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**Enhancing Students' Oral Performance through Cooperative  
Group Work**

The case of 3rd year LMD Students of English  
At the University of Biskra

**A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master 2 Degree in Sciences of Language.**

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# Appendices

**Appendix 01: students' questionnaire**

University of Mohamed Khider  
Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Language  
Department of Foreign Languages

Students' questionnaire

Dear student,

You are kindly invited to answer the present questionnaire that aims to figure out the main use of cooperative group work in developing oral proficiency in English. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research.

Thank you for help,

Please, tick ( X ) the choice that corresponds to your answer:

1- Do you find speaking in English?

- a- very easy
- b- easy
- c- difficult
- d- very difficult

2- Which skill that you want to develop most?

- a- speaking
- b- listening
- c- writing
- d- reading

Because.....  
.....

3- Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

- a- high
- b- above average
- c- average
- d- below average
- e- low

4- Did the oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?

- a- very much
- b- some what
- c- not very much
- d- not at all

5- Do you feel afraid when you talk in classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

6- If your answer is “yes”, is it because:

a- Fear of making grammatical mistakes?

b- Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?

c- Having deficient vocabulary?

d- Fear of teacher’s negative feed back?

e- Lack of self-confidence?

7- Which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?

a- Group work

b- Role-play

c- Problem solving

d- Discussion

e- Or others, please specify

.....  
.....

8- Have you ever heard of cooperative language learning?

a- Yes

b- No

9- In the oral expression course, do you prefer?

a- Individual work

b- Pair work

c- Group work

Please, justify your answer:

.....  
.....

...

10- Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

a- Yes

b- No

11- Do you feel that group work helps you to: (you may choose more than one answer)

a- Ask and respond to more questions?

b- Learn to listen to different opinions?

c- Evaluate your peers’ performance?

d- Develop social skills for getting along with others ?

12- Do you think that cooperative group work helps you improve your speaking skills?

a- Yes

b- No

Because.....  
.....

13- Does your teacher raise your awareness towards the skills of cooperative group work?

a- Yes

b- No

## Appendix 02: teachers' questionnaire

University of Mohamed Khider  
Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Language  
Department of Foreign Languages

Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work that aims study how group work presented via cooperative language learning can be used in improving third-year student's oral proficiency at the department of English, University of biskra.

I would greatly appreciate if you could take the time to share your experience by answering the questions below.

Your answers are very important to help us for the completion of this work.

Thank you,

Please, tick ( × ) the choice that best represents your answer.

1- Degree (s) held:

- a- BA (License)
- b- MA (Magister/ Master)
- c- Ph.D (Doctorate)

2- How long have been teaching English?

.....  
.....

3- Do you teach oral skills?

- a- Yes
- a- No

4- Which of the following describes your students' level of oral proficiency in English?

- a- High
- b- Above average
- c- Average
- d- Below average
- e- Low

5- Can you say that your students are motivated to speak in English?

a- Yes

b- No

6- If your answer is “yes”, please what are your strategies to motivate them?

.....  
.....  
.....

7- What are the most common difficulties in teaching the speaking skill?

a- pronunciation

b- poor vocabulary

c- sentence construction

d- please, specify if others

.....  
.....

8- Which of the following techniques do you most use?

a- Group work

b- Role- play

c- Problem solving

d- Discussion

9- Do you evaluate your students’ oral production?

a- Yes

b- No

10- Have you ever used cooperative language learning?

a- Yes

b- No

11- Do you raise your students’ awareness towards the value of cooperative work?

a- Yes

b- No

12- Do your students face problems working in groups?

a- Yes

b- No

13- Do you think that cooperative group work enhances students’ oral proficiency?

a- Yes

b- No

c- Please, justify

.....  
.....

## Résumé

La présente étude vise à explorer les effets du travail de groupe coopératif sur l'amélioration des compétences orales des apprenants et des compétences communicatives. Ce travail vise principalement à rendre l'utilisation d'une paire ou un petit groupe de maximiser la production orale des apprenants. Il tente également de faire ressortir l'importance d'établir une ambiance détendue et amicale comme une tentative d'amener les apprenants à utiliser la langue. L'hypothèse de base adoptée dans la présente étude établit que l'apprentissage efficace des langues étrangères prend ses racines dans les actions et l'utilisation des langues. Nous pensons que la promotion de cette vision de l'enseignement en anglais contribuera à fournir aux apprenants l'utilisation étendue de langue et de la classe de production orale. La méthode de ce travail de recherche est très descriptive. Autrement dit, elle vise à décrire deux variables: le travail de groupe coopératif comme variable indépendante et son rôle dans l'amélioration des compétences orales des apprenants comme variable dépendante. Les données ont été recueillies par des questionnaires administrés à la fin de troisième année apprenants LMD (pour un échantillon de trente-trois étudiants) et aux enseignants (pour un échantillon de dix enseignants) qui ont enseigné à l'expression orale au département d'anglais, Université de Mohamed Khider, Biskra. Les résultats ont montré que le travail de groupe coopératif est la bonne technique à utiliser la langue des apprenants plus en plus et la participation orale en classe qui se répercute sur la compétence des apprenants par voie orale. Sur la base de ces résultats, l'hypothèse a été confirmée dans que les élèves doivent être fournis avec une technique adéquate pour développer les compétences nécessaires parler et de créer des situations appropriées où ils peuvent utiliser la langue sans hésitation. Cette étude a certainement ses rôles, mais ses conclusions ont révélé des

implications intéressantes. Ainsi, les recherches futures devraient se faire expérimentalement afin de tester l'applicabilité des résultats à une plus grande population de sujets.



# *Dedication*

*I have the honor to dedicate this work to:*

*My parents who are always by my side, especially my sweet angel my “mother” who is the beloved person in my life, who did a lot for me. My great father who helped me a lot and for my success*

*To my two brothers “Mouatez” and “Aymen” whom I love so much and I wish to them the happiness and success in their life.*

*To my close cousins “Hanane, Maroua, Abir, Marwa, Asma, Roufeida”*

*To my grand mother and all my family*

*To all my friends, especially my sweet heart “Sarah Zaiter” and “Sabrina Aouassi”, my best friend ever for years “bolbol”*

*To all my sisters and friends in low*

*“Kribaa Sarah”*

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# Abstract

The present study aims to explore the effects of cooperative group work on improving learners' oral proficiency and communicative skills. The present work is mainly concerned with making use of pair or small group to improve learners' oral production. It also attempts to shed some light on the importance of establishing a relaxed and friendly atmosphere as an attempt to get learners to use the language. The basic hypothesis adopted in this study sets out that effective foreign language learning takes its roots in actions and language use. We believe that promoting this vision to teaching English will contribute to provide learners with extensive language use and classroom oral production. The method of this research work is descriptive. That is, it aims to describe two variables: cooperative group work as the independent variable and its role in improving learners' oral proficiency as the dependent variable. The data were gathered through self-completion questionnaires administered to third-year LMD students and to teachers who have taught Oral Expression at the Department of English, Biskra University. The results have shown that cooperative group work is the appropriate technique for increasing learners' language use and classroom oral participation which in turn affects learners' oral performance. On the basis of these results, the hypothesis was confirmed in that students need to be provided with an adequate technique to develop the speaking skill and to create suitable situations where they can use the language without hesitation. This study has certainly its limitations, but its findings revealed interesting implications. Thus, future research should be done experimentally to test out the applicability of the findings to a larger population of subjects.

## List of tables

### First series of tables:

Table1: Slavin (1995); Johnson & Johnson (1998) based on the research of Dr. Tzu-Pu Wang (2009: 114) .....25

Table2: Comparison between cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching. (Zhang, 2010: 82) .....26

### Second series of tables:

Table 01: Students' attitude towards speaking.....37

Table 02: Learning the skills..... 38

Table 03: Students' evaluation about their level in English.....40

Table 04: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses..... 41

Table 05: Students' confidence to talk the language.....42

Table 06: Students' inability to speak..... 43

Table 07: Kind of Most Enjoyed Techniques that Used in Teaching.....44

Table 08: Students' Knowledge of Cooperative Language Learning.....45

Table 09: Students' Preference.....46

Table 10: Difficulties that Student face Working in Groups..... 48

Table 11: Understanding the Specific Skills of Successful Group Work..... 49

Table 12: Students' Evaluation of Cooperative Group Work..... 50

Table 13: Raising Students' Awareness towards the Skills of Cooperative Work.....51

Table 14: Teachers' Academic Degree.....52

Table 15: Teachers' Experience in Teaching.....53

Table 16: Teachers' Concern of Oral Expression Module.....54

Table 17: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Level of Oral Performance.....55

Table 18: Teachers' Perception of Students' Motivation in Speaking .....	56
Table 19: Most Common Difficulties in Teaching Speaking.....	57
Table 20: Techniques that Teachers Use the Most.....	58
Table 21: Teachers' Evaluation.....	59
Table 22: Teachers' Use of Cooperative Language Learning.....	60
Table 23: Teachers' Perception of the Value of Cooperative Work.....	61
Table 24: Teachers' Awareness of Students' Problems that Face in Cooperating.....	61
Table 25: Teacher's Evaluation of the Value of Cooperative learning.....	62

## **List of figures:**

Graph 01: Students' attitude towards speaking.....	38
Graph 02: Learning the skills.....	39
Graph 03: Students' evaluation about their level in English.....	40
Graph 04: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses.....	41
Graph 05: Students' confidence to talk the language.....	42
Graph 06: Students' inability to speak.....	43
Graph 07: Kind of Most Enjoyed Techniques that Used in Teaching.....	45
Graph 08: Students' Knowledge of Cooperative Language Learning.....	46
Graph 09: Students' Preference.....	47
Graph 10: Difficulties that Student face Working in Groups.....	48
Graph 11: Understanding the Specific Skills of Successful Group Work.....	49
Graph 12: Students' Evaluation of Cooperative Group Work.....	50
Graph 13: Raising Students' Awareness towards the Skills of Cooperative Work....	51
Graph 14: Teachers' Academic Degree.....	52
Graph 15: Teachers' Experience in Teaching.....	53
Graph 16: Teachers' Concern of Oral Expression Module.....	54
Graph 17: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Level of Oral Performance.....	55
Graph 18: Teachers' Perception of Students' Motivation in Speaking.....	56
Graph 19: Most Common Difficulties in Teaching Speaking.....	57
Graph 20: Techniques that Teachers Use the Most.....	58
Graph 21: Teachers' Evaluation.....	59
Graph 22: Teachers' Use of Cooperative Language Learning .....	60
Graph 23: Teachers' Perception of the Value of Cooperative Work.....	61
Graph 24: Teachers' Awareness of Students' Problems that Face in Cooperating.....	62

## Table of contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgement .....	II
Abstract .....	III
Lists of tables.....	IV
Lists of figures.....	VI
<b>General Introduction</b>	
1- Statement of the problem.....	1
2- Significance of the study.....	2
3- The research question and hypothesis .....	2
4- Objectives of the study.....	3
5- Organization of the Work.....	4
6- Limitation of the study.....	4
7- Literature review.....	5
<b>Chapter One: the Speaking Skills</b>	
Introduction .....	7
1- What is speaking? .....	7
1.1- Oral Communication .....	8.
1.2- The interaction skills .....	9
2- The relationship between speaking and the other skills .....	9
2.1- speaking versus writing .....	10
2.2- speaking versus listening comprehension .....	11
3- Speaking and its relationship with communicative competence.....	11
4- The Psychological Problems of the Students .....	14
5- Teaching Techniques for Oral Proficiency .....	14
5.1- Group Work .....	15

5.1.1- Advantages of Group Work.....	16
5.1.2- Disadvantages of Group Work.....	16
5.2- Role- play .....	16
5.2.1- Advantages of using role play.....	17
5.2.2-Stages of role play .....	18
5.3- Problem solving .....	18
Conclusion .....	19
 <b>Chapter two: cooperative language learning</b>	
Introduction .....	21
1-The Historical Development of Cooperative Language Learning: An overview.....	21
2- An Introduction to Cooperative Language Learning.....	22
3- Some Definitions to Cooperative Learning .....	23
4- Characteristics of cooperative language learning .....	26
5- Cooperative language learning methods .....	27
5.1 Students-Teams-Achievement Division (STAD) .....	27
5.2 Jigsaw .....	28
5.3 Group investigation .....	29
6- Goals of cooperative language learning .....	29
7- Benefits of cooperative language learning .....	30
8- The role of the teacher .....	32
Conclusion .....	33
 <b>Chapter three: field of investigation</b>	
Introduction .....	36
1- The Students' questionnaire .....	36
2- The teachers' questionnaire .....	37
3- Data Collection and Analysis of Students' Questionnaire .....	37
4- Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire .....	52



5- Recommendations .....	64
5-1- Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire .....	64
5-2- Discussion of Students' Questionnaire .....	65
Conclusion .....	66
<b>General conclusion .....</b>	<b>68</b>
References list .....	70
Appendices	
Appendix 1: students' questionnaire	
Appendix 2: teachers' questionnaire	

## **General Introduction**

Language education may take place as a general school subject or in a specialized language school. The teaching of foreign language by its very nature is an interactive process, which involves active participation of both the teacher and learner. There are many methods of teaching languages, some have fallen into relative obscurity and others are widely used. Teaching oral proficiency through reading and cooperative learning are methods of teaching foreign languages that help students or learners to learn a foreign language in classroom setting.

With a growing need for more effective, successful and active ways of foreign language learning; cooperative learning is an innovative non profit institute established to advance the understanding and practice of cooperation. Innovation in language field has been stimulated by a special concern for learning through active and collaborative setting. How students interact with each others is a neglected aspect of instruction; this is the best dominants view that show how languages are best learned. Students are interacting with each other in groups; completing a task or learning content, where their attention is not directed toward the language itself.

### **1- Statement of the Problem**

Communication is the main objective of learning a foreign language. Yet, we observed that EFL learners have difficulties in communicating in English. There are many difficulties that the learners face that imply him not to master the speaking skill.

Teaching English in Algeria requires teachers to take into account that English can be taught and practiced in the classroom. Since the classroom is the primary situation in which learners have the opportunity to use the foreign language. To overcome the obstacles that learners face in their oral proficiency teachers have to provide learners with a method which increases the opportunities of language use.

Organizing the class into group is one of the surest ways to provide learners with extensive oral production and communication.

## **2- Significance of the Study**

This study is meant to contribute to the improvement of learners' oral production in English .It aims to investigate how cooperative group work presented through cooperative learning can be used in improving learners' speaking skills. It intends to:

\*Increase opportunities for student talking time.

\*Make use of pair and small groups to maximize learner's oral production.

\* Produce better (more effective, more detailed, more comprehensive) presentations and reports.

This is achieved through the combined talents of group members, contributing knowledge and ideas.

## **3- The Research Questions and Hypothesis**

If we consider the main concern of teaching a foreign language, it is to develop the use of the target language communicatively and the aims and objectives that will be stated after. Then, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of cooperative group work in oral skill.

The questions that may be asked within this context would be as follows:

What is cooperative learning?

What are its effects on teaching and learning?

What is the impact of cooperative group work on learners' achievement?

Does the true understanding of the principles and practices of cooperative language learning or small groups lead eventually to develop learners' oral proficiency?

### **-The Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that:

If the teachers use cooperative learning and design appropriate techniques, learners will enhance their oral proficiency and use English fluently and accurately to negotiate and express their intended meaning.

### **4- Objectives of the Study**

Cooperative group work is an approach of teaching and learning that is a vehicle of many benefits that are supposed to be taught. Group work is becoming an increasingly popular method of assessment across university courses. Closely linked to the role of cooperative learning in enhancing achievement is its perception held by educators. This has an impact on how cooperative group work is implemented in schools and colleges of education.

The study aims to investigate the role of cooperative group for some reasons:

\*It promotes teamwork, a skill which is highly valued by employers.

\*It is an opportunity to develop communication skills and enable participants to develop interpersonal skills.

In this study, we will try to investigate the effectiveness of this method in developing learners' oral proficiency.

## **5- Organization of the Work**

The present study is divided into three main chapters. The first and second chapters are the theoretical part. The third chapter is the field work or practical part.

In the first chapter we are going to talk about an overview of the nature of speaking and oral communication. Also we will deal with the relationship between speaking and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the reasons of students' inability to speak in English. Finally, we will deal with the rules of the teachers in the process of teaching speaking.

The second chapter deals with the historical background of the cooperative language learning, definition of cooperative language learning, followed by different methods about learning in small groups.

The last chapter deals with data analysis of both teachers and learners questionnaires.

### **- Methodology and Research Tools**

We will use the questionnaire technique to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. We will direct two main questionnaires: one for the teachers who have been teaching for a long time.

Students' questionnaire would be submitted to third year LMD students at the Department of English at the University of Biskra. It aims at investigating the students' evaluation of their skill and the awareness of cooperation in group work.

## **6- Limitations of the Study**

This study has certainly its limitations. It is limited to students of 3<sup>rd</sup> year LMD at the University of Biskra. Thus, the present research would be experimental in order to test out the applicability of the findings to a larger population of subjects. We have decided not to involve all

the levels because of time factor. It is also obvious that we cannot incorporate all the views of English teachers concerning the use of group work in oral expression module because of the limited scope of the present work.

### **7- Literature Review**

Constantopoulos (1994:251) and Northern Province department of Education (2001:18) define cooperative learning as a concept based on group work in which the learners are responsible for others' learning as well as their learning. A major feature of cooperative learning is that it involves learner-to- learner interaction in the process of fostering successful learning.

In his book, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (1986) Jack C. Richards survey the major approaches and methods in language teaching. In addition, the book seeks the assumptions behind these methods to help teachers explore their own beliefs and practices in language teaching, especially through cooperative language learning.

# **Chapter One**

## **The Speaking Skills**

## **Introduction**

One of the major responsibilities of any teacher who teaches English language learners (ELLs) is to enable them to communicate effectively through oral language. It is important for students to learn to speak English well and for teachers to know how to teach speaking well. Teachers must address these two questions: why it is important for students to learn to speak English, and why it is for teachers to learn to teach speaking? Why is it so difficult to teach learning oral proficiency?

Many teachers have to teach in the classroom what is best learned outside it. They have to teach mainly grammar and vocabulary because these areas are tested in examinations. So why speaking is a neglected language skill in many classrooms. Students can pass their examinations through knowledge of that grammar and vocabulary but they find it more difficult to speak English outside the classroom. However, teachers' concern is to develop learner's ability to use the target language for communicative purposes.

In this chapter, we are going to give an idea about speaking and what is its definition, the nature of oral communication, the speaking sub-skills, the relationship between speaking and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the reasons of students' inability to speak in English and some techniques for teaching speaking. At the end we will talk about the role of the teacher.

### **1-What is speaking?**

The aim behind learning a foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language. We speak for many reasons: to express our feelings and thoughts, to exchange information with other people, when we want something. Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill, it is said to be an active or productive skill. Bygate.M (1987: p.57):



*“Speaking is, however, a skill which deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages. Our learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions. It is the skill by which they are most frequently judged, and through which they may make or lose friends. It is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement and of business. It is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning.”*

It is absolutely true that speaking is supposed to be a productive skill. Traditionally, the productive skill is taken as an active skill. M,V.Rodriques (2000:32) stated that: “in productive skill, the speaker or the writer produces the utterances in order to communicate his attention which forms the message. In speaking, the speaker produces the spoken utterances.” If we think of speaking in terms of ‘use’, “it involves putting a message together, communicating the message, and interacting with other people.” (Lindsay and Knight, 2006: 57)

### **1.1- Oral Communication**

Oral skills; speaking and listening; are at the very foundation of literacy. Classroom talk helps students to learn, to reflect on what they are learning, and to communicate their knowledge and understanding. The speaking skill involves a communicative ability of producing and receiving information. Byrne (1986:8) states that: “Oral communication is two-way process between speaker and listener and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding).”

The nature of oral communication is the ability to communicate expressing themselves through words while others may express themselves in writing or through body language. Oral

communication involves the negotiation of meaning between two persons; it is always related to the context in which it occurs. When we speak, the person should be able to comprehend what is being said. Both speaker and listener have a role to play, because speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. For Kramsch (1983:367) speaking involves: “Anticipating the listener’s response and possible misunderstanding, clarifying one’s own and the other’s intentions, and arriving at the closest possible match between intended, perceived and anticipated meaning”.

### **1.2- The Interaction Skills**

According to Bygate (1987,p. 22) both speakers and listeners, besides being good at processing spoken words should be ‘good communicators’, which means “good at saying what they want to say in a way which the listener finds understandable.” This means being able to process interaction skills.

The interaction between speaker and listener is a complex process. The speaker has to encode the message while the listener has to decode or to interpret the message. The speaker’s message usually contains more information that is redundant. However, speech is often characterized by incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical utterances and repetitions. Speaking and listening are the most common skills used inside the classroom. Thus, speaking in classroom entails interacting with the teacher and peers, depending on how classroom activities are organized. It follows those teachers who do more oral interaction activities in the classroom will have more opportunities to develop students’ oral fluency.

### **2. The Relationship between Speaking and the Other Skills**

The purpose of language learning is to improve the speakers’ four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teacher focuses attention on one skill at a time. Thus in one lesson special attention is paid to speaking, another to writing and so on, with the base of large vocabulary and good grammar. The four skills are actively related and can not be separated.

According to Donn Byrne (1976) listening and reading are called ‘receptive skills’, and the other two skills are called ‘productive skills’. According to Tae Ho Chun (2006, p.86):

*“Speaking is often connected with listening. For example, the two-way communication makes up for the defect in communicative ability in the traditional learning. Two-way means the relationship of the communication between the teacher and the students at school. This relationship is connected with the communicative activities between two people. It can create a fresh environment for speaking language. The two-way communication can lengthen the dialogue limitlessly. This is its advantage. At the same time, if the speakers want to give the correct response, he has to think hard, the sentence is not easily forgotten which is created by themselves through thinking”...*

## **2.1- Speaking versus Writing**

The purpose of all language is to communicate – that is, to move thoughts or information from one person to another person. Brown, G and Yule, G (1983: 20) begin their discussion on the nature of speaking by distinguishing between spoken and written language. They point out that for most of its history; language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language. This language has been characterized by well- formed sentences which are integrated into highly structured paragraphs. Spoken language, in the other hand, consists of short utterances in a range of pronunciation.

Harmer, J (2005) finds it is important to define some differences between speaking and writing for better understanding of their nature. When we write, all the information have to be on the page. The reader can not stop asking questions to make things clearer. However, in speaking, we have the advantage of interacting with co- participants whether we know them or not. The speaker may modify his speech according to his co-participant reaction.

Lindsay and Knight (2006) state that we speak differently depending to whom we are speaking and for what reason; similarly with the written language the type of writing depends on whom it is written for and why.

## **2.2- Speaking versus Listening Comprehension**

We speak and listen in our lives everyday. There is a relationship between speaking and listening. If someone speaks you have a choice to listen. Not everyone will choose to listen, but some will. You can listen to anything you hear if you choose. Both are important in life. Neither can exist without the other. If you want someone to listen to you, you have to speak. If you want someone to speak, you have to be willing to listen. Foreign language teachers need to understand that a significant amount of time of the class should be devoted to developing oral productive skills. However, listening or understanding can not be left to take care of itself. Byrne, D (1976:8) states that: “the listening skill is an important skill as the speaking skill, because both the speaker and listener have a positive function to perform”. Thus, what makes up the whole communication is the interrelationship between speaker and listener during face-to-face communication. Listening is essentially an active process. Nunan, D (1989: 23) states that: “we do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our back ground knowledge.”

In the communicative movement, both the listening and the speaking skills receive a special attention. To sum up, the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill because in face to face communication the two skills have to be developed in tandem.

## **3. Speaking and its Relationship to Communicative Competence**

Beginning with Noam Chomsky (1967) and his distinction between competence - ‘a Speaker’s intuitive knowledge of the rules of his native language’, and performance - ‘what he actually produces by applying these rules’, the theory of communicative competence has gone through a serious development so far.

Brown (1994: 227-229) refers to several theories of communicative competence as they developed through periods of time, of which the most notable ones include the studies by Hymes (1967, 1972), Savignon (1983), Cummins (1979, 1980), or Canale and Swain (1980). Nevertheless, as Brown suggests, the newest views are probably best captured by Lyle F. Bachman (1990) in his schematization of what Bachman calls 'language competence'.

Bachman's *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing* (1994). As a useful source of information for helping with the interpretation of Bachman's framework of communicative competence, I made use of Douglas H. Brown's *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (1994).

According to Bachman (1994, 84), communicative competence, 'communicative language ability' (CLA), comprises two basic features – firstly, knowledge, competence in the language, and, secondly, the capacity for implementing or using the competence. Bachman proposes three components that in his view 'communicative language ability' framework which includes language competence, strategic competence, and psychological mechanisms. While language competence is a set of specific knowledge components that are utilized in communication via language, strategic competence is the term that Bachman uses to characterize the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use. The third component, psycho- physiological mechanisms present the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon. (Bachman 1994, 84)

Bachman divides language competence into two categories: organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence, further splitting into grammatical and textual competence, presents those abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional content, and ordering them to form texts. (Bachman 1994, 87)

Grammatical competence includes the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology and graphology all of which govern, according to Bachman, the choice of words to express specific significations, their forms, arrangements in utterance, to express propositions, and their physical realization. Textual competence, on the other hand, includes the knowledge of the conventions for joining utterances together to form a text structured according to rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization, Bachman says. (Bachman 1994, 87-88)

According to Brown (1994, 229), what Bachman proposes here is a group of rules and systems that ‘dictate’ what a communication can do with the forms of language, whether they are sentence-level rules (grammar) or rules which control how, for example, spoken ‘string’ of sentences together (discourse). Both competences then, in relation to oral production, provide devices for creating cohesive relationships in oral discourse and organizing such discourse in ways that are ‘maximally efficient in achieving the communicative goals of the interlocutors’, Bachman concludes (p.89).

The second category of language competence that Bachman distinguishes, pragmatic competence, also splits into two further competences – illocutionary competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Both competences concern ‘the relationship between utterances and the acts of functions that speakers . . . “intend to perform through these utterances.” (Bachman, 1994: 89) While illocutionary competence deals with the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions (ideational, heuristic, manipulative, imaginative), sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing these language functions in a given context with regard to the sensitivity to dialect or variety , register, naturalness, and cultural references and figures of speech. (Bachman, 1994: 92-98)

Brown (1994: 229) interprets illocutionary competence as functional aspects “pertaining to sending and receiving intended meanings” while sociolinguistic aspects of pragmatic competence

relate to “such considerations as politeness, formality, metaphor, register, and culturally related aspects of language.”

#### **4. The Psychological Problems of the Students**

Students face many situations in school that may result in psychological problems. The pressure and adjustments that come with high school and college life can often be overwhelming for students. Psychological problems can also be caused by things that happen at home or with friends. Not every student will experience psychological problems. Every student copes with difficult situations in a different manner.

The goal of teaching the oral skill is to enhance communicative efficiency. Every act of communication does not involve a rapid-fire exchange. In fact; when learners try to express themselves, there is hesitation, much repetition and frequent indefiniteness as the speaker seeks the most convenient combination of element to express his intended meaning (Rivers, 1968: 192-8). These difficulties are due to a lack of interest in the subject, poor listening practice, deficient vocabulary, or lack of self confidence and the fear of making mistakes.

Developing oral proficiency in the foreign language can be done only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other. The teacher must adopt a motivating attitude in such a way that all students are involved in the learning process.

#### **5. Teaching Techniques for Oral Proficiency**

Second language classroom techniques and activities promoting oral proficiency are suggested and discussed. The suggestions are based on a course organization that focuses on basic communicative goals and uses frequent conversation between paired students. The activities include retelling partner responses and situational role-playing. Approaches to integrating topics such as numbers, grammatical points, and vocabulary into the proficiency-based course design are discussed, and test techniques and items are also suggested.

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

### **5.1- Group Work**

To begin with, Adrian Doff (1991: 138) describes group work as follows: “In group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group). As in pair work, all the groups work at the same time.”

Despite the need for whole-class teaching and individual work in language classroom, the use of group work has been emphasized as another interactional dynamics of language classroom. A group work is a classroom situation where students are working within smaller units or groups. Through interacting with each other in groups, students can be given the opportunity to oral exchange.

Richards, Lockhart (1999) and Nunan, Lamb (1996) agree that group-work together with pair-work change the interactional dynamics of the classroom. Nevertheless, Harmer (1992: 245-246) proposes that group-work is even more dynamic than pair-work:

*“There are more people to react with and against in a group and, there is a greater possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs, for the latter puts a greater demand on the students’ ability to co-operate closely.”*



Oral interaction, in group, is based on a real attempt to find a collective solution to problems. Group work is a meaningful activity because the students need to focus on meaningful negotiation and information exchange.

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

### **5.1.1- Advantages of Group Work**

In addition to the benefit of group work, it has a number of additional advantages:

- It increases the opportunities for students to practice.
- It reduces the dominance of the teacher's talk over the class.
- It promotes collaboration among students.
- It makes students interact orally with each other in a purpose.
- It increases the opportunities for authentic negotiation.

### **5.1.2- Disadvantages of Group Work**

Group work also has disadvantages like:

- From the student's point of view, the value of help from the colleagues is less than the teacher's.
- It may bring potential risks, too, because some learners resent being corrected by other members of the group.
- It may kill the spirit of self- reliance.

### **5.2- Role- play**

Role play is a teaching strategy that fits within the social family of models (Joyce and Weil, 2000). These strategies emphasize the social nature of learning, and see cooperative behavior as stimulating students both socially and intellectually.

Many students derive a great benefit from role-play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purpose.

Role play as a teaching strategy offers several advantages for both teacher and student. Student interest in the topic is raised. Research has shown that “integrating experiential learning activities in the classroom increases interest in the subject matter and understanding of course content” (Poorman, 2002: 32). There is increased involvement on the part of the students in a role playing lesson. Students are not passive recipients of the instructor’s knowledge. Rather, they take an active part. Poorman (2002) observes that “true learning cannot take place when students are passive observers of the teaching process” (p. 32). Role play teaches empathy and understanding of different perspectives. Role playing has also been seen to be effective in reducing racial prejudice (McGregor, 1993).

Revel, J (1979) sees role play as: “an individual’s spontaneous behavior reacting to other in hypothetical situation.”(p.16) this implies that role play invites students to speak through a fictitious identity in an imagined situation to present the view of a person without necessarily sharing them.

### **5.2.1- Advantages of using role play**

The educational advantages of using role play in teaching include the following:

1. It encourages individuals to reflect upon their knowledge for a subject.
2. It gives life and immediacy to academic material that can be largely descriptive and/or theoretical.
3. It can encourage students to emphasize with the position and feelings of others something that, in the normal process of teaching, is likely to be missed.
4. Individuals are required to use appropriate concepts and arguments as defined by their role. As roles change, so might relevant concepts and arguments. Students may come,

as a consequence, to appreciate more fully the relevance of diverse opinion, and where and how it is formed.

5. Participation helps embed concepts. The importance of creating an active learning environment is well recognized if the objective is one of deep, rather than surface learning. Role-playing can make a valuable contribution in this process.

### **5.2.2-Stages of role play**

According to (Cherif & Somervill, 1998), role playing activities can be divided into four stages:

- Preparation and explanation of the activity by the teacher;
- Student preparation of the activity;
- The role-play;
- The discussion after the role playing activity.

### **5.3- Problem solving**

Henry.J (1991.299) stated that: “Many curriculum theories for elementary as well as secondary education exemplify a primary of method within the proposed school program. This method usually consists of some form of problem solving procedures as the basis for most, if not all, teaching- learning activities.”

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

The problem tasks range from the imaginary to the more realistic. The latter involves processes which have some kind of realistic application in which the students become involved in an effort to achieve a goal. In problem solving, students are involved in pooling information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. For instance, the teacher

describes the task to the students: “you are stranded on a desert island a long way from anywhere. There is a fresh water spring on the island, and there are banana trees and coconut palms. The climate is mild. Make a list of eight to twelve things which you think are necessary for survival.” Apart from the activities focusing on the likes and dislikes of individual learners- which therefore need an initial phase where each student works on his own- most of the problem-solving tasks require pair or group work throughout. Thus, students can be asked to solve the problem individually or collectively. The latter is calling for cooperative negotiation. Problem solving activities demand that the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we have focused on the fact that for teaching speaking, teachers should provide learners with effective oral practice. They have to adopt a wide range of techniques and procedures through which oral proficiency can develop. Such techniques should involve learners in real communication.

# Chapter Two

## Cooperative Language Learning

## **Introduction**

Cooperative language learning is one of the most distinguished of all instructional practices. In foreign language learning and teaching cooperative language learning provides students with the opportunity to use language in the appropriate situations.

This chapter tries to show the positive effects of cooperative language learning on foreign language learning and teaching. Compared with the traditional language teaching, cooperative language conforms to the developmental trend of language teaching method. In the foreign language learning classrooms, cooperative language learning provides students with the necessary academic and social skills.

This chapter provides a better understanding of cooperative language learning. We will talk about the historical development of cooperative language learning (an overview), next its definitions, followed by the characteristics of cooperative learning, then the different methods about learning in small groups. Lastly, it we will discuss the goals of cooperative language learning and the significant roles assumed by the teachers.

### **1- The Historical Development of Cooperative Language Learning: An overview**

Language teaching history, for more than hundred years, has been characterized by search for more effective ways of foreign language learning. The language teaching profession emphasized the role of the learner in the process of language learning, this focus on the learner has resulted with the development of effective cooperative learning.

According to Slavin (1995), the history of cooperative learning can be traced back hundreds of years in the past starting from the early Twentieth Century. For John Dewey, cooperative learning is essential to students' learning. He mentioned that cooperation in the classroom can be considered to be a regular and systematic basis of teaching.

Both of Piaget (1965) and Lev Vygotsky (1962) stress the role of social interaction in learning which emphasizes the importance of discussion and problem solving among peers.

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001, 194), cooperative language learning is founded on significant premises about the interactive and cooperative nature of language learning. Learners develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially and pedagogically structured situations. Slavin (1995, 16) indicates that students want to achieve better because their classmates want them to do so in cooperative groups.

As a result of many years of research, cooperative learning has positive effects on the relationship among students, self-esteem, and students' achievement.

## **2- An Introduction to Cooperative Language Learning**

Cooperative learning refers to a systematic instructional method in which students work together in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals. The data in a large amount of research shown, compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, cooperation has positive effects on a wider range of outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Slavin, 1995; Kagan 1999).

In second language teaching, cooperative language learning shared approximately the same principles of communicative language teaching. As Richards & Rodgers (2001, 151) suggest that: "Cooperative language learning originates outside of language teaching, because it is compatible with many of the assumptions of communicative language teaching. It has become a popular and relatively uncontroversial to the organization of classroom teaching."

Cooperative language learning has been recognized as the instructional approach to teaching that promotes communicative interaction in the classroom.

Unlike the traditional methods of language teaching and learning such as: grammar translation method and audio-lingual method; cooperative language learning is viewed as one of the "learner-centered" methods of language teaching.

Although hundreds of studies have been conducted on cooperative learning in many subjects, TEFL-related research on cooperative learning is a relatively new and undeveloped area of inquiry.

Traditionally, the field of language teaching and learning often refers to “teacher-centered” instruction in which the teacher plays the major role in the classroom, because here the teacher is the knower and the director of his students who are supposed to take in. In this situation the students are sitting in rows listening to the teacher who stands in front of them. (Harmer, 2005: 14).

In traditional instruction, most teachers make use of individual work and the whole-class instructional methods more frequently than others. Good & Brophy (1987, 1996: 147) state that in whole class: “The teacher typically begins a lesson by reviewing prerequisite material, then introduces and develops new concepts or skills, then the group in a recitation or supervised practice or application activity, another assigns seatwork or homework for students to do on their own”.

In these classrooms, Chaudron (1988:51) finds that 70% of the classroom time is taken up by teacher talking time. This type of instruction can be very beneficial in undergraduate education because, “it enables the teacher to teach large number of student at the same time”.

Recently, some significant shifts have begun to take place in this age-old instruction. This shift was from teacher-oriented to learner-centered instruction, and from whole-class instruction to group work learning. In this sense, great attention was given to achieve the predefined goals.

### **3- Some Definitions of Cooperative Learning**

Students’ learning goals may be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts. In fact, Johnson et Al (1994; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) have drawn the attention to cooperation as a distinguished principle of cooperative learning rather than



competition in learning. Learners benefit more from sharing each other's thoughts rather than working alone:

*“Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to them selves and beneficial to all other group members, cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning ....” (p.195)*

For Olson and Kagan, cooperative language learning entails learners learn from each other in pairs or small groups. CLL in this context emphasizes learner accountability in which each member of the group is responsible for his own contribution to activity. As for Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richard and Rodgers, 2001), CLL is that:

*“Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learner in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others.” (p.192)*

Cooperative language learning is an approach to language teaching that aims to foster cooperation rather than competition, to develop communicative competence through the use of interactive group activities, and to increase opportunities for learners to use the target language.

Deutsch (1949) identifies three goal structures: cooperative, in which each individual's goal-oriented efforts contribute to others goal attainment; competitive, in which each individual's

goal-oriented efforts prevent others from reaching their goals; and individual, in which individual's goal-oriented efforts have no connection with others goal attainment. The table below shows a comparison between cooperative learning, competitive learning, and individual learning:

Goal structure	Cooperative learning	Competitive learning	Individual learning
Learning goals	To have an objective is essential	It's important for students to have an objective. What they care more is to win or to lose	An objective and individual are both important. Everyone's last expectation is to reach his own objectives.
Teaching activities	It implies to any subjects of teaching task. The more complicated and the more abstract the task is, the more it needs cooperation.	It focuses on practices and drills of skills as well as memory and review of knowledge	Acquisition of simple skills and knowledge
Interaction between teachers and students	Teachers supervise and participate in the groups so as to instruct cooperative skills	Teachers are the main resources of reconciliation, feedback, reinforce and Support. Teachers posit Questions and clear up rules. They play a reconciliatory role in a disputed point and they are judges of correct Answers.	Teachers are the main resources to assist, feedback, reinforce and support.
Interaction among students	Encourage students to interact, help and share with each other as the relationship to positive interdependence.	The homogeneous group maintains fair competition, which is a type of negative interdependence.	There is no interaction among students.
Teaching Materials	The arrangement of teaching materials is based on the goal of the courses.	It is to arrange teaching materials for group or individual.	The arrangement of teaching materials and teaching are simply for individual.

Table1: Slavin (1995); Johnson & Johnson (1998) based on the research of Dr. Tzu-Pu Wang

(2009: 114)

#### 4- Characteristics of cooperative language learning

Cooperative language learning shares some characteristics with communicative language teaching. They provide high light to the interaction and communication between students and students and teachers, the teacher take the role of the guider, facilitator, and negotiator. They both consider that healthy relationships with other classmates are more conducive to learning.

The table below summarizes the main differences between cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching (based on the research of Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Nunan, 1989- gathered by Yan Zhang page 82, academic publisher 2010)

	Traditional language teaching	Cooperative language learning
Independence	Non or negative	Positive
Learner roles	Passive and receiver and performer	Active participator, autonomous learners
Teacher roles	The center of the classroom, controller of teaching pace and direction, judge of students' right or wrong, the major source of assistance, feedback, reinforcement and support	Organizer and counselor pf group work, facilitator of the communication tasks, intervener to teach collaborative skills
Materials	Complete set of materials for each student	Materials are arranged according to purpose of lesson. Usually one group shared complete set materials
Types of activities	Knowledge set recall and review, phrasal or sentence pattern practice, role play, translation, listening etc	Any instructional activity, mainly group work to engage learners in communication, involving processes like information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction
Interaction	Some talking among students, mainly teacher-	Intense interaction among students, a few teacher-

	student interaction	student interactions
Room arrangement	Separate desks or student placed in pairs	Collaborative small groups
Student expectation	Take a major part in evaluating own progress and the quality of own efforts towards learning. Be a winner or loser	All members in some way contribute to success of group. The one who makes progress is the winner
Teacher-student relationship	Superior-inferior or equal	Cooperating and equal

Table2: Comparison between cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching.

(Zhang, 2010: 82)

### **5- Cooperative language learning methods**

Cooperative learning methods are structured, systematic, and instructional strategies are used at any grade level and in most school subjects. Teachers have been used to encourage their students to work together on occasional group projects, discussion or debate group and so on. Some of these methods which have been extensively researched and widely used are student-team-achievement division (STAD), jigsaw, and group investigation.

#### **5.1 Students-Teams-Achievement Division (STAD)**

According to Slavin (1986), STAD is a prevailing and simple technique in cooperative learning. In STAD, teams should be assigned in groups of four or five which are mixed in academic performance, sex and race or ethnicity. The major goal of the team is “to make sure that their teammates have learned the material.” (Slavin.1995:78). Students take individual quizzes and they are not allowed to help each other. This makes sure that every student is responsible for knowing the material.

Students’ quiz scores are compared to their own past average. The students earn points for their teams based on how much their scores could exceed their previous quizzes. These points are

then summed to obtain team scores. Some teachers provide some kinds of recognition or reward to students on “Great team” or “Super team” (Slavin, 1995: 5).

STAD is considered as the most appropriate technique in cooperative learning methods for teaching subjects, and one of the simplest of all cooperative learning strategies. Recently, it has become clear that this technique is very useful for teaching specially vocabulary and grammar forms in foreign language classes.

## **5.2 Jigsaw**

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique that has been studied in various ways by a number of researchers and teachers in classes of different levels and subjects. The jigsaw method was developed by Elliot Aronson in 1971 on Austin, Texas. Jigsaw requires everyone’s cooperative effort to produce the final product. In the original jigsaw, each member of a group was assigned a different part of material. Then all the students from different groups who had the same learning material gathered together and formed an “expert group” to discuss and communicate with each other until they all mastered the material. Jigsaw II, which was suggested by Slavin in 1978, attached more importance to familiarity of all the group members with the whole task. (Wang, 2002)

According to Choe and Drennan (2001), Jigsaw technique known also as “integration” is used in numerous subject matters from elementary school to university. So, to achieve complete learning of a subject matter, Kagan (1989-90) said that each student becomes both a learner and teacher as well, and there is no environment that enables some of the students to surpass the others. This is a unique group-learning experience, in which students are to cooperate with each other so as to achieve a certain goal. Aronson (2006) considered the Jigsaw as a teaching technique that is being used successfully particularly in teaching foreign languages (p.75).

By means of this technique, students become more kind to each other while developing their empathic powers (Aronson, 2000, p. 51 and Barratt, 1992, p.75).

### **5.3 Group investigation**

According to Sharan & Sharan (1992-1999, 10) : “the group investigation method requires the students to form small interest groups, plan and implement their investigation, synthesize the group members’ findings, and make a presentation to the entire class”. Slavin (ibid: 112) believes that “cooperative interaction and communication among classmates are best achieved within the small group, where exchange among peers and cooperative inquiry can be sustained.” The teacher and students need to experience a variety of communicative and social skills that establish norms of appropriate cooperative behavior in the classroom.

In a group investigation classroom, Ivy Geok-Chin Tan et Al (2006) stated that “the students are members of small interest groups (three to five members). The entire class must be oriented by the teacher to carry out their own inquiry into the topic selected for exploration and study. The classroom became more reorganized into a community of inquirers.” (p.10)

A central role to group investigation is students “cooperative planning of the learning task. Each group member takes part in determining what they want to investigate in order to solve the problem, which resources they need, which will do what and how they will present their project to the class as a whole. Usually there is a division in the group that enhances “positive interdependence”.

In second language acquisition, group investigation offers many opportunities for meaningful language use. It exposes students to constant evaluation by both classmates and by the teacher more than traditional whole-class instruction.

### **6- Goals of cooperative language learning**

In second language learning, Richards and Rodgers (2001: 193) believe that communicative interaction is the most important goal of cooperative language learning in the classroom. Interaction is viewed as a learner-centered approach to teaching to improve students’

achievement. Students will learn from each other contribution to classroom discussions. For Richards and Rodgers, goals of cooperative language learning are:

- To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pairs and group activities.
- To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms, mainstreaming).
- To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.
- To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communicative strategies.
- To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Thus, Cooperative language learning is an approach that crosses both mainstream education and second and foreign language teaching. Cooperative goals create pro- academic norms among students, and pro-academic norms have important effects on students' achievement.

### **7- Benefits of cooperative language learning**

Cooperative language learning is gaining broad acceptance in a multitude of language learning classrooms, and a powerful educational approach principally because of its contributions in enhancing and improving students' productivity and achievement and providing more opportunities for communication.

The benefits of cooperative learning have been identified and documented throughout the past 20 years (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Slavin, 1991). Kath Murdoch, Jeni Wilson (2004, 10) said that "many useful and life long skills can be enhanced, such as those listed below:

- Accepting and providing constructive criticism.
- Active listening.
- Questioning, checking and confirming.
- Justifying viewpoints.
- Linking ideas, maintaining focus and keeping on tack.
- Managing time, negotiating, organizing and planning.
- Presenting ideas to others.
- Reflecting on learning, behavior and thinking.
- Supporting or helping others.
- Understanding other points of view.
- Using eye contact and appropriate body language.

Slavin (1995: 60) found that the most important psychological outcome of cooperative learning is its effect on students “self-esteem”. Students’ beliefs that they are valuable and important learners are of critical importance for their ability to be confident decision-makers, and ultimately to be productive individuals. In cooperative classroom, motivation is found to have great effect on enhancing students’ performance. Slavin (1995: 16) states that:

*“Rewarding groups based on group performance (or the sum of individual performances) creates an interpersonal reward structure in which group members will give or withhold social reinforces (such as praise and encouragement) in response to group mates’ task-related efforts.”*

From the perspective of second language teaching, McGroarty (1989; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 195) offers the potential advantages for ESL students in CLL classrooms:



1. Increased frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction.
2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills.
3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction.
4. Opportunities to include a greater variety of curricular materials to stimulate language as well as concept learning.
5. Freedom for the teacher to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication.
6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

#### **8- The role of the teacher**

The role of the teacher is critical for the success of cooperative learning in the classroom. It differs considerably from the role of the teacher in traditional teacher-directed teaching. The teacher's role changes from a deliverer of information to a facilitator of learning. According to Murdoch & Wilson (2004: 12):

*“The teacher's role is the key to success. Teachers who use cooperative learning in their classroom play multiple roles. The way these roles are enacted depends on the age group, the nature of the tasks students are engaged in, prior experiences of the students, and the broader school and community culture.”*

The teacher has to create highly structured and well-organized environments for classroom instruction. Harel (1992: 169) defines the teacher's role in the classroom as follow:

*“During this time the teacher interacts, teaches, refocuses, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates, and empathizes. Depending on what problems evolve, the following supportive behaviors are utilized. Facilitators are giving feedback, redirecting the group with questions, encouraging the group to solve its problems, extending activity, encouraging thinking conflict, observing student and supplying resources”*

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

- Share the responsibility for managing both interaction and learning and with students.
- Structure the learning environment so that the student cooperates to obtain learning goals.
- Stimulate interactive language use through group work and collaborative problem solving.
- Choose classroom tasks which involve information sharing, cooperative reasoning, opinion sharing, and values clarification.
- Coordinate group activities.
- Provide clarification, feedback, and motivation support.

## **Conclusion**

Cooperative learning, compared with traditional instruction teaching method in foreign language teaching, tends to promote productivity and achievement and providing more opportunities for communication. Furthermore, it shares the same basic set of principles with the Communicative Language Teaching. It makes clear that the objective of foreign language teaching is not only to teach students some grammatical rules and vocabularies, but also how to

use the knowledge in practice to express or narrate thoughts and ideas. We know a great deal about the effect of cooperative learning on students and the conditions necessary to make cooperative learning more effective for the achievement of outcomes. Therefore, it is not surprising that cooperative language learning is beneficial in foreign language learning and teaching. It is worthwhile for teachers and scholars to introduce this method to language learning classroom.

# Chapter three

## Field work

## **Introduction**

The present research work is about “Enhancing students’ oral performance through cooperative group work”. In chapters one and two we have presented a review of related literature to speaking skills and an analysis of cooperative language learning. The third chapter discusses the field work namely the research design, the implementation of the research procedure and the outcomes

We believe that the nature of our topic requires the application of the descriptive method. Therefore, we decided to use the questionnaire because it is the most appropriate data gathering tool to carry out our research. In this study, we have made up two questionnaires: 1/the teachers’ questionnaire which is designed for all teachers of oral expression who are believed to be in a good position to provide relevant data to our study,2/ the students’ questionnaire which is designed for third year LMD students of the English Department. This chapter highlights the research design in terms of aims, administration and the analysis of students’ and teachers’ questionnaires.

### **1- The Students’ Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is designed for the students to diagnose their awareness of using cooperative group work in teaching the English language.

We have administered the questionnaire to 3<sup>rd</sup> year LMD students (option: language sciences), the addressed sample represents forty (40) students. The questionnaire consists of thirteen questions, five (5) of which are “yes/no” questions and eight (8) are multiple choices questions as A, B, C, D, or open-ended questions to inquire about the students’ opinions or to explain their choices. The questions were clear enough in order to help to students’ better understand and thus provide appropriate answers. The questions cover the variables selected and each particular aspects of our study.

## 2- The Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed for the teachers of the oral expression course to consider their opinions and attitudes towards the use of group work in order to investigate effectively the students' needs in terms of their oral ability in English.

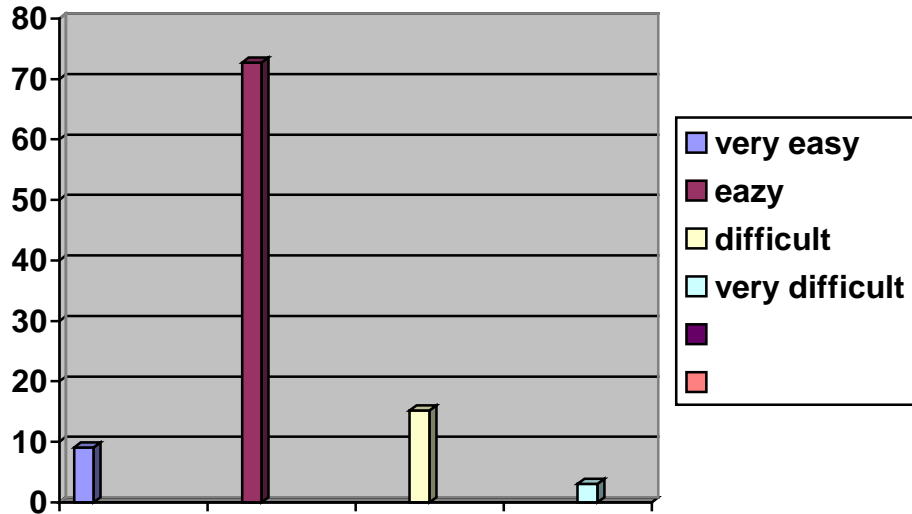
We have administered the questionnaire to all teachers of oral expression course at the department of English at the University of Biskra. The sample represents (14) teachers of oral expression, however, only (10) teachers have handed back the questionnaire, the remaining four (4) teachers refused to be involved in the investigation because of shortage of time. We are very grateful to those who have devoted their time to participate in the research work and we highly appreciate their help. The questionnaire is made up of thirteen (13) questions; it involves different types of questions "closed" and "open-ended" questions. Closed questions contain "yes/no" questions or multiple choices as A, B, C, D (the teacher is required to tick up the right answer) and open-ended questions which provide the opportunity to give their personal opinions.

## 3- Data Collection and Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

### Q1-Do you find speaking in English?

Options	Response	%
Very easy	3	9.09
Easy	24	72.72
Difficult	5	15.15
Very difficult	1	3.03
Total	33	100

**Table 01: Students' Attitude towards Speaking.**



**Graph 01: Students' Attitude toward Speaking.**

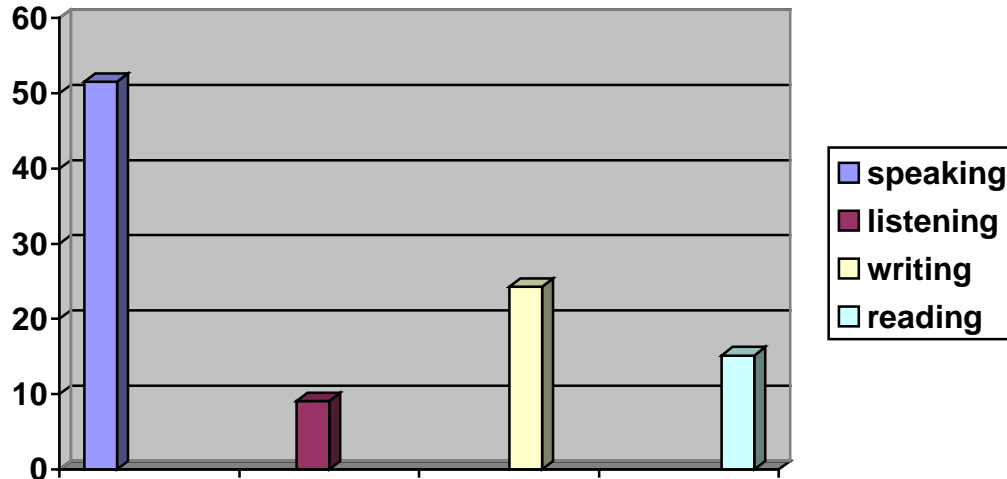
The students here are asked to say whether they find speaking easy, very easy, difficult, or very difficult. The majority of the students about (72.72%) believe that speaking in English is very easy, about (9.09%) said it is easy, but about (15.15%) who find speaking in English difficult and only (3.03%) said it is very difficult.

Most of the students (73%) who find that speaking in English is very easy do not necessarily represent good speakers of English. However, the students who find that speaking in English is difficult and very difficult scarcely participate and/or speak in the classroom.

**Q2- Which skills do you want to develop most?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Speaking	17	51.51
Listening	3	9.09
Writing	8	24.24
Reading	5	15.15
Total	33	100

**Table 02: Learning the four Skills.**



**Graph 02: Learning the four Skills.**

The students were asked to pick up the most important skill they need to develop most, about (51.51%) of the respondents answered the speaking skill, while (24.24%) picked the writing skill, about (15.15%) choose the reading skill and the listening skill (9.09%).

From the table we notice that the first skill is the first students' choice because to many students the speaking skill is considered to be the most difficult one. They have difficulties in speaking and they are poor speakers, they need to be able to communicate with each other fluently. Some students said that they need to be able to communicate by using simple, spontaneous language.

However, the students also believe that the writing skill is equally needed (24.24%). Those students believe that they should be able to write correct, well organized and simple passages.

Concerning the reading skill, just (15.15%) of them think that reading is to be first developed because they believe that it provides them with a large supply of vocabulary that they can use.

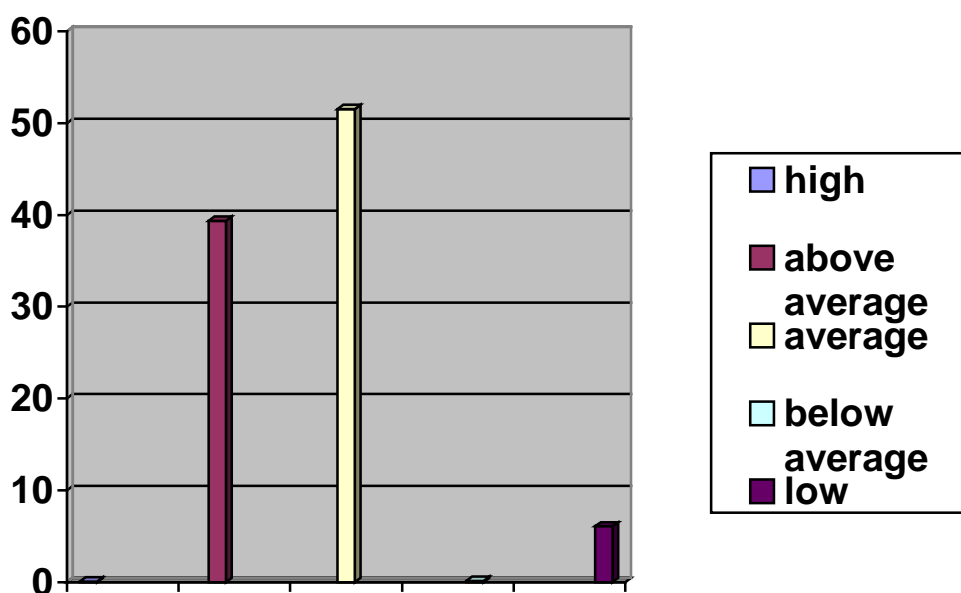
Last and unlike the other skills, only (9.09%) have put the listening skill in the first position. Those students believe that language has to be learned first by listening before any oral or written production.



**Q3-Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?**

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
high	1	3.03
Above average	10	39.39
Average	17	51.51
Below average	3	9.09
Low	2	6.06
Total	33	100

**Table 4: Students' Evaluation of Their Level in English.**



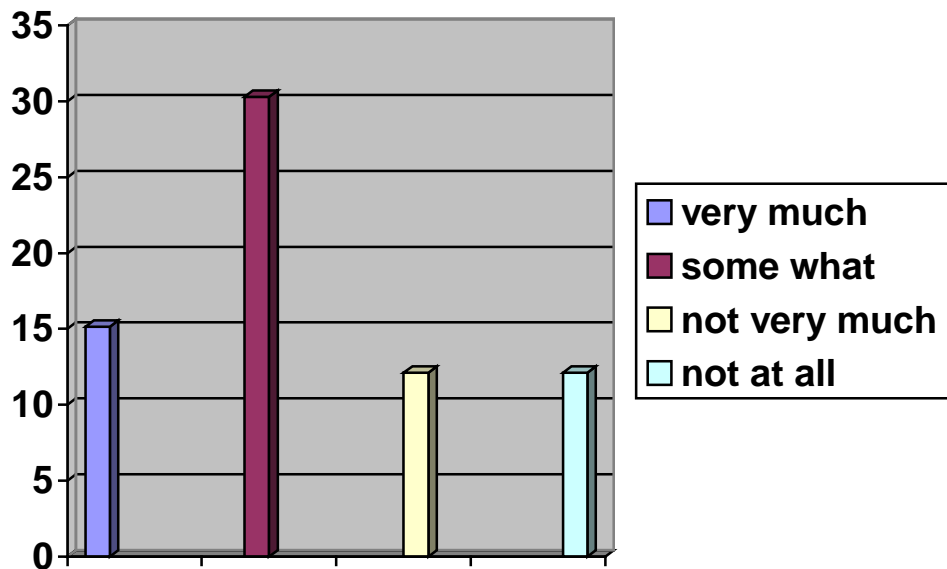
**Graph 03: Students' Evaluation of Their Level in English.**

About (51.51%) of the students admitted that their level in oral performance is average. And about (40%) mentioned that their level is above average, against about (10% and 6.06%) who reveal that their level is below average and low because they don't participate in the classroom. However, the students who found their level is below average and approximately average the results obtained in the students' needs of the skills.

**Q4- Did the oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Very much	5	15.15
Some what	10	30.30
Not very much	4	12.12
Not at all	4	12.12
Total	33	100

**Table 04: Students' Attitude towards Oral Expression Course.**



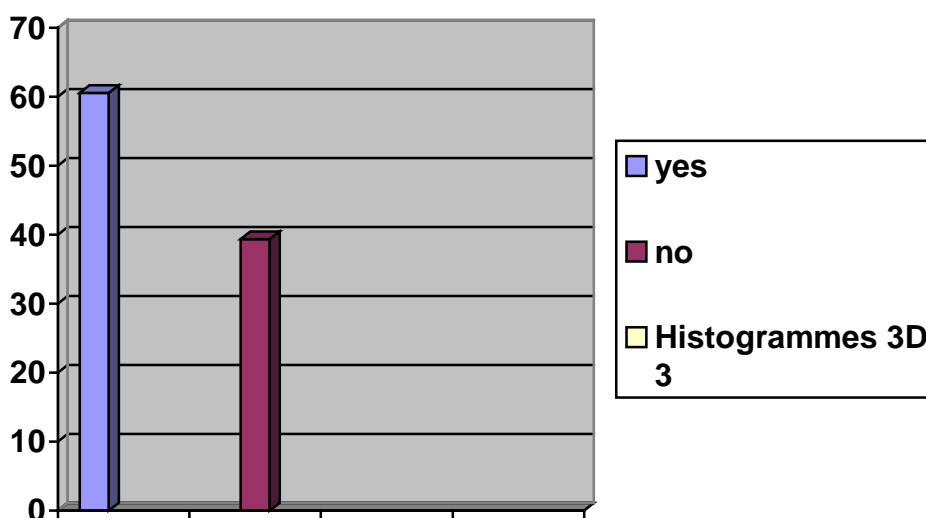
**Graph 04: Students' Attitude towards Oral Expression Course.**

From the results that we obtained about (15.15%) of the respondents indicated that the oral expression course helps them to improve their level in oral proficiency; while (30.30%) of the students said that they improve somewhat their oral performance. Against (12.12%) of the subjects stated that the oral expression courses are not helpful at all, may be because the courses are not interesting enough to stimulate their communication.

**Q5- Do you feel afraid when you talk in classroom?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	20	60.60
No	13	39.39
Total	33	100

**Table 05: Students' Confidence to speak the Language.**



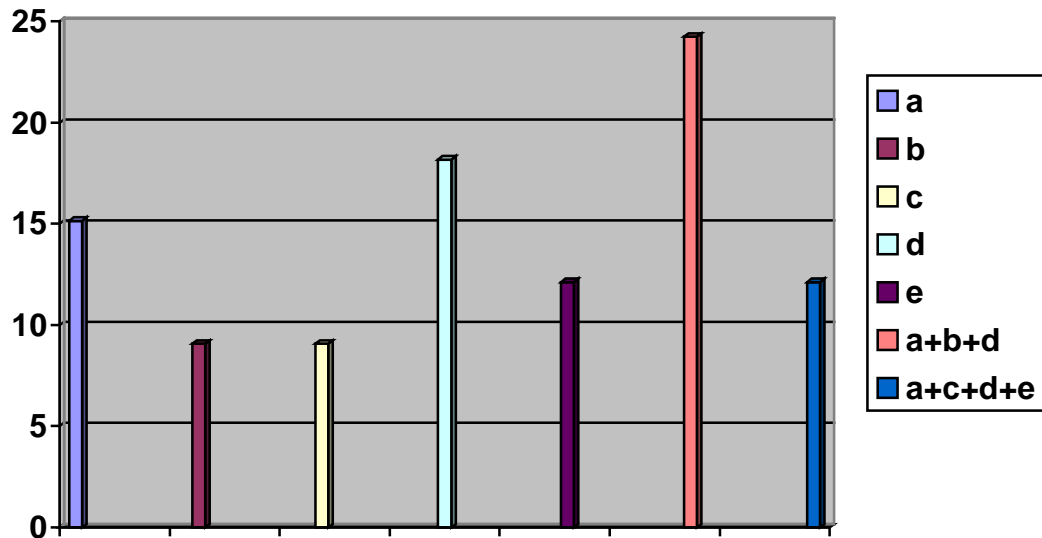
**Graph 05: Students' Confidence to speak the Language.**

From the table above we see that the majority of the students (20) about (60.60%) feel afraid when they talk in the classroom; do not feel at ease to talk. While (13) or about (39.39%) who are not afraid at all to talk in the classroom, they consider themselves to be able to participate inside the class. This does not mean that the majority of the students are motivated to speak the English language. However, we can not also consider their reluctance to speak an indicator of their lack of motivation.

**Q6- If your answer is “yes” is it because you:**

Options	Response	Percentage %
a- fear of making grammatical mistakes	5	15.15
b- fear of making pronunciation mistakes	3	9.09
c- having deficient vocabulary	3	9.09
d- fear of teacher negative feed beck	6	18.18
e- lack of self confidence	4	12.12
A+b+d	8	24.24
A+c+d+e	4	12.12
Total	33	100

**Table 06: Students’ Inability to Speak.**



**Graph 06: Students’ Inability to Speak**

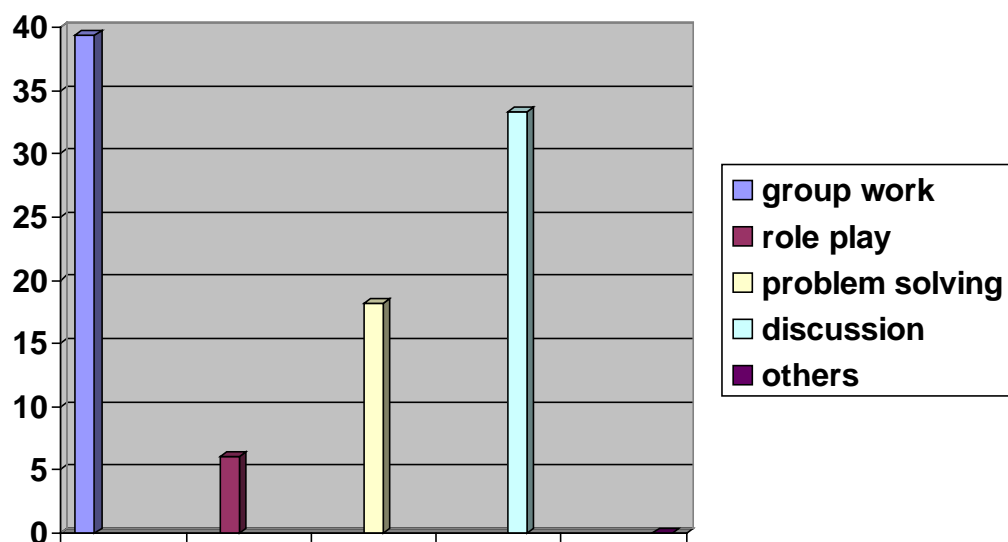
In this case, students are asked why they do not participate in the classroom. Here, students are provided with a set of different choices that show their reasons of inability to speak inside the classroom. However, they can choose one or more choices that describe their case.

From the results that we have, about (5) students or (15.15%) have indicated that the reason that makes them not participate in the classroom is the fear of making grammatical mistakes. Whereas 3 or (9.09%) of the subjects indicated that they do not participate in classroom because of their fear to make pronunciation mistakes. Also, (9.09%) said they have deficient vocabulary therefore they do not talk in the class. Besides (4) subjects or about (12.12%) mentioned that they do not participate in the class because their fear is related the teacher's negative feed back, or they have lack of self- confidence. Students who are scared or afraid to make mistakes in grammar, they feel that their classmates will mock them; consequently, they keep silent in the class. Others are afraid of the reaction of the teacher or his negative feed back. In this case, the teacher's role is to create a friendly atmosphere that incites the students to speak.

We can also notice that there are students who have more than one reason which hinder their participation in the classroom.

**Q7- Which of the following techniques does you enjoys best?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Group work	13	39.39
Role play	2	6.06
Problem solving	6	18.18
Discussion	11	33.33
Others	0	0
Total	33	100



**Graph 07: Kind of Most Enjoyed Techniques that Used in Teaching.**

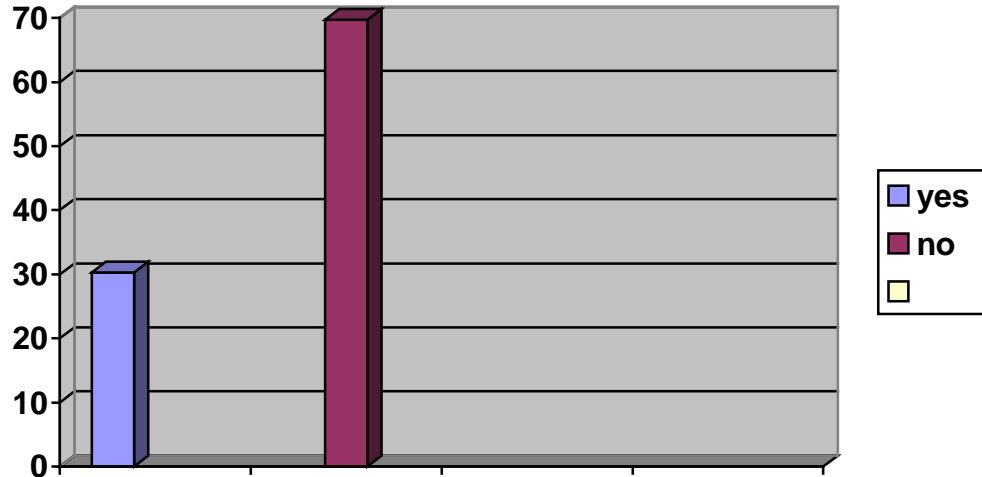
In this item students are asked about the most technique they enjoy best in teaching. From the table above, we noticed that group work comes at the first place with approximately (39.39%) followed by discussion which came at the second place with about (33.33%). Also we have recorded about (6) or (18.18%) who consider that problem solving is the most enjoyable technique and only (2) subjects or mainly (6.06%) who indicates that role play enjoys best.

From this results we find group work is the most enjoyable it came at the first place. Students who find group work best enjoyable because are motivated when they work together in small groups.

**Q8- Have you ever heard of cooperative language learning?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	10	30.30
No	23	69.69
Total	33	100

**Table 06: Students' Knowledge of Cooperative Language Learning.**



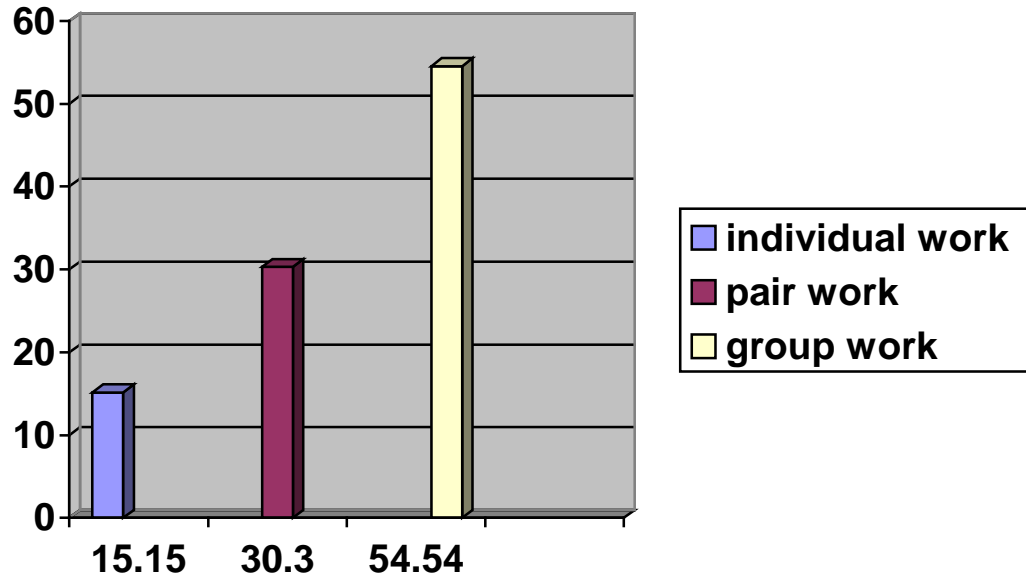
**Graph 08: Students' Knowledge of Cooperative Language Learning.**

The statistics related to this item shows that (30.30%) of the subjects have heard of cooperative learning, against (69.69%) who have not. That is to say, the majority of respondents are more likely to have a positive attitude toward cooperative work and this no doubt, will affect their learning outcomes. This is a quality that is rarely found and is believed to establish a healthy environment.

**Q9- In the oral expression courses, what do you prefer?**

Options	Response	Percentage%
Individual work	5	15.15
Pair work	10	30.30
Group work	18	54.54
Total	33	100

**Table 09: Students' Preferences.**



**Graph 09: Students' Preferences.**

In this section, students are asked whether they prefer individual work, pair work or group work for the reason to know what kind of instruction students prefer.

The majority of the students (18) about (54.54%) indicated that they prefer to have group work instead of the other kinds of tasks. While ten (10) subjects say that they prefer working in pair group translating into (30.30%). Whereas only five (5) students prefer work individually (i.e. 15.15%).

From the results that we had from the table above, we see that group work is the most enjoyable and came at the first place on students' preference because they are sociable students who enjoy sharing and being with others. Students also like to feel that the space in which they meet belongs to them and strengthen their feeling to take risks in speaking.

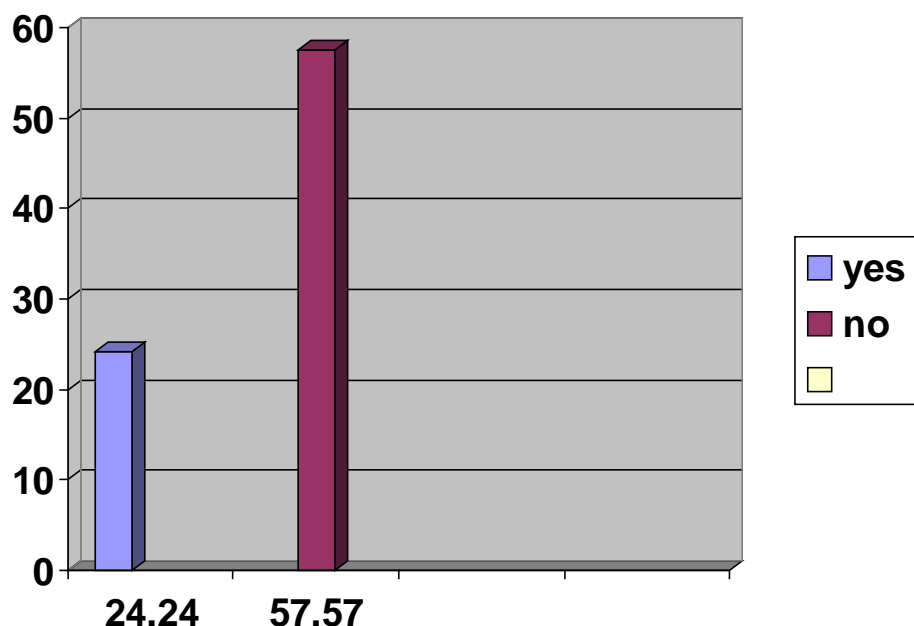
The same thing for pair work, the subjects are also likely to be sociable. While in individual group, those students who like to work individually have a higher level that don't like or may not to work with another partner especially if he was weak students or perhaps they feel more comfortable or secure to work individually more then with a partner.



**Q10- Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	8	24.24
No	25	57.57
Total	33	100

**Table 10: Difficulties that Student face Working in Groups.**



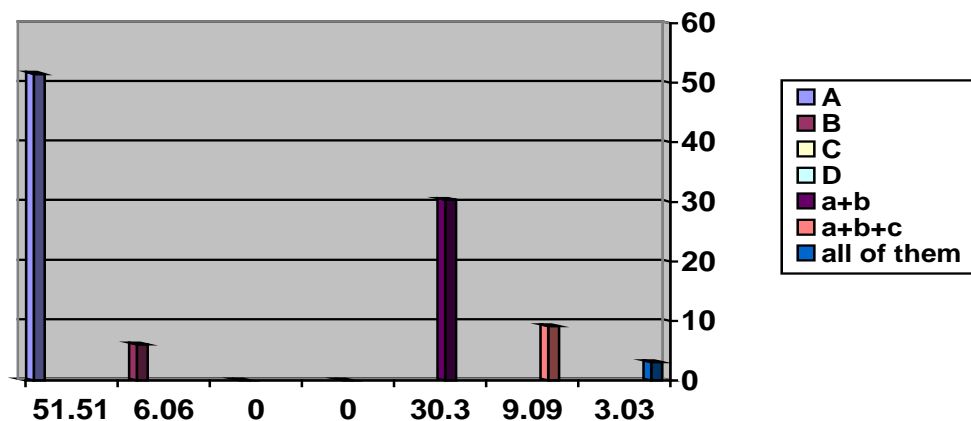
**Graph 10: Difficulties that Student face Working in Group.**

In this question, we have recorded a majority of 25 respondents, or (75.75%), who has indicated that they do not have difficulties when they work together with their classmates. This means that they are among students who would prefer working cooperatively for the communication of their thoughts. Eight or (24.24%) of the respondents have problems when they work together with other classmates. One possible interpretation is that these subjects are in favor for individual work. There are also other factors that teachers should be aware when setting cooperative work in order to get its substantial benefits.

**Q11- Do you feel that group work helps you to: (you may choose more then one answer)**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Ask and respond to more questions	17	51.51
Learn to listen to different opinions	2	6.06
Evaluate your peers' performance	00	00
Develop social skills for getting along with others	00	00
A+b	10	30.30
A+b+c	3	9.09
All of them	1	3.03
Total	33	100

**Table 11: Understanding the Specific Skills of Successful Group Work.**



**Graph 11: Understanding the Specific Skills of Successful Group Work.**

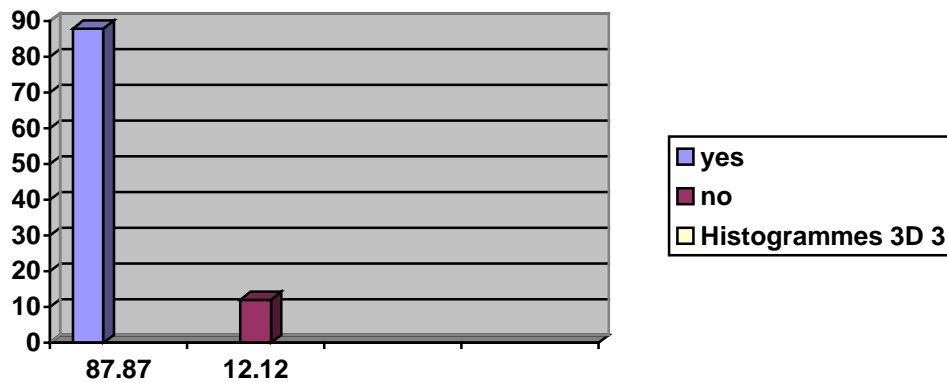
In this question, students are asked to say what group work helps them to do. From the table above (17) respondents out of (54.54%) find that group work help them to ask and respond to more questions, and about (6.06%) or 2 respondents who believe that group work help them to listen to different opinions. On the other hand, we have recorded no subjects (00) opting for the Evaluation of your peers' performance and developing the social skills for getting along with

others. Whereas others (10) have chosen the first choice and the second one about (30.30%) and (3) students (9.09%) have opted for the first, second, and the third choices.

**Q12- Do you think that cooperative group work helps you improve your speaking skills?**

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	29	87.87
No	4	12.12
Total	33	100

**Table 12: Students' Evaluation of Cooperative Group Work.**



**Graph 12: Students' Evaluation of Cooperative Group Work.**

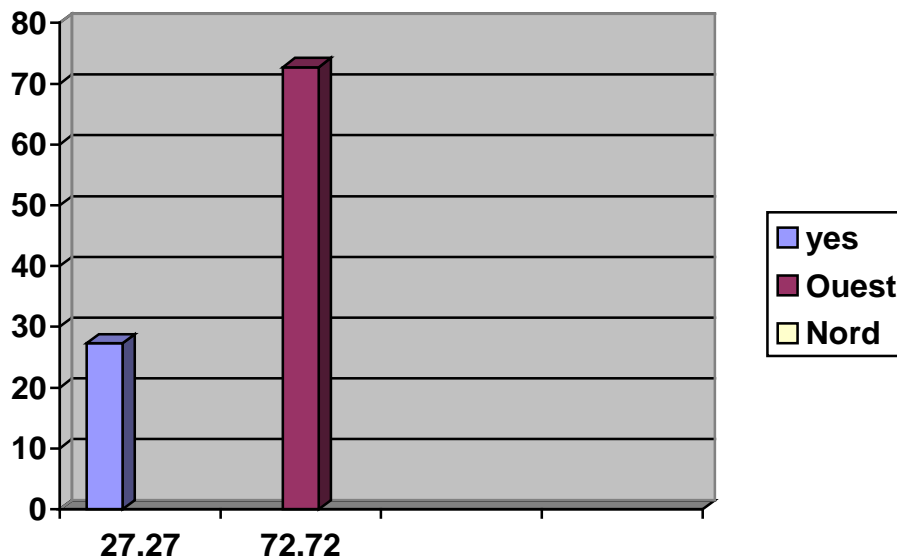
From the results above, four respondents (4) or (12.12%) has indicated that cooperative group work does not help them to improve their speaking skill. While the majority of the respondents about (29) have chosen the opposite situation which they say that cooperative group work helps them to improve their speaking skill (87.87%).

We understand that a high portion of the sample recognizes the benefit of cooperative group in improving their speaking skill.

**Q13- Does your teacher raise your awareness towards the skills of cooperative group work?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	9	27.27
No	24	72.72
Total	33	100

**Table 13: Raising Students’ Awareness of the Skills of Cooperative Work.**



**Graph 13: Raising Students’ Awareness of the Skills of Cooperative Work**

As shown in the table above, the majority of subjects (72.72%) answer “no” indicating that their teachers do not raise their students’ awareness of the necessary skill that would really help in establishing effective learning. This can only be interpreted in terms of their ignorance of the necessary skill they should possess or their confusion with traditional group work. 72

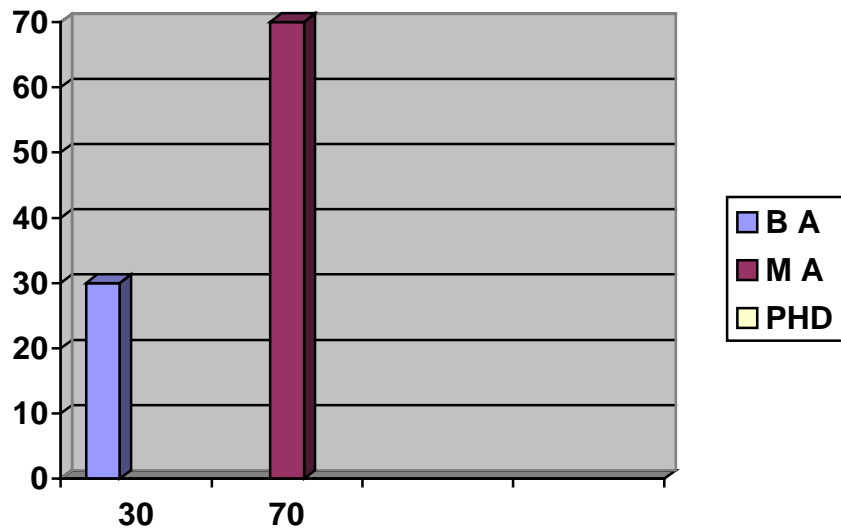
Nine respondents or (27.27%) state that their teachers raise their awareness towards necessary skills for group work. These teachers seem to understand that group work does not mean putting students in groups. Rather, it involves more participation on both teachers and students' part.

#### 4- Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

##### Q1-Degree(s) Held:

Degree	Response	Percentage %
B A (license)	3	30
M A (magister)	7	70
(master)	0	/
PhD (doctorate)	0	/
Total	10	100

**Table 14: Teachers' Academic Degree.**



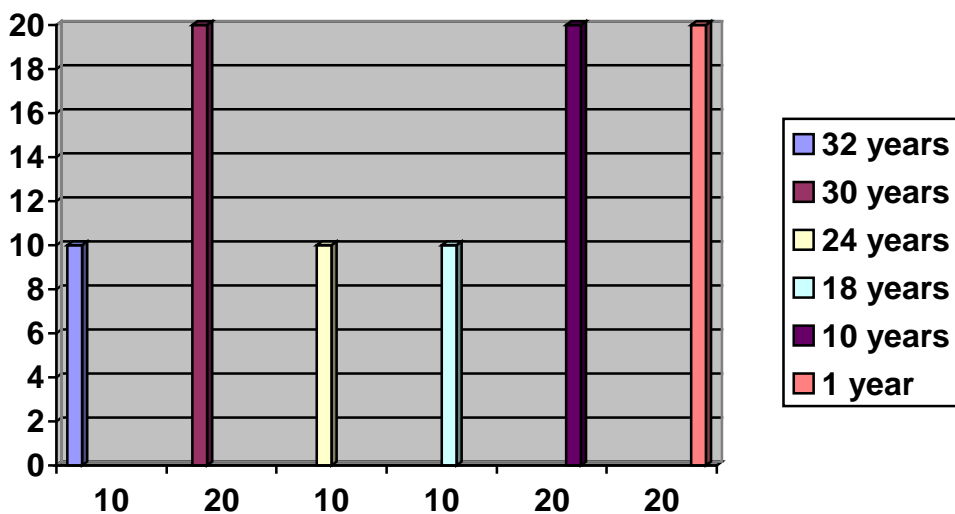
**Graph 14: Teachers' Academic Degree.**

As the table indicates, the highest percentage is that the teachers who have got a Magister degree (70%) and only 3 teachers or about (30%) have a B A license. We believe that our sample is as representative as possible for the population to which it is designed.

**Q2- How long have you been teaching English?**

Number of years	Response	Percentage %
32 years	1	10
30 years	2	20
24 years	1	10
18 years	1	10
12 years	1	10
10 years	2	20
1 year	2	20
Total	10	100

**Table 15: Teachers' Experience in Teaching.**



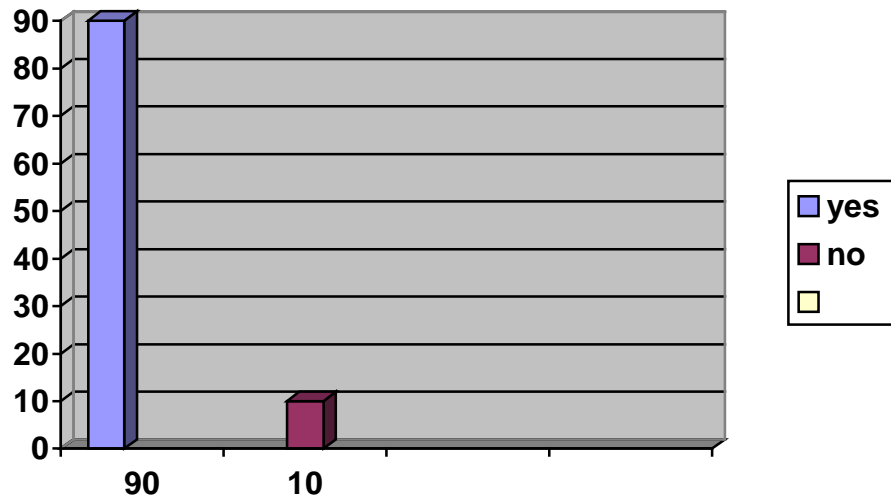
**Graph 15: Teachers' Experience in Teaching.**

Teachers, here, are required to give in numbers how many years they have been teaching English i.e. their teaching experience. The most experienced have been teaching for 32, 30, 24 years, (10%) for 32 years, (20%) for 30 years and only (10%) for 24 years. And (10%) how have been teaching for 18 years and (20%) of the teachers who have been teaching for 10 years. Finally, the teachers who have been teaching for one or less then one year about (20%). This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of enhancing their oral proficiency.

**Q3- Do you teach oral skills?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	9	90
No	1	10
Total	10	100

**Table 16: Teachers' Concern with Oral Expression Module.**



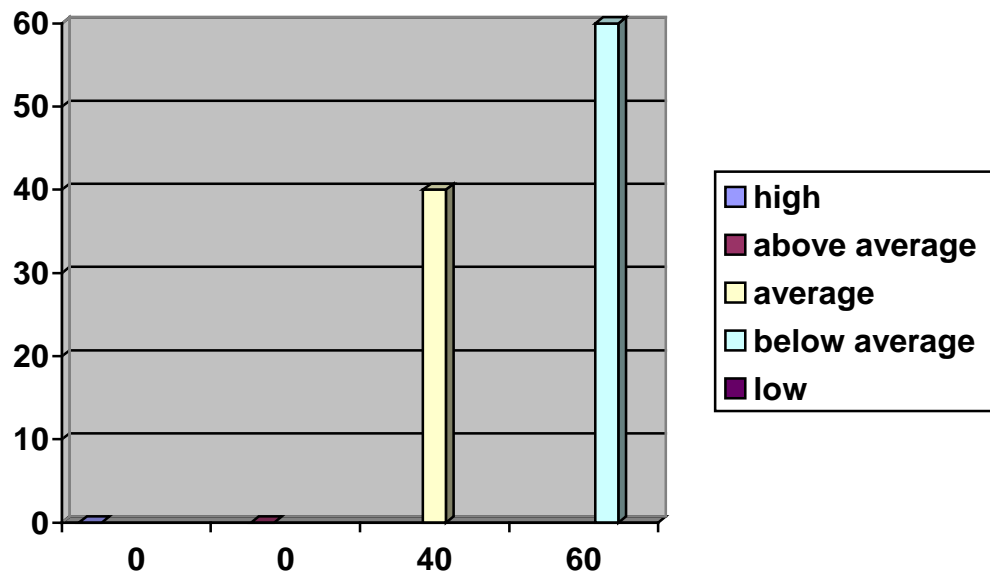
**Graph 16: Teachers' Concern with Oral Expression Module.**

From the results shown in the table above, one teacher about (10%) answer the question negatively by saying that he does not teaching oral expression. Whereas (9) of the teachers who answer positively by saying that they are teaching oral module this approximately (90%). This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of enhancing their oral proficiency and for the need to develop their speaking skills.

**Q4-Which of the following describes your students' level of oral proficiency?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
High	0	0
Above average	0	0
Average	4	40
Below average	6	60
Low	0	0
Total	10	100

**Table 17: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Level of Oral Performance.**



**Graph 17: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Level of Oral Performance.**

In this item, teachers are asked to describe students' level in oral performance. The majority of the teachers agree that their students' level is below average about (60%) of the sample. However, four (4) teachers out of 10 said that the level of their students in oral performance is average. But no one has chosen the choices of 'high', 'above average', and 'low'.

It seems to us that the majority of students do not have a good command of English. Supposedly, because they are weak in speaking or they are not interested in English and are not

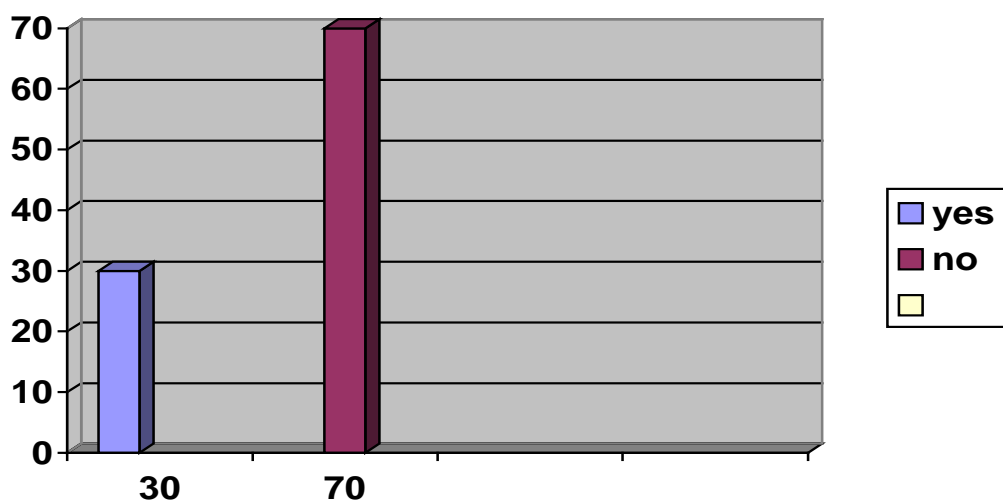


motivated to the language. This means that students need practice in talking to be able to develop their speaking skill.

**Q5-Can you say that your students are motivated to speak in English?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	3	30
No	7	70
Total	10	100

**Table 18: Teachers’ Perception of Students’ Motivation in Speaking.**



**Graph 18: Teachers’ Perception of Students’ Motivation in Speaking.**

From the results, the majority of the teachers (7) have indicated that their students are not motivated (70%), while 3 out of 10 teachers say that their students are motivated. The first thing that we can understand is that teachers who said that their students are unmotivated probably are not motivating their students, whereas others are motivating their students. And the second thing is that unmotivated students can be due to many reasons perhaps lack of self confidence, lack of interest in the language, or they fear to make grammatical mistakes.

**Q6- If your answer is “yes”, please what your strategies to motivate them are?**

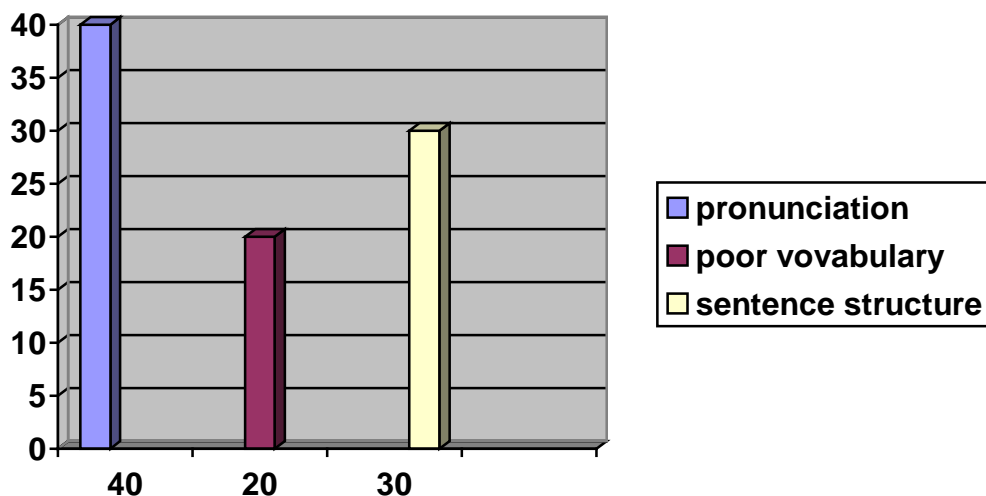
All the teachers explained that they raise their students' motivation through different ways. In the first place, they select topics of students' interest which stimulates them to use English. Also, organizing classroom debates about current topics and bringing in interesting activities encourage students to exchange ideas. Moreover, creating a relaxed and friendly environment in which students feel comfortable to use the language in front of their teachers and classmates.

To sum up, we can say that teachers' perception of different ways in raising students' motivation can be of great benefits in increasing students' oral participation.

**Q7- What are the most common difficulties in teaching the speaking skill?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Pronunciation	4	40
Poor vocabulary	3	30
Sentence construction	2	20
Total	10	100

**Table 19: Most Common Difficulties in Teaching Speaking.**



**Graph 19: Most Common Difficulties in Teaching Speaking.**

According to the results that we found, the majority of the teachers (40%) claim that their students have difficulties in pronunciation and they consider that as the most needed item of

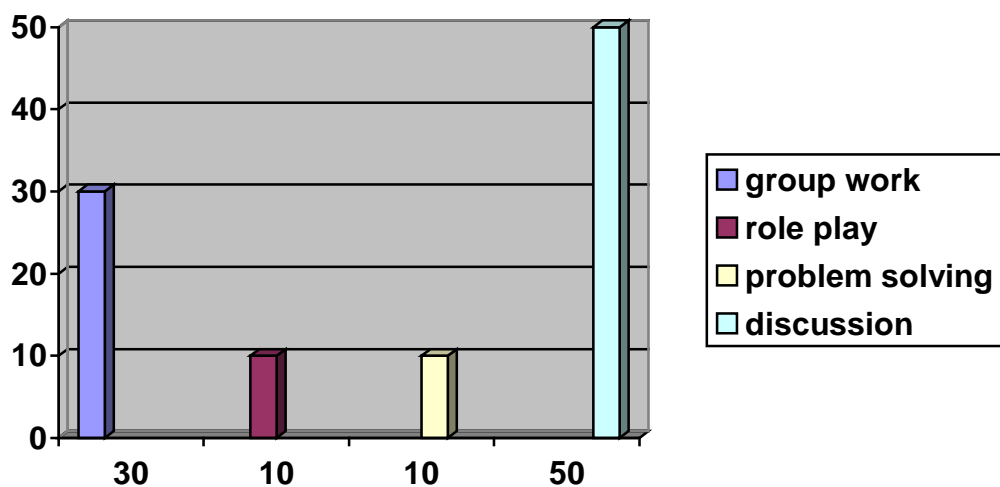
speaking, followed by sentence structure about (30%) who believes that it is needed item. Finally, vocabulary comes in the last position as the least needed item in teaching oral expression (20%).

All the teachers believe that all the language areas need improvement because they help them in mastering the language and using it correctly and the more learners practice, the better pronunciation they will get.

**Q8- Which of the following techniques do you most use?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Group work	3	30
Role play	1	10
Problem solving	1	10
Discussion	5	50
Total	10	100

**Table 20: Techniques that Teachers Use Most.**



**Graph 20: Techniques that Teachers Use Most.**

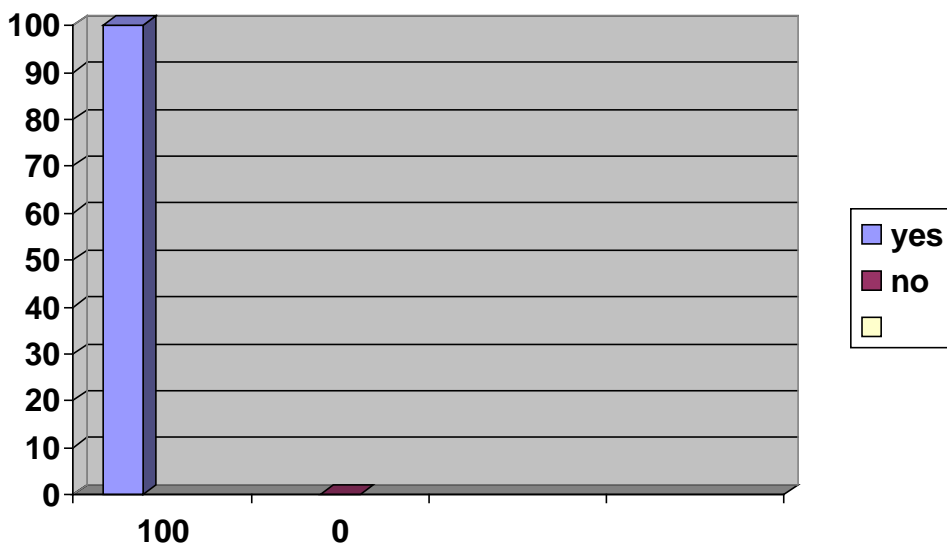
There are several ways for teaching the speaking skill. We have suggested four options for teachers to choose among them. Half of the teachers (50%) build confidence in discussion; to state differently, they focus less on grammar mistakes and insist on the communication of ideas. In the second position come those who make use of group work as a teaching technique. Teachers in favor of this type of technique may have their reasons such as that speaking is a social act in

which two or more people are involved in oral exchange of information, and students feel less inhibited and more confident in themselves to speak. The last two categories of teachers have worked on role-play and problem solving (10% for each category). Teachers who opted for these choices believe that students may derive great benefits from such techniques.

**Q9-Do you evaluate your students' oral production?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	10	100
No	00	00
Total	10	100

**Table 21: Teachers' Evaluation of oral skill.**



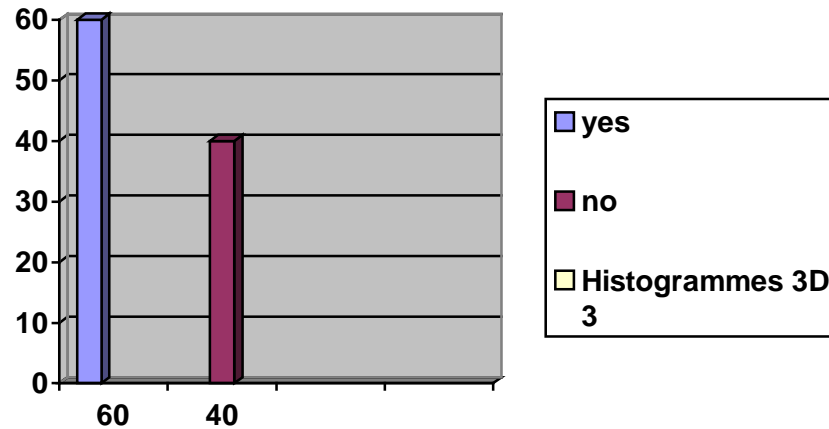
**Graph 21: Teachers' Evaluation of oral skill.**

From the analysis of the results, we found that all the teachers (10) provide evaluation for oral production as shown in figure 21 (i.e. 100%). So from that we understand that evaluation is recognized by many teachers to be essential aspects of foreign language teaching. It is obviously that every teacher differs from the other one when evaluating oral production but they must have in consideration all features when evaluating speaking production of course.

**Q10-Have you ever used cooperative language learning?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	6	60
No	4	40
Total	10	100

**Table 22: Teachers' Use of Cooperative Language Learning.**



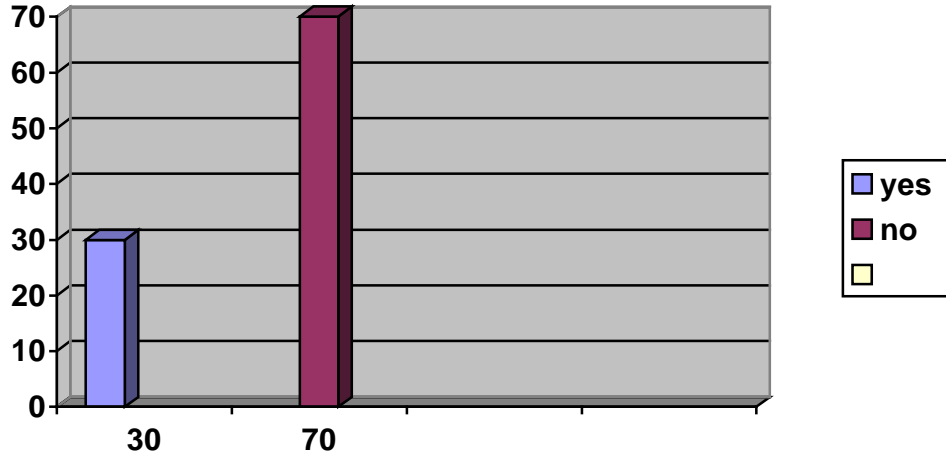
**Graph 22: Teachers' Use of Cooperative Language Learning.**

From the results of the table above, the majority of the teachers (60%) indicate that they use cooperative learning while (4) teachers out of the sample (40%) answer negatively and mentioned that they do not use it. Perhaps they do not have knowledge about it or have just a little about its implementation. For those who use cooperative learning, probably they know or aware about its benefits in teaching.

**Q11-Do you raise your students' awareness towards the value of cooperative work?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	03	30
No	07	70
Total	10	100

**Table 23: Teachers' Perception of the Value of Cooperative Work.**



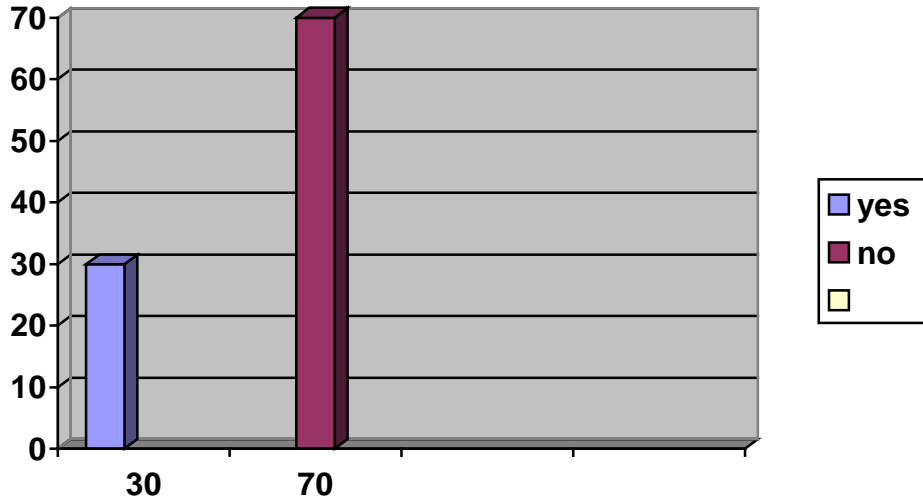
**Graph 23: Teachers' Perception of the Value of Cooperative Work.**

As shown in this table, a high proportion of teachers (70%) answered negatively. It means that when they set students to work collaboratively in pair or group work, they do not try to make their students aware of the potential benefits of this technique. Whereas (30%) has opted for the reverse choice and they indicate that they actually help their students when collaborating with each other to show for them the importance when working in groups. However, raising students' awareness of the value of cooperative learning is of great benefits to students because this would encourage them to participate more.

**Q12-Do your students face problems working in groups?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	3	30
No	7	70
Total	10	100

**Table 24: Teachers' Awareness of Students' Problems Faced in Cooperative work.**



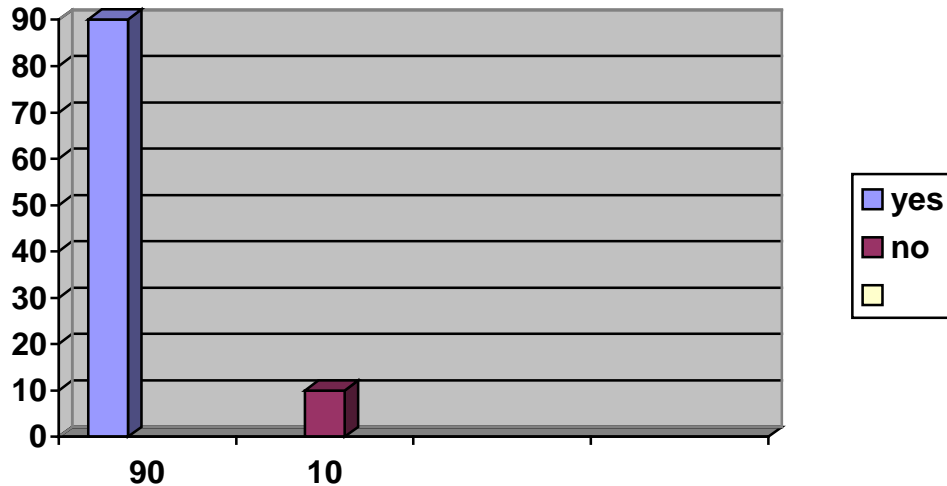
**Graph 24: Teachers' Awareness of Students' Problem Faced in Cooperative work.**

From the results of the table below, the majority of the teachers (7) out of 10 indicate that their students do not have any problems when collaborating in groups. But the rest of the teachers 3 it seems that they face some problems when their students work together with their classmates. This may due to many reasons; one possible reason is that some students prefer to work alone. Another possible interpretation is that some students are not interested at all in learning. Here came the role of the teacher by controlling his students in order to avoid problems.

**Q13-Do you think that cooperative group work enhances students' oral proficiency?**

Options	Response	Percentage %
Yes	9	90
No	1	10
total	10	100

**Table 25: Teachers' Evaluation of the Value of Cooperative learning**



**Graph 25: Teaches' Evaluation of the Value of Cooperative Learning**

From the results of the final question, 9 teachers (90%) believe that cooperative work enhanced students' oral production. While only one teacher (10%) who answered negatively.

Every teacher of the nine who believe in the advantages of cooperative work justifies their answers differently. One of the teachers claims that cooperative group work offers an effective technique of communicative interaction. It is believed that interaction and negotiation of meaning between students are of great importance for successful language learning. He adds saying that through cooperative learning, teachers provide more opportunities for each student to take part in the classroom and make his contribution. Two teachers claim that cooperative work can be used to increase motivation. This latter has a great effect on enhancing students' performance in English. And it provides a healthy atmosphere in which students learn from each other rather than complete to one another. While the rest of the teacher claimed that the role of cooperative group work as a technique of teaching reduces anxiety and encourages students to take risks.



## **5- Recommendations:**

### **1- Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire**

From the results obtained we focused on it can be said that we has discovered many factors on the attitude of teachers on teaching speaking and their perception of cooperative group work. Results from the analysis in this study led us suggest these recommendations.

- 1- All the teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of developing oral performance because they consider oral skills as their major concern.
- 2- Teachers of oral expression should do their best to improve the level of their students. They should vary their teaching strategies in oral skills.
- 3- For teaching speaking, most teachers opted for group work. As such, teachers would provide Students with language use and help them in increasing their oral proficiency.
- 4- Teachers need to show respect to their students' thoughts and opinions and accept that learners have different levels of achievement. They should know how to create motivation among students.
- 5- Teachers need to better understand meaningful ways of assessing students' oral production. It is suggested that negative evaluation might inhibit students' future participation.
- 6- Some teachers admit that their teaching does not consist in making students aware of the skills they adopt for effective learning. However, other teachers show the importance of these skills for an optimal and more productive learning to take place.
- 7- Teachers indicate that when teaching they do not have problems or do not seem to notice any problem.

- 8- Teachers' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for improving students' oral proficiency reveals their recognition of the effectiveness of this strategy.

## **2- Discussion of Students' Questionnaire**

From the results obtained of the students' questionnaire, we note that:

- 1- Students should give more importance to the speaking skills because the foreign language it is not just a writing language.
- 2- Foreign language teaching is one which creates situations where students interact and express their thoughts using the target language.
- 3- Learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language.
- 4- The majority of the students express their needs in terms of speaking skills.
- 5- Concerning the other skills, speaking reinforce the learning of the other skills.
- 6- Some students may be motivated to learn English; they feel afraid to speak and to communicate with their classmates because they fear to make mistakes in pronunciation or grammar, or fear of teachers' negative feedback. So here, teachers should encourage their students to talk in the classroom.
- 7- For the strategies of teaching, it seems that most of the students are interested in discussion and group work. Here comes the teachers' role to adapt the technique with encouragement of participation of more students.
- 8- Students showed different preferences for classroom arrangements (i.e. group work, pair work individual or seat work). However, teachers need to include the type of teaching that provides learners with a variety of opportunities for communicative interaction and language use.
- 9- Students' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique of teaching speaking implies students' willingness of that technique.

## **Conclusion**

Concerning the influence of cooperative group work on improving students' oral production and from the positive results that we revealed in this study have confirmed our hypothesis. From this we understand that there is a relationship between group work and oral production. Cooperative group work is one way of teaching which according to many years of research and practical application by hundreds of thousands of teachers, now exist for virtually every imaginable instructional purpose.

Now we know a great deal about the effects of group work on students and the condition necessary for effective group work, especially for teaching speaking.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

We are going to the close of this study which highlights some important aspects of the process of foreign language teaching / learning. Through this research, we hypothesized that if teachers introduce cooperative group work in EFL learners are going to improve the students' oral production, we should provide them with more opportunities to get the practice they need to use the language. We believe that the present application of cooperative group work to the field of language learning is essential for promoting oral communication because it creates a situation where learners are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps each other's understanding.

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

This study shows that **(1)** learners need to be provided with an effective instructional technique for improving the quality of learners' oral production; **(2)** teacher's responsibility is to create a relaxed and friendly situation where the learners can use the target language without hesitation; and **(3)** both teachers and learners should be aware of the necessary skill for effective learning to take place. Overall, this study is useful not only for the learners helping them to

improve their speaking and to teachers contributing to their understanding of the rules and the conditions necessary for effective learning. Future research should be done to test the applicability of the findings to larger population.

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