group work learning is one of the most common practices. In foreign languages learning, group work gives students the opportunity to use language in meaningful situations. Nowadays cooperative group work became one of the most helpful methods of classroom instruction.

This chapter suggests a better comprehension of cooperative group work language learning; it includes an overview about group work, a number of definitions, followed by different methods about learning in small groups, some of the characteristics, and the goals of group work will be next followed. Some of the benefits and pitfalls of group work are also considered, finally some recommendations for group work.

In this chapter, we introduce two main types of information. The first is to present what cooperative group work learning is, and the second one gives information about how we can make use of its different techniques.

1. Group work: An Overview

For centuries researchers were searching for more effective ways for language teaching. For more than hundred years, the emphasis was on the role of the learner in the process of learning /teaching. As a result, in recent years, a significant progress began to appear and cooperative learning comes to the scene. The history of cooperative learning back hundreds of years, the early twentieth century (Slavin, 1995: ix). U.S. John Dewey suggest some forms of cooperation among students as essential to learning. He focused on developing the idea of using cooperation in the classroom as systematic basis

Cooperative learning is founded on significant premises about the interactive and cooperative nature of language learning (Richard s & Rodgers, 2001; 194). It is commonly

known of cooperative learning is that "learners develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially and pedagogically structured situations". Social interdependence theory of Morton Deutch (1949; in Slavin, 1995; 16) explores the influence of social interdependence on individual interaction within a given situation. He indicates that in cooperative groups, students try to work better because their classmates want them to do so.

David and Rodger Johnson at the University of Minnesota, Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins University, and Elizabeth Cohen at Stanford, have spent years searching and analyzing cooperative group work, competitive and individualistic learning (Slavin, P. 3). As a result of many years of research and practical applications, cooperative language learning now exists for instructional purpose. Other studies improved that cooperative group work learning has positive effects on the relationship among students and between students and teachers.

2. Definitions of group work

Johnson et al (1994; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), in fact, have focused on cooperation as a separated field of cooperative group work learning, rather than competition. In cooperative learning, they suggests that learners develop more from sharing each other's thoughts and exchange information rather than working individually."Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of «A»". (p. 195)

Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richard and Rodgers: 2001), states cooperative learning is that: "Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups in groups and

in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others" (p. 192).

The definition above shows that cooperative learning is making learners learn from each other in pairs or small groups. Cooperative learning in this context emphasizes learner accountability in which each member of the group has a role to perform and he is responsible for his own part on the activity.

Regardless of the definition introduced the objectives are the same. Thus, Cooperative learning is an approach that aims to strength cooperation rather than competition, develop communicative competence through using groups. Cooperative learning is one of the teaching methods that can save time and energy.

3.   CooperativeLanguage Learning Methods

Cooperative Learning is an ancient field the teaching process. For a long time, teachers have been using it to encourage students to work together on groups. However, until 1970, some significant research on some applications of cooperative learning began to take place. As a result, many cooperative learning methods appeared. Now teachers have different cooperative teaching methods to work with. Some of these methods which have been common used are Student team-Achievement Division, Jigsaw and Group Investigation.

3.1 Students team-achievement division (STAD)

According to Slavin (1986), is a simple technique of cooperative learning. In this technique, team should be divided in groups of four or five students which are chosen randomly. The major goal of the team is "to make sure that their teammates have learned the material." (Slavin.1995; 78). After a period of time of practicing this method, the students have individual quizzes. Students are not allowed to help each other with the quizzes each one

should work alone. This individual accountability motivates students to do a good work. The success of the whole team depends on the all of group members have to master all the information taught by the teacher during the courses.

The success of the group measured by the students' progress by comparing the result to their past average, the graded are given to each team based on which students work harder and perform better.

In foreign language classrooms, this may be useful for teaching grammar forms. Students will learn some grammar roles then they are given the chance to prove that all members of the team have mastered these rules. STAD is the simplest of all cooperative learning methods, and it is useful for teachers who have no experience in this field of teaching.

3.2 Jigsaw

The Jigsaw was developed by Elliot Aronson (1978). Jigsaw II was studied by Slavin. In this method, students work in heterogeneous teams. The students are given, stories, journals, chapters or reports to read, they are given « expert sheet » each one contains a different topic, each member of the team choose one sheet and read the passage carefully. When they finish reading, students from different teams with the same topic meet in an « expert group » to discuss their topics. After that each member go back to his team and explain what the passage he read was about. The teacher role here is built quizzes and gives student the sufficient time to finish their work. Testing Jigsaw is the same as testing STAD; the grade depends on the work of each member of the team.

3.3 Group investigation

Group investigation is a method of cooperative learning that was adapted many years ago by John Dewey (1970, in Slavin; 11), and has been redefined lately by Shlomo and Yael Sharan at the University of Tel Aviv. In this method, groups are divided according to students' interest. Students form groups from two to six. Slavin believes that: "cooperative interaction and communication among classmates are best achieved within the small group, where exchange among peers and cooperative inquiry can be sustained." (P 112)

According to Sharan (1992-1999; 10): "the group investigation method requires the students to form small interest group, plan and implement their investigation, synthesize the group members' findings, and make a presentation to the entire class".

Group investigation is based on taking information from different sources inside and outside the classroom. The important feature of group investigation is students' cooperation solving the task. Group members determine the topic they want to investigate to solve the problem, and the resources needed, what and how they will present their project to the whole class.

4. Characteristics of cooperativelanguagelearning

Cooperative language learning differs from traditional language teaching methods. Comparing cooperative language learning with traditional language teaching will highlight some important characteristics of language learning.

The table below summarizing the main differences between cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching (based on the research of Johnson and Johnson, 1991; Nunan, 1989; in Zhang, 2010; 81)

	Traditionallanguageteaching	Cooperativelanguagelearning

Independence	Non or negative	Positive
Learnerroles	Passive receiver and performer	Active participator, Autonomouslearners
Teacherroles	The center of the classroom, controller of teaching pace and direction, judge of students" right or wrong, the major source of assistance, feedback, reinforcement and support	Organizer and counselor of group work, facilitator of the communication tasks, intervener to teach collaborative skills
Materials	Complete set of materials for each student	Materials are arranged according to purpose of lesson. Usually one group shares complete set materials
Type of activities	Knowledge set recall and review, phrasal or sentence pattern practice, role play, translation, listening etc	Any instructional activity, mainly group work to engage learners in communication, involving processes like information sharing, negotiation of meaning andinteraction
Interaction	Some talking among students, mainly teacher student interaction	Intense interaction among students, a few teacher-student interactions
Classroom arrangement	Separate desks or students	Collaborative small groups

	placed in pairs	
Students expectation	Take a major part in evaluating own progress and the quality of own efforts towards learning. Be a winner or loser	All members in some way contribute to success of group. The one who makes progress is the winner
Teacherstudentrelationship	Superior-inferior or equal	Cooperating and equal

Table5.1: Comparison of cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching. (Zhang, 2010; 82)

Cooperative language learning is a systematic procedure was founded to overcome the weaknesses of traditional language teaching. It was typically informal, unstructured, and only used on rare occasions (Slavin, 1995: ix). Macaulay and Gonzalez (1996; 2) characterize it as follow:"The instructional use of small groups so that learners are able to work together in a manner that enhances both group andindividual learning. The key to cooperative learning is the careful structuring of learning groups. There are many ways to structure such groups, but some of the key elements are building interdependence, the designing of interactive processes, and account ability etc the building of social skills around suchareas as decision making, communication, and conflict management is also fundamental to cooperative learning".

Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001; 196) introduce the following characteristics for the success of group work learning in cooperative learning.

4.1 Positive interdependence of cooperativelearning

The reason behind the success of the whole group is the positive interdependence among all group members. (Richard & Rodgers, 2001; 196), state that: "Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member all." (p.196). It means that all group members are one, they have same goal each member perform his role appropriately for the sake of the whole group to complete a task or solve a problem. .

4.2 Group formation

Group formation considered one of the important basics in creating positive interdependence. Richards and Rodgers (2001; 196) state that when the teacher divides the class into groups he should keep in mind the following points:

- Considering group size: typically group size is from two to four. This will depend on the tasks the students have to carry out, students' age, and time division.

- Assigning students to groups: groups can be teacher-selected, random, or students-selected.

- Suggesting student's role in groups: Each group member has a specific role to play, such as noise monitor, recorder, or summarizer.

4.3 Individual accountability

In cooperative group work learning, each group member has a specific role to perform for a successful cooperative group, the members' responsibility is to develop the whole group. Individual accountability focus on both group and individual performance, for example grading the whole group as one or choosing randomly a student to share what the whole group experience with the whole class (Slavin, 1995; 42).

Learner accountability is gives each member of the group a role to perform. The importance of individual accountability is in providing learners with an incentive to help each other and to motivate each other to achieve a shared outcome (Slavin; 43)

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4.4 Social skills

One of the remarkableissues is that students cannot interact effectively with their classmates. Social skills like any other skill should emphasize and must be taught, teachers should motivate their students to communicate and interact with each other as teammates. Larsen-Freeman (2000; 164) states that: "in cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative skills so that they can work together more effectively". It is teacher's role to encourage social and collaborative skills. According to Arnold : "skills in negotiating (clarifying seeking clarification, checking for comprehension, problem for more information) as well interaction skills in turn taking, listing, encouraging, helping, disagreeing" (Arnold, 1999; 3).

4.5 Structuring and structure

Richards and Rodgers (2001; 196) states that "structuring and structure refer to ways of organizing student interaction and different ways students are to interact such a s three-step interview or Round Robin."

5. **Goals of cooperativeleaning**

The main goal of cooperative group work is communication and interaction inside the classroom among the students and outside the classroom.

Richards and Rodgers (2001; 193) believe that cooperative learning goals are:

- To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pairs and group activities.

- To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g. content-based, foreign language classrooms, mainstreaming).

- To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, languagestructures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.

- To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communicative strategies.

- To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate. Thus, these constitute the main goals of cooperative language learning in language teaching. Clearly, cooperative goals create pro - academic norms among students, and pro-academic norms have important effects on students' achievement.

6. Redefinition of the roles

Cooperative group work learning states the roles of both teachers and learners in the light of methodology, which relies more on cooperative group work and pair work activities. (Richards & Rodgers 2001; 193)

6.1Teachers' role

The role of the teachers in cooperative group work teaching is totally different from traditional teaching. The teacher is not only a deliverer of information, the teacher is a facilitator, guider and a friend sometimes; he have a specific message to convey. He must create highly structured and well-organized environment in the classroom. Harel (1992; 169) defines the teacher's role in the classroom as follow: "During this time the teacher interacts, teaches, refocuses, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates, and empathizes. Depending on what problems evolve, the following supportive behaviors are utilized. Facilitators are givingfeedback, redirecting the group with questions, encouraging the group to solve its problems, extending activity, encouraging thinking conflict, observing student and supplying resources".

With cooperative learning, Hyland (1991; in Richards, and Lockhart, 1996; 102 -3), states that the teacher's role is to:

- Share the responsibility for managing both interaction and learning with students.

- Structure the learning environment so that student cooperates toobtain learning goals.

- Stimulate interactive language use through group work andcollaborative problem solving.

- Choose classroom tasks which involve information sharing, cooperative reasoning, opinion sharing, and values clarification.

- Coordinate group activities.

- Provide clarification, feedback, and motivation support.

In using group work, the teacher act as a facilitator. Slavin (1995) states that "[the teacher] circulates among the groups, sees that managing their work, and helps out with any difficulties they encounter in group interaction and the performance of the specific tasks related to the learning project." (p. 113). In cooperative language learning the teacher can perform a role of one of the group members.

6.2Learners' role

In group work, the learner is a member of group who is obliged to do his role and make sure that has mastered the content being taught. In cooperative learning, the student is the leader. Slavin (1995) believes that in order to ensure cooperation among students, "[they] are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding." (p. 2). Cooperation among student makes them responsible of their own learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that: "learners are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning." (p. 199).

Richard and Rodgers (2001) report that when using cooperative group work: "each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder or summarizer."(p.197)

The following table lists some roles that learners can perform.

Role	Description
Encourager	Encourages reluctant or shy students to participate.
Praiser/cheerleader	Shows appreciation of other's contribution and recognizes accomplishment.
Gatekeeper	Equalizes participation and makes sure how one dominates.
Coach	Helps with the academic content, explains concepts.
Question commander	Make sure all students" questions are asked and answered.
Taskmaster	Keeps the group on task.
Recorder	Writes down, decisions and plans
Reflector	Keeps group aware of progress (or lack of progress).
Quiet captain	Monitors noise level.
Materials monitor	Picks up and returns materials.

Possible students" role in cooperative learning groups (Kagan, 1994; in Woolfolk, 2004; 496).

7. Benefits and pitfalls of cooperative learning

Cooperative group work learning is an important educational approach because it has a great role in enhancing students' level of achievement and gives them opportunities to

communicate and interact. "What the child learns to do in cooperation with others, he will learn to do alone" Lev Vygotsky, Mind and Society, 1978.

McGroatry (1989; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001; 195) suggests some advantages for cooperative group work in the classroom:

1. Increased frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction.

2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills.

3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction.

4. Opportunities to include a greater variety of curricular materials to stimulate language as well as concept learning.

5. Freedom for teacher to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication.

6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

Slavin (1995. P, 60) found that the most important psychological effects of cooperative learning on learners is raising their self-esteem, he beliefs that students feel valuable and important because of their role as decision-makers, and ultimately to be productive members. In cooperative classroom, motivation has a huge effect on enhancing students' oral performance, Slavin (1995; 16) states that: "Rewarding groups based on group performance (or the sum of individual performances) creates an interpersonal reward structure in which group members will give or withhold social reinforces (such as praise and encouragement) in response to group mates' task-related efforts".

Larsen-Freeman (2000; 168) suggest that the main difference between the motivational and social cohesion perspectives depends on in the fact that motivational perspective emphasizes that group members help each other in order to success as a group so they benefit themselves as well, whereas social cohesion perspective sets that group members help each other because they care about each other and feel responsible on each other. Another benefit is that "interaction among children around appropriate tasks increases their mastery of critical concepts"(Damon, 1984; in Slavin, 1995; 17). It means that cooperative learning depends on the use of cooperation in tasks.

Cooperative learning as any learning procedure has benefits and pitfalls. Some of the most important pitfalls that must be avoided. For example, some "students may not like the people they are grouped or paired with" (Harmer, 2005; 21)

However, not all learners accept working collaboratively in groups chosen randomly by the teacher on tasks. Nunan (1989), for instance, ESL learners often prefer "traditional" over "communication" activities, in which the tasks are teacher-centered instead learner-centered. In cooperative group work tasks some students feel embarrassed when they make mistakes in front of their peers or their teachers. The teacher has the solution For this problem which is setting up the groups on the basis of students preferences; let them choose their teammates.

There are also some other pitfalls that makes group work less reliable. Slavin states that "if not properly constructed, cooperative learning methods can allow for the "free rider" effect, in which some group members do all or most of the work while aggressive students go along for most of the ride." (p.19). such a problem is most common problem, it appears when the group is obliged to do a single task, it also can result when the less skillful members are ignored by the other group members, right here appears the role of the teacher ; he should give each member a specific role to do

To conclude, cooperative group work learning is an approach that has many advantages and benefits. It cannot successes only if each member including the teacher do his role appropriately, teachers should take the right decisions when conducting such approach.

8. Recommendations for improving Group Work

Group work in past few years become one of the most used techniques ; and the most shared among teachers specially in teaching speaking skill. In order to make use of this technique

According to Hansen, R.S. (2006)

1. Emphasize the importance of teamwork

Before the groups are formed and the task is set out, teachers should make clear why this particular assignment is being done in groups. Students are still regularly reporting in survey data that teachers use groups so they don't have to teach or have as much work to grade. Most of us are using groups because employers in many fields want employees who can work with others they don't know, may not like, who hold different views, and possess different skills and capabilities.

2. Teachteamworkskills

Most students don't come to group work knowing how to function effectively in groups. Whether in handouts, online resources, or discussions in class, teachers need to talk about the responsibilities members have to the group (such as how sometimes individual goals and priorities must be relinquished in favor of group goals) and about what members have the right to expect from their groups. Students need strategies for dealing with members who are not doing their fair share. They need ideas about constructively resolving disagreement. They need advice on time management.

3. Use team-building exercises to build cohesive groups

Members need the chance to get to know each other, and they should be encouraged to talk about how they'd like to work together. Sometimes a discussion of worst group experiences makes clear to everyone that there are behaviors to avoid. This might be followed with a discussion of what individual members need from the group in order to do their best work. Things like picking a group name and creating a logo also help create a sense of identity for the group, which in turn fosters the commitment groups need from their members in order to succeed.

4. Thoughtfullyconsider group formation

Most students prefer forming their own groups, and in some studies these groups are more productive. In other research, students in these groups "enjoy" the experience of working together, but they don't always get a lot done. In most professional contexts, people don't get to choose their project partners. If the goal is for students to learn how to work with others whom they don't know, then the teacher should form the groups. There are many ways groups can be formed and many criteria that can be used to assemble groups. Groups should be formed in a way that furthers the learning goals of the group activity.

5. Make the workload reasonable and the goals clear

Yes, the task can be larger than what one individual can complete. But students without a lot of group work experience may struggle with large, complex tasks. Whatever the task, the teacher's goals and objectives should be clear. Students shouldn't have to spend a lot of time trying to figure out what they are supposed to be doing.

6. Considerroles for group members

Not all the literature recommends assigning roles, although some does. Roles can emerge on their own as members see what functions the group needs and step up to fill those roles. However, this doesn't always happen when students are new to group work. The teacher can

decide on the necessary roles and suggest them to a group with the group deciding who does what. The teacher can assign the roles, but should realize that assigning roles doesn't guarantee that students will assume those roles. Assigned roles can stay the same or they can rotate. However they're implemented, roles are taken more seriously if groups are required to report who filled what role in the group.

7. Provide some class time for meetings

It is very hard for students to orchestrate their schedules. Part of what they need to be taught about group work is the importance of coming to meetings with an agenda some expectation about what needs to get done. They also need to know that significant amounts of work can be done in short periods of time, provided the group knows what needs to be done next. Working online is also increasingly an option, but being able to convene even briefly in class gives groups the chance to touch base and get organized for the next steps.

8. Request interim reports and group process feedback

One of the group's first tasks ought to be the creation of a time line what they expect to have done by when. That time line should guide instructor requests for progress reports from the group, and the reports should be supported with evidence. It's not good enough for the group to say it is collecting references. A list of references collected should be submitted with the report. Students should report individually on how well the group is working together, including their contributions to the group. Ask students what else could they contribute that would make the group function even more effectively.

9. Require individual members to keep track of their contributions

The final project should include a report from every member identifying their contribution to the project. If two members report contributing the same thing, the teacher defers to the student who has evidence that supports what the student claims to have done.

10. Include peer assessment in the evaluation process

What a student claims to have contributed to the group and its final product can also be verified with a peer assessment in which members rate or rank (or both) the contributions of others. A formative peer assessment early in the process can help members redress what the group might identify as problems they are experiencing at this stage.

Conclusion

Unlike most traditional language teaching methods in foreign language teaching, cooperative language learning aims to promote productivity and improve achievement and make more opportunities for classroom interaction. Furthermore, it shares the same essential set of principles with communicative language teaching. We know a lot about the effect of cooperative learning on students and the conditions necessary to make cooperative learning more effective for achievement outcomes. It is now possible for teachers to select from different cooperative methods to achieve different purposes and to use cooperative learning as the main organizing scheme for classroom instruction.

Chapter

FIELD WORK

Introduction

The most important step of any research design is to move to something more practical. As long as our research is concerned, the most suitable method is the descriptive one. As Burns and Grove (2001, 248) state that a descriptive design helps us to identify problems in current practice with an aim to solve them. However, the researcher may have to draw on range of different procedures for collecting needs data, such as: observations, meetings, tests and questionnaires. It is really necessary to employ all these procedures and the choice will obviously depend on the aim of the research work, the sample under investigation, the time available and the nature of the data collected.

In this study, we have made use of two questionnaires; the teachers' questionnaire is designed for teachers who are believed to be in good position for providing data relevant to our study. The students' questionnaire is designed for inviting them to contribute information on their actual state of learning. When the questionnaire is well prepared, it enables the researcher to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. This chapter, then, clarifies the research design in terms of the aim, the administration and the description. Moreover, it also contains the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaire.

1. Students' questionnaire

1.1 Aim of the questionnaire

The students' questionnaire aims to understand the first year English students' attitudes towards the use of group work activities in the oral expression classes and their awareness of the value of classroom interaction the teacher and learners' role. It also attempts to investigate the students' difficulties in the oral expression class their perception of the methods and techniques used by teachers to overcome these difficulties.

1.2 Administration of the questionnaire

It is impossible to conduct the research on the whole population under investigation, we have administered the questionnaire to first year students. It is worthy to mention that the questionnaire took place on 4th April 2017; we have a totality of forty (40) students.

The questionnaire was administered to forty (40) students for one hour. Among thirty six (33) handed back questionnaires, twenty nine (29) were returned in the same day and six (04) few days later. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were simple and clear enough in order to help the students understand and thus provide appropriate answers.

1.3 Description of the questionnaire

In designing the questionnaire for research purposes, the items required answers with (yes/no question), or picking up the most appropriate answer from a series of options, or open questions asking the students to give their opinions or to explain their choices. The questions revolve around four headlines each one of which covers the variables selected and each particular aspect of our study.

Part one: Background information(Q2 -Q1)

In this section the students were asked to indicate their gender in (Q1). In (Q2), students are asked if they find speaking in English: five 05 rating options were proposed ranged from, very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult.

Part two: Students' perception of the speaking skill (Q3 - Q9)

In this section seeks information about some aspects of the speaking skill. In the first place, students are asked to pick the most important skill that need to be developed most: speaking, listening, writing or reading and then they had to explain their choices (Q3). This question seeks information about how the students rate their oral performance in English whether it is high, above average, average, below average or low (Q4). In (Q5), students are asked if they

consider that the oral expression courses help them to improve their oral performance very much, somewhat, don't know, not very much, or not at all. Then, in (Q6) they are asked to say whether they feel afraid to talk or not. In (Q7) they asked to identify the reasons which lie beyond their answers from a set of options. In (Q8), students are asked about the technique they enjoy best: multiple-choices were given, group work, role -play, problem solving, discussion, or any other techniques they had to specify. In the last question of this section, they are asked if they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production or not (Q9).

Part three: Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work (Q10-Q16)

The first question of this section seeks information about students' awareness of cooperative learning (Q10). The next question investigates the students' preferences for individual work, pair work or group work (Q11) and then they are required to justify their choices (Q12). In (Q13), students are asked if they find it difficult to work cooperatively with their classmates or not. After that, students are asked if the teacher tries to solve the problems encountered when they are working with their peers, is considered in question (Q14). In (Q15), students are asked whether their teachers raise their awareness towards the skills of cooperative group work. Finally, students are asked to say whether group work helps them to: ask and respond to more question? Learn to listen to different opinions? Evaluate their peers' performance or develop social skills for getting along with others? (Q16)

Part four: Students' evaluation of cooperative work (Q17-Q19)

These three questions investigate the students' evaluation of cooperative work whether it helps in improving their speaking skill or not, do teachers evaluate students? And whetherevaluationhelpsthemimprovetheirspeakingskills.

1.2 Data collection and analysis

Part one: Background information

Item one: Gender

Options	Subject	%
Male	03	9.1%
Female	30	90.9%
Total	33	100%

Table1: Gender
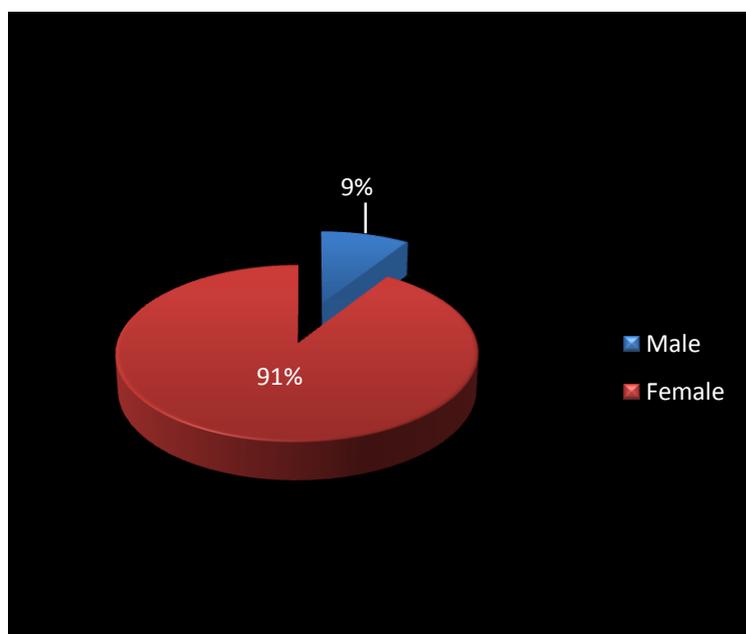
Graph 1: Gender

In fact, we have recorded just three (03) male subjects out of total thirty three 33 (9.1%), where as the rest is of female subjects, that is thirty (30) (90,9%) are female subject. This adds nothing to work except that girls are expected to be more interested in collaborating.

Item two: Doyou find speaking English is?

| Options	Subject	%
Veryeasy	07	**21.21%**
Easy	20	**60.60%**
Difficult	06	**18.18%**
Verydifficult	00	**0%**
Total	33	**100**

Table 02: Students' attitude towards speaking
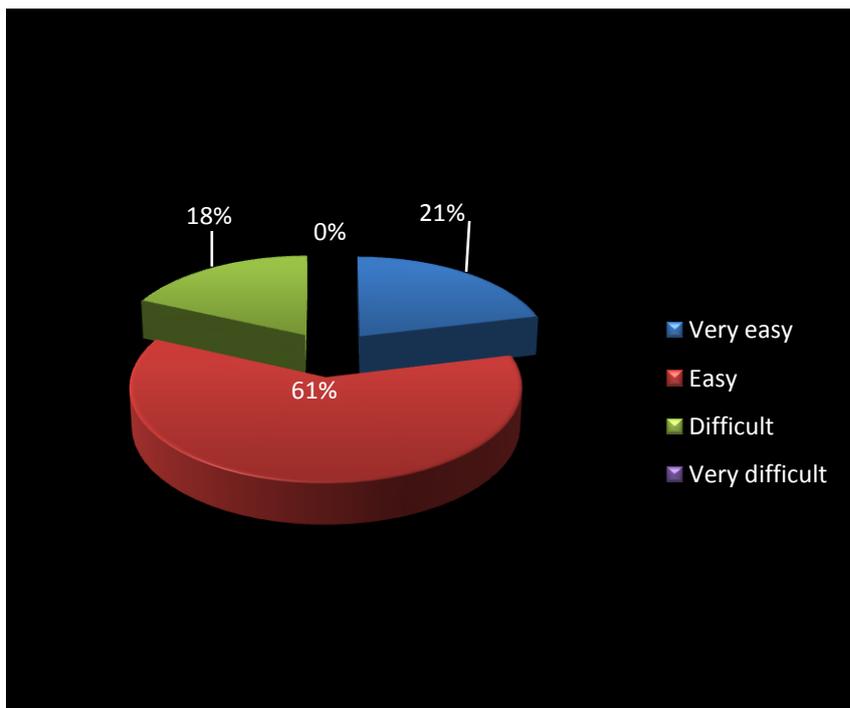
Graph2: students' attitude towards speaking

Subjects, here, are asked to say whether they find speaking easy, very easy, difficult or very difficult. The majority of respondents 20 or about (60.60 %) believe that speaking in English is easy, about (21.21%) said it is very easy; against (18.18 %) who find it difficult and no one find it very difficult. For ranking speaking by difficulty, most students (60.60%) find that speaking

is easy. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are good speakers. Those who find speaking difficult and very difficult might represent the proportion of students who never participate in the classroom.

Part two: Students' perception of the speaking skill

Item three: The most important skill that needed to develop the most

Options	Subject	%
Speaking	23	69.69%
Listening	2	6.06%
Writing	5	15.15%
Reading	3	9.1
Total	33	100

Table 3: Emphasis in learning the skills
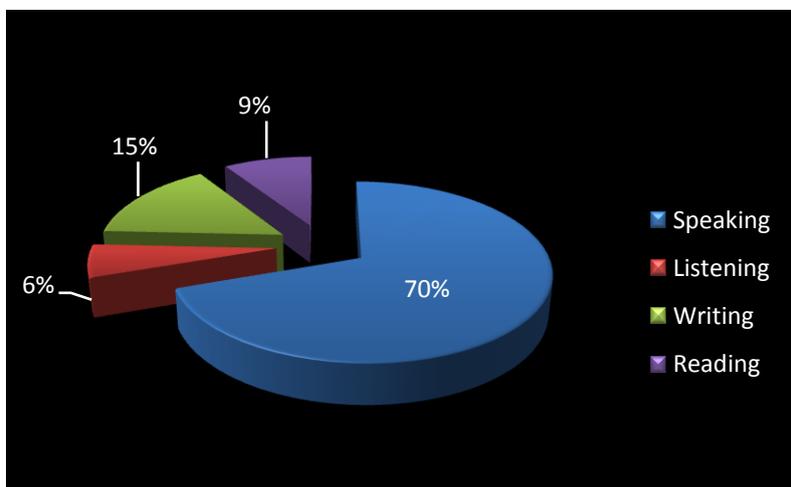
Graph3: Emphasis in learning the skills

For this section, the difficult question was to ask subjects to pick the most important skill that they think need to be developed most: (69.69%) of the respondents picked the speaking skill first, while (15.15%) of the respondents put the writing skill first. Then, it is followed by

the reading skill (9.1 %) and listening skill (6.06%). The final classification we get from table is the following: the speaking skill first; the writing skill second; the reading and the listening skill are third and fourth respectively.

The aim of this question is to determine the subjects' needs to the different language skills. Therefore, we have asked the subjects to pick the most needed skill (Speaking, listening, writing or reading).

To begin with, we notice that the speaking skill came first in the students' choices, as we have seen above. For those students, speaking is considered more difficult than the other skills. They are likely to be poor speakers and need to be able to communicate using simple, spontaneous language that is somehow fluent.

For the writing skill, and unlike speaking, only 5 respondents believe writing is most needed; these form (15.15%).

As reading is concerned, just 3 respondents believe it to be first developed, this translate into (9.1%). Those who opted for this choice believe that reading provides them with a large supply of vocabulary items for future use. Last, but in no way least, and unlike the other skills, only 2 respondents (6.06%) have put the listening skill in the first position. These students believe that one has to receive language first before any oral production takes place.

Of course, we are not obliged to follow blindly this classification. Still the data obtained yields valuable information on the students' needs.

Item four: Which of the following describes your level of oral performance?

Options	Subject	%
High	**04**	**12.12%**
Aboveaverage	**06**	**18.18%**
Average	**20**	**60.60%**
Belowaverage	**02**	**6.06%**

Low	01	3.03%
Total	33	100

Table 4: Students' evaluation about their level in English
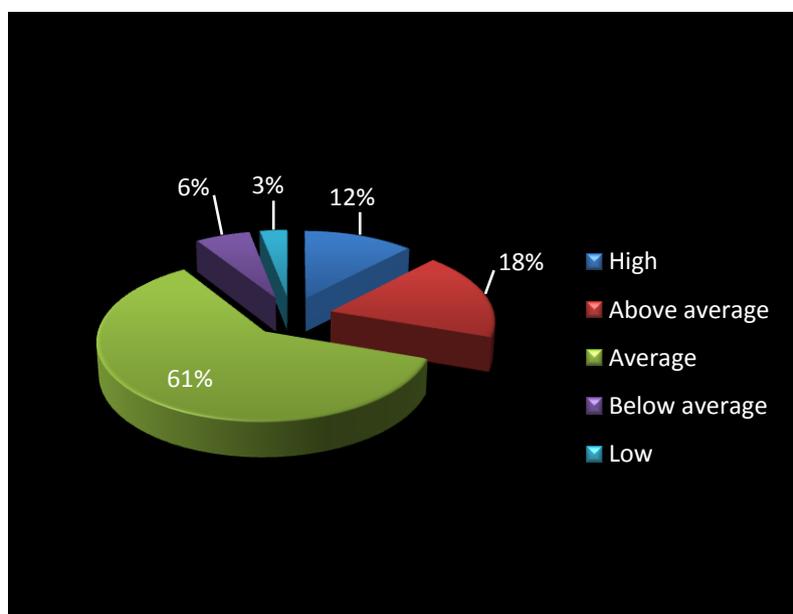
Graph4: Students' evaluation about their level in English

Students here are asked to describe their speaking ability in the language class. In answer to this, they are expected to rank themselves from high to low.

We have recorded 20 respondents (60.60%) who have admitted that their level of oral performance is average. About (18.18%) said that their level is above average; against about (6.06%), (3.03%) and (12.12%) who confess that their level is below average, low or high. Therefore, these are not likely to participate verbally in the classroom. And if they stay silent without any attempt to participate, then they will not advance any further.

Those who found that their level is approximately average and below average match the results obtained in the students' needs in terms of skills where speaking is felt to be the skill the students need most to develop.

Item five: To what extent do oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?

Options	Subjects	%
Verymuch	16	48.48%
Somewhat	13	39.39%
Not at all	00	00%
Not verymuch	03	9.1%
Don't know	01	3.03%
Total	33	100

Table5: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses.
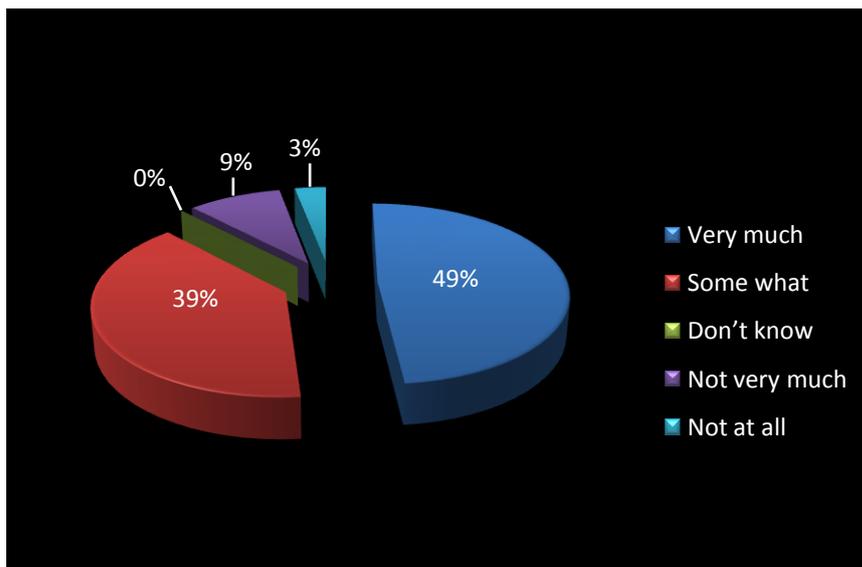
Graph6: **Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses**

This item of information sheds light on subjects' attitudes toward the whole teaching process. Sixteen respondents (48.48%) have indicated that the oral courses help them improve their oral performance; (39.39%) of the subjects said that they improve somewhat their oral performance. A number of subjects have opted for the reverse situation in that (9.1%) respondents do not actually find their teachers' courses helpful, only one respondent (3.03%) of the subjects say

that they are not helpful at all also, we have recorded (0%) subjects who have opted for don't know.

Many students do not contribute to language input partly because the courses are not interesting enough to stimulate their verbal participation and communication. It goes without saying that if the courses are motivating enough, students are seen struggling to express themselves using the language to express their ideas.

Item six: Do you feel afraid to talk?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	20	60.60%
No	13	39.39%
Total	33	100

Table 06: Confidence in the use of English
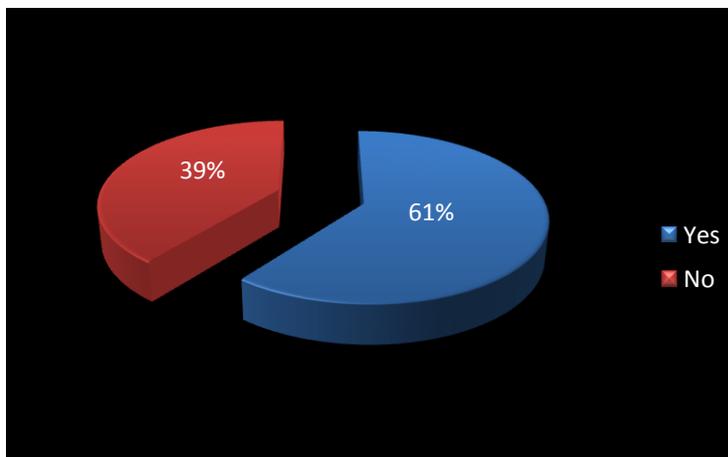
Graph6: Confidence in the use of English

This question aims at determining whether subjects are afraid to talk or not. An examination of the table above will reveal that the majority of respondents 20, or (60.60%) do not feel at ease to speak (they remain silent), while about (40%) who consider themselves as talkative or able to participate. Yet, things not always light i.e. not all subjects actually are motivated to speak in

English language. This might have several reasons; one possible reason is that respondents might be uninterested in the topics themselves. Another interpretation is that the subjects are not motivated enough to speak. However, we cannot always consider their non -speaking to lack of motivation, although motivation can play a major role to initiate speech.

Item seven: If your answer is "yes" it is because?

Options	Subjects	%
Fear of making grammatical mistakes	18	54.54%
Fear of making pronunciation mistakes	05	15.15%
Havingdeficientvocabulary	03	9.09%
Fear of teachers' negative feedback	02	6.06%
Lack of self confidence	05	15.15%
Total	33	100

Table 07: Reasons for the inability to speak
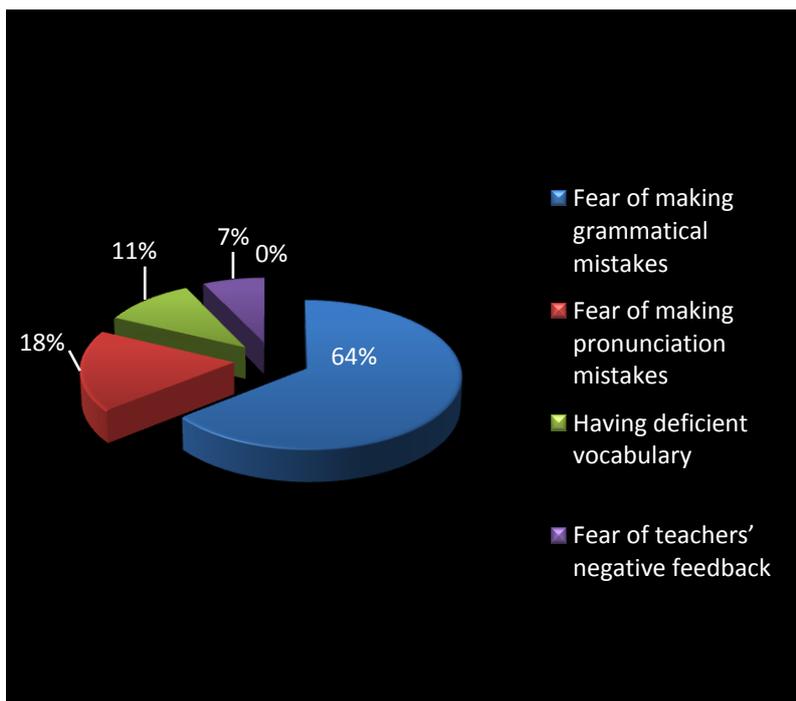
grahp7: Reasons for the inability to speak

Having discussed the issue of students being afraid to talk, it seems wise to see just what makes students unwilling to use the language for oral communication. Subjects are, therefore, asked why they do not participate in the classroom, and are provided with a set of possible choices from which they have to choose those which best describe their case.

Whereas the majority 18 subjects (54.54%) have indicated that they do not participate because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and that their classmates make fun of them, 3 (or 9.09%) say it is because they have deficient vocabulary as they are not talkative, and 5 subjects out of the total sample do not participate as they are afraid of making pronunciation mistakes. In fact, this problem may prevent communication and slow down learning. Closely related to this is the fear of teachers' negative feedback; we have recorded 2 subjects, or (15.18%) who are reticent to speak in the classroom since they lack self-confidence; this might keep them from making their way toward native speakers. So, it is the teacher role to create friendly and relaxed atmosphere that pushes them to speak.

Item eight: Which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?

Options	Subject	%
Group work	23	69.69%
Roleplay	08	24.24%
Problemsolving	00	0%
Discussion	02	6.06%
Others	00	0%
Total	33	100

Table 08: Kinds of techniques used for teaching
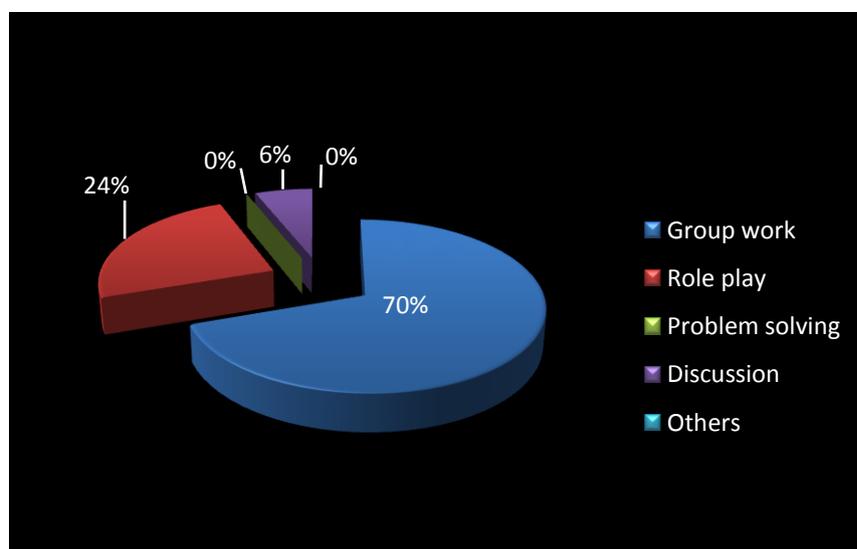
graph 08: Kinds of techniques used for teaching

The present item of information is intended to ask subjects about the technique they enjoy best. The table above summarizes the most frequent techniques that teachers can use in order to carry out a speaking activity. As can be noticed in the first place comes group work with

37

(69.69%) followed by role play with (24.24%). We have recorded 2 cases of subjects who consider discussion as the technique that enjoys best and no one choose problem solving and others.

This indicates that in the first place, subjects are aware of these techniques and secondly those who find group work enjoyable are motivated when they set to work in groups.

Item nine: Do you given the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	23	69.69%
No	10	30.30%
Total	33	100

Table 9: Students' self- evaluation
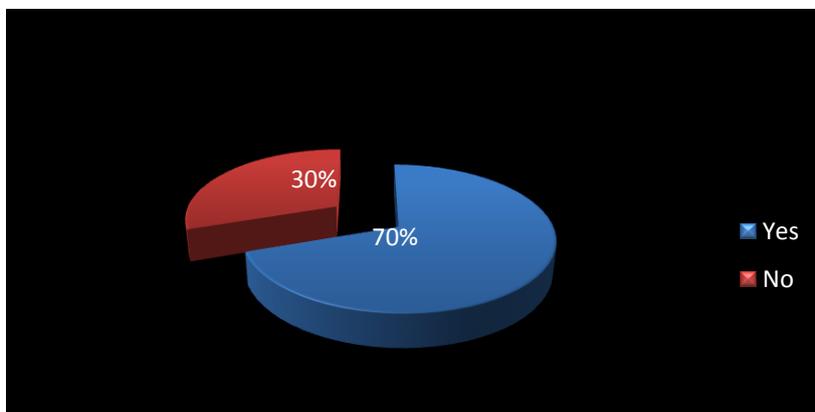
Graph9: Students' self- evaluation

Evaluating students' oral production is recognized as an essential feature of effective teaching. The final question on speaking was whether they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production or not. It was not surprising that the majority (69.69%) said yes, while only 10 subjects or (30.30%) said no. So, the number of yeses shows that respondents are

given the opportunity to provide feedback on committing mistakes which can stimulate students' participation in the teaching process. Self-evaluation and peer review can be a useful technique in which students feel more responsible and thus more independent in their learning.

Part Three: Students' perception of teachers' implementation of cooperative work.

Item ten: Do you ever heard of cooperative learning?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	15	45.45%
No	18	54.54%
Total	33	100

Table 10: Students' familiarity with cooperative learning
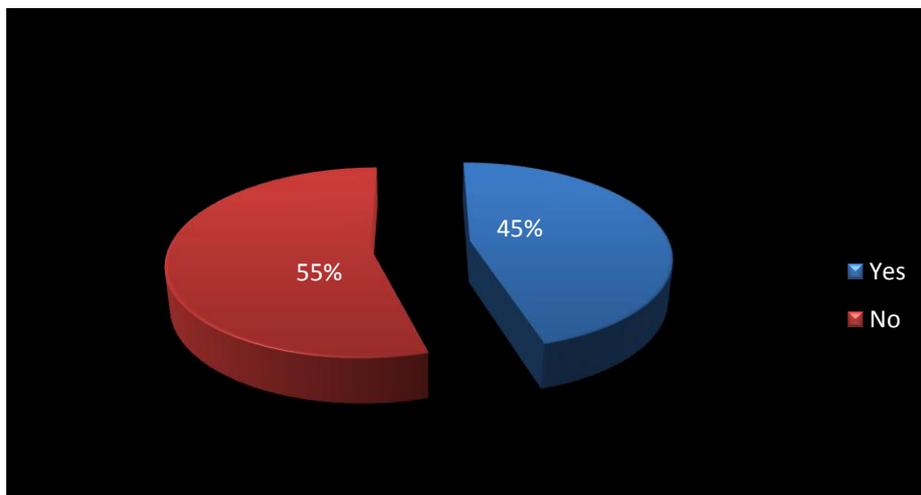
Graph10: Students' familiarity with cooperative learning

The statistics related to this item shows that (45.45%) of the subjects have heard of cooperative learning, against (54.54%) who have not. That is to say, the majority of respondents are more likely to have a positive attitude toward cooperative work and this no doubt, will affect their learning outcomes. This is a quality that is rarely found and is believed to establish a healthy environment.

Item eleven: Which of these techniques do you prefer?

Options	Subject	%
Individualwork	07	21.21%
Pair work	10	30.30%
Group work	16	48.48%
Total	33	100

Table 11: Students' preference
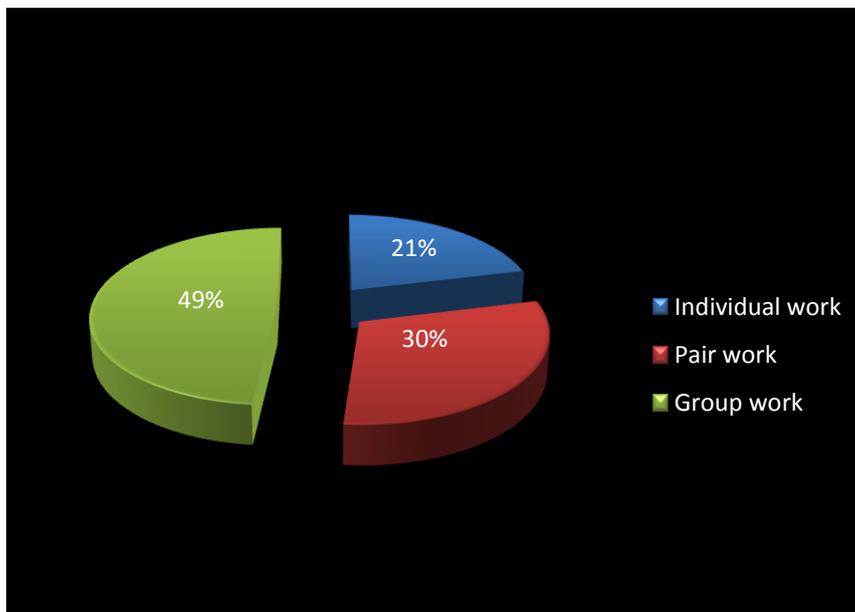
Graph11: Students' preference

In this item, subjects are invited to say whether they prefer individual work, pair work, or group work. Our aim is that opting for one type of task in preference to another may help us to see the kind of instruction students prefer.

The majority has indicated that they prefer having group work instead of other types of tasks. These are 16 subjects translating into (48.48%). Ten subjects, however, are opted for working in pairs (30.30%), and only seven (21.21%) prefer to work individually.

Item twelve: Whatever your answer please justify

Those having opted for group work are of extroverts, sociable students who enjoy sharing and being with others. Students also like to feel that the space in which they meet belongs to them and strengthen their feeling to take risks in speaking. As for pair work, the subjects under investigation are also likely to be sociable or trying to be. As far as the third category is concerned, those students have a higher level students who may not want to work with a weak partner, or probably they feel more secure to work individually instead of in the company of others.

Item thirteen: Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

Options	Subject	%
Yes	08	24.24%
No	25	75.75%
Total	33	100

Table12: Difficulties encountered in group work
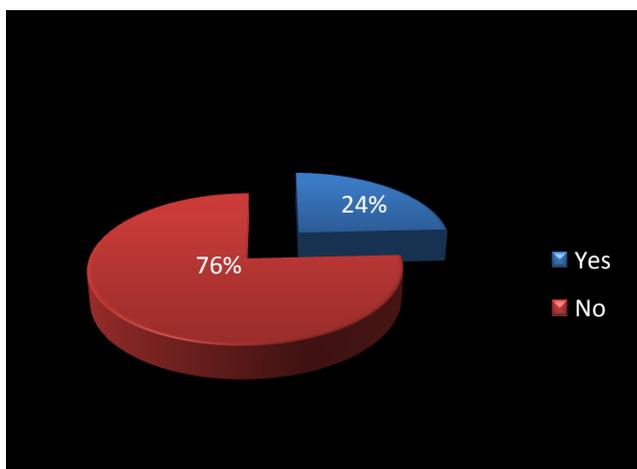
Graph12: Difficulties encountered in group work

In this question, we have recorded a majority of 25 respondents, or (75.75%), who has indicated that they do not have difficulties when they work together with their classmates. This means that they are among students who would prefer working cooperatively for the communication of their thoughts. Eight or (24.24%) of the respondents have problems when they work together with other classmates. One possible interpretation is that these subjects are in favor for individual work.

Item fourteen: Does your teacher try to solve the problems encountered when you are working with your peers?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	22	66.66%
No	11	33.33%
Total	33	100

Table13: Teachers' attitudes towards the problems
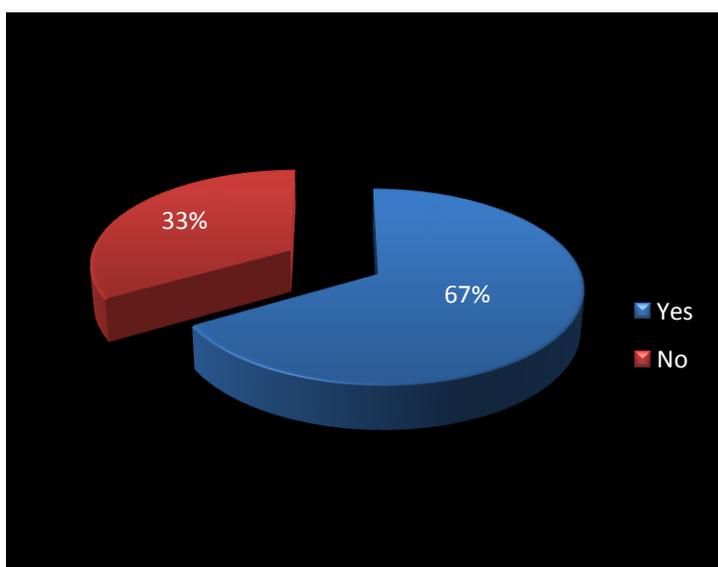
Graph13: Teachers' attitudes towards the problems

The aim of this question is to see whether teachers help their students to solve the problems encountered while working with their peers. Apparently, the majority of yeses, translating into (66.66%) who are likely to be characterized by talkative students or perceived to be socially involved with their peers. On the other hand, a numerical minority of 11 subjects out of total 33 (33.33%) who are likely to be characterized by silent students or perceived to be less skillful or ignored by other peers.

Item fifteen: Does your teacher raise your awareness towards the skill of cooperative work?

Options	Subject	%
Yes	07	12.12%
No	27	81.81%
Total	33	100

Table14: Raising students' awareness towards the skills of cooperative work
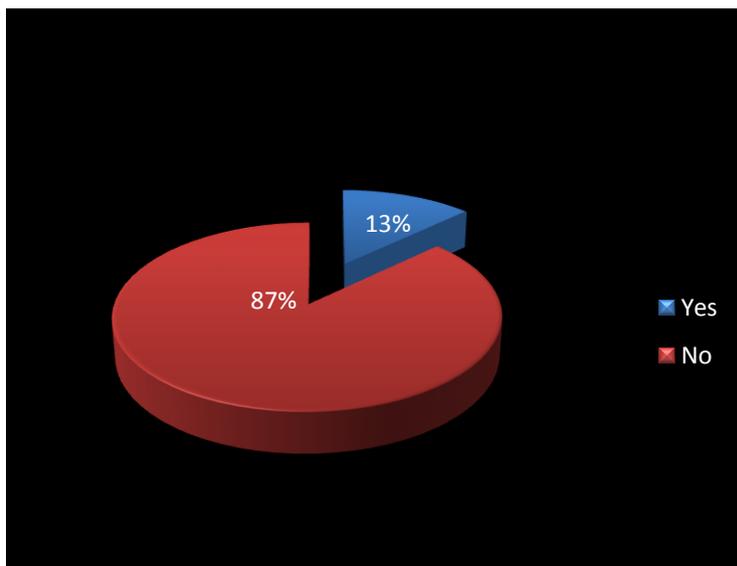
Graph14: Raising students' awareness towards the skills of cooperative work

The majority of subjects (81.81%) answer "no" indicating that their teachers do not raise their students' awareness of the necessary skill that would really help in establishing effective learning. This can only be interpreted in terms of their ignorance of the necessary skill they should possess or their confusion with traditional group work.

Seven respondents or (12.12%) state that their teachers raise their awareness towards necessary skills for group work. These teachers seem to understand that group work does not mean putting students in groups. Rather, it involves more participation on both teachers and students' part.

Item sixteen: Do you feel that group work helps you to

Options	Subject	%
Ask and respond to more questions	**20**	**60.60%**
Learn to listen to different opinions	**06**	**18.18%**
Evaluatetheirpeers performance	**02**	**6.06%**
Develop social skills for getting along with others	**02**	**6.06%**
All of them	**03**	**09.09%**
Total	**33**	**100**

Table 15: Understanding the specific skills of successful group work.
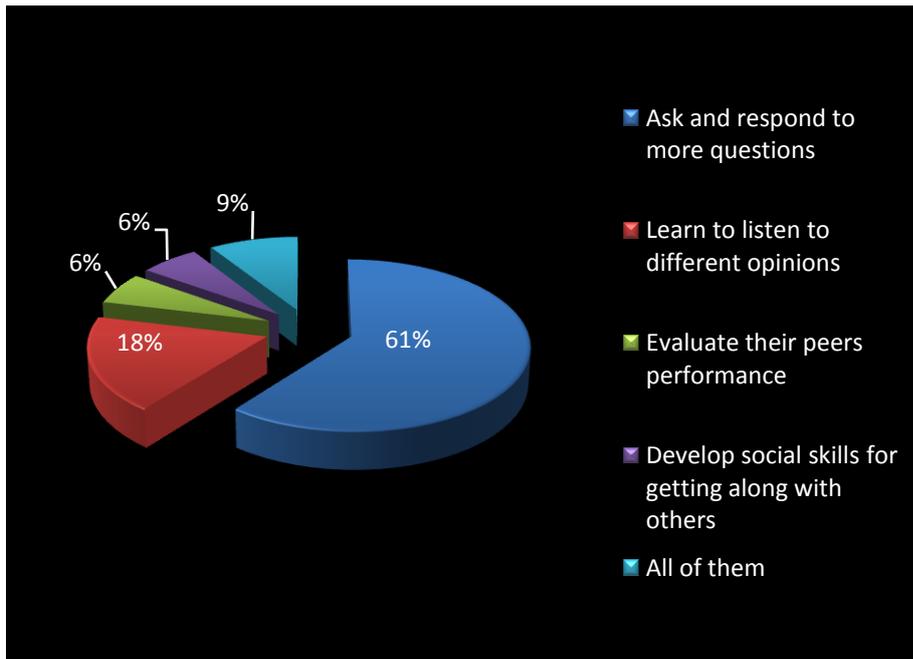
Graph15: **Understanding the specific skills of successful group work.**

In this question, subjects are asked to say what group work helps them to do. A quick glance at the table above will reveal that 20 respondents out of (60.60%) find that group work help them to ask and respond to more questions, these. The second position is opted for by just 6 subjects (18.18%) who believe that group work help them to listen to different opinions. Furthermore, we have recorded 02 respondents have opted for the fourth skill which is developing the social skills for getting 2 more thought that group work helps them evaluate their peers performance and 03 for all of them.

Of the four skills we presented above, ask and respond to more questions is the only one that teachers teach their students how to do it. But what we really find surprising is that almost all the teachers are aware of the need for these skills, but do not want to bother themselves teaching them.

Part four: Students' evaluation of cooperative work

Item seventeen: Do you think that cooperative work help you improve your speaking skills?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	29	87.87%
No	04	12.12%
Total	33	100

Table16: Students' evaluation of cooperative work.
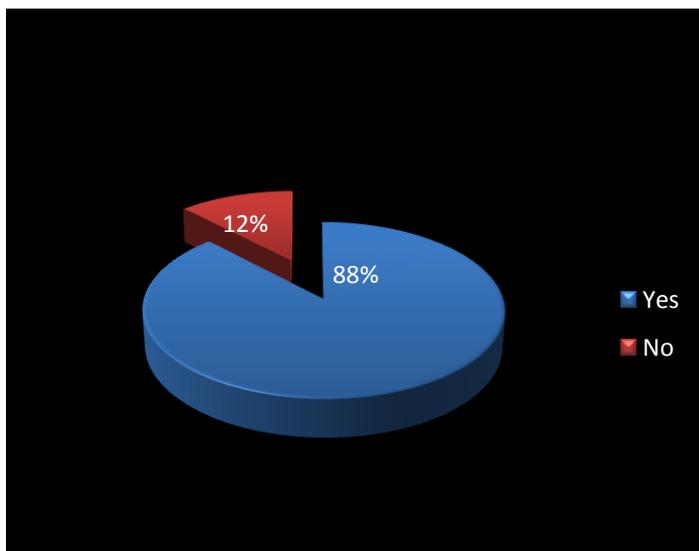
Graph16: Students' evaluation of cooperative work.

In answer to the above question, a numerical minority of 4 respondents (12.12%) has indicated that cooperative work does not help them to improve their speaking skill. In comparison, 29 subjects have opted for the opposite situation. This translates into (87.87%); yet, it communicates a deep fact that a high portion of the sample recognizes the benefit of cooperative work in improving their speaking skill.

Item eighteen: Does your teacher evaluate your work?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	30	90.90%
No	03	9.1%
Total	33	100

Table 17: Students' attitudes toward evaluation
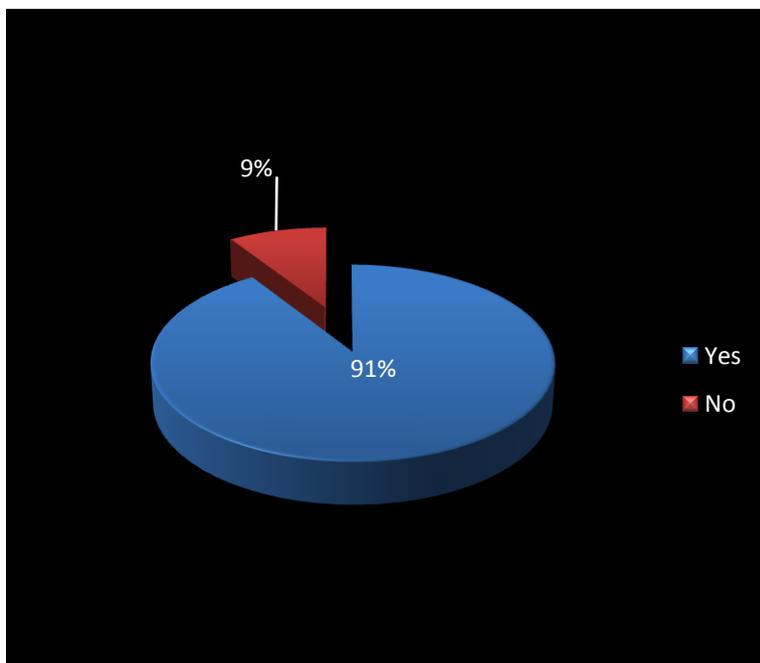
Graph17: students' attitudes toward evaluation

The question was made up to know whether teachers are evaluating their students work, only 03 subjects answered with no, the majority of students confess that their teachers are evaluating their work. Which means that evaluation is an important step for teachers to discover whether they going in the right path or they may need some changes in their strategies?

Item nineteen: Do you think that evaluation improves your speaking skills?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	29	87.87%
No	04	12.12%
Total	33	100

Table18: Improving speaking skills through evaluation
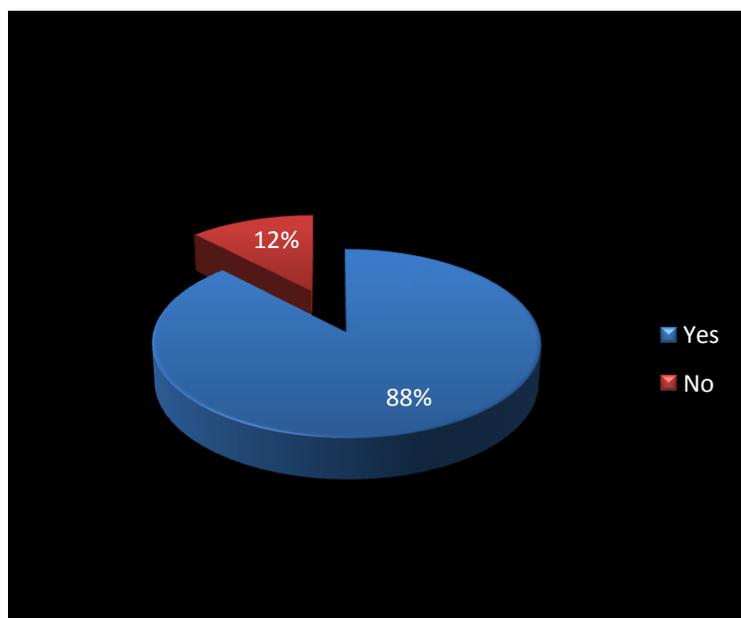
Graph18: Improving speaking skills through evaluation

This question aims to discover whether evaluation improves students' speaking skills. In the table above 29 among 33 answered that evaluation is a good tool that pushing them to work better and set their weaknesses to come over it. Only four 04 subjects thought that evaluation adds nothing to their level.

Discussion of the results

According to the results of analyzing the students' questionnaire, we note that:

1) Foreign language teaching is a process creating situations where students interact and express their thought using the target language. That is to say, learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language.

2) The majority of the students express their needs in terms of speaking skills.

3) Other skills (i.e. reading, writing, and listening), learning the speaking skill will reinforce the learning of the other skills.

4) Although some students may be motivated to learn English, they feel afraid to speak it for their inability to interact with others; lack of self - confidence, fear of operating foolish when mistakes are made (grammatical or pronunciation mistakes) and fear of teachers' negative feedback. Because of the many psychological problems students have, teachers need to encourage students' talk inside the classroom.

5) In teaching speaking, students have different attitudes toward different teaching techniques. The majority of the students is interested in role play and group work. The teachers' role is to adapt the technique with encourages more students' participation.

6) The students showed different preferences for classroom arrangements (i.e. group work, pair work individual or seat work). However, teachers need to include the type of teaching that provides learners with a variety of opportunities for communicative interaction and language use.

7) Concerning the implementation of cooperative group work, students do not seem aware of the skills they can adopt for a successful functioning of group work. We believed that teachers should raise their students' awareness towards the importance of these skills.

8) Students' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for teaching speaking implies students' readiness for such a technique

Conclusion

The main goal behind learning a foreign language is to master that language and use it in a real life situation, the teachers' role is to encourage and motivate students to interact and communicate in the classroom, this cannot be taught only if they use several techniques; the most common used are group work and role play. Students face some problems when they try to speak they afraid of turning to foolish when they make grammar or pronunciation mistakes, it is the teacher job to set a good environment and make students feel comfortable even if they make mistakes; teacher should not interrupt students while they speak.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results of analyzing the gathered data the researcher suggests the following recommendations

- The teacher must choose the appropriate technique to perform the lesson

- The teacher is not only a message transformer; he has many roles to perform in the classroom, he is a facilitator, guider and even a friend.

- Forming groups raise students' awareness toward the importance of holding responsibility.

- "Two heads better than one" group members should collaborate to finish a task or solve problem. Teachergive instructions needed to group members.

- Teachers should never interrupt students while performing a presentation; instead he should wait till the student finish then he asses his work.

- Teacher may give the freedom to his students in choosing their teammates. And choosetopicsthat are interesting to students.

- It is the teachers' responsibility to encourage students to overcome their fears and try to communicate and interact without hesitation.

General conclusion

This study focuses on some important aspects of the process of foreign language teaching / learning. Through this research, we hypothesized that the improvement of the students' oral production, is through providing them with opportunities to get the practice they need to use the language. We believe that the application of cooperative group work to the field of language learning is the important for promoting oral communication because it creates a situation where learners are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's knowledge and fill in gaps each other's understanding.

The present study is divided into three chapters. The first and the second chapters are the descriptive part which is review a related literature. As for the third chapters, we have administered a self-completion questionnaires one for students and the other one for teachers. The first chapter mainly outlines some of the theoretical issues related to speaking skill. The second chapter provides a better understanding of group work and its underlying principles. The third chapter deals with analysis of the obtained data gathered from teachers and the student's questionnaire. The obtained results confirmed our hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between cooperative group work and oral proficiency. The findings revealed in this study show that well planned and organized cooperative group work is an effective technique for improving EFL learner's oral proficiency.

This study shows that learners must be provided with effective instructional techniques for improving the learners' oral production, teacher's responsibility is to create a relaxed and friendly environment where the learners can use the target language without hesitation and both teachers and learners should be aware of the necessary skill for effective learning to take place.

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Appendix

Students' questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire

Dearstudents,

This questionnaire aims to collect data about the role of group work in improving students' oral proficiency. I would highly appreciate if you could take the time and energy to share your experience by answering the questions below. Your answers are very important and will be of much help for fulfillment of this work. Please, cross(X) the option that represents the answer which you see the best and give full answer if necessary.

Part one: Background information

1. Gendre

   a) Male ☐

   b) Female ☐

2. Do you find that speaking English is?

   a)   ☐   Veryeasy

   b) Easy   ☐

   c) Difficult ☐

   d) Verydifficult   ☐

Part two: Students' perception of the speaking skill

3. Pick the most important skill that needs to be developed most?

   a) Speaking ☐

   b)Listening   ☐

   c) Writing   ☐

   d) Reading   ☐

4. Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

   a) High ☐

b) Aboveaverage ☐

c) Average ☐

d) Belowaverage ☐

e) Low ☐

5. To what extend do the oral expression courses help you improve your oral

performance

   a) Verymuch ☐

   b) Somewhat ☐

   c) Don't know ☐

   d) Not verymuch ☐

   e) Not at all ☐

6. Do you feel afraid to talk?

   a) ☐ Yes

   b) ☐ No

7. If your answer is "yes", is it because you:

   a) Fear of making grammatical mistakes? ☐

   b) Fear of making pronunciation mistakes? ☐

   c) Havingdeficientvocabulary? ☐

   d) Fear of teacher's negative feedback? ☐

   e) Lack of self confidence? ☐

8. Which of the following techniques did you enjoy best?

   a) Group work ☐

   b) Roleplay ☐

   c) Problemsolving ☐

   d) Discussion ☐

e) Others ☐

9. Are you given the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

Part three: Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work

10. Have you ever heard of cooperative learning?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

11. In oral expression, do you prefer:

    a) Individualwork ☐

    b) Pair work ☐

    c) Group work ☐

12. Whatever your answer is, please justify

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13. Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

14. Does your teacher try to solve the problems encountered when you are working with your peers?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

15. Does your teacher raise your awareness towards the skills of cooperative work?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

16. Do you feel that group work helps you to?

    a) Ask and respond to more questions? ☐

    b) Learn to listen to different opinions? ☐

    c) Evaluatetheirpeers' performances? ☐

    d) Develop social skills for getting along with others? ☐

    e) All of them ☐

Part four: Students' evaluation of cooperative work

17. Do you think that cooperative work helps you improve your speaking skill?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

18. Does your teacher evaluate your work?

    a) ☐   Yes

    b) ☐   No

19. Do you think that evaluation improves your speaking skills?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة أعلاه ال تطوير تقنية التعبير الشفوي من خلال استعمال طريقة العمل الجماعي لفائدة طلبة اللغة الانجليزية كلية الأدب و اللغات جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة الفرضية التي اعتمدت في هذه الدراسة تأكد ان تعلم اللغة عن طريق تحسين مستوى العمل الجماعي التعاوني يعزز من قدرات الطالب في استخدام اللغة و التمكن منها   اعتمدنا في دراستنا هذه على استبيان موجه لطلبة السنة الاولى اختصاص لغة انجليزية لمعرفة رأيهم حول تطبيق تقنية العمل الجماعي لتحسين مستوى مادة التعبير الشفوي

أظهرت نتائج الاستبيان أن معظم طلبة الانجليزية سنة اولى واعيين عن أهمية تطبيق هذه التقنية كما أظهرت النتائج ان تقديم هذه التقنية بطريقة مناسبة يخلق فرص عديدة تمكن الطلبة من استخدام اللغة دون اي تردد