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Enhancing Students' Oral
Proficiency through Cooperative
Group Work

The case of 3rd year LMD Students of English at
Constantine University

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for THE MASTER Degree in Language Sciences

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DEDICATION

I dictate this work to:

My Mother and my Father

My Brothers and Sisters

My Nieces and Nephews

My Brothers and Sisters in Law

All the extended Family and Friends

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the effects of cooperative group work on improving learners' oral proficiency and communicative skills.

The present work is mainly concerned with making use of pair or small group to maximize learners' oral production. It also attempts to shed some light on the importance of establishing a relaxed and friendly environment as an attempt to get learners to use the language.

The basic hypothesis adopted in this study sets out that effective foreign language learning takes its roots in actions and language use. We believe that promoting this vision to teaching English will contribute to provide learners with extensive language use and classroom oral production.

The method of this research work is quite descriptive. That is, it aims to describe two variables: cooperative group work as the independent variable and its role in improving learners' oral proficiency as the dependent variable. The data were gathered through self-completion questionnaires administered to third-year LMD learners and to teachers who have taught Oral Expression at the Department of English, Mentouri University, Constantine. The results have shown that cooperative group work is the right technique for increasing learners' language use and classroom oral participation which in turn affects learners' oral proficiency. On the basis of these results, the hypothesis was confirmed in that students need to be provided with an adequate technique to develop the speaking skill needed and to create suitable situations where they can use the language without hesitation.

This study has certainly its limitations, but its findings revealed interesting implications. Thus, future research should be done experimentally to test out the applicability of the findings to a larger population of subjects.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C.L.T: Communicative Language Teaching

C.L.L: Cooperative Language Learning

E.F.L: English as Foreign Language

E.S.P: English for Specific Purposes

F.L: Foreign Language

M.T: Mother Tongue

T.L: Target Language

T.T.T: Teacher Talking Time

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

The teaching of foreign language by its very nature is an interactive process, which involves active participation of both the teacher and the learner. It has been stressed, in FLT methodologies that are more than a system of rules, but as a dynamic resource for the creation of meaning, shift away from the study of language seen as purely a system and shift towards the study of language as communication. For that reason, a great opportunity of classroom interaction is being truly demanded.

With a growing need for more effective, successful and active ways of foreign language learning. Innovation in the language field has been stimulated by a special concern for learning through active and collaborative setting. The predominant view is that language is best learned when students are interacting with each other in groups-completing a task or learning a content or resolving real life issues - where their attention is not directed toward the language itself, except when a focus on language forms is necessary. Many researchers have called into question the importance of investigating the impact of cooperative language learning on learners' oral proficiency.

I. Statement of the Problem

The main objective of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in that language. Yet, we observed that EFL learners have difficulties in communicating in English. The reasons for learner's inability to speak well are many and varied.

To begin with, learners cannot swallow everything they need to speak well at once, nor can they learn effectively from a random collection of language tasks where most of the time is spent on doing exercises, which do not involve the students in intensive interactions thus do not help them to develop

communicative abilities.

Teaching English in Algeria requires teachers to take into account that English can be taught and practised only in the classroom. Since the classroom is the primary situation, in which learners have an opportunity to use the target language, so the kind of methodology followed has a great influence on language development.

Developing learners' oral proficiency requires mainly overcoming these obstacles. Thus, teachers have to provide learners, with a method of increasing those opportunities of language use. Organizing the class into groups is one of the surest ways to provide learners with extensive oral production and communication.

If we consider, the main concern of teaching a foreign language is to develop the use of the target language communicatively. The precise question we would ask is: Does the true understanding of the principles and practices of cooperative language learning or small groups lead eventually to develop learners' oral proficiency?

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

II. Aims of the study

This study is meant to contribute to the improvement of learners' poor productions in English through the proposition of cooperative language learning to foreign language teaching. It aims to investigate how cooperative group work presented via cooperative language learning can be utilized in improving third-year LMD learners' speaking skills in the department of English. This study aims at:

- Increase opportunities for student talking time (STT)

- Shed some light on the influence of the social and affective factors (self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety, etc) in creating a friendly and relaxed learning environment.

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

III. Assumptions and hypothesis

On the basis of what has been said, we assume that:

- The English Language Learners' (ELLs) desire is to achieve a high degree of oral proficiency.

- Speaking is a social act in which two or more people use a language to express their thoughts.

- Learning is not passively observed facts or information simply added to existing knowledge; instead, learning is an active process for both teacher and learner.

- The underachievement in speaking is not only due to learners unwilling to speak but also to teachers reluctant to use such a method.

In this respect, we hypothesize that:

If teachers use cooperative learning and design appropriate classroom technique. Then, learners will use English spontaneously and flexibly to negotiate and express their intended meaning.

We believe that promoting this vision to foreign language teaching in general and oral expression in particular will hopefully contribute to provide learners with extensive oral production and communication.

IV. Means of Research

The most important methods of collecting needs analysis data are interviews, observation and questionnaires. However, interviews and observation are more useful in helping to better understand students' needs, but more time consuming. Because of time constraints, we will use questionnaire to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. In this sense, we would direct two main questionnaires; one to the teachers who have been teaching for a long time to make sure that their answers are the product of many years of observation and evaluation of learners' needs and difficulties. Students' questionnaire would be directed to third-year LMD students in the department of English at the University of Constantine. It aims at investigating the students' attitudes towards the present language teaching situations. We also want to investigate the students' evaluation of their skill and the awareness of cooperation in group work.

V. Organization of the work

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first and second chapters review the related literature. The third chapter is the practical part of the study.

The first chapter outlines some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of speaking and oral communication. It also deals with the relationship between speaking and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the reasons of students' inability to speak in English. In this chapter, different techniques for developing oral proficiency are presented, and their implication to teaching the oral skills. The roles of the teacher in the process of teaching and assessing speaking are also considered.

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

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

CHAPTER ONE

THE SPEAKING SKILL

Introduction

One of the major responsibilities of any teacher working with English Language Learners (ELLs) is to enable them to communicate effectively through oral language. Teachers concerned with teaching the spoken language must address this question: why is it so difficult to teach learning oral proficiency?

To a large extent, it is because teachers are desperately attempting to teach in the classroom what is best learned outside it. The classroom, of course, is a convenient place for providing information and developing education skills. However, teachers' concern is not only to inform but also to develop learner's ability to use the target language for communicative purposes.

In this chapter, we will deal with general issues about speaking; definitions of speaking, the nature of oral communication, and the sub-skills. The relationship between speaking and the other skills. Then, we will discuss the reasons of students' inability to speak in English and some techniques for teaching speaking. The roles of the teacher in the process of teaching and assessing speaking are also considered.

1. What is speaking?

As it was noted at the beginning of this work, the aim behind learning a foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language. We speak for many reasons-to be sociable, because we want something, because we want other people to do something, to respond to someone else, to express our feeling and thoughts, to exchange information, to refer to an action or an event in the past, present, or future, etc. Speaking is said to be an active or productive skill. Widdowson (1978: 57) suggests that:

Although it might be convenient to represent the language skills in this way when considering usage, it is not especially helpful, and indeed might be positively misleading to present them in this way when considering use.

What has been said about speaking was conceived to the knowledge of linguistic rules i.e. language ‘usage’ rather than to the way it is realized in communication i.e. language ‘use’. By language ‘use’ is meant the ability to use the language to achieve communicative purposes.

With reference to ‘usage’, it is absolutely true that speaking is an active or productive skill. If we think of speaking in terms of ‘use’, “it involves putting a message together, communicating the message, and interacting with other people.” (Lindsay and Knight, 2006: 57)

1.1. The nature of oral communication

The speaking skill involves a communicative ability of producing and receiving information. Byrne (1986:8) states that:

Oral communication is two-way process between speaker and listener (or listeners) and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding).

Because oral communication involves the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons, it is always related to the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experience, the physical environment and the purpose for speaking. Both speaker and listener have a role to play, because speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. For Kramsch (1983: 367) speaking involves

Anticipating the listener’s response and possible misunderstanding, clarifying one’s own and the other’s intentions, and arriving at the closest possible match between intended, perceived and anticipated meaning.

The interaction between speaker and listener is a complex process. The speaker has to encode the message he wishes to convey in appropriate

language, while the listener (no less actively) has to decode (or interpret) the message. However, the listener's interpretation does not necessarily correspond to the speaker's intended meaning. The speaker's message usually contains more information that is redundant. At the same time, the listener is helped by prosodic features, such as stress and intonation as well as by facial and bodily movements such as gestures. However, speech is often characterized by incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical utterances and by frequent false starts and repetitions. Inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most commonly used skills. They are recognized as critical for functioning in an English language context by teachers and learners. Thus speaking in a classroom entails interacting with the teacher and peers, depending on how classroom activities are organized. It follows that teachers who do more oral interaction activities in the classroom will have more opportunities to develop students' oral fluency. Activities should involve spontaneous practice of the target language.

Brown and Yule (1983: 13) draw a useful distinction between two basic language functions. These are the transactional function and interactional function. The former is concerned with the transfer of information, is message oriented since the speaker assumes that less information is shared with the listener. On the other hand, the interactional function, in which the primary purpose of speech is the maintenance of social relationships and is listener oriented. The knowledge is shared between the speaker and the listener. Another basic distinction we can make when considering the development of the speaking skill is between monologues and dialogue. The ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is quite distinct from interacting with one or more speakers from transactional and interactional purposes. While all native speakers can and do use language internationally, not all native speakers have the ability to extemporize on a given subject to a group of listeners. This is a skill which extensively has to be learned and practised. Brown and Yule (1983: 19-20) suggest that:

... The teacher should realize that simply training the students to produce short turns will not automatically yield a student who can perform satisfactorily in long turns. It is currently fashionable in language teaching to pay a particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns

...It must surely be clear that students who are capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language.

1.2 The speaking sub-skills

Finally, speaking has its own sub-skills different from the other skills. A good speaker must be able to synthesize this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given exchange. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 140), state that learners have to:

- a) think of ideas they wish to express, either initiating a conversation or responding to a previous speaker;
- b) change the tongue, lips and jaw position in order to articulate the appropriate sounds;
- c) be aware of the appropriate functional expressions, as well as grammatical, lexical, and cultural features to express the idea;
- d) be sensitive to any change in the “register” or style necessitated by the person(s) to whom they are speaking and situation in which the conversation is taking place;
- e) change the direction of their thoughts on the basis of the other person’s responses.

In speaking, the learner has to acquire these sub-skills of knowing what, how, why, to whom and when to say something. Once again, the teacher’s role is to monitor students’ speech production to determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need development. Hence, the responsibility of the teacher is to devise activities that can address different skills by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real life communication.

2. The relationship between speaking and the other skills

The aim of language teaching courses are very commonly defined in terms of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The teacher focuses attention on one skill at a time. Thus, in one lesson special attention is paid to speaking, in another to writing and so on. This sometimes reflects the apparent needs of the learners the objective of the course, and the method followed by the teacher. Although, often treated separately, the four skills are actively related. The diagram below shows how all the four skills are related:

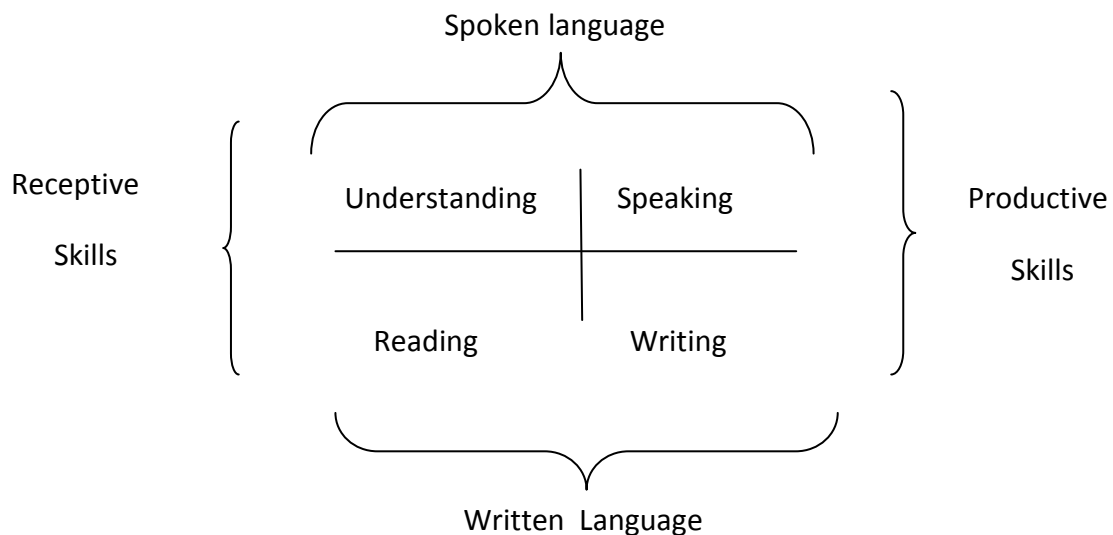


Diagram 1: Inter – relationship of the four skills (Donn Byrne 1976)

Let us begin by reviewing what is usually said about the four skills. Listening and reading are called ‘receptive skills’, the other two ‘productive skills’. The first two are useful sources of experience, but active participation in- and feedback on-speaking and writing the target language is essential to foster progress and reinforce learning.

2.1. Speaking vs. Writing

Brown and Yule (1983: 20) begin their discussion on the nature of speaking by distinguishing between spoken and written language. They point out that for most of its history; language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language. This language is characterized by well-formed sentences which are integrated into highly structured paragraphs. Spoken language, on the other hand, consists of short, often fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciation. There is often a great deal of repetition and overlap between one speaker and another.

A major difference between speech and writing is that the speaker does not typically use full sentences when speaking. In this case we can use the term utterance rather than sentence. They are short phrases and clauses connected with “and”, “or”, “but” or “that”, or not joined by any conjunctions at all but simply spoken next to each other, with possibly a short pauses between them. The spoken language of idea units is simpler than written language with its long sentences and dependent and subordinate clauses. Written English is organized into paragraphs, pages, chapters and complete texts. There is also a situation where speakers use less specific vocabulary than written language. Examples of this include the use of ‘things’, ‘it’ and ‘this’. They usually use syntax in a loosely organized manner and a set of fillers such as ‘well’, ‘oh’ and ‘uh uh’ make spoken language feel less conceptually dense than other types of language such as expository prose.

Harmer (2005) finds it is important to define some differences between speaking and writing for better understanding of their nature. He claims that because the audience to whom we are writing is not always present and most of the cases are unknown audience. When we write, all the information have to be on the page. The reader cannot stop and ask a question to make things clearer. Whereas in speaking, we have the advantage of interacting with “co-participants”, whether we know them or not. This is, of course, is highly beneficial because the speaker may modify his speech according to his co-

participant reactions. Another important difference between the two productive skills lies in the concept of durability. Writing is more durable. However, when we speak, our words just live to few moments. When we write, our words may live for years or even centuries. For this reason, writing is used to provide a record of events.

There are also similarities between writing and speaking. Lindsay and Knight (2006: 60) state that we speak differently depending on whom we are speaking to and for what reason. Similarly with written language, the type of writing varies depending on whom it is written for and why.

To conclude, we should not think of spoken language as something unimportant or inferior. In fact, it is a very important element of language learning.

2.2. Speaking vs. Listening comprehension

Foreign language teachers (FLTS) need to understand that a high proportion of class time should be devoted to developing oral productive skills. However, listening or understanding cannot be left to take care of itself. In their book on listening, Avery and Ehrlich (1992: 36) distinguish between reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. The latter refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or formal lectures where the transfer of information is in one direction, only from the speaker to the listener. Reciprocal listening refers to those listening tasks where there is an opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker and to negotiate the content of the interaction. They stress the active function of the listening. Byrne (1976: 8) states that the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill, because both the speaker and listener have a positive function to perform. Thus, what makes up the whole communication is the interrelationship between speaker and listener during face-to-face communication. Listening is essentially an active process. Nunan (1989: 23) states that:

We do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our back ground knowledge.

The listener has to identify and select those spoken signals from the surrounding sounds, to segment the signals into known words, to analyze syntax and extra meaning and then respond appropriately to what has been said. Usually, the listener's attention will be focused on the meaning rather than the form. Listening processes involve two models: bottom-up and top-down model. Bottom-up models work on the incoming message itself, decoding sounds, words, clauses and sentences. Working one's way up from smaller to larger units to obtain meaning and to modify one's prior knowledge. Top-down models use background knowledge to assist in comprehending the message (Nunan, *ibid*).Receptive but not passive, listening is an active skill because it requires from the listener not simply to hear utterances but to listen and to understand what has been said.

However, we can learn from the mother tongue experience. The scope of listening comprehension should be treated as an integral part of the speaking skill. Consider what will happen when the learners try to use the target language outside the classroom and where they are exposed to natural speech.Understanding breaks down almost immediately. In addition, poor understanding often results in nervousness which will probably in turn inhibit speech. The reason behind this is simply not sufficient to expose the learners to those samples of spoken language (dialogue or teacher talk) in order to provide the students with models of oral production. Byrne (1976: 9) gives two main reasons why this is inadequate:

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

b) The learners need suitably varied models of natural speech. Thus, the listeners have to be taught to listen as well as to speak.

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

3. Student's psychological problems

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

3.1. Lack of interest in the subject

In a foreign language classroom, the student may often stay silent because he has 'nothing to say' in that moment. The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express in English. As well as having something to say, the student must have the desire to communicate something to some person or a group of persons. If the student does not have a positive relationship with his teacher, or feel at ease with his classmates. So, he may feel that what he would like to say can be of little interest to them. On the other hand, he may be very aware of his limitations in the foreign language and feel that, by expressing himself in it, he is laying himself open to criticize or ridicule. For these reasons, again, he remains silent.

3.2. Poor listening practice

Since speaking is essentially an interaction between two or more people, listening comprehension plays a major role. The student may have acquired

skill in expressing himself in the foreign language, but he has little practice in understanding the oral language when spoken at a normal speed of delivery in a conversation situation. The student therefore does not comprehend sufficient elements in the message to be able to make further contribution to the discussion. Students need much practice in listening to the target language functions which will provide them with the breathing space necessary for oral performance.

3.3. Deficient vocabulary

In attempting to use the foreign language to express their own thoughts, students find themselves struggling to find appropriate words where their choice of expression is severely limited. When students are learning a foreign language, they are unable to express their thoughts in orally mature vocabulary. Thus, finding themselves now limited to expressing themselves in childishly simple language, they feel frustrated and uncomfortable. The teacher must be aware of this psychological factor and conscious of his own contribution in the process of teaching. He must be aware of the fact that, although they are limited in their powers of expression, they are limited in their powers of expression, they are not really the immature persons this deficiency might make them appear to be.

3.4. Lack of self confidence and the fear of making mistakes

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves when their oral participation may cause unpleasantness and embarrassment, while others hesitate to participate in the discussion simply because they are afraid of being continually corrected by the teacher for every slip they make.

However, students' mistakes must be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts he should be interrupted as little as possible. Instead, the teacher should note one or two errors of pronunciation or grammar which would affect communication or be unacceptable to a native speaker, and brings these to the attention of the whole class for a later practice.

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

4. Teaching techniques for oral proficiency

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

4.1. Group Work

Despite the need for whole-class teaching and individual work, or “seat work” in language classroom, the use of group work has been emphasized as another interactional dynamics of language classroom. A group work is a classroom situation where students are working within smaller units or groups. Through interacting with each other in groups, students can be given the opportunity to oral exchange. For example, the teacher might want students to predict the content of reading a text of five paragraphs. Then, they are divided into five groups. Each group selects a paragraph of the text just reads and prepares to answer the questions put by the other groups. Each group has to scan a paragraph of the text for detailed comprehension and formulate questions to test the comprehension of the other groups. The aim is to get the students involved in oral interaction: asking and answering questions, agreeing and disagreeing certain points of paragraph and proposing modifications. Indeed, it is through this kind of tasks that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed (Bright & McGregor, 1970).

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

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

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

- It reduces the dominance of the teacher's talk (TT) over the class (Mackay & Tom, 1999: 26).

- It increases the opportunities for students to practise and to use new features of the target language.

- It increases the opportunities for authentic negotiation.

- It promotes collaboration among students. They do not simply throw words to each other; they interact orally with a purpose.

Group work does not only have advantages, it has also disadvantages, like:

- It may kill the spirit of self-reliance.

- From the student's point of view, the value of help from the colleagues is less than the teacher's.

- It may bring potential risks, too, because some learners resent being corrected by other members of the group.

To conclude, group work involving communicative tasks is essential to develop oral proficiency because it demands maximum student's participation in an orally purposeful activity.

4.2. Role-play

Many students derive a great benefit from role-play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purpose (ESP). Role-play is an authentic technique because it involves language use

in real interactive contexts. It provides a format for using elements of real-life conversation and communication (Forrest, 1992)

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

a) They can play themselves in an imaginary situation.

b) Or they can be asked to play imaginary people in an imaginary situation. (Byrne, 1976: 117-8)

Students usually find role-playing enjoyable, for example, they might be given the role of an angry father awaiting the late return of his middle school son from football game. Another student could be given the role of the son. Therefore, students have to prepare a dialogue for their presentation. Because role-play imitates real life, the range of language functions that might be used expands considerably. The role relationships among students call for practising and developing sociolinguistic competence to use the language skills that are appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Role play went through a period of relative unpopularity; yet this pity since it has a distinct advantages. In the first place, it can be a direct interactive method. It is an authentic technique for language use in interactive contexts to train students for specific interactive skills of arguing, information, persuading, discussing, or complaining...etc. It promotes spontaneous oral exchanges between participants instead of reciting already memorized stretches. Indeed, as Dickson (1981: 382) puts it:”learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say.”

Second, role play allows hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behavior than they might be when speaking for themselves, since they do not have to speak the responsibility for what they are saying.

Third, by broadening the world of the classroom to include the world outside, role play allow students to use a much wider set of language use.

Role-play is an effective technique when it is open-ended so that different people would have different views of what the outcome should be and consensus has to be reached. There is a dynamic movement as the role-play progresses with students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels. To succeed with role-pay, the teacher has to give each student who does not play his role appropriately a card that describes the person or the role played. The teacher needs not only to identify the situation which will stimulate the discussion but also give them the role that matches the requirements of their personalities. Topics for role play should be taken from students' current interest and anticipated experiences. This will contribute to increase the student's self-confidence as a speaker and his motivation to participate more.

4.3. Problem solving

Barker and Gaut (2002: 160) defined problem solving as follow:

A problem-solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings

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

The problem tasks range from the imaginary to the more realistic. The latter involves processes which have some kind of realistic application in which the students become involved in an effort to achieve a goal. In problem solving, students are involved in pooling information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. For instance, the teacher describes the task to the students: ‘you are stranded on a desert island a long way from anywhere. There is a fresh water spring on the island, and there are banana trees and coconut palms. The climate is mild. Make a list of eight to twelve things which you think are necessary for survival. Apart from the activities focusing on the likes and dislikes of individual learners, which therefore need a initial phase where each student works on his own, most of the problem-solving tasks require pair or group work throughout. Thus, students can be asked to solve the problem individually or collectively. The latter is calling for cooperative negotiation. Problem solving activities demand that the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others.

Problem solving can be of two kinds: short-term task and long-term task or project. The former can be done in course of one class session while the latter is more time consuming that may take many sessions and longer. An example of a short-term problem-solving task includes putting items in categories. For this kind of activities, the students have either to classify items according to categories giver by the teacher or to identify them by themselves. The students are given a list of 10-15 items, such as occupations (bank clerk, truck driver, policeman teacher lawyer, etc ...) and asked to locate them under heading according to different features. Like, physical / mental work, indoors / outdoors, with people / alone etc... Such short-term activities are task-centered and can be presented in a relatively simple way (i.e. they do not require a lot of explanation in order to set up; nor do they generally need any support materials). It can be comfortably done in one class session of 20 -30 minutes. However, some teachers regard any activity which involves individual or group research over a period of time as project work. Very often this kind of activity is topic-centered and results in the production

of a piece of written oral report or both. For example, the teacher often asks students to develop a presentation on a particular historic period and to generate written products appropriate to the period. Students might conduct diagrams or realia to support the project. This example shows that teachers attach more importance to activities which get the learners out of the classroom, particularly those that involve the collection of data through information search, information exchange and information synthesis.

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

4.4. Discussion

Discussion is any exchange of ideas and opinions either on a class basis with the teacher's role as a mediator and to some extent as participator, or within the context of a group, with the students talking among themselves. It may last for just a few minutes or it may continue for a whole lesson (in case of advanced learners who have a good command of foreign language). It may be an end in itself; a technique for developing oral expression through exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments and points of views. We can say that this technique is student-directed and teacher-guided discussion. (Hill and Ruptic 1949; in Byrne, 1976). For example, all students can be asked to read a single book or story which can be discussed in one session upon completion of the reading. Discussion groups (also called literature circles and book clubs) can last from one to two or three session depending on the length of the book.

While discussion has many advantages, some benefits for second language learners include: increased comprehension levels; opportunities to improve listening skills and develop spoken language proficiency; increased participation of quiet and shy students and more time for teacher observation of students learning.

One of the reasons that discussions fail is that students are reluctant to give an opinion in front of the whole, especially if they cannot think of anything to say and are not confident of the language they might use to say it. Many students feel extremely exposed classroom in discussion (Barnes and Todd, 1977: 81). Teachers have to keep in mind that topics for discussion are not selected at random. The first step toward successful discussion is that the teacher has to respect the following:

- Provide the students with a variety of sources of input (both topical information and language forms), newspapers, video-recording, or simply text so that they can have something to say and the language with which to say it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Do linguistic follow-up at the end of the discussion; give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems.

Through well-prepared discussion, the teacher's role is not to force his opinions on the students but rather to encourage them to express theirs. The teacher's opinion, if offered at all, should only serve to stimulate further ideas on the part of the students, not to inhibit them. Secondly, the teacher

should appear more interested in the ideas at least in the beginning. Sometimes, of course, the teacher may have to help students to get their message across, or make their meaning clear. Also the teacher also has to keep the channels of communication open not of course by doing all the talking himself, but by stimulating students talks through questions which server as stimuli for discussion as long as they generate controversial opinions amongst the students.

5. The roles of the teacher

The primary role of the teacher is to create the best conditions for learning. The teacher needs to play a number of different roles during classroom procedures. However, Harmer (2001: 275-6) suggests three roles if the teacher is trying to get students to speak fluently:

- Prompter:** the teacher should become a prompter when students get lost, stuck and cannot think of what to say next, or in some other ways lose the fluency the teacher expects of them. The teacher, in this role, should be very careful not take initiative away from the students. He can leave them to struggle out of such situations on their own, and indeed sometimes this way is the best option. However the teacher may offer discrete suggestions. This will stop the sense of frustration that some students feel when they come to a ‘dead end’ of language or ideas.

- Participant:** in any part of the lesson there is always a chance for the teacher to participate in discussions, as an equal not as a teacher. In this way the teacher can prompt covertly, introduce new information to help the activity along, ensure continuing students involvement, and generally maintain creative atmosphere. However, the teacher should be very careful of participating too much, thus dominating the speaking and drawing all the attention.

- Feedback provider:** the teacher should be very careful of when and how to give feedback in the speaking activity, over-correction may inhibit them and take the communicativeness out of the activity. On the other hand,

positively and encouragingly correction may get students out of difficult misunderstanding and hesitations. Everything depends upon teacher tact and the appropriacy of the feedback provided.

6. Assessing speaking

The term assessment refers to more than tests and grades. Actually, Haley and Austin (2004: 117) state that “[it] involves development of materials, processes, activities and criteria to be used as tool for determining how well and how much learning is taking place.” Similarly, Lindsay and knight (2006) state that:

Assessment is the process of analyzing and measuring knowledge and ability, in this case, the learner’s knowledge of the language and ability to communicate. (p.121)

In foreign language teaching, it is important to assess all learners’ language skills and not just their use of grammar or vocabulary. In speaking, assessment involves the learners’ knowledge of the language items and the ability to use this knowledge to communicate in that language.

Thornbury (2005: 124) states that speaking assessment can be done either formally or informally. Informal assessment can take place at the beginning and at end of the language courses as well as at various occasions during the course itself-by asking questions to check whether the learners have understood or not. On the other hand, format assessment can be done through tests-using placement, diagnostic, progress or development tests - and examinations like the Cambridge Certificate in English language Speaking Skills (CELS), the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examination, and the examinations offered by Cambridge ESOL.

Testing can have a significant influence on how a teacher works with his learners and also influences how learners learn. It may seem easier to prepare a grammar test. However, testing speaking in not an easy task because of the complexity of the skill. The problem, however, with including an oral

component in a test is that it complicates the testing procedure in terms of practicality and the way assessment criteria can be reliably applied. Setting and making a written test of grammar is relatively easy and time-efficient. A test of speaking, on the other hand, is not. As an example; we may use an oral interview which forms a common kind of foreign language tests. During the test, all the learners of a class have to be interviewed individually, the stress caused, and the time taken, may seem to be greater than the benefits. Moreover, the teacher may have different criteria or standards for judging speaking Thornbury (2005: 125)

Language teaching program that prioritizes the speaking skill but does not assess it cannot be said to be doing its job properly. Testing plays a major role in foreign language learning, both as a motivational factor to ‘do more speaking’ in class and as tool for the teacher to determine what skills and knowledge the learners already have and what areas need more focus. Testing oral production means testing what the learner does with the foreign language, ability to comprehend the spoken language, ability to frame a ready response, and the ability to express his ideas intelligibly with correct structure and appropriate lexical items. Then, teachers might also be interested in articulation of sounds, stress, intonation, etc...

It may be difficult for the teacher to be objective in grading his learners. The teacher may use a variety of rating systems. A holistic rating when the teacher is interested in the students’ overall performance. On the other hand, analytic rating captures the learners’ performance on only one aspect, say fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, stress, etc... (Lindsay and Knight, 2006: 124). So, the use of this element will be taken into account when the teacher finally gives a final grade. There are other times when speaking skills can be assessed. Almost any activity designed to test speaking are generally the same as the kinds of activities designed to teach speaking, e.g. role-play, pair work, information-gap exchange, discussions, etc... Although fear of bad marks can sometimes be motivating, it is surprising to find the amount of power that learners feel when assessing themselves. It can be a real awareness raising activity.

Conclusion

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

The next chapter will devote to cooperative language learning, its underlying principles and classroom implications.

CHAPTER TWO

COOPERATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

Cooperative language learning (CLL) is one of the most distinguished of all instructional practices. In foreign language learning, CLL provides students with the opportunity to use the language in meaningful situations. It has become a popular and relatively uncontroversial to the organization of classroom instruction.

This chapter provides a better understanding of cooperative language learning; it includes a general historical overview about CLL, a number of definitions will next be presented, followed by different methods about learning in small groups, some of the characteristics, and the goals of CLL will be discussed. The roles of the teachers and the learners, and also some of the benefits and pitfalls of CLL are also considered.

Through this chapter, we intend to present two main types of information. The first type provides a clear picture of what makes cooperative language learning, and the second one gives information in the form of practical guides to the use of the most widely forms of cooperative learning.

1. Cooperative Language Learning: An Overview

The history of language teaching has been characterized by search for more effective ways of foreign language learning. For more than hundred years, the shift within language teaching profession emphasized the role of the learner in the process of learning and teaching. As a result, in recent years, some significant development began to take place and effective cooperative learning comes to the scene.

The history of cooperative learning can be traced back hundreds of years and longer as far as the early twentieth century (Slavin, 1995: ix). U.S. educator John Dewey held some forms of cooperation among students as essential to learning. He is usually credited with promoting the idea of

building cooperation in the classroom as a regular and systematic basis. Cooperative language learning is mainly based on the works of Jean Piaget's (1965) and Lev Vygotsky's (1962) developmental theories which emphasize the importance of discussion and joint problem solving among peers. Both of them stress the role of social interaction in learning.

CLL is founded on significant premises about the interactive and cooperative nature of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 194). An essential premise of CLL is that "learners develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially and pedagogically structured situations". Social interdependence theory of Morton Deutch (1949; in Slavin, 1995: 16) explores the influence of social interdependence on individual interaction within a given situation. He indicates that in cooperative groups, students want to achieve better because their classmates want them to do so.

Pioneers in CLL, David and Rodger Johnson at the University of Minnesota, Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins University, and Elizabeth Cohen at Stanford, have devoted years of detailed research and analysis on cooperative, competitive and individualistic efforts to learning (Slavin, *ibid*: 3). As a result of many years of research and practical applications, cooperative language learning now exists for virtually imaginable instruction purpose. Other studies show that cooperative learning has positive effects on the relationship among students, self-esteem, long-term retention and students' achievement.

Cooperative language learning, therefore, has an ancient pedigree in education. Although the term may not have been frequently used, CLL in some forms have been practiced for decades.

2. An introduction to CLL

In second language teaching, cooperative language learning shares approximately the same principles of communicative language teaching (CLT). As Richards and Rodgers (2001: 151) put it:

Cooperative language learning originates outside of language teaching, but because it is compatible with many of the assumptions of communicative language teaching. It has become a popular and relatively uncontroversial approach to the organization of classroom teaching.

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

Unlike traditional methods of language teaching and learning (e.g. Grammar Translation Method and Audio-Lingual Method...etc), cooperative language learning is viewed as one of the ‘learner- centered’ methods of language teaching. Traditionally, the field of language teaching and learning often refers to ‘teacher-centered’ instruction in which the teacher plays the major role in the classroom. In this classroom, the teacher is the knower and the director of his students who are supposed to take in. A great deal of learners’ traditional role, is that “of students sitting in rows listening to teacher who stand in front of them.” (Harmer, 2005: 114). This kind of instruction is characterized by the teacher is the knowledgeable part in the classroom (Scrivener, 1994:1).

As opposed to traditional methods, learner-centeredness is a central principle of CLL. The principle of learner centricity depends on active not passive absorption of the language (Nunan, 1988). He mentions that learners themselves are expected to take responsibility of their own learning. In this context, the teacher does not abandon and neglect his job.

In learner-centered instruction there was a shift in viewing the teacher's role as a facilitator. In his role as facilitator, "it is necessary to provide questions to challenge thinking, give directions, explain activities, clarify procedures students should use on an activity, and check students' understanding" (Slavin, 1995: 132). This view to teaching does not necessarily mean that the teacher receives passive role while learners act as leaders. Moreover, the teacher's job is to create a successful learning environment for effective learning to take place.

Traditionally, most teachers make use of individual work or "seatwork", and whole-class instructional methods more frequently than others. Good and Brophy (1987; in Richards and Lockhart, 1996), state that in whole-class:

The teacher typically begins a lesson by reviewing prerequisite material, then introduces and develops new concepts or skills, then the group in a recitation or supervised practice or application activity, and then assigns seatwork or homework for students to do on their own (p.147).

In these classrooms, Chaudron (1988:51) finds that 70% of the classroom time is taken up by teacher talking time (TTT). This type of instruction can be very beneficial in undergraduate education because, "it enables the teacher to teach large number of students at the same time." (Richards & Lockhart, *ibid*, 148). Research suggests that whole-class instruction methods seem to have serious and dramatic effects than its benefits. Usually the teacher may feel that all the students have an equal opportunity to participate in the class, but this is not always true. Again, Richards and Lockhart (*ibid*) argue that "such instruction is teacher-dominated, with little opportunity for active student's participation." (P. 148).

Although the need for whole-class instruction and individual work, teachers need to include other types of teaching in their classes to provide learners with a variety of opportunities for communicative interaction. Recently various alternatives have been proposed which emphasize the use of pairs and small groups in the classroom (e.g. Cooperative Learning, Collaborative Learning and Communicative Language Teaching). Through interacting with each other in pairs or groups, many researchers (e.g. Ellis, 2003) believe that both linguistic and communicative competencies are developed. Hatch (1978; in Richards & Lockhart, 1996) argues that “one learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed.” (p. 152). Setting students to work in groups is so important in that “certain capacities of an individual are not brought out expect under the stimulus of associating with others” (Dewey, 1916, in Richards & Lockhart, *ibid*, 266). Group work has also been challenged on the grounds that it does not ensure the conditions needed for collaborative work to achieve satisfactory task outcomes or language acquisition.

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

3. Definitions

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), sometimes also called Collaborative Learning (CL) takes many forms and definitions; each of them emphasizing a particular aspect, but all definitions, more or less shed light on the same spot.

Johnson et al (1994; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), in fact, have drawn the attention to cooperation as a distinguished principle of CLL, rather than competition in learning. In cooperative learning, they point out; learners benefit more from sharing each other's thoughts rather than working alone.

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of «A». (p. 195).

As for Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richard and Rodgers, 2001), CLL is that:

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

This definition implies that CLL entails learners learn from each other in pairs or small groups. CLL in this context emphasizes learner accountability in which each member of the group is responsible for his own contribution to activity.

Regardless of the definition taken or how it is used, the goals are the same. Thus, CLL is an approach to language teaching that aims to foster cooperation rather than competition, to develop communicative competence through the use of interactive group activities, and to increase opportunities for learners to use the target. CLL is one teaching method among many that its objectives will derive from the context in which it is used.

4. Cooperative Language Learning Methods

Cooperative Learning is not new to teaching. Since 1920, teachers have been used to encourage their students to work together on occasional group projects, discussion or debate groups and so on. However, until 1970, some significant research on specific applications of cooperative learning to classroom setting began to take place. As a result, many cooperative learning methods are available. It is now possible for teachers to select from a wide variety of cooperative methods to achieve different teaching outcomes. Some of these methods which have been extensively researched and widely used are Student team-Achievement Division, Jigsaw and Group Investigation.

4.1. Students team-achievement division (STAD)

In STAD, teams should be assigned in groups of four or five which are mixed in academic performance, sex and race or ethnicity. The major goal of the team is “to make sure that their teammates have learned the material.” (Slavin, 1995: 78). After a period of team practice, the students take individual quizzes. Although, students study together, they are not allowed to help each other with the quizzes. This individual accountability motivates students to do a good job by explaining to each other as the only way to ensure team success is for all team members to master the information and the skills being taught.

The success is based on improvement points; that is, students' quiz scores are compared to their own past average, and points are given to each team based on the degree to which students work harder and perform better than their own earlier performance. These points are then summed to obtain team scores. Some teachers provide some kinds of recognition or reward to students on 'Great team' or 'Super team' (Slavin, 1995: 5).

In cooperative learning methods, STAD is the most appropriate technique for teaching every imaginable subject. In foreign language classrooms, this may be useful for teaching vocabulary and grammar forms. In this type of cooperative learning, students would be learning specific grammatical feature; then, they would be given the opportunity to ensure that team members have mastered the rule in communicative contexts. STAD is one of the simplest of all cooperative learning methods, and it is a goal model to begin with for teachers who are new to the cooperative approach.

4.2. Jigsaw II

The Jigsaw method was developed by Elliot Aronson (1978). A more practical and easily adapted form of Jigsaw, Jigsaw II is provided by Slavin. In this method, students work in heterogeneous teams, exactly as in STAD. The students are assigned chapters, stories, or other units to read, and are given 'expert sheet' that contains different topics for each team member to concentrate on while they read. When everyone has finished reading, then students from different teams with the same topic meet in an 'expert group' to discuss their topics. The experts then return to their teams and take turns teaching their team members. However, it is important that the teacher distributes quizzes and allow enough time of every one to finish. Team scoring for Jigsaw II is the same as scoring for STAD. Also, as in STAD, success full team may earn certificates or other rewards.

Aronson's original Jigsaw resembles Jigsaw II in most respects, but it also has some important differences. In the original Jigsaw, students read topics different from those read by their teammates. "This has the benefit of making the experts possessors of unique information, and thus makes the team each member's contribution more highly." (Slavin, 1995, 126). The advantage of Jigsaw II is that all students read the material, which may make unified concepts easier to understand. Jigsaw is one of the most flexible of the cooperative learning methods. In second language acquisition, this method would be very conducive to discussion and negotiation of meaning in the target language.

4.3. Group Investigation

Group investigation is a form of cooperative learning that dates back to John Dewey (1970, in Slavin, *ibid*: 11), but has been redefined in more recent years by Shlomo and Yael Sharan at the University of Tel Aviv. In this method, group composition is based on students' interest, and it is heterogeneous. Students form their own two-to-six groups. Slavin (*ibid*: 112) believes that "cooperative interaction and communication among classmates are best achieved within the small group, where exchange among peers and cooperative inquiry can be sustained." The teacher and students need to experience a variety of communicative and social skills that establish norms of appropriate cooperative behavior in the classroom.

As the name suggests, group investigation requires the students to seek information from a variety of sources inside and outside the classroom. In group investigation, groups choose topics from a unit studied by the entire class. A central role to group investigation is students' cooperative planning of the learning task. Each group members takes part in determining what they want to investigate in order to solve the problem, which resources they need, which will do what and how they

will present their project to the class as a whole. Usually there is a division in the group that enhances ‘positive interdependence’.

Group investigation exposes students to constant evaluation by both classmates and by the teacher more than traditional whole-class instruction. This kind of evaluation is more appropriate for advanced levels. In second language acquisition, group investigation offers many opportunities for meaningful language use.

5. Characteristics of CLL

Cooperative language learning differs considerably from traditional language teaching methods. Thus, comparing cooperative language learning with traditional language teaching will illustrate the principal characteristics of language learning.

Table 5-1 summarized the main differences between cooperative language learning and traditional language teaching (based on the research of Johnson and Johnson, 1991; Nunan, 1989; in Zhang, 2010: 81).

	Traditional language teaching	Cooperative language learning
Independence	Non or negative	Positive
Learner roles	Passive receiver and performer	Active participator, Autonomous learners
Teacher roles	The center of the classroom, controller of teaching pace and direction, judge of students’ right or wrong, the major source of assistance, feedback, reinforcement and support	Organizer and counselor of group work, facilitator of the communication tasks, intervener to teach collaborative skills

Materials	Complete set of materials for each student	Materials are arranged according to purpose of lesson. Usually one group shares complete set materials
Type of activities	Knowledge set recall and review, phrasal or sentence pattern practice, role play, translation, listening etc	Any instructional activity, mainly group work to engage learners in communication, involving processes like information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction
Interaction	Some talking among students, mainly teacher-student interaction	Intense interaction among students, a few teacher-student interactions
Room arrangement	Separate desks or students placed in pairs	Collaborative small groups
Student expectation	Take a major part in evaluating own progress and the quality of own efforts towards learning. Be a winner or loser	All members in some way contribute to success of group. The one who makes progress is the winner
Teacher-student relationship	Superior-inferior or equal	Cooperating and equal

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

Cooperative language learning represents the systematic and carefully planned use of group-based procedures. It seeks to overcome some of the weaknesses of traditional group work. It was typically informal, unstructured, and only used on rare occasions (Slavin, 1995: ix). Macaulay and Gonzalez (1996: 2) characterize it as follow:

The instructional use of small groups so that learners are able to work together in a manner that enhances both group and individual learning. The key to cooperative learning is the careful structuring of learning groups. There are many ways to structure such groups, but some of the key elements are building interdependence, the designing of interactive processes, and accountability ... the building of social skills around such areas as decision making, communication, and conflict management is also fundamental to cooperative learning.

Similarly, Olsen and Kagan (1992; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 196) propose the following characteristics for the success of group-based learning in CL.

5.1. Positive interdependence of CLL

The essence of the cooperative group is the development and maintenance of positive interdependence among group members. Richards & Rodgers (ibid), state that: “Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member all.” (p.196). It means each group member depends on each other to accomplish a shared goal. Without the help of one member, the group is not able to reach the desired goal. For cooperative groups to be effective, group members should engage in team building activities that deal explicitly with the development of mutual support within the group. Students need access to activities in which they learn from each other as they ask for help and receive help from one another.

5.2. Group formation

Group formation is an important factor in creating positive interdependence. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 196) state that while the teacher breaks down his classes into pairs and small groups, many factors should be considered:

- Considering group size: typically group size is from two to four. This will depend on the tasks the students have to carry out, students' age, and time division.
- Assigning students to groups: groups can be teacher-selected, random, or students-selected.
- Suggesting student's role in groups: Each group member has a specific role to play, such as noise monitor, recorder, or summarizer.

5.3. Individual accountability

In cooperative learning, each group member is held accountable for success of the cooperative group, because it places responsibility for action and progress on each of the group member. Individual accountability takes into account both group and individual performance, for instance, by assigning a grade for his own contribution of the team project or by or by calling on a student at random to share with the whole class (Slavin, 1995: 42).

Learner accountability can be reached by giving each group member a specific role to perform. The importance of individual accountability is in providing learners with an incentive to help each other and to motivate each other to achieve a shared outcome (Slavin, *ibid*: 43).

5.4. Social skills

The student does not know how to interact effectively with his classmates. Social skills like other skills should be taught and reinforced, because it determines how students should interact with

each other as teammates. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 164) states that “in cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative skills so that they can work together more effectively”. Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction. In cooperative tasks, students need to develop “skills in negotiating (clarifying seeking clarification, checking for comprehension, problem for more information) as well interaction skills in turn taking, listing, encouraging, helping, disagreeing” (Arnold, 1999 : 3).

5.5. Structuring and structure

While it is clear that, all the other characteristics (e.g. individual accountability, social skills, etc...) enhance the achievement outcomes of cooperative learning, there is some evidence that carefully structuring interactions among students in groups also can be effective, even in the absence of group rewards (Slavin, 1995: 43)

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 196) states that “structuring and structure refer to ways of organizing student interaction and different ways students are to interact such as three-step interview or Round Robin.”

6. Goals of CLL

In second language teaching, the most important goal of cooperative language learning is communicative interaction. There is a great deal of support for the idea that interaction among students on learning task will lead to improve student achievement. Students will learn from each other contribution to classroom discussions

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 193) believe that CLL goals are:

- To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pairs and group activities.
- To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum

settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms, mainstreaming).

- To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.
- To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communicative strategies.
- To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Thus, these constitute the main goals of cooperative language learning in language teaching. Clearly, cooperative goals create pro-academic norms among students, and proacademic norms have important effects on students' achievement.

7. Redefinition of the roles

Cooperative language learning (Kagan, 1987; Kessler 1992; in Richards & Lockhart, 1996) attempts to redefine the roles of both teachers and learners in the light of methodology, which relies more on cooperative group work and pair work activities.

7.1. Teacher roles

The role of the teacher in cooperative language learning differs considerably from the role of the teacher in traditional teacher-directed teaching. The teacher's role changes from a deliverer of information to a facilitator of learning. The teacher has to create highly structured and well-organized environments for classroom instruction. Harel (1992: 169) defines the teacher's role in the classroom as follow:

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

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

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

In classroom activities, the teacher models a variety of roles, each of them is learned by practice over time.

While conducting to group work, the teacher serves as a resource person and a facilitator. Slavin (1995) states that “[the teacher] circulates among the groups, sees that managing their work, and helps out with any difficulties they encounter in group interaction and the performance of the specific tasks related to the learning project.” (p. 113). In CLL the teacher can perform the role of group member, “sitting with students to do the task” (Ellis, 2003: 271). However, the problem with this specific role is that many students may feel uncomfortable to react to their teacher as participant rather than as an educator.

7.2. Learner roles

In CLL, the essential role of the learner is as a group member who must work with other group members to make certain that everyone in the group has mastered the content being taught. In CLL, the student plays the major role. Slavin (1995) believes that in order to

ensure participation among students, “[they] are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other’s current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other’s understanding.” (p. 2). Through CL, students become responsible for their own learning. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) put it, learners “are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning” (p.199). In this context, this does not mean that the teacher has no role to perform. Instead, he is there as a counselor, educator, friend and facilitator of learning; his job is more than handing out grades and marking papers with red ink.

Richard and Rodgers (2001) report that within CL work, “each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder or summarizer.”(p.197). Similarly, Kagan (1994; in Woolfolk, 2004: 495) states that the teacher must assign a variety of roles for each group member, to make sure that everyone in the group is involved in a specific role in accomplishing an overall group task. The following table lists some roles that learners can perform.

Role	Description
Encourager	Encourages reluctant or shy students to participate.
Praiser/cheerleader	Shows appreciation of other’s contribution and recognizes accomplishment.
Gate keeper	Equalizes participation and makes sure how one dominates.
Coach	Helps with the academic content, explains concepts.
Question commander	Make sure all students’ questions are asked and answered.

Taskmaster	Keeps the group on task.
Recorder	Writes down, decisions and plans
Reflector	Keeps group aware of progress (or lack of progress).
Quiet captain	Monitors noise level.
Materials monitor	Picks up and returns materials.

Table 7.2.1: Possible students' role in cooperative learning groups (Kagan, 1994; in Woolfolk, 2004, P.496).

8. Benefits and pitfalls of CLL

Cooperative learning is a powerful educational approach principally because of its contribution in enhancing students' achievement and productivity and providing more opportunities for communication. From the perspective of second language teaching, McGroarty (1989; in Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 195) offers the potential advantages for ESL students in CLL classrooms:

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

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

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

The role of CLL in enhancing students' motivation has proved to be a major one. Focuses on the fact that students want one another to succeed and that is why they help one another. This view represents the social cohesion perspective. In cooperative activities, students need to develop "social skills such as acknowledging another's contribution, asking others to contribute, and keeping the conversation calm need be to be explicitly taught." (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 168). The main difference between the motivational and social cohesion perspectives lies in the fact that the former emphasizes that group members help each other because they benefit themselves as well, whereas the second holds that group members help each other because they care about each other. The third major benefit is that "interaction among children around appropriate tasks increases their mastery of critical concepts (Damon, 1984; in Slavin, 1995 17). From this view, cooperative learning on achievement would depend on the use of cooperative tasks. They argue that interaction among students on learning tasks will lead in itself to improved students' achievement (Slavin, *ibid*: 42).

While many potential benefits arise when CL is used, there are some important pitfalls that must be avoided if cooperative learning is to be instructionally effective. For example, some “students may not like the people they are grouped or paired with” (Harmer, 2005: 21). However, not all learners are positively disposed towards working collaboratively on tasks. Nunan (1989), for instance, states that the ESL learners often tend to favor ‘traditional’ over ‘communication’ activities, showing a preference for teacher-centered over learner-centered participatory structures. In cooperative tasks, some students find it more humiliating to make mistakes in front of their peers than in front of the teacher. In fact, to solve this problem, the teacher has to set up the groups on the basis of students’ preferences.

There are other pitfalls that make cooperative learning may be less effective. Slavin (ibid) states that “if not properly constructed, cooperative learning methods can allow for the “free rider” effect, in which some group members do all or most of the work while aggressive students go along for most of the ride.” (p.19). Such a problem is most likely to occur when the group has a single task, for example to hand in a single report, complete a single worksheet, or produce one project. Such assignments can also result in a situation in which students who are perceived to be less skillful are ignored by other group members. To solve this problem, the teacher assigns each group member responsible for a unique part of the work.

Finally, there are various problems associated with the organization of cooperative work that can create a negative effect on the outcome of the task. The physical characteristics of the classroom, in particular the arrangement of the furniture can go a long way toward encouraging communication. For the teacher, the biggest problem may be the crowded classrooms. Because of the number of the students, group discussion can become noisy and disruptive. There is also the risk of that students will engage in off – task talk.

To sum up, CLL is an approach that was found to have many advantages and benefits. However, many teachers emphasize the right decisions of conducting cooperative learning, otherwise, the benefits of CLL would not be obtained.

Conclusion

Unlike most traditional language teaching method in foreign language teaching, cooperative language learning tends to promote productivity and achievement and more opportunities for classroom communication. Furthermore, it shares approximately the same essential set of principles with communicative language teaching. We know a great deal about the effect of cooperative learning on students and the conditions necessary to make cooperative learning more effective for achievement outcomes. It is now possible for teachers to select from a wide variety of cooperative methods to achieve different purposes and to use cooperative learning as the main organizing scheme for classroom instruction and not just as an occasional activity.

CHAPTER THREE
FIELD OF INVESTIGATION

Introduction

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

The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used for eliciting information from some target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. In this study, we have made use of two questionnaires -(1) the teachers' questionnaire is designed for teachers who are believed to be in good position for providing data relevant to our study. (2) The students' questionnaire is designed for inviting them to contribute information on their actual state of learning. When the questionnaire is well prepared, it enables the researcher to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. This chapter, then, clarifies the research design in terms of the aim, the administration and the description. Moreover, it also contains the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaire.

1. Students' questionnaire

1.1 Aim of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is mainly designed to diagnose the students' evaluation of their skills and the awareness of cooperation in group work in the English language. Second, it also attempts to investigate their actual state of learning in terms of the use of cooperative group work.

1.2 Administration of the questionnaire

Given the impossibility to conduct the research on the whole population under investigation, we have administered the questionnaire to third-year LMD students belonging to different options: applied linguistics, civilization and literature, and language sciences.

It is worthy to mention that the questionnaire took place in May 2010, at the central library and the library of languages and human sciences. In both libraries, we have a totality of forty (40) students.

Taking diversity of the students makes us, far from being biased. The questionnaire was administered to forty (40) students for one hour. Among thirty six (36) handed back questionnaires, twenty nine (29) were returned in the same day and six (06) few days later. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were clear enough in order to help the students' understand and thus provide appropriate answers.

1.3 Description of the questionnaire

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

1.3.1 Section One: General questions (Q2-Q1):

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

1.3.2 Section Two: students' perception of the speaking skill (Q3-Q9):

This section seeks information about some aspects of the speaking skill. In the first place, students are asked to pick the most important skill that need to be developed most :speaking, listening, writing or reading and then they had to explain their choices (Q3). This question seeks information about how the students rate their oral performance in English whether it is high, above average, average, below average or low (Q4). In (Q5), students are asked if they consider that the oral expression courses help them to improve their oral performance very much, somewhat, don't know, not very much, or not at all. Then, in (Q6) they are asked to say whether they feel afraid to talk or not. In (Q7) they asked to identify the reasons which lie beyond their answers from a set of options. In (Q8), students are asked about the technique they enjoy best: multiple-choices were given, group work, role-play, problem solving, discussion, or any other techniques they had to specify. In the last question of this section, they are asked if they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production or not (Q9).

1.3.3 Section Three: Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work (Q10-Q16):

The first question of this section seeks information about students' awareness of cooperative learning (Q10). The next question investigates the students' preferences for individual work, pair work or group work (Q11) and then they are required to justify their choices (Q12). In (Q13), students are asked if they find it difficult to work cooperatively with their classmates or not.

After that, students are asked if the teacher tries to solve the problems encountered when they are working with their peers, is considered in question (Q14). In (Q15), students are asked whether their teachers raise their awareness towards the skills of cooperative group work. Finally, students are asked to say whether group work helps them to: ask and respond to more

question? learn to listen to different opinions? Evaluate their peers' performance or develop social skills for getting along with others? (Q16)

1.3.4 Section Four: students' evaluation of cooperative work (Q17):

The last question (Q17) investigates the students' evaluation of cooperative work whether it helps in improving their speaking skill or not, and then they are required to explain why.

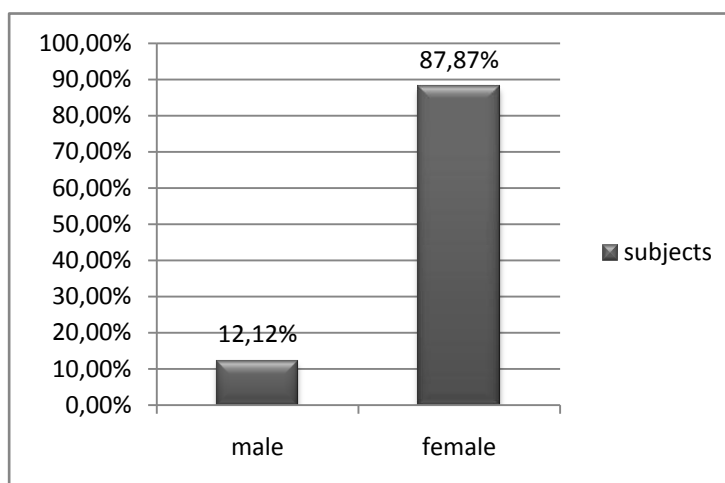
1.4 Data collection and analysis:

Section One: General questions

Q1 . Sex:

Sex	Subjects	%
male	4	12.12
female	29	87.87
Total	33	100

Table1: Sex



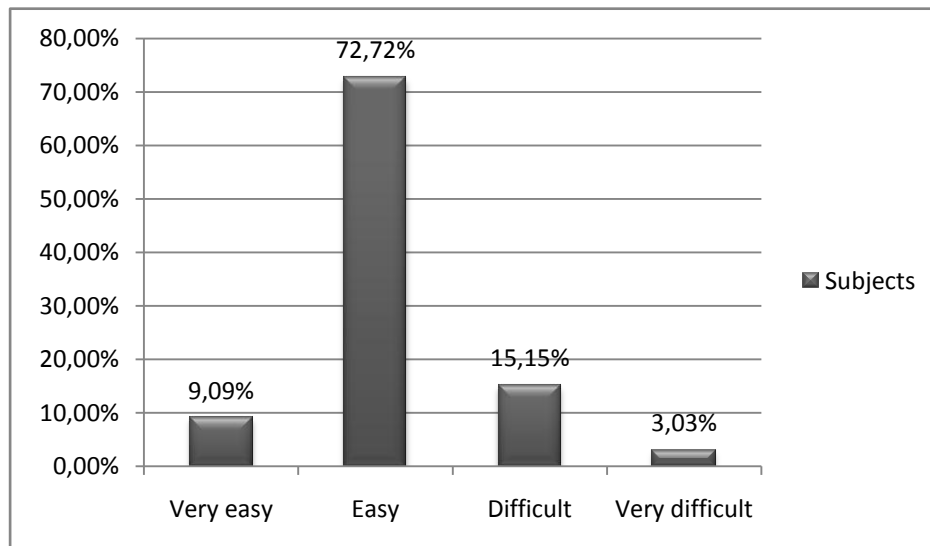
Graph 01: Sex

A quick glance at this table will reveal that female students outnumber male. In fact, we have recorded just four 4 male subjects out of total thirty three 33 (12,12%), where as the rest is of a female sex, that is twenty nine 29 (87,87%) are female subject. This adds nothing to work except that girls are expected to be more interested in collaborating.

Q1 Do you find speaking in English?

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

Table 02: students' attitude towards speaking



Graph02: students' attitude towards speaking

Subjects, here, are asked to say whether they find speaking easy, very easy, difficult or very difficult. The majority of respondents 24 or about (73%) believe that speaking in English is easy, about (9.09%) said it is very easy, against (15.15%) who find it difficult and only (3.03% who find it very difficult.

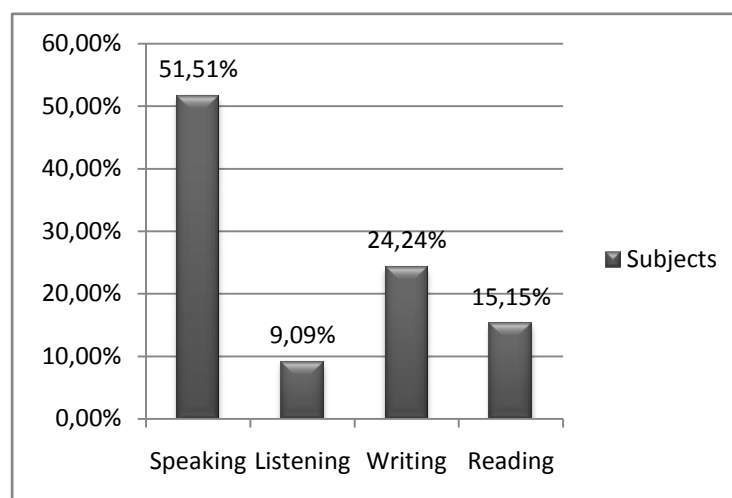
For ranking speaking by difficulty, most students (73%) find that speaking is easy. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are good speakers. Those who find speaking difficult and very difficult might represent the proportion of students who never participate in the classroom.

Section two : students' perception of the speaking skill

Q3 . Pick the most important skill that needs to be developed most?

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

Table 03: Emphasis in learning the skills



Graph 03: Emphasis in learning the skills

For this section, the difficult question was to ask subjects to pick the most important skill that they think need to be developed most: (51.51%) of the respondents (N=17) picked the speaking skill first, while (24.24%) of the respondents put the writing skill first. Then, it is followed by the reading skill (15.15%) and listening skill (9.09%). The final classification we get from table N°3 is the following: the speaking skill first; the writing skill second; the reading and the listening skill are third and fourth respectively.

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

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

As for the writing skill, and unlike speaking, only 8 respondents believe writing is most needed; these form (24.24%). Those subjects believe that they should be able to write simple but correct and well-organized passages.

Insofar as reading is concerned, just 5 respondents believe it to be first developed, this translate into (15.15%). Those who opted for this choice believe that reading provides them with a large supply of vocabulary items for future use.

Last, but in no way least, and unlike the other skills, only 3 respondents (i.e. 9.09%) have put the listening skill in the first position. These students believe that one has to receive language first before any oral production takes place.

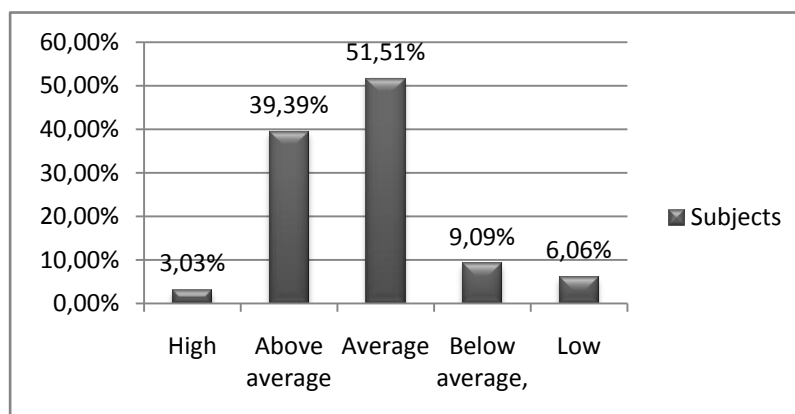
Of course, we are not obliged to follow blindly this classification. Still the data obtained yields valuable information on the students' needs.

Q4 .Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

Options	Subject s	%
----------------	----------------------	----------

High	1	3.03
Above average	10	39.39
Average	17	51.51
Below average	3	9.09
Low	2	6.06
Total	33	100

Table 4: Students' evaluation about their level in English



Graph 4: Students' evaluation about their level in English

This question acts as a support to the one just preceding (pick the most important skill that needs to be developed most?). Subjects, here, are asked to describe their speaking ability in the language class. In answer to this, they are expected to rank themselves from high to low.

We have recorded 17 respondents (51.51%) who have admitted that their level of oral performance is average. About (40%) said that their level is above average; against about (10%) and (6.06%) who confess that their level is below average or low. Therefore, these are not likely to participate verbally

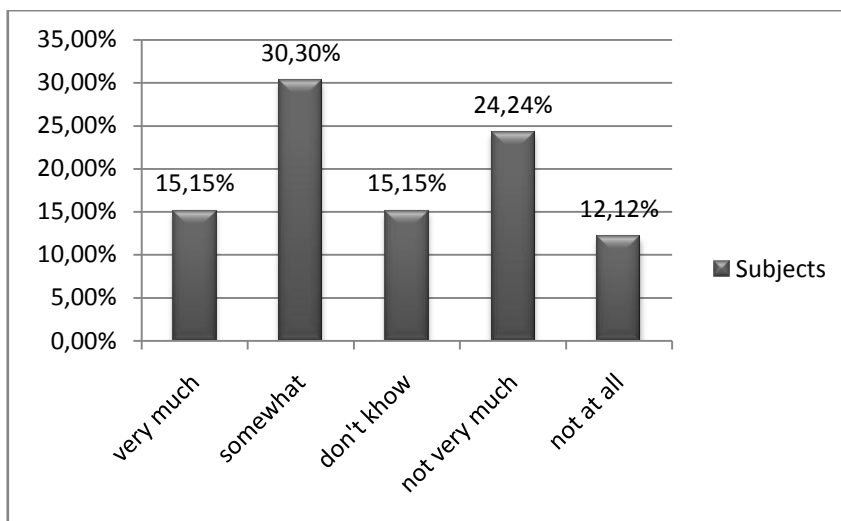
in the classroom. And if they stay silent without any attempt to participate, then they will not advance any further.

Those who found that their level is approximately average and below average match the results obtained in the students' needs in terms of skills (see table 3, where speaking is felt to be the skill the students need most to develop), however, these results do not match the teachers' questionnaire (see table N°20).

Q5 .To what extend did the oral expression courses help you improve your oval performance?

Options	Subjects	%
Very much	5	15.15
Somewhat	10	30.30
Don't know	5	15.15
Not very much	4	12.12
Not at all	4	12.12
Total	33	100

Table5: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses.



Graph 05: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses.

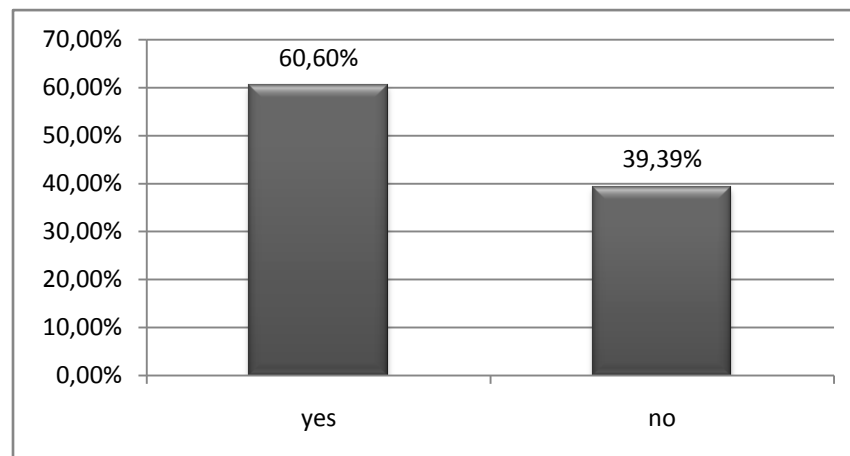
This item of information sheds light on subjects' attitudes toward the whole teaching process. Five respondents (15.15%) have indicated that the oral courses help them improve their oral performance; (30.30%) of the subjects said that they improve somewhat their oral performance. A number of subjects have opted for the reverse situation in that (24.24%) respondents do not actually find their teachers' courses helpful, (12.12%) of the subjects say that they are not helpful at all also, we have recorded (15.15%) subjects who have opted for don't know.

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

Q6 .Do you feel afraid to talk?

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

Table 06: Confidence in the use of English



Graph 06: Confidence in the use of English

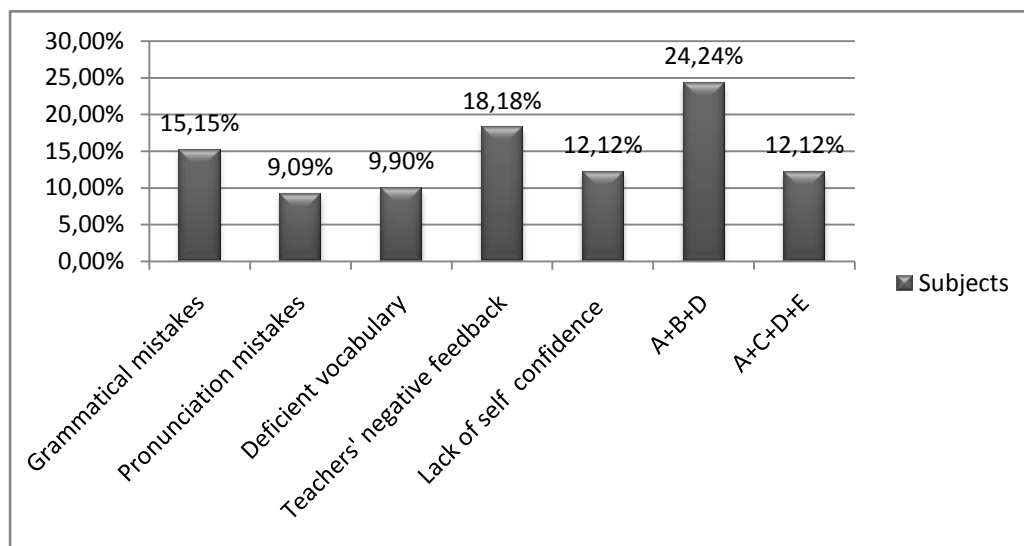
This question aims at determining whether subjects are afraid to talk or not. An examination of the table above will reveal that the majority of respondents 20, or (60.60%) do not feel at ease to speak (they remain silent), while about (40%) who consider themselves as talkative or able to participate. Yet, things not always light i.e. not all subjects actually are motivated to speak in English language. This might have several reasons; one possible reason is that respondents might be uninterested in the topics themselves. Another interpretation is that the subjects are not motivated enough to speak. However, we cannot always consider their non-speaking to lack of motivation, although motivation can play a major role to initiate speech. The

next question gives us a clear idea of some possible factors which may prevent students from speaking in a foreign language.

Q7 .If your answer is "yes", is it because you:

Options	Subjects	%
a. Fear of making grammatical mistakes?	5	15.15
b. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?	3	9.09
c. Having deficient vocabulary	3	9.09
d. Fear of teacher's negative feedback	6	18.18
e. Lack of self confidence?	4	12.12
a+b+d	8	24.24
a+c+d+e	4	12.12
Total	33	100

Table 07: Reasons for the inability to speak



Graph 07: Reasons for the inability to speak

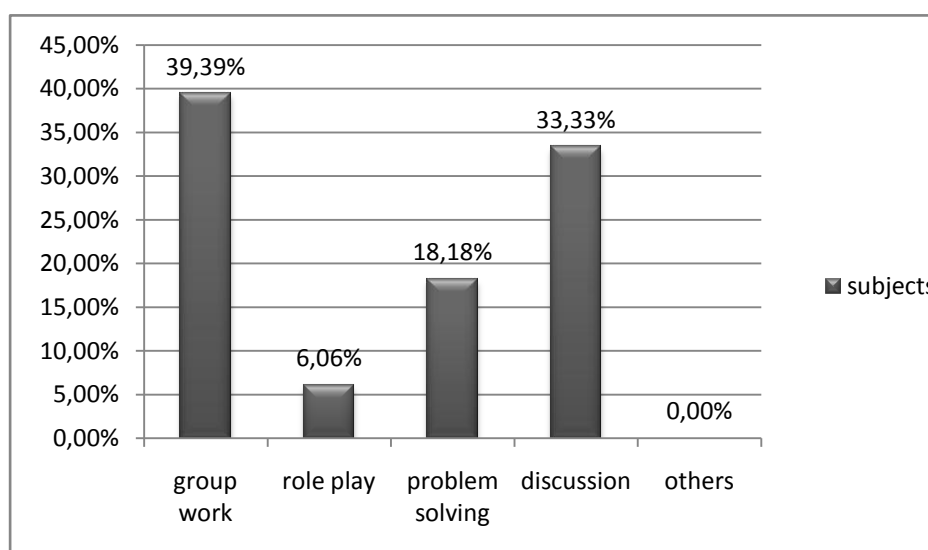
Having discussed the issue of students being afraid to talk, it seems wise to see just what makes students unwilling to use the language for oral communication. Subjects are, therefore, asked why they do not participate in the classroom, and are provided with a set of possible choices from which they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

Whereas 5 subjects (i.e. 15.15%) have indicated that they do not participate because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and that their classmates make fun of them, 3 (or 9.09%) say it is because they have deficient vocabulary as they are not talkative, and 3 subjects out of the total sample do not participate as they are afraid of making pronunciation mistakes. In fact, this problem may prevent communication and slow down learning. Closely related to this is the fear of teachers' negative feedback; we have recorded 4 subjects, or (12.12%) who are reticent to speak in the classroom since they lack self-confidence; this might keep them from making their way toward native speakers. So, it is the teacher role to create friendly and relaxed atmosphere that pushes them to speak.

Q8 .Which of the following techniques did you enjoy best?

Options	Subjects	%
Group work	13	39.39
Role play	2	6.06
Problem solving	6	18.18
Discussion	11	33.33
Others	0	/
Totale	33	100

Table 08: Kinds of techniques used for teaching



Graph 08: Kinds of techniques used for teaching

The present item of information is intended to ask subjects about the technique they enjoy best. The table above summarizes the most frequent techniques that teachers can use in order to carry out a speaking activity. As can be noticed in table N°8, there are no major differences between the

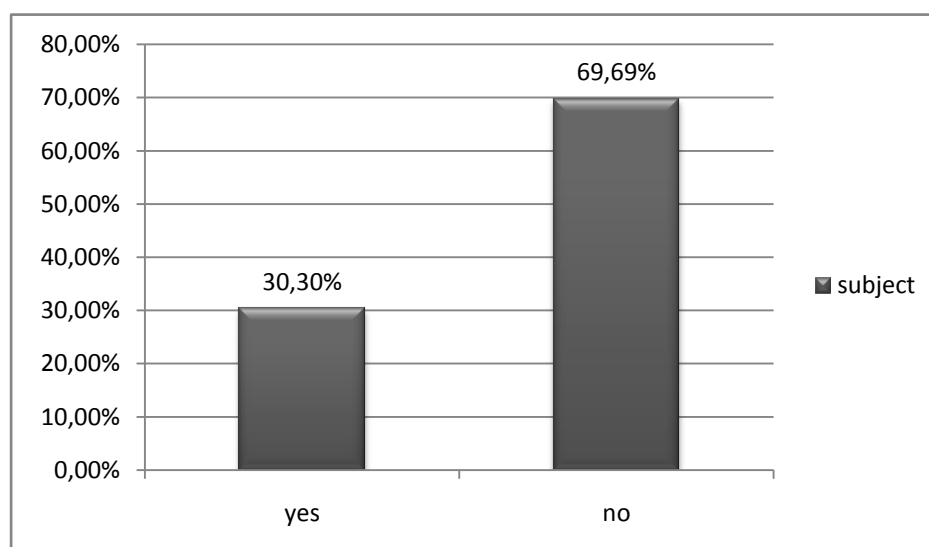
percentages of group work and discussion. In the first place comes group work with (39.39%) followed by discussion with (33.33%). Not surprising, we have recorded 6 cases of subjects who consider problem solving as the technique that enjoys best and only (6.06%) answers opt for role play.

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

Q9 .Are you given the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?

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

Table 9: Students' evaluation



Graph 09 : Students' evaluation

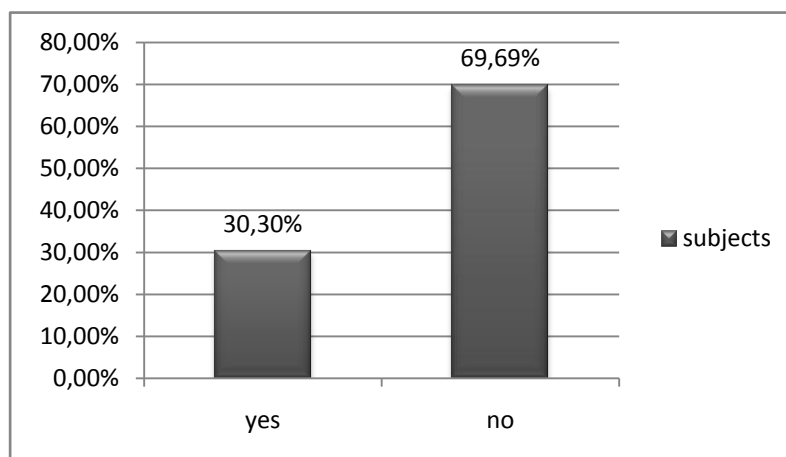
Evaluating students' oral production is recognized as an essential feature of effective teaching. The final question on speaking was whether they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production or not. It was not surprising that the majority (69.69%) said no, while only 10 subjects or (30.30%) said 'yes'. So, the number of yeses shows that respondents are not given the opportunity to provide feedback on committing mistakes which can stimulate students' participation in the teaching process. Self-evaluation and peer review can be a useful technique in which students feel more responsible and thus more independent in their learning.

Section three : Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work.

Q10 .Have you ever heard of cooperative learning?

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

Table 10: Student's familiarity with cooperative learning



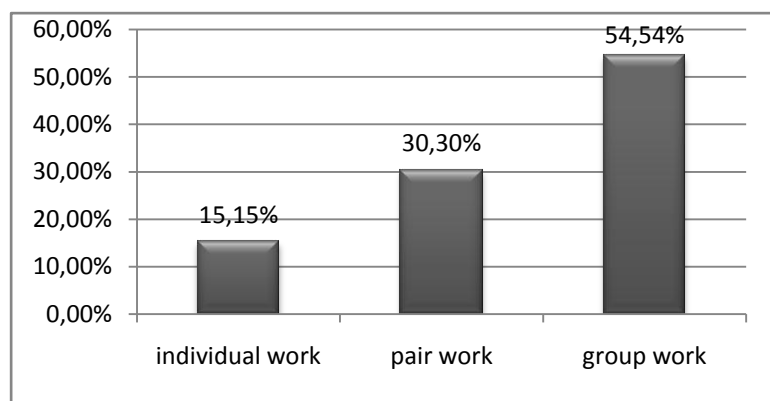
Graph 10: Student's familiarity with cooperative learning

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

Q11 .In oral expression, do you prefer:

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

Table 11: Students' preference



Graph 11: Students' preference

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

The majority has indicated that they prefer having group work instead of other types of tasks. These are 18 subjects translating into (54.54%). Ten subjects, however, are opted for working in pairs (i.e. 30.30%), and only five (or 15.15%) prefer to work individually.

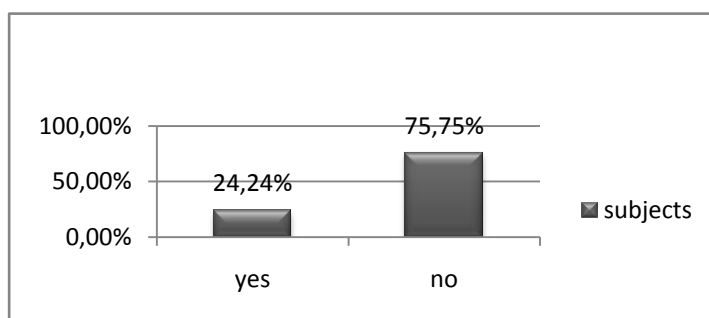
Q12 Whatever your answer is, please justify

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

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

Options	Subject	%
Yes	8	24.24
No	25	75.75
Total	33	100

Table 12: Difficulties encountered in group work



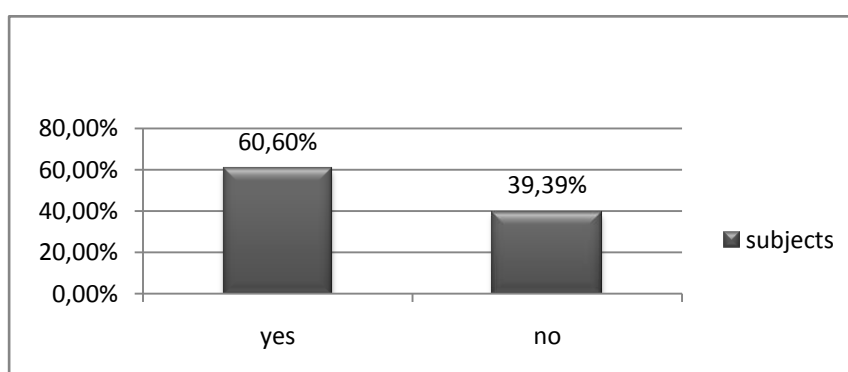
Graph 12: Difficulties encountered in group work

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

Q14. Does the teachers try to solve the problems encountered when you are working with your peers?

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

Table13: Teachers' attitudes towards the problems



Graph 13: Teachers' attitudes towards the problems

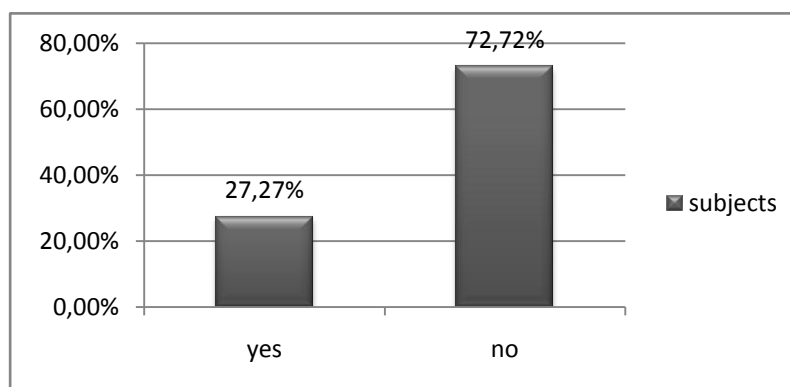
The aim of this question is to see whether teachers help their students to solve the problems encountered while working with their peers. Apparently,

the majority of yeses, translating into (60.60%) who are likely to be characterized by talkative students or perceived to be socially involved with their peers. On the other hand, a numerical minority of 13 subjects out of total 33 (i.e. 39.39%) who are likely to be characterized by silent students or perceived to be less skillful or ignored by other peers.

Q15. Does your teacher raise your awareness towards the skills of cooperative work?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	9	27.27
No	24	72.72
Total	33	100

Table14: Raising students’ awareness towards the skills of cooperative work



Graph 14: Raising students’ awareness towards the skills of cooperative work

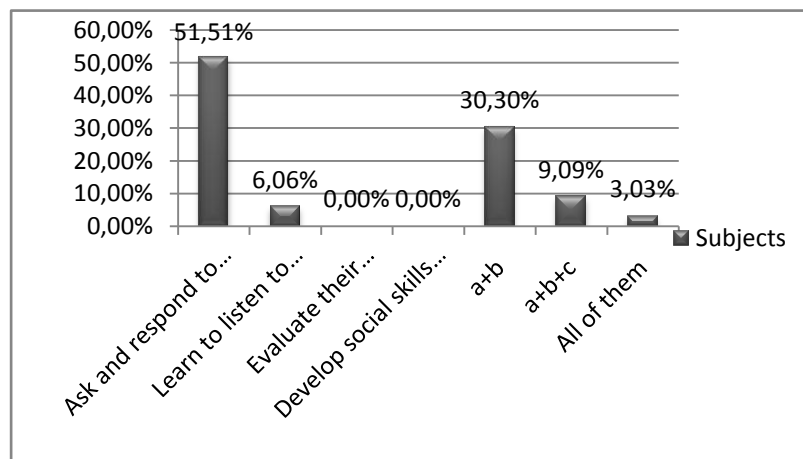
As shown in the table above, the majority of subjects (72.72%) answer ‘no’ indicating that their teachers do not raise their students’ awareness of the necessary skill that would really help in establishing effective learning. This can only be interpreted in terms of their ignorance of the necessary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

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

Q16. Does you feel that group work helps you to:

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

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



Graph 15: Understanding the specific skills of successful group work.

In this question, subjects are asked to say what group work helps them to do. As has been noted in the previous question, only 9 subjects have reported that their teachers raise their awareness toward the skills needed for group work. A quick glance at the table above will reveal that 17 respondents out of (54.54%) find that group work help them to ask and respond to more questions, these have placed this skill in the first position. The second position is opted for by just 2 subjects (i.e. 6.06%) who believe that group work help them to listen to different opinions. Furthermore, we have recorded no subjects opting for the second skill and no respondents have opted for the fourth skill which is developing the social skills for getting along with others. As for the 15 subjects, when asked about these skills, 6 subjects (i.e. 18.18%) have opted for the first and second skill, and 9 subjects (i.e. 27.27%), have opted for the first, second and third skill.

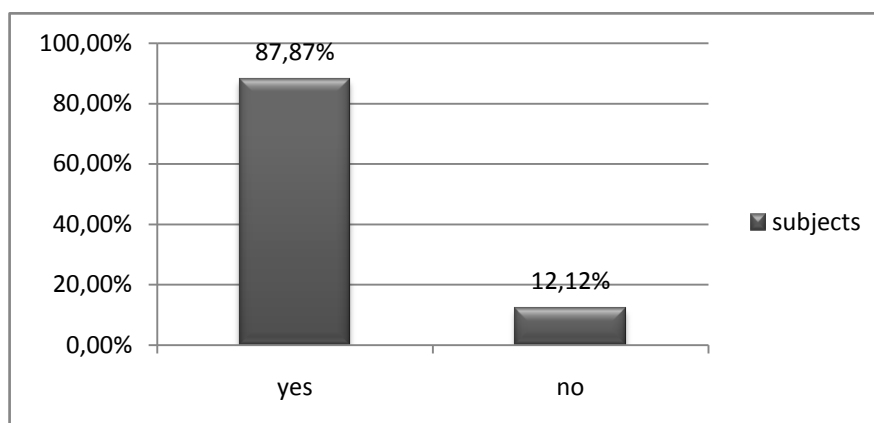
Of the four skills we presented above, ‘ask and respond’ to more questions is the only one that teachers teach their students how to do it. But what we really find surprising is that almost all the teachers are aware of the need for these skills, but skills do not want to bother themselves teaching them.

Section four : students' evaluation of cooperative work

Q17 .Do you think that cooperative work helps you improve your speaking skill?

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

Table 16: Students' evaluation of cooperative group work.



Graph 16: Students' evaluation of cooperative group work

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

Discussion

On the basis of the analysis of the students' questionnaire, we note that:

1. Foreign language teaching is not merely a process of transforming knowledge, but one which creates situations where students interact and express their thought using the target language. That is to say, learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language.
2. With speaking, the majority of the students express their needs in terms of speaking skills. Concerning the other skills (i.e. reading, writing, and listening) students do not seem to understand that they are interrelated. Thus, learning the speaking skill will reinforce the learning of the other skills.

3. Although some students may be motivated to learn English, they feel afraid to speak it for their inability to interact with others; lack of self-confidence, fear of operating foolish when mistakes are made (grammatical or pronunciation mistakes) and fear of teachers' negative feedback. Because of the many psychological problems (listed above) students have, teachers need to encourage students' talk inside the classroom to be exclusively in English.
4. As for teaching speaking, students seem to have different attitudes toward different teaching techniques. The majority of the students are interested in discussion and group work. The teachers' role is to adapt the technique with encourages more students' participation.
5. The students showed different preferences for classroom arrangements (i.e. group work, pair work individual or seat work). However, teachers need to include the type of teaching that provides learners with a variety of opportunities for communicative interaction and language use.
6. Concerning the implementation of cooperative group work, students do not seem aware of the skills they can adopt for a successful functioning of group work. We believed that teachers should raise their students' awareness towards the importance of these skills
7. Students' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for teaching speaking implies student's readiness for such a technique.

2. Teachers' questionnaire

2.1 Aim of the questionnaire

We believe that in order to investigate effectively the students' needs in terms of their oral English ability. It is necessary to consider the teachers' opinions and attitudes toward the use of group work as presented by cooperative language learning. It also aims at investigating the teachers' thought of how language is being taught and the problem being encountered with teachers in their teaching tasks.

2.2 Administration of the questionnaire

Our target population consists of all teachers of oral expression in the department of English at the University of Constantine. There is no possibility of covering the whole population. As such we have reduced the sample to (13) teachers, who do have similarities with the whole population.

The questionnaire was handed out to (13) teachers however, only (10) teachers have handed back their questionnaire. Thus, our sample contains a total of (10) teachers. In the light of these circumstances, only 10 teachers have co-operated with our work and we feel very grateful to their comprehension.

2.2 Description of the questionnaire

The whole questionnaire is made up of (16) items and classified under (04); sections each focusing on a particular aspect. It involves different types of questions: "closed" and 'open-ended' questions. Closed questions require the teacher to answer by 'Yes' or 'No' or to tick up the right answers from a set of options and open-ended questions which require from them to give their personal opinions or background information about subjects.

Section 1: General Question (Q1, Q2)

The first section aims at collecting items of information on the sample. The first question (Q1) seeks information about the teachers in terms of degrees. In (Q2), teachers are asked to give the numbers of years they have been teaching English; i.e. their teaching experience.

Section 2: Teachers' Perception of the Speaking Skill (Q3-Q10)

In this section, teachers are required to state whether or not the oral skills are their major teaching concern (Q3). In (Q4), teachers are asked to describe their students' level of oral proficiency in English; whether it is high, above average, average, below average or low. This question seeks

information whether teachers motivate their students to speak in English or not (Q5) and to explain how in case they give a positive answer (Q6). After that, teachers are asked to pick the most difficult aspect for teaching speaking: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary or sentence structure or any other aspects they had to specify (Q7). In (Q8), respondents are asked to pick the technique they use most: multiple-choices were given; group work, role-play, problem solving or discussion. Then, they are required to state whether or not they evaluate their students' oral production (Q9) and to specify the appropriate answer, in case of positive answer, from a set of options: whether they prefer, self-evaluation, peer- evaluation, teacher-evaluation, or all of them (Q10).

Section 3: Teachers' Implementation of CLL (Q11-Q15)

In this section, teachers are required to state if they have ever used cooperative language learning (Q11). In (Q12), teachers are required to indicate how far they agree with some statements characterizing cooperative language learning using strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. The next item (Q13) aims at investigating the role of the teacher in terms of helping students see the value of cooperative work. In (Q14) teachers are required to indicate whether their students face problems working in groups or not.

Section 4: Teachers' Evaluation of CLL (Q15)

The last questions (Q15), teachers are required to say whether they think that cooperative learning enhances students' oral skills or not, and then they have to justify their answer.

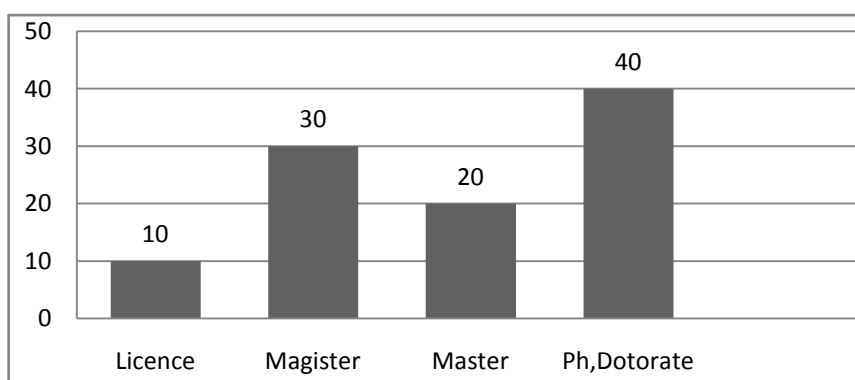
Analysis of the questionnaire

Section 1: general questions

Q 1. Degree(s) held:

Degree		Subjects	%
B A (licence)		01	10
M A	Magister	03	30
	Master	02	20
Ph. D (Doctorate)		04	40
Total		10	100

Table 17: Teachers' Academic Degree



Grahp17: Teachers' Academic Degree

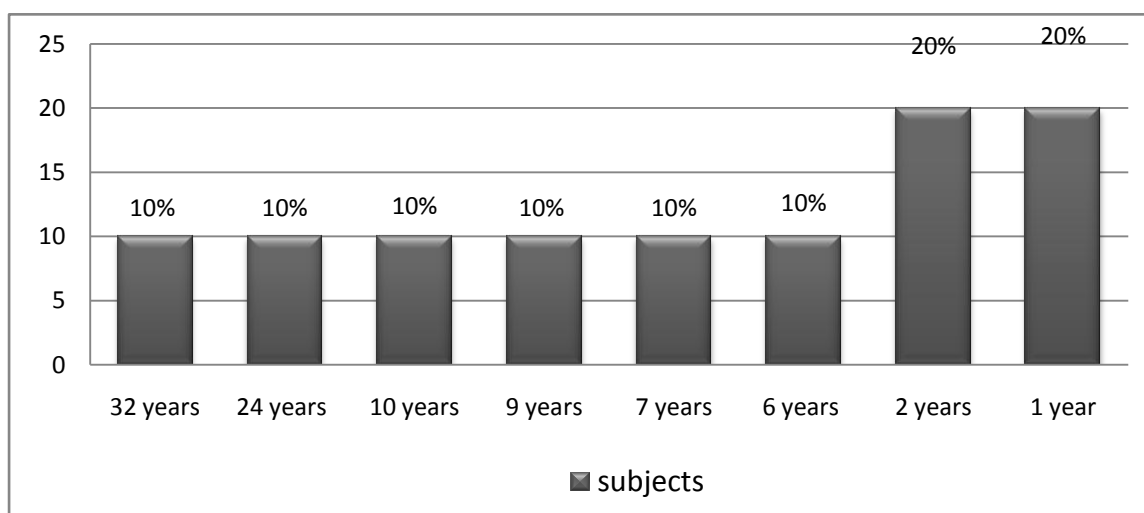
As the table indicates, the highest percentage is that of the teachers who have got a Doctorate (40%). In the second position come those who have a degree of magister (30%). Finally, (20%) of the teachers have a Masters' degree and only (10%) had a Licence. We believe that our sample is as representative as possible for the population to which it is designed

Q 2: how long have you been teaching English?

Number of years	Subjects	%
32 years	01	10
24 years	01	10
10 years	01	10

9 years	01	10
7 years	01	10
6 years	01	10
2 years	02	20
1 years	02	20
Total	10	100

Table 18: experience in teaching



Graph: 18 Experience in Teaching

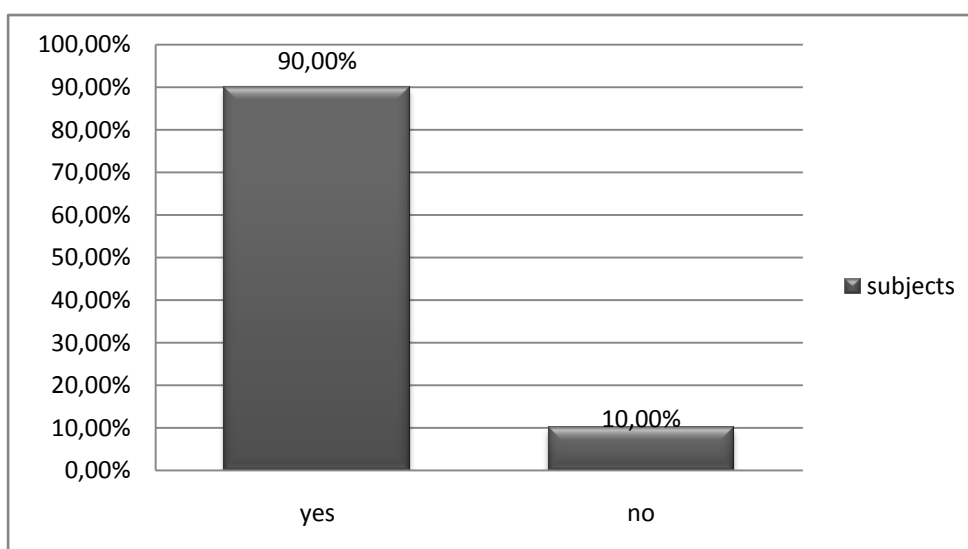
Teachers, here, are required to give in numbers how many years they have been teaching English i.e. their teaching experience. The most experienced have been teaching for 24 and 32 years (10% for each category). We can notice that (40%) have no more than 10 years experience in the field of teaching. Finally, the highest percentage is that of teachers who have been teaching for one and two years (20% for each category).

Section 2: teachers' perception of the speaking skill.

Q3: are the aural / oral skills your major teaching concern?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	9	90
No	1	10
Total	10	100

Table 19: Teachers' concern of the oral skill



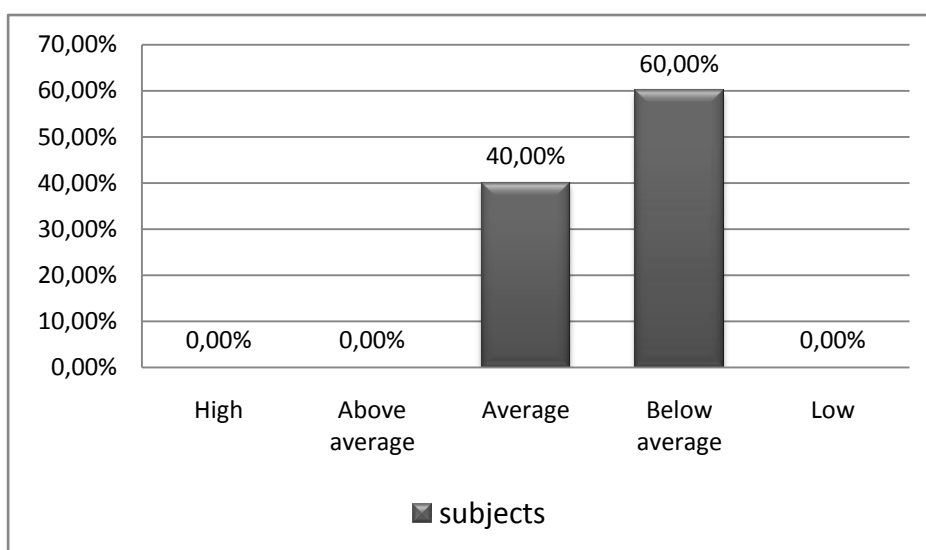
Graph 19: Teachers' concern of the oral skill

As shown in this table, expect one questioned teacher, i.e. (10%) answered negatively. Nine of the teachers (90%) who answered positively the question, indicating that the oral skill are their major teaching concern. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of enhancing their oral proficiency. These answers consolidate the belief that students need to develop their speaking skill, and that this skill will eventually enhance to a certain extent the other skills.

Q4: which of the following describes your students' level of oral proficiency?

Options	Subjects	%
High	0	0
Above Average	0	0
Average	4	40
Below Average	6	60
Low	0	0
Total	10	100

Table 20: Teachers' evaluation of students' level of oral proficiency



Graph 20: Teachers' evaluation of students' level of oral proficiency

Teachers, here, are required to describe their students' level of oral proficiency. It seems to us that a majority of 6 teachers, translating into 60%, agree that their students have a below average in oral proficiency. However, 4 teachers out of 10 believe that their student's level in oral proficiency is

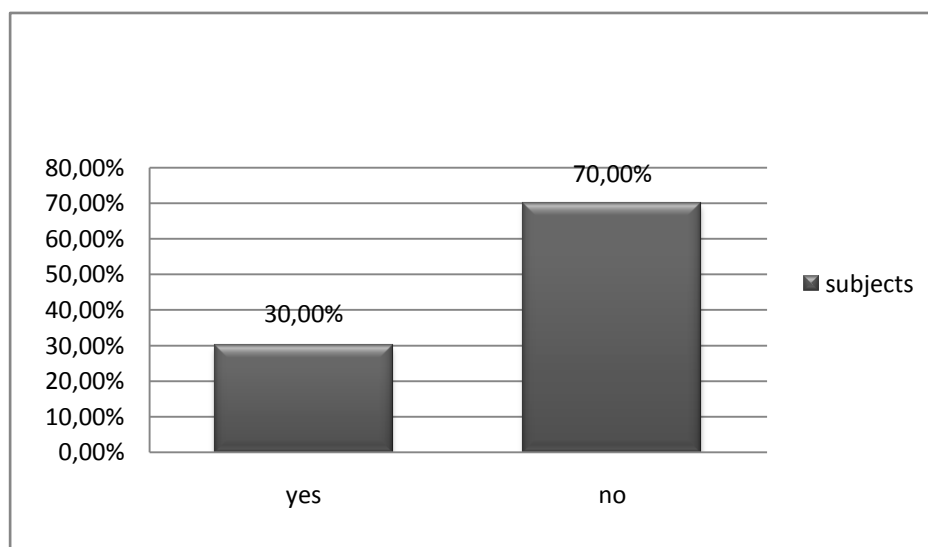
average. No one teacher has opted for the 'high', 'above average' or 'low' options.

If we lend ourselves to these results, it seems to us that the majority of students do not have a good command of English, probably, because they have poor speaking habits and practice, not interested in English, or demotivated to use the language. We believe that the main reason for which students' bad level is reticence. This means that students need practice in talking to be able to develop their speaking skill.

Q5: do you motivate your students to speak in English?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	03	30
No	07	70
Total	10	100

Table 21: Teachers' perception of students' motivation in speaking



Graph 21: Teachers' perception of students' motivation in speaking

Turning now to motivation, two aspects will be discussed here. The first point is whether or not the teachers are motivating their students to speak in English. The great majority has indicated that they do not motivate their students (a total of 7 teachers or 70%), while only 3 out of 10 (i.e. 30%) motivate their students.

Unmotivated students can be due to many factors, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of interest in the speaking subjects, fear of making grammatical mistakes etc.... The role of teachers in enhancing students' motivation has been found to have great effect on enhancing students' performance in the target language; thus, teachers should find their ways to motivate their students.

Q6: if your answer is "yes", how do you do to motivate them?

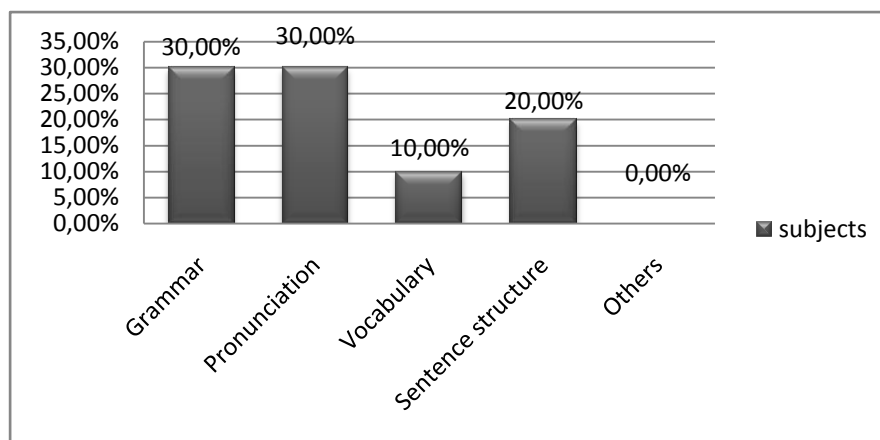
Only 1 teacher (out of 4) who answered "yes" did not provide any justification for his answer. For the rest who answered "yes", (3 of them) they explained that they raise their students' motivation through different ways. In the first place, selecting topics of students' interest which stimulates them to use English. Also, organizing classroom debates about current topics and bringing in interesting activities encourage students to exchange ideas. Moreover, creating a relaxed and friendly environment in which students feel comfortable to use the language in front of their teachers and classmates. One teacher answered that role-play and language games are an excellent ways of motivating students to speak.

In sum, teachers' awareness of different ways of raising students' motivation can be of great benefits in increasing students' oral participation. In our opinion, motivation is what keeps teachers teaching and their students learning.

Q7: what do you find most needed item of speaking?

Options	Subjects	%
Grammar	03	30
Pronunciation	03	30
Vocabulary	01	10
Sentence structure	02	20
Others	00	00
Total	10	100

Table 22: Teachers' perception of the most needed item of speaking



Graph 22: Teachers' perception of the most needed item of speaking

According to this table, the majority of the teachers (60%) claim that their students' needs in spoken English are in terms of grammar and pronunciation (30% for each category). They are followed by sentence structure (20%). Then; vocabulary comes in the last position as the least needed item in teaching oral expression.

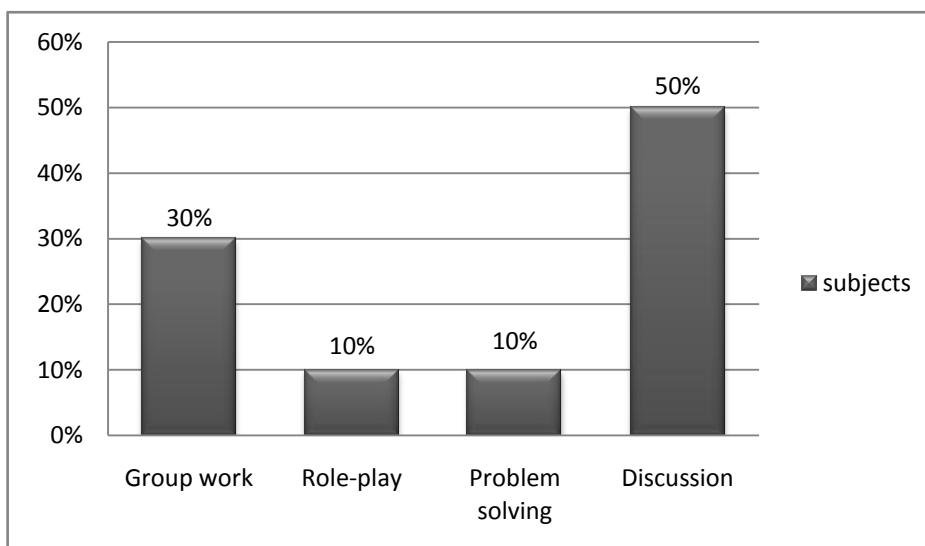
All the teachers agree that all the language areas need improvement. To begin with, grammar helps in mastering the language and using it correctly. Also, the more learners practise, the better pronunciation they will get.

As a conclusion, we believe that there is a need to create a better learning condition to help learners to acquire better.

Q8: which of the following techniques do you use most?

Options	Subjects	%
Group work	03	30
Role-play	01	10
Problem solving	01	10
Discussion	05	50
Total	10	100

Table 23: Teachers' use of teaching techniques



Graph 23: Teachers' use of teaching techniques

There are several ways for teaching the speaking skill. We have suggested four options for teachers to choose among them. Half the teachers

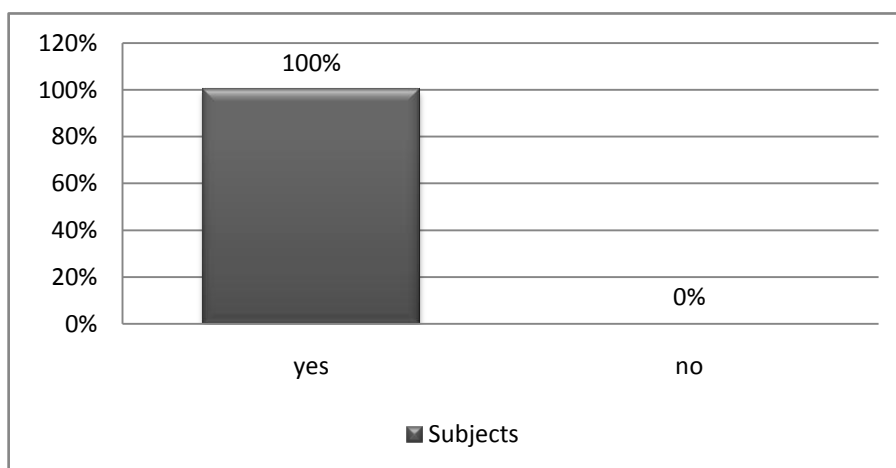
(50%) build confidence in discussion; to state differently, they focus less on grammar mistakes and insist on the communication of ideas. In the second position come those who make use of group work as a teaching technique. Teachers in favor of this type of technique may have their reasons such as that speaking is a social act in which two or more people are involved in oral exchange of information, and students feel less inhibited and more confident in themselves to speak. The last two categories of teachers have worked on role-play and problem solving (10% for each category). Teachers who opted for these choices believe that students may derive great benefits from such techniques.

In sum, teachers realize that simply training students to produce sentences will not yield good speakers. In our opinion, speaking begins from participation and communication.

Q9: do you evaluate your students' oral production?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	10	100
No	00	00
Total	10	100

Table 24: Teachers' evaluation of speaking



Graph 24: Teachers' evaluation of speaking

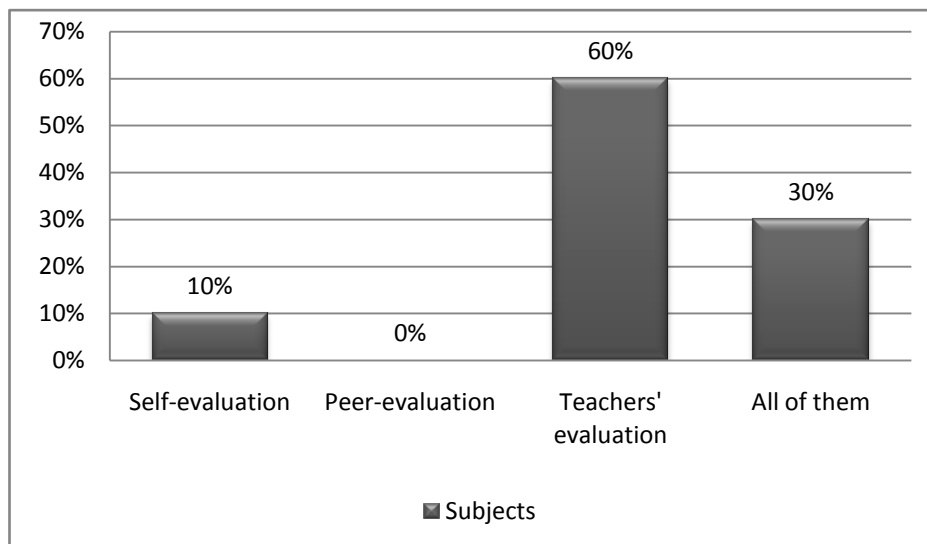
Evaluation is recognized by many teachers to be an essential aspect of foreign language teaching. Along the analysis of the results, we found that all teachers (100%) provide evaluation for oral production as shown in table 25. It is worthy to mention that teachers differ in terms of their focus when evaluating speaking production. Some highlight accuracy, others prefer

Fluency; yet, our opinion is that all features must be taken into consideration when evaluating the oral proficiency. It is all about balance between this and that.

Q10: if your answer is "yes", do you prefer:

Options	Subjects	%
Self-evaluation	01	10
Peer-evaluation	00	00
Teachers' evaluation	06	60
All of them	03	30
Total	10	100

Table 25: Teachers' preference for evaluation type



Graph 25: Teachers' preference for evaluation type

A large number of the teachers (60%) expressed their preference for teacher-evaluation. These teachers have a tendency for the belief that the teacher is the only one who can judge the students' production. They believe that it helps students get feedback from more proficient speakers. Like self-evaluation, peer-evaluation is another way of assessing students' production. Only one teacher (10%) has opted for this choice. We believe that this type of evaluation will develop in the students the sense of criticism autonomy. Similarly, another teacher (10%) has opted for peer evaluation while 3 teachers (30%) out of total 10 have opted for the fourth choice 'all of them'. Teachers' preference for one type or another depends mainly on teachers' approach to teaching.

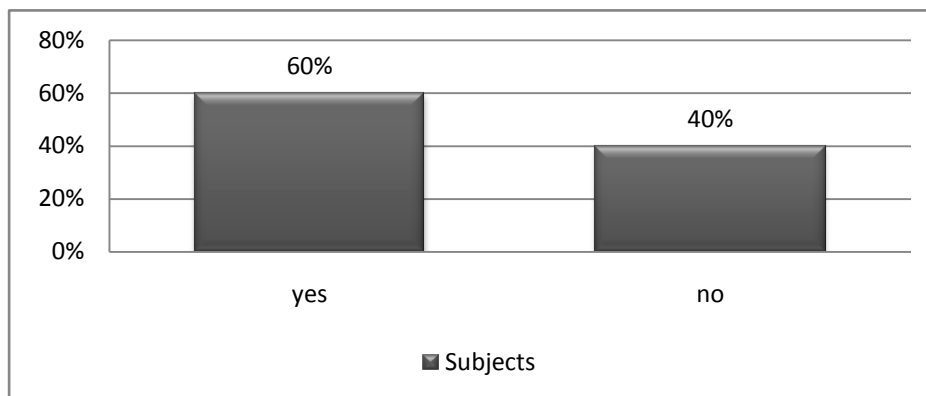
Section 3: Teachers' incorporation of CLL

Q 11: have you ever used cooperative language learning?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	06	60
No	04	40

Total	10	100
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Table 26: Teachers' use of cooperative learning



Graph 26: Teachers' use of cooperative learning

As the table indicates, most teachers (40%) say that they have never used cooperative learning. This can be due to teachers' unwilling to use it and they have little or no knowledge about its implementation. The other teachers (60%) however, use it. This indicates that they are aware of its substantial benefits, and they are able to use it. Although not all teachers have used cooperative learning, most of them do actually take it into account when practicing teaching.

Q12: Please indicate how far you agree with each of the following principles (characterizing cooperative language teaching) using 1, 2, 3 or 4.

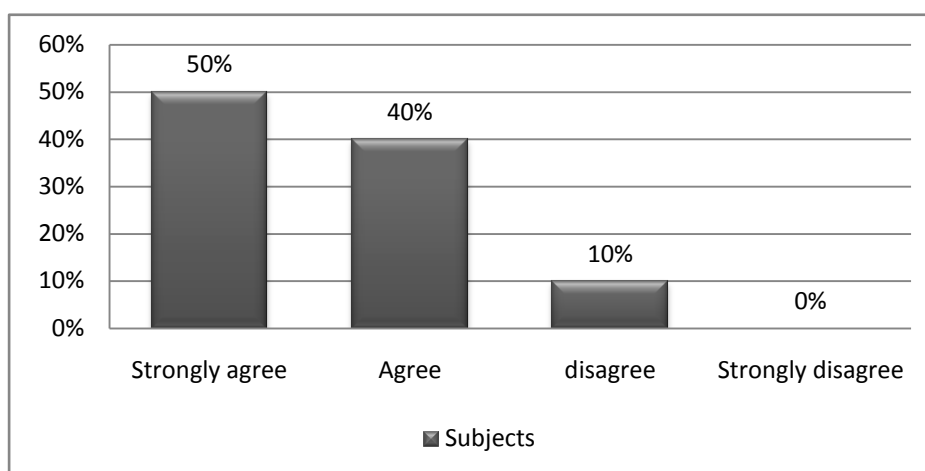
1-Strongly agree 2-Agree 3-Disagree 4-Strongly disagree.

a. Learning is facilitated through peer interaction in the target language:

	Strongly agree	Agree	disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Subjects	05	05	01	00	10

%	50	40	10	00	100
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Table 27: Teachers' perception of peer interaction



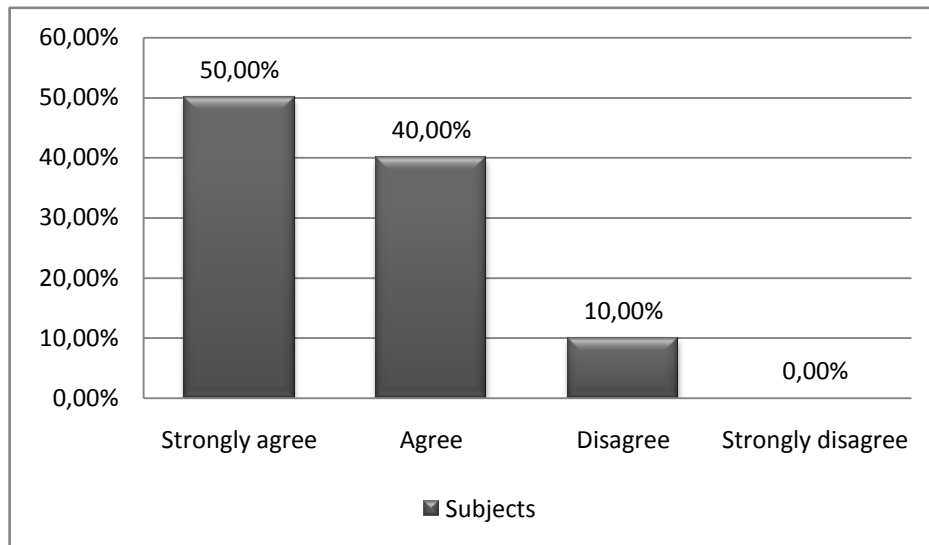
Graph 27: Teachers' perception of peer interaction

It is hypothesized that learning is facilitated through peer interaction. Teachers are, therefore, invited to express their agreement or disagreement. The majority (50%) agrees strongly with the statement presented above. On the other hand, we have recorded 4 cases (40%) of agreement and only one case of disagreement. On the whole, 9 teachers out of 10 seem to agree that language acquisition is facilitated by students interacting in the target language, i.e. they are involved in information gap activities. There is much talking as they help each other to solve problems and complete task. This involves students to use English in class and practise their speaking skill.

b. Although students work together, each student is individually accountable.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Subjects	05	04	01	00	10
%	50	40	10	00	100

Table 28: Teachers' perception of individual



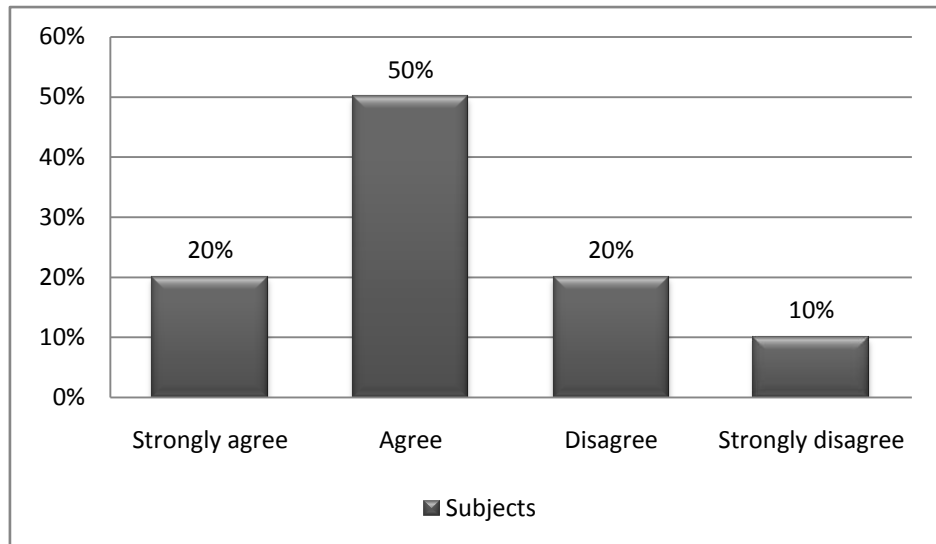
Graph 28: Teachers' perception of individual accountability

Each student needs to be made accountable for his own contribution to the completion of the task because some students may actively participate while others engage in "social loafing". A half of 6 teachers out of 10, translating into (50%), say they agree strongly to the statement presented to them, and 4 (or 40%) just agree. Furthermore, we have recorded one case option for disagree (10%). On the whole, 9 out of 12 teachers admit that if individual accountability is taken into account, it will lead to better learning and achievement.

- c. Students are encouraged to think in terms of "positive interdependence", i.e not thinking competitively and individualistically, but rather cooperatively.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Subjects	02	05	02	01	10
%	20	50	20	10	100

Table 29: Teachers' perception of positive interdependence



Graph 29: Teachers' perception of positive interdependence

In this statement, cooperative learning is characterized by positive interdependence. Students are encouraged to think in terms of "**all for one and one for all**" (Alexander Damas). Teachers, here, are required to indicate how far they agree with this statement.

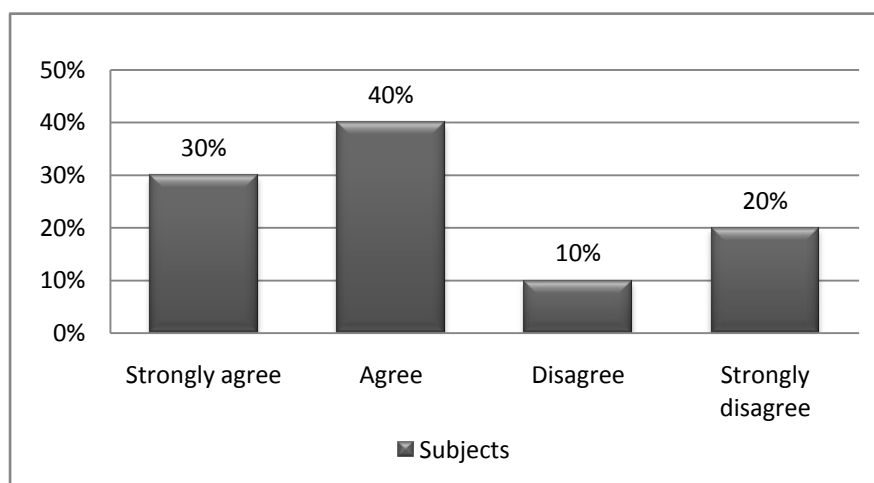
As shown in this table, the half of teachers, i.e. 50%, agrees with the statement presented to them, and 2 (or 20%) agree strongly. All in all, we have 7 teachers (70%) who share our view that students have to support one another because success can be achieved only if each member makes a specific contribution to complete the task. On the other hand, we have recorded 2 cases of disagreement (20%) and another case which is strongly disagreement (10%). Probably, those teachers are in favor of traditional classroom competition. In our point view, this is not to say that competition is always wrong, if properly structured, competition between one group and another can be an effective means of motivating people to do their best; yet the forms of competition used in classrooms are rarely healthy or effective.

d. Since social skills involve the use of the language, teachers do not only teach language; they teach cooperation as well.

	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Total

	agree			disagree	
Subjects	03	04	01	02	10
%	30	40	10	20	100

Table 30: Teachers' perception of the social skills



Graph 30: Teachers' perception of the social skills

In cooperative tasks, the teacher helps students how to learn more effectively. We believe that it is the teachers' job to teach their student's collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively. Teachers, here, are asked to state how far they agree or disagree with this statement. A majority of 4 teachers out of 10, translating into (40%), states that they agree with the statement presented to them, and 3 (or 30%) strongly agree. All in all, we have 7 teachers (70%) who share our view that students should realize that some skills are needed to engage in effective collaboration. These teachers seem to understand the principles underlying a successful cooperative work.

On the other hand, we have recorded 1 case of disagreement (10%) and another 2 (or 20%) case of strong disagreement. This can only be interpreted by their ignorance of the skills students should process. Again, cooperative

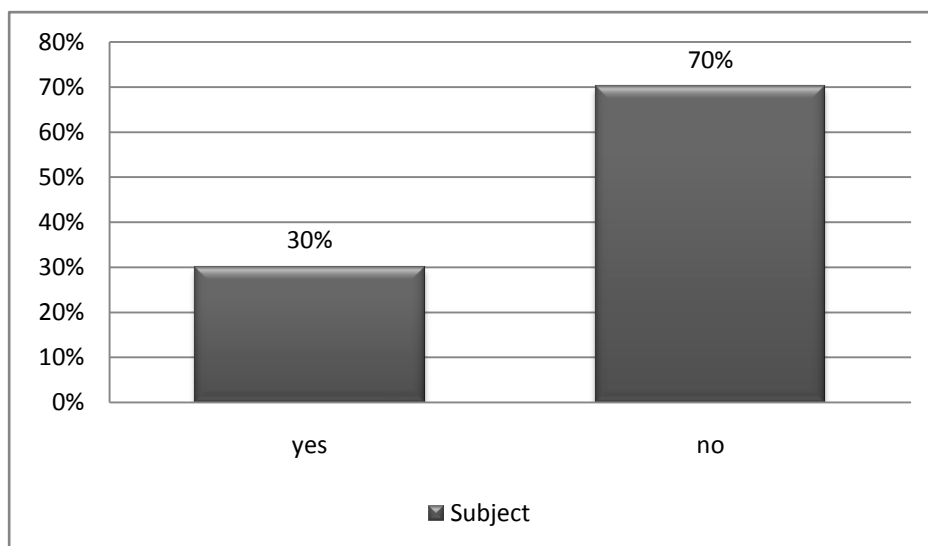
learning essentially involves students in working together in groups. But it is not the group or pair work what makes cooperative learning distinctive; it is the way that students and teachers work together that is important.

In sum, teachers can provide training in the strategies needed to engage in effective collaboration for example, how to ask and respond to questions, how to disagree, how to ask other students contribution and how to get along with others.

Q 14: do you raise your students' awareness towards the value of cooperative work?

Options	Subject	%
Yes	03	30
No	07	70
Total	10	100

Table 31: Teachers' perception of the value of cooperative work



Graph 31: Teachers' perception of the value of cooperative work

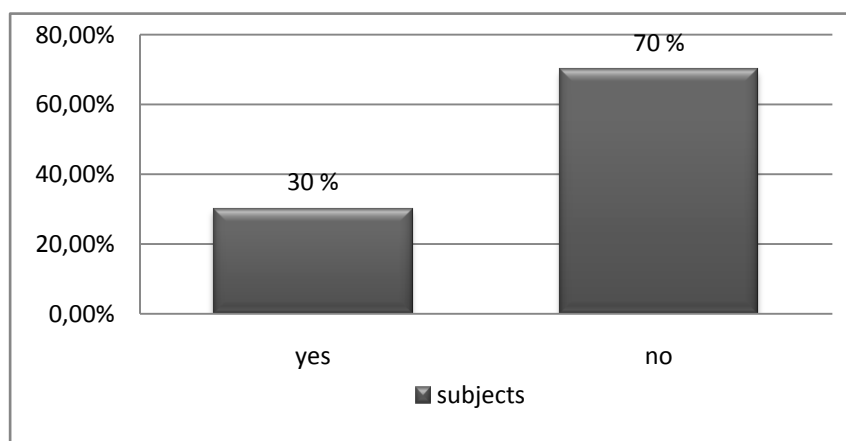
The aim of this item is to investigate whether or not teachers help their students see the value of cooperative work. As shown in this table, a high proportion of teachers (70%) answered negatively. It means that when they set students to work collaboratively in pair or group work, they do not try to make their students aware of the potential benefits of this technique. A smaller number has opted for the reverse situation in that 3 teachers (30%) do actually help their students see the importance of working cooperatively. This implies that our teachers are aware of the necessity of involving students in the process of learning and teaching. Thus, students are likely having a positive attitude towards learning.

In sum, raising students' awareness of the value of cooperative learning is of great benefits to students because this would encourage them to participate more. Thus, it would give better results.

Q 15: do your students face problems working together?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	03	30
No	07	70
Total	10	100

Table 32: Teachers' perception of students' problems in groups



Graph 32: Teachers' perception of students'

As shown in this table, (70%) of the teachers say that their students do not have any problems working together. Regarding the 3 teachers who answered yes (30%), they seem to encounter some problems when their students work together with their classmates.

In cooperative classrooms, teachers may encounter many problems. This might have several reasons; one possible reason is that some students prefer to work alone. Another possible interpretation is that some students are not interested at all in learning or they are lower in status for participating.

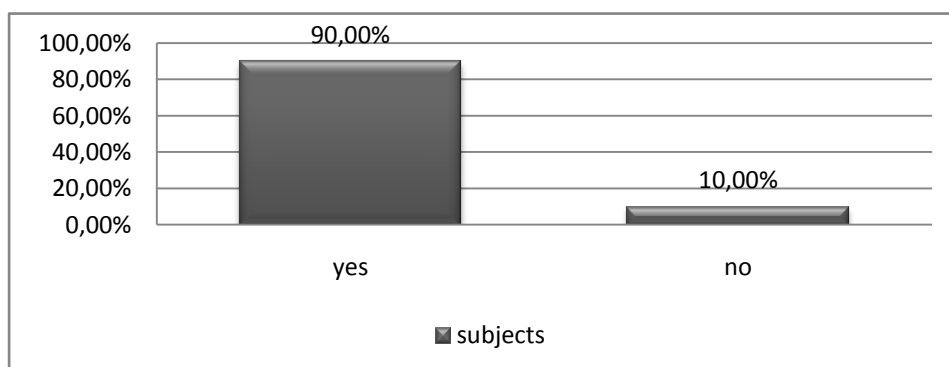
In sum, cooperative learning demands constant control from the teacher in order to avoid problems.

Section 4: Teachers' evaluation of CLL

Q16: do you think that cooperative work enhances students' oral production?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	09	90
No	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 33: Teachers' evaluation of cooperative learning



Graph 33: Teachers' evaluation of cooperative learning

The examination of the last item reveals that 9 teachers (90%) believe that cooperative work enhanced students' oral production. Only one teacher (10%) has answered negatively; i.e. denied any benefits from CLL in making students' oral production enhanced.

Because...

Of the nine teachers who claimed that CLL has great benefits, only two teachers did not say why. The rest of the teachers provide a variety of answers. To begin with, one of the teachers claims that cooperative group work offers an effective technique of communicative interaction. It is believed that interaction and negotiation of meaning between students are of great importance for successful language learning. He adds saying that through cooperative learning, teachers provide more opportunities for each student to take part in the classroom and make his contribution. In fact, two teachers discussed the effect of CLL on the affective side of students. They claim that cooperative work can be used to increase motivation. This latter has a great effect on enhancing students' performance in English. In cooperative classroom, students feel at ease to speak when they are allowed to work together. It is further claimed by another teacher that CLL promotes cooperation between students rather than competition. They are encouraged to help each other succeed. Thus, it provides a healthy atmosphere in which students learn from each other rather than compete to one another. In the same vein, the four remaining teachers who believe that cooperative work enhance students' oral proficiency. They acknowledge the role of cooperative group work as a way of teaching which reduces anxiety and encourage students to take risks.

Discussion

Analyzing the teachers' questionnaire has revealed many facts on teachers' attitudes towards teaching speaking, their behavior in the classroom, and their perception of the principles underlying cooperative and their practices as far as cooperative group work is concerned.

1. In fact, approximately all teachers consider the aural / oral skills as their major concern while teaching. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of developing oral proficiency.

2. For teaching speaking, most teachers opted for group work. As such, teachers would provide Students with language use and help them in increasing their oral proficiency.

3. Teachers need to better understand meaningful ways of assessing students' oral production. It is suggested that negative evaluation might inhibit students' future participation.

4. When teachers were asked the use of cooperative learning, some teachers confirmed about the use of cooperative group work in their practices.

5. As far s their implementation of cooperative group work as part of their instructions, some teachers admit that their teaching does not consist in making students aware of the skills they adopt for effective learning. However, other teachers show the importance of these skills for an optimal and more productive learning to take place.

6. When asked about possible problems encountered while teaching, teachers did not seem to notice any problem. This finding urges the need for teachers to be attached with students' problems and how to solve them.

7. Finally, teachers' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for improving students' oral proficiency reveals their recognition of the effectiveness of such a technique.

Conclusion

All in all, the positive results revealed in this study concerning the influence of cooperative group work on improving students' oral production have confirmed our hypothesis. This means that there is a positive relationship between cooperative group work and oral proficiency.

Cooperative group work is one way of teaching which according to many years of research and practical application by hundreds of thousands of teachers, now exist for virtually every imaginable instructional purpose. Furthermore, we now know a great deal about the effects of cooperative group

work on students and the condition necessary for effective group work, especially for teaching speaking.

General Conclusion

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

The present study is a total of three chapters. The first and the second chapters are the descriptive part which is review a related literature. As for the third chapters, we have administered a self-completion questionnaire one for students and another one for teachers. The first chapter mainly outlines some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of speaking. The second chapter provides a better understanding of cooperative language learning and its underlying principles. The third chapter is concerned with analysis of the obtained data gathered from teachers and the student's questionnaire.

All in all, the obtained results confirmed our hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between cooperative group work and oral proficiency. The positive findings revealed in this study show that well planned and organized cooperative group work is an effective technique for improving EFL learner's oral proficiency.

This study shows that **(1)** learners need to be provided with an effective instructional technique for improving the quality of learners' oral production; **(2)** teacher's responsibility is to create a relaxed and friendly situation where the learners can use the target language without hesitation; and **(3)** both teachers and learners should be aware of the necessary skill for effective

learning to take place. Overall, this study is useful not only for the learners helping them to improve their speaking and to teachers contributing to their understanding of the rules and the conditions necessary for effective learning. Future research should be done to test the applicability of the findings to larger population.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I : Students' Questionnaire.

Appendix II : Teachers' Questionnaire.

University of Constantine
Department of English

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes toward the use of cooperative group work in developing oral proficiency in English.

Your answers are very important for the validity of this research we are undertaken. As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

Please, tick (✓) the choice that corresponds to your answer.

Thank you very much in advance.

Personal information:

1. Sex:

a. Male

b. Female

2. Do you find speaking in English?

a. Very easy

b. Easy

c. Difficult

d. Very difficult

Section one:

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

a. Speaking

b. Listening

c. Writing

d. Reading

Because

.....

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

a. High

b. Above average

c. Average

d. Below average

e. Low

5. To what extent did the oral expression courses help you improve your oral performance?

a. Very much

b. Somewhat

c. Don't know

d. Not very much

e. Not at all

6. Do you feel afraid to talk?

a. Yes

b. No

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

a. Fear of making grammatical mistakes?

b. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes

c. Having deficient vocabulary?

d. Fear of teacher's negative feedback?

e. Lack of self-confidence?

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

a. Group work

b. Role-play

c. Problem solving

d. Discussion

e. Other, please specify

.....
.....

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

a. Yes

b. No

Section two:

10. Have you ever heard of cooperative language learning?

a. Yes

b. No

11. In oral expression, do you prefer?

a. Individual work

b. Pair work

c. Group work

12. Whatever your answer is, please justify

.....
.....

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

a. Yes

b. No

14. Does the teacher try to solve the problems encountered?

a. Yes

b. No

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

a. Yes

b. No

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

a. Ask and respond to more questions?

b. Learn to listen to different opinions?

c. Evaluate their peers' performance?

d. Develop social skills for getting along with others?

Section three:

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

a. Yes

b. No

Because.....
.....

Thank You

University of Constantine
 Department of English

The Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work that aims to propose how group work presented via cooperative language learning can be used in improving third-year students' oral proficiency at the Department of English, University of Constantine.

I would very much appreciate if you could take the time and the energy to share your experience by answering the questions below. Your answers are very important and will be of much help for the completion of this work.

Please, tick (✓) the choice that best represents your answer and give full answer where necessary.

Thank you very much in advance.

Personal information:

1. Degree(s) held:

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

2. How long have you been teaching English?

.....

Section one:

3. Are the oral / aural skills your major teaching concern?

- a. Yes
- b. No

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

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

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

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. If your answer is "yes", please how do you do to motivate them?

.....
.....

7. What do you find most difficult for teaching speaking?

- a. Grammar
- b. Pronunciation
- c. Vocabulary
- d. Sentence structure
- e. Other, please specify

.....

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

- a. Group work
- b. Role-play
- c. Problem solving
- d. Discussion

9. Do you evaluate your students' oral production?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. If your answer is "yes", do you prefer?

- a. Self-evaluation
- b. Peer-evaluation
- c. Teacher -evaluation
- d. All of them

Section two:

11. Have you ever used cooperative language learning?

.....

12. Please indicate how far you agree with each of the following ideas (characterizing cooperative language learning) using 1, 2, 3, or 4
 1-strongly agree. 2-agree 3-disagree 4-strongly disagree

Learning is facilitated through peer interaction in the target language.	
Although students work together, each student is	

individually accountable.	
Students are encouraged to think in terms of 'positive interdependence', i.e. not thinking competitively and individualistically, but rather cooperatively.	
Since social skills involve the use of the language, teachers do not only teach language, they teach cooperation as well.	

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

a. Yes

b. No

Do your students face problems working in groups?

c. Yes

d. No

Section three:

14. Do you think that cooperative group work enhances students' oral proficiency?

a. Yes

b. No

Because

.....

Thank you

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير تقنية التعبير الشفوي لفائدة طلبة اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية الآداب واللغات الأجنبية، جامعة منتوري قسنطينة. كما تهدف لبحث مدى استيعاب أساتذة اللغة الإنكليزية لأسس والتطبيقات التي يقوم عليها تطوير تقنية التعبير الشفوي بطريقة العمل الجماعي التعاوني.

الفرضية الأساسية التي اعتمدت في هذه الدراسة تبين أن تعلم لغة أجنبية عن طريق ممارسة اللغة والتمكن منها فإنه من الممكن تحسين مستوى الطلبة في التعبير الشفوي. ونحن نعتقد بأن تعزيز هذه الرؤية لتدريس اللغة الإنكليزية سوف تسهم في تفعيل ذلك.

كما اعتمدنا في دراستنا على استعمال استبيانين، الأول موجه لطلبة السنوات الثالثة من نظام أ.ل. أم. دي اختصاص اللغة الإنكليزية والثاني إلى أساتذة التعبير الشفوي لقسم اللغة الإنكليزية لسبر آرائهم حول تطبيق تقنية العمل الجماعي التعاوني في مادة التعبير الشفوي.

النتائج التي توصلنا إليها قد وضحت لنا أن الطلبة والأساتذة واعييين عن أهمية تطبيق هذه التقنية، كما أظهرت أن الطلاب في حاجة إلى أن تقدم كتقنية فعالة لتطوير المهارات اللازمة وخلق فرص مناسبة لتمكين الطلبة من استخدام اللغة من دون أي تردد.

Résumé

La présente étude vise à explorer les effets du travail de groupe coopératif sur l'amélioration des compétences orales des apprenants et des compétences communicatives.

Ce travail vise principalement à rendre l'utilisation d'une paire ou un petit groupe de maximiser la production orale des apprenants. Il tente également de faire ressortir l'importance d'établir une ambiance détendue et amicale comme une tentative d'amener les apprenants à utiliser la langue.

L'hypothèse de base adoptée dans la présente étude établit que l'apprentissage efficace des langues étrangères prend ses racines dans les actions et l'utilisation des langues. Nous pensons que la promotion de cette vision de l'enseignement en anglais contribuera à fournir aux apprenants l'utilisation étendue de langue et de la classe de production orale.

La méthode de ce travail de recherche est très descriptive. Autrement dit, elle vise à décrire deux variables: le travail de groupe coopératif comme variable indépendante et son rôle dans l'amélioration des compétences orales des apprenants comme variable dépendante. Les données ont été recueillies par des questionnaires administrés à la fin de troisième année apprenants LMD (pour un échantillon de trente-trois étudiants) et aux enseignants (pour un échantillon de dix enseignants) qui ont enseigné à l'expression orale au département d'anglais, Université Mentouri, Constantine. Les résultats ont montré que le travail de groupe coopératif est la bonne technique à utiliser la langue des apprenants plus en plus et la participation orale en classe qui se répercute sur la compétence des apprenants par voie orale. Sur la base de ces résultats, l'hypothèse a été confirmée dans que les élèves doivent être fournis avec une technique adéquate pour développer les compétences nécessaires parler et de créer des situations appropriées où ils peuvent utiliser la langue sans hésitation.

Cette étude a certainement ses rôles, mais ses conclusions ont révélé des implications intéressantes. Ainsi, les recherches futures devraient se faire expérimentalement afin de tester l'applicabilité des résultats à une plus grande population de sujets.