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Implementing Cooperative Learning Technique in Teaching Speaking Skill

The case of second year LMD students of English at Biskra University

A dissertation submitted in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree in Applied
Language Studies.

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Dedication

With gratitude, this work is dedicated to the dearest people to my heart

My dear parents

My lovely sisters for their love, help and encouragement

My dear brothers, especially my sweet and lovely brother Fares Elislam

My eldest brother and his wife- Peace upon them-

My best friends and dear colleagues who shared with me the educational life

People who attempt to read this dissertation

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate how EFL teachers implement cooperative learning technique in the classroom to explore the effectiveness of implementing this technique in developing learners' oral skill. The present study was conducted with two second year LMD classrooms following the qualitative approach. Classroom observation, group interview and teachers' interview were used as the main data gathering tools in this research and helped us in getting insights into how cooperative learning is implemented by oral expression teachers and into learners' attitudes towards learning in small groups. The research findings have revealed that learning in small groups developed learners' oral skill and confirmed that the implementation of cooperative learning technique comprises some negative aspects like creating noise in the classroom and groups' conflicts. Based on the obtained results, we recommended that teacher-learner collaboration could reduce the problems that impede the success of implementing cooperative learning in the classroom.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

L1: First Language

L2: Second language

LMD: License Master and Doctorate

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ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

General Introduction

1. Introduction

Language teaching has been shifted from the emphasis on teacher-centered classroom where the teacher is the only source of input to an emphasis on learner-centered classroom where learners affect each other's knowledge and skills (Crandall, 1999, p.226). In the light of this idea, cooperative learning technique has been emerged for the sake of facilitating learning through the interaction learners make when they work in pairs or in small groups and it has been defined by Coetzee, Niekerk & Wydeman (2008, p. 108) as “a team approach to learning where each member of the group is dependent on the other members to accomplish a specific learning task or assignment.”

Unlike in traditional ways of teaching, it has been recognized by Kagan (2009) that teachers using cooperative learning give their students chance to interact and vary their learning styles so that they get interested in the learning task. Therefore, the present study is carried out to investigate to what extent teachers of English at Biskra University implement cooperative learning principles in their classrooms to develop their learners' speaking skill. They need to implement such approach that is more learner-centered to create a kind of interaction among learners and develop their oral skill by making the classroom more comfortable conducive learning atmosphere so that learners feel free to speak without being shy or reluctant.

2. Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to explore whether EFL teachers at Biskra University use cooperative learning technique in their classrooms and how they implement its principles in teaching speaking skill. Secondly, the present study attempts to

investigate the problems teachers face in implementing cooperative learning technique in teaching speaking to suggest some pedagogical implications.

3. The Significance of the Study

The present study is important for many reasons. First of all, it provides learners with results of previous studies conducted on the same topic such as (Kagan, 2009) and (Jhonson & Jhonson, 2008) and increases readers' understanding of the nature of cooperative learning technique and its role in developing language teaching so that teachers will be able to integrate it to teach different aspects of language. Moreover, it highlights the process of managing cooperative learning classroom and the different challenges teachers and groups face when this technique is implemented in the classroom which are not yet handled in different classrooms; consequently, the present study provides instructors and learners with suggested solutions to overcome these difficulties and benefit from the use of cooperative learning in the future.

4. Research Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if EFL teachers implement cooperative learning to get their learners effectively interact within a cooperative atmosphere, they may develop their own teaching and enhance their learners' speaking skill; otherwise, if teachers are not aware of the advantages of cooperative learning they would not use it as well as lose its benefits.

5. Research Questions and Sub-questions

The present study deals with one of the important issues related to the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Educators have proved that the use of group work has been commended as effective way to develop learners' oral proficiency in English. Cooperative learning as a kind of group work can break students' silence through reducing

anxiety and low self confidence as well as facilitates communication inside the classroom when effectively integrated by the teacher.

In order to extend our understanding of cooperative learning technique and how it can be effectively implemented in teaching speaking skill, it is important to ask the following research questions:

1. Why do foreign language learners often fail in using their different types of knowledge to respond coherently in a conversation?
2. To what extent do oral expression teachers implement cooperative learning in their language course? And to what extent implementing cooperative learning technique is effective in developing learners' speaking skill?
3. How can teachers implement easily cooperative learning in the oral expression course and what are the main problems they encounter when using cooperative speaking tasks and activities?

6. Research Methodology

6.1. The method.

We followed in the present study the descriptive method because descriptive methods according to Brown et al. (1999) are used to accomplish three purposes; describing behavior, exploring a phenomenon or to test a hypothesis about behavior. In the present study, we used the descriptive method to explore how cooperative learning technique is implemented by EFL teachers in the classroom and discover whether its integration in teaching speaking skill develops learners' oral skill.

6.2. Population and Sampling

The population of the present study is second year LMD students at the Division of English at Biskra University. The whole population contains around 540 student divided into

twelve (12) groups. Since it is difficult to observe all the groups, we selected two groups randomly as the sample of the study to be observed over three continuing sessions for each group. Each of the two groups contains about 40-45 students. We selected second year LMD students because they have been learning English at university for three whole academic semesters in which they have acquired the necessary knowledge that enables them to speak and sustain short conversations. Since the present study explores how teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning in their classrooms, especially in teaching speaking skill, we are interested also in teachers of oral expression at the same division because they have experienced teaching oral skill and can provide us with the necessary information concerning the implementation of cooperative learning technique in teaching speaking skill.

7. Research Tools

In an attempt to answer the research questions, a qualitative data will be gathered through classroom observation, students' interview and teachers' interview. Classroom observation would provide us with real data about different aspects of the cooperative classroom such as management of the physical environment, students' collaboration and teacher's roles because observation according to Wallace (1998) is one of the protocols used in qualitative research mainly to assess a teacher's performance or way of teaching and to establish objective data concerning what goes on in a range of classrooms for the sake of developing the profession of teaching, it will be used in our context neither for assessment nor for generalizing findings but for exploring aspects of what goes on in EFL classrooms between learners working in groups for the benefit of improving and developing the teaching of speaking skill at Biskra University classrooms. In addition to classroom observation, we used structured interview as the second main data gathering tools because interview according to Wallace (1998) is helpful in seeking knowledge, experiences and opinions of

learners, teachers or however orally more like a conversation. The interview is conducted in the present study with oral expression teachers and random cooperative groups in order to tap into their attitudes towards using cooperative learning in the classroom and to get insights on groups' progressing in cooperative learning atmosphere when they work on a cooperative speaking task during oral expression course.

8. Limitations of the Study

Even though observation and interviews are appropriate and effective procedures for gathering information in qualitative studies as in the present study, their implementation was not easy. Observing the physical settings, the teacher and the individual learners at one time was not possible. Also, because the present study is conducted with a small sample and limited to teaching speaking skill it may not yield generalizable results.

9. The Structure of the Study

The dissertation is divided into two parts; the first part is the theoretical part and deals with the relevant literature review and consists of three chapters. The second part is the field of investigation and contains two chapters.

Chapter one in the literature review; it is an introduction to speaking skill in language teaching framework. It discusses the different definitions of speaking skill, the variety of processes and knowledge involved in speaking, the role of speaking skill in foreign language teaching and assessment of speaking skill. The second chapter deals with the relevant literature on cooperative learning and provides a general overview on cooperative learning technique like defining cooperative learning technique, highlighting its role in language learning, its history, its characteristics and explains its different tasks and activities. The third chapter in the literature review focuses on the integration of cooperative learning in teaching

speaking skill concerning how to manage cooperative classroom, what are the roles of the teacher in implementing cooperative learning technique in the classroom and clarifies the different cooperative speaking tasks and activities and cooperative assessments.

Chapter one in the second part which is the field of investigation reports the data analysis and provides the findings obtained from classroom observation, group interview and teachers' interview. The second chapter in the second part provides some pedagogical suggestions and recommendations based on the research findings for both teachers and students concerning how to facilitate the implementation of cooperative learning and to reduce learners' different difficulties.

Part One

An Over View on the Relevant Literature

Chapter One

An Introduction to Speaking Skill in Language Teaching

Introduction

The objective of teaching speaking skill is to develop learners' oral proficiency so that they effectively use their background knowledge to respond coherently in a given communicative situation. The central theme this chapter discusses is the place of speaking skill in foreign language teaching context. It first of all provides concise comprehensible definitions for the skill of speaking. Moreover, it highlights the sub skills involved in the process of speaking such as speech production, articulation and managing interaction. This chapter also gives an overview on teaching speaking skill in the classroom by reporting its importance in language teaching, pointing out the different types of knowledge included in teaching such skill; for example, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, pragmatic knowledge in addition to social cultural knowledge as vital requirements to respond appropriately in a speaking task. In addition, this chapter suggests techniques that may facilitate teaching such complex skill as classroom free discussion, simulations and role plays. The chapter concludes with the assessment of oral skill including appropriate speaking tests as well as some of the problems teachers may face in testing their students' speaking skill.

1.1. Speaking Definitions

Speaking skill is one of the basic components of foreign language teaching and learning in addition to listening, reading and writing since it provides learners with the

opportunity to hold successful conversation as well as manage interaction. It has been extensively defined by many authors in the literature from different perspectives.

According to Brown (2004), speaking is the person's product of creative construction of linguistic strings. In other words, for him speaking is a productive skill in which the speaker makes choices of lexicon, structure and discourse that are observed and interpreted by the listener. Furthermore, Speaking has been defined by Thorunbury (2005) as a natural integral part of the person's daily life. In other words, it is an activity which is carried out by both ordinary and specialized people to do their basic functions according to their specific needs. Attempting to illustrate the process of speaking fluently in foreign language, he claims that speaking is a complex skill that involves in addition to the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation a command of skills and another type of knowledge.

According to Bygate (1987), people express themselves orally by perceiving, recalling and articulating different sounds and constructions of the language in a correct order and call these three skills as the motor-perceptive skills. The term "Oral expression" includes making correct choices of language forms and doing so in the right order, sounding in a way that is similar to that of native speakers as well as producing the right intended meanings speaker needs the listener to understand as conditions that indicate how best we are at speaking in the target language as it has been illustrated by Mackey (1965) in a language teaching framework when he said "Oral expression involves not only [...] the right patterns of rhythm and intonation but also choice of words and inflections in the right order to convey the right meanings." (as cited in Bygate, 1987, p.5).

1.2. The Process of Speaking

In attempt to study the process of teaching speaking, Thorunbury (2005) stressed that speaking is a complicated skill in which speakers do certain things and need to develop a

command of skills like speech production, conceptualization, formulation, articulation and managing interaction.

1.2.1. Speech production.

According to Thorunbury (2005), how speech is produced is one of the main points of focus in the study of speaking and he described speech as linear, contingent as well as spontaneous in nature. It is linear because it takes place in real time words follow words and phrases follow phrases and likewise at the utterance level, it is contingent because speech is the production of words by words and utterances by utterances responding to another speaker's production, and it is therefore spontaneous because each utterance we utter depends on the preceding one. For him Speech spontaneity indicates the limitation of time devoted to planning the speech we will produce as well as the possibility that the production of an utterance may overlap with previous produced ones and doesn't necessarily denotes that speech is unplanned. Awareness about these three features of real time processing of speech production helps in recognizing many of spoken language characteristics, how speakers hold conversation, take and pass turns.

1.2.2. Conceptualization and formulation.

Among the things speakers do is conceptualizing their speech in terms of its discourse type, its topic and its purpose. Conceptualization occurs when a speaker shifts the topic of conversation by introducing new concept and gaining the floor. For example, in a particular conversation interlocutors talking about the story of "Junket" one of the participants introduces the concept "Kedgere" and shifts the topic of conversation and takes the turn. By doing so this speaker has conceptualized the topic of the conversation. (Thorunbury, 2005)

In the process of speaking, speakers map out and plan their speech by making strategic choices at the levels of discourse, syntax and vocabulary. This planning of speech is called formulation. At the level of discourse, each type of discourse has a starting, middle and end as well as distinctive scripts that are part of people's shared background knowledge. These later are choices that help in saving the formulation time and easing the load of the listener. At the level of utterance specific syntax is selected according to the utterance type and content so that it goes with the intentions of the speaker. Also, speakers select the right words that goes with the context in which the utterance is uttered and the grammar of each utterance constrains the grammar of another by the amount information presented can be held in working memory at any single time. In addition to the awareness about discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and grammar, speakers need also to be aware of pronunciation patterns of single words and the complete discourse such as stress and intonation (Thorunbury, 2005).

1.2.3. Articulation.

After speech is formulated, hence it needs to be articulated. Articulation according to Thorunbury (2005) refers to the process of using the organs of speech to produce sounds that takes place when a stream of air is produced in the lungs moving through the vocal cords and shaped among other organs such as movements of the tongue, lips and the teeth and results in the production of different phonemes. According to Seely (2005), the phonemes of English are divided into two categories, which are vowels and consonants. Sounds in the first category are speech sounds produced with an open mouth according to the shape of mouth and position of the tongue. In English language system there are four (4) vowel letters: **a**, **e**, **i**, and **u** and numerous vowel sounds depending on regional accents. However, the later are sounds produced when a stream of air is embedded through the mouth. The articulation of vowels according to Kelly (2000) takes place when the air stream is voiced throughout the vibration of the vocal cords in the larynx and shaped to modify the overall shape of the mouth

by the tongue and the lips and he summarizes the importance of the tongue position in indicating the difference between the variety of vowel sounds. While vowels are voiced, consonants can be voiced or voiceless as well as can be Fortis or lenis according to the place and manner of articulation. Consonant sounds are produced when the vocal tract are completely or partly closed so that the passage of air cannot pass through or hardly pass as well as there may be a closed movement of the lips, tongue or throat in the production of consonants.

2.2.4. Managing interaction.

According to Hedge (2000), any form of actual face to face interaction require management which is governed by rules that are often influenced by status and social cultural conventions. Rules considered to govern interaction are those of openings and closings, taking turns and topic management. Conversations are opened in different ways. In English for example, openings are ritualized as statement followed by response or question followed by an answer such as “These buses get later, don’t they.” And as tags which end with an invitation to talk and respond in accordance to it like “It is a nice day, isn’t it”. However, in closings always there is pre-closing signals like “I don’t want to keep you ...” that indicates the end of the conversation which occur before the actual closings take place. Turn taking also needs to be managed and formulated so that it fits the flow of the conversation for example; actual turns should follow the same topic of the previous turns and find the appropriate words that go with what has been already said or commenting on previews tags endings. Turn taking is also characterized by occurrences of interruptions which are guided by some cultural conventions such as the use of politeness phrases which make it acceptable. Conversations are also managed through following rules of moving from one topic to another regarding the role of the context.

Following Thuranbury (1999), the script of conversation below seems to display the language features appropriate to casual talks among friends such as the omission of some words, use of particular vocabulary and grammar and the use of question tags, especially in A's contributions which are characterized by omission of words like ([I] had to laugh, though) and use of question tags like (Aren't they?) as an opening sequence for the conversation.

A: Great sausages these, aren't they?

B: Yes, the ingredients are guaranteed free of additives and artificial coloring.

A: Had to laugh, though. The bloke that makes himself, want a ciggie?

B: No, thanks. Patrons are requested to refrain from smoking while other guests are dining...

1.3. Speaking in the Language Classroom

Speaking skill is one of the basics of language learning. It has an important role in language learning developed through time and involves different types of knowledge; both linguistic and non linguistic knowledge.

1.3.1. The role of speaking in foreign language teaching.

According to Hughes (2002), the role of the spoken form of language used to be neglected in traditional language studies to be reconsidered and overlooked in recent language studies to have the great emphasis especially during the last few decades when some language teaching approaches that insist on the role of speech in language teaching have emerged as a reaction to the drawbacks of grammar translation methods. These approaches include the natural or direct methods that placed speech at the fore-front of their pedagogies basing the language course on speech-based interactions between learners and teacher. In addition to the natural methods, other approaches which give the central emphasis

to speaking emerged such as the situational, functional and audio lingual methods in which the pedagogy of teaching insist on teaching and learning through the medium of speech aided by the use of tape technologies. During the twentieth century, more attention was given to spoken language in communicative approaches which succeeded in making a notable change in second language teaching and learning methodologies because of the greatest emphasis they placed on speech which was important from two perspectives. Firstly, vocabulary and grammar rules are implicitly taught through exposure to spoken language. Secondly, spoken forms of the language provides learners with meaningful interesting communication in context which make them learn how to use language as it is used in its real communicative setting. In summary speaking is important because it is the skill through which we carry out different things and learn different languages as it has been stressed out by Bygate (1987) who said that speaking skill is used not only to carry out our daily life practices but also it is the skill through which languages are learned.

1.3.2. Linguistic knowledge involved in speaking.

Speaking fluently in the foreign language requires developing different types of linguistic knowledge which include knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, phonology as well as pragmatic knowledge.

1.3.2.1. Vocabulary knowledge.

Researchers studied a corpora of spoken language indicated that spoken language is characterized by the use of some frequent words like ‘well’, ‘in fact’, ‘yeah’ and ‘but’ that make up approximately 50 % of the whole conversation. They made the conclusion that spoken language is characterized by the existence of chunks that are defined as random frequency combinations of words which are pre-assembled through repeated use , existence of idiomatic expressions and social formula like ‘ see you later’. Further features of spoken

discourse are existence of some expressions which do not appear in written discourse like discourse markers which frequently appear in speech like “well” which is one of the common discourse markers used in English, expressions that express speakers’ attitudes towards what has been said like ‘probably’ and ‘may be’, expressions that express positive and negative appraisal as well as deictic expressions (Thorunbury, 2005). Following Yule (1996) deictic expressions refer to any linguistic form used in spoken discourse to accomplish the function of pointing via language. For example the expression “That” in the statement “what’s that?” is used by someone immediately when he notices something strange and they are called also indexicals and they are classified into three categories; person deixis (“me”, “you”), special deixis (“here”, “there”) and temporal deixis (“now”, “then”).

Following MacCarten (2007), the frequent use of some vocabulary items differs from one corpus to another; for example, the word “probably” is about five times more frequent in conversation than in newspapers and ten times more frequent in conversation than in academic texts; in contrast, the word “however” is eight times more frequent in newspapers than in conversation and over twenty times more frequent in academic texts than in conversation. He claimed also that language learners should be aware of the role of speakers’ status and the situation in which the conversation took place in determining the appropriate vocabulary to use in particular situations; for example, they need to understand whether an item of vocabulary is used by everyone in all kinds of situations, or mostly by people who know each other very well, or mostly in more polite situations with colleagues such as whether it is appropriate to say “good bye” or more appropriate to say “Bye”.

1.3.2.2. Grammar knowledge.

The applied linguist MacCaferthy (1985) makes distinction between the grammar of written discourse and that of spoken language and summarizes this distinction in some

significant differences that include the appearance of some kinds of ellipses in speech, the existence of different formal types of reported speech in the two modes which make the grammar of written discourse valid to that of speech. Another difference lies in the existence of pre and post-posed items or what is called topics and tails in conversation. Furthermore, differences between the grammar of written discourse and that of spoken language according to Thorunbury (2005) are related to the fact that speech production is minimal planned and occurs in real time that makes it less complex than writing and lies in the existence of some features that are unique to speech. These features include the existence of tags that are expressions like No? , Right? And Ok? .Utterances in spoken grammar are divided into body, optional odds and tail slots and they are only clauses and short phrases; however, in written grammar full sentences are present. The use of vagueness expressions to fill pauses and reduce assertiveness of statements, the existence of ellipses and syntactic blends which are also characteristics of spoken grammar which occurs as a result of performance effects and real time processing of speech difficulties like false starts and incomplete utterances.

1.3.2.3. Phonology.

Among the types of knowledge learners have to memorize is pronunciation. A pronunciation of words according to Thorunbury (2005) is indicated by the social context and the only choices speakers may have are choices of intonation. Intonation serves in the separation of information into tone units which mark the most important and significant piece of information within this units, and signals connections between tone units. Moreover he argues that there exist a fundamental relationship between high pitch and new information. In other words, the use of a step up in pitch denotes that new information is presented in discourse and the rise in pitch at the end of the tone units is a signal of continuation as well as indicates that fall in pitch suggests completion. To sum up, learners must be aware of the effects of intonation and pitch in understanding spoken forms of the foreign language and

differentiate different accents as well as be able to employ these pronunciation patterns appropriately to be good speakers.

In a study of the role of context and culture in language teaching, (Kramsch, 1993, p. 34) indicated that the choice of vocabulary and pronunciations of words is determined by the context in which an utterance occurs and he illustrated the role of context in the following exchange between a teacher and a foreign language learner.

S: How do you say 'leave'?

T: It depends; it could be 'weggehn' or 'lassen'. What's the context?

S: 'Leave the children'.

T: Well ... 'lassen', but it depends on the rest of the sentence.

S: 'Leave the children in the woods'.

T: Ah, then it might be 'verlassen'. Who says that to whom?

S: I'm the mother and I say to the father: 'You should leave the children in the woods'.

T: So, you would use the second personal singular, familiar form.

In the above example Kramsch (1993) affirmed that constructing a speech event depends not only on having the right choice of grammatical and lexical features but also on the whole communicative situation which determines the appropriate vocabulary and the right pronunciation.

1.3.2.4. Pragmatic knowledge.

Pragmatics according to Gundel et al. (1993; cited in Hughes, 2002) is a field of linguistics that is interested in the language rules which govern speech, politeness conventions in a particular context. In other words, it studies and explores the relation between language and its context of use. Speech act is one of the subjects of study in pragmatics which stresses that speakers do things by their speech that is their communicative

purposes. Knowledge of speech acts helps the speaker realize different functions such as making assertions, requests, orders and apologies. In summary, pragmatic knowledge is the knowledge of how to do things by the language considering the role of its context of use. This knowledge is important for language learners because it helps them perform and realize different kinds of speech acts understand and interpret them as well as know how such speech acts fit into the exchanges and talks. In addition to the knowledge of speech acts learners need to develop knowledge of the rules of politeness taking into account other speakers face needs avoiding face threatening acts by making use of politeness markers such as ‘thank you’ and ‘please’. The Knowledge of how politeness is presented in a given speech community is vital requirement for speakers since it makes up a part of knowing how to speak (Thorunbury, 2005).

1.3.3. Non-linguistic knowledge involved in teaching speaking.

In addition to the linguistic knowledge that is necessary to speak, learners need to accomplish non-linguistic knowledge which is necessary for understanding like social and cultural knowledge.

1.3.3.1. Social-cultural knowledge.

According to Hymes (1972), there are certain concerns that influence our speech and how we say something in any social and situational context in which the exchange happens. These social and contextual factors that influence speech include the situation that is physical setting in which the talk takes place, participants who are the speakers and hearers, ends which are the conventional outcomes of the event, the act sequence or the form and content of what is said, key that is the tone, manner or spirit of act and norms of interpretation and interaction such as asking questions, expressing views and explaining (as cited in Luoma, 2004, pp. 24-25). Moreover, Thorunbury (2005) pointed out that social cultural knowledge is

the knowledge about the social conventions and values of behavior in a particular speech community as well as the knowledge of how these values are realized by the members of this speech community through language and this involves linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge. For example, the knowledge of how greeting is linguistically expressed by native speakers and what sort of extra linguistic behaviors are required like shaking hands.

I.3.4. Teaching speaking techniques.

Attempting to develop learners' skill of speaking and increasing their speaking fluency teachers adopt in the classroom some techniques and strategies that have been suggested as useful in developing students' oral proficiency so that they hold and sustain easily conversations using the target language in a way approximate to that of the native speaker. These techniques involve role plays, simulations and free discussions in addition to others.

1.3.4.1. Free discussion.

In free discussion activities students manage talks on topics that take their interest over a period of time. In free discussion learners are provided with opportunities to develop their speech fluency when they exchange opinions, experiences and stories as well as encouraged to use the language according to their needs to maintain a conversation and develop their knowledge about the strategies of giving and taking the turns, introduce and shift topics as well as encouraging responses, comments and contributions (Hedge, 2000).

1.3.4.2. Role plays.

According to Ladousse (1987), role play is a concept made of two words 'role' and 'play'; the first word indicates that learners take a part in a specific situation whereas, the second word means that the students take the role on inventive and playful manner within a

safe setting. As an activity, it is defined by him as the activity in which students create their own reality unselfconsciously through experimenting their knowledge of the real world to develop their interaction skills. According to Hedge (2000), role plays are variety of activities in which students are provided with information presented in role cards that guide them to simulate real world given the freedom to choose the language they use and develop the personalities and the situations as they wish to make the activity enjoyable and successful as much as possible.

1.3.4.3. Simulations.

Following Hedge (2000), simulations are activities which share common characteristics with role play. She claimed that in simulations students simulate real life situations as if they are doing it in real world like a business meeting. The use of simulations encourages learners' performance and makes learning enjoyable and effective. For success in simulations, Jones (1982; as cited in Harmer, 1998, p. 274) has suggested some key conditions. First of all there must be a reality of function that is students must think of themselves not as students but as real participants and they should also think of the classroom as it is a simulated setting. Another important condition for the success o simulations is that the structure of the activity must be organized and students are given sufficient information about the real participants.

Ladousse (1987) makes distinction between simulation and role play and summarizes the differences in the point that simulations are lengthy, more complex than role play, relatively inflexible and they often include role play elements.

1.4. Assessment of Speaking Skill

Rost (2002) defines assessment as “an integral part of instruction, in that, it suggests appropriate starting points for instructional design and allows for feedback on learner performance.”(p. 125).

Due to the importance of assessment in the field of language teaching, one of the fundamental points will be discussed in this chapter is assessment of speaking skill pointing out some of the most used speaking tasks and the common issues related to the assessment of oral skill.

1.4.1. Speaking tasks.

Speaking tasks are defined by Luoma (2004) as tasks in which students are asked to use language to realize different functions and “can be seen as activities that involve speakers in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular speaking situation.” (p. 31)

Speaking tasks are categorized by Brown (2004) according to the types of oral production into imitative speaking tasks, intensive speaking tasks, responsive speaking tasks, extensive speaking tasks and interactive speaking tasks.

1.4.1.1. Imitative speaking assessment tasks.

Imitative speaking is defined by Brown (2004) as the ability to repeat some forms of language like words, phrases and sentences. In the light of this definition, some tasks have been designed to assess learners’ ability to imitate different meaningful sounds and sentences focusing more on phonological aspects of language. These tasks include phonologically focused repetition tasks in which test takers are asked to repeat meaningful forms range from word level to sentence level like sentence repetition tasks which learners are asked to repeat certain meaningful sentences which become complex as the task progresses (Luma, 2004).

Another type of imitative speaking tasks which is frequently used is PhonePass test in which test takers read aloud sentences, repeat sentences directed over the phone, order and say words, answer questions and sometimes talk about opinions. In PhonePass tests, test takers output is completely controlled, scored and calculated by examiners and reported back to them within minutes (Brown, 2004).

1.4.1.2. Intensive speaking assessment tasks.

Following Brown (2004), intensive speaking is the ability to produce short stretches of oral language that are grammatically, lexically and phonologically and semantically meaningful. This type of oral production involves tasks like read-aloud tasks, sentence or dialogue completion tasks and picture-cued tasks.

According to Underhill (1987), read-aloud is an oral production testing technique in which learners are asked to read aloud to the interviewer, after having short time for preparation, a passage from a text or part from a dialogue. This assessment technique is simple in terms of administration and the passages used are selected from different perspectives as well as they can be used to test all learners. He also pointed out that students can be tested through sentence or dialogue completion from aural or written stimulus in which missing parts need to be completed by examinees with appropriate words or sentences. Another type of intensive speaking tasks is picture cued tasks which are explained by Brown (2004) as tasks in which learners are asked to give simple description for a picture-cued stimulus.

1.4.1.3. Responsive speaking assessment tasks.

Following Brown (2004) responsive speaking involves short conversations, short talks and simple interaction and in this type of speaking, assessor tests comprehension using tasks

like paraphrasing and question and answer. In a Paraphrasing task, test taker hears a limited number of sentences and he is asked to produce these sentences in their own paraphrase; whereas, in question and answer learners are given a variety of questions that require answers which they are asked to predict and perform orally.

1.4.1.4. Interactive and extensive assessment speaking tasks.

According to Brown (2004), interactive speaking and extensive speaking take the form of lengthy and complex interaction or conversation. In these types of oral performance, assessment involves tasks like interviews, discussion/conversations, oral presentation as well as role plays.

Underhill (1978) argues that interviews are useful for oral production testing and they are the most frequently used type of tests. It takes a form of face to face exchange between the learner and the interviewer and intends to get the learner to answer certain questions about topics which the interviewer chooses according to the extent to which they illicit learner's performance and he stated on discussion/conversation testing technique, it is one way to make the testing situation natural having two people exchange and discuss a common topic in a form of authentic communicative conversation more than looking as a test in which the interviewer determines the topics and keeps the focus on specific language items as in structured interviews.

However, oral presentation according to Brown (2004) is a test which requires presenting a report, a paper, or a design of new product or a marketing plan. Test takers' output is scored in an oral presentation checklist.

Following Luoma (2004), students can be tested also through role plays by getting them to simulate real life situations on which they have a predictable structure or take roles of

participants presented in a tape recorder or in TV respecting the rules of the talk like turn taking and passing rules and regarding the social conventions presented in that speaking situation.

1.4.2. Some issues in assessing speaking.

In assessing learners' speaking skill, the assessor may face certain issues ranged from the design of assessment tests and tasks to the final judgments he makes about his students' oral performance.

According to Hughes (2002), the first issue the teacher may encounter in assessing learners' speaking skill is related to what he should consider when he designs speaking tests. In other words, the problem is whether to design tasks to assess learners' linguistic knowledge; grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation or to assess their ability to use language for communication.

A second issue is related to the interactive nature of speech which can be affected by the conditions under which learners' performance will be assessed which do not exist in every day common interaction. The issue of interactivity is explained by Butler et al. (2000) in the following statement:

It is important to recognize that a test imposes certain constraints on the character of the interactions that are created in the character of the interactions that are created in the assessment and thus on the validity of generalizations from performances on the test to performance in ordinary interactions outside the test [...]. (as cited in Hughes, 2002, p. 78)

Further serious issues in assessing oral performance are the problems of isolating speaking skill from other skills in the design of oral tasks and tests which is something difficult and the issue of authenticity which is explained as the issue of the effects interpersonal and cultural factors have on learners' speech performance in both assessment and

ordinary situations as well as the issue of specifying goals and contexts in authentic tasks (Hughes, 2002).

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed some of speaking skill definitions which agree that it is a daily life activity by which we make friends, greet and judge people. It is a set of choices speakers make concerning syntax, structure and discourse, and looked in general at the status of oral skill in the process of language teaching and how its role overlooked in current teaching methodologies. The process of speaking involves certain sub-skills range from speech production that is a real time spontaneous and contingent process to managing interaction which takes place face to face governed by certain conventions of openings and closings and those of taking and giving the floor as well as the processes of planning and articulating speech. Moreover, We have figured out that in order to speak fluently, learners should know certain vocabulary and grammar especially that which is particular to oral discourse, be aware of pronunciation rules as well as develop knowledge of the social cultural conventions across cultures which are necessary for understanding. In addition, we have dealt with some techniques which are used in teaching oral skill like free discussion, role plays, and simulations which involve learners in using language as in real life situations in enjoyable manner. We concluded the chapter by introducing the process of assessing speaking including certain types of speaking tasks and tests like interviews, repetition tasks as well as phonePass tests and pointed out to some issues related to the assessment of spoken language.

Chapter Two

General Overview on Cooperative Learning Technique

Introduction

In the last few years, great efforts have been made by educators to make learning more learner-centered and increase the amount of interaction inside the classroom by adopting cooperative learning approach. This chapter provides a brief introduction to cooperative learning, including its various definitions and origins in social psychology, developmental psychology, and humanist psychology. This chapter also tries to make distinction between cooperative learning and collaborative learning which are often considered as equivalents. Moreover, this chapter highlights the role of cooperative learning in language teaching and learning concerning how it reduces negative affective factors like anxiety and low self esteem as well as how it encourages motivation. In addition, this chapter tries to explain the principles of cooperative learning and finally provides some available cooperative tasks.

2.1. Definition of Cooperative Learning

Educators put various definitions for cooperative learning. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) recognized that cooperative learning is the structured use of small groups in classrooms to direct teaching and make learners benefit from each other's learning and they state:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner held accountable for his or her own learning and motivated to increase the learning of others (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 192).

Similarly, Cooperative learning has been defined as a learning approach in which learners work in small groups for their own and each others' benefit and it is often contrasted

with competitive and individualistic learning approaches. Johnson, Johnson and Halubec (1994) compared these three approaches and say:

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 grade of "A" that only one or a few students can attain and individualistic learning in which students work by themselves to accomplish learning goals unrelated to those of other students. (As cited in e Mints center staff, 2001, p. 6)

It appears from the above statement that cooperative learning is more than just learning in groups that may increase or hinder students' development but it is learning which provides effective strategies and structures to develop learners' sense of responsibility and skills of collaboration and cooperation (ibid).

In summary, cooperative learning is regarded by Lotan (2004) as a powerful approach to learning because it is both an effective pedagogy and a compelling philosophy and world view which are not found in any form of group work.

2.2. Roots of Cooperative Learning in Educational Psychology

The approach of cooperative learning has been developed in the basis of different psychologists' work and has its roots in social psychology, developmental psychology and humanist psychology.

2.2.1. Social psychology.

Cooperative learning approach has its roots in social psychology which is defined by Frank (2002) as "the systematic study of how exchanges with other people in our environment influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions." (p. 247). Also, he argues that man is a social animal whose much behavior occurs in group settings such as family or school which automatically implies interactions with other people. Based on this idea, collaborative classroom environments were managed to apply social psychology principles.

According to McCafferty, George and Christina (2006) Cooperative learning approach came to existence in the 1970's by Aranson and his colleagues based on the sociologists Alport's work (1954) on how to facilitate group dynamics among people from different racial groups who come to live together and he puts three conditions for interaction to reach practical relations. First of all, interlocutors must have the same status; they should have common goals and finally their collaboration should be officially authorized. These three conditions were applied to the classroom by Aranson and his colleagues (Aranson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes and Snapp 1978) to improve students' relationships inside classrooms at schools in the Southwestern in the United States which are often integrated schools where students are characterized by racial diversity in teaching different matters including second language teaching in a form of activities like Jigsaw using print and spoken texts.

2.2.2. Developmental psychology.

In addition to the influence of social psychology on the formation of cooperative learning, its development has been affected by the work of Piaget and Vigotsky in developmental psychology.

According to McCafferty et al. (2006) cooperative learning approach has been developed in the light of Piaget's ideas about the way in which individuals construct their own knowledge of the world surrounding them to build their background knowledge. Piaget's ideas received the interest of many educators like Doise and Mugny (1995) and Murry (1982) on the value of social contexts in raising the productive cognitive conflicts that can be applied to classroom environments to get learners involved in their own learning playing active roles and engaged in realistic tasks as well as to get them discover how cooperation among two weak students can help them deal with tasks in which they fail individually.

Unlike Piaget, Vigotesky supports the role of the child's social cultural knowledge in constructing his knowledge of the world. He developed the so-called the social cultural theory of development and he believed that there is a definite relationship between the person's social cultural knowledge stored in the ZPD (The Zone of Proximal Development) of each individual and the proponents of collaborative learning. Vigotesky defines the ZPD as: "The distance between the actual development levels as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer." (as cited in Roosevelt, 2008, p. 1017)

Also, Vigotesky claims that collaboration is necessary in any type of learning because it maintains the dynamic tension between what the children can achieve individually or through imitation. By collaboration, he refers to situations in which the child has the opportunity to interact in social contexts for the purpose of problem solving.

Vigotesky's concept of the ZPD and his idea about background knowledge and its influence on our understanding of the world have great influence on modern educational practice which is clearly observed in the development of new models of modern classroom environments such as collaborative learning environment (ibid, pp. 1021-1022).

2.2.3. Humanist psychology.

Among the ideas which educators relayed on in the development of cooperative learning approaches are those of humanist psychologists like Maslow and Rogers. Maslow (1968) proposed a hierarchy of needs; maintenance needs and growth needs. The fulfillment of these needs is necessary for survival and growth. These later includes the needs to know and understand, aesthetic needs, the need to realize one's potential and the need to connect with something beyond one self. Also, Rogers (1979) pointed out that learners have to develop interpersonal relations for their psychological growth. Although cooperative learning

is based on interpersonal interaction and ideas like those of Maslow and Rogers are based on the individual development, these ideas were considered in developing cooperative learning approaches because they go with cooperative learning in attempt to achieve the purpose of making learning dependent on individuals and peers (As cited in MacCaferty et al., 2006, pp. 15-16)

2.3. The Difference between Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Learning

Cooperative learning and collaborative learning are two concepts which are often used interchangeably to mean working in groups; however, each term has some distinctive features which make it different from the other.

According to Brody (1998) cooperative learning and collaborative learning arose from different frameworks and used in different subject areas as a separated approaches which have no connection or disagreement until educators started to search for appropriate practices to implicate in the classroom in the 1980s; however, in recent studies, the terms cooperative learning and collaborative learning overlap in means and ends, hold wide variations in formats and applications, embrace differences in underlying philosophies and theories of learning.

For Ingleton et al. (1969) both cooperative learning and collaborative learning were built in the basis of the social nature of learning to emphasize a social approach to the development of learning skills and other different skills and he stressed out that the difference between them lies in the highly structured nature of face to face interaction in cooperative learning which is the responsibility of the teacher to develop; whereas, collaborative learning is less structured and assigning is always given to students.

Similarly, Pantiz (1997) indicated that cooperative learning is the highly structured approach to learning in groups; however, collaborative learning is considered to be less

structured. Furthermore, Bruffee (1995) prospected that co-operative learning is more appropriate for use with elementary school children while collaborative learning is better suited for adults including college and university students and claimed that unlike collaborative learning which is appropriate for non-foundational higher order knowledge, cooperative learning is seen as to be appropriate for fundamental knowledge (as cited in McWhaw, 2003, p. 71)

The common similarities and differences among the major cooperative and collaborative learning approaches were summarized by Davidson (1994) in the table below:

<i>Attributes Common to All Approaches</i>	
1.	A common task or learning activity suitable for group work.
2.	Small-group student interaction focused on the learning activity.
3.	Cooperative, mutually helpful behavior among students.
4.	Interdependence in working together.
5.	Individual accountability and responsibility for group work outcomes.
<i>Attributes that Vary Between Approaches</i>	
6.	Procedures by which students are organized into groups, (e.g., heterogeneous, random, student selected, common interest).
7.	The value of and ways for structuring positive interdependence (e.g., goals, task, resources, roles, division of labor, or rewards).
8.	The value of explicitly teaching group work skills: e.g., communication, relational (social), group maintenance, and task skills.
9.	The use of reflection, processing, or debriefing among students and/or between teacher and students on communication skills, academic skills, or group dynamics.
10.	The value of classroom climate-setting through class-building, team-building, community building, or setting cooperative norms.
11.	Attention to student status by the teacher (identifying competencies of low-status students and focusing peers' attention on those competencies).
12.	The use of group structures for organizing the communication pattern within the group.
13.	The question of group leadership: whether responsibilities are rotated among students, shared by structures or roles, or not designated.
14.	The teacher's role in different phases of the lesson, unit, or process.
15.	Emphasis on the value of demonstrating equal participation by all students.
16.	The importance of simultaneous interaction among students in pairs or small groups.

Table 01: Common and varying attributes among major cooperative and collaborative learning approaches (Adapted from Brodey, 1998, p. 9)

2.4. The Role of Cooperative Learning in Language Learning

Cooperative learning is one of the effective techniques used in modern language classrooms. Its benefits are numerous and various. One of cooperative learning benefits is related to its positive role in enhancing the positive affective factors related to language learning that leads researchers like Crandall (1999) to claim that cooperative learning has been developed specially to encourage affective factors that correlate positively with language learning. An extra important benefit of cooperative learning is that it helps in creating a conducive learning atmosphere that encourage positive interdependence, group interaction, individual accountability and developing small group social skills.

2.4.1. Cooperative learning and affective factors.

Cooperative learning has been proved as a supporting and encouraging technique for positive affective factors related to language learning as well as a way to reduce negative ones. According to Arnold & Brown (1999) affective factors are individual factors that have to do with internal factors that are a part of the learner's personality and include anxiety, motivation as well as self esteem and self confidence.

2.4.1.1. Cooperative learning and anxiety.

In any classroom, feelings of fear from making mistakes and seeming unintelligent often exist. Such feelings educators refer to as anxiety; for example, Crandall (1999) pointed out that anxiety includes students' feelings of fear from failure or appearing foolish which impede interaction in the language classroom, especially in situations when the teacher poses difficult questions which only few students have answers for. Also, he argues that the perfect solution to reduce anxiety and increase the amount of interaction is by giving students time to

think and opportunities to exchange their contributions in small groups until they become correct or acceptable before introducing them to the entire class.

To lower the level of anxiety within the classroom, it is useful if teachers include cooperative learning which is considered by Oxford and Ehrman (1993) as a classroom procedure which can lower anxiety in the language classroom (as cited in Crandall 1999, p. 233)

2.4.1.2. Cooperative learning and motivation.

Motivation has been regarded by different researchers in the literature as an important factor in enhancing foreign language learning in terms of increasing the use of language and the development of language proficiency. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as “the effort, want (desire) and affect associated with learning a second language”. Moreover, Lennon (1993) sees motivation as “the most important single factor influencing continuing development in oral proficiency” (as cited in Graham, 1997, p. 96).

As a motivational technique, cooperative learning has been suggested to increase learners’ motivation. According to Dornyei (2001), encouraging cooperation among learners is a powerful means to increase students’ motivation. He explains its effects on learners’ motivation concerning how it creates feelings of solidarity and supportiveness among learners, increases their expectations of success, maximizes the sense of obligation and responsibility towards their mates as well as raises the efforts of individuals to make individual contributions for the success of the work of the whole group. Similarly, Crandall (1999) advocates that peer support can be a commanding motivator for uninterested, shy or insecure learners for the reason that individuals know that they can get feedback and assistance in making their contributions as acceptable as possible in cooperative groups. As a

result they would be motivated to introduce their contributions to the entire class after the support of their group mates.

Although many claims stressed out that competition is the best motivator for learners, an experimental study carried out by Johnson and his colleagues in 1981 on 122 students to investigate the role of cooperation in favor of competition revealed that cooperation is more powerful in enhancing learners' achievements (as cited in Crandall, 1999, p. 235)

2.4.1.3. Cooperative learning and self -confidence and self- esteem.

Different Studies on the role of cooperative learning in increasing learners' self-esteem and self-confidence on learners' achievements are common. For example, Dornyei (2001) claimed that in cooperative learning environments, learners build more positive attitudes, develop higher self-confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, Maslow (1968 cited in De Andrès 1999, p. 87) recognized, in his hierarchy of needs, that self-esteem can be increased by constructing a learning environment in which feelings of belonging and security are present.

2.5. Cooperative Learning Principles

As an approach, cooperative learning has been developed under certain principles such as positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face group interaction, and development of small group social skills on which the success of the cooperative lesson depends.

2.5.1. Positive interdependence.

The first principle which distinguishes cooperative learning from any form of group work is positive interdependence. Positive interdependence means the feeling of one-for-all and all-for-one. In other words, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2002; as cited in McCafferty et al., 2006, p. 39) pointed out that Positive interdependence refers to the group's feeling that each member in the groups makes his efforts for not only his own success but also for the

success of others and they explained positive interdependence as each member in the group understands that they all “sink or swim together”.

Brody (1998) stressed out that determining whether positive interdependence exists among groups and deciding whether it is strongly required depends on asking the questions: “Does a gain for one student result in a gain for another?” and “is cooperation necessary?”. The answer for the first question would be “yes positive interdependence is present” only if students are more likely to help and tutor one another, encourage each other and attempt to develop peer norms in favor of achievement. Also, the answer for the second question will be “Yes it is necessary” only if students cannot reach their goals without working together at least part of the time.

Positive interdependence according to Johnson and Johnson (2008) can be found only in cooperative environments where individuals perceive that they can reach their goals only if the other individuals with whom they are working cooperatively also reach their goals. They therefore promote each other’s efforts to achieve the goals; however, positive interdependence is often absent in competitive classroom where individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals only if the other individuals fail to obtain their goals to be replaced by negative interdependence.

2.5.2. Individual accountability.

The second principle of cooperative learning that is apparently needed for the success of any cooperative group structure is individual accountability that refers according to Kagan (2009) to the amount of participation of all group members in the team project and he pointed out that one way to ensure that all individuals participate and make their efforts as much as possible is by making each individual accountable for his contribution to the team project.

Following Coetzee et al. (2008) individual accountability refers to the fact that Learners in the group need to understand that they are responsible for understanding the

material and each member in the group has to make sure that the other members understand the task so that each of them can also do the part for which he is responsible in order to accomplish the task on time.

2.5.3. Development of small group social skills.

Another important principle of cooperative learning is development of small group social skills. These skills according to Brody (1998, p.115) involve trust-building communication, leadership and conflict-management skills.

Bennet et al. (1991; cited in Crandall, 1999, p. 228) recognized that the success of cooperative groups requires in addition to linguistic skills, development of social skills which facilitate teamwork, create trust between individual students and enhance communication, leadership, problem-solving, and decision making in group interaction. In other words, learners need to learn how to work together as a unit to reach their common goal including how to take turns, negotiate meanings, listen to mates, help and encourage them, as well as how to agree and disagree appropriately.

Kagan (2009) identified a range of social skills required to be a good team member. Among these skills are knowledge of how to help when help is requested, but you also don't want to be a know-it-all, knowledge of how to be a good leader, but you don't want to become too bossy or too shy to participate, but not too loud or assertive to overwhelm your teammates, knowledge of how to motivate your teammates when they are down, listen to them to understand their perspectives, the knowledge of how to accept and reject gracefully when your idea is not selected, and finally knowledge of how to take turns, politely disagree, resolve conflicts, and reach harmony. These skills are appropriate not only in cooperative groups but also in social groups like the family.

2.5.4. Face- to -face group interaction.

Another important principle of cooperative learning is the emphasis on small group interaction. Crandall (1999) recognized that to increase the interaction among group members, it is useful to get learners to structure pairs or small groups that constitute of three to six students which are small enough to allow students to make their contributions and participate and large enough to give them opportunity to benefit as much as possible from each other. Moreover, he explains the role of small groups in promoting face-to face interaction in the fact that each individual will have a role to play ; for example, one student may act as a facilitator, one as a group leader, one as a recorder and others may be reporters or readers so that they will have a continued face-to-face interaction . Similarly Brody(1998) argues that interpersonal and face-to- face interaction is developed when members help, share, assist, encourage, and support each other's efforts to achieve and produce.

2.6. Cooperative Learning Activities

There are various types of cooperative learning activities which are used in teaching a variety of matters to enhance learners' skills and abilities such as, Jigsaw, Think/ Pair/ Share, Round Table/ Round Robin, and numbered heads together.

2.6.1. Jigsaw.

According to Crandall (1999) Jigsaw is one of the most known cooperative learning activities which are frequently used to create a real 'information gap' in the classroom and encourage classroom communication.

Kagan (2009) identified two types of jigsaw; the original jigsaw and Jigsaw II. The original jigsaw was coined and applied to the classroom at the first time by Aranson and his colleagues (1978). In this type of Jigsaw, the curriculum to be learned is divided among group members into parts and each individual is asked to have access to a particular part of

that curriculum after they have had successful cooperation sharing the whole information within the group and at the end of the activity each individual learner would have a quiz about the whole curriculum. Slavin found that the traditional jigsaw have certain drawbacks concerning rewriting the curriculum which takes time and created instead of it jigsaw II in which no rewriting of curriculum is needed. In jigsaw II, students are assigned to expert topics to read from a particular text or curriculum materials, after sharing that information in expert groups to master the material, and then returned to their teams to report on their topic. Finally, all students took a quiz on all the material.

2.6.2. Think/pair/share.

Another most basic cooperative learning activity is think/pair/share. In a recent study by The e Mints center staff (2001) pointed out that in think/pair/share activity, students are provided by a particular topic which they are asked to think about following individual reflections and then try to discuss it in pairs. The study found that this structure can help students in various situations such as formulating a hypotheses, make reasoning, or preparation for brainstorming.

One example to understand how think/pair/share activity works is to ask students to be in pairs; one is Spock and the other is Kirk and then get them engaged in an activity like “Describe three main things that you did on the weekend.”

- Think Each student take thirty seconds to think of his or her response to the question. (No talking is allowed during “think” time.)
- Pair The Spocks share their responses with the Kirks. The Kirks actively listen because they will need to know what their partners have said. When the Spocks finish, the Kirks respond.
- Share After each member of each pair has responded, we ask that a volunteer share three things her or his partner said. By asking for a volunteer, weaker students have more processing time for their answers and more models to choose from as presented by others. We then choose a few more students at random to share.

Think/pair/share can be used for different purposes. It is used sometimes to start a class, to introduce a new topic, to exemplify a new concept during a lesson, to get students involved in the lesson and to get them develop their confidence to participate in a relaxed manner. Another benefit of think/pair/share is that it provides learners with time to think and formulate a response and opportunity to listen and share ideas with their partners. (MacCafferty et al., 2006)

6.2.3. Round table, rally robin / round robin.

Round table, Round robin and Rally Robin are three of cooperative learning activities which are used in the classroom to increase learners' cooperation.

According to Kagan (2009) in round table each member in the group takes the turn and then writes it down in a sheet of paper and passes this sheet of paper around the table so that each member in the group will have his own turn to make his contribution. Instead of writing in a sheet of paper students may write their ideas in a computer using graphic organizer (As cited in eMints center staff, 2001, p.15).

Round robin is one of Kagan's (2009) structures in which the teacher poses a problem to which multiple responses and solutions are possible. During round robin, each student has time to think about his response and record it in his own paper before the round robin. Finally, each student shares in turn for a specified time. The same steps are applied to rally robin the only difference is that in rally robin students do the work with a partner not with a team.

2.6.4. Numbered heads together.

Another effective cooperative structure is numbered heads together. Numbered heads together is a cooperative learning structure developed by Kagan when he was training to analyze which structures work and which do not work in the classroom to develop effective

cooperative structures and he observed learners put their heads together to find solution for a particular question to gain points for their groups and how the rest of the members make their efforts to help the student who will respond to make the appropriate answer. He says:

“[...] Later when I sat at my computer, I gave this simple sequence a name; I called Numbered Heads Together to convey the idea that each student had a number and that all the students on the team put their heads together to come up with their best answer. Numbered Heads Together was one of the first cooperative learning structures I began training. I cut out the between-team competition and the yelling out of answers, but kept the basic underlying structure.”(Kagan, 2009, p. 122)

In this activity, a question is posed for all the group members to discuss and develop a team answer which every single learner knows. After the final answer is provided and recognized by all group members, a number is called and students with that number are expected to answer the question helped and supported by the other members in the group. Numbered heads together according to High (1993; as cited in Crandall, 1999, p. 231) is often used for reviewing grammatical structures, vocabulary or factual items from a reading or audio-visual text.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that cooperative learning is a structured group learning in which learners get responsible for their own learning as well as for the learning of others. It comes to existence influenced by the work of different psychologists such as Piaget, Vigotesky and Maslow. Besides that, cooperative learning is different from collaborative learning in terms of structure, use and underlying philosophies. In addition, cooperative learning in language learning effectively supports affective factors that correlate positively to language learning such as how it reduces learners' anxiety, encourages their self-esteem and self confidence and raises their motivation so that promotes interaction in the classroom and develops oral proficiency. Furthermore, we have seen certain characteristics of cooperative learning which differentiate it from any

other group work like positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face group interaction and development of small group social skills. Finally, some of cooperative learning activities were explained in terms of their use and effectiveness such as jigsaw, think/pair/share, round table/round robin and numbered heads together.

Chapter Three

Integration of Cooperative Learning in Teaching Speaking Skill

Introduction

The technique of cooperative learning is integrated by teachers in teaching different matters including oral proficiency. A central theme this chapter discusses is how to integrate cooperative learning approach in the classroom in teaching speaking skill. It first of all highlights the underlying processes related to the management of the cooperative classroom environment such as team building, group cohesiveness, group size and group norms. This chapter also attempts to provide a general view on the teacher's role in implementing cooperative learning technique in the classroom concerning motivating learners, explaining tasks, assigning roles and monitoring groups. Moreover, this chapter provides some cooperative speaking activities integrated by teachers to improve learners' oral proficiency. The chapter concludes with cooperative learning and assessment.

3.1. Managing a Cooperative Classroom

The first key for success in implementing cooperative learning is a well managed cooperative classroom. The effective management of the cooperative classroom is often dependent on successful group work and pair work, clear directing norms, well formed groups, optimal group size and cohesive groups.

3.1.1. Pair-work definition.

According to Harmer (2001) Pair work is a form of learning with partner to accomplish a task such as studying a text, writing a dialogue, or completing feeling gap activities. Pair work has various advantages in enhancing learner's language fluency "Two heads are better than one". For example, it increases learners' amount of speaking in the

classroom, it establishes learner autonomy and develops learners' oral proficiency. Also, it allows the teacher to discuss with pairs and doesn't take more time in its management.

3.1. 2.Group work definition.

According to Harmer (2001) group work is one way to ask students to work together as a team which may contain five or more students to do certain tasks which require a group decision like writing a group story, role play, or discussing a given topic and he suggested that small groups of five are better than large groups since they are small enough to give each student in the group opportunity to participate. Lotan (2004, p. 167) pointed out that successful and productive group work requires learners' collaboration and support to understand the learning task and be active participants and have equal participation to achieve their goal as a group. Moreover, Students need to learn how to engage in meaningful conversations about the subject, and how to deal and resolve group conflicts.

Nation (1994) pointed out that successful group work is the result of some key factors that work together. These factors are the learning goals of the group work, the task, the way the information is distributed, the seating arrangement of the group members and the social relationship between the members of the group. According to him the primary goal of group work is to put the focus of the instruction on the spoken use of the language because group work is most commonly used to get learners talking to each other and its main purpose is to help students to develop their fluency in using language.

3.1.3. Group norms.

Dornyei & Murphey (2003) explain group norms as rules of conduct in the classroom which most teachers and learners need to make joint learning impossible. These rules are determined either by the teacher or by the school to explain for learners what is allowed and

what is not allowed for them in the classroom and must be respected and followed by the group members.

One type of group norms is cooperative group norms. According to Lotan (2004) these are rules and directions that learners need to follow to do the cooperative task and help them when they are lost as well as aid the teacher in his delegation and control of the groups. Cooperative norms that students must learn and internalize while they collaborate in small groups include rules of allowing students to serve intellectual resources for one another, the right to request help and the duty to provide assistance. Furthermore, learners need to know how to conduct constructive conversations in small groups by justifying their arguments and by explaining for weak students how to do so, rather than doing the work for them.

Ehrman and Dornyei (2003; cited in Dornyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 38) summarized the main norms the teacher might set out to direct learners' behaviors during working in structured small groups to facilitate cooperation between students when they work together such as how they are going to do the task and how they get to help and support each other to finish the task on time in the following table:

<i>Group norms that facilitate cooperative learner behaviour</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be responsive to the needs of your groups. • Encourage others. • Praise helpful actions and good ideas. • Share your ideas with your peers. • Take turns. • Ask for help if you need it. • Ask others for their ideas. • Pay attention to and respect other's opinions. • Consult your team mates before making a decision. • Don't be impatient with the others. • Be brief in discussions. • Do not dominate. • Make sure everybody participates.

Table2. Group norms that facilitate cooperative learner behavior

3.1.3. Team building.

According to Kagan (2009) after students finished with forming groups, they can't succeed in working together unless they recognize that they are a team which must work as a unit in which each member trusts and respects the others and he called this process team building. In other words, the group of students needs to develop a team identity which supports learners in the same group to get to know each other and build a community in which they all feel responsible for the success of this community which they are members in.

Kagan (2009) pointed out that team building have five aims to achieve. These are the aim to get students acquainted (know each other), the aim to develop a team identity which can be done by giving a name for the team, the aim to achieve a shared support among team members, the aim of getting learners respect and valuing differences among their mates and finally the aim of developing synergy.

3.1.4. Teams types.

There are three main ways to group students; these are heterogeneous grouping, homogeneous grouping, and random grouping.

Kagan (2009) clarified that Heterogeneous teams are teams which are mixed in terms of ability, gender, and race. In other words, in each team, we found low, middle and high achieving students as well as we found males and females. This type of teams are the most preferred type of teams because they increase the amount of benefiting from each other, improve relations among diverse level or gender learners and facilitates the management of the classroom and they are often contrasted with homogeneous teams which are teams that share similar characteristics such as they all have the same ability, the same gender or they all have similar interests.

Similarly, Ingleton, Loene and Tim (1969) stated that in classrooms with different ability learners, heterogeneous grouping is better than homogeneity because heterogeneity

allows a mixing of ability levels, of learning styles, of students from various backgrounds, of younger and older students, and of genders. A teacher may purposely choose to mix genders and cultures in order to break down difficulties and build on tasks that require different perspectives.

In addition to homogenous, heterogeneous, Kagan (2009) acknowledged a third type of teams which are random teams. According to him, random teams are teams that are formed by chance without taking any factor into consideration.

3.1.4. Group size.

One important factor for the success of any group activity is the group size. Many educators studying the effectiveness of the use of small groups in education proved that small groups of four students are better than large groups of more than four students. For example, Hertz-azarowitz (2003) pointed out that the optimal size of small groups for learning seem to be three to four members, because in small groups of this size students can be involved more in the task and have enough opportunity to talk and discuss and can be observed by the teacher easily; whereas, in larger groups the participation is particular to some students at others' expense.

The group size is often determined by the type of the task and in most cases the best groups are groups which range from four to six students. Large groups need more time to finish and require good communication skills to accomplish. Large groups tend to be effective when the devoted time for the task is long enough, learners in the groups develop high social interaction skills and have already experienced cooperative learning; however, if these conditions are not present it is best to use small groups of less than four students or better to use pairs (e Mints center staff, 2008)

3.1.5. Group cohesiveness.

Cohesiveness is one of the important factors learners get into account when they choose to be a member in a given group. According to Mullen and Cooper (1994; as cited in Dornyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 62) cohesiveness involves at least three aspects. The first aspect is interpersonal attraction that is one's desire to be a member in a particular group simply because he likes this group's members. Another aspect is commitment to task or in other words, the desire to be in the group because of interest in the task. The last aspect of cohesiveness is group pride or the desire to be in the group for prestige.

The importance of creating cohesive groups lies in the fact that cohesiveness in groups creates pleasant atmospheres and has a positive relationship with performance. Cohesiveness among groups develops groups' responsibility to contribute and work for the success of the group and increases the groups' goal oriented norms to achieve. In summary people we are working with have great influence on our efforts to do well for the success of the group; in other words, when we work within two different groups on the same task our efforts to succeed are higher within the group which we have a desire to work with than we do in another group in which we don't like to work in for a particular reason. The role of cohesiveness in our performance is explained by Brown (2000; as cited in Dornyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 65) in the following statement: "when what we are doing and who we are doing it with matter enough to us, we will work harder for our groups than we will never do on our own."

3.2. The Role of the Teacher in Implementing Cooperative Learning

Even though cooperative learning is a learner centered approach, its success often is linked to teachers' supervision and direction. The teacher has a variety of role in implementing cooperative learning such as introducing tasks and activities, monitoring

learners' autonomy, assigning roles, dealing with difficult students and assessing learners' processing.

3.2.1. Creating a motivating learning atmosphere.

Following Kagan (2009), before asking students to work on a cooperative task, the teacher's first role is to transform the classroom into a community in which students feel they are cared by others to develop their sense of belonging and motivate them to work together and enjoy learning with peers. In addition, the teacher has to make the curriculum motivating and this occurs by rewarding the groups or by selecting funny and enjoyable cooperative structures which add a motivating social component to mastery-oriented learning like Kagan's structure numbered heads which is an activity in which groups' members put their heads closer to each other and collaborate to gain points for their own groups when the groups compete with the other groups.

According to Dornyei and Murphey (2003, p. 51) the teacher's main role in the classroom is to establish a friendly climate by managing group anxiety and clarifying group goals.

3.2.2. Introducing tasks.

One of the teacher's roles in cooperative learning environment is to explain the learning task for students. Johnson and Johnson (2008) clarified that in cooperative classroom it is the teacher's role to explain the instructional task and cooperative structure to students through explaining the academic assignment, explaining the criteria for success, structure positive interdependence and individual accountability, explain the group norms of learner behaviors that students are supposed to internalize while they work in groups like social skills. More over it is supposed from the teacher to teach the concepts and strategies required to complete the task and define the objectives and the necessary interaction patterns of the lesson.

3.2.3. Monitoring groups' learning.

Another important teacher role in formal cooperative learning is to monitor the groups' work. According to Johnson and Johnson (2008) in cooperative classroom, teachers move around the groups to monitor each learning group and intervene when necessary to improve the progress of the groups on the task because monitoring the groups' work by the teacher, learners try to make more efforts to remain on the task and tend to feel accountable to contribute in the work.

According to Ingleton et al. (1969) the teacher intervenes to monitor the learning groups to get them progress in the task work and she claims that monitoring provides feedback to both the teacher and the students on progress, and is essential to support the students' learning and management of their groups. Similarly, MaCcafferty et al. (2006) pointed out that the teacher's job when learners start working together is to monitor how the students go about the task and whether they are using the appropriate skills and he said that the best way to jump into learners' minds is by observing them when they are working so that the teacher will be present to aid students with the needed help, especially learners with special difficulties. He claimed also that teachers should not intervene to solve group difficulties until the team gives-up and he uses the expression TTT to mean "Team Then Teacher". In other words, teammates should collaborate first to find solutions to the encountered difficulties unless they did not succeed in handling the situations, the teacher intervenes to help them to do so by providing extra explanation. Likewise, Lotan (2004) stressed out that teachers need to know how to set up, promote, and sustain group work, how to hold groups and individuals accountable for being on task, and when and how to intervene when problems arise.

3.3. Cooperative Speaking Tasks and Activities

There are a range of cooperative learning activities that teachers can use in teaching the oral aural skills. The most used cooperative speaking activities are sorting and ranking, two puzzles or three-step interview, group dialoguing and universal stories.

3.3.1. Sorting and ranking.

According to McCafferty et al. (2006) Sorting and ranking activities are activities in which students are given a variety of pictures which they are asked to arrange and order logically following a given criterion. After students finished the sorting and ordering of pictures, they are asked to explain orally why they choose this way of ordering to the entire class to get them understand their thinking using the target language. This activity is successful in developing learners' oral- aural skills. In this activity expert students in the target language are likely to be more successful than beginners.

3.3.2. Solving two puzzles: three-step interview.

Kagan (2009) clarified that solving two puzzles or three step interviews is one of Kagan's structures. It was developed to foster participation and language development among students, especially those who did not develop English fluency. This activity was built on the fact that learners working in pairs tend to be more talkative than those having group discussion. In this activity students are asked to have pair interviews in which each student interviewed his partner on a various topics so that they develop their speaking fluency and listening comprehension. After pairs finished the interviews they discuss what have been said in the interview in groups.

3.3.3. Group dialoguing.

Another cooperative learning activity which can be used in developing learners' speaking skill is group dialoguing. According to McCafferty et al. (2006) group dialoguing is

an effective whole class activity for preparing students for student-student interaction in small groups. In this activity students are asked to sit in the center of the classroom and start introducing facts, opinions, events and experiences which they have faced in their lives and after having shared their lives' experiences, they choose one story to write in the blackboard as the "daily news activity" and then they discuss different conventions of print contained in this stories.

3.3.4. Universal stories activities.

Universal stories activities are activities in which students are asked to identify the plot of famous stories presented across cultures which they have already read or watched in TV in front of the entire class. The teacher in this activity may introduce for students two versions of one of the famous universal stories like "Cinderella" and ask students to compare the two versions using their own words or ask them to create their own version. Through this activity students can develop their understanding, fluency and vocabulary (McCafferty et al., 2006).

3.4. Cooperative Learning and Assessment

As instruction moved to be student centered, new ways of assessment which are more learner-centered like cooperative assessment appeared. According to Kagan (2009) cooperative learning in addition to being an effective set of instructional strategies, it is also a powerful approach to assessment. Due to the importance of cooperative assessment in the process of teaching, we attempt to explain the various types of cooperative assessment and some cooperative learning assessment approaches.

3.4.1. Types of cooperative assessment.

There are four main types of cooperative assessment which are group assessment, individual assessment, self and peer assessment.

3.4.1.1. Group assessment.

A recent study by e Mints center staff (2001) confirmed that group assessment or what is often referred to as group processing is a way to get the teacher evaluates the progress of the group on the task and helps him to provide feedback for learners about how successful and functioning their group is without forcing students to tell on one another.

Lotan (2008) defines Group processing as reflecting on a group meeting to describe which members' actions were helpful and which are not helpful and decide which actions to continue and which actions need to be replaced and its purpose is to clarify and improve the effectiveness of the members' contributions in making the group work functioning to achieve the group's goals. Moreover, he pointed out that the feedback received during group processing aims to improve the use of social skills and ensure individual accountability and promotive interaction.

3.4.1.2. Individual assessment.

Individual assessment often takes a form of quiz, test or a collection of evidence that all individuals in the group contributed in the group work. In addition, it informs the teacher about how members in groups made efforts for the success of the group work. Besides that, individual assessment is a way to foster learner's individual accountability. In other words, when individuals are informed that they will have individual assessment their responsibility towards the accomplishment of the task will be increased. (e Minits center staff,2001)

3.4.1.3. Peer and self assessment.

In both peer and self assessment students play effective part in the process of assessment this makes assessment a process in which learners are active participants do their efforts to enhance their achievements and work hard to succeed. In other words, according to Brown (1994; cited in Ingleton et al., 1969)

Assessment is [...] a participative process in which they are themselves involved. This in turn tends to motivate students, who feel they have a greater investment in what they are doing. Using self and peer assessment makes the process much more one of learning because learners are able to share with one another the experiences they have undertaken. (P. 27)

Kagan(2009) recognized that one way to get students involved in the process of assessment is by structuring team test- taking in which team mates have a test to do individually and then they come back to their teams to review and adjust their answers by dividing the roles between them; for example a leader has to lead his teammates to sharing their answer, the checker has to check who have similar answers and if there are differences in answers, they all collaborate and share to solve the problem and make the necessary adjustments for teammates' responses and finally, the Cheerleader is going to celebrate correct answers or the teamwork process.

According to Ingleton (1969) peer assessment is a type of assessment in which group members are the assessors of the group members' contributions. In other words, it is the group who judges the contributions of its members and he pointed out that peer assessment is an effective way to help students learn valuable skills, like how to be faire, reflective and less reliant on experts. Moreover, it is a way to ensure that the mark awarded to a group member reflects the individual contribution and claimed that social loafing and freewheeling are some issues that may arose in peer assessment which can be handled by teacher's help.

3.4.2. Cooperative learning assessments.

Kagan (2009) pointed out that cooperative learning adds a number of valuable assessment approaches which offers new ways to observe students during teamwork, monitor students, and make adjustments during lessons and structures for polling the entire class, every team, and every student such as the Walkabout, Simultaneous sharing structures and all students respond. Walkabout cooperative assessment approach is appropriate to be used when the teacher provides direct instruction and set pairs or teams to work on a given project then he moves around the groups to listen to student's contributions and observe them working. Also, he recognized that Walkabout is not only an effective assessment approach but also it is an important management tool; for example, when the teacher moves around the groups, he can prevent discipline problems, connect with students, ensure that team members keep on task, and challenge and redirect students. Doing so, some questions like did students comprehend the instructions? Are students doing the structure correctly? Could the task be structured better? What do students know? What skills do students have? What additional instruction would be helpful? Come to teacher's mind and responding to these questions he makes appropriate adjustments.

The second assessment approach provided by Kagan (2009) is simultaneous sharing structures. This is a way to assess the whole class at once; for example, a question is posed by the teacher and each student has a thinking time to write his own answer on his/her own board and hold up their answer boards when the teacher says "show me" so that he can observe their answers and see what percent of the class has the correct answer.

The third cooperative learning assessment approach is called all-students-respond structures. This later is similar to similar sharing structures in providing the teacher with opportunity to assess different students at once, especially when the structures or activities used by the teacher have every student taking turns responding so that simultaneous

interaction is increased such as in Round robin; a cooperative learning activity in which a small group of students exchange turns regularly.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have figured out that the success of cooperative learning depends more on how well the classroom is managed to be appropriate for the integration of cooperative learning technique in the classroom. We figured out also that cooperative groups are more than just having learners working together but a cohesive unit that works as a team of four to five members guided by some group norms that facilitate cooperative learner behavior. Moreover we deduced that the teacher's main roles in implementing cooperative learning are motivating learners to work, explaining the task and assigning roles and monitoring learners' work to provide effective feedback. Furthermore, we have seen certain cooperative speaking activities which are used in the classroom to develop learners' speaking skill like group dialoguing and universal stories. In addition, we have seen certain cooperative assessments in which learners are active participants in the process of assessment in the process of assessment; they assess themselves and their peers.

Part Two: Field Work

Chapter Four

Analysis of Classroom Observation, Teachers' Interview and Group Interview

Introduction

This chapter represents the field work of the present study which attempts to explore whether EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning technique to get insights into how this technique is implemented to develop learners' speaking skill. To do so, two second year LMD classrooms were observed, and two interviews held: one held with random groups of students and one held with EFL teachers. This chapter provides a detailed description of both classroom observation and the interviews concerning their design, aims, and population and includes the analysis of the data obtained from classroom observation which took place in two second year LMD classrooms at the Division of English, and both students' and teachers' interview. Finally, a summary of the results obtained from the observation and the interview is included.

4.1. Description and Analysis of Classroom Observation

To investigate whether EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning technique and get valid data about the ways they use in implementing this technique in their classrooms in teaching speaking, we carried out an observation to explore what goes on between people inside the classroom.

4.1.1. Description of classroom observation.

The observation was carried out in two second year EFL classrooms at Biskra University during the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013. The observation's

aim is twofold. The first aim is to explore the extent of using cooperative learning technique by EFL teachers at the Division of English at Biskra University and the second aim is to explore how they implement it in teaching oral skill in the classroom.

The physical settings, learners' interactive behaviors and the teacher's actions were observed by means of observation checklist (grid) over six sessions in two second year EFL classrooms which include around 45 students in each. In these six sessions cooperative learning was implemented in four sessions; three continuing sessions in the first classroom and one in the second classroom. In the two remaining sessions, individualistic approaches were used by the teacher. The observation is presented in a form of checklist which contains certain items to guide the observation. The checklist consists of three sections; the first section is designed to observe the learning environment, the second section is designed to guide the observation of the groups' progressing and the last section is devoted to observe the teacher's roles and actions.

4.1.1.1. Section one: general observation of the classroom.

Section one in the observation checklist consists of five items (categories). It attempts to obtain real data about some aspects of the classroom environment in which cooperative learning was implemented such as its physical management, the grouping of students, and the group size.

4.1.1.2. Section two: general observation of the groups.

Section two contains six items. It attempts to explore what learners are doing while they are working in cooperative groups. For example, whether learners are introducing different facts and ideas, whether they show willingness to work with peers, whether learners criticize each other's thoughts and contributions, whether they remain on the task using the

target language and whether there exist some students in the groups who did not participate in the learned task.

4.1.1.3. Section three: general observation of the teacher.

Section three contains six items. It attempts to explore the different roles of the teacher in the classroom such as whether he assigns roles, suggests topics, motivates learners to collaborate for the achievement of a common goal, monitors learners’ behaviors, gives instructions to direct the learners’ work, moves around the groups and gives feedback.

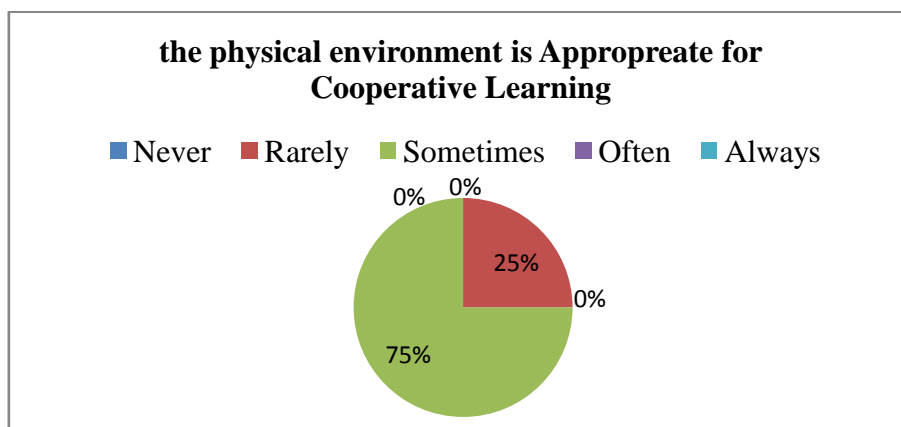
4.1.2. The analysis of the observation.

Section one: general observation of the classroom

Item one: The physical setting is clean and large enough so that it allows for the success of the cooperative task

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	01	03	00	0
Percentage	00%	25%	75%	00%	00%

Table 03: The appropriateness of the physical environment for cooperative learning



Graph 01: The appropriateness of the physical environment for cooperative learning

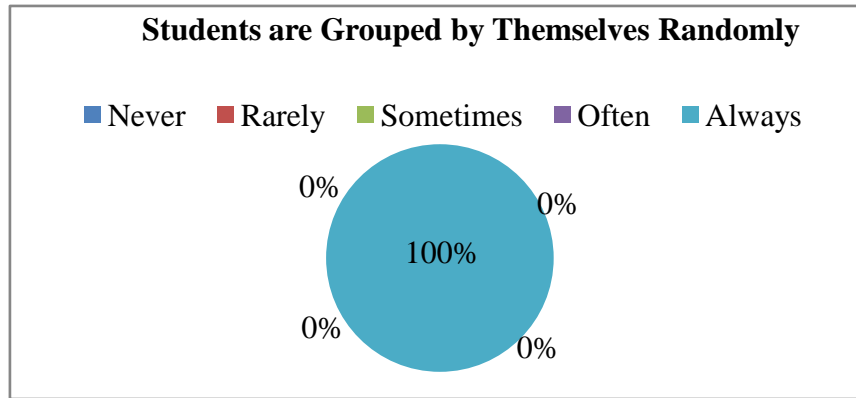
It seems from the obtained results that the physical settings in which cooperative learning was implemented by the teacher were sometimes appropriate for cooperative learning and it is rarely that they were not appropriate.

The majority of sessions we have attended took place in large enough and organized rooms in which the problem faced is moving tables and chairs by students to get closer to each other and form circles around tables or to leave space in the center of the room for students who will present their role plays to the entire class. Such management took five to ten minutes depending on how much students collaborate to rearrange the classroom. however, The first room in which we attend the first two sessions was full of tables and chairs which were not managed; tables were put too close to each other, half of the number of both tables and chairs in the room was needless. These features of the room impede the teacher to move around groups to monitor their work and require management from students such as moving tables and chairs which results in noise and time wasting.

Items Two & Three: Learners grouped by themselves randomly

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	00	00	04
Percentage	00%	00%	00%	00%	100%

Table 04: The grouping of students randomly by themselves



Graph 02: The grouping of students randomly by themselves

The table above reveals that in all the observed sessions in which cooperative learning technique was implemented by teachers the groups were always formed by students in a random way. In other words, in one group you may find mixed ability, mixed gender students and in another group you may find members of the same age, the same gender and the same ability. Moving chairs to get closer to each other when students were forming groups did not take long time because all teammates were seating in close tables.

Besides that, we noticed that teachers had no touch in the grouping of students may be because they think that by giving the chance to students to choose with whom they want to work helps in creating harmony within the groups, reduces shyness, increases learners' motivation to collaborate and reduces groups' conflicts.

However, it has been proved by Kagan (2009) that teams that include high, middle, and low ability students, gender diversity and a linguistic and ethnic diversity are better in developing positive peer tutoring and aid in managing the classroom and ease the acquisition and introduction of new information and improve student's ethnic and social relations.

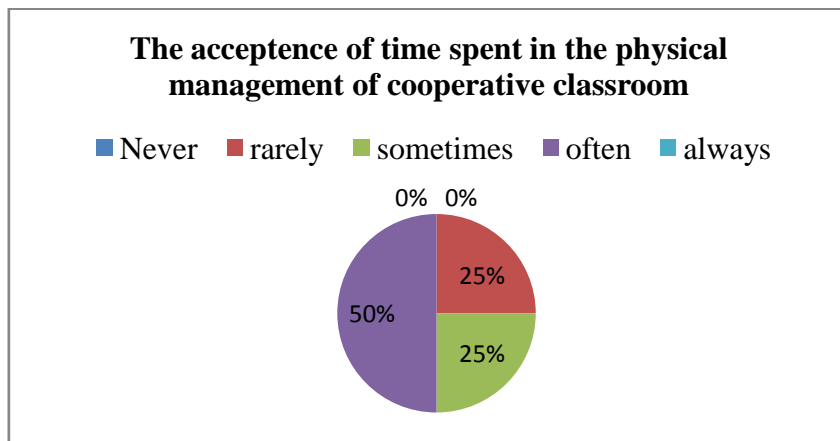
A further important thing we noticed during our observation of the first classroom in which cooperative learning was implemented in all the three sessions is that in each

cooperative lesson the groups' members have been partly changed. This may be because the first cooperative lesson was the last session before spring holidays so that a number of students were absent because they leaved to their homes so that they were replaced by other students.

Item Three: The time spent in physical management of the classroom is acceptable

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	01	01	02	00
Percentage	00%	25%	25%	50%	00%

Table 05: The acceptability of time Spent in the physical management of the classroom



Graph 03: The acceptability of the time spent in classroom management

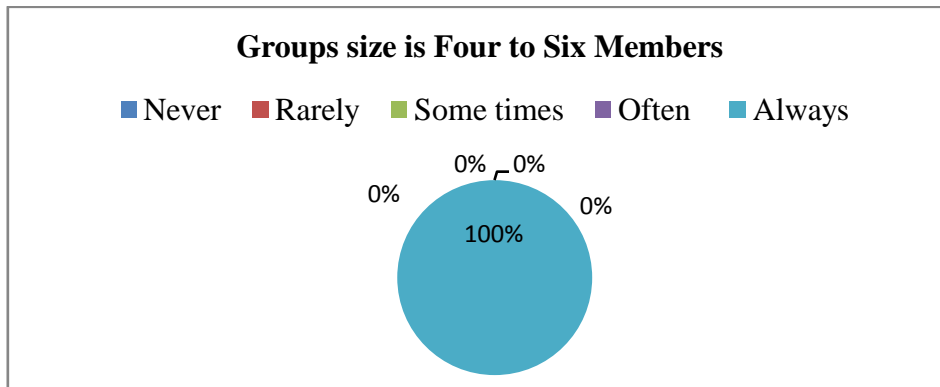
The obtained results reveal that in all the attended sessions the teachers and students often spend an acceptable time in rearranging the classroom to become conducive for cooperative structures. For example, in the majority of sessions the time spend did not pass five minutes because learners showed great responsibility to manage their time to finish their work on time, especially in the sessions in which the groups presented their role plays which

they have discussed in small groups; however, in some sessions the time reached around ten minutes, because the physical settings required more management than the other rooms.

Item Four: Groups consist of no more than six students

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	00	00	04
Percentage	00%	00%	00%	00%	100%

Table 06: The groups' size



Graph 04: The groups' size

The observation of the two classrooms during cooperative learning lessons reveal that teachers used groups of four to five students and rarely the number of teammates reaches six members and this appears clearly in table six (06). The results reveal also that the number of group members is always delimited by the teacher. For example, during the first sessions we attended within these two classrooms teachers asked students to be in groups of four or five students and discuss a topic they suggest to learners to discuss first and present later on.

Teachers perhaps prefer groups of four to five students because they are aware that groups of this size are large enough to increase interaction between group members and small enough to allow each group member to participate and provide the teacher the opportunity to monitor their behaviors.

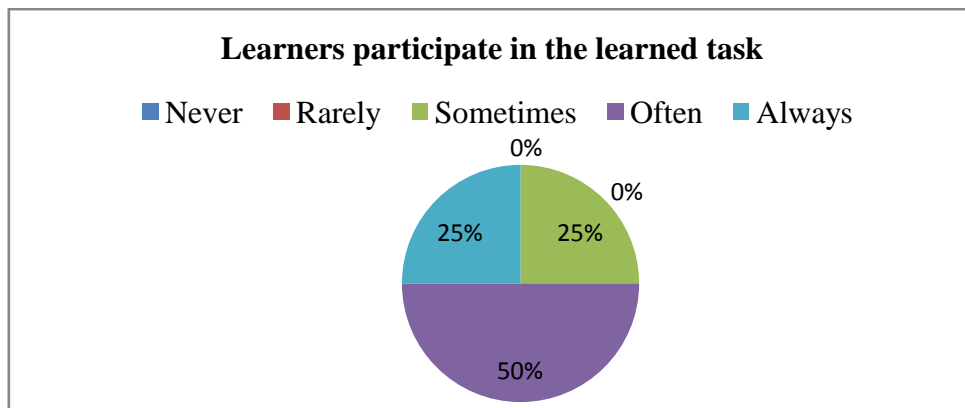
The effectiveness of groups of four to five students has been proved by various researchers in the literature like Gillies (2003, p. 41) who agrees that the optimal size for successful cooperative groups seem to be three to four members, because in small groups of this size students can be involved more in the task and have enough opportunity to talk and discuss and can be observed by the teacher easily.

Section two: general observation of the groups

Item One: Learners introduce facts, give opinions, provide suggestions and give information

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	01	02	01
Percentage	00%	00%	25%	50%	25%

Table 07: Learners participation in the learned task



Graph 05: Learners' participation in the learned task

The results presented in the table above reveal that after students finished forming groups, in each group all teammates often participated in the task at least once. For example, in one of the observed classrooms, each group of students was given a small card on which a topic is written down to be discussed by group members to be developed by them in a form of a role play; when we moved around the groups we noticed that in each group students put their heads together and each of them introduced at least one idea for the success of the group

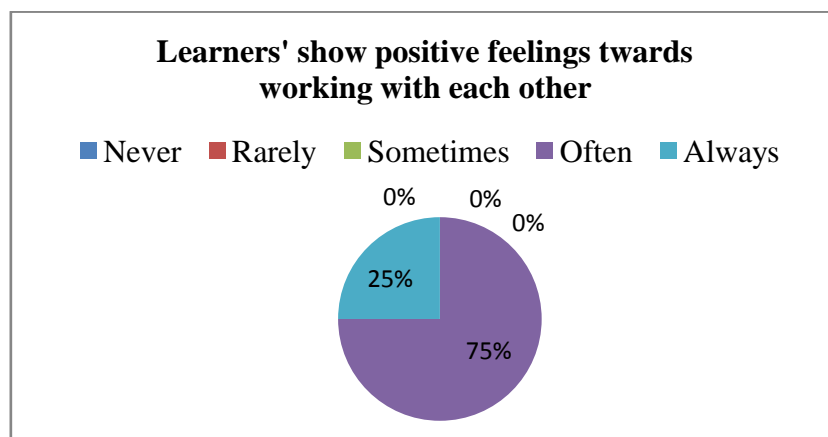
work, but the participation among learners was relative and not equal; the group leader and students with high language proficiency were those who participated more.

These results proved that learners in all the groups develop high individual and group accountability which is one of the features of cooperative learning which distinguishes it from group work. In other words, all learners showed responsibility in their work to finish the work on time and succeed in the completion of the task by introducing their thoughts.

Item Two: Learners show readiness and motivation to work with peers and feel comfortable within the group

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	00	03	01
Percentage	00%	00%	00%	75%	25%

Table 08: Learners’ positive attitudes towards working with peers



Graph 06: Learners’ positive attitudes towards working with peers

The above table confirms that in all the observed sessions in which cooperative learning was implemented, learners showed readiness and motivation to work with peers in small groups.

When we were observing learners while they work in groups we noticed that learners were relaxed and motivated to work and participate to achieve their common goal and this reflects their positive attitudes towards working in small groups; moreover, in a session we attended with one of the two observed classrooms, the teacher asked students to suggest something to do because they were not really ready to present their role plays and some of their teammates were absent, some students suggested a group game and all the classroom agreed with this idea and showed positive attitudes towards working within small groups.

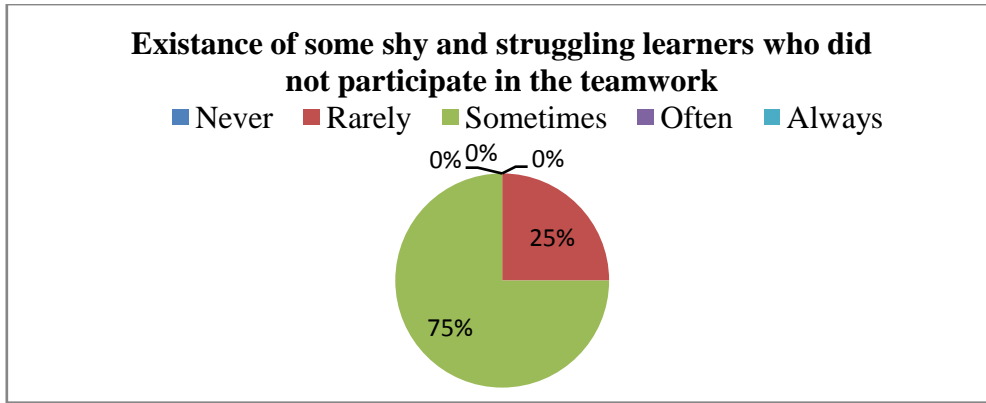
Learners often show willingness to work with peers because they feel that their mates are present to provide them the necessary help and motivation and to correct their mistakes before they present their work in front of the entire class.

Furthermore, during the oral presentation of the groups I noticed that learners were working in harmony and relaxed manner and each of them was taking his turn at ease as it is supposed from him; however, some groups were better than others and even individuals within the same group were fluent speakers than their group mates, this may be related to individual differences.

Item Three: Existence of some shy and stragglng students who did not cooperate with the other group members

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	01	03	00	00
Frequency	00%	25%	75%	00%	00%

Table 09: Existence of shy and stragglng students in the groups



Graph 07: Existence of shy and struggling students in the groups

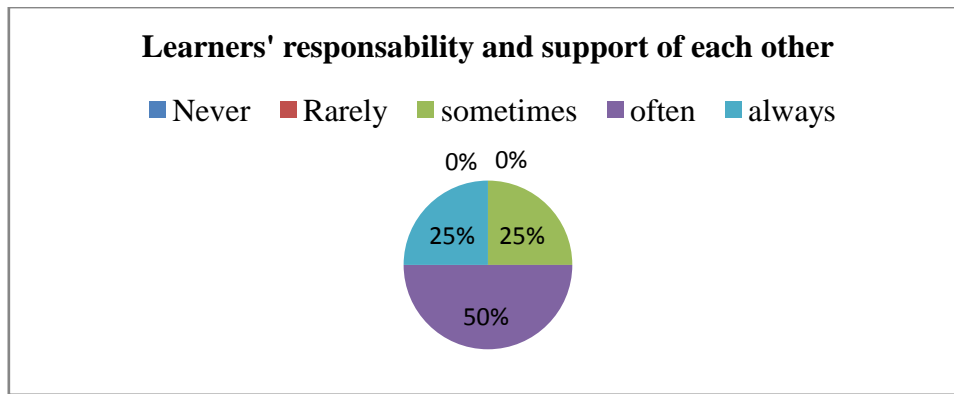
The results in the table above reveal that almost all the groups during the attended sessions sometimes contain some students who did not contribute in the task by suggesting solutions or giving opinions. Students were silent may be because they were shy, not interested in the topic, or don't go along with some members in the same group. However, it is rarely to observe some groups that were well managed groups in which members take turns regularly.

The problem of having some members in certain groups do not participate can be reduced if the teacher monitors the groups to get learners feel that they are observed by the teacher so that they will make more efforts to participate or if teammates support those shy students and encourage them to speak.

Item Four: Learners show feelings of responsibility towards other group members' work and support silent students to participate in the speaking task

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	1	02	1
Percentage	00%	00%	25%	50%	25%

Table 10: Learners' responsibility and support of each other



Graph 08: Learners' responsibility and support of each other

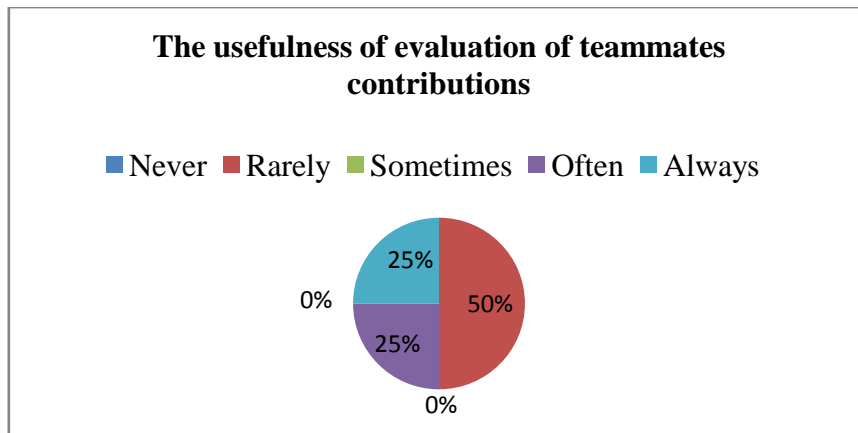
The table above shows that learners in almost all the groups were often responsible for their own and each other's work; they all have specific assigned roles to do and each of them was making his efforts to do that role by introducing new thoughts or supporting silent students to contribute in the teamwork.

The observation reveals also that in each classroom some groups include some members who were not interested on working on the task but otherwise they were talking about life topics in Arabic and often gave the responsibility to the group leader to ask students who did not contribute to collaborate and assign students to remain on the task and if they did not collaborate he find himself doing the task alone and responsible to complete it on time.

Item five: Learners evaluate the usefulness of each other's contributions and do not criticize the opinions of each other

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	02	00	01	01
Percentage	00%	50%	00%	25%	25%

Table 11: Learners positive evaluation of each other's contributions



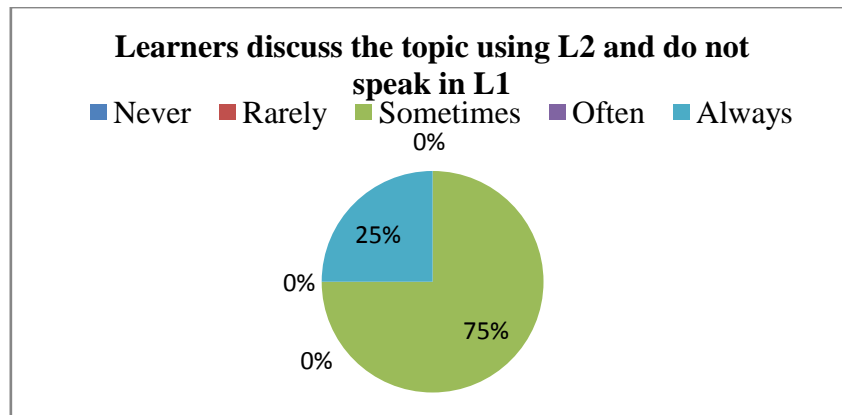
Graph 09: Learners positive evaluation of each other’s contributions

The table above reveals that learners in different groups rarely contribute to correct each others’ mistakes and provide direct feedback for their mates and if it exists, it was often positive. In other words, learners did not criticize the ideas of their mates or laugh if a mistake is done by one of them to cause conflicts between the group mates this may be because all members often do the same kind of mistakes and none of them is proficient than others as well as they work as a team in which they are not just individuals but as one unit.

Item Six: Learners discuss the topic at hand in L2 and do not speak in L1

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	03	00	01
Percentage	00%	00%	75%	00%	25%

Table 12: students’ discussion of the topic and use of the target language



Graph 10: students' discussion of the topic and use of the target language

The observation reveal that learners during all the observed cooperative lessons make use of the mother tongue (Arabic) concerning dividing the work between group mates, giving directions and asking for help, especially during the first session we attended in the first classroom. This use of Arabic language may be explained by certain reasons. First of all, learners feel more comfortable when they speak in Arabic as well as they succeed often in explaining their ideas to their mates when they speak in Arabic more than they do in English. Another possible reason is that some learners do not have the appropriate vocabulary that allows them to speak in English; in addition, to their fear of making pronunciation mistakes so that their group mates make fun of them.

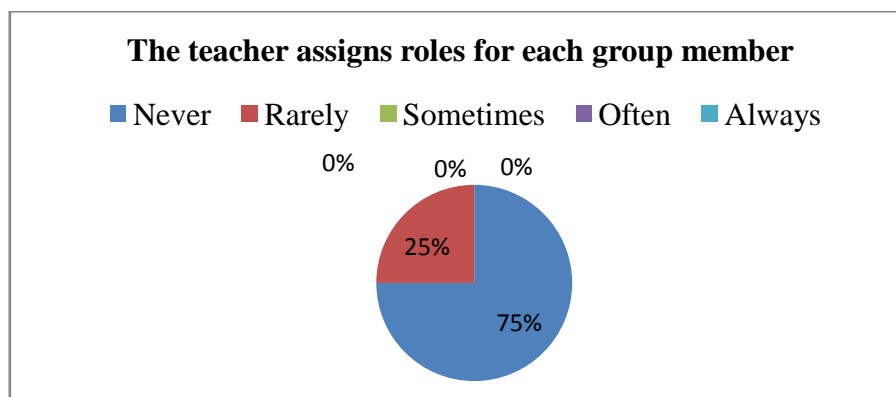
The extent of using Arabic by learners was reduced in the two following sessions because learners get familiar with working with each other and they had a long time to search and learn the vocabulary of their topics during the holidays as well as they started their oral presentations in front of the entire class.

Section Three: General Observation of the Teacher

Item One: Teacher assigns roles and gives directions for each group member

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	03	01	00	00	00
Percentage	75%	25%	00%	00%	00%

Table 13: The teacher assignments of roles for group members

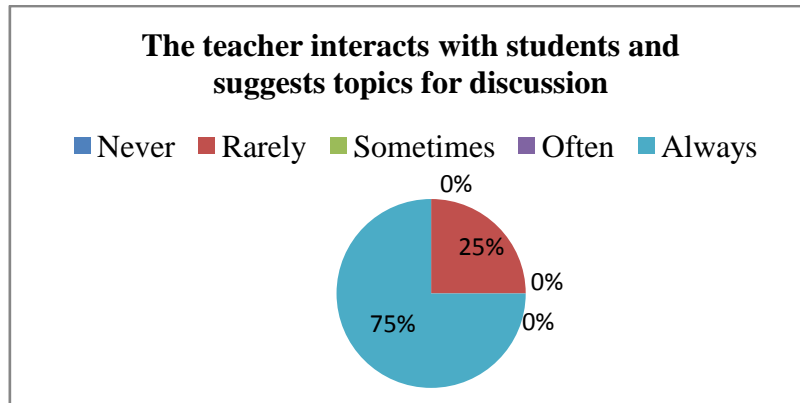


Graph 11: The teacher assignments of roles for group members

The table above shows that teachers do not contribute in the groups' work to assign roles for individual members; however, they had only asked learners to be in random groups and explained the learned task for them and left the choice of group leader and division of the work between group mates to learners. This may be because teachers think that this reduces group problems such as learners are not satisfied by their roles in the group, they are not interested in working with those mates or they complain about their group leader's behaviors.

Item 02: Teacher interacts with learners and suggests topics for discussion

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	01	00	00	03
Percentage	00%	25%	00%	00%	75%

Table 14: Teacher -learner interaction in cooperative classroom**Graph 12: Teacher-learner interaction in cooperative classroom**

The Table above reveals that teacher-learner interaction was present in all the observed sessions. For example, in the first session the teacher gave students a number of papers in each paper a given topic is written down, and then she distributed these papers among groups. After the groups read their own topics, the teacher started asking students about their attitudes about these topics and students started also asking their teacher about difficult terms and expressions and requested the needed clarification. The teacher then explained for groups the main objective of the lesson which is developing learners' knowledge about how to express complaint and apology in English and set down some guidelines to direct the groups' work. The teacher suggested the topics because she knows that students have enough time to collaborate and discuss the topics together inside and outside the classroom to develop the appropriate knowledge and skills to do the role play in coming sessions.

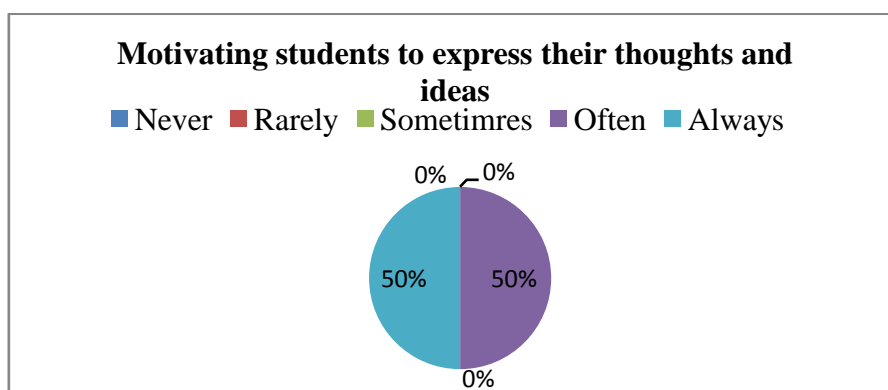
However, in the second session the choice of the topic was given to students because the groups have only one hour and a quarter to discuss and it is better if students choose topics on which they are interested and have enough knowledge about to be able to finish the work on time. Different students started suggesting topics until the whole class agree with one of the suggested topics and explained how to do the task and the teacher agreed with students and they started the work.

In the last session in which students in both the first and the second classrooms presented the discussed topics orally teacher-learner interaction was higher than it was in the two previous sessions because after each group presented his role play each individual in the group was asked by the teacher certain questions and criticisms and they responded accordingly.

Item Three: Teacher motivates students to express their ideas by some motivating expressions

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	00	02	02
Percentage	00%	00%	00%	50%	50%

Table 15: Motivating students to express their ideas by the teacher



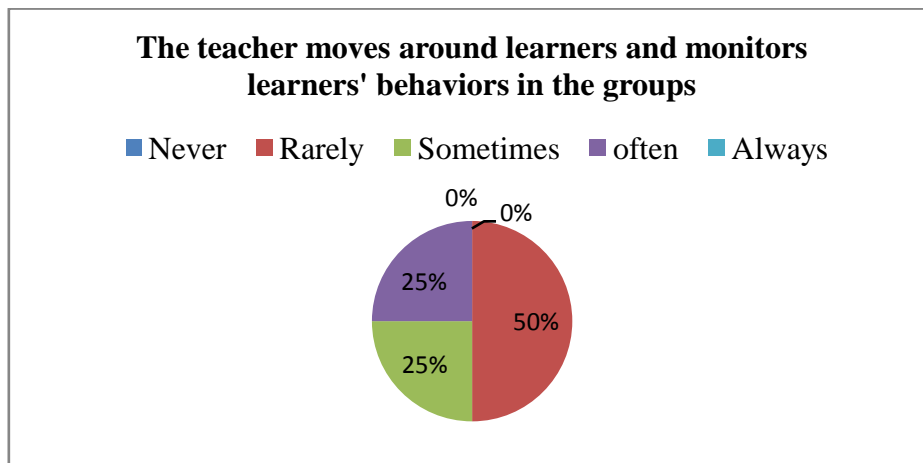
Graph 13: Motivating students to express their ideas by the teacher

The results in the table above reveal that teachers during the four observed sessions in which cooperative learning technique was implemented often motivate their students to speak using different encouraging words and expressions. Also, they often show their learners that they are observing how they are progressing on the task and that increases their efforts to contribute and participate to be praised by the teacher. Encouraging and motivating students by the teacher often increases their efforts to participate more to develop their language proficiency and their learning grades.

Items Four and Five: The teacher moves around groups and monitors learners' behaviors in the groups

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	02	01	01	00
Percentage	00%	50%	25%	25%	00%

Table 16: Moving around the groups and monitoring students' behaviors



Graph 14: Moving around the groups and monitoring students' behaviors

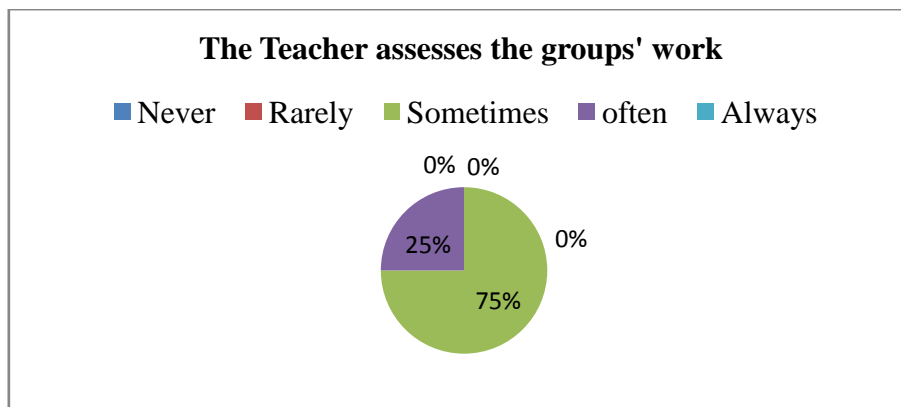
The observation of the teachers during four continuing sessions revealed that teachers rarely contribute in the work of the groups to provide assistance or to give some guidelines as well as rarely moves around groups to monitor learners' behaviors. This may be because

cooperative structures often support noise in the classroom and the organization of the classroom doesn't allow the teacher to move around to see how well groups were functioning because tables were next to each other.

Item Six: The teacher assesses the groups' work

Scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sessions	00	00	03	1	0
Percentage	00%	00%	75%	25%	00%

Table 17: Assessing the groups' work



Graph 15: Assessing the groups' work

The observation reveal that teachers sometimes assess their learners work and progress through observing them either from near or far places. Also, the observation showed that groups after each oral presentation were assessed by the teacher either as individual members or as a whole group as well as provided by feedback which is important for students since it motivates those who were praised and those who were criticized to do more in next times.

Even though classroom observation provided us with the opportunity to observe groups while they were working and real life data, our focus on moving around the groups was superior on observing the teacher because it was difficult for us to observe all the groups and the teacher during the same time. Moreover, because the number of the attended sessions

may not be sufficient, it may not be helpful in generalizing the results obtained. Consequently, we have held two interviews: teachers' interview and group interview.

4.2. Description and Analysis of Teachers' Interview

To explore how teachers implement cooperative learning technique, discover the problems they often face in implementing such technique and get insights into their attitudes towards using cooperative learning technique in teaching speaking skill, an interview was held with five teachers.

4.2.1. Design and description of the interview.

This interview is held with five (05) Oral expression teachers in the Division of English at Biskra University. It aims to investigate whether cooperative learning technique is implemented by EFL teachers to explore how they implement such effective technique in teaching oral skill. Teachers' interview aims also to discover some cooperative learning implementation difficulties and attempts to suggest relevant solutions for successful implementation. Our interviewees were asked thirteen (13) questions. First of all, they were asked about their currently held degrees, their period of teaching EFL at University in general and Oral Expression module in particular. Also, they were asked about the techniques they often use in teaching oral expression module. Moreover, teachers were asked if they use cooperative learning technique in their oral expression courses and how often they do so. In addition, we have asked the interviewees certain questions concerning the implementation of cooperative learning technique such as; do they spend long time in preparing cooperative lessons?, do they ask their students to work in small groups or in pairs?, how do their students form groups?, which group size they find optimal?, and how much time they spend in the rearrangement of the classroom?. Furthermore, teachers were asked about their student's motivation towards working in small groups, the problems they face when they assign their

learners to work in groups and their reactions to control needless behaviors and their roles in the success of cooperative lessons. Finally, teachers were asked about how they assess the groups' work.

4.2.2. Analysis of teachers' interview.

Question one: Which degree do you hold?

Three of our interviewees responded that they have held currently the Magister degree; however, two of them said that they are new graduated students and their currently held degree is the License degree.

Question Two: For how long have been teaching EFL at University level? And for how long have you been teaching Oral Expression module?

The interviewees range between experienced and highly experienced teachers. Two of our interviewees responded that they have been teaching EFL at University for ten (10) to (12) twelve years and have been teaching Oral expression for four to six years, two have been teaching EFL for four (04) to five (05) years and three to five years teaching oral expression module and only one of the interviewees responded that he has been teaching English at University for two years; one year as oral expression teacher. Our teachers' different experiences and held degrees will benefit us a lot to get insights into the main ways teachers use in implementing cooperative learning technique in teaching speaking skill in order to be able to fill in gaps that often cause problems for both learners and teachers when cooperative learning technique is implemented.

Question Three: What are the learning techniques that you often use in teaching oral expression?

The majority of the interviewees responded that they vary their teaching techniques in their oral expression courses and all of them stated that the main techniques they usually use are role plays, free discussions, collaborative learning technique, listening comprehension and intensive reading techniques. For example one of the interviewees said that he often uses different techniques according to the learned material; for example, uses role plays to teach learners the communicative aspects of the target language and develop learners' speaking skill and uses audio tapes to teach listening comprehension. Varying the teaching techniques by EFL teachers increases the possibility of developing learners' skills in general and speaking skill in particular because having different students in the classroom means that each student has his own learning style and interest. In other words, one student may learn more in cooperation and another student learns more in individualistic situations.

Question four: Do you use cooperative learning technique? If yes how often?

All the interviewees responded that they do use sometimes cooperative learning technique and they all argued that the use of such technique often depends on the topic tackled and the learning task and its purposes. For example, one of the interviewees stated that: "Yes I do use this technique at least three times a month. In fact it depends on the task and its purpose." This confirms that EFL teachers are aware of the positive effects cooperative learning may have on learners' oral performance.

Question Five: When you decide to use cooperative learning, does preparation of cooperative lesson take long time?

The majority of our interviewees agrees that the preparation of cooperative lesson does not need long time, and pointed out that what it needs really from the teacher is to be intelligent in choosing the matters which cooperative learning technique is useful for more than other techniques, because the success of any lesson depends on the harmony between the learned matter and the used technique.

Question Six: When you apply cooperative learning, do you ask your students to work in small groups or in pairs?

The majority of our interviewees confirmed that they usually use both techniques, but the main cooperative learning structure they rely on more is small groups. For example, one of the teachers said that the choice of using small groups or pairs is often determined by the learning task, but in most times we use group work. The fact that teachers prefer to ask students to work in small groups in favor of pairs may be related to the increased interaction created when learners work in small groups of four to five members maximum and facilitates for them monitoring the groups unlike in pair the opportunity to observe all the pairs is less and it cannot be possible because of time limitation.

Question Seven: Do you group your students or you give them the chance to group themselves? And how many students you prefer to be in each group?

All the teachers we have interviewed confirmed that they always let their learners choose their teammates in order to create harmony in the groups and to facilitate interaction between peers. Our interviewees pointed out also that they often ask students to be in groups of three to five or four to five students. One of the interviewees said: "I let my students

choose themselves in order to work at their ease and each group contains four to five students so that they can exchange information and learn from each others.”

Question Eight: How much time do you often spend in rearranging your classroom to be appropriate for cooperative learning?

All interviewees declared that the time they spend in rearranging the classroom and getting students form groups is not too long and in most times range from five to ten minutes depending on the physical setting because students are adults and know how to form groups easily and are responsible enough to manage their time. One of the interviewees confirmed that and said: “Students arrange their groups and they often spend five minutes because they are mature enough.” Teachers confirmed also that spending five or ten minutes in rearranging the classroom to become conducive for cooperative learning is acceptable because they often spend around the same time in classroom management when they use whole class instruction.

Question Nine: Do you feel that your students show more willingness to interact to speak in cooperative situations or they produce more in competitive situations where each individual works to achieve better than others?

All the teachers we have interviewed agree that the majority of their students show readiness and motivation to speak when they work in small groups rather than they do in competitive situations. This may be because in competitive situations learners feel more anxious, especially when they listen to fluent students’ performances so that they underestimate their speaking ability as a result they keep silent. Moreover, one of the interviewees declared that cooperative groups can be also competitive groups and students often like competitive groups in which they show more willingness to collaborate to succeed. She said: “Students are more willing to work in groups; in addition, competition can also be in groups; students of one group have to challenge to give as much ideas as they can and see

which ones are better to be used.” By creating competition in cooperative classroom structures, students who are interested in competitive learning and struggle when they work in groups come to participate as well as shy or reluctant students become motivated learners because they will enjoy learning more and will have a desire to get their groups to win.

10. Do you face certain problems when you use cooperative learning technique? If yes, identify some of them.

Almost all of the teachers we interviewed agree that they suffer from a variety of problems when they implement cooperative learning. Among these problems they identified noise, existence of some students who are not accustomed with this technique, and problems of bossy leaders in some groups who often use their own ideas and neglect their teammate’s ideas. One of our interviewees with whom we attended a variety of sessions in which cooperative learning technique was implemented said that: “ yes, I do; in each group , there is a leader who gives orders, controls the work, imposes his/her own ideas and doesn’t let others participate. In other cases, one student does all the work even if he/she doesn’t want. Because others don’t want to work, he gets the burden”. Such serious problems impede poor learners to benefit from such technique and otherwise support the idea that cooperative learning is effective only for good learners and to handle these problems teachers may move around the groups and motivate silent students to share responsibilities among them or try to vary the classroom structures.

11. What do you often do to control your learners’ disruptive behaviors when they work in groups such as speaking in L1, speaking out of subject and problems of leader ship which often cause noise?

None of our interviewees disagree that in each group of learners there is often needless behaviors like using the native language, speaking out of subject, and group

conflicts. Teachers affirm that such behaviors can be reduced by moving around students to ensure that they are working on the task and use the target language or otherwise, assign them to do so by providing pieces of advice, providing extra explanation to guide them to focus more, ask uninterested learners to share roles with their group mates, or give them some remarks from time to time so that they understand that there is something wrong.

12. When you assign your students to work in groups, what are your roles as a teacher in the success of the learning task?

Almost all of the interviewees asserted that they have various roles when their learners work in small groups and these roles vary according to the task given to the groups. The teachers stated that in some situations they act as guides who give directions and explanations, other times as facilitators who provide help, assistance and necessary explanation, other times, act as motivators who encourage students to do more or monitors who move around groups to check how well they are functioning and sometimes they even act as participants in the task. One of our interviewees explained the different roles she often does when her students work in small groups and said: “I work as guide, helping if there is any problem, a motivator, encouraging them to be more involved in doing their task, and a participant by being a part in a role play for example.”

By being involved in the instruction even if they use learner-centered interaction like cooperative structure, teachers can handle different problematic situations which impede the success of cooperation among learners such as noise and bossy behaviors of the groups' leaders so that they ensure that each student in all the groups is participating in his own learning.

13. Assessing the groups' work, do you rely on individual assessment or cooperative assessment?

Our interviewees declare that they use both types of assessment. However, one of the interviewees confirmed that she relies more on individual assessment in order to be fair with students through observing how each individual within different groups is participating and progressing, she explained: "I use both in fact. I can check each student work, participation when observing them from near or far, but I rely more on individual assessment and check their progress." Assessment is effective ways to get learners increase their efforts to achieve. in addition to individual and group assessments, teachers can rely on cooperative assessment in which students assess themselves like peer assessment in which groups' members assess their teammates.

4.3. Analysis of Groups Interview

In order to get insights into learners' attitudes towards working in small groups and get valid data about how well they progress in working cooperatively, we have held an interview with four random cooperative groups of second year LMD students.

4.3.1. Description of group interview.

We got in contact with four random groups in the classroom during the last cooperative session we have attended in the first observed second year LMD classroom. Group interview aims to get insights into learners' feelings and attitudes towards working in small groups and how working in small groups develops their speaking fluency. The interview comprises eleven questions which were asked specifically to help both learners and teachers overcome the difficulties that impede learner's progress when they work in small groups. The first question interviewees were asked is related to the period of working in groups, the second question concerns the choice of group mates, another question was about

the group mates' levels whether they are similar or different. Groups were asked also about their feelings when they work with peers, whether they divide the work among them and participate on the learned task, whether they often accomplish the task on time, whether they encourage their teammates to cooperate and express their thoughts and whether they remain on the task using the target language (English). Furthermore, the groups were asked about their behaviors when they work in small groups, what they like most about working in groups and what they dislike. Most importantly, students were asked if working within small groups develops their speaking skill and the reasons beyond that.

4.3.2. Analysis of group interview.

Question1. How often do you work in groups?

The majority of interviewees in all the groups confirmed that they work in groups sometimes three times or two times a month and sometimes two times in two weeks depending on the task and almost none of them stated that they do not work in groups. They also declared that the teacher is the one who decides when students need to work in small groups or in pairs.

Question2. Why did you choose each other to be in the same groups?

All the interviewees in all the groups responded that they choose each other to work together for many different reasons; for example, they feel comfortable when they work together, they get familiar with each other and this allows them to speak, because they trust each other and that creates harmony in groups. In one of the interviewed groups, a student confirmed that he usually works within this group because they trust each other because all of them often show responsibility when they work together he explained: "we often work together because we have similar characters and I prefer to work with this group mates because they share responsibility with me and that makes us feel that we are in harmony."

Question Three: Are your levels in English similar or different?

Results obtained from groups' interview reveal that learners in almost all the groups have the same degrees of achievements. The majority of the groups' members asserted that they have the same or proximate language proficiency. However, only members of one of the interviewed groups affirmed that their levels differ from one to another from average, good to very good. Even though students work in harmony when they choose members of the same levels, it is better if the teacher helps students to form heterogeneous groups in order to get weak students benefit from average and good students.

Question Four: How do you feel when you work with a partner or within a group?

The majority of Learners responses' asserted that they feel comfortable, relaxed, self confident, excited and ready to participate and speak when they work with mates although there exist some learners in different groups stated that their feelings towards working with peers change whenever their group mates change; for example, when their group mates share the responsibility with them they find working in small groups motivating and if they do not participate and repose on them they prefer to work alone. One member within one of the groups stated: "Our feelings when we work in groups depends on the group with whom we are working with."

Question Five: Do you divide the work among you and have you all participated in the task?

Students in all the groups responded that they divided the work between them by assigning roles to each group member. Students declared that roles were divided between them to ensure that they all participate on the task and the first thing teammates did is electing a group leader who is responsible to divide the work among them. This was also

observed during the observed sessions which we attended. This reveals that dividing the work between learners has effective role in the success of any form of group work and learners understand that they are all responsible to work together and not let one member do all the work alone.

Question Six: Do you often accomplish the task on time?

When students were asked this question, there were contradictions in learners' responses. In some groups, members confirmed that they always finish the task on time because they collaborate and share ideas and remain on the task; in contrast, other groups' members claimed that its rarely that they finish the task on time, because often some teammates do not cooperate and speak out of subject and if they do often we spend a lot of time debating.

Question Seven: Do you encourage each other to participate and make contributions?

Almost all of the interviewed groups confirmed that whenever they work in small groups they encourage each other to speak and contribute because often group works need cooperation among group mates in order to succeed. Also, the majority of them stated that they do encourage each other because they feel that they are responsible to do so in order to finish the work on time. However, some of the groups' members claimed that they did not encourage each other because there are some teammates who were dominating the work and some members who just need others to do the work for them.

Question Eight: Do you discuss the topic quietly so that you do not disturb the other groups?

The majority of the groups declare that they often do not discuss the topic at hand quietly when they work in groups because members in each group often need to be heard by

their teammates and this leads them to raise their voices. Furthermore, they stated that they often debate when they work in groups so that they speak at the same time and this causes noise. Only few students respond that they speak quietly because often they work in harmony and share responsibilities. If students use loud voices when they discuss in small groups they often disturb the other groups next to them and to handle this problem the teacher may ask students to speak quietly because they make noise or students themselves try to remind each other to use quite voices.

Question Nine: Do you all participate and listen to each others' contributions?

The majority of the interviewees confirm that they always contribute, share ideas between them and listen to each others' opinions and ideas because this increases their possibility to finish the task on time and increases their relationships. Only few students argued that they do not listen to each other because there is often a member in the group with whom they often disagree with. Having all the groups' members participate in the discussion ensures that learner-learner interaction is increased and students will benefit from each other and effective debates is one of the positive aspects of cooperative groups because it ensures that groups are functioning; however, having silent members in groups lowers interaction in teams as well as silent members would not develop their speaking proficiency and to overcome this problem students in groups have to help and support silent students to speak.

Question Ten: What do you like and dislike more about working with peers?

Almost all of our interviewees declared that they like working with peers because of various advantages and benefits of working within a group such as helping and encouraging each other, providing feedback and correcting mistakes and advising each others. Learners asserted also that they like working with peers because it provides them with opportunities to have someone beyond them to listen to, share ideas and discuss different points of view with

him. However, they confirmed that they dislike some features of working with peers like having teammates who did not cooperate with the group, having students uninterested in the task in the group and having bossy leaders who did not listen to their teammates' ideas. One of the interviewees stated that working with peers who did not cooperate with him makes him do the task alone and consequently dislikes group work.

Question Eleven: Does Working with peers develop your speaking fluency and improve your oral performance? If yes or no, are there particular reasons?

On one hand, the majority of the interviewed groups declared that working in small groups develop their speaking fluency and improve their oral performance because they learn from each other new vocabulary, acquire pronunciations of new words, learn from teammates' mistakes. Also they argued that working with peers reduces their anxiety and makes them speak at their ease. On other hand, few learners declare that working with peers did not help them in developing their speaking skill because always their teammates have the same speaking levels or because they often do not use the target language. These problems are common in groups and can be reduced if learners collaborate to remain on the task and if they notice a member in a group ask him to use the target language. Also these problems can be handled easily if teacher moves around the groups and monitors learners' behaviors.

Conclusion

The present study aims to explore whether cooperative learning technique is used by EFL teachers at Biskra University as well as whether the implementation of this technique enhances learners' speaking skill. The results obtained from classroom observation, teachers' interview and group interview reveal that teachers are aware of the advantages of using cooperative learning and they often integrate it in teaching oral skill. The results reveal also that learners' speaking skill has been developed by learning cooperatively in small groups. In

other words, the results confirmed the study's hypothesis that if EFL teachers implement cooperative learning to get their learners effectively interact within a cooperative atmosphere, they may develop their own teaching and enhance their learners' speaking skill. Furthermore, the results reveal that although the implementation of cooperative learning technique is proved as effective technique, it still comprises certain negative aspects such as some learners are not interested in working in groups, group conflicts which result in noise and students extensive use of the native language and can be reduced by the collaboration of the teacher and learners.

Chapter Five

Some Pedagogical Suggestions and Recommendations

Introduction

The results obtained from classroom observation, teachers' interview and students' interview confirmed that using cooperative learning approach helps in developing learners' speaking skill; however, the results revealed also that the process of implementing cooperative learning in the classroom comprises certain problems like groups' conflicts, having some groups' do not focus on the task or speak in the native language (Arabic). This chapter attempts to suggest some pedagogical implications that could help teachers' to overcome their problems in implementing cooperative learning technique and could help students to benefit from each other when they work within small groups depending on the present research findings as well as findings of previous research.

5.1. Suggestions and Recommendations for Teachers

Depending on teachers' claims about some problems they often face when they ask their students to work together in small groups, providing some pedagogical suggestions that could help teachers overcome their cooperative learning' implementation difficulties is vital and necessary.

We recommend that teachers can get their learners' interested in learning in small groups by acknowledging the different benefits and objectives of the cooperation lesson at the beginning of any cooperative lesson because stating objectives helps students understand what they are supposed to do and reduces needless disagreements between group members.

In addition, we suggest that teachers can make cooperation attractive and reduce students' needless behaviors which create challenges for the success of cooperative learning like some students are not interested in working in groups, some students are bossy and

others are shy and reluctant by providing tasks that can be finished much more quickly and accurately in groups, selecting tasks that go with a special interest or ability of the reluctant students and making sure that all students like them.

We recommend also that it would be better if teachers vary the ways of grouping students and not leave the choice of teammates always to students in order to develop learners' social skills and get weak learners benefit from average and good students in their teams because when students choose their own teammates they often choose their friends whom they often work with and this lowers their social skills.

I further recommend that teachers can monitor groups' progress by moving around groups because by doing so students understand that the teacher observes their participation and actions and consequently they increase their efforts to use the target language and remain on the topic. Moreover, the teacher can encourage reluctant students to work by using some supporting expressions like "I like your contributions and they can be beneficial for other groups" or "I think that you are collaborating in an intelligent way go on."

Furthermore, I propose that teachers may collaborate to discuss the problems they often face when they implement cooperative learning and try to cooperate to find solutions for these difficulties and benefit from each other's experiences.

5.2. Suggestions and Recommendations for Students

Depending on learners' complains in the interview, it could be helpful to suggest some recommendations to help students overcome the problems they face in learning in cooperative groups.

I suggest that learners may create cohesive groups by trying to build a team identity by giving their groups' names because doing so increases students understanding that they

are a team in which each student should help and support his group which he belongs to in order to celebrate the success at the end of the activity.

I recommend also that students may develop their interpersonal relationships in the classroom if they change their teammates from one time to another because that helps in increasing the amount of interaction in the classroom, and it would be helpful if they create groups with different abilities and gender students.

Furthermore, I recommend that group mates can support each other to speak and collaborate in the task by using some motivating expressions like “We really appreciate your contributions” and “We really need your help”. Moreover, students can reduce noise in the classroom if they try to remind each other to speak quietly and remain on the task in order to finish on time.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have included some pedagogical recommendations and implications that could be helpful for teachers who implement cooperative learning strategy based on the results obtained from the present study and the findings of previous studies in the literature as well. We have also provided some pedagogical suggestions for students to help them cooperate effectively. These recommendations were made because the data obtained confirmed that teachers face certain problems when they implement cooperative learning technique such as groups’ conflicts, having some groups’ do not focus on the task or speak in the native language (Arabic) which can be reduced by the collaboration of teachers and learners.

General Conclusion

The current study aims to investigate whether EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning technique and how they implement such technique in teaching speaking skill to develop learners' speaking skill.

The study attempts to confirm or reject the hypothesis that says if EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning to get their learners effectively interact within a cooperative atmosphere, they may develop their own teaching and enhance their learners' speaking skill; otherwise, if teachers are not aware of the advantages of cooperative learning they would not use it as well as lose its benefits. The investigation was conducted at the division of English and intended to two main questions. The first question is related to the extent of implementing cooperative learning by teachers in the classroom and the extent cooperative learning is effective in developing students' oral proficiency. The second question is related to the possible ways to facilitate the implementation of cooperative learning in teaching the oral skills and the different problems they encounter when using cooperative speaking tasks and activities.

The present research case study was second year LMD students at the division of English at Biskra University. Two second year LMD classrooms were observed over six sessions by means of classroom observation checklist and four random cooperative groups of students were interviewed at the end of the last observed session by means of structured group interview; moreover, to obtain valid data, five EFL teachers were also interviewed by means of structured interview.

In this research, we relayed on classroom observation and held two structured interviews; one with random cooperative groups and one with five oral expression teachers as the research's main data gathering tools.

The data obtained from classroom observation, group interview and teachers' interview confirmed that EFL teachers use cooperative learning and integrate it in teaching speaking skill. The findings asserted also that the groups' size and heterogeneity in grouping learners, time management and teachers' gaudiness are positive factors for successful implementation of cooperative learning. The research findings confirmed also that learners' oral skill was developed by working in small structured groups and their amount of interaction was increased and this confirms the research's hypothesis.

The current study signifies also that the implementation of cooperative learning comprises certain negative aspects like creating noise in the classroom, group's conflicts and having uninterested learners within some groups. These negative aspects could impede the success of cooperative lesson. Therefore, we suggested some pedagogical recommendations for both teachers and students aiming at helping teachers overcome certain problems they often face when they assign their students to work in groups and help students benefit from working in cooperative classroom structure. The suggestions were based on the findings of the present study and the findings of previous research as well.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Observation Checklist for Cooperative Learning

Observer:	Classroom:
Course:	Date & Time:
Session:	Academic year:

N: Never R: Rarely S: Sometimes O: Often A: Always

	N	R	S	O	A
1. <u>General Observation of Groups' Management</u>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The physical setting is clean and large enough so that it allows for the success of the cooperative task. 2. Learners are grouped by themselves. 3. Learners are grouped randomly. 4. Time spent in physical management of the classroom is acceptable. 5. Groups consist of no more than six students 					
2. <u>General Observation of the Groups</u>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learners introduce facts, give opinions, provide suggestions, and give information. 2. Learners show readiness and motivation to work with peers and feel comfortable within the group. 3. Existence of some shy and struggling learners who keep their ideas for themselves and do not cooperate with the other group members. 4. Learners show feelings of responsibility towards other group members' work as well as support silent students to participate in the speaking task at hand. 5. Learners evaluate the usefulness of each others' contributions and do not criticize the opinions of each other. 6. Learners discuss the topic at hand in the target language without speaking in the native language 					

3. General Observation of The Teacher

1. Teacher assigns roles and gives directions for each group member.
2. Teacher interacts with learners and suggests topics for discussion.
3. Teacher motivates students to express their ideas and thoughts by some supporting expressions like “good” and encourages silent students to share their ideas and interact with mates in the group.
4. Teacher monitors individual learners’ unpleasant behaviors and checks if their attention is focused on the cooperative speaking task.
5. Teacher gives instructions and guidelines to monitor and direct the work of the groups.
6. Teacher moves around the groups to see how well the groups are processing.
7. Teacher assesses groups’ work.

Observers’ Comments:

Appendix Two

Teacher's Interview

Introduction

Dear Teacher,

This interview is designed mainly to investigate whether EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning in their oral expression course as well as to get insights into the ways they adopt in implementing cooperative learning approach in teaching speaking skill. Please answer the following questions and make comments when necessary. Your comments and responses are necessary to handle certain problems that correlate negatively to the implementation of cooperative learning technique. We will be grateful for your help and collaboration.

The Questions

1. Which degree you have currently held?

.....

2. For how long have you been teaching English as a foreign language at University level? And for how long you have been teaching oral expression module?

.....

3. What are the learning techniques that you often use in teaching oral expression?

.....

4. Do you use cooperative learning technique? If yes, how often?

.....

5. When you decide to use cooperative learning, does preparation of cooperative lessons take long time?

.....

6. When you apply cooperative learning do you ask your students to work in small groups or in pairs?

.....

7. Do you group your students or you give them the chance to group themselves? And how many students you prefer to be in each group?

.....

8. How much time you often spend in rearranging your classroom to be appropriate for cooperative learning?

.....

9. Do you feel that your students show more willingness to interact and speak in cooperative situations or they produce more in competitive situations where each individual works to achieve better than others?

.....

10. Do you face certain problems when you use cooperative learning technique? If yes, identify some of them.

.....

.....

11. What do you often do to control your learners' disruptive behaviors when they work in groups such as speaking in L1, speaking out of subject and problems of leader ship which often cause noise?.....

.....

12. When you assign your learners to work in groups, what are your roles as teacher in the success of the learning task?

.....

13. In assessing the groups' work, do you relay on individual assessment or cooperative assessment?

.....

Finally, thank you for your time, help and collaboration.

Appendix Three
Students' group interview

Introduction

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to answer some questions in this interview that intends to investigate whether EFL teachers at Biskra University implement cooperative learning technique in teaching oral skill as well as how they implement cooperative learning during oral expression course. Your responses are very necessary for the validity of the present study. Please answer the following questions. Thank you for your collaboration.

Group number:

The Questions

1. How often do you work in groups?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

2. Why did you choose each other to be in the same group?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

3. Are your levels at speaking in English similar or different? (Yes/ No/ Approximately)

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

4. How do you feel when you work with a partner or within a group?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

5. Do you divided the work among you and have you all participated in the task?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

6. Do you often accomplish the task on time?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

7. Do you encourage each other to participate and make contributions?

S₁:

S₂:

S₃:

S₄:

S₅:

8. Do you discuss the topic quietly so that you do not disturb the other groups?

S₁:
S₂:
S₃:
S₄:
S₅:

9. Do you all contribute and listen to each others' contributions?

S₁:
S₂:
S₃:
S₄:
S₅:

10. What do you like and dislike more about working with peers?

S₁:
S₂:
S₃:
S₄:
S₅:

11. Does working with peers develop your speaking fluency and improve your oral performance? If yes or no, are there particular reasons?

S₁:
S₂:
S₃:
S₄:
S₅:

Thank you for your time and collaboration.

Abbreviations:

TEF: Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في كيفية تطبيق تقنية التعلم التعاوني من طرف أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في الأقسام الدراسية، واستكشاف مدى فعالية تنفيذ هذه التقنية في تطوير المهارات الشفوية للمتعلمين. قد أجريت هذه الدراسة مع قسمين من أقسام السنة الثانية ل م د. لجمع المعلومات، استخدمنا الملاحظة و المقابلة كأدوات رئيسية لجمع البيانات في هذا البحث، والتي ساعدتنا في الحصول على آراء حول كيفية تطبيق التعلم التعاوني من قبل أساتذة التعبير الشفوي وعلى آراء المتعلمين تجاه التعلم ضمن مجموعات صغيرة وقد كشفت نتائج البحث أن التعلم في مجموعات صغيرة يطور المهارات الشفوية لدى الطلبة وأكدت أن تنفيذ تقنية التعلم التعاوني يضم بعض الجوانب السلبية مثل إنشاء الفوضى في الأقسام الدراسية و خلق مجادلات بين مجموعات المتعلمين. استنادا إلى النتائج المتحصل عليها، اقترحنا أن التعاون بين المعلم والمتعلم يمكن أن يقلل من المشاكل التي تعيق نجاح تطبيق التعلم التعاوني في الأقسام الدراسية.