People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Language Arts and Foreign Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

Section of English

The Impact of Cooperative Group Work in Overcoming EFL Students' Speaking Difficulties

Case Study of Third Year EFL Students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Dissertation presented to the Department of Foreign Languages as Partial Fulfilment for the Master's Degree in Sciences of Languages

Presented by: Ayoub LAMARA   **Supervised by:** Mrs. Nachoua HASSINA

Board of Examiners

Chair: Dr. Ahmad BASHAR   University of Biskra

Supervisor: Mrs. Nachoua HASSINA   University of Biskra

Examiners: Mrs. Salima RABEHI   University of Biskra

            Mrs. Amina Zohra MEBARKI   University of Biskra

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Dedication

In the Name of ALLAH the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All the Praise is due to ALLAH alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds

This work is dedicated:

To my parents and all members of the family

My fiancée

To all my dear teachers

To all my friends

To everyone who helped me in order to accomplish this work

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The speaking skill is important in any language. Students who learn English as a foreign language usually face many difficulties when trying to speak English in order to communicate or to perform an oral activity. This study aims to set a clear relationship between the cooperative group work as a strategy and the EFL speaking difficulties faced by third year LMD students in the University of Mohamed Kheider of Biskra, and how it is an effective strategy to overcome those difficulties. The method of the research is purely descriptive, it aims to describe two variables: cooperative group work as the independent variable and its role in overcoming students' EFL speaking difficulties as the dependent variable. The data was collected through the use of questionnaires for both teachers who taught oral expression and students of third year LMD. The obtained results showed that the use of cooperative group work strategy can help EFL learners overcome their EFL speaking difficulties. Thus, this strategy should be implemented in oral classes more frequently.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

CL: Cooperative learning.

CLL: Cooperative language learning.

Q: Question

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between the EFL speaking difficulties and the role of the cooperative group work in overcoming them. The speaking skill in English language is a very complicated skill to master. Learners usually encounter many obstacles while developing their EFL speaking skill. Teachers use different ways and methods to improve their students' ability of speaking, but it is not working all the time. English learners face many difficulties when trying to do an oral activity because of several factors. Effective solutions are needed to make the students feel more comfortable when dealing with speaking tasks.

English learners in Algeria usually learn and practice English only in the classroom; teachers have to be aware about that. The methodology used in the classroom has a great influence on the learners' language development. Speaking is an important skill to develop for students because it allows them to communicate but they usually face many obstacles when trying to speak. Since the classroom is the primary situation in which they have the chance to use and practice oral English, teachers should use an effective method or strategy to increase the opportunity of language use. Dividing students into groups is one of the possible ways to provide them with more opportunities to practice their EFL speaking skill.

Cooperative group work is a dynamic way of interaction in language classroom; it is a classroom situation where students are working together in small groups. Through interacting with each other, learners have the opportunity to exchange ideas and thoughts, and an opportunity to practice language tasks. It aims to reduce learners' anxiety and get them involved in a language activity.

Speaking difficulties are those difficulties faced by learners when performing an oral activity such as the luck of vocabulary, poor grammar, anxiety, and pronunciation difficulties. They vary from one student to another, and there are common ones. The role

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of the teacher in the classroom is to help learners overcome those difficulties in order to make them develop their oral proficiency.

1. Aims and Significance of the Study

It is significant to know what difficulties faced by the EFL student when encountering an oral activity and to know how we can overcome those difficulties. In fact, many EFL learners do not know how to solve this problem and are not aware of the effectiveness of the cooperative group work strategy in overcoming those difficulties.

This research aims to put a clear relationship between the EFL speaking difficulties and the cooperative group work strategy, and how can the latter help EFL students overcome their difficulties.

2. Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of EFL speaking?
2. What are the psychological EFL speaking difficulties?
3. What is the nature of cooperative language learning?
4. What is the impact of the cooperative group work on overcoming EFL students' speaking difficulties?

3. Research Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if EFL third year students are using the cooperative group work strategy, they can overcome their EFL speaking difficulties.

4. Methodology

The research is mainly descriptive using the qualitative method to collect data. We used questionnaires as research tools. The participants of the questionnaires are both teachers and students selected randomly from third year LMD students of English language at the University of Biskra as a sample in order to know the common EFL speaking difficulties faced by the students, and to see both teachers' and students' attitude

towards the cooperative group work strategy. Collecting data is through analyzing and interpreting the results of both the questionnaires in order to answer the research questions and to confirm or reject the hypothesis.

4.1. Participants

Third year LMD students of English at the University of Biskra are chosen as a sample of our research because of their sufficient experience and knowledge about the EFL speaking skill and its difficulties. We choose sixty third year LMD students randomly to respond our questionnaire designed, in addition to six experienced teachers to participate the teachers' questionnaire.

4.2. Research Design

The Descriptive design is conducted in our research using the qualitative method. We plan to measure the impact of cooperative group work on students' EFL speaking difficulties. The research is divided into two main parts: the theoretical part and the practical one. In the theoretical part provides information about the two variables of the research, the independent variable which is the cooperative group work, and speaking difficulties as our dependent variable. While in the practical part, we analyze the data gathered in order to get results that confirms or reject our hypothesis. Semi-Structured questionnaires for both students and teachers is used for collecting data.

4.3. Instrumentation

In order to obtain valid data for our research, we implement the questionnaire technique for third year LMD students and for teachers. The questionnaires helps us identify the common EFL speaking difficulties that are faced by students and noticed by teachers, and know the attitudes of both students and teachers toward cooperative group work. Analyzing the data given by those two questionnaires gives the results of our research more reliability and credibility.

4.4. Procedure

The students' questionnaire are administrated to students while they were studying a course, each student is asked to answer the questionnaire alone in order to have valid results. The answers are gathered and analyzed. We have statistics about the EFL speaking difficulties encountered by students. This allows us to identify the common difficulties and the less common ones. The statistics also let us know the percentage of their preference for using the cooperative group work strategy. Microsoft Excel 2013 is used to do the statistics. Six teachers are asked to answer our questionnaire in order to benefit from their long experience and knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SPEAKING SKILL AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

Introduction

Speaking is a high complex skill to master for EFL students. The primary task of speaking in general is to convey messages and to express thoughts and emotions. It is not just a process of uttering words or sentences. It is not an easy task for EFL learners to speak English in the right way; one can be competent in knowing the language rules and structures but it is complex when it comes to speaking. Learners encounter many difficulties especially psychological ones due to the luck of exposure, practicing, and other aspects; they face those difficulties whenever they are asked to speak English. Language programs should focus on that skill and provide students with more speaking tasks, activities, and more exposure to the target language. The speaking skill needs more attentions by applied linguists and teachers because learners need to overcome their difficulties in order to communicate and convey their messages more effectively. This is actually the main reason of learning any foreign language.

1. **The Nature of Speaking**

Speaking latterly means producing words and sentences that represent one's thought. It is a process of constructing meaning that contains producing, receiving, and processing information (Lindsay and Knight, 2006). It is considered as a productive skill of the language. We speak for many purposes; in order to be understood by others, to share ideas and feelings, to express an opinion, and to respond to what already has been said by others. In other words, we speak in order to be sociable. Brown (2001) claims that speaking a language means that we can carry out a conversation successfully. He adds that a successful language acquisition requires being able to achieve pragmatic goals through oral interaction with other speakers.

Speaking in classroom situation is much different from speaking in casual contexts. Learners usually view the classroom as the only place where they can use and practice their spoken language that they are learning. They rely on classrooms to achieve speaking proficiency which is not an easy task. Fluent speaking in the target language needs huge efforts by the learner because it is not a matter of transferring the knowledge of the first

language into the learned language (Thornbury, 2007); even mastering the rules of grammar, vocabulary of the target language does not guarantee that learners will be able to speak effectively in that language because speaking is a high complex skill for EFL learners.

2. The Importance of Speaking

Speaking is a very important skill for EFL learners to acquire. It is an essential skill for communication. Actually, speaking is usually a priority for most English learners (Florez, 1999). Burkart & Sheppard states that successful language learning is measured in terms of carrying out a conversation in the target language (2004). Mastering speaking skill is significant because it allows EFL learners to interact appropriately with native speakers of the target language. Ur (1996) claims that speaking is the most important skill among the four skills because people who use a certain language are called speakers of that language. Thus, we can say that the use of language in real life situations is much more important than knowing about it and its rules. Scrivener (1994) argue that there is no point of knowing much about a language and its rules if we cannot use it and put it into practice. Therefore, English curriculums in our educational systems must focus on developing learner's oral production because it is the most required skill for communication, learners need to know how to use the target language in real contexts and they need to feel comfortable in classroom in order to create a motivational and supportive environment that allows them to speak and express their thoughts as Willis suggest:" *Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened*"(1996, p,7)

3. The Relationship between Speaking and other Skills

Learning a foreign language requires the learners to develop their four language skills. These skills are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The primary task of Language teachers is to develop their students' skills using different methods and techniques. Usually these skills are taught separately during language courses, the teacher focuses on speaking skill in one course, and the other course will focus on writing skill

for instance. Although they are taught separately but they are interrelated. This diagram shows the relationship between the four skills:
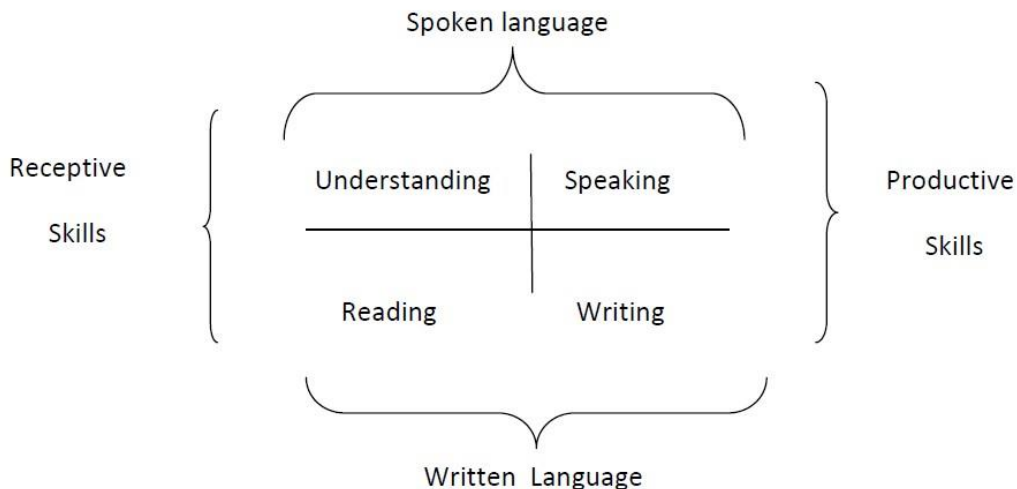
Diagram 1: Interrelationship of the Four Skills, (Donn Byrne 1976)

The diagram above shows that the four skills are related, yet it shows that they are divided into two main types. Listening (understanding) and reading are called the receptive skills because during these two skills we store information into our minds and we try to understand the message connived by other speakers or writers. On the other hand, speaking and writing are called the productive skills of the language. The leaner provides a feedback to the teacher when he speaks or writes. Through this feedback, the teacher is able to determine to what extant the learner is competent in the target language, and this will help him select the appropriate tasks and activities suitable for the learners in order to foster the learning process of the language.

3.1. Speaking Vs Writing

Writing is the ability to produce a peace of language in a correct, appropriate, coherent, and a cohesive form. Klein (1985) states that writing is the ability to express ideas and thoughts through the use of pan and paper. It is not a natural phenomenon; people learn to write at school rather than acquiring this skill naturally. Usually, writing is viewed by EFL learners as the most difficult skill to master. In the other hand, teachers find that teaching writing is the most challenging task for them.

In relationship with speaking, the two skills share some characteristics. Both skills are considered as the productive skills of the language as opposed to listening and reading. They are used to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Lindsay and Knight (2006) suggests that speaking and writing are similar in the way that when we speak, we speak differently according to the people we are talking to. Writing in the other way also depends on the category of readers we are writing to. Both speaking and writing varies according to whom we are addressing.

In comparison to speaking, both skills differ from each other in many ways. In spoken discourse, we use simple, short sentences, without giving much importance to the rules of grammar, cohesion and coherence. Whereas in written discourse is more organized, it takes the rules of grammar, cohesion and coherence into consideration; it involves the use of long and complex sentences. Speaking depends on the context that the speakers are involved; a specific use of language and vocabulary is carried out according to the situation unlike writing which is not highly concerned with it. Another difference suggested by Harmer (2005) is that in writing, usually we write to unknown audience; we put all the information on the page. The readers cannot ask for clarification in order to have a better understanding of the written production. Whereas speaking takes place in real time situations; when we speak, we are interacting with participants, we have the ability to change or modify our speech according to the participants we are dealing with. They can even stop us and ask questions for clarification. Finally, spoken discourse is less durable than the written one. It lives for only few moments, while written discourse is more durable, it may live for a long time, since it is used to record events.

3.2. Speaking Vs Listening

Listening is a complex skill for EFL learners and it is always related to speaking. It takes place when someone is speaking. It is a process of interpreting what the speaker is trying to convey using the listeners' prior knowledge as Anderson and Lynch states:

> Understanding is not something that happens because of what a speaker says: the listener has a crucial part to play in the process, by activating various types of

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knowledge, and by applying what he knows to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker means. (1988, p,6)

According to the latter definition, we can say that listening is a process of decoding the message conveyed by the speaker. It is a highly significant skill for EFL learners because it is usually the most frequent skill that they use even in their real life when using their mother tongue.

In classroom context, usually the language teacher is the speaker and the learners are the listeners. Since primary school, listening consumes a high percentage of the learners' time in the classroom more than any other skill. Coakley & Wolvin states that listening represent a central element in the lives of learners during all the educational levels that they pass (1997). Listening is considered as the primary means of incoming knowledge and information (Gilbert, 1988). Thus, it is an important task for the language teacher to make his learners able to listen in an effective manner.

In relationship with speaking, both skills are very important for EFL learners. Listening and speaking are the two main skills that takes place in a face-to-face communication, listening cannot be separated from speaking because they are interrelated. Byrne (1976) claims that listening is an essential skill; it has the same importance as the speaking one because both the speaker and the listener have a task to perform when having a conversation. Listeners usually focus on understanding the overall meaning of the speech they listen to rather than focusing on the form, i.e. they do not try to understand every single word uttered by the speaker but they attempt to obtain the general message.

4. Teaching Speaking

The Speaking skill is viewed by EFL learners as the most important skill needed to master. They believe that being fluent in the target language will allow them to communicate effectively with other speakers of that language. The classroom usually is the only place where EFL learners find the opportunity to practice and develop their

speaking skill. Thus, the task of the language teacher is to provide his learners with much opportunities to speak and guide them to be more fluent in the target language.

Teaching speaking is a highly significant task of language teacher in the classroom. According to Brown and Yule (1989), throughout history; language teaching did not put much focus on teaching spoken language. Language teaching devoted more importance to teaching writing because it was believed that it is the most important skill for language learners to acquire. Teaching speaking is not only a matter of asking the learners to produce sounds, it is much more than that. Nunan states: "*Speaking is the same as oral interaction which are conventional ways of presenting information, expression our idea and thought have in our mind*" (1991, p40). According to that definition, speaking is a way of expressing one's ideas and presenting new information to others. EFL learners do not need to be aware only of the linguistic rules of the language in order to speak effectively, but they also need to be aware of the sociolinguistic aspect of the language for successful oral communication.

Language teacher has to know what to teach in order to develop his learners' speaking skill. Nunan (2003) claims that teachers need to follow certain strategies in order to give more opportunities for learners to practice their spoken language. Nunan also suggests four conditions for the language teacher in order to teach speaking successfully: giving learners practice with fluency and accuracy, using group-work and pair-work strategies, plan speaking tasks that involves discussions, and preparing classroom activities that involve practice of speaking and guidance from the teacher.

5. Strategies for Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking for EFL learners is one of the most important tasks for language teacher. The teacher has to know how to make his students motivated to speak. He should use attractive and enjoyable techniques in order to engage all the learners in a speaking activity. The following represent few strategies that the language teacher can use in teaching speaking.

5.1. Group Work Activities

Group work basically means anything done by learners in groups. The learners during this activity are working together in a given task in a form of groups or unites. Group work provide the learners with opportunity to practice their spoken language through interaction with group members. Group work reduces the time of teacher talk inside the classroom (Mackay & Tom, 1999). Bright & McGregor (1970) believe that through group work activities help learners develop their linguistic and communicative competences. It also increases collaboration among EFL learners; it makes them work as a unit to achieve a task or to solve a certain problem.

Group work can be done in various ways such as role-play and games. Role-play is an activity where a group of learners are asked to perform in an imaginary situation giving each student a specific character. Usually it is one of the favorite activities for EFL learners, they find it fun and enjoyable. Language teachers is the one who select the topic of the role-play. For a successful role-play, that teacher has to choose a topic that is in the interest of his learners in order to make them motivated and encourage hesitant students to speak and express themselves. Instead of repeating what they memorized, learners during rule-plays feel free to speak and interact between each other spontaneously as Dickson states: "*Learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say.*" (1981, p. 382)

Another activity that can be put under group work strategy is the use of games inside the classroom. Games are effective way to engage learners to perform a specific task. They are designed to encourage interaction between learners in an enjoyable way. Learners interact with each other in order to solve a puzzle, complete gaps; find missing parts of something, draw a picture, find similarities and differences between two objects…Most of EFL learners find games a fun way of completing classroom tasks.

5.2. Oral Presentations

Oral presentation is one of the most used strategies of teaching speaking in EFL classrooms. It is usually an individual activity for learners. The learner presents a topic or

a subject matter to the teacher and his classmates individually for a long duration of time. Oral presentations are useful for learners who study a target language for academic purposes (Thornbury 2007, p, 94). Since oral presentations are often done in an individual way, Schcolnik and Kol (1999) claims that they affect positively the learning process. They states that working in an individual way increases learners' autonomy and privacy; it also helps them to depend on themselves when learning. Oral presentations can also be performed in pairs or even in groups depending on the nature of the topic and the objectives of the language teacher.

There are two main types of oral presentations: controlled, guided, and free presentations. According to Al Issa (2010), the controlled type of presentation indicates that the topic which is provided in the textbook or decided by the teacher should be easy and familiar for learners in order to make them confident to present more complex topics in the future. In the guided type, the teacher chooses the topic of the presentation suitable for his learners according to their language proficiency. While in the free type, learners have the freedom to choose a topic that they prefer, using any kind of language level suitable for them. Learners in this type of presentation are able to use high structured language and perform for a longer time than the previous types. The free type of oral presentation should be the type used in our EFL classrooms for the fact that it is preferred by EFL learners where they can decide what to present by their own, and because of its positive outcomes on the learning process.

5.3.Discussions

Discussions is another strategy of teaching speaking that can be applied to EFL classrooms and probably the most used strategy by language teachers. It is the context when learners exchange ideas and opinions about a certain topic of discussion. The language teacher is the one who select the topic and the one who guide the learners so they will not discuss points that are irrelevant to the topic of discussion. It can be done individually i.e. each student express his own point of view. It can be done also in a form of groups. Within each group, learners interact with each other and share different opinions coming to agree on one point of view in order to share it with the other groups.

Discussions may last around quarter an hour or even the whole session according to the level of the learners. When learners are highly competent in the target language, this can lead to long discussions.

Language teacher's task during discussions is to facilitate the process for his learners. The main interest of this strategy is the learner himself; it is directed to him. While the teacher plays the role of a guide for his learners (Hill and Ruptic 1949; in Byrne, 1976). The teacher should always provide the learners with common topics that every learner has an idea about in order to obtain well organized and rich discussions. The role of the teacher is highly important. He has to follow the process and guide it, try to show the learners to do an effective discussion, encourage slow learners to engage in the discussion, help them convey their opinions, and make them clear for other learners.

Discussions are often a good strategy of teaching speaking and beneficial for EFL learners. It helps learners improve both their listening skill and their speaking proficiency through interactions with each other. It encourages shy learners to engage with others and express their opinions. It gives the teacher the opportunity to observe his learners and evaluate their level in the target language. It also provides learners with the opportunity to practice their spoken language in an effective way and at the same time, giving feed-back to the teacher about their speaking proficiency. All the previous points represent advantages of classroom discussions which can help increasing the process of learning and teaching the target language.

6. Speaking and Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behavior. It is actually an abstract term that is difficult to be given a precise definition. The   modern psychologists define it as the study of behavior and mental processes (Coon and Mittrer, 2007). Psychology is considered as a social science because it deals with thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals whether alone or within a group or an environment. It is a wide range science that includes sub-fields that deals with different areas of interests. Psychology developed through history and it has different schools and theories. The work of psychologists can

be noticed in almost every field of life such as pedagogy, medicine, sport, economy... Thus, it became of the most important science that helps us understand the human behaviors and provide us with theories of how do we think and how should we deal with other individuals psychologically.

Psychology has different sub-fields, one of theme is what is referred to as "Educational psychology". Skinner (1958) defines educational psychology as a branch of psychology that deals with teaching and learning. Walter (1970) suggests another definition which says: "*Educational Psychology is the study of those facts and principles of psychology which help to explain and improve the process of education*". According to those definitions, we can say that educational psychology is a tool that provides the teacher with a better understanding of his learners and their differences. It allows the teacher to know all the problems that are faced by the learners and enables him to solve them effectively. Educational psychology helps the teacher improve the teaching and learning processes; it enables him to understand what factors are responsible for a better learning such as motivation, self-confidence and others, and how to increase them for the learners. It also allows the teacher to know his students' needs and how to address them. The knowledge of educational psychology is highly significant for every teacher in any course for the fact that it is one of the most important keys for better learning and teaching experiences.

In relationship with speaking, psychology plays a great role on how an individual produces an oral production. Each learner has his own psychological status and that determines how each one of them speak. When trying to express themselves, most of EFL learners do not feel at ease, they tend to show hesitation, much repetition, pauses, unreasonable expressions, and huge difficulty to express the intended meaning (Rivers, 1968). Since the main goal of teaching oral expression is to enhance EFL learners' speaking skill, language teachers should make their learners feel at ease and provide them with comfortable environment in order to create a well-conditioned context of improving their oral proficiency.

7. Psychological Speaking Difficulties

EFL learners face huge difficulties when speaking English; psychological difficulties are from the most encountered ones. Those difficulties make an obstacle for EFL learners in the way of reaching oral proficiency. Schwartz (2005) states that difficulties such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, and lack of interest in the subject commonly hinter learners to speak.
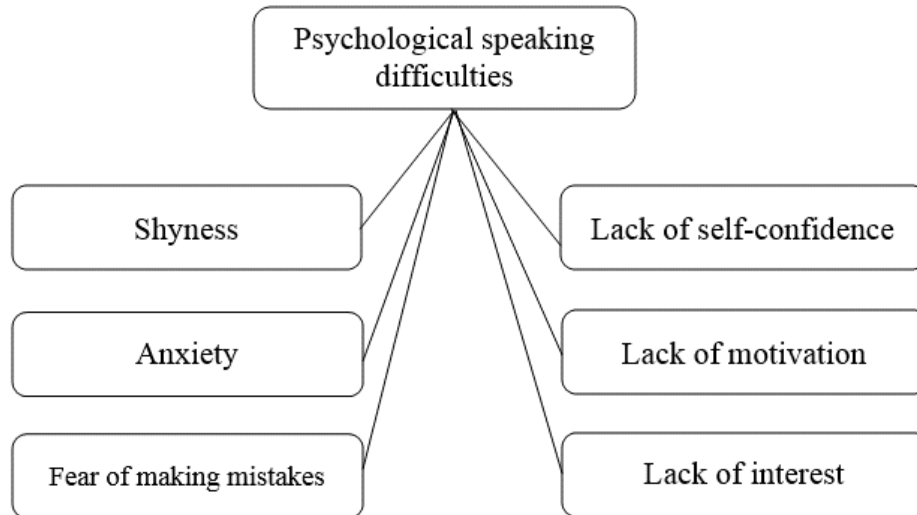
Diagram 2: Psychological Speaking Difficulties Based on Schwartz (2005).

7.1. Shyness

Shyness is a feeling of fear, lack of comfort, and awkwardness. Payne (2015) defines shyness as:

> Shyness can be defined as a feeling of discomfort or inhibition in social or interpersonal situations that keeps you from pursuing your goals, either academic or personal. Shyness results in excessive self-focus and worry, often preoccupation with your thoughts, feelings or physical reactions.

According to this definition, Shyness is status of fear and incapability to do something that is needed to be done. It is a natural feeling that is experienced by all people, but its degree differ from one another.

In EFL speaking classrooms, shyness is one of the most appearing phenomenon among learners. It represents a huge difficulty for EFL learners especially during speaking classes. Shy students tend to avoid answering questions or participating in the speaking courses which is actually a disadvantage toward developing their oral proficiency because it prevents them to perform a speaking task in the best way they can. According to Baldwin (2011), speaking in front of people is one of the most common fears for students, they face the feeling of shyness that makes them unable to think and forget what they want to say. Shy learners are exposed to the possibility of not being heard by their teachers (Freidman, 1980). However, there are learners who became orally proficient even though they are shy inside the class (Morris, 1979).

Shyness appears in EFL classrooms for certain reasons. Robby (2010) states that shyness can appear because of the nature of the learner; learners who are very quiet by their nature tend to be shy because they find that speaking in front of the class is a threatening activity. Saurik (2011) adds that shy students avoid speaking because they are afraid to make mistakes when they speak and afraid of being laughed at by their classmates because of their low oral proficiency. Thus, shyness is a huge obstacle for EFL learners that requires the teacher to help his/her students overcome it.

7.2. Anxiety

According to the aims of many researchers, it is difficult to give a clear definition of anxiety as an affective variable in language learning, this is due to the description of anxiety in terms of behaviors associated with it. Brown (1987) cites that it is impossible to identify anxiety in a simple sentence, while Scovel (1978) points out that anxiety is the state of vague fear and apprehension associated mainly and indirectly with an object which is measured by behavioral and physiological tests or self-reports of internal feelings and reactions. Horwitz *et al.* (1986) believe that anxiety is a self-tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system. Both McIntyre and Gardner (1994) defines anxiety as a state of fear and tension, which is associated especially with foreign language contexts, which, in turn, includes speaking. Taken all together, it can be said that language anxiety is the sum of

feelings of apprehension, fear, tension, nervousness, responses to perceived or real threats specific to second language learning and performance.

In relationship with speaking, anxiety is a common difficulty encountered by EFL learners. It affects the speaking performance of the learners and leads them to other difficulties. Foreign language students in the University of Texas suggested some problems caused by anxiety and how can they influence the language learning. According to Howitz *et al.* (1986) the main cause of anxiety is speaking. Those are some difficulties suggested by the students:

● Difficulty in speaking in the classroom is the main concern of foreign language students. Students reported that they would feel comfortable if they prepare their speech before entering the classroom, in other hand, they tend to freeze in the unprepared or the free speech in the class.

● Difficulty in understanding the content of the input. Some students reported that they barely or sometimes never understand the teacher's speech when he is talking in the target language.

● Speaking in a test situation is a real difficulty for some learners; they tend to forget what they already know because they face difficulties in concentrating during the test.

● Students avoid speaking situations to avoid anxiety. Anxious students show avoidance behavior and that can lead to escape the whole class.

Speaking anxiety is a real difficulty for EFL learners and it needs to be treated by the language teacher. Teachers need to create a comfortable environment for their learners in order to make them feel at ease when performing a speaking task. According to Harmer (2007), in order to reduce anxiety, teachers need to focus on learners' strengths and weaknesses so they can create a suitable learning method for all learners. Thus, the teacher's role is important in helping EFL learners with this difficulty.

7.3. Fear of Making Mistakes

Fear of making mistakes is another common difficulty faced by EFL learners. It refers to the situation when learners are afraid to express themselves because they fear negative evaluation or criticism by the teacher and being laughed at by their classmates (Aftat, 2008) According to Robby (2010), Fear of making mistakes is of the most spread difficulties for EFL learners during speaking courses. EFL learners are worried how others will see them or judge them; they do not want to look foolish or silly in front of their teacher or classmates so they avoid participating and getting involved in classroom activities in order to escape these embarrassing situations (Kurtus, 2001).

Fear of making mistakes is a serious problem for EFL learners that is needed to be dealt with by the teachers. Language teachers need to change the learners' view of making mistakes from a negative to a positive one. They should make them believe that making mistakes is not a problem, but it is a way of learning because we all learn from our mistakes even in real life situations.

7.4. Lack of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is generally referred to as our beliefs towards our abilities and capabilities and how we see them. This concept is usually referred to as self-esteem. Though the two terms are close in meaning and used interchangeably they are not the same. According to Rosenberg, being self-confident means that:

> The individual simply feels that he is a person of worth; he respects himself for what he is, but he does not stand in awe of himself nor does he expect others to stand in awe of him. He does not necessarily consider himself superior to others. (1979, pp 30-31)

Furthermore, Norman and Hyland (2003) suggests that self-confidence includes three aspects:
● Cognitive: refers to the individual's awareness of their abilities.

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● Performance: refers to the individual's capability to perform something.

● Emotional: refers to the individual's sensation towards the two previous aspects.

According to the previous definition and the three aspects, we can say that self-confidence is knowing our abilities, how to use them, and having faith in them.

In relationship with EFL classrooms, lack of self-confidence represents a real difficulty for learners that hinters them from achieving oral proficiency. He and Chen (2010) stats that learners' low ability of speaking English is the primary reason of their lack of self-confidence. Brown (2001) claims that when language teachers are not encouraging their learners sufficiently, this also leads to learners' lack of self-confidence in the classroom. Thus, the role of the teacher is significant, as Kubo (2009) suggests: in order to increase learners' self-confidence, teachers need to provide their learners with more opportunities to practice their spoken English in the classroom.

7.5. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is one of the most significant key factors for successful language learning. Many studies proves that EFL learners with high motivation to learn English tend to be more successful in learning than learners with low motivation. According to Piccioli (2014), there are two types of motivation:

●Intrinsic motivation: when the learner is motivated from within, he is learning or performing a task because he has the desire to do it for his own benefit.

● Extrinsic motivation: when the learner is motivated from another source, for instance:

in order to pass an exam, avoid a punishment.
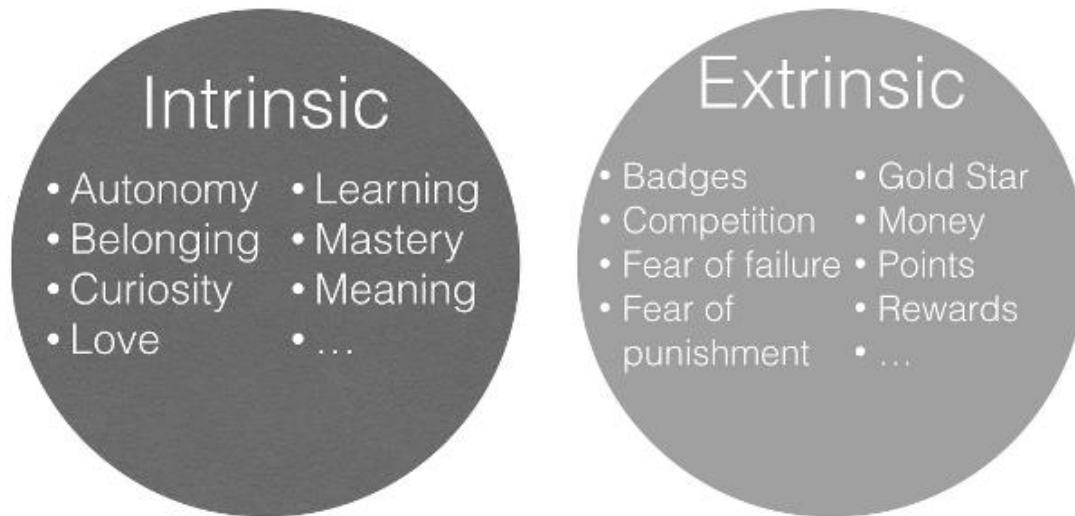
Diagram 3: Types of Motivation (Piccioli, 2014)

It is clear that intrinsic motivation is more advantageous for EFL learners because it lasts longer than the extrinsic one. Many studies assure that this type have a huge importance in encouraging success. Intrinsic motivation strengthens the learner's attention and makes him willing to use and devote all his energy in learning tasks.

Lack of motivation characterizes another common difficulty for EFL learners in the classroom. Gardner (1994) (in Nunan, 1999) states that there are causes that leads to students' lack of motivation such as boredom, tedious way of teaching, lack of relevant materials, and lack of awareness towards the aims of the program being taught.. Badu (2010) claims that lack of motivation in the classroom causes learners' feeling of hesitation to speak English. The role of teacher is highly important, Harmer (2001) underlines the importance of the teacher in creating a helpful and pleasant atmosphere in the classroom through keeping and developing his students' motivation. Siegel (2004) (in Aftat, 2008) states that learners' motivation is the product of effective teaching; motivating EFL learners requires the teacher to inspire and interest his students to communicate in English. Thus, learners' motivations depends on the performance of the teacher which is a fact that language teachers should consider.

5.1. Lack of Interest in the Subject

The last difficulty that we are going to tackle is the lack of interest in the subject. It refers to the situation when EFL learners are exposed to topics that they don't have much knowledge about or they just see it as uninteresting topics to discuss. They don't have any interest to participate or to speak about that topics. Thus, language teachers should provide their learners with familiar and attracting subjects in order to encourage the learners to speak as Thornbury states:

> Familiarity with the topic: the greater the familiarity, the easier the speaking task …feeling towards the topic and/ or the participants generally, if you are well disposed to the topic are talking about, and/or the other participants, the easier it is likely to be. (2005, p.25)

Indeed, unfamiliar and uninteresting subjects hinter EFL learners from speaking English because they simply do not have anything to say; consequently, they remain silent. While well-chosen topics by the teacher that suits learners' knowledge and interest have a great positive effect on learners' participation and engagement on speaking activities inside the classroom.

There are other psychological difficulties. However, the previous difficulties are the most common ones faced by EFL learners according to psychologists. Those difficulties need to be treated so learners express themselves successfully.

Conclusion

By the end of this chapter, we have seen that the EFL speaking skill is indeed a significant skill for EFL learners and one of their important concerns because it is the primary skill for communication. Therefore, improving it is a major priority for EFL learners. We have also tackled the psychological difficulties that encounter the learners when performing speaking tasks and activities, and how they hinter them from achieving oral proficiency. The role of the teacher is truly central in helping and showing his/her students how to overcome these difficulties by using different techniques and strategies.

CHAPTER TWO

COOPERATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

Cooperative language learning (CLL) is one of the most popular and successful approaches of teaching and learning foreign languages. In general it refers to the context when language learning takes place through the use of group formatting. Through the use of CLL, EFL learners are able to exchange thoughts and opinions, interact with each other, each member of the group share his/her efforts and knowledge with other members and try to accomplish a common learning goal by working together (cooperatively). Within this chapter, we will discover what is cooperative language learning, how it works, how it can be implemented in EFL classrooms, its characteristics, types, goals, and benefits to the learning process.

1. **Overview of Cooperative Language Learning**

Cooperative learning appeared in the United States on 1806 in New York City; it was brought from England to a school of Lancastrian origin (Johnson and Johnson, 1987). Because the students of this school were from different cultures and backgrounds, the primary reason of adopting this technique for this school was to increase American socialization (Marr, 1997).

The term "cooperative language learning" appeared in the twentieth century. It was generally founded on the work of Piaget (1965) and Vygotsky (1962). Their theories donated much importance to the use of discussions, problem solving activities, and the role of social interaction in the learning process. Richards and Rodgers (2001) states that the principal of CLL is that through interacting in socially and pedagogically situations with each other, learners develop their communicative competence in language. CLL developed over the years and now it became one of the most popular approaches of learning foreign languages because of its effectiveness in the learning and teaching processes.

2. The Nature of CLL

Cooperative language learning has been defines by various researchers. Each one of them view CLL from a different angle. However, all of them share the same interest of showing its importance. Johnson *et al*. (1994; in Richards and Rodgers) states that:

> Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (2001, p195).

Olsen and Kagan (1992) defines CLL as an organized group learning activity in which learning relies on the social interaction and the exchange of information between learners in groups, each member of a group is responsible for his/her own learning and is motivated to improve the learning of other members of the group. Cooperative language learning is not just a matter of group work, there is a huge difference between CLL and traditional group work, the latter indicates that learners work in groups for the sake of working in groups only. However, CLL means that learners are working in groups and as groups; in this situation, group work is carefully structured, planned, and evaluated (Jacobs, 1997). Unlike traditional learning and teaching methods, CLL is viewed as a "learner centered" rather than 'teacher centered' which is the case of many traditional methods.

Considering all the previous definitions together, we can say that CLL is a teaching approach in which learners from different backgrounds and social status are working together cooperatively. Each member of a group contributes with his/her efforts and share knowledge with the other members in order to achieve a common goal which enhances the learning process.

3. Elements of CLL

According to Johnson and Smith (1991), Cooperative language learning has five essential elements in order to be effective:

ELEMENTS

- Positive Interdependence
- Promotive Interaction
- Individual Accountability
- Interpersonal Skills
- Group Processing

Cooperative Learning Model

ACTIONS

- "sink or swim together"
- "promote each other's success"
- "no hitchhiking ! no social loafing"
- "ask clarifying questions to members"
- "ask what has been a success and what can be improved"
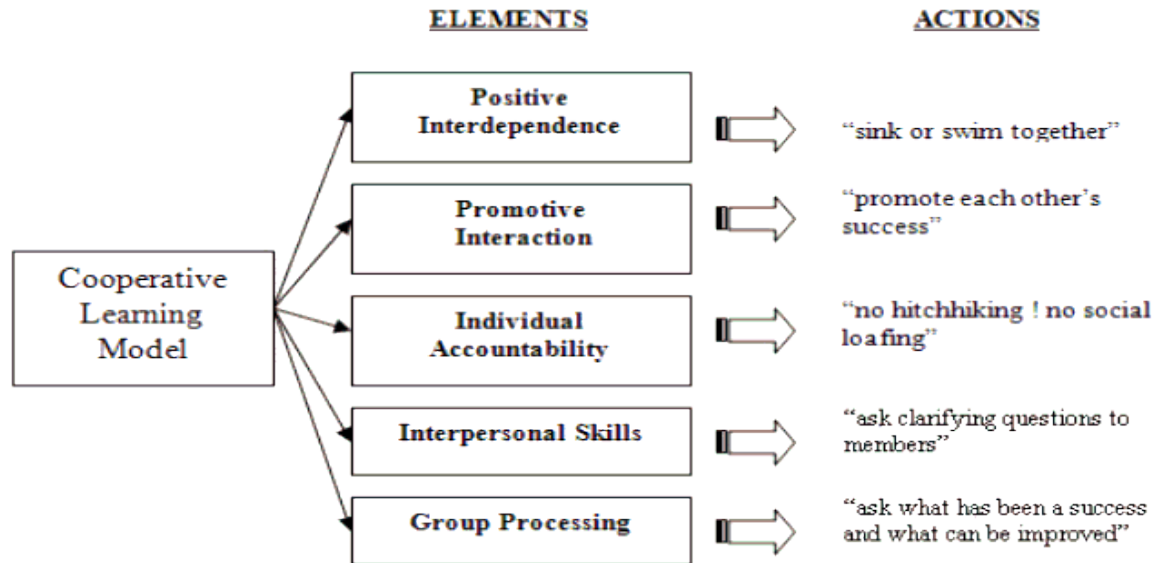
Diagram 4: Elements of CLL Based on Johnson and Smith (1991, in Neo *et al*. 2012)

3.1. Positive Interdependence

Positive interdependence is the first and the most important element of CLL. It refers to the perception that students of the same group must believe that they 'sink or swim together' i.e. they are linked together and they share the same fate. One member cannot succeed unless the other members of the same group succeed too and the vice versa. Learners have to be cooperative, they bring together their efforts with the efforts of their group mates, share their knowledge, and support each other in order to complete a specific task or activity. Learners in this situation have two responsibilities: learn the given material and make sure that all of the members of the group learn the material too. When positive interdependence takes place, we can observe that each member's effort is needed for group success and that each member has his/her own contribution in which it is joint to other members' contributions because each member has unique resources, knowledge, role, and responsibilities (*ibid*).

3.2. Promotive Interaction

Promotive interaction is the second element of an effective CLL suggested by Johnson and Smith. It is also called 'face-to-face' promotive interaction. It occurs when the member of a group facilitate, encourage, help, and support each other to learn or accomplish a group goal. They promote each other's learning orally. This means that learners are supposed to discuss with each other the provided learning material, cooperate in order to solve problems being encountered. They provide each other with efficient help, support, and assistance in order to facilitate the learning material. Promotive interaction results in promoting members success which, in turn, leads to high achievements as well as it enables the learners to better know each other in both personal and professional levels (Johnson and Smith, 1991).

3.3. Individual Accountability

The third essential component of is what is referred to as individual accountability. This term takes place when the performance of a member of a group is being assessed by the teacher. The result of that assessment is given to the member who has been assed and to his/her group. In this way; the group is able to know which member needs more help and assistance in order to complete a given task. Individual accountability takes into account the performance of both the individual and the whole group. The learners have to be committed to the principal that there are 'no hitchhike! no social loafing' which means that they cannot spy on other groups' work and that they have to depend on each other only. Since CLL helps each member of a group to be a stronger as an individual. After completing a cooperative learning activity, learners are expected to perform the same activity or task being performed by CL on their own without any help. Individual accountability makes the teacher able to determine if the group members are strengthened through learning cooperatively. In order to assess learners individually and to check the amount of efforts a member is contributing to the his/her group's work, individual accountability can be promoted by some common ways such as: making the size of groups small, testing each learner individually, calling students randomly to present their group work orally in front of the class, and asking the learners to teach what they learned to another learner from different group (*ibid*).

3.4. Interpersonal Skills

The fourth element of CLL is the appropriate use of small-group and interpersonal skills. According to Johnson & F Johnson (1991), in order to get an effective group work, learners of the same group have to: be familiar with each other, trust each other, communicate and interact clearly and freely, accept each other for who they are, support each other, and quickly solve any encountered conflict. Teachers should not believe that by telling their students to work cooperatively, they necessarily have the required skills for that. Teachers must consider teaching their learners interpersonal and social skills such as: leadership, trust-building, decision-making, communication, and how to deal with conflicts as any other taught academic skills. Interpersonal skills are required for an effective CLL especially if the members of the same group are from different backgrounds and cultures (*ibid*).

3.5. Group Processing

The last elements that is required for an effective CLL is group processing. It refers to the context when members of a group evaluate their functions and contributions to the group work. The purpose of group processing is to clarify and develop members' contributions to the overall efforts of the group in order to reach their goals. Learners discus to what extent they are accomplishing their goals, asking what has been a success and what can be improved which means that member explore what actions are useful and non-useful and decide what actions should be kept and what should be changed. This, teachers must give their learners a sufficient time that enables them to evaluate their work efficiently (*ibid*).

Those were the five elements that cooperative language learning suggested by Johnson and Smith (1991). When these elements are found together within groups of EFL learners, they enables learners how to work together in an effective way. It also allows the teachers to use CLL in his/her classroom with its full benefits for the students which, in turn, can improve the learning process and can contribute in increasing the academic and social development for the learners.

4. Goals of CLL

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the goals of CLL can be summarized as follows:

● Providing learners with opportunities of natural language acquisition via interaction with pairs and group activities.

● Providing teachers with a methodology that helps them accomplishing the previous goal and that suits different curriculum settings.

● Providing learners with opportunities to develop their communication strategies, and maximize their learning process.

● Creating a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom that motivates learners and reduces their stress and anxiety.

● Enabling the teacher to make his/her students focus on a specific subject such as: structure of language, communicative function.

5. Types of CLL

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1998) Cooperative language learning has three major types which are the following:

5.1. Formal CLL

The first type cooperative language learning is the formal one. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec states: "*Formal cooperative learning groups ensure that students are actively involved in the intellectual work of organizing material, explaining it, summarizing it, and integrating it into existing conceptual structures. They are the heart of using cooperative learning*" (*ibid*, p. 17). Thus, formal CLL is the situation when learners are working together in a range of one course time or several weeks to achieve certain learning goal or to complete a given task. Furthermore, the teacher in formal CLL has five roles:

● Specify the objectives of the lesson.

● Make decisions about the number of students of each group, students' rules in their groups, and arranging the classroom.

• Explain and clarify the goal of the lesson or the assignment for the students.

• Monitor students' learning and help learners by answering their questions and showing them how to use their interpersonal skills.

• Evaluate the work of the students and explain to them how well they functioned and how well they collaborated together (Holubec, 1998).

5.2. Informal CLL

The informal cooperative language learning is the second type suggested by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec. It involves having students working together in groups for a temporal period of time. It lasts from few minutes to the whole course time. The informal type of CLL is implemented for direct teaching such as lectures and demonstrations. It can be used in order to make the learners concentrate on the material being taught by the teacher, to set an encouraging mood for learning, to help learners to have a clue about the lesson to be learned, to make sure that learners mentally process the given material, and to make the students exposed to an upcoming instructional session (*ibid*).

5.3. Cooperative Base Groups

The last type suggested by Holubec (1998) is what is called 'cooperative base groups'. It refers to long term cooperative groups that lasts at least one year, with a stable membership. The purpose of cooperative base groups is to make the members of the same group provide each other with help, encouragement, assistance, and support in order to enhance each other's academic progress. It provides learners with long-lasting and strengthened relationships in which the members of a group meet daily to discuss the learning process of each member, determine each other's weaknesses, and try to overcome them. Cooperative base groups tend to improve the learning process of the learners, their social skills, and to make them work cooperatively whenever they face problems with learning or any other aspects.

6. CLL Strategies in the Classroom

Implementing cooperative language learning in EFL classroom requires certain activities. Arends (2004) suggests the most used activities that can be used by the teacher to implement CLL in his/her classroom which are the following:

6.1. Jigsaw

Jigsaw is one of the most effective activities of CLL that is based on sharing information between group members. This activity is suitable for language classes and can address the four skills. During Jigsaw, learners are divided into groups of five members. Each member has a specific role or material to learn. Then the learner is asked to teach other members that unique information that he/she has learned. The teacher is able to assess the learners with this activity (*ibid*).

6.2. Three-Step Interview

Another activity of CLL that can be used in EFL classrooms is what is referred to as "three-step interview'. Each member choses another member as a partner. In the first step the member will start interviewing this partner by asking some clarifying questions. Then, in the second step, the two members reverse their roles. Finally, in the third step, the two members share their answers and opinions with the rest of the group. This activity help learners express themselves in the target language, and represents one of the great activities for language speaking classes (*ibid*).

6.3. Think-Pair-Share

Think-pair-share is another effective activity of CLL that can be used in EFL classrooms. It is suitable for all types of language classes. It has three steps; first, the teachers asks a question and the learners think about the answer silently. Secondly, each member of a group chooses a partner to exchange ideas and thoughts about that question. Finally, the pairs share their answers with other pairs, the whole group, or the entire class. This activity encourages learners to speak about themselves in the target language especially if they are new to the class (*ibid*).

6.4. Round Robin Brainstorming

Round robin brainstorming is another CLL activity where learners perform a brainstorm process with round robin style. Round robin style takes place when learners sit around a table while performing an activity together. The teacher divide the learners into small groups; from four to six members with one students selected as a recorder. Then, he asks them a question with many possible answers. The students are given time to think about the right answer. After that, the members share their answers with their group mates in a round robin style. The recorder take notes of the all the answers of the group members. The learner next to the recorder starts answering and all the members are given the opportunity to share their answers (Arends, 2004).

6.5.Numbered Heads

Numbered heads is a CLL activity where the use of numbers takes place. The teacher divide the class into small groups of four members. Each member is given a number from one to four. Then, each group is asked a question by the teacher. The group members work together trying to answer the question, and they finish with one shared answer. Finally, the teacher calls a number (three for instance) and each member with number three from all groups is asked to give the answer (*ibid*).

6.6.Team Pair Solo

Team pair solo is a CLL activity that aims to develop learners' competence of solving problems. It includes three steps: first, learners solve a problem as a group, then as partners, and finally by themselves. The problems are usually beyond the learners' abilities i.e. they are not able to solve these problems on their own. However, students can be more successful when they are assisted which is the notion of mediated learning. Through this activity, and by working as a team and as partners, learners develop their ability to solve the encountered problems on their own without the need of any help which is the main goal of 'team pair solo' (*ibid*).

6.7. Three-Minute Review

Three minute review is a simple activity of CLL also suggested by Arends that can be done within the lecture. During this activity, the teacher asks the groups to review what they learned during the lecture or discussion in a matter of three minutes. Allowing them to ask and answer clarifying questions. This activity shows the teacher how well the learners understood the lesson he/she taught.

6.8. Circle the Sage

Circle the sage is another activity of CLL that involves learners are interacting with other groups. Group of students represents a sage. In the first step, the teacher makes a survey to discover each student' special knowledge. After that, the teacher asks the learners to surround a sage (group of students) in which the sage does not include students from the same team. The learners of the same sage will learn from each other. Then, the sage gives a lecture about their special knowledge to the rest of their classmates, while the latter are listening, writing down their notes, and asking clarifying questions. The teacher after that asks each member to return to his/her group and explain to their groups what they learned. Since each member has been to a different sage, they compare their new knowledge which may include disagreements. Finally, the whole class discuss those disagreements and tries to find solutions for them (*ibid*).

6.9.Partners

The last activity of CLL suggested by Arends is what is called 'partners'. During this activity, the teacher divides the class into groups of four members. Then, he/she divides each group into two, each two members of the same group represent partners. The teacher asks each partners to complete an assignment in order to teach it the other partners that are of the same group. Each partners work together and help each other to learn the given material. After that, each partners return to their group and teach each other what they learned. Partners are able to test their group mates according to what they taught them. Finally, groups assess and evaluate their learning and try to discover how they can improve the process.

In addition to the previous strategies suggested by Arends; there are other strategies that can be used in the classroom. Role-plays and the use of games are considered as two common CLL strategies since they are done in groups in which learners work together to complete a specific task.

7. The Benefits of CLL
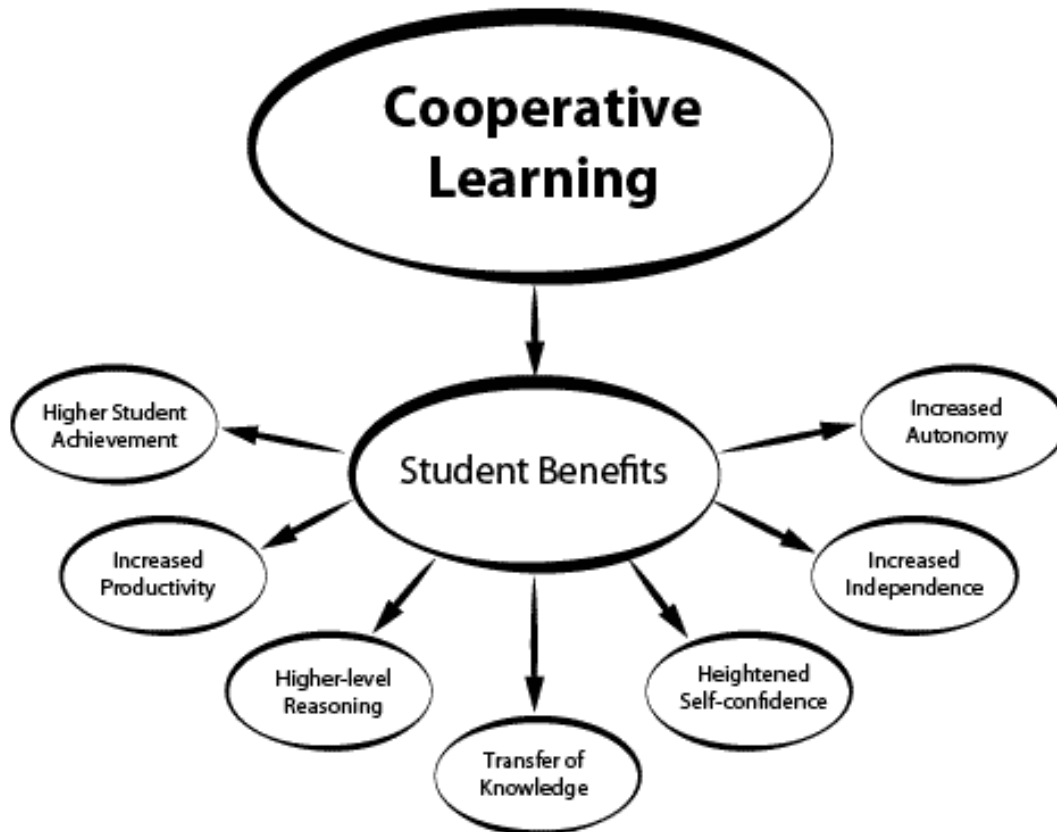
Diagram 5: CLL benefits for Students. (Cuthrell, 2015)

Many researchers and writers emphasized the role of CLL as a powerful teaching and learning approach because of its advantages for the learner. The benefits of CLL can be summarized as the following:

● It provides learners with more opportunities for communication (Brecke & Jensen, 2007)

● It increases both the verbal exchange and the improvement of oral interaction of the learners (Cohen, 1994).

• It enables the teacher to manage learners from different backgrounds and cultures (Cohen, 1994).

• It enables the learners to make their own decisions without any help (interdependence) and prepares them to be active citizens in their society. (*ibid*)

• It encourages the learners to be critical thinkers (Totten, *et al.,* 1991).

• It enhances the transformation of knowledge and it allows the learners to retain what they learned for a long time (Beckman, 1990).

• It increases the autonomy of the learners i.e. they will be able to perform certain task or activities on their own (Vygotsky, 1978).

• It enables the learners to develop and practice social-affective strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

• It reduces stress and increase motivation of the learners (Slavin, 1995).

• It makes the learners feel that they are valuable and significant individuals in the classroom (*ibid*)

• It makes the learners more confident to speak and act in the target language (Jacobs and McCafferty, 2006).

• It strengthen the learners' self-confidence and make them believe in their abilities (Huber, 2004).

• It enables the learners to reach high achievement and great productivity of the target language (Johnson and Johnson, 1994).

• It improves the relationship between learners in terms of friendship and helping each other and make it closer (*ibid*).

• Learners experience a high level of understanding of the concepts and ideas being taught by the teacher Willis (2007).

• It develops learners' personal growth and their sense of responsibility (Zhang, 2010).

In order to gain all these benefits during cooperative group work, there are certain conditions that are required for it to be effective.

8. Conditions for an Effective CLL

In order to obtain an effective CLL, certain conditions are needed which are the following:

8.1. Heterogeneity of Group Members

The first condition for an effective CLL is the heterogeneity of group members. It includes that each group must include a variety of members with different abilities, skills, backgrounds, genders, and ethnic groups (Slavin, 1991). According to Larson *et al* (1984), when the groups are heterogeneous, low ability learners have the opportunity to be in touch with high ability learners and that allows them to benefit from them in terms of learning strategies. On the other hand, high ability learners can learn strategies from teaching their group mates. Heterogeneous groups enables students to teach each other the academic material and even life skills that are required in real life situations (Klimovien and Statkevičienė, 2006).

8.2. Interdependent Reward Structure

Reward structure is second conditions of CLL to be effective. The success of CLL depends on the type of reward structure (Slavin, 1984). Reward structure has three major types which are: individual rewards that concerns the individual learner, group rewards that concerns the group's work, and group rewards which is related to individual achievement. The latter type is known as interdependent reward structure which considered as the most effective reward structure (ibid). When the interdependent reward structure is implemented, the success of an individual students is dependent on the success of his/her group members. According to Johnson *et al.* (1985), when cooperative conditions are respected, learners can achieve their goals only when their group members achieve the same goal. This will encourage the learners to work together and make sure that each member of the group has learned the material.

8.3. Task Structure

The last condition that makes CLL effective is selecting the appropriate task structure. There are two types that can be implemented in CLL: learners are assigned to a group study or they asked to complete individual tasks. In the first type of task stricture; learners are asked to work together to learn a given material, find answers to particular questions, or solve problems. While in the second type; learners are asked to learn individually a specific information or part of material and teach it to their group members. Those two types of task structure are considered to be the most effective task structures compared to the individual methods (Klimovien and Statkevičienė, 2006)

9. Forming and Guiding Groups

Making group work successful requires the teacher to form and guide the groups appropriately. Davis (1999) states that effective group work functions best when the size of the group is between four and six members. However, sometimes according to the assignment, groups between eight and ten members can be effective too. The ideal group should include a variety of learners with different level of abilities, interests, and ways of thinking. Forming the groups is the task of the teacher. He/she can use different methods to do that such us: allowing the learners to choose their group mates which can be successful with small classes, selecting randomly the members of the groups, or by forming the groups according to the answers of questionnaires given to learners which can work with large classes and seem fair for the learners (*ibid*).

After forming the groups, the guidance of the teacher is highly significant for an effective group work. Explaining the task or the assignment to the students and waiting for them to complete them is not enough. Learners need to be advised and encouraged, the teacher must check the work of the groups regularly in order to see whether they are working on the right way or not through asking them for their overall plan and to report their progress daily. The teacher must guide them the right direction if they are not following it. That does not mean dedicating what they have to do. Allowing them to make their own decisions about their progress (*ibid*).

10. Evaluating Group Work

In order to check if the group work is effective, it needs to be evaluated by the teacher. Evaluating a group work activity requires the teacher to take the efforts of the individual and the group as a whole into consideration. Usually, the evaluation of a group work project is included in the final grade of the learners. But the learner's contribution to the group efforts can be assessed through different ways such as: asking an individual student about a specific information about what he/she have learned, about what he/she thinks has contributed to the overall group effort, about what he/she thinks is needed to be done in order to improve the group effort, or asking a member to give a report about his/her group progress. While evaluating the whole group achievement has its own method, which is based on the success of the final work and the assessment of the group when it was progressing. By explaining how the group work will be evaluated to the learners before they begin, they will motivated to work since they have the idea of group grading in mind. Learners will try to avoid appearing foolish and irresponsible in front of their classmates. They will take responsibility and give their best contribution to the group to achieve their shared goal (Davis, 1999)

11. Student's and Teacher's Roles in CLL

When implementing CLL in the classroom, the roles of the teacher and the learner differ from their rules when implementing other techniques. Their roles can be summarized as follows:

11.1. Student's Roles

The student plays an important role during a CLL activity. Since learners are working in groups, they are expected to help each other learn the given material. As Slavin states: "*They are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding.*" (1995, p.2). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), learners are taught to be self-dependent, they are responsible for their learning process. They add that each student has his/her own role to play within his/her group. Researchers has shown that during CLL activities, high achieving learners tend to dominate those activities. Thus, it is significant

to give all the members of the group the opportunity to contribute with their efforts regardless of their low abilities or their poor language profanely. Kagan (1994; in Woolfolk, 2004) claims that within a group work activity, learners need to be given specific roles to play in order to make all of them involved in accomplishing their overall group goal. Kagan suggests some roles that learners can perform within cooperative learning activity which are listed in the following table:

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

Table 1: Possible Roles for Learners within Group Work (Kagan, 1994; in Woolfolk, 2004, p.496).

11.1. Teacher's Roles

The teacher's role in CLL is significant in helping groups to function well. His/her roles in CLL are different from other teaching methods since the roles of the teacher in traditional methods are to transmit knowledge. His/her role in CLL is to facilitate the learning process. According to Harel (1992) the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, supporter, redirector, clarifier, and observer. He adds that teachers must prepare their learners for the activities that they will encounter, help them when they are performing a learning task, and guide them without imposing on them what they have to do. Teachers

speak less during a CLL activity (Jacob, 2006). They should evaluate the group work not only by their final product, but also in terms of their progress (Swann, 1992 in Mercer, 1995). According to Hyland, teacher's role can be summarized as follows:

• Takes responsibility to manage and organize both interaction within learners and their learning process.

• Creates and develops a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom that motivates learners to work together.

• Encourages the learners to use and interact in the target language through the use of group work strategies.

• Selects appropriate activities that enable the learners to share information, opinions, and think critically.

• Organizes and coordinates group tasks.

• Provides learners with explanations, feedback, and support. (1991; in Richards and Lockhart, 1996)

Indeed the roles of teachers and learners are important. A successful cooperative group work requires the teacher and the learner to work together. This will guarantee better results and more effective learning.

Conclusion

Cooperative language learning is indeed one of the most successful approaches for both learners and teachers. It provides learners with opportunities to communicate with each other and increases their productivity and achievements. It shows them how to work together to solve problems and to accomplish certain goals which is an important skill inside and outside the classroom. It also involves a wide range of strategies that can develop the four language skills and that enables the teachers to select the appropriate one that suits his/her objectives. Learners usually prefer cooperative language learning strategies because it makes them feel responsible of their work, and makes learning more fun and interesting.

CHAPTER THREE

FIELDWORK

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, we have tackled the literature related to the EFL speaking skill and its difficulties as well as the cooperative language learning. Now, our research will be more practical. Since our research is descriptive, we intend to obtain data from both students' and teachers' questionnaires. The aim of this chapter is to analyze, interpret, and discuss the answers of students since they are the ones who are facing EFL speaking difficulties, and teachers since they have experience in teaching and using different methods. Collecting data from their knowledge, attitudes, and opinions concerning EFL speaking difficulties and cooperative group work provides us with reliable data that can help us find solutions to the research problem.

1. Students' Questionnaire

1.1. Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to discover learners' evaluation of their EFL speaking skill, whether they face difficulties when they speak or not, their preferred oral activities, their awareness of cooperative group work and its helpfulness to them. In order to do that, we have submitted sixty questionnaires to sixty English third year students at the University of Biskra. The participants were chosen randomly and they were given half an hour to answer the questionnaires.

1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section is about personal information of the learners concerning their gender, their purpose of learning English, and the most important skill for them. After that, the questionnaire has other three main sections: section two is about how learners evaluate their EFL speaking skill, what difficulties encounter them when they speak, and the effectiveness of oral classes for them. Section three is about learners' awareness of cooperative group work and their attitudes towards it. The last section is about whether cooperative group work helps learners to overcome their EFL speaking difficulties or not ending with suggestions if any.

2. Results' Interpretations

Section one

Q1: Learners' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	08	13.33%
Female	52	86.67%
Total	60	100%

Table 2: Learners' Gender

Table two shows us the sample of our study. Clearly the percentage of females (86.67%) is huge compared to the percentage of males (13.33%). This result will not affect the study because we are focusing on learners answers to the questionnaire and not their gender i.e. this result will not add anything to the study except that females are more cooperative and helpful.

Q2. Why did you choose English as your major?

Answers	Number	Percentage
By their freewill	52	87.67
Obliged	08	13.33
Total	60	100%

Table 3: Learners' Freewill to Learn English

In this question, learners were asked to explain why they chose English as their major. Fifty two students (87.67%) answered different form of answers (their dream, because they want to be teachers of English, because they like English, because it is an international language and the language of technology…) they choose English by their freewill. While eight students (13.33%) did not choose English by their freewill; they were obliged to choose it for reasons such us: their parents imposed it on them or simply they choose another field of study when they succeeded on BAC exam but they could not get it.

Q3. Pick the most important skill that you need to develop most

Options	Number	Percentage
Speaking	39	65%
Listening	6	10%
Writing	10	16.67%
Reading	5	8.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 4: The most Important Skill for Learners
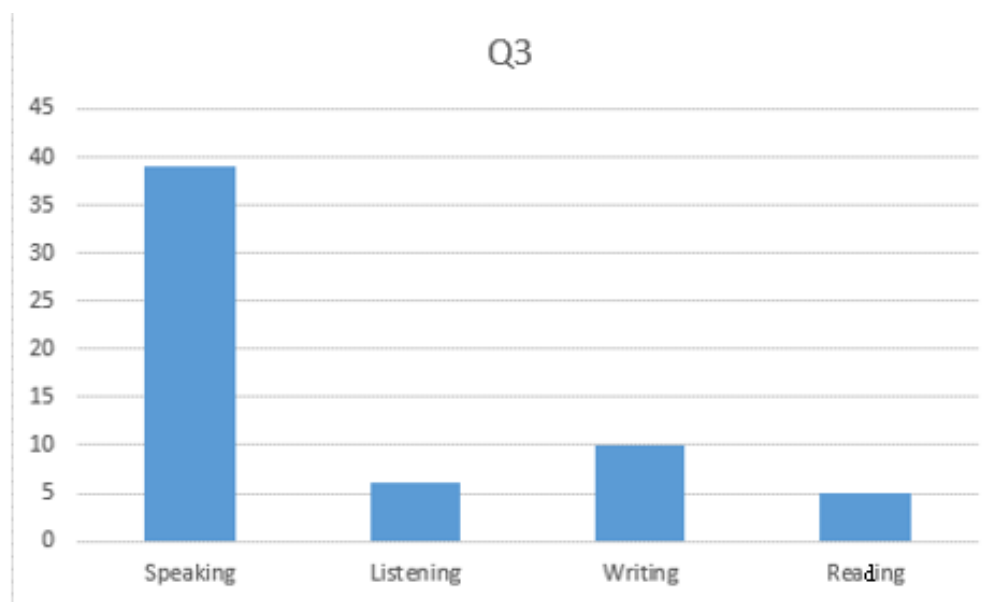
Graph 1: The most Important skill for Learners

This question aims to discover which skill learners think is the most important to develop. Thirty nine students (65%) who represent the majority choose speaking as the most important skill. While six learners choose listening (10%). Ten choose writing (16.67%) and five choose reading (8.33%). Speaking obviously is the most important skill for learners since almost two thirds of them choose it. Writing came in the second place while listening in third place. Finally reading came at the last place and that shows that the vast majority of learners have no interest in it.

Section two

Q4. How do you find speaking in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Very easy	3	5%
Easy	10	16.67%
Normal	35	58.33%
Difficult	12	20%
Very Difficult	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 5: Learners' Perception of their Speaking
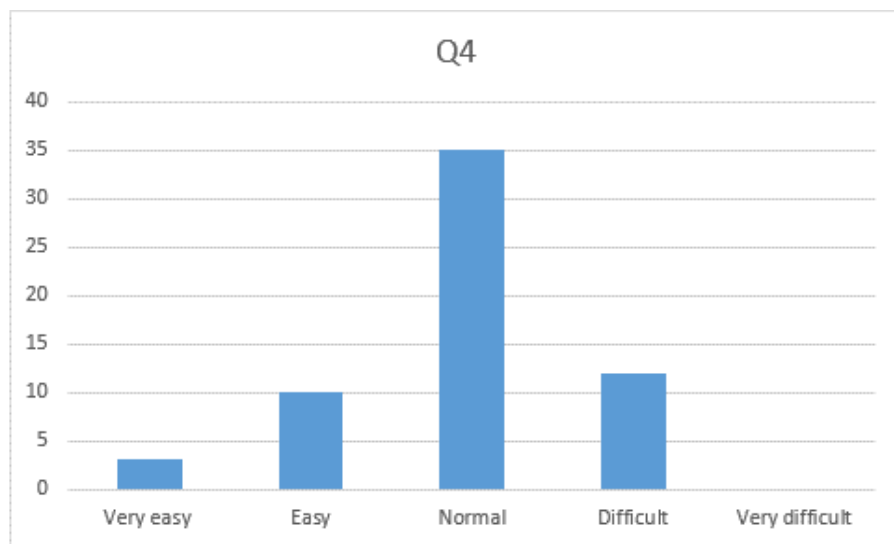
Graph 2: Learners' Perception of their EFL Speaking

The table and the graph show how learners find speaking in English. Three students (5%) answered that speaking in English is very easy for them. While ten students (16.67%) find it easy for them. Thirty five who are the majority (58.33%) find speaking in English normal i.e. not easy and not difficult. Twelve students (20%) find it difficult to speak and no one finds it very difficult (0%). According to these answers, the majority of learners face challenges when speaking in English while few do not encounter any challenges and speak English easily.

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Q5. Which of the following describes your level of speaking skill in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
High	4	6.67%
Above average	22	36.67%
Average	27	45%
Below average	7	11.66%
Low	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 6: Learners' Evaluation of their Speaking Skill
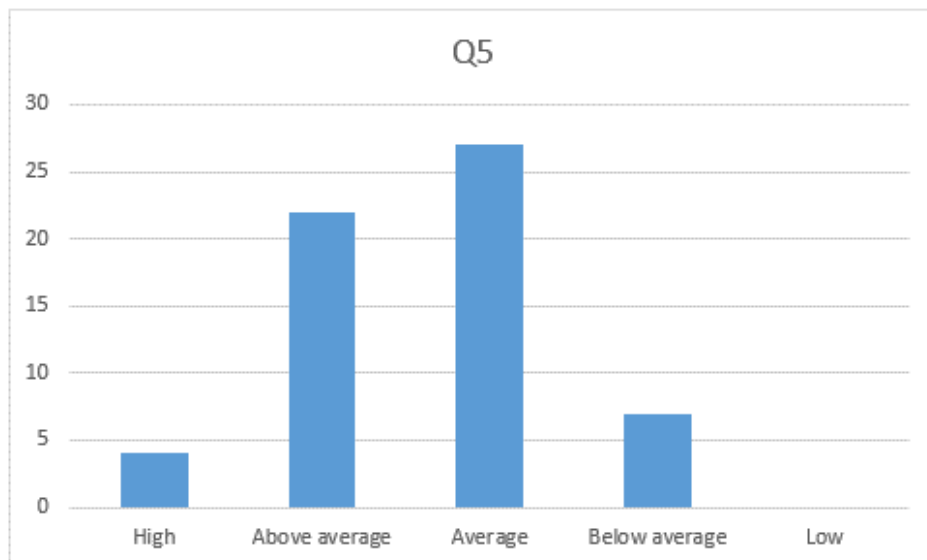
Graph 3: Learners' Evaluation of their Speaking Skill

In this question, learners were asked to state an evaluation of their level of speaking in English. Only four students (6.67%) considered their level as high, while twenty two (36.37%) stated that their level is above the average. Twenty seven students (45%) who are the highest percentage evaluated their level as average i.e. not high and not low. In the other hand, seven students (11.66%) stated that their level is below the average and no one (0%) stated that they have low level in EFL speaking. It is clear that the majority of learners evaluate their level between average and above the average.

Q6. To what extent does oral expression course help you improve your speaking skill?

Options	Number	Percentage
Very much	18	30%
Somehow	27	45%
Don't know	3	5%
Not very much	10	16.67%
Not at all	2	3.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 7: The Effectiveness of Oral Expression Course
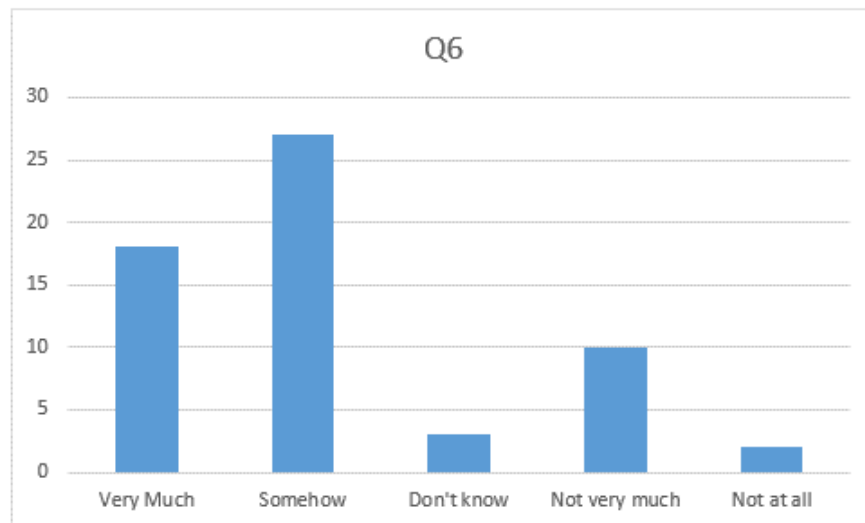
Graph 4: The Effectiveness of Oral Expression Course

The aim of this question is to check the learners' perception of oral courses and its effect on the improvement of their EFL speaking skill. Eighteen students (30%) think that oral expression course is very helpful for them in developing their EFL speaking skill, whereas twenty seven (45%) think that it somehow improves their EFL speaking skill. Only three students said that they do not know whether oral classes is helpful for them or not. While ten learners (16.67%) answered that oral expression course is not helping them improving their EFL speaking skill very much and only two students (3.33%) said that it is not helping them at all.

Q7. Do you face difficulties when you speak in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	42	70%
No	18	30%
Total	60	100%

Table 8: Learners' Perception of Facing Speaking Difficulties
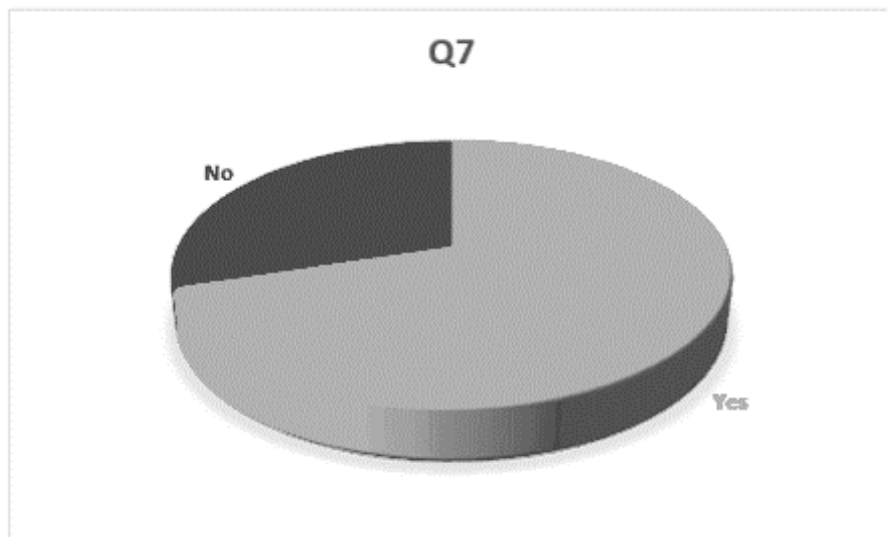
Graph 5: Learners' Perception of Facing Speaking Difficulties

In this question, we asked learners whether they face difficulties when they speak or not. Forty two students (70%) who represents the majority of students answered yes, they do face difficulties when they speak in English. While eighteen students (30%) said that they do not face any difficulties when they speak, consequently, they speak English easily without any problems.

Q8. **If your answer is "yes", is it because of**

Options	Number	Percentage
Shyness	17	39%
Anxiety	4	9%
Fear of making mistakes	11	26%
Lack of motivation	2	5%
Lack of self-confidence	3	7%
lack of interest in the subject	6	14%
Total	42	100%

Table 9: Speaking Difficulties Faced by Learners
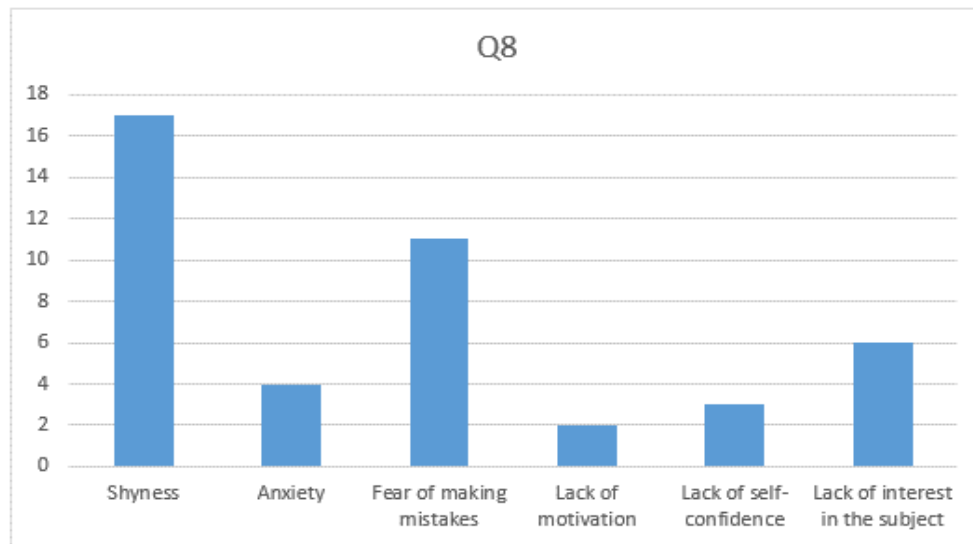
Graph 6: Speaking Difficulties Faced by Learners

The results of this question shows what speaking difficulties learners face when they speak in English. Only forty two students answered this question, and eighteen did not answer because they said that they do not face any difficulties when they speak. According to learners who answered this question, seventeen students (39%) choose shyness as their most faced difficulty. Eleven (26%) considered fear of making mistakes as their first difficulty. Whereas six students (14%) picked luck of interest in the subject. While only four students (9%) choose anxiety, three (7%) choose lack of self-confidence, and two (5%) choose lack of motivation as their primary speaking difficulty.

Q9. Which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?

Options	Number	Percentage
Group work activities	28	46.67%
Presentations	24	40%
Discussions	8	13.33%
Other techniques	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 10: Techniques Preferred by Learners

This question aimed to discover which techniques that are preferred by learners. Group work activities and oral presentations where generally the most chosen techniques. Twenty eight students (46.67%) picked group work activities and twenty four (40%) picked oral presentations. While only eight students (13.33%) choose discussions as their preferred technique, and no one (0%) choose or suggested other techniques.

Q10. Are you given enough opportunities to improve your speaking skill?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	51.67%
No	29	48.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 11: Learners' Attitudes towards Opportunities of Improving their EFL Speaking Skill

Learners in this question were asked to express their attitude toward their given opportunities of improving their EFL speaking skill. Whether they are enough or not. The answers were very close; thirty one students (51.67%) answered yes, they are given enough opportunities to develop their EFL speaking skill. While twenty nine (48.33) answered no, they do not feel that they are given enough opportunities. Students who answered no gave some reasons that are responsible of their lack of opportunities to improve their EFL speaking skill, they are summarized as follows:

● Lack of practice.

● Teachers talk more than learners.

● Learners are not motivated to speak.

● Time is limited, there has to be more oral expression sessions.

● Teachers prefer to work with high achieving learners.

● Poor teaching methods.

● Lack of materials.

Section three

Q11. Have you ever heard of cooperative language learning?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	51.67%
No	29	48.33
Total	60	100%

Table 12: Learners' Knowledge of Cooperative Language Learning

The table above displays learners' knowledge of CLL. Thirty one students (51.67%) answered 'yes', they are aware of this teaching and learning approach. While twenty nine of them (48.33%) answered 'no', they never heard of it before. According to this result, it is clear that almost half of learners are aware of CLL and the other half are not.

Q12. In oral expression course, do you prefer?

Options	Number	Percentage
Individual work	15	25%
Pair work	18	30%
Group work	27	45%
Total	60	100%

Table 13: Strategies Preferred by Learners
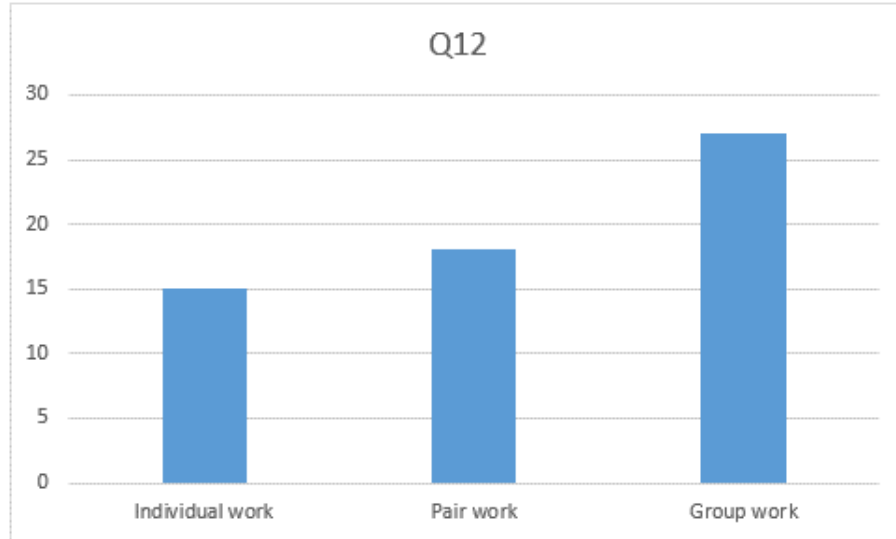
Graph 7: Strategies Preferred by Learners

In this question, learners were asked to choose which strategy they prefer during oral expression course. Fifteen students (25%) choose 'individual work' as their preferred strategy i.e. they prefer to work alone. They gave reasons of their choice which are:

● They prefer to rely on their knowledge,

● Enables them to determine their weak points.

● Make them improve themselves.

● Encourage them to be creative.

● They feel free to express themselves.

● Enables them to give their best.

● Shows them their real level.

● Enables them to work seriously, working in groups make them depend on other members.

● They do not like to work with weak students.

● They have difficulties to work with others.

While eighteen students (30%) prefer to work in pairs. According to them, pair work:

● Makes them feel comfortable because they like to discuss with one person.

● Enables them to exchange knowledge.

● Help them express themselves.

● Organized, less noisy, and practice.

Finally, twenty seven students (45%) choose 'group work' for the following reasons:

● They feel comfortable and interested while working with their friends.

● It decrease shyness and anxiety.

● It improves their vocabulary.

● It enables them to share ideas and information and learn from each other.

● It enables them to discuss their weaknesses and to overcome them.

● It involves more interaction.

● Group members feel that they complete each other i.e. they help each other.

● It provides them with more opportunities to speak in English.

● It is fun and enjoyable.

Obviously, group work strategy were the most chosen strategy by learners. Pair work came in the second place, and individual work were the least chosen one.

Q13. Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	30%
No	42	70%
Total	60	100%

Table 14: Learners' Perception of Facing Difficulties while Working in Groups

Learners were asked in this question to say whether they face difficulties while they are working in groups or not. Forty two students (70%) which are the majority answered 'no', they do not face any difficulties. While eighteen students (30%) answered 'yes', they do face difficulties when they work in groups and they specified them. These difficulties can be summarized as the following:

● Different point of views; it is hard to agree.

● Some learners stick to their ideas and do not accept to cooperate.

● Some learners find it hard to express their opinions.

● Some learners dominate the work, they do not give others a chance to express themselves.

● Some learners do not work seriously.

● High achieving learners do not like to work with low achieving ones.

● Some students depend on high achieving students to do their work.

● Low achieving students feel like they are underestimated by high achieving ones.

Q14. Does the teacher try to solve the problems faced during group work?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	39	65%
No	21	35%
Total	60	100%

Table 15: Teachers' Attitude toward Group Work Problems

The aim of this question is to check what learners think of their teachers, whether they think that they teachers solve their problems when they work in groups or not. Thirty nine students (65%) answered 'yes', they think that their oral teachers help them facing the difficulties faced in group work activities. Whereas twenty one students (35%) answered 'no', they think that their teachers are not helping them solve problems encountered during group work.

Q15. Does your teacher show you the importance of group work?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	40	66.67%
No	20	33.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 16: Teachers' Role of Showing the Importance of Group Work

The answers of this question shows whether learners think that their teachers show them the importance of group work or not. Forty students (66.67%) answered 'yes', their oral teacher shows them the importance group work. While twenty students (33.37%) choose 'no', they think that their oral teacher does not show them the importance of group work. The answers of this question and the previous one show that the majority of

learners think that their oral teachers shows them the importance of group work and solve its problems.

Q16. Do you feel that group work helps you to?

Options	Number	Percentage
a- Overcome your shyness and anxiety	1	1.67%
b- Get motivated to speak?	1	1.67%
c- Raise your self- confidence?	0	0%
d- Develop your social skills and to learn to listen to different opinions?	10	16.67%
a+b	2	3.33%
a+b+c	6	10%
a+b+c+d	4	6.67%
a+b+d	1	1.67%
a+c	5	8.33%
a+c+d	1	1.67%
a+d	9	15%
b+c	5	5%
b+c+d	2	3.33%
b+d	7	11.66%
c+d	5	8.33%
None	1	1.67%
Total	60	100%

Table 17: Group Work Advantages
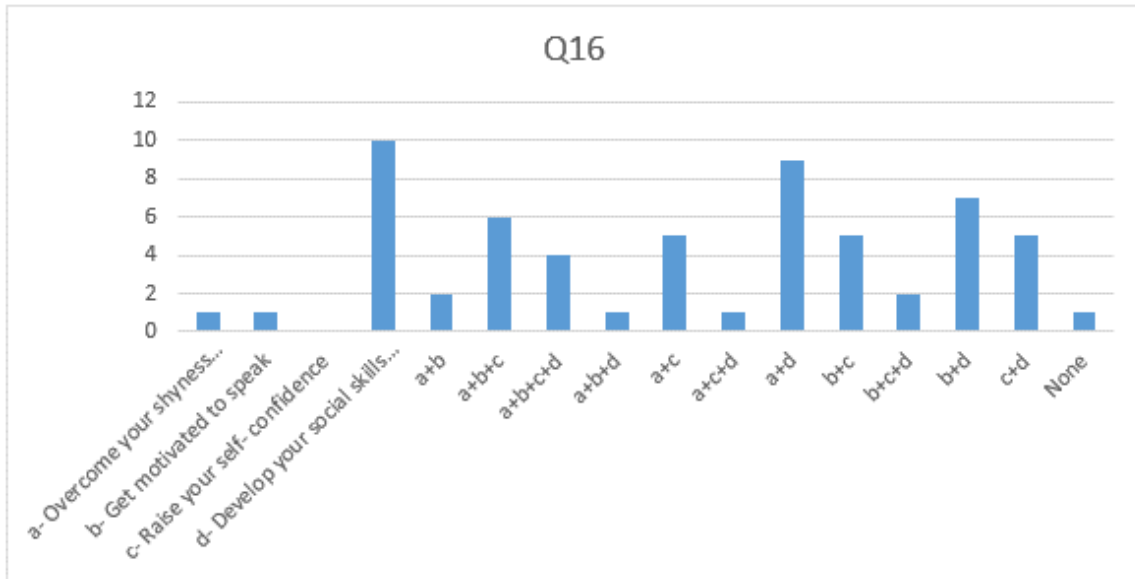
Graph 8: Group Work Advantages

In this question, learners were asked to choose which advantage they obtain from group work. Ten students (16.67%) felt that group work develops their social skills and enables them to learn to listen to different opinions. Only one (1.67%) choose 'overcome your shyness and anxiety' and other one (1.67%) picked 'get you motivated to speak, while forty five students (78.32%) choose more than one advantage, they think that group work benefits them in various ways, consequently, they picked more than one option. Whereas one student (1.67%) did not choose any option, he/she thinks that group work does not help him at all.

Section Four

Q17. Do you think that working in groups helps you facing your speaking difficulties?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	48	80%
No	12	20%
Total	60	100%

Table 18: The Effectiveness of Group Work
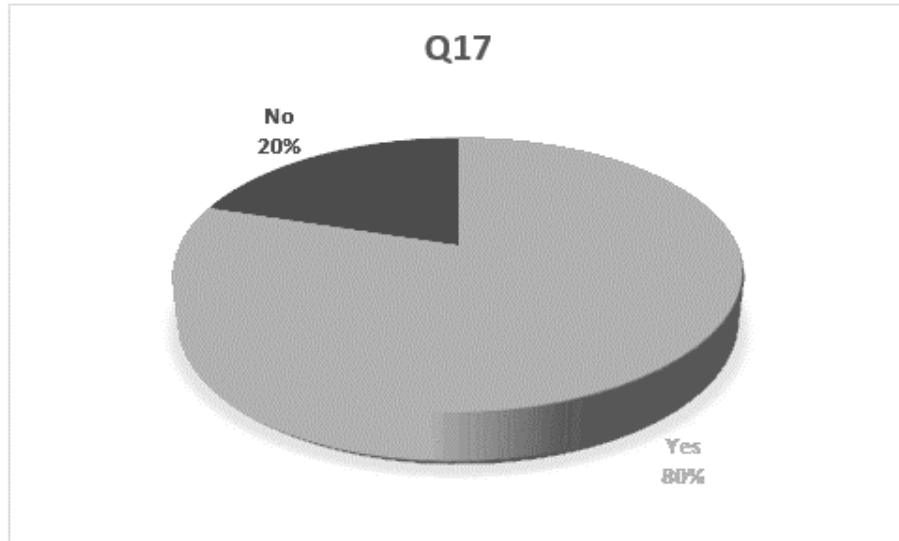
Graph 9: The Effectiveness of Group Work

This question aims to discover whether learners feel that group work helps them face and overcome their EFL speaking difficulties or not. Forty eight students (80%) answered 'yes'; group work helps them facing those difficulties because of different reasons which are summarized as the following:

● Makes them gain more self-confidence.

● Learn from each other and correct their mistakes.

● Encourages them to speak and to interact with each other.

● Develops their skills.

● Everyone has his/her own role, consequently all of them are given a chance to speak.

● Creates a competition between learners.

● Enables them to obtain new knowledge and vocabulary.

● Makes them give their best.

● Helps them to interact with other people outside the classroom.

● Improves their pronunciation.

● Makes them responsible when they are given specific rules.

While twelve students (20%) answered 'no' they don't think that group work is really helping them in any way. They gave reasons of their choice which are:

● They do not face any difficulties to speak.

● Do not need classmates to help them, they need the teacher.

● Working in groups makes them use their mother tongue instead of English.

● It is very noisy.

● Group work has problems and they do not like to face them.

It is clear that the majority of learners find cooperative group work strategy helpful for them in facing and overcoming their EFL speaking difficulties.

Q18. What can you suggest about the use of group work strategy in oral classes?

This questions permits learners to give any suggestions about the use of group work strategy in their oral classes. Their suggestions can be summarized as follows:

● Group members must be serious when working.

● Learn communication skills before working in groups.

● Provide learners with a comfortable atmosphere, groups should not make any noise.

● The teacher must teach learners how to work in a group and guides them while working.

● The size of the group have to be limited, it shouldn't exceed five members.

● The group should contain a variety of learners' levels so they can help each other.

● Members should choose each other by their desire.

● The teacher should select interesting and fun topics.

● The teacher should observe how the groups are working and their effectiveness.

● The teacher should create competitions between the groups.

● Each member should be given a specific role in order to engage all the learners.

● It should not be the only strategy used in oral classes, there must be a variety of strategies.

● Each member should be evaluated alone according to his contribution to the group.

● The teacher should use this strategy more often because most of students find it enjoyable and fun to work with their friends.

3. Results' Discussion

After submitting and interpreting learners' questionnaire, discussion is the next step. The majority of EFL student in the University of Biskra choose to study English by their choice, consequently, they are already motivated to learn it. It is clear that most of EFL

learners think that EFL speaking is the most important skill for them to develop. This result is a support to the work of Florez (1999) who claims that speaking is usually a priority for most English learners.

Section one was mainly about speaking; how learners evaluate their EFL speaking skill and what difficulties do they face when speaking. Most of EFL learners find speaking in English challenging. Only few find it easy. When learners were asked to evaluate their EFL speaking skill, their answers where mainly between average and above average, therefore, they feel like they are not yet fluent and they need to develop this skill. Concerning the effects of oral expression course on the development of learners' EFL speaking, the majority of EFL learners think that oral course is helpful to them and contributes to the improvement of their EFL speaking. However, oral courses should be developed since a respected number of students do not find it helpful to them.

Most of EFL learners face difficulties when they speak in English that hinter them from achieving speaking proficiency, and this confirms what Schwartz (2005) states how learners are blocked to speak because of such difficulties. EFL learners tend to experience all the psychological difficulties mentioned in our research with different rates. This requires the teacher to take some actions to help his learners to overcome these difficulties. Learners usually prefer group work activities and oral presentations in oral classes instead of other techniques with a small advantage to group work activities since it was the most selected option because they find it effective and fun. Almost half of EFL learners do not feel that they are given enough opportunities to improve their EFL speaking skill, while the other half is satisfied with their given opportunities. This fact requires the teacher to give more equal chances to EFL learners to improve their EFL speaking skill, to try methods of teaching that suits all the learners, and to provide learners with enough time to practice.

Section two was about cooperative group work strategy and its effectiveness on EFL learners. Cooperative language learning as an approach is not really common between EFL learners since almost half of them does not know about it. Group work as a strategy

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is preferred by a huge number of EFL learners because of its advantages, while individual and pair work are less preferred because of learners' different learning styles. Most EFL learners find group work an easy strategy i.e. they do not face difficulties when working in groups which is another advantage for this latter and they find that their teacher is showing them the importance of this strategy. However, some learners find it difficult to work in groups and think that the teacher is not helping them with that. This requires the teacher to help them through showing them the importance of this strategy, teaching them how to work and the required skills for it before asking them to work in groups, and through guiding them while working. Thus, the role of the teacher is highly important as stated by Davis (1999) who significate the rule of the teacher and his/her tasks during group work.

Cooperative group work tend to have various advantages for EFL learners as was shown in the results of the questionnaire. Most of students find that this strategy aids them in more than one way and help them with their psychological difficulties. In section three, it was obvious that the majority of EFL learners find that cooperative group work helps them overcome their psychological speaking difficulties in different ways and encourage them to speak English without any obstacles or fears. Learners in their suggestions gave some interesting ideas such us: seriousness during group work, limited size of the group members, variety of levels of members of the same group, the rule of the teacher is significant, and to use this strategy more often. This indicates that EFL learners in the University of Biskra are interested in cooperative group work strategy, they find it interesting and fun and most of all, they believe that it helps them face and overcome their psychological speaking difficulties.

4. Teachers' Questionnaire

4.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to discover the teachers' evaluation of their learners' EFL speaking skill and what difficulties they are facing. Furthermore, to check teachers' attitude about cooperative group work and its effectiveness. Then, compare their answers with students' answers in order to check whether they share the same perception

concerning EFL speaking difficulties and the use of cooperative group work or not. We submitted a questionnaire to six oral expression teachers in the University of Biskra to benefit from their experience and knowledge and imply them in our research.

4.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section contains two questions about the teacher's degree and years of experience in teaching English. The second section is about teachers' perception of their learners' EFL speaking skill. Section three is to know about teachers' implication of cooperative group work and to check whether they think that this strategy helps EFL learners overcome their EFL speaking difficulties or not. We conclude the questionnaire by asking them to give any comment or suggestion they think would be helpful.

5. Results' Interpretation

Section one

Q1. Your degree

Options	Number	Percentage
BA (License)	0	0%
MA (Magister/Master)	4	66.67%
Ph. D (Doctorate)	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 19: Teachers' Degrees

The table above shows the degrees of the selected teachers who answered our questionnaire. Four teachers (66.67%) have magister degree and two (33.33%) have doctorate degree. While none of them (0%) has Licence degree. Our selected teachers tend to have good levels and that will help us gain from them valuable knowledge.

Q2. How long have you been teaching English?

Options	Number	Percentage
9	1	16.67%
10	1	16.67%
12	3	50%
32	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 20: Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

Answers to this questions shows us teachers' years of experience in teaching English. Three teachers (50%) taught English for twelve years. While only one (16.67%) taught it for nine years, another (16.67%) have ten years of experience, and a teacher (16.67%) has thirty two years of experience being the most experienced teacher in our sample.

Section two

Q3. Are the oral skills your major teaching concern?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	83.33%
No	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 21: Teachers' Major Teaching Concern

This question aims to discover whether our sample of teachers are specialized in oral skills or not. Five teachers (83.33%) answered 'yes', oral skills are their major teaching concern. Whereas only one (16.67%) answered 'no', oral skills are not her major teaching concern. However, she teaches oral expression course. The majority of the selected teachers teach oral skills as their major concern, and this will help us obtain specialized knowledge that is beneficial for our research.

Q4. How many years have you been teaching oral expression?

Options	Number	Percentage
2	1	16.67%
5	1	16.67%
8	1	16.67%
9	1	16.67%
10	1	16.67%
20	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 22: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Oral Expression

This table shows us teachers' years of experience in teaching oral expression course. Each teacher gave us different answer. One teacher (16.67%) taught oral expression for only two years, another one (16.67%) taught it for five years, one (16.67%) for eight years, another one (16.67%) for nine years, other teacher (16.67%) for ten years, and the last one (16.67%) taught it for twenty years. Teachers' years of experience in teaching oral expression will certainly provide us with precious knowledge and information.

Q5. Which of the following describes your students' level of speaking skill in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
High	0	0%
Above average	1	16.67%
Average	4	66.66%
Below average	1	16.67%
Low	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 23: Learners' Level of Speaking English
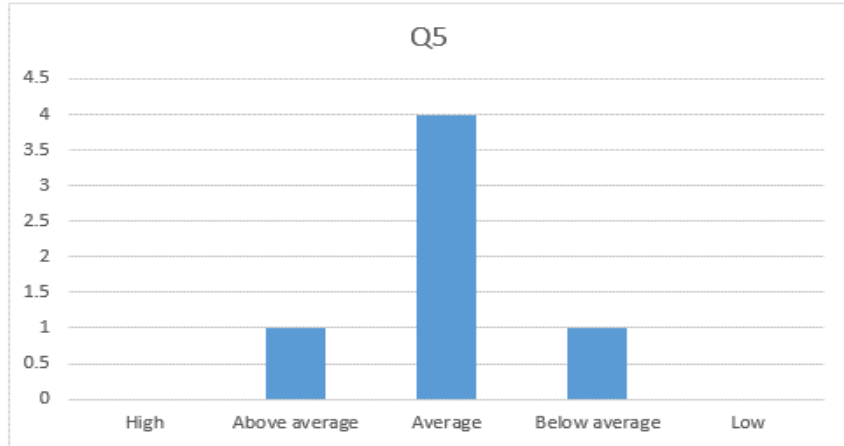
Graph 10: Learners' Level of Speaking English

In this question, teachers were asked what level they think that their learners have in speaking English. Four teachers (66.66%) said that their learners have an average level. While only one (16.67%) answered that their level is above the average, and other one (16.67%) think that their level is below the average. Whereas no one (0%) answered that learners' have high or low level of speaking in English. Clearly the majority of teachers agree that their learners' level of speaking English is average.

Q6. Do you think that your students are motivated to speak in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	66.67%
No	2	33..33%
Total	60	100%

Table 24: Learners' Motivation to Speak in English

Teachers' answers to this question show what they think in terms of their learner' motivation to speak in English. Four teachers (66.67%) answered 'yes', they do think that their learners are motivated to speak in English. While two teachers (33.33%) said that they think that their learners are not motivated. Teachers provided us with some ways that they use to motivate their learners which can be summarized as follows:

● Choosing interesting topics and activities.

● Creating motivating and easy going atmosphere.

● Giving them the freedom to choose topics to discuss.

● Using non-direct correction of mistakes.

● Providing authentic contexts that suits learners' levels, interests, and needs.

Q7. What do you think are the most faced difficulties by students when speaking in English?

Options	Number	Percentage
1- Shyness	0	0%
2- Anxiety	0	0%
3- Fear of making mistakes	0	0%
4- Lack of motivation and interest	0	0%
5- Lack of self-confidence	0	0%
1+3+5	1	16.67%
1+2+3+5	1	16.67%
2+3	1	16.67%
All of them	3	50%
Total	6	100%

Table 25: Learners' Speaking Difficulties

The table shows what EFL speaking difficulties teachers think that learners are facing. Three teachers (50%) answered that learners are suffering from all the mentioned psychological difficulties. Other teacher (16.67) said that they do face all the mentioned difficulties except 'lack of motivation and interest'. Another one (16.67%) believes that they face three difficulties which are: shyness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence. The last one (16.67%) thinks that learners suffer from only two difficulties which are anxiety and fear of making mistakes. It is clear that no teacher choose only one difficulty, consequently, all of the teachers think that learners face various difficulties at once when speaking English.

Q8. Which of the following strategies do you use most in your oral classes?

Options	Number	Percentage
1-Group work activities	1	16.67%
2- Oral Presentations	0	0%
3- Discussion	1	16.67%
1+2	1	16.67%
1+3	1	16.67%
All of them	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 26: Most Used Strategies by Teachers

Teachers were asked in this question what strategy do they mostly use in their oral classes. Two teachers (33.33%) choose all the strategies mentioned, thus they do imply them all in their oral classes. Other teacher (16.67%) choose only 'group work activities', other one (16.67%) choose discussions, one (16.67%) choose 'group work activities' and 'oral presentations', and the last one (16.67%) choose 'group work activities' and 'discussions'. While no teacher (0%) choose 'oral presentation' alone. We can notice that group work is the most used strategy since it was chosen by five teachers.

Q9. Do you evaluate your students' oral production?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 27: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Oral Production

In this question, teachers were asked to say whether they evaluate their learners' oral production or not. All of the teachers (100%) answered 'yes', they do evaluate their learners' oral production.

Q10. If yes, do you prefer?

Options	Number	Percentage
Self-evaluation	0	0%
Peer-evaluation	0	0%
All of them	5	83.33%
None	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 28: Teachers' Way of Evaluation

This question aims to check what way of evaluation teachers prefer to use when evaluating their learners. Five teachers (83.33%) answered that they evaluate their learners not individually and not a peers, but as a whole. They evaluate them as groups i.e. each group member has the same mark as the rest of his/her group members. One teacher (16.67%) said that he never use any of these ways of evaluation. While no one (0%) choose self-evaluation or peer evaluation.

Section Three

Q11. Do you use cooperative group work strategy in your oral classes?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 29: Teachers Usage of Cooperative Group Work

The table shows teachers usage of cooperative group work strategy in their oral classes. All of the teachers (100%) answered 'yes', they use this strategy in their oral classes. Whereas no one (0%) answered 'no'. Thus, cooperative group work is a very common strategy among teachers.

Q12. Do you raise your students' awareness towards the value of cooperative group work?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 30: Raising Learners' Awareness towards the Value of Cooperative Group Work

Teachers in this question were asked whether they raise their learners' awareness towards the value of cooperative group work or not. All of the teachers (100%) answered 'yes', they do raise their awareness towards the value of this strategy. To reach that, the teachers provided us with some tips which are the following:

● By letting them work in groups and then compare the results when working individually

● By choosing appropriate tasks that shows the importance of cooperative group work

● By explaining that exchanging ideas and opinions refines the individual view.

● By the use of authentic materials and simulated authentic language use situations.

Q13. Do your students face problems when working in groups?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	66.67%
No	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 31: Teachers' Perception of Learners' Group Work Problems
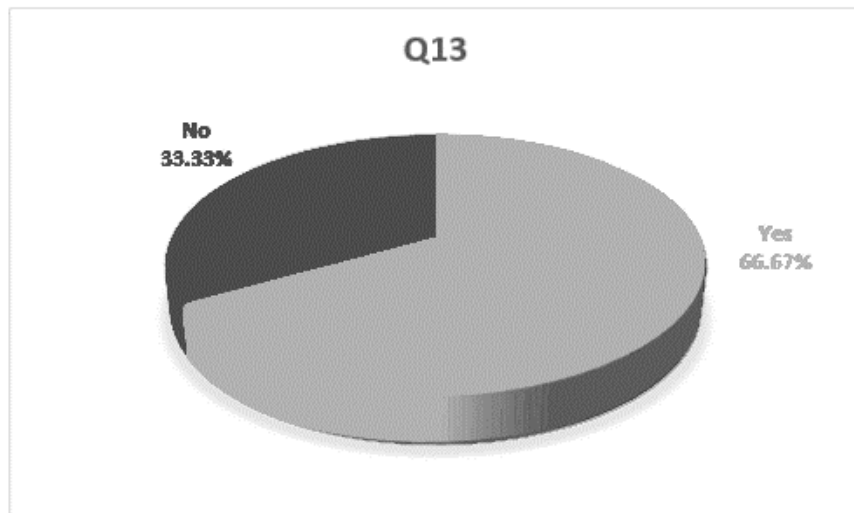
Graph 11: Teachers' Perception of Learners' Group Work Problems

In this question, teachers were asked whether their learners are facing problems while working in groups or not. Two teachers (33.33%) answered 'no'. They think that their learners are not having any problems when working in groups. While four teachers (66.67%) answered 'yes', their learners do face problems when working i groups. According to these teachers, those problems are:

● Sometimes learners do not agree on something.

● Lack of mutual connections.

● Lack of awareness about the importance of group work.

● Differences in opinions, interests, levels, and seriousness.

● Difficulty of being at the same language use pace.

● Struggle for group leadership.

● Lack of motivation for weak learners.

Q14. Do you think that group work strategy can overcome students' speaking difficulties?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	83.33%
No	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 32: Effectiveness of Group Work
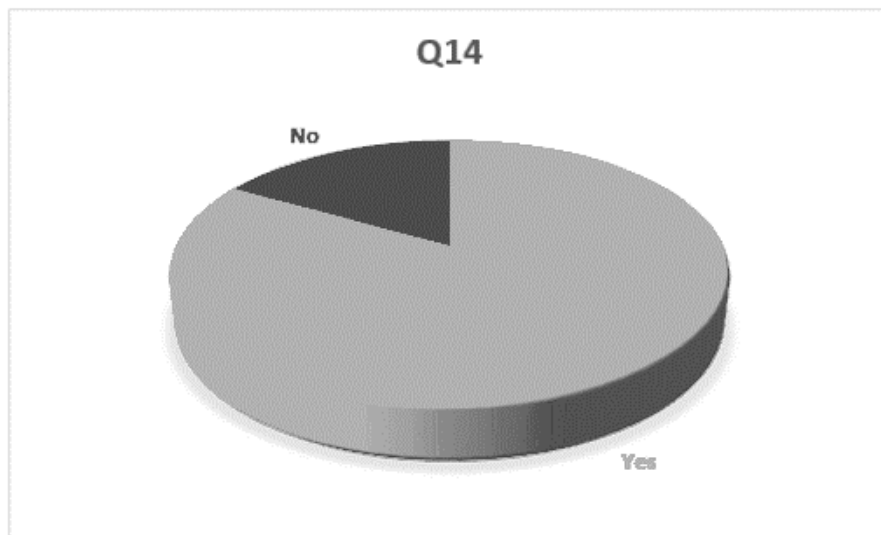
Graph 12: Effectiveness of Group Work

Teachers in this question were asked whether they think that group work strategy can overcome learners' EFL speaking difficulties or not. Five teachers (83.33%) answered 'yes', they think that this strategy is a way for learners to overcome their EFL speaking difficulties. While only one teacher (16.67%) does not agree with them; he thinks that this strategy cannot overcome learners' EFL speaking difficulties. Teachers justified their answers as the following:

Teachers who answered 'yes' gave the following reasons:

● It is very helpful for learners to get rid of shyness and anxiety.

● It enhances learners' motivation to engage effectively in their oral classes.

● Learners feel supported by their group members.

● Learners feel comfortable and self-confident when working in groups.

● It enables them to express and share their ideas.

For the teacher who answered 'no', he gave the following reasons:

● This strategy focuses on the group, not the individual.

● Weak learners are not able to express their ideas and participate because of the dominance of strong peers.

Q15. What can you suggest about the use of group work strategy in EFL oral classes?

This question was a space for teachers to provide us with suggestions they think they are useful to make cooperative group work strategy works better in EFL classrooms. Teachers provided the following suggestions:

● This strategy should not be dismissed because of its effectiveness.

● Group work has many standards to be respected in order to be well organized

● Group work should be well organized and guided.

● Class size, materials, types of tasks should be well selected for an effective group work.

● This strategy should be used more often, but not always since learners are evaluated individually.

● Learners are advised to work in groups even outside the classroom because of it is all for their benefits.

● The teacher should not impose his/her ideas on learners.

● The teacher should make the task motivating by diversifying the activities, and by using games and competitions.

6. Results' Discussion

Teachers who answered our questionnaire tend to have high levels and a long experience in teaching English. Thus, they are capable of providing us with the necessary knowledge that will help us in our research. In section one, most of the teachers consider that oral skills are their major teaching concern and they do have decent experiences in teaching oral expression course. Consequently, they are aware of learners' strengthens and needs in developing their EFL speaking skill. Concerning learners' levels in speaking English, most teachers agree that their learners' level is average. This result is similar to

the learners' evaluation of their level. Therefore, both teachers and learners agree on learners' level in speaking English which is average.

In terms of learners' motivation, most teachers think that EFL learners are motivated to speak in English because they use several effective strategies that make them motivated. The latter supports what Siegel (2004, in Aftat, 2008) states; he said that learners' motivation is the product of effective teaching. However, learners do face some psychological difficulties that hinter them from achieving oral proficiency. Thus, these difficulties need to be treated. The role of the teacher here is very important to help his/her learners to overcome these difficulties. The majority of teachers tend to use group work activities in their oral courses and evaluate their learners in groups and not individually. Thus, they think that group work strategy is the most effective strategy in oral courses

Section two, we finds all of the teachers imply cooperative group work strategy when teaching speaking and they raise their students' awareness towards the use of this strategy through various ways. Consequently, teachers are convinced that this strategy has huge advantages for EFL learners as many researchers suggested. However, most teachers think that their learners face some problems while working in groups. It is the role of the teacher to help his/her learners face those problems through preparing the students for activities that they will perform, help them while performing them, and guide them without imposing things on them as Harel (1992) claims.

Concerning the effectiveness of cooperative group work strategy; the majority of teachers think that this strategy can overcome learners' EFL speaking difficulties and encourage them to speak in English. Thus, they share the same attitude with learners about the effectiveness of this strategy. They think that cooperative group work helps learners get rid of psychological difficulties and motivates them to speak English without any problems. Teachers provided some handful suggestions which were similar to learners' suggestions about this strategy. They both agree that this strategy should be

used more often, should be more organized and guided, and the teacher should not impose his ideas on learners.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the analysis of both students' and teachers' questionnaire confirms that EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra face various psychological speaking difficulties when they try to speak in English. Furthermore, they emphasize the role of cooperative language learning strategy in oral classes as a powerful strategy in developing learners' EFL speaking skill. The obtained results from analyzing the questionnaires show that there is a positive influence of cooperative language learning strategy on helping learners overcome their EFL speaking difficulties. Teachers and learners stress that group work should be organized and guided by the teacher in order to obtain better results. They suggest that this strategy should be implied more often in oral classes because of its effectiveness and because most learners find it a space to express themselves and a strategy that helps them get rid of their psychological difficulties.

General Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

EFL learners at the Department of English at Biskra University tend to face various psychological difficulties when they attempt to speak in English. This study aims to investigate what are those difficulties, and to what extent these difficulties hinter EFL learners to achieve EFL speaking proficiency. The study also investigats whether cooperative group work strategy is helpful for EFL learners in overcoming their EFL speaking difficulties or not. The research was descriptive following the qualitative method; learners' and teachers' questionnaires were the implemented tools to collect data. Our sample included sixty EFL third year learners and six oral expression teacher at the University of Biskra. The research was divided into three main chapters. The first and the second chapters were a description of the variables and a review of related literature. The first chapter was about the nature of speaking and the psychological speaking difficulties. The second chapter described cooperative language learning and provided a better understanding of cooperative group work inside EFL classrooms, while the third chapter was the practical part of the research. After the submission of teachers and learners' questionnaires, the third chapter was about analyzing the data gathered from both questionnaires.

Throughout the research, we found that speaking is the most important skill for communication; and that the majority of EFL learners consider that developing their EFL speaking skill as their highest concern. We also found that cooperative group work is one of the most successful strategies to develop learners' EFL speaking skill because of its effectiveness, and that it is preferred by the majority of learners and teachers. At the beginning of our research, we hypothesized that if EFL third year students are using the cooperative group work strategy, they can overcome their EFL speaking difficulties. According to learners' and teachers' answers, we conclude that EFL learners do face difficulties when they speak in English and that cooperative group work is a successful strategy for improving learners' EFL speaking production because it creates an comfortable environment where learners help and encourage each other, share their knowledge, and promote each other's learning. Thus, we can say that this research has

confirmed our hypothesis which stated that by the use of cooperative group work strategy in EFL classrooms, learners are able to overcome their EFL speaking difficulties.

This study reveals some pedagogical implementations that need to be considered. First, since learners consider developing their EFL speaking skill as their major concern; it should be given more concern and time. EFL learners face various psychological speaking difficulties; that requires the teachers to consider that and try to help their learners face and overcome those difficulties through the use of effective techniques and strategies. Cooperative group work should be well explained, organized, and guided by the teacher. It is the task of the teacher to provide his/her learners with a comfortable atmosphere that enables them to work at their best and to make sure that all the learners are engaged through giving each one a specific role to perform within his/her group. Finally, since we found that cooperative group work is an effective strategy in teaching speaking; it is necessary that this strategy should be implied more often in EFL oral classes.

Throughout the research, we faced some challenges. The time was the main challenge for us; it did not allow us a classroom observation which was planned as another tool of the study. The other challenge was the unfamiliarity with conducting such research However, the guidance of the supervisor helped us with this challenge. We recommend further research using classroom observation technique and questionnaires with larger population to support the findings of the present study

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Appendices 1

STUDENTS QUESTINNAIRE

Dear student, thank you for taking some of your time to fill in this questionnaire, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below to express your attitudes toward the use of cooperative group work in overcoming your speaking difficulties. Your answers are very important for the validity of our research. As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

Please, tick √ to choice your answer. Thank you very much in advance. Personal information: Lamara Ayoub, Master 2 (science of language)

Section one

1. Gender:

    a.   Male   ☐

    b.   Female   ☐

2. Why did you choose English as your major?

……………………………………………………………………………………

3. Pick the most important skill that you need to develop most?

    a. Speaking   ☐

    b. Listening   ☐

    c. Writing   ☐

    d. Reading   ☐

Section two

4. How do you find speaking in English?

    a. Very easy   ☐

    b. Easy   ☐

    c. Normal   ☐

    d. Difficult   ☐

    e. Very difficult   ☐

5. Which of the following describes your level of speaking skill in English?

    a. High   (14 -17)   ☐

    b. Above average (12 - 13)   ☐

    c. Average (10)   ☐

    d. Below average (07 – 09)   ☐

    e. Low (00 – 06)   ☐

6. To what extent does oral expression courses help you improve your speaking skill?

       a. Very much ☐

       b. Somehow ☐

       c. Don't know ☐

       d. Not very much ☐

       e. Not at all ☐

7. Do you face difficulties when you speak in English?

       a. Yes ☐

       b. No ☐

8. If your answer is "yes", is it because of:

            (Order them from the most to the least faced difficulties)

       a. Shyness   n-

       b. Anxiety   n-

       c. Fear of making mistakes   n-

       d. Lack of motivation   n-

       e. Lack of self-confidence   n-

       f. Lack of interest (boring topics)   n-

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

       a. Group work activities (role-plays, games...) ☐

       b. Presentations ☐

       d. Discussion ☐

       e. Other, please specify

………

……………………………………………

10. Are you given enough opportunities to improve your speaking skill?

       a. Yes ☐

       b. No ☐

If No,, why ? …………………………………………………………………………………………...

……

Section three

11. Have you ever heard of cooperative language learning?

       a. Yes ☐

       b. No ☐

12. In oral expression course, do you prefer?

    a. Individual work ☐

    b. Pair work ☐

    c. Group work ☐

Whatever your answer is, please justify

………
………………………………………………………………………

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

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

If yes, what are they? …………………………………………………………………….......
……
……

14. Does the teacher try to solve the problems faced during group work?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

15. Does your teacher show you the importance of group work?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

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

             (You can chose more than one answer)

a. Overcome your shyness and anxiety? ☐

b. Get motivated to speak? ☐

c. Raise your self- confidence? ☐

d. Develop your social skills and to learn to listen to different opinions? ☐

Section four

17. Do you think that working in groups helps you facing your speaking difficulties?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

Because…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

19- What can you suggest about the use of group work strategy in oral classes?

………
………
………………………………………………………………………………………………....................

        .   *Thank You ;)*

Appendices 2

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves as a data collection for a research work that aims to show how cooperative group work can be used in overcoming third-year students' speaking difficulties at the Department of English, University of Biskra. I would be really thankful if you could take the time and the energy to share your experience with us by answering the questions below. Your answers are very important and will help us complete our research.

Please, tick √ to choose your answer. Thank you very much in advance.

Personal information: Lamara Ayoub, Master 2 (science of language)

Section one

1. Your degree:

    a. BA (License) ☐

    b. MA (Magister/Master) ☐

    c. Ph. D (Doctorate) ☐

2. How long have you been teaching English?

……………………………………………………………

Section two

3. Are the oral skills your major teaching concern?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

4. How many years have you been teaching oral expression?

……………………………………………….................

5. Which of the following describes your students' level of speaking skill in English?

    a. High ☐

    b. Above average ☐

    c. Average ☐

    d. Below average ☐

    e. Low ☐

6. Do you think that your students are motivated to speak in English?

      a. Yes   ☐

      b. No   ☐

7. If yes, how do you do to motivate them?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………….......

8. What do you think are the most faced difficulties by students when speaking in English?

                (You can choose more than one answer)

      a. Shyness   ☐

      b. Anxiety   ☐

      c. Fear of making mistakes   ☐

      d. Lack of motivation and interest   ☐

      e. Lack of self-confidence   ☐

9. Which of the following strategies do you use most in your oral classes?

      a. Group work activities (role-plays, games...)   ☐

      b. Oral Presentations   ☐

      d. Discussion   ☐

10. Do you evaluate your students' oral production?

      a. Yes   ☐

      b. No   ☐

11. If yes, do you prefer?

      a. Self-evaluation   ☐

      b. Peer-evaluation   ☐

      c. All of them   ☐

Section three

12. Do use cooperative group work strategy in your oral classes?

      a. Yes   ☐

      b. No   ☐

13. Do you raise your students' awareness towards the value of cooperative group work?

      a. Yes   ☐

      b. No   ☐

14. If yes, how?

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15. Do your students face problems when working in groups?

     a. Yes   ☐

     b. No   ☐

16. If yes, what are they?

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17. Do you think that group work strategy can overcome students' speaking difficulties?

     a. Yes   ☐

     b. No   ☐

  Because…………………………………………………………………………………

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18. What can you suggest about the use of group work strategy in EFL oral classes?

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Thank you ;)

ملخص

من المعروف أن مهارة التحدث هي أهم مهارة في أي لغة. الطلبة الذين يتعلمون اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية غالبا ما يواجهون صعوبات عندما يحاولون التكلم باللغة الانجليزية من أجل التواصل أو القيام بنشاط شفهي. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى وضع علاقة واضحة بين إستراتيجية العمل الجماعي و الصعوبات الكلامية المواجهة من طرف طلبة الانجليزية سنة ثالثة في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة, و إلى أي مدى هي إستراتيجية فعالة في التغلب على هذه الصعوبات. منهجية البحث وصفية وصفية تهدف إلى وصف متغيرين: العمل الجماعي كمتغير مستقل و دوره في التغلب على الصعوبات الكلامية المواجهة من طرف الطلبة كمتغير غير مستقل. جمع المعلومات كان عن طريق إجراء استبيان لأساتذة يدرسون مادة التعبير الشفهي و طلبة ثالثة جامعي لغة انجيزية. نتائج البحث أظهرت أن إستعمال أستراتيجية العمل الجماعي قادرة على مساعدة طلبة الانجليزية في التغلب على صعوباتهم الكلامية. ومنه, من المستحسن أن تستعمل هذه الإستراتيجية أكثر في حصص التعبير الشفهي.