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Developing Students' Speaking Skill through

Cooperative Learning

A Case study of Third-Year LMD Students at Mohammad Kheider University

of Biskra.

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

Degree in Science of Languages

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DEDICATION

First of all, I would like to dedicate this simple work especially:

❖ To my parents, Boudjemaa El-Okbi and Ghadab Najet, who have supported and encouraged me to finish this work.

❖ To my brothers; Ramzy, Khelifa, Mostafa and Abd Elraouf and my sister Malak for their continuous support and encouragement.

❖ To my extended family.

❖ To all my friends and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

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Abstract

In foreign language context, students are in continuous investigations for better methods that would help them to master language skills especially speaking .The present study aims at discovering how cooperative language learning can be utilized to develop English as a foreign language students' speaking skill in the English branch, at Mohammed Kheider University, Biskra. The major question of this study is whether the implementation of the cooperative learning would lead to better achievement concerning students' speaking skill. Based on the research questions, we hypothesized that effective implementation of the cooperative learning would result in making students interact more and show their true oral capacities; students would develop their oral fluency and accuracy and be engaged in meaningful interaction that would sustain their speaking skill. For the verification of our hypotheses, we opted for the descriptive method and used two different data collection tools: students' questionnaire and classroom observation to gather data from third year students. Through the analysis of the data, we discovered that students in oral tasks showed acceptance concerning the work cooperatively, they discussed topics in groups and in pairs. Students interacted more with each other and attempted to practice aspects of language including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Students also practiced oral language with less hesitations and with speed. Since students were able to practice their oral accuracy and fluency, one can understand that they were engaged in meaningful interactions that helped them sustaining their speaking skill. Therefore, our hypotheses are confirmed. However, for future research, this study will be more significant and accurate, if it is experimental.

Key Terms: speaking skill, cooperative learning, group work, pair work, developing speaking skill.

List of Abbreviations

FL: foreign language

L$_1$: the first language or the mother tongue

L$_2$: the second language

EFL: English as a foreign language

STAD: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions

TGT: Teams-Games-Tournament

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General Introduction

Students learning English as a foreign language should experience real communicative situations to become skilled at expressing their own thoughts and develop their oral fluency and accuracy since they are the salient features of the spoken language. The study focuses on the importance of constructing pairs or small groups to maximize students' oral productions in order to develop their speaking skill. It attempts to highlight the importance of establishing a comfortable and welcomed environment through cooperative work as an endeavor to get students to use the language more. This current issue has called many researchers to investigate the importance of cooperative language learning in developing students' speaking skill.

II.   **Statement of the Problem**

Students learn a foreign language to be able to speak it, yet they face a lot of difficulties which hinder them from achieving this goal and in the long run they may not develop this important skill. Enhancing students' speaking skill requires mainly overcoming these obstacles. Teachers have to provide students with a method that would increase opportunities of language use. Managing the class into groups seems to be one of the finest ways to increase students' oral productions and communications. Therefore, the present study attempts to highlight the importance of cooperative learning in the development of students' speaking skill.

III.   **Aims of the Study**

The present study aims at discovering how cooperative language learning can be utilized to develop EFL students' speaking skill in the English branch.

It also aims at highlighting the importance of:

- Assigning cooperative groups to maximize the oral productions in order to optimize students' speaking performance.
- Increasing the students' talking time to practice their oral fluency and accuracy.
- Improving the oral production to enhance speaking communication skills.

IV.   **Significance of the study**

The present study would offer assistance to the language teaching field. Since the method used by the teacher has an impact on teaching, this study tries to show that the implementation of cooperative learning may contribute in the development of students' speaking skill in the branch of English at Mohammad Kheider University of Biskra.

V.   **Research Questions**

The study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is cooperative learning?
2. Is cooperative learning crucial in the learning process?

3. How can teachers implement cooperative learning effectively in oral classes?

4. Does the implementation of the cooperative learning boost students' engagement in oral tasks?

5. Does the implementation of cooperative language learning in the classroom lead to a better achievement in speaking?

VI. Hypotheses

The researcher hypothesizes that:

If cooperative learning is effectively implemented in oral classes, students will develop their speaking skill.

Sub-hypotheses

If teachers use cooperative learning in oral classes, students will:

1. Interact more and show their true oral capacities.
2. Develop oral fluency and accuracy.
3. Be engaged in meaningful interactions that would sustain their speaking skill.

VII. Methodology

The study is based on a descriptive method, and to obtain data two samples are dealt with from the whole population (around 337 students divided in 10 groups)

VII. 1. *Sample*

Two groups from Third-year LMD students in the branch of English at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. (Total number is 64 students, each group contains 32 students)

VII. 2. *Data collection tools*

Concerning data collection, one questionnaire was administered to third- year LMD students. In addition to the questionnaire, classroom observation would be of a great importance to provide a clear image about the students' real reaction with the cooperative learning.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE SPEAKING SKILL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING/ LEARNING CONTEXT

Introduction

In the context of foreign language teaching and learning, teachers generally tend to create real life situations in the classroom to enable students to show their speaking potentials. The main objective of teachers is to make students speak the target language effectively. However, it would not be easy for teachers to accomplish this objective unless they are acquainted with general issues related to the speaking skill, and that is what will deal with this chapter; starting by definitions and perspectives to the speaking skill followed by description of speaking functions and their pedagogical implications. features of the speaking performance, relationships between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, content of speaking course and pedagogical models for teaching speaking will be also discussed.

1. Speaking Skill Definitions

The process of learning a foreign language requires mainly the mastery of its skills. Speaking is a skill that should be attained since it is needed in most of our communications in the foreign language; consequently, various definitions and perspectives have widely dealt with it in order to improve the acquisition and learning of foreign language.

One of the relevant definitions is presented by Bailey (n.d): "speaking is the productive, oral skill. Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. (Utterances are simply things people say.)" (p. 2).Speaking is an active skill that involves the logical construction and production of language i.e. meaningful utterances in order to convey the intended meaning. Another definition provided by Bygate (1987) in which he defined speaking in distinction with writing stating that:

> Speaking is definitely not writing that we say aloud. It is greatly conditioned by the time factor, it involves language produced spontaneously with false starts, repetitions, self-corrections and under normal circumstances, and it disappears, leaving no record but traces in memory (p.51).

Speaking in the foreign language cannot be sustained easily because it takes place in real time and cannot be predictable for most of the time. So, even with some preparations there will be hesitations, repetitions and these criteria are what make speaking different from writing.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

Speaking is seen as an undervalued skill in various ways. Probably this is because almost all people can speak and thus "take it for granted". Moreover, this relative neglect may be related to the origin of the speaking skill as being transient and improvised, which in turn will result in viewing the speaking skill as "facile", "superficial" and "glib". Yet speaking merits attention just like literary skills since is considered as a skill through which students are evaluated and judged nowadays. Thus the spoken form of the language is necessary and apart from the written mode, students are persuaded to speak the language impulsively and not just uttering the written form. The "expansion" of the spoken form of language "must be welcomed" as it enables students talk and listen in foreign language and therefore communicate with speakers of foreign language(Brown and Yule, 1983; Bygate, 1987). However, the process of learning the spoken form of foreign language is not an easy task, rather it demands deep look at what could be involved in the process of mastering the speaking skill with regard to the secondary challenges that might appear while learning and teaching it (Pewlak, Waniek-klimczak, and Majer, 2011). In other words, the knowledge about how to speak the target language is very significant because it requires profound insight at the major constituents of the speaking skill.

3. Speaking Functions and their Implications for Teaching

3.1. *Speaking Functions*

In order to design pedagogical activities and materials in second and foreign language teaching, "it is necessary to recognize the very different functions speaking performs in daily communication and the different purposes for which our students need speaking skills" (Richards, 2006, p.2). Richards (2006) provides three different functions to speaking:

3.1.1. *Speaking as Interaction*

It serves mainly as a social function and refers to "conversation" in particular   as exchanging greetings, engaging in small talk and chit chat. The emphasis is on the

speakers and how they want to picture themselves and not on the message. As Richards (2006) clarifies, speaking as interaction uses conversational conventions, may be formal or casual and reflects speakers' identity. Speaking as interaction is not achievable without students having particular skills such as opening and closing conversations, reacting to others and using adjacency pairs.

3.1.2. *Speaking as Transaction*

This function considers more the message (what and how it is said?) than the speaker. According to Richards (2006), the message should be clearly and accurately comprehendible. Such kinds of speaking as transaction could be like asking for directions, class activity during which students design a poster, problem solving activities. In transactions, the focus is primarily devoted to information, Linguistic accuracy is not always important and there may be frequent questions, repetitions, and comprehension checks. Transactions require certain skills to be involved, students should be skilled at Explaining a need or intention, asking questions and confirming information, justifying opinions and making suggestions and agreeing and disagreeing.

3.1.3. *Speaking as Performance*

Unlike the aforementioned functions, speaking as performance focuses on both the message and the speaker. The message is predictable in terms of organization and sequencing; such speaking could be in form of debates in class or giving a lecture. Speaking as performance can be characterized as follows: It reflects organization and sequencing. Form and accuracy are important. It is evaluated according to its effectiveness on the listener. Speaking as performance as well demands certain skills to be considered: using appropriate opening and closing, maintaining audience engagement and using appropriate vocabulary, correct pronunciation and grammar (Richards, 2006).

3.2 *Implications of Speaking Functions for Teaching*

The main issues that should be considered when planning speaking activities for an oral course are related to the providence of opportunities for learners to acquire each kind of speaking.

3.2.1. *Speaking as Interaction*

This kind of speaking is difficult to teach because it takes place under control of unspoken thus understood rules. So, it is preferred to be taught by providing examples integrated within usual dialogues that include small talks, reacting to others, recounting personal incidents, and opening and closing conversations. For example reacting to others, students would be given dialogues and listeners react by saying "really", "is that right", "wow". Another technique could be by giving conversations and let students generate follow up questions. "Mastering the "art" of speaking as interaction" may not be priority for most of EFL students, but when confronting with situations that require mainly speaking as interaction, students find themselves at a "loss of words" and confused (Richards, 2006).

3.2.2. *Speaking as Transaction*

This kind of speaking is easily planned because there are group activities like information gaps and role plays that can be used for obtaining information in addition to real world transactions. These activities could be in form of ranking activities, values clarifications brainstorming, and group discussion activities. Groups could be assigned to carry out certain conversational statements for others to discuss them (Richards, 2006).

3.2.3. *Speaking as Performance*

Teaching this kind of speaking requires different teaching strategies that involve providing examples and models of speeches, oral presentations, or stories through videos in order to understand how such texts are constructed relying on certain questions such: What is the speaker's purpose? Who is the audience? And how is the talk constructed? Students then will work on their own texts and present them in the class (Richards, 2006).

4. Features of Speaking Performance

In their path to the mastery of the target language, foreign language learners should pass by the spoken language features that are, fluency and accuracy. They are considered as skills by which a foreign language learner is frequently judged. Therefore, it is essential to establish the most important aspects related to speaking fluency and accuracy including definitions, ways of evaluation, and conditions for the development of the two skills.

4.1. *Developing Fluency*

Many English learners aim at being fluent when speaking the target language. Fluency stands for "being able to communicate your ideas without having to stop and think too much about what you are saying" (BBC WORLD SERVICE, p.2). Oral fluency refers mainly to the production of language without many hesitations, pauses and with more speed. Fluency is often followed by some mistakes in grammar, but for some it is not a problem since they can speak and send comprehensible messages. Fluency is "typically" evaluated according to certain criteria that are "speed of access or production" and "the number of hesitations" (I. S. P. Nation& Newton, 2009).fluency is likely to be developed under three main conditions as suggested by (I. S. P. Nation& Newton, 2009):

- **Providing meaning-based activities**: for the development of oral fluency, the activities should stress the meaning in the sense that students need to be taught how to make themselves clear when communicating with others (Brumfit, 1984. Cited in I. S. P. Nation& Newton, 2009).

- **Students are likely to be engage in activities where language items are present in their learning experience**: students would feel comfortable working with subject matters that integrate topics and structures exist in students' learning experience , so through these activities, students would be ready to work

- **Students are supported to perform for a higher level**: students should make a balance when speaking and comprehending. There should be less hesitating and larger use of language. The time pressure may help in the development of the oral fluency.

4.1.1. Designing Fluency Activities

For fluency activities to achieve their goals there should be some procedures to be followed. These procedures can appear in a variety of techniques integrating the whole range of language skills. It is through these procedures that we can judge whether an activity will develop fluency in an efficient way or not. Such techniques are recommended by (I. S. P. Nation& Newton, 2009) as follows:

4.1.1.1. *The 4/3/2 technique*

In this technique, students are assigned to work in pairs taking the roles of a speaker and a listener. The speaker starts speaking for a period of time that may last to four minutes concerning a topic while the partner listens. The next step is that the pairs change with each speaker keeping the same information to another partner but in three minutes, followed by other change and two-minutes for speaking.

4.1.1.2. *Time Pressure*

One way for encouraging learners to reach advanced level of performance is by limiting the time in which they can do something. This is used in 4/3/2 by decreasing the time for each repetition. In split information activities like same or different or find the difference, it is done by putting a time limit on each set of five items and getting learners to change partners after the set time.

4.2. *Developing Accuracy*

Many English learners also wish to achieve spoken accuracy. "Speaking accurately means that you speak without errors of grammar and vocabulary" (BBC WORLD SERVICE, p.2). Oral accuracy refers to the correct use of grammar rules and structures and the appropriate use vocabulary. Accuracy is evaluated as well but by the "amount of error" (I. S. P. Nation& Newton, 2009). Therefore, for students to maintain oral accuracy, they should focus mainly on the most salient features of an accurate spoken language that are, grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation.

4.2.1. *Grammar*

Generally, accurate grammar refers to written language. However, spoken grammar can be accurate as well; Thornbury (2005) listed different features for spoken grammar:

- Clauses are usually added (co-ordinate): unlike writing, the act of speaking is characterized by incomplete sentences namely, clauses that are joint in the speech without confusing the meaning.

- **Head+ body+ tail construction:** this construction consists of the head that is the speaker, the body to refer to the message or the speech and the tail which indicates the

additional information that was not mentioned with the message in the first place and has been remembered later. Often, tails are referred to as tags or question tags with which speakers make a direct request for the listeners' agreement such as: OK? NO?

-**Direct speech favored**: the use of the direct speech is spoken grammar feature that requires less rules than reported speech. The direct speech is preferred in the real life conversations since it is less complex.

- **A lot of ellipsis**: in spoken language, interlocutors often tend to exclude some words in their speech without destroying the meaning of what would be said. Examples of ellipsis could be like: coffee? Biscuit?

- **Performance effects**: they are features of spoken grammar and namely, the audible effects of "real time processing difficulties". They include hesitations (erm, ub), repeats (the repetition of some words), false starts and incomplete utterances.

4.2.2 *Vocabulary*

In oral performance, students usually fail to express their thoughts appropriately because of the use of incorrect vocabulary; thus they need to sustain accuracy in vocabulary, the correct use of lexical items according to specific context, and not just consulting word synonyms. Accordingly, Harmer (2004) reported that students need to see words in context in order to recognize how they are used. As an illustration, Lackman (n.d) suggested that activities related to pre-planned conversations would help students think and practice accuracy before they produce the oral language. In class activity, students could be given a general topic, then assign students in pairs/groups to discuss the grammar rules, the appropriate vocabulary and the correct pronunciation.

4.2.3. *Pronunciation*

One key to triumph in learning to speak a foreign language is having good pronunciation. Achieving accuracy in pronunciation refers to the ability of speaking a native like language. As Harmer (2004) regards, foreign language students should consider all different aspects related to sounds, intonations, where words should be stressed and the way they are produced in one's mouth. Those features assist in the comprehension of the spoken language. In other words, in order to help students improve their pronunciation, it

is important to understand some important information about how the sounds of English are produced.

4.2.4. Designing Accuracy Activities

Just like fluency, accuracy in speaking has its principles that should be considered by teachers to implement the activities in a purposeful manner. Such principles Baily (n.d) are:

4.2.4.1. *Plan Speaking Tasks that Involve Negotiation for Meaning.*

As learners work to make themselves understood (either in speech or in writing), they must attend to accuracy. Namely, they must select the right vocabulary, apply grammar rules and pronounce words carefully. That would be realized by planning speaking tasks that require learners to negotiate for meaning; teachers can give students valuable chances for practice and language development.

4.2.4.2. *Personalize the Content of Speaking Activities Whenever Possible.*

Personalization is a way of preparing for activities that touch students' environments, atmosphere, objectives and concerns. As cited in Baily (n.d), Omaggio (1982) confirms that teachers who opt for personalization were reviewed as being effective. Teachers also can consult role plays concerning situations suggested by the learners.

5. Relationships between Language Skills

A separate speaking course might give the impression that speaking exists alone. In fact, speaking always entails a listener despite some problems of misunderstanding what others are saying. Speaking needs to be in conjunction with other skills because many real-world tasks may involve also reading and writing (Thornbury, 2005). When we are engaged in conversation, we are obliged to listen as well as to speak. The act of lecturing entails notes written in advance, people who are listening take notes from time to time. Writing is rarely done alone because much of communications nowadays are done via emails and text messages, so receivers read what people send to them even receivers read their own writings. Consequently, if a skill is "multi- layered", it would not make sense to teach each one in isolation (Harmer, 2007). Plainly, the relationships between listening,

speaking, reading, and writing, then, are complex relationships but with the sense of support. The practice in one skill is resulted in the practice of another skill if not all the skills.

6. Content of Speaking Course

The process of learning any language requires a well planned design to test and develop the learners' abilities in the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. When it comes to speaking, the emphasis then should be devoted to set objectives in order to develop that skill. Thus, an oral production lesson should consider and incorporate some important elements, recommended by Gueche (2010), in order to fulfill its objectives.

6.1. *Exposure*

The process of learning a foreign language requires mainly an exposure to this language. Foreign language students are supposed to be exposed to meaningful and comprehensible contexts, they have to attend the different structural features and varieties of language use (Gueche, 2010). In this stage, students are about to observe and make sense of how the language being studying is used in the environment or the right context.

6.2. *Instruction*

Classroom instruction is designed for students to come across language features. The instruction then will be by providing students with chances to observe and think about these features. Classroom instruction could be significant when it highlights the students' understanding and processing of such features.

6.3. *Practice and Use of Language*

Students' oral production is the stage of language practice and use. Therefore, it is important to provide students with valuable opportunities in the class to practice more the formal aspects of language in addition to the conversational and communicative skills that are presented in interactions.

6.4. *Integrating Skills*

In real life, speaking is rarely isolated since reading and writing often provide sources for speaking and there is usually an assumed listener. Accordingly, speaking should be taught within classrooms in accordance with other skills. An integrated skills approach then, stands for the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

6.5. *Feedback*

While the students are involved in oral communication, it is the role of the teacher to provide feedback on their performance. Feedback during oral work includes providing comments or actions on the students' oral production, in addition to correcting the mistakes. Feedback is then, vital since it gives the students' an idea about their performance.

7. Teaching Speaking

Nowadays the consideration of the speaking skill is widely acknowledged among teachers and language practitioners. The teacher's concern when teaching speaking should be giving students chances to express themselves in real-life situations. In other words, teaching speaking corresponds preparing FL learners to use the target language orally by providing enough opportunities not only to practise the different linguistic features, but also to master the basic interactive skills of English language. In order to make the picture clear, Harmer (2007) provides teachers with a methodological model for teaching productive skills (Speaking and Writing); the model is summed up in the following figure:

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Ss have all the     │
│ information they need│
└─────────────────────┘
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┌─────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│ Lead-in │ →  │ T sets the│ → │ T monitors│ → │ T gives task│  │ Task related │
│         │    │ task     │    │ the task │    │ feedback │    │ follow up    │
└─────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────────┘
                                                    ↓
                                              ┌──────────┐
                                              │ T sets the│
                                              │ task     │
                                              └──────────┘
                                                    ↓
                                              ┌──────────┐
                                              │ T monitors│
                                              │ the task │
                                              └──────────┘
                                                    ↓
                                              ┌──────────┐
                                              │ T gives task│
                                              │ feedback │
                                              └──────────┘
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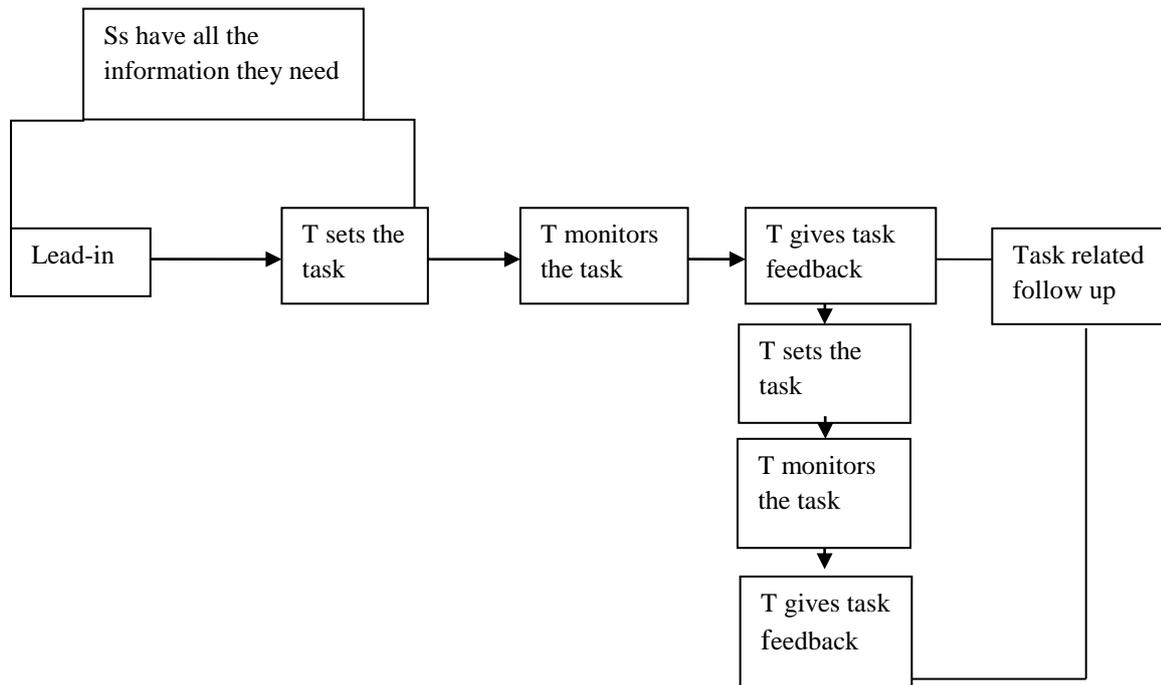
Figure 1: A Basic Model for Teaching Productive Skills (Harmer, 2007, p. 276).

Harmer (2007) points that the key for the success of classroom tasks related to productive skills is the teachers' management of those tasks in addition to their feedback on students' work. In the lead-in stage, teachers need to engage and involve students in the topic and make them familiar with it depending on certain ways such as asking if they have any background knowledge about that topic, or by generating ideas concerning certain context. After setting the task, teachers should make clear and understood instructions for students to be aware about what they supposed to do as far as the task is concerned. If the teacher wants students to work in pairs or groups, then the instructor must show the procedures as being a participant with the providence of any needed information to accomplish the task well. Once the students have started, teachers then need to monitor the task. The teacher may go around the pairs and groups with the possibility of helping them with difficult words and grammar rules. When the students finish the task, the teacher will give task feedback through which students see how well they have done, the teacher is likely to respond to the content and not only the language used. The teacher should consider the positive aspects of the achieved work not the failings. Finally, the teacher could move on from the task with a task related follow-up.

8. Speaking Activities

Effective teaching should be characterized by meaningful use of different thus significant classroom activities. Teachers of oral expression have to consider the aforementioned aims to assign the appropriate activity as a way to develop students' oral production; teachers then are supposed to be eclectic when it comes to apply any activity, but there are several activities that would contribute in the development of students' speaking skill as: debates/discussions, role plays and presentations.

8.1. *Debates/ Discussions*

Natural discussions are preferred for many teachers, these discussions may be learners' personal concerns or a topic included in the course book. Such topics could activate debate activities in English between students. However, this kind of discussions is not always present, so it is beneficial for teachers to set up certain discussions/debates. Formal debates/discussions then could be in form of cards for instance, the teacher can write statements related to pre- selected topics and let students discuss them for a period of time, afterward, students should provide a summary of the main points (Thornbury, 2005). Lackman (n.d) adds that debates and group discussions are suitable alternatives to get students to use certain "discourse markers", particularly those for adding information and contrasting with what has just been said. If the teacher is going to do a debate, the students then will be asked to brainstorm some debating topics e.g., controversial issues. Then, the teacher should choose a topic that will work best for the debate. A good way to do that is to read out each topic and ask students to raise their hands. The teacher can choose the topic that gets the best split. When using a discussion, teacher can get some topics on the board and use a show of hands to choose the most popular one, but before that they should be taught some discourse markers for adding and contrasting information on the board for the duration of the activity and to scoring them on using the discourse markers.

8.2. *Role plays*

Role-plays are one of the typical activities for the practice of real world communications. They enable students act appropriate English utterances even in difficult situations following certain sequences as preparations of vocabulary and recognition of real world content and context of the role-plays (Baily n.d; Thornbury, 2005). As Lackman

(n.d) illustrates, when students are given a particular function (advising, persuading, etc.), they have to create a role play to suit the function. The trick is to get them think about the functions needed in real-world situations. In preparation, teacher can provide a list of structures for the function, or ask them to produce their own. When the students prepare the function and the list of structures, they work in pairs or groups and scheme a situation that suits the function. The teacher should be in the monitoring phase to answer questions and help them with the task. Then, students will be asked to practice the role play and use the structures. In this stage, the teacher can collect the most frequent errors to deal with afterwards.

8.3. *Presentations*

In oral presentation, students should be acquainted with procedures about generating and organizing their ideas in order to improve their formal speeches in a variety of ways, including "sequentially", "chronologically" and "thematically". They need practice in organizing their speech about problems and solutions, causes and results, and similarities and differences. After organization, they can practise speeches with their peers or with the whole class. Teachers can also help students adjust students' speeches to correspond the intended audience. Furthermore, teachers can provide feedback after the performance (Wallace, Stariha & Walberg, 2004). Another activity is by giving students a short presentation on a life of a famous historical figure with the providence of some cues and hints. In groups, they start to look for information about their favorite figure in other books or just by asking the teacher. After the delivery of the presentations, they need to be given the analysis of what they said and their use of language items then students represent their work to take advantage of the teacher's feedback on their first attempts (Harmer, 2007). Such activities tend to provide students with chances to think about accuracy before they speak as it gives teachers the opportunity to deal with it later on (Lackman, n.d).

9. Different Roles of EFL Teachers

In foreign language classroom, "what it takes to be a teacher is dedication, professionalism, intelligence, commitment, energy and above all else intuition: knowing what is the right thing to do in any given situation" (Williams, 2004, p. 3). Teachers of oral expression play different and significant roles. They are model providers, prompters; they

can be involved in classroom tasks or be feedback providers. Teachers should consider when and how to give feedback without neglecting how to deal with the use of the mother tongue in foreign language teaching and learning as well.

9.1. *The Teacher as a Prompter*

Sometimes the students engaged in oral tasks lose the "thread" of what is going on or lose some words; it is then the role of the teacher to play as a prompter. The teacher may offer some words or phrases; often it is necessary to prompt students to speak in English rather than in their mother tongue. Prompting students should be in a sensitive and encouraging way but with "discretion" i.e. teachers should not be too adamant and not too retiring (Harmer, 2007).

9.2. *The Teacher as a Participant*

The traditional way in most of classroom activities is a teacher standing at the back letting students deal with them and at the end they intervene to provide feedback. However, there are times teachers could join the activity not as a teacher but as a participant; such thing may make students enjoy as an attempt to change the routine of being a prompter or source provider. Teachers should be careful not to dominate the "proceeding" since they know the language more (Harmer, 2007).

9.3. *The Teacher as Feedback Provider during Oral Work*

Teachers face a "delicate" decision concerning providing students with feedback on their errors. Learners do not pay attention to those errors because the focus is on what they are saying and not the way they are saying it. Teachers' intervention to provide assistance may have the "counterproductive" effect of forcing accuracy on the expense of fluency. Nevertheless, teachers would be uncomfortable "letting errors go" and tend to maintain a "focus on form", that is, formal accuracy in order to make students understand they are under control (Thornbury, 2005). Therefore, through feedback both assessment and correction can be helpful during oral work and not necessarily for teachers to deal with all oral productions in the same manner; rather it depends on the stage of the lesson, type of the activity, and the type of the mistake (Harmer, 2007).

9.4. *The Teacher as a Balance Maker in Using the Mother Tongue and English*

Foreign language students depend on their mother tongue in the class frequently if not ordinary; this issue is English teachers' headache. However, "The first step towards solving this problem implies teachers' awareness and recognition of L1 interference as an inevitable process on the way to English mastery" (Gueche, 2010, p. 138).The teachers' mission then is to provide students with purposeful explanation on how the recurrent use of L1 hinders them from having the essential practice in the target language without neglecting the role of the mother tongue by creating a balance that considers the following (Harmer, 2007).

- **Acknowledging the L$_1$**: the use of the students' mother tongue on their L$_2$ learning has undeniable importance, so teachers can show their understanding of the learning process and discuss L$_1$ and L$_2$ issues with the class.
- **Using appropriate L$_1$ and L$_2$ activities**: establishing set of activities that would maximize the benefits of using students' L$_1$ such as translating or contrasting between the two languages in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects. Yet, this use should be implemented in the context of English language use in the classroom (Harmer, 2007).

In a nutshell, there should be an ability to switch between these several roles, with careful judging of using one and not the other in terms of appropriateness. After the decision is made, it is time to carry out that role and perform it.

10. Different Roles of EFL Students

In foreign language context, it is vital to recognize that students are different because they do not share the same knowledge, skills, and preferences including the ability to speak one language. However, foreign language students should have mutual roles along with the process of learning the target language globally and developing their oral performance particularly in order to understand their part of responsibility toward the language they wish to master. The most important roles that students must play start by possessing a positive attitude toward language they want to learn and toward speakers of that language. Students have to foresee success; they must be prepared to risk making

mistakes; they should acquire the desire to learn about the language and organize their own practice of the language (Edge, 1993).

Often FL students face some difficulties when speaking in the classroom, so it is their role to be armed with three major strategies to adjust and resolve the difficulties, such strategies are suggested by (Harmer, 2007):

- **Improvising**: it is to try any alternative word or phrase that comes to the mind, it works sometimes.

- **Discarding**: it is when the speakers desert the thought that they failed at putting it into words to shift to another thought.

- **Paraphrasing**: speakers sometimes tend to paraphrase i.e. to express certain words in form of sentences; such "lexical" alternatives may save the speakers without letting the audience know as it makes the communication flows.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to discuss features related to the speaking skill in oral sessions. In designing speaking course, Teachers should be acquainted with the very issues of the speaking performance including the different definitions provided and all what is concerned with oral fluency and accuracy with ways of developments. Additionally, teachers should realize the importance and the need for sustaining the speaking or oral performance of students. With this regard, oral sessions have to include and provide adequate activities that consider not only opportunities for students to speak but also to maintain their oral fluency and accuracy in order to fulfill the goal of successful oral communication.

CHAPTER TWO:
COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING/LEARNING

Introduction

The traditional educational instructions, instructor-centered lectures, used by foreign language teachers had and still have undeniable significance. However, new methods and instructions should be implemented to meet students' needs and thus develop their level of achievement. Accordingly, increasing "student-centered" aspect in the classroom is a prerequisite not only to enable students to work cooperatively, but also to optimize meaningful interactions that would assist students in learning the target language. This chapter is devoted to elucidate some aspects related to cooperative learning: starting by providing some definitions and perspectives to the cooperative learning, moving to highlighting the methods, aims, and elements of cooperative learning. Then, stating the difference between small groups and cooperative learning as well as the implementation of cooperative learning. The chapter is concluded by mentioning some cooperative learning activities, different roles of EFL teachers and learners, issues concerning advantages of cooperative learning and its implementation for effective speaking.

1. Cooperative Learning Definitions

The field of foreign language learning and teaching has been exposed to many changes with the intention of searching for more innovative and effective methods of instruction. Recently, the notion of the student as an instructor has brought the cooperative learning method to the existence as an endeavor to increase the social interactions among students that would result in meaningful and purposeful learning of the language.

Various definitions to the cooperative learning have been formulated. What was noteworthy is that of Slavin (1995, p. 2. As cited in Fehling) who stated that:

> Cooperative learning refers to a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in the gaps in each other's understanding.

Cooperative Learning in the classroom entails students working together in order to construct shared knowledge, so the key element in cooperative work is the negotiation of

meaning among and between students to arrive at a general understanding of a given task. In other words, as (Gillies, 2007) put it: "Cooperative learning involves students working together in small groups to accomplish shared goals" (p. 4). The premise behind cooperative learning is having students support, assist and complete each others' understanding and knowledge so that every member of the group can master the assignment. Moreover, in cooperative activities, students seek results that are beneficial for them and for group members. Cooperative learning is then the implementation of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson and Johnson n.d).

2. Theoretical Perspectives

In foreign language teaching, the aspects of students' interactions and the way they perceive each other are relatively neglected. Moreover, more time is devoted to implementing instructions for students' interactions with educational materials from one hand and students-teachers interactions from another hand. However, the aspect related to student-student interactions has its influence on students' learning including their emotions toward schooling as a whole (Johnson and Johnson, 2002). Nevertheless, making students work on groups in the classroom to finish a learning task and call it a cooperative group would not necessarily make them one. With this regard, to make sure that a group is cooperative, practitioners have to consider the distinctive methods cooperative learning is possibly implemented without neglecting the basic elements included within each cooperative activity (Jolliffe, 2007; Dyson & Casey, 2012). It is crucial to understand the basic constituents of any instructional method to make adequate use of it and thus obtain the intended results concerning students' attainments.

At another point, Jolliffe (2007) put the weight on the students' side and not on the teachers' as Dyson & Casey (2012) did. For effective cooperative learning to take place, groups must contribute and cooperate together to achieve mutual learning goals, they need to discuss the assigned work and assist each other to comprehend it. However, this process needs more attention to be paid to teaching small groups and interpersonal skills as a way to ensure that students will interact properly.

3. Cooperative Language Learning Methods

Several educational researches have confirmed that applying the sense of cooperation has a significant effect on students' learning. Many of cooperative learning methods have been researched for their effectiveness. Some of these methods (Slavin, 1991) are specific for certain grades and levels and others are generally relevant. Such methods are like: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions, Teams-Games-Tournament and Jigsaw.

3.1. *Student Teams-Achievement Divisions*

In STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions), students are assigned to four or five member groups in which each group is a "microcosm" of the whole class. In this method, every week the teacher presents the new task to the class through a lecture or a discussion. The role of group members then is to work on the activity; they may work on issues one at a time in pairs. After that, students will take turn test each other, discuss problems as a group or use the means they need to master the activity. Group members are allocated to work on the assignment until all group members are sure they understand the task. When students finish the assignment, they should be tested on that activity individually. The scores earned individually are put into group attainments by the teacher. Moreover, each student's contribution is determined by his/her test results. STAD follows a system called score improvement; this system allows each group member to contribute most points to his/her group. The Students in this case are obliged to do their best in order to show considerable development in completing the task (Slavin, 1991).

3.2. *Teams-Games-Tournament*

TGT (Teams-Games-Tournament) (Slavin, 1991) is a cooperative learning method in which students play games in order to present their individual competence concerning the mastery of the task. In TGT, Students are supposed to work on these games in weekly tournaments in which they compete with members of other teams who are similar in "past performance". The competitions happen at tournament tables composed of three students. The tasks change every week according to a system that establishes the equality of the competition. This equal system permits students belonging to all levels of "past performance" to contribute most points to their teams if they do their best.

3.3. *Jigsaw*

In the Jigsaw method (Aronson, 1978 cited in Slavin, 1991), groups are consisted of five to six students; the task is divided into sections. In the beginning, each group member presents his or her own section with the possibility that two students may share a section. Next, members from different groups who have worked on the same sections meet in "expert groups" to discuss and analyze their sections. After that, students return to their groups and start teaching their group mates about their sections. Students should be attentive to their mates so that they learn about other sections.

Another version of Jigsaw is Jigsaw 2 developed by Slavin (1986). In this method, students work in four or five member groups. Students are asked to read common narrative, be it a book, a short story or a biography. After receiving a topic, each student should be an "expert", and then students with the same topics should meet in groups to discuss and return to their groups to teach what they have learned. What is different from the first version is that in jigsaw 2, Students pass individual tests and the scores will be the same as the improvement score system in STAD. In jigsaw 2, students are tested on their contribution to their groups. The score improvement system is used to establish the fairness between students and make them aware that their contribution benefits them and their group.

The triumph of cooperative learning methods is not automatically guaranteed. Therefore, Teachers should provide the groups with primary training on cooperative learning procedures as well as group social skills for students to complete tasks well and thus achieve better.

4. Cooperative Learning Basic elements

Cooperative learning just like other instructional methods has its chief elements to be implemented. Therefore, for the triumph of the cooperative efforts, some light should be thrown on five main elements as suggested by (Johnson, Johnson 2002):

4.1. *Positive Interdependence*

Effective cooperative lesson is conditioned by students' perception of the idea "sink or swim together." Johnson and Johnson (2002) put forward that in cooperative learning

settings, students have to learn the assignment and ensure that all members of the group learn it. Positive interdependence allows students to realize that they have mutual goals to be achieved when working cooperatively; they should realize also that their work assists group members and their group members' work assists them. Students work together in cooperatively to make all members learn by sharing their information and thoughts to provide mutual support and encouragement and to enjoy their joint success. As a final point, Positive interdependence has to ensure that efforts of each group member are crucial for group success and each group member has his or her own contribution to make to the mutual effort.

4.2. *Face-to-Face Interaction*

Face-to-Face interaction is the act of students supporting and assisting each other's efforts to achieve, accomplish tasks, and produce in order to reach the group's goals. Face-to-Face interaction is achieved when individuals provide each other with help and assistance, this help may be in form of clarifications, explanations or even the meaning of certain vocabularies. Another feature for well structured face to face interactions is having students Exchange information and materials; students may help each other sharing their thoughts and ideas with their group members in order to get meaningful information that serve the topic. Effective face to face interaction is where students can correct each other's mistakes or any kind of feedback in order to develop their learning performance. The last but certainly not the least condition is that students among each other should sustain encouragement and support through which students feel less anxious and stressed (Johnson, Johnson 2002).

4.3. *Individual Accountability*

The third basic element of cooperative learning is the individual accountability. Johnson and Johnson (2002) stress the idea that students need to recognize the group members who need assistance and encouragement in the completion of the task. Group members should realize their responsibilities in the group and not rely on others' work. Cooperative learning groups aim at developing each student's points of strength. For teachers, there are common ways to structure individual accountability as proposed by (Johnson, Johnson 2002): teachers should keep the size of the group small because small cooperative group encourages the individual accountability. Teachers need to test each

student to ensure that every student has provided his/her contribution to the group. Individual accountability can be structured by teachers where they can assign students from each group to teach and explain what they learned to their group members.

4.4. *Interpersonal and Small-Group Skills*

The fourth basic element of cooperative learning is the interpersonal and small-group skills (Johnson, Johnson 2002). For a well-structured cooperative learning, teachers and students should make a good use of the interpersonal and small-group skills for one reason; is that interpersonal and small-group skills do not exist by coincidence when they are needed. Teachers must acquaint their students by the "social skills" needed for cooperation so that students are ready and motivated to use them and thus achieve better. For students, in order to manage efforts to achieve mutual goals, they must get to know and trust each other; students need to interact with each other in order to know each other's personality and the way of thinking, the trust should be maintained with time by students among each other and recognize that each member is responsible for his/her efforts in the class tasks. Students need to communicate correctly and clearly in the sense that they should keep discussing the problems related to the topic in a way that makes other group members understand. Group members should show acceptance and support to each other.

4.5. *Group Processing*

The fifth main component of cooperative learning is group processing (Johnson, Johnson 2002). Effective cooperative work is influenced by group members and how they evaluate themselves concerning their ways and methods to deal with class tasks. Students need to check their processes of how to work on an activity cooperatively. Students evaluate the group by describing the actions of each member and whether they were helpful and beneficial to the group and by making decisions concerning group members' actions that need to be maintained or changed. Concerning the teachers' part, they may thoroughly observe the cooperative learning groups by moving around the groups to know how students deal with the task as they discuss with each other. Students' discussions provide significant information about how students understand teachers' instructions, concepts and whether they are applying the basic elements of cooperative learning. In short, what makes a group work cooperative is the entire realization of the main elements that construct the cooperative learning.

5. Cooperative Language Learning Aims

Cooperative Learning theories seek to establish and realize some intentions and aims in the context of foreign language learning and teaching. The reason is that there is a support for the idea that interaction among and between students on learning task will lead to improve students' achievements. Hence, aims that cooperative learning wants to reach and establish are: academic learning, social-affective learning and personality development (Fehling. n.d).

5.1. *Academic Learning*

Cooperative Learning is seemed to be applicable in many disciplines; education is one of those disciplines. As Cohen (1994) asserts, cooperative learning can assist students learn academically. He put forward that students, for academic purposes, need to acquire and attend the content of the subject on the one hand, and sustain some competences including problem solving and decision making on the other hand. Therefore, they have to discuss, form ideas and opinions and have to give feedback. Group discussions encourage each member's knowledge through recurrent oral summarizing, explanation, and elaboration.

5.2. *Social-Affective Learning*

Another aim for cooperative learning can be social-affective learning (Fehling. n.d). Students can learn to support each other, to address the variety in a group, to work in a team and to deal with the perspective of others. A further intention is that students are capable of discovering ways to listen to each other and to resolve problems collectively. For a general benefit, teachers can integrate high and low achieving students, allowing them to support and help each other collectively in the group.

5.3. *Personality Development*

At the psychological level, Cooperative Learning can be motivating for the students in the sense that it can reinforce the confidence in the abilities they possess. Additionally, students must be given the chance to make their own decisions in the one hand. The teacher in the other hand must prepare the students for their role in the adult world (Cohen 1994). Consequently, establishing learning aims would be of a great importance for the

success of any method. Such aims of cooperative learning would academically affect students' achievements.

6. The Difference between Small Groups and Cooperative Learning

In foreign language teaching and learning context, it is crucial to understand and see the whole picture of a given method and strategy in order to make the adequate use of it. It is the case of cooperative learning as well. Cooperative Learning should be clearly distinguished from small groups (though sometimes they are used interchangeably). For Macpherson (2007), the distinctive features between cooperative learning and traditional small groups are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, communication skills, face-to-face interaction and group processing.

6.1. *Traditional Small Groups*

Traditional small groups stand for teachers asking students to form groups to complete a class task. In traditional small groups, there is neither structured interdependence nor individual accountability, and communication skills are unspecified or disregarded. It should be said that sometimes the group or the teacher selects a leader, but the stress is on the task to be done and not for group processing. Eventually, each group member is an individual and responsible only for him/herself. Most of the time the teacher assigns the groups and then leaves them without any supervision until the time allotted finishes (Macpherson 2007).

6.2. *Cooperative Learning Teams*

In cooperative learning teams, however, Macpherson (2007) says that positive interdependence is incorporated within the group task activities in which group members depend on each other to achieve joint success. Cooperative learning teams ensure that individual accountability is a result that can be predictable. For group skills, meaningful interactions are supposed to be used by all group members within group activity. Group members frequently check the way they are working on the task in order to adjust their behaviors properly. The role of the teacher is present but when necessary, that is, to observe and ensure the proper flow of the process.

Cooperative Learning is seen as more than students working together, rather it is perceived as students searching for mutual and shared success away from individual success and competition. Cooperative learning seeks for students supporting, assisting and correcting each other.

7. Implementation of Cooperative Learning

In pedagogy, cooperative learning can be easily implemented. There are basically three ways in which cooperative learning may be structured in the university classroom. Teachers may use formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning, and cooperative base groups (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 2008).

7.1. *Formal Cooperative Learning*

formal cooperative learning refers to students learn and work together for one class period to several weeks to master the assigned task whether problem solving or decision making for better achievement in learning(Johnson et al., 2008). Concerning the course requirement or assignment, Johnson et al (2008) see that it may be structured cooperatively, but teacher should first, make a number of "pre-instructional decisions" including the identification of lesson objectives, decide the group size and what each student should do for the group. Second, teachers need to provide neat explanation and stresses the positive interdependence, that is, teachers explain clearly the main elements of cooperative learning to be implemented by students to ensure that they succeed in the assignment. Third, teachers need to check the learning process by the intervention within groups to provide explanations or to encourage students to interact more with each other. The fourth should is that teacher need to finish by assessing students' learning and evaluate groups processed the task to encourage behaviors and discourage others.

7.2. *Informal Cooperative Learning*

Teacher can implement cooperative learning informally. They need to make students work together to achieve a mutual learning goal. Unlike the formal implementation, the informal implementation consists of students work together on a classroom task for few minutes in one class period. Teacher through this manner of implementation, try to drive students' attention to the assigned task and sets the preferred atmosphere for effective learning. The challenge that faces the teacher is to make students perform the logical

thinking concerning the gradual understanding of the task including the processes of organizing the task, explaining it, summarizing it and incorporating it within previous knowledge. Informal cooperative learning groups are attempt to enable students to engage in discussions that last for three to five minute before and after a lecture (Johnson et al., 2008).

7.3. *Cooperative Base Groups*

Unlike the aforementioned manners of implementations, Cooperative base groups are supposed to be long-term cooperative learning groups. Those groups are characterized by regular connection that is to say, students are supposed to form groups for a long period of time for specific purposes. Within Base groups, students should provide the support, assistance and encouragement to each member who needs progress in his/her learning period. The group members may help each other understanding the unclear issues related to the assigned work. The implementation of base groups attempt to develop students' presence and the value and magnitude of learning, Positive improvement is enhanced when base groups are given responsibility as the responsibility for accomplishing a service project to improve the school (Johnson et al., 2008).

8. Cooperative Learning: Activities

Effective teaching should be characterized by meaningful use of different thus significant classroom activities. Teachers are supposed to be eclectic when it comes to apply any activity, but there are several activities that would contribute in the development of students' cooperative learning skills.

8.1. *Think-Pair-Share Activity*

The objective of think-pair-share activity is to enable students to practice speaking and listening to each other. When the teachers ask questions, Students may think individually about the questions and their responses, this is the first step. Next, they pair each other and share their responses. After the paired discussions, students are called to review their pair's responses to the whole class (Park, 2009). As Simon (2008) regards, this activity is useful and applicable because teachers require students to formulate hypotheses about the results of an experiment before it is undertaken.

8.2. *Numbered Heads Together activity*

In this activity, students work together in groups to review and recapitulate previous information and bring to mind answers. As an illustration, the teacher may divide students into groups of four and make each member represents a number. The teacher then directs a question about the content, group members start discuss possible answers. After that the teacher gets a number and the students with that number take turns to answer the question. The idea behind this activity is to call a number from one group to answer the question, and then have the other groups' delegates indicate agreement or disagreement by giving thumbs up or thumbs down to the response (Park, 2009).

8.3. *Roundtable or Assembly Line*

Teachers can consult activities such as roundtable or assembly line with foreign language students. Group members work on a meeting in form of a line to produce and generate a list of items related to a given topic. The objective of this activity is to generate the maximum number of responses in form of a list. This activity allows each group member to practice speaking, listening and writing in their contribution to provide items to the list. After having students discussing the work, one group member starts presenting the list with one item. The student then passes the list to the next group member, whose turn is to add another item to the list. Students continue with this process until the responses are completed. It is necessary to ensure that all students provided at least one item; eventually, the group can discuss the items (Park, 2009).

8.4. *Three-Step Interview*

This activity would be effective when students are solving problems that are controversial, and have no specific right or wrong answers. Three problem-solving steps are involved in this process. For the first step, the teacher presents a problem about the various opinions that exist and poses several questions for the class to address. In the next step, the students in pairs present the interviewer and the interviewee. After the first interview has been completed, students reverse the roles, when finishing all interviews, the class is supposed to write a summary report of the interview results. (Simon, 2008)

9. Roles of EFL Teachers in Cooperative Learning

In foreign language classroom, teachers play different and significant roles. In a cooperative learning context, teachers need to state the benefits, so that learners understand the importance of working together. The teacher must set clear objectives for learners engaging in the activity. Therefore, to maximize the potential for successful group activities, the teacher needs to be fully prepared. This preparation could in form of activities to be done before the group activity. As Macpherson (2007) reports, teachers need to make sure that the class activity is presented through the integration of cooperative learning main elements, they should make clear the whole guide lines for working in groups to make the communication easier. For the general benefits, teacher can form mixed level of students in order to help each other. From time to time, teachers should be present to provide assistance and to monitor the group processing. For teachers to be acquainted with the true implementation of the cooperative learning, they need to discuss with colleague teachers to cover more areas of implementation. To ensure that all students are working on the task the teacher needs to make tests to individual students. The teacher after the activity may help students in establishing group processing in order to evaluate how students performed in the group activity.

10. Different Roles of EFL Learners

Foreign language students should have mutual roles along with the process of learning the target language in order to understand their part of responsibility toward the language they wish to master. In a cooperative learning context, and in order to keep the group focused on a task, it is important for the group to divide roles and responsibilities.

Roles can be identified in a variety of ways, but basically there are four different types of responsibilities. The leader, his/her role is to ensure that everyone is taking part in the task. The leader should keep the harmony between group members. The reporter, his/her role is to sustain discussions between group members and reports decisions to class. The monitor, whose role is to guarantee that the group's zone is clean and bring any needed materials for the group. The consensus builder may contribute in the group to reach harmony and summarizes discussions in order to reach agreement (Simon, 2008).

11. Advantages of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning methods and main elements have contributed to a large extent in the development of students' productions and level of achievements. Therefore, cooperative learning possesses various advantages as identified by (Zhang, 2010). Cooperative leaning:

- **Provides the chances of input and output:** according to Zhang (2010), Cooperative language learning creates acceptable and interactive contexts in which students can listen to each other and work on certain issues (problem solving). Cooperative language learning enables students to acquire comprehensible input and output and the processes of negotiation.

- **Creates effective climate:** with their group members, students have the opportunity to practice and rehearse their answers before producing them in front of the whole class as a solution to reduce anxiety and fear. (Zhang, 2010).

- **Increases a variety of language functions:** Cooperative learning allows students to produce language with functions including suggesting, requesting and other functions. Working in cooperative learning groups may promote students "discourse management" in order to ensure chances for language learning.

- **Fosters learner responsibility and independence:** Cooperative learning main concern is to make each student a stronger individual through working cooperatively. Cooperative learning, therefore, tries to highlight the individual accountability.

12. Applying Cooperative Learning for Effective Speaking

One way to facilitate speaking is creating an atmosphere filled by support and "interdependence". With this regard, cooperative learning when applied to language teaching can benefit the development of speaking. When learners are assigned to work together, speaking then becomes less threatening. Teacher can maintain this atmosphere by assigning activities of cooperative learning since they are considered as an effective preparation for real interactions. In addition, they have fixed mechanisms to reduce common communication issues in a foreign language classroom (Safont and Campoy,

2002). It is important to ensure that speaking is productive and not off task. Allocating cooperative learning opportunities may guarantee that students speak and interact purposefully and they are on the task. Students have to speak with each other to succeed in the task since it is interdependent (Jolliffe, 2007).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the definition of cooperative learning was addressed as the instructional method, through which students assist each other and complete each other's comprehension concerning a given task. Moreover, cooperative learning methods are claimed to be effective conditioned by a serious monitoring and supervision from the teacher's part regarding the clear establishment of the five main elements of cooperative learning. The aforementioned features are what make cooperative learning different from the traditional group work. Holding the sense of responsibility, teachers and students should contribute in the success of the cooperative learning in order to obtain the intended results concerning students' level of achievements.

CHAPTER THREE:
FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapters were devoted to review two aspects, the speaking skill and cooperative learning. The following chapter is allocated to investigate how students' speaking skill will be developed through the implementation of cooperative learning. The data were gathered through two different data collection tools, questionnaire and classroom observation. The results will be described and interpreted to verify the formulated hypotheses.

1. Questionnaire

1.1. *Objectives*

The current questionnaire is a data collection tool designed to investigate how cooperative language learning can be implemented (used) to develop third-year LMD students' speaking skill in the English branch. Additionally, it aims at discovering students' attitudes toward the skills of cooperative learning in oral classes.

1.2. *The Piloted Questionnaire*

1.2.1. *Description and Structure of the Piloted Questionnaire*

In the piloting stage, a questionnaire consisted of 14 questions was administered to third year students. From 14 questions, 10 questions were direct with yes/ no answer and agree/disagree. 4 questions were followed by justifications to allow students to give their explanations. The piloted questionnaire consisted of two sections; the first one was composed of 7 questions about students' speaking skill and the second one was also composed of 7 questions about students' perception of cooperative leaning in oral classes. The piloting stage was done to test the content of the questionnaire and to see if students will understand later on the main questionnaire. Therefore, six students from third year were asked to fill in the questionnaire. They were asked to circle any irrelevant, ambiguous and difficult terms or questions in order to avoid them later on in the main questionnaire.

1.2.2. *The Findings and the Interpretations of the Piloted Questionnaire*

Six students participated in the piloting from the whole sample that is 64 students, in the first item or question of the first section, 50% of the students find speaking in English easy, 33. 33% of the students think that speaking in English is average and only 16.66 %

(one student) finds it very difficult. The second item, students were asked if they need to develop their language skills; 83.33% of the students answered yes and one16.66% replied with no. the third item was devoted to ask students which skill they need to develop most with justifications. 83.33% of students selected speaking but only 50% of the students preferred to justify, one justifies that speaking is important and shows students' level, other says in order to communicate easily with others and improve the language and the third student sees that the main goal of learning a foreign language is to communicate. In the fourth item, 33.33% of the students claim that they always participate in oral tasks; another 33.33% of the students say they sometimes participate, one student 16.66% answers often and one16.66% rarely. Concerning the sixth item, all 6 students 100% replied with yes concerning their trial to develop their speaking skill. In the last item, three categories were given to see how often student agree or disagree. In the first category 4 students 66.66% strongly agree that developing speaking skill is essential in the process of learning a foreign language. 2 students 33.33% just agree. In the second category, 4 students 66.66% agree that oral expression sessions help students maximize their oral productions. One student 16.66% stays neutral and one 16.66% disagree. In the third category, 5 students 83.33% agree that students must be given opportunities to speak freely in oral tasks so that they can practice their oral fluency and accuracy, and one student 16.66% strongly disagrees.

In the second section, 4 students 66.66% reply that they prefer individual work, 2 students 33.33% prefer whole class leaning and one student 16.66% prefers pair work. Only 3 students 50% provide justifications; students with the choice of whole class claim that they learn new things from each other, vary their vocabulary and avoid shyness. The student with the choice of pair work claims that working in pairs provides exchange of ideas, thoughts and correct each others' mistakes. In the second item of the second section, 5 students 83.33% select yes in the sense that they can engage themselves in oral tasks when they are based on group/pair work and only one student 16.66% replies by no. The third item consisted of asking students to say how often they agree with three categories; 4 students 66.66% agree with the idea that working in pairs/groups can help students raise their engagement in oral tasks; one student 16.66% stays neutral and one student 16.66% disagree. In the second category, 5 students 83.33% disagree with the idea that says it is difficult to work with classmates in groups and pairs and only one student agrees on it. In the last category, 4 students 66.66% agree that teachers should raise students' awareness

toward the skills of cooperative learning. In the fourth item, students were given multiple choice questions. 3 students understood the instruction, others did not. The other students got confused with the previous question and answered with agree and disagree. From those three students, one student agreed with the idea that group/pair work helps students to interact more and exchange information through more questions and answers, other student strongly agrees whereas the third student stays neutral. The second choice stands for students would be involved in meaningful interactions to sustain correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (accuracy), one student strongly agrees, other disagrees while the third one agrees. The third choice was to perform oral language with more speed, less hesitations and pauses (fluency), all 3 students disagree. For students who understood the instruction, 2 students think that group/pair work helps students to interact more and exchange information through more questions and answers, only one student chooses the third option which is to perform oral language with more speed, less hesitations and pauses (fluency). In the fifth item, 4 students 66.66% consider cooperative learning beneficial, whereas 2 students 33.33% see it not beneficial. For the sixth item, 3 students 50% prefer speaking activities that are based on individual work and 3 students 50% opt for group/pair work. Only 2 justifications were provided; one student says that in the individual work, one feels free. Other student reports that group/pair work is for helping each other. In the last item of the second section, 3 students 50% think that cooperative learning can help students develop their speaking skill; the last 3 students 50% see the contrary. Only 3 students provided justifications, the first student says that working individually helps student to focus more and produce more correct English, other student prefers individual work to talk whenever he wants and feels free and the last student reports that working alone is an opportunity for deep thinking.

Throughout this study, students replied on the majority of the questions. Students were asked to circle any ambiguous terms, such terms as cooperative learning, fluency, accuracy and implementation in addition to one question instruction. In the main questionnaire all the remarks will be considered. The part of justification is removed since the majority of students refused to provide it; the structure of questions will change to be more direct in order to get valid information.

In short, so far the results show that students will interact more, develop their oral fluency and accuracy when working on groups or pairs. These findings; therefore, are in the way of confirming the formulated hypotheses.

1.3. *The Main Questionnaire*

1.3.1. *Description and Structure of the Main Questionnaire*

The students' main questionnaire was derived from the one of the pilot work. Some modifications has been made concerning changing words and expressions that students had asked about in the pilot study, ordering the items, reconstructing the questions to be as clear as possible and omitting one question to replace it with other questions that have direct relationship with the topic. In addition, the part of justification is removed because of the inadequate information. The main questionnaire consists of 16 questions divided into two sections: students' perception of speaking skill which consists of 08 questions, students' perceptions of cooperative learning in oral tasks which is composed of 08 questions.

1.3.2. *Administration of the Main Questionnaire*

The questionnaire has taken place a week after the pilot work. The adopted questionnaire has been administered to third -year LMD students in their oral classes; two groups (totally 64 students) from the whole population of 337 students, but only 50 questionnaires were handed back due to the absence of the rest of the students. Students finished answering the questionnaire's questions in 10 minutes after their lecture of oral expression with the presence of their teacher.

1.3.3. *The Findings and Interpretations of the Main Questionnaire*

Section one: Students' Perception of the Speaking Skill

1. Do you find speaking in English:

Very Easy   Easy   Average   Difficult   Very Difficult

Figure 2: Students' Attitudes toward Speaking
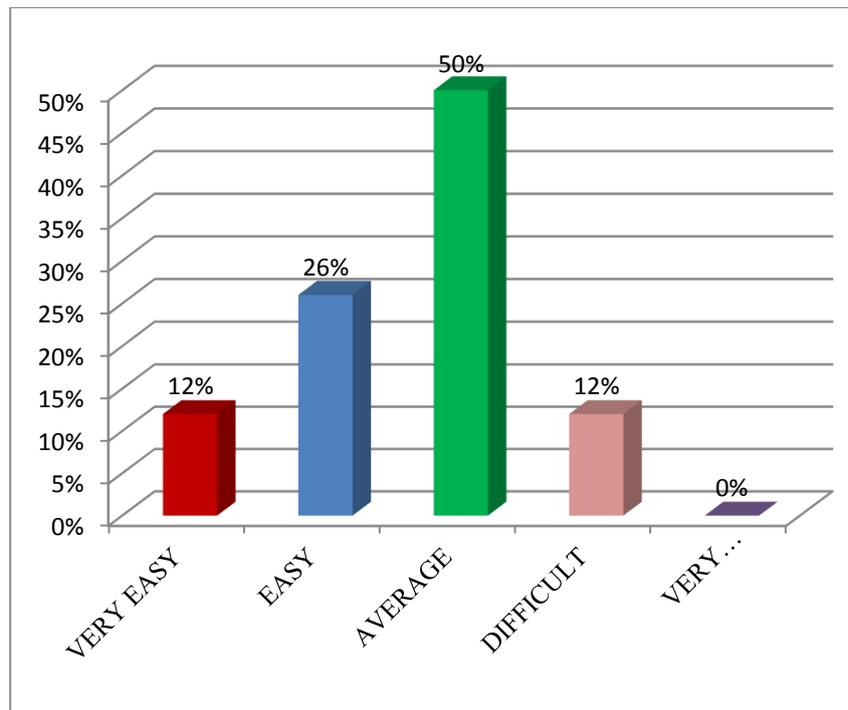
This question attempts to test students' perception of the speaking skill and how they evaluate themselves when it comes to speak the language. In their response to the question, the majority of the students 50% consider speaking in English not easy but not difficult, that is average. The second proportion of students 26% think that speaking the language is easy, 12% of the students think that speaking the English language is a very easy task, the second 12 % of the students believe in the difficulty when speaking the language and no one thinks it is very difficult. The students with the average option may reveal that they are struggling when it comes to produce the oral language. The 26% and the 12% of students who claim that speaking English is easy and very easy may represent the students who are active in oral sessions, that is to say, they often participate and take part in the oral assignments. However, the 12% of students who admit the difficulty of speaking the language may represent the students who do not participate and take part in the oral assignment.

2. Do you need to develop their language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)?

Yes   No

Figure 3: Students' Perception of the Need to Develop Language Skills
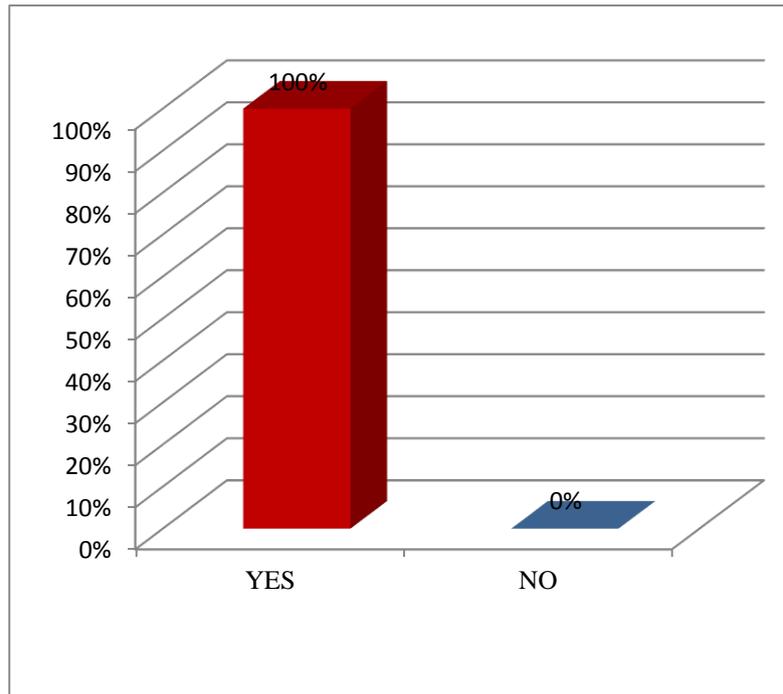
The aim of this question is to discover students' awareness about the need to develop their language skills for better attainments, this question also leads to test at least students' readiness for language skills development. All students 100% see that they need for sure to develop language skills. From this question, it can be concluded that students are aware of the necessity to sustain listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to achieve better in the language they wish to master.

3. Which skill you need to develop the most?

Listening   Speaking   Reading   Writing

Figure 4: Highlighting the Most Needed Skill.
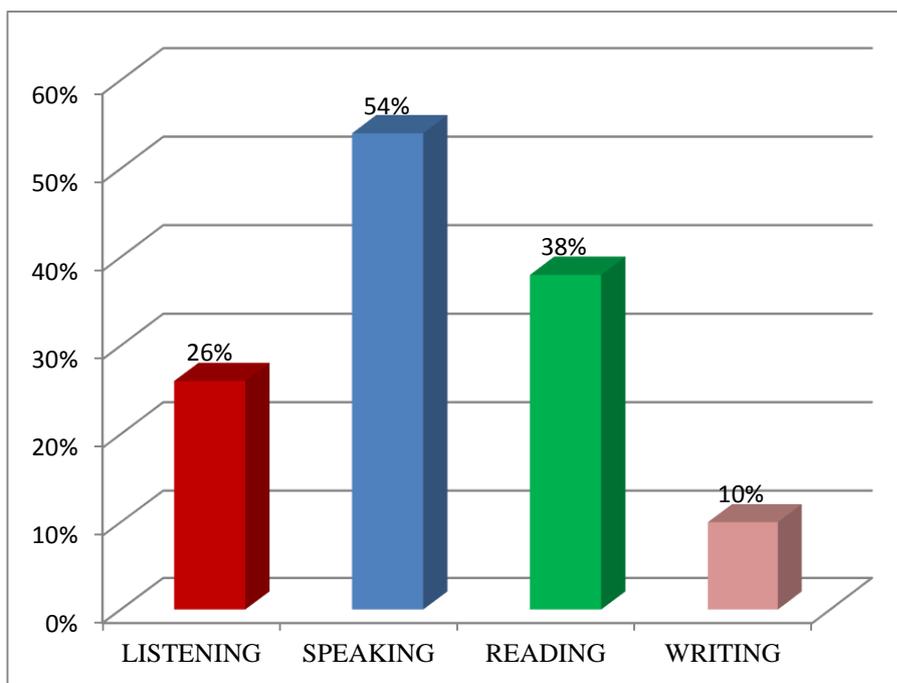
This question aims at highlighting the skill students need the most and therefore develop it by both the teacher and the students. According to their responses, 54% of the students think that speaking is the most needed skill to be developed, 38% of the students opt for listening as being the most needed skill for developments, 26% of the students go for writing and only 10% of the students choose reading. Students with the choice of speaking skill represent the majority; this leads to conclude that most students find speaking is not an easy task and needs to be developed. Students who opted for listening skill may think that they need to practice listening well in order to produce correct language and so on with the rest of the skills.

4. How often do you participate in oral tasks?

Always   Often   Sometimes   Rarely

Figure 5: Frequency of Participation in Oral Sessions
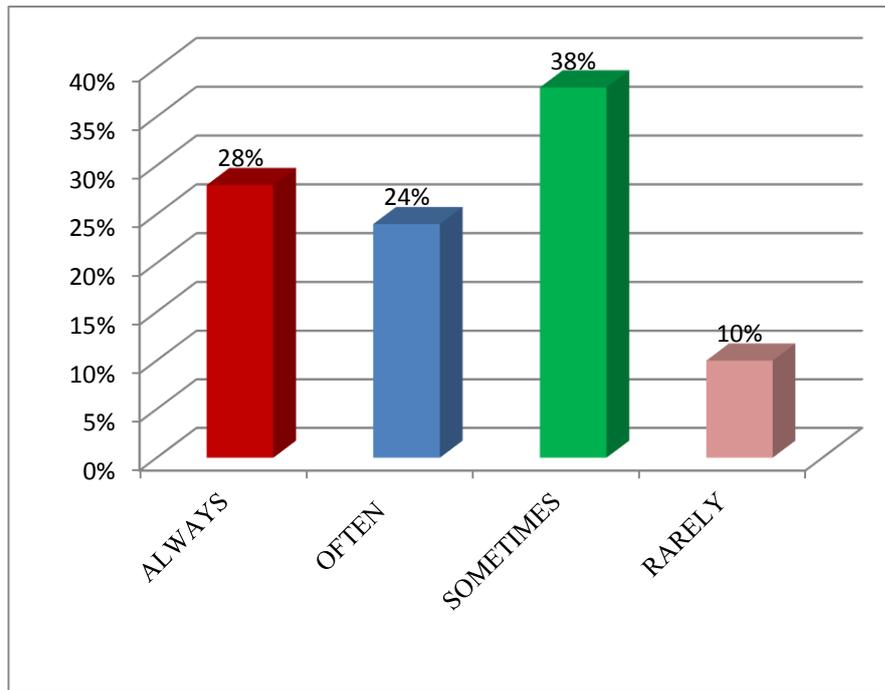
This question item attempts to expose students' use of language in oral expression sessions and to what extent they speak the language and take part in the oral task. According to the graph, 38% of the students say that they sometimes participate, followed by 28% of the students who always take part in the oral tasks, then 24% of the students respond by often and the last option rarely has been selected by 10% of the students . Since most of students went for sometimes, one can induce that students have to a certain extent some difficulties when it comes to speaking the language inside the classroom.

5. Did you try to develop your speaking skill?

Yes   No

Figure 6: Students' Experience with Speaking Development
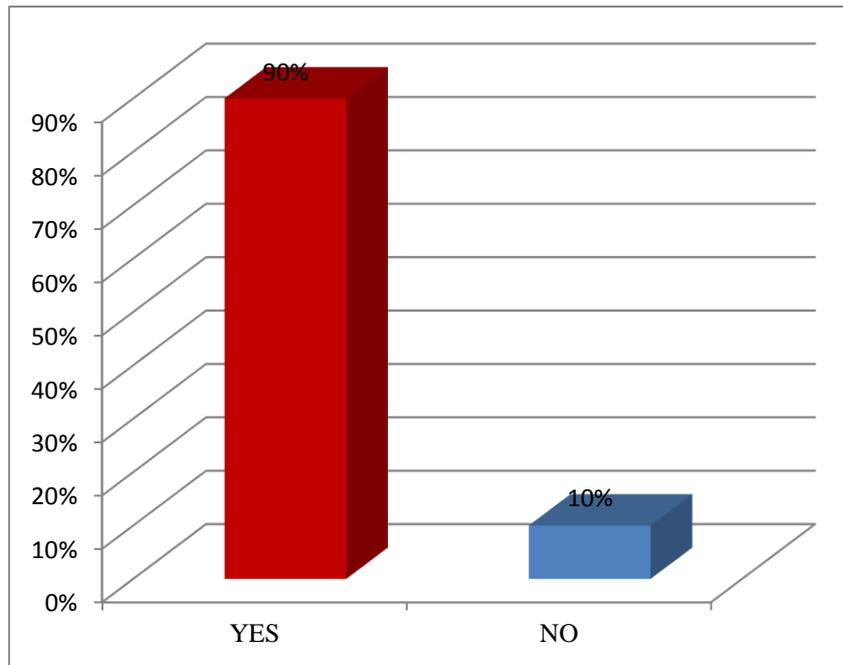
This question tends to highlight students' efforts to develop their speaking skill. The question also seeks to expose students' desire and eager to sustain their oral productions in oral tasks. The majority of the students 92% opt for yes in the sense that they tried to develop their speaking skill at least once; only 8% of the students say they did not attempt to develop their speaking skill. On the light of the results, we can understand that most of the students have the desire and most importantly bear the responsibility of sustaining their speaking skill. Students who did not try to develop their speaking skill may not be interested in speaking but in other skill, it may also lead to think that those students are not interested in the development of any skill which means they are careless.

6. Does the teacher encourage you to speak in the classroom?

Yes   No

Figure 7: Students' Perception of Teacher's Encouragement
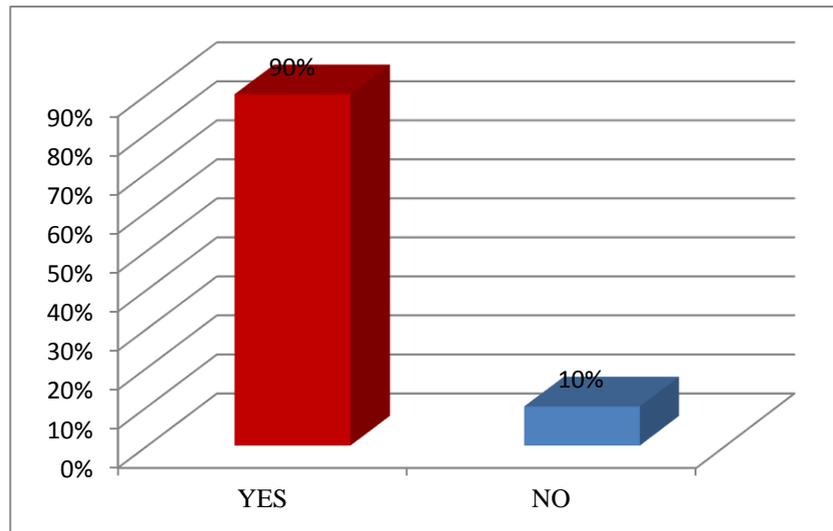
This question attempts to test students' perception of their teachers' encouragement when it comes to produce oral language in the classroom. As the graph shows, most of the students 82% reply with yes in the sense that the teacher does encourage students to speak the language in the classroom. 18% of the respondents decline the idea and the teacher does not encourage them to speak the language in the class. The majority of the students opted for teachers' encouragements, with regard to this idea, we can deduce that the students appreciate and are aware of the teachers' roles and efforts in the classroom. The other proportion of students who declined the idea may have not interacted with their teachers a lot to sense the encouragements, they may be also introvert students and do not take part in the oral activities.

7. Do you think that developing speaking skill is essential in the process of learning a foreign language?

Yes   No

Figure 8: Students' Attitude toward the Need for Speaking Skill Development
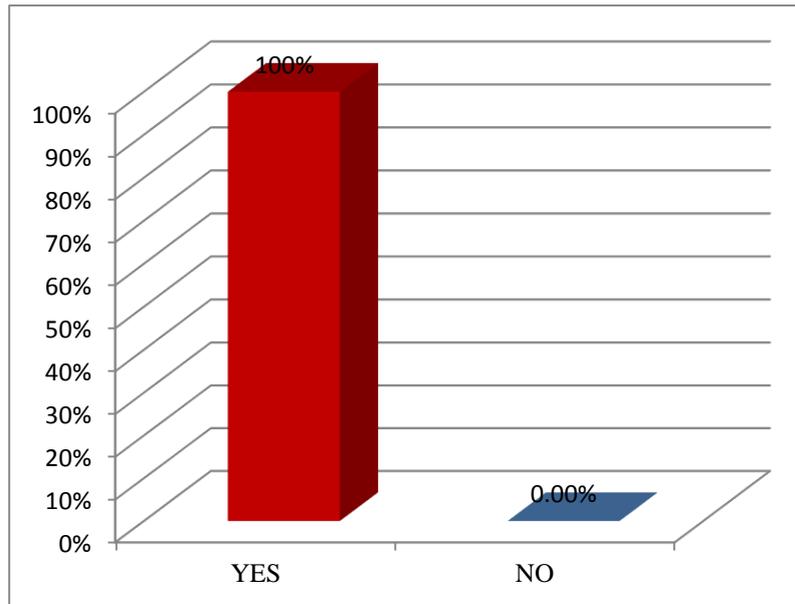
The seventh question item aims at evaluating students' attitude toward the necessity of developing the speaking skill in EFL learning. As the graph illustrates, all the (50) students, that is (100%), opt for the idea that says developing speaking skill is essential in the process of learning a foreign language. From the question and its result, one can deduce that all students share a positive attitude toward developing the speaking skill in the learning process. It also indicates that students appreciate the need for speaking skill development.

8. Do you think that oral expression sessions help students maximize their oral productions?

Yes   No

Figure 9: Students' Attitude toward the Importance of Oral Sessions
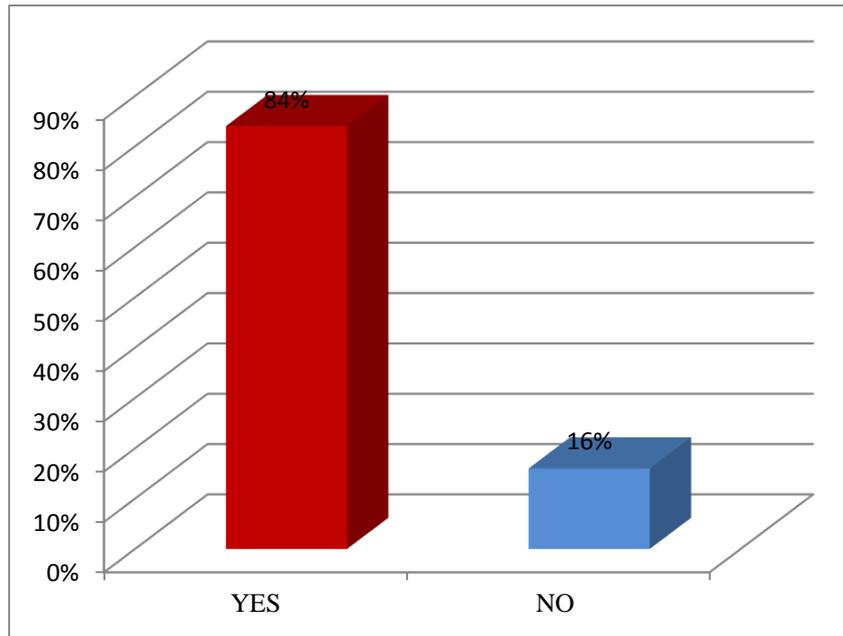
The eighth question item seeks to clarify students' attitude and evaluation of the oral sessions and to what extent they contribute in the development of students' oral production. According to the graph, 84% of the respondents believe that oral expression sessions are important; whereas 16% of the rest of the respondents think the opposite and oral expression sessions have no significance. Since the majority of the students are for the importance of the oral sessions, it can be deduced that students hold a positive attitude the oral sessions. Additionally, they are aware about how oral sessions can offer to them in order to sustain their oral productions in oral tasks.

Section Two: Students' Perception of the Cooperative Learning

9. How do you prefer to work in oral expression tasks?

In Groups   In Pairs   Individually

Figure 10: Students' Preferences of Working in Oral Session
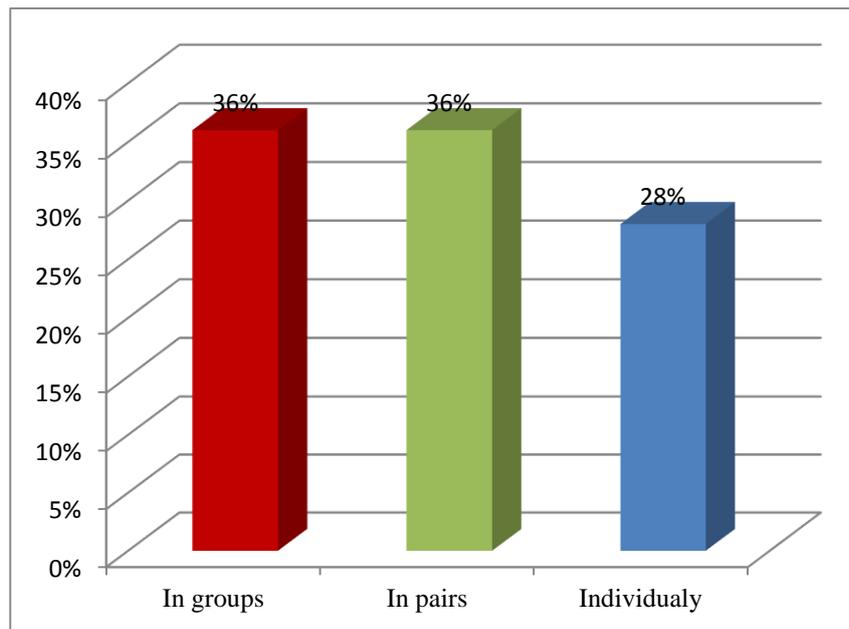
This question item tends to investigate students' preferences when it comes to participate in oral task in the classroom. The preferences are in terms of working in groups/pairs or individually. As the graph elucidates, an equal proportion of students that is 36% of the respondents prefer group and pair work in oral tasks. The other proportion, 28% of the students go with the individual work. Students' selection of both group/pair work equally leads to judge that students prefer interactions among and between each other. These interactions may be in form of questions and answers. The 28% of the students who prefer individual work seem to be isolated thinkers in the sense that they prefer to work, interact and think with themselves and thus appreciate the individual work as a way to solve oral tasks.

10. Do you engage yourself (participate) in the oral task when you work in groups/pairs?

Yes   No

Figure 11: Students' Engagement in Cooperative Work Based Oral Session.
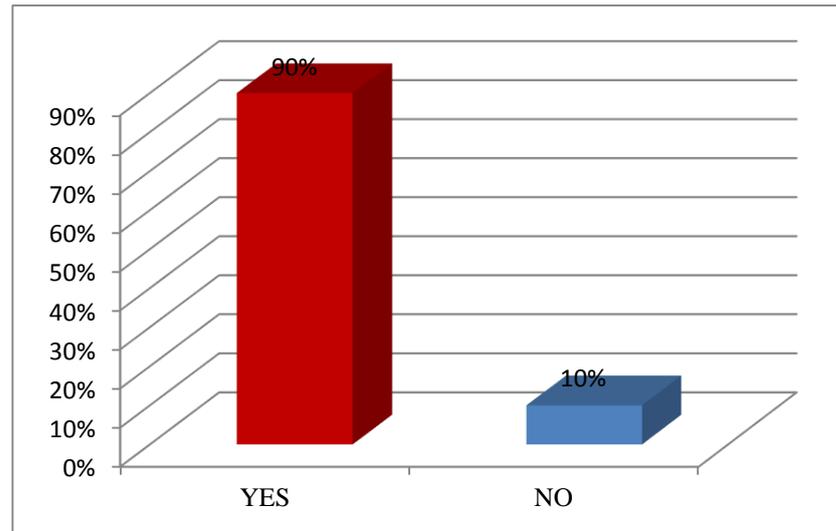
The questions attempts to discover whether students feel comfortable when working in groups/pairs on oral tasks. From this question we also seek to know whether students engage/participate in oral tasks when it is based on cooperative learning. According to the graph, a significant majority of students, that is 90%, think that they can engage themselves and participate in oral tasks when they are based on group/pair work. A satisfactory percentage of students represented in 10% believe that they cannot engage themselves in cooperative work based oral activities. The majority of students opt for yes as an answer, this may be interpreted as those students prefer group/pair work interactions in the sense that they can help each other solving the assigned activity. Students with no answer believe in individual work as a way to work on oral activities and thus try to avoid any interactions with others. This may lead to conclude that they have individualistic thinking and prefer to think deeply by their own.

11. It is difficult to work with classmates in groups/pairs:

Yes   No

Figure 11: Students' Attitudes toward Working in Pairs/Groups
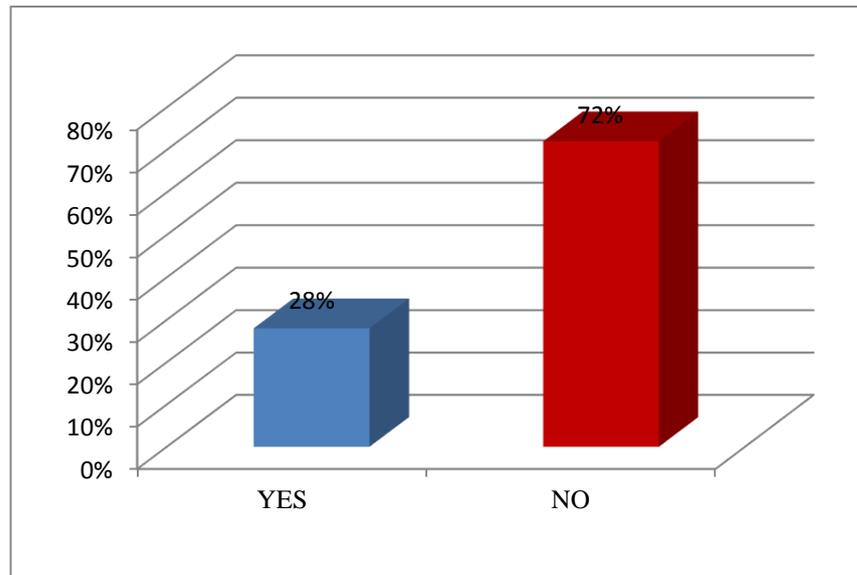
This question is a test for students to clarify if they have problems or difficulties working with classmates that is in groups and pairs. As the graph shows, a significant majority of respondents 72% find no problems or difficulties working with classmates in groups/pairs. An acceptable minority of students 28% find problems and difficulties working with their classmates. Students with yes option accept the idea of working with classmates and have no problems, they may think of it as an opportunity to discuss topics related to the oral activity. Students with no option believe in the individual work and prefer to discuss and analyze the oral task individually thinking that group/pair work may trouble them.

12. Do think that group/pair work (Cooperative Learning) helps you to interact more and exchange information through more questions and answers?

Yes   No

Figure 13: Cooperative Learning Contribution in Increasing Students' Interactions
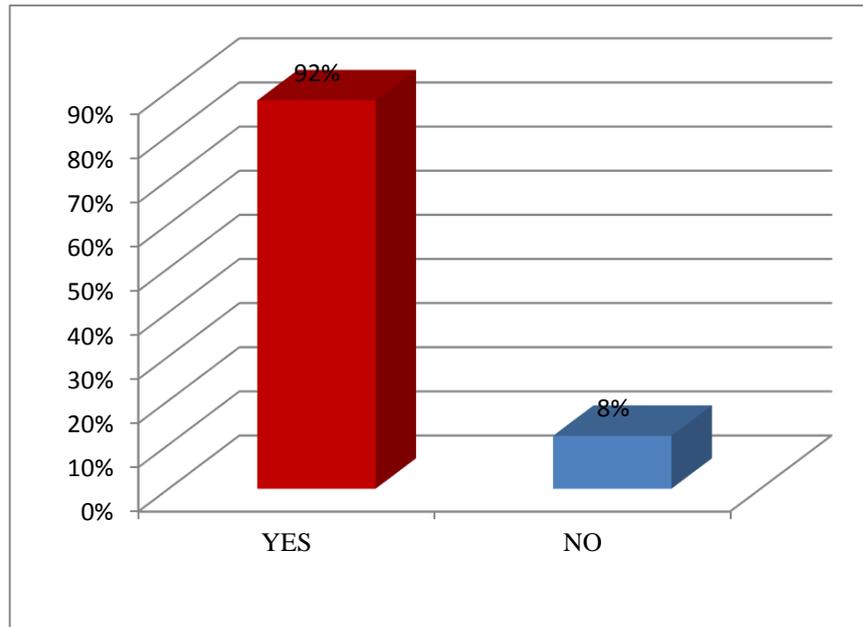
The question item aims at discovering students' perception and evaluation of cooperative learning contribution in increasing students' interactions in oral tasks and whether they get benefit of exchanging information. The above graph shows that 92% of the respondents believe that cooperative learning helps them to interact more and exchange information; this exchange will be in form of questions and answers related to the oral task been assigned. This proportion of students may have experienced the cooperative learning and discussed materials effectively. For the rest of the respondents represented in 8% think that cooperative learning has nothing to do with increasing students' interactions and exchange of ideas. This may lead to understand that those students experienced working in groups or pairs and got a negative result. They think that group/pair work hinders them from understanding the assigned work in the sense that some group members take advantage of the group/pair work to discuss things out of the topic.

13. Do you think that group/pair work (Cooperative Learning) helps you to practice grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary (accuracy) and therefore achieve better in speaking?

Yes   No

Figure 14: Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning Effectiveness in Developing Oral Accuracy
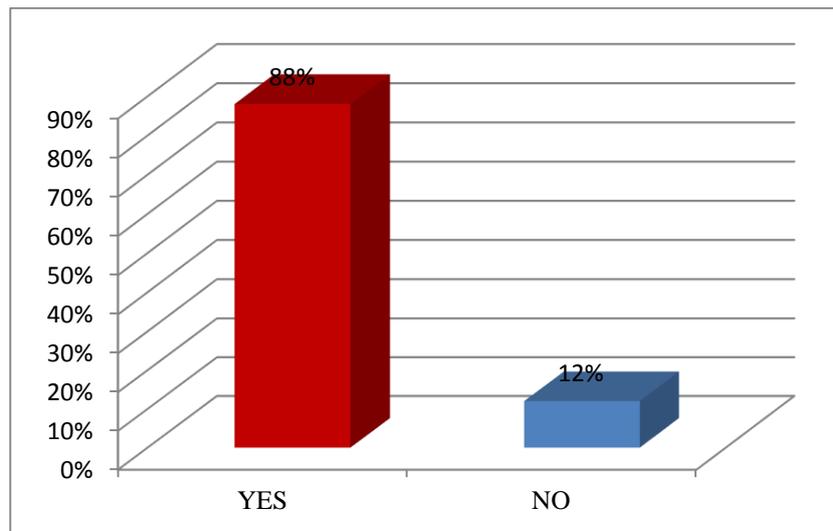
The question item tends to expose students' evaluation of cooperative learning effectiveness in developing students' oral accuracy. As the graph illustrates, the majority of the respondents 88% opt for the idea that cooperative learning can help them practice grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, namely accuracy. The rest of the respondents in a value of 12% decline the idea in the sense that cooperative learning would not contribute in the development of their oral accuracy. The majority of the students see that cooperative learning can provide them help through which students can interact with each other and produce oral language. This practice would help students correct their mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The minority of students who are against the idea may have not experienced the sense of practicing and correcting aspects of language in groups/pairs unlike those who did.

14. Do you think that group/pair work (Cooperative Learning) helps you to practice oral language in order to perform it fluently (with more speed, less hesitations and pauses)?

Yes   No

**Figure 15:** Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning Effectiveness in Developing Oral Fluency
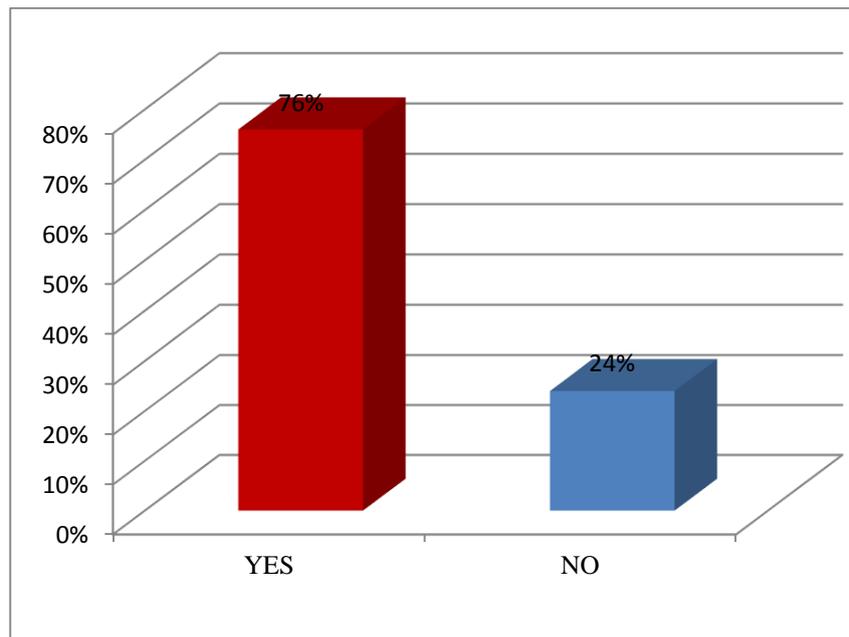
The question item tends to expose students' evaluation of cooperative learning effectiveness in developing students' oral fluency. As the graph demonstrates, the majority of the respondents 76% opt for the idea that cooperative learning can help them practice oral language in order to perform it with more speed, less hesitations and pauses, namely fluency. A significant minority of respondents in a value of 24% decline the idea in the sense that cooperative learning would not contribute in the development of their oral fluency. The majority of the students believe that cooperative learning can help them interact with each other and produce oral language fluently on the basis that they listen to each other and feel comfortable when practicing to reach fluency. The minority of students who are against the idea may not get the opportunity to practice the language with classmates and thus could not develop their oral fluency.

15. In oral tasks, do you think that you get more and different ideas when you work:

Individually   In groups/pairs

Figure 16: Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning Effectiveness in Generating Ideas

This question item tends to test students' perception of cooperative learning effectiveness when it comes to generate ideas in the oral tasks. Through this question also we seek to know whether students appreciate the benefit of cooperative learning concerning the stage of collecting and generating ideas in order to be constructed and produced orally later on. As the graph shows, the majority of students 66% think that in oral tasks they can generate/construct more and different ideas when they work in groups/pairs. A significant minority of students 44% refuses the idea and believes that cooperative learning will not help them in constructing and generating different ideas. The majority of students believe in the sense that cooperative learning makes each group member contributes his or her ideas and eventually construct a unit of knowledge. Students who decline the idea may think that cooperative learning will hinder them from realizing their thoughts and thus will not take part in the oral activity.

16. Do you think that group/pair work (Cooperative Learning) is an opportunity for students to help each other and develop their speaking skill?

Yes   No

Figure 17: Students' Overall Evaluation of Cooperative Learning
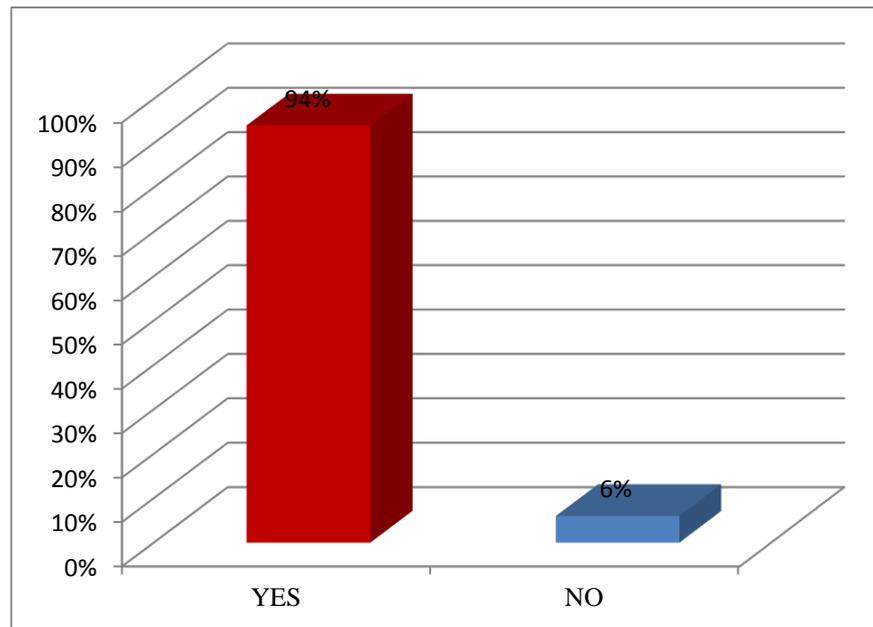
The question tends to investigate students' overall evaluation of cooperative learning as an instructional method in foreign language teaching and learning, the evaluation concerns its usefulness in oral classes in particular. As the graph demonstrates, the majority of the students 94% find cooperative learning in oral classes beneficial; the other 6% of the students see the contrary and judge cooperative learning as being not beneficial. Since the majority of the students opt for beneficial, it can be deduced that those students got benefits from group/pair work and thus achieved their needs. For those who reject the idea, they may not get what they need when trying to work in groups/pairs.

1.3.4. *Discussion of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire*

The answers to question 2 mean that most students value the need to develop language skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing in learning a foreign language.

The answers to question 1, question 4 and question 3 represent the inadequate level of mastery concerning the speaking skill. Moreover, students confirm that by selecting speaking as the most needed skill to be developed.

The answers to question 5, question 7 and question 8 lead to conclude that students are aware about the importance of speaking skill development in the process of learning a foreign language. Furthermore, students have a positive attitude toward oral expression sessions and appreciate the help that would offer for them to develop their speaking skill.

The answers to question 9, question 10 and question 11 would mean that students have a positive attitude toward cooperative learning since the majority opt for both group and pair work.

Answers to questions 10, 11 and 15 mean that students can promote their engagement in the oral assignments that are based on cooperative learning. Students believe that participating in cooperative learning based tasks can offer them opportunities to think, discuss and analyze what they have as activities to eventually construct shared knowledge. These finding would lead to answer the question that asks whether the implementation of the cooperative learning boost students' engagement in oral tasks.

The answers to question 11, question 12 and question 15 mean that students have no problem working cooperatively with their classmates; they consider cooperative learning as a way to interact and benefit each other through the exchange of information. The information can be obtained through different questions and answers related to the assigned work. Through the construction of the questions and their answers, students may help each in building suitable and correct forms. These findings to the questions lead to confirm the hypothesis that states that if cooperative learning is implemented effectively, students will be engaged in meaningful interactions and therefore sustain their speaking skill and since students were able to interact and practice the language cooperatively, it can be understood that they were engaged in meaningful interactions.

Responses related to question 13 and question 14 mean that students are able to interact with their classmates. These aspects of student-student interactions benefit the students in the sense that they are able to practice aspects of language including correct use of grammar rules, the appropriate selection for vocabulary and correct pronunciation (oral accuracy). Students also benefit concerning the practice to produce oral language with more speed, less hesitations and pauses (oral fluency); this in turn will lead to confirm the hypothesis in the study that students will develop their oral fluency and accuracy.

Answers to the last question 16 lead to deduce that students consider cooperative learning as an opportunity to help each other and develop their speaking skill; the question is like an overall evaluation of the cooperative learning, the result of this question answers the last research question that asks whether the implementation of cooperative leaning will develop students' speaking skill.

2. Classroom Observation

Two groups selected as a sample (third year) have been observed during 8 sessions of oral expression and we have attempted each time to take significant notes (Appendix III: Classroom Observations Notes). For this classroom observation, the researcher opted for is note-taking technique and the notes are sometimes linked with examples. The main aim for undertaking classroom observation was to discover students' attitudes toward cooperative learning and whether they benefit from it concerning the development of their speaking skill. Eight sessions of oral expression have been attended with two groups and each group consisted of 32 students. During the eight sessions, teachers varied their oral tasks between building vocabulary, listening activities, role plays, sketches, creating monologues.

Through the attendance for conducting the classroom observation, both teachers started the lessons by generating students' ideas concerning the topic to be covered during the sessions. Students at first started to participate individually concerning their knowledge about the topics. For all sessions, teachers asked students to work in groups or pairs of their own choice; this step means that teachers do not want force students to work with other students who may not know them well and thus affects the realization of the main objective which is interaction.

Once the groups started to work, the teachers started to manage the work of the groups/pairs and then checked the progress of the task from time to time. The teachers tend to supervise and check the work of the students in order not to take advantage of the cooperative work to speak about irrelevant topics. Students started discussing with each other the task whether it is a role play, vocabulary building, listening activity or other tasks. This is a sign that students are ready to work in groups/pairs. When discussing the assigned activity, students showed acceptance toward each other's ideas and thoughts, some groups' members tried to correct the mistakes of their classmates, these mistakes were concerned with the meaning of the new vocabularies such as belt, tighten, bush and penny and the pronunciation of certain words such as coincidence and kettle. Since there are discussions among and between students in their groups, it is clear that they are engaged in meaningful interactions that helped them use the language more in their discussions.

Moreover, the sense of the positive interdependence is clearly established since the students accepted to be corrected by their group members; students rely on each other in the sense that they trust each other's ideas and attempts that would eventually benefit the whole group. In most of the discussions, students used the mother tongue to discuss the topics, but once the teachers made the remark they stopped. Students sometimes if not often tend to use their mother tongue in classroom discussions because of the luck of linguistic competence. Students then prefer to use the first language to make their thoughts clear to the group members. The teachers are cautious concerning the use of the mother tongue in the discussions; the recurrent use of the mother tongue would hinder students from developing their level in the foreign language and thus there will be no progress. Taking into consideration the teacher's remark, students found it interesting to use the English language in the discussion and they enjoyed it even if there were some mistakes on the grammar level.

Despite the large number of the groups in some sessions, students moved around and worked on the task. Students are in a cooperative atmosphere established by the teacher in order for students not to feel anxious when using the language when discussing the class activities. The teachers throughout the eight sessions encouraged the students to make some noise in the sense that they are free to move around and gather the group to work with each other to practice and produce oral language that is correct (accurate) and smooth

(fluent). Some students from each group/pair tried to correct their group members' mistakes especially in grammar. In the first sessions some students committed some mistakes while performing especially in grammar, teachers did not provide direct feedback. They gave advantages to fluency on the expense of accuracy in order not to confuse the students and make them lose the "thread". Through this step, teachers try to make students produce the language as much as they can even with mistakes.

In the last sessions and because of the practice in groups and pairs, students' oral production showed some progress; they performed oral language with correct grammar, practiced new vocabulary and the way they are pronounced. They also produced oral language without many hesitations and with speed. Teachers provide students with opportunities to use the language, so they established a relaxed environment for students to make them produce the language easily and with confidence. These opportunities are presented in the cooperative learning because most of the students prefer to show their oral capacities when they are working with their classmates.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that teachers and learners agree on the idea of implementing cooperative learning in oral classes, they consider promoting it can have a positive outcome on students' speaking skill. Cooperative learning gives the opportunity for students to interact with each other, discuss the material cooperatively, correct each other's mistakes and explain the unclear ideas and items. In doing so, students are practicing aspects of language including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation as it helps students to produce a fluent oral language. Therefore, through a regular and well planned cooperative work, students can exchange information in the foreign language as a way to master it especially in the development of their speaking skill

General conclusion

Many foreign language students seek to achieve a level of mastering the foreign language and wish to be native like speakers. However, this goal is not easy to be realized, it needs more efforts and work from both, the teacher and the students. Teachers who look forward to enhance their students' language skills especially speaking and students who are looking for more than an adequate level in speaking the foreign language should experience and implement different methods in order to realize the aforementioned goals and objectives. The current study is set to investigate the effectiveness of one instructional method among many others. This instructional method is called the cooperative learning.

The present thesis seeks to discover how cooperative learning can be implemented to develop students' speaking skill. The current study is composed of five research questions, but the major one seeks to know whether the implementation of cooperative learning in the classroom lead to a better achievement in the speaking skill. The study is also composed of one main hypothesis and three sub-hypotheses; the main hypothesis assumes that students' speaking skill will develop if cooperative learning is effectively implemented. The sub-hypotheses propose that students will interact more and show their true oral capacities; they will develop their oral fluency and accuracy and be engaged in meaningful interactions that would help them sustain their speaking skill. To address the research questions and for the verification of the formulated hypotheses, the researcher opted for the descriptive method and used two data collection tools: students' questionnaire and classroom observation.

The dissertation is a set of three chapters; the first two chapters are for the theoretical part concerning the two variables. The first chapter is devoted to discuss features related to the speaking skill in oral sessions. Oral courses are devoted to make students speak; accordingly, teachers need to be acquainted with issues related to the speaking performance including the different definitions provided and all what is concerned with oral fluency and accuracy with ways of developments. Additionally, teachers and students should realize the importance and the need for sustaining the speaking or oral performance. With this regard, oral sessions have to include and provide activities that consider not only opportunities for students to speak but also to maintain their oral fluency and accuracy for a successful oral communication.

The second chapter is allocated to provide the definition of cooperative learning. It was addressed as the instructional method, through which students assist each other and complete each other's comprehension concerning a given task. Cooperative learning methods are claimed to be helpful but with a serious supervision from the teacher's part regarding the clear establishment of the five main elements of cooperative learning. With the sense of responsibility, teachers and students should contribute in the success of the cooperative learning in order to obtain the intended results concerning students' level of achievements.

The third chapter is the field work; it is assigned to address the research questions and the formulated hypotheses. The data were gathered through two data collection tools students' questionnaire and classroom observation. The field work is composed of three parts, the first part is about the piloted questionnaire linked with its analysis, the second is about the main questionnaire followed by its analysis and the third is about the classroom observation and its analysis.

On the light of what have been said and stated throughout the whole study, we addressed the meaning of the cooperative learning as being the instructional method through which foreign language students work together in groups or pairs to construct shared knowledge. Students in cooperative learning assignments are supposed to help each other for the general benefit which is the mastery of the assignment. In the same vein, cooperative learning is a crucial method in the learning process; it contributes in making students negotiate meanings. Through the classroom interactions, students are assumed to use the foreign language in their discussion, this in turn would make students develop a critical thinking since they have to pose their views and try their best to defend them. In pedagogy, if teachers tend to implement cooperative learning, they may consult three major ways. They may implement it formally by assigning the students to work on a task in a period of time; this period could last from one class session to several weeks. Informal implementation of the cooperative learning may take the form of students working cooperatively for just few minutes in a class period. Teachers can consult the third way which is the base groups, in this implementation, students are asked to work cooperatively for a long period of time for specific purposes.

Reflecting on the field of investigation, students hold a positive attitude toward the cooperative learning, they consider it as an opportunity to practice the language they wish

to master. Students through their responses to the questionnaire and the classroom observation are ready to interact with their classmates to work on different oral class assignments. Students' readiness and willingness to work cooperatively mean that they engage themselves in such assignments. Students in their discussions with their group members are in fact in the process to practice the foreign language in many ways. Group members are using the language in most of their interactions and discussions, so they are showing their oral capacities and helping each other to arrive at correct use of grammar rules, suitable vocabulary and correct pronunciation or namely oral accuracy. Students are not exercising just the oral accuracy, but also exercising to perform a fluent oral language in the sense that students throughout the use of the language, they are trying to develop the rate of language delivery. In other words, they attempt to produce an oral language with more speed, less hesitations and pauses. Since students are able to practice the use of the language when working cooperatively, it can be said that they were engaged in meaningful interactions, these interactions helped them to develop their speaking skill. The implementation of the sense of cooperative learning in the oral classes would contribute in the development of students' skills including the speaking skill. Finally, it is worth saying that further researches can be conducted on cooperative learning and the speaking skill to get more accurate and significant results.

Recommendations

Throughout this study, we understood that:

- Before implementing the sense of cooperative learning, teachers need to have students acquainted with such social skills as helping each other, sharing and exchanging ideas and accepting each other's ideas.
- In the classroom, there should be a cooperative atmosphere; it can be achieved through the establishments of group-building activities characterized by support and assistance and away from competition. These activities promote the sense of meaningful interactions that would assist the students to benefit and practice the language.
- In cooperative learning assignments, students need to be aware about providing own "fair share" to support and help the whole group achieve a learning goal.
- Students should be given the opportunities to speak and use the language more in the classroom and among each other in order to practice the language more. This

practice would benefit the students to achieve better in the use of aspects of the language including the correct use of grammar rules, the appropriate selection of vocabulary and pronunciation.

- Students need to be given enough opportunities to speak the language as a way to practice and perform smooth and fluent language without many hesitations and pauses and with confidence.

- Students need to be told that their efforts are necessary for the joint success of the group.

- Teacher's role is not neglected, the teacher needs to monitor and assist when necessary through moving around the groups

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: The Piloted Questionnaire

Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra
Branch of English

Dear student,

The at hand questionnaire is data collection tool selected for a research that aims at discovering how cooperative language learning can be implemented to improve third-year LMD students' speaking skill in the English branch. You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire and communicate your thoughts concerning the implementation of cooperative learning in developing students' speaking skill. Your contribution would be of a great help for the completion of this work.

Thank you in advance.

Please, tick the appropriate box (√) and make full statements whenever necessary.

Section one: Students' Speaking Skill

1. Do you find speaking in English:

   a. Very easy ☐

   b. Easy ☐

   c. Average ☐

   d. Difficult ☐

   e. Very difficult ☐

2. Do you need to develop your language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

3. Which skill you need to develop most?

   a. Listening ☐

b. Speaking ☐

c. Reading ☐

d. Writing ☐

Please, justify

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

…

……………………………………………..

4. How often do you participate in oral tasks in the classroom?

a. Always ☐

b. Often ☐

c. Sometimes ☐

d. Rarely ☐

5. Did you try to develop your speaking skill?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Does the teacher encourage you to speak in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7. Please, answer the following questions according to the scale:

(A)   Agree
(SA) Strongly agree
(D)   Disagree
(SD) Strongly disagree
 (N)   Neutral

a. Developing speaking skill is essential in the process of learning a foreign

languag ☐

b. Oral expression sessions help students maximize their oral productions. ☐

c. Students must be given opportunities to speak freely in oral tasks so that they can practice their oral fluency and accuracy. ☐

Section two: Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning

8. How do you prefer to work in oral expression tasks:

In groups ☐

In pairs ☐

Individually ☐

As a whole class ☐

Please, justify your selection
………………………………………………………………..
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
…..
……………………………………………………….

9. Do you engage yourself (participate) in the task when you work in groups/pairs?

Yes ☐   No ☐

10. Please, answer the following questions according to the scale:

    (A)   Agree
    (SA) Strongly agree
    (D)   Disagree
    (SD) Strongly disagree
    (N)   Neutral

a. Working in pairs/groups (cooperative learning) can help students raise their ☐ engagement in oral tasks.

b. It is difficult to work with classmates in groups/pairs. ☐

c. Teachers should raise students' awareness towards the skills of cooperative ☐ learning.

11. Do you feel that group/pair work (cooperative learning) helps you to:

Interact more and exchange information through more questions and answers? ☐

    a. Be involved in meaningful interactions to sustain correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (accuracy)? ☐

    b. Perform oral language with more speed, less hesitations and pauses (fluency). ☐

12. Do you think that working in groups/pairs (cooperative learning) is:

Beneficial ☐   Not Beneficial ☐

13. Do you think that speaking activities are better when they are based on :

Individual Work ☐   Pair/Group Work ☐

Whatever your answer, please

justify...………………….................

....

....

14. Do you think that the implementation of cooperative learning in oral expression sessions helps you develop your speaking skill?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Whatever your answer, please justify

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOU SINCERE COLLABORATION

APPENDIX II: The Main Questionnaire

Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra
Branch of English

Dear student,

The at hand questionnaire is data collection tool selected for a research that aims at discovering how cooperative language learning can be implemented (used) to improve third-year LMD students' speaking skill in the English branch. You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire and communicate your thoughts concerning the implementation of cooperative learning in developing students' speaking skill. Your contribution would be of a great help for the completion of this work.

Thank you in advance.

Please, read the following questions and then TICK (√) the appropriate box.

Section one: Students' Perception of the Speaking Skill

1. Do you find speaking in English:

    a. Very easy   ☐

    b. Easy   ☐

    c. Average   ☐

    d. Difficult   ☐

    e. Very difficult   ☐

2. Do you need to develop your language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

3. Which skill you need to develop most?

    a. Listening   ☐

b. Speaking ☐

c. Reading ☐

d. Writing ☐

4. How often do you participate in oral tasks in the classroom?

    a. Always ☐

    b. Often ☐

    c. Sometimes ☐

    d. Rarely ☐

5. Did you try to develop your speaking skill?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Does the teacher encourage you to speak in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7. Do you think that developing speaking skill is essential in the process of learning a foreign language?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. Do you think that oral expression sessions help students maximize their oral productions?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Section two: Students' Perception of Cooperative Learning

9. How do you prefer to work in oral expression tasks?

    a. In groups ☐

    b. In pairs ☐

    c. Individually ☐

10. Do you engage yourself (participate) in the oral task when you work in groups/pairs?

Yes ☐   No ☐

11. Is it difficult to work with classmates in groups/pairs?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

12. Do you think that group/pair work (cooperative learning) helps you to interact more and exchange information through more questions and answers?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

13. Do you think that group/pair work (cooperative learning) helps you to practice grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary (accuracy) and therefore achieve better in speaking?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

14. Do you think that group/pair work (cooperative learning) helps you to practice oral language in order to perform it fluently (with more speed, less hesitations and pauses)?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

15. In oral tasks, do you think you get more and different ideas when you work:

Individually   ☐   in groups/pairs   ☐

16. Do you think that group/pair work (cooperative learning) is an opportunity for students to help each other and develop their speaking skill?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SINCERE COOPERATION

APPENDIX III: Classroom Observations Notes

<u>**Classroom Observation 1:**</u>

Level: third year

Number of students: 18

Duration: 1 hour and a half

Topic: English idioms

<u>**Notes:**</u>

- The teacher starts the lesson by generating students' ideas concerning English idioms.

- Students at first started to participate individually concerning their knowledge about some English idioms.

- According to the teacher's instructions, students are supposed to work in groups or pairs of their own choice, once the groups started to work, the teacher started managing the work of the groups/pairs and then checked the progress of the task from time to time.

- Students started discussing the task with each other. When discussing the assigned activity, some group members tried to correct the mistakes of their classmates

- In these idioms, the majority of the students did not understand the terms **tight, rein, pull, penny** and **bush**.

- As groups or pairs, students tried to discuss the meaning of the terms, so they divided the work between themselves in the sense that student one looks for the meaning in the dictionary, second student writes it and other students ask other group members.

- After the discussion, one student from each group tries to explain what he understood so far to his/her group members.

- Students liked the activity and enjoy it because they tried to memorize and perform the idioms orally to their classmates with correct pronunciation in order not to forget them.

Classroom Observation 2:

Level: third year
Number of students: 16
Duration: 1 hour and a half
Topic: Ebola virus (listening to video)

Notes:

- The teacher directly gave the students the instructions to be followed. The students were asked to listen carefully to a video about Ebola virus.
- After the listening stage, the students should divide themselves into two groups A and B in order to set some questions to be asked to both groups.
- Students initially started asking questions individually, some students committed some mistakes especially in grammar; the teacher gave advantages to fluency on the expense of accuracy and also not to confuse the students.
- The next step was that the teacher asked students to work together and bring more questions.
- The students started to discuss the work, they tried to help each other constructing the questions to be posed, after the questions been posed, other group members tried to help each other constructing full and well- structured sentences.
- When each group member tried to give the question or the answer, all the group members helped him/her completing his/her sentences.
- Students used the mother tongue to discuss the topic, but once the teacher made the remark they stopped.
- Taking into consideration the teacher's remark, students found it interesting to use the English language in the discussion and they enjoyed it.
- Despite the large number of the group, students moved around and worked on the task.
- The teacher encouraged the students to make some noise in the sense that they are free to move around and gather the group to work together.
- Some students from each group tried to correct their group members' mistakes especially in grammar.
- Students' oral production showed some progress; they performed oral language with correct grammar and practiced new vocabulary and the way they ar

pronounced. They also produced oral language without many hesitations and with speed.

Classroom Observation 3:

Level: third year

Number of students: 19

Duration: 1 hour and a half

Topic: sketches

Notes:

- The theme was about sketches. Students were asked to perform a dialogue given by the teacher.
- In pairs, students started acting the scene trying to live the characters, they were asked to perform with gestures, correct pronunciation, intonation and pitch.
- Indeed, students helped each other to arrive at the correct form to perform well, each pair members tried to provide the correct gestures and pronunciation since there was a reward for the best performance.
- Students' interactions were very clear; the majority of the students were engaged in the task and in the pair work.
- In the oral production, students performed with correct pronunciation, intonation and pitch because of the practice with their classmates.
- The second task was that students should create their own dialogue. As the first instruction, the teacher asked the students to work in pairs of their own choice.
- A repeated remark from the teacher to the students to "make some noise" as an attempt to make students feel comfortable and thus practice well.
- Students in pairs started to generate ideas including the correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. What was observable is that some pairs provided help to other pairs without any selfishness.
- In the oral production, students performed a fluent oral language; there were some mistakes in grammar and pronunciation committed by some students but they were corrected by students themselves. Those mistakes may be due to some internal factors   such   as   anxiety.

- All in all, the teacher was satisfied with the ideas and gestures that students have performed and at the end all the students who performed on stage were given the reward.

Classroom Observation 4:

Level: third year

Number of students: 17

Duration: 1 hour and a half

Topic: monologues

Notes:

- Students were asked to form groups or pairs to discuss various themes and generate ideas.
- Students showed willingness to work cooperatively, they started discussing the themes and each member tried to share his/her ideas.
- The discussions were in students' mother tongue (Arabic) but the teacher was constantly advising students to discuss in English even with mistakes.
- Students considered the remark and tried to do so, it was clear that students were interacting with each other as far as the task is concerned.
- Students during their discussions showed acceptance toward each other's ideas and suggestions.
- When students finished their monologues, they started to practice them. In the practice, students tried to concentrate on the exact pronunciation with the help of the teacher from time to time.
- The final work of the groups was performed by one student from each group, concerning this point, students showed agreement and there were no problems.
- The overall performance of each student was acceptable in terms of fluency; that is to say each student produced oral language with less hesitations and pauses.
- In terms of accuracy, students produced correct vocabulary, pronunciation and to a certain extent correct grammar; the problem was in the use of tenses such as the past   perfect   and   present   perfect.

- For the teacher, he did not give any remark; rather he gave advantage to fluency but when students stop speaking to think, he interferes and completes their statements. Students acted positively toward the interference of the teacher.
- Generally, the teacher liked the monologues and encouraged students' thinking.

Classroom Observation 5:

Level: third year

Number of students: 20

Duration: forty five minutes (45min)

Topic: a role play

Notes:

- Students were asked to perform a scene in a role play.
- It was a play of Macbeth and students were asked to perform the scene of the three witches.
- At first, students could not perform correctly. The teacher interference was needed, and indeed the teacher helped students to live the characters; the teacher tried to perform one character with the students and once the students understood, they performed better.
- Other students showed an observable improvement concerning the way they produced the language in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and tone.
- In their performance, the students tried to feel comfortable by looking to each other and ignore the other students.
- This session took only forty five (45) minutes, so once students finished performing, the teacher dismissed the class.
- At the end the teacher was satisfied with the students' performance excused them for not knowing well the language of the play.

Classroom Observation 6:

Level: third year

Number of students: 20

Duration: one hour and a half

Topic: sketch

Notes:

- The sketch was in form of a dialogue. At first, students started reading the characters, but they failed to be in harmony with each other.

- The teacher tried to explain the scene and the needed gestures to be performed, the students after that started to control the situation and back to be in harmony.

- The teacher provided enough time for students to practice the dialogues together, students were interested in the topic of the dialogue.

- Students tried to practice the roles orally and out loud since the teacher told them to do so.

- Through the time allotted for the practice, students showed development in both fluency and accuracy in the sense that they performed and produced oral language that was clear enough as well as correct grammar, pronunciation, intonation and tone that were needed for an acceptable performance.

- As there were students who really worked on the task, other students did not get involved and did not take part in the oral session.

- For the final performance, the teacher was satisfied with four groups/pairs out of six groups/pairs.

Classroom Observation 7:
Level: third year
Number of students: 22
Duration: forty five minutes (45 min)
Topic: vocabulary building

Notes:

- According to the teacher's instructions, students were supposed to search for the meaning of some phrasal verbs depending on their positions in the statements.

- Such phrasal verbs are like: back off, back up and back down. After writing the list of the terms, students formed groups and pairs to start the work on the topic.

- Among each other, the students were discussing and analyzing the statements and each time one group member tries to provide his/her "fair share".

- When discussing the activity, groups' members tried to pronounce correctly the given words.
- At the end students tried to memorize and perform the phrasal verbs orally to their classmates with correct pronunciation in order not to forget them.

Classroom Observation 8:

Level: third year
Number of students: 20
Duration: one hour
Topic: script (TV advertisement)

Notes:
- The script was in form of a dialogue about a washing powder called DAZZLE. At first, students started reading the characters.
- The teacher tried to explain the scene and the needed gestures to be performed, the students after that started to practice the script.
- Students tried to practice the characters orally and out loud since the teacher told them to feel free when practicing the script.
- With time, students start to perform and speak clear language as well as correct grammar, pronunciation, intonation and tone that were needed for an acceptable performance.
- After performing the original script, students were asked to make their own version of the advertisements.
- Students formed their peers and started working, the teacher tried to help students with some vocabularies.
- Students among themselves tried to create good advertisements by generating many ideas. Students showed acceptance toward each other's ideas.
- In the performance, students delivered clear and understood language, students selected appropriate vocabulary for the advertisement. There were some mistakes at the level of grammar as in the use of the verbs begin and leave in the past and got confused when using the auxiliary to be in the past with the third person and the plural.
- The teacher was satisfied with four groups/pairs out of six groups/pairs.

الملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو اكتشاف مدى فعالية منهج التعلم التعاوني في تطوير التعبير الشفوي لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر-بسكرة.لاكتشاف العلاقة بين المتغيرين(التعلم التعاوني و التعبير الشفوي)، قمنا بطرح خمسة أسئلة بحث حيث كان أبرزها هو ما إذا كان التطبيق الفعال لمنهج التعلم التعاوني قد يؤدي إلى تطوير مهارة التعبير الشفوي لدى الطلبة. للإجابة على التساؤلات المطروحة وضعنا ثلاثة فرضيات، افترضنا أن التطبيق الفعال لمنهج التعلم التعاوني قد يساعد الطلبة في التفاعل أكثر فيما بينهم و كذلك إظهار مهاراتهم اللغوية عن طريق التعبير الشفوي. افترضنا أيضا أن الطلبة و من خلال هذا التفاعل يمكنهم تطوير الدقة و الطلاقة في استخدام اللغة. الفرضية الأخيرة تفيد بأن الطلبة بإمكانهم المشاركة و الانغماس في تفاعلات دلالية التي من شأنها تنمية مهاراتهم الكلامية. للتحقق من صحة الفرضيات المطروحة،اعتمدنا على المنهج الوصفي ، و لجمع البيانات استعنا بوسيلتين: استبيان للطلبة و ملاحظة فصول دراسية. من خلال تحليل البيانات المستمدة من الاستبيان و الملاحظات، اكتشفنا أن الطلبة في حصص التعبير الشفوي أظهروا تقبلا للتفاعل في التعلم التعاوني، حيث قام الطلبة بمناقشة بعض المواضيع في أفواج و ثنائيات،و في هذا السياق كان الطلبة يتحاورون فيما بينهم محاولين إظهار إمكانياتهم اللغوية بطلاقة و تردد أقل. بما أن الطلاب كانوا قادرين على التمرن على الدقة و الطلاقة في الكلام، اتضح أنهم كانوا مندمجين في محادثات لغوية دلالية التي من شأنها تطوير مهاراتهم الكلامية.كل النتائج التي توصلنا إليها سابقا تؤكد صحة فرضياتنا المطروحة سابقا. و في الأخير كل ما يسعنا قوله هو أن هذه الدراسة ستكون أكثر دقة و فعالية لو كانت قائمة على أساس تجربة.