

Motivating EFL Students through Cooperative Language Learning at UHBC

تحفيز طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال تعلم اللغة التعاوني في جامعة شلف

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to examine the effectiveness of cooperative language learning (CLL) for its motivational effect on learners' acquisition and teachers' performance in the EFL classroom. The aim, then, is to identify and investigate teachers' and learners' perceptions of CLL, as well as to determine whether the performance and the acquisition of second year LMD students would improve when teachers use CLL to teach speaking skills. In this regard, two research instruments have been used to achieve the desired aims; an interview with teachers in addition to classroom observation in the English department at Hassiba Benbouali University. Thus, the present study aims to show how CLL, if effectively implemented, serves as a significant method that enhances the teaching/learning process in language classes. The analysis of the teachers' interview reveals that they have positive attitudes towards this approach to create a motivating learning environment, and students also have positive perceptions towards the use of this effective method in their classes. The results obtained from the classroom observation confirm that students are more engaged and interested under CLL as they make significant improvement.

Keywords: cooperative language learning, learners' engagement, motivation, speaking skill.

تحاول هذه الورقة فحص فعالية التعلم التعاوني للغة (CLL) لتأثيره التحفيزي على اكتساب المعلمين وأداء المعلمين في الفصول الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الهدف إذن هو تحديد ودراسة تصورات المعلمين والمتعلمين لـ CLL، وكذلك تحديد ما إذا كان أداء واكتساب طلاب السنة الثانية LMD سيتحسن عندما يستخدم المعلمون CLL لتدريس مهارات التحدث. وفي هذا الصدد، تم استخدام أداتي بحث لتحقيق الأهداف المرجوة؛ مقابلة مع المعلمين بالإضافة إلى المراقبة الصفية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة حسيبة بن بوعلي. وبالتالي، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى إظهار كيف أن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية التعاوني، إذا تم تنفيذه بشكل فعال، يعمل كطريقة مهمة لتعزيز عملية التدريس و التعلم في فصول اللغة. ويكشف تحليل مقابلة المعلمين أن لديهم اتجاهات إيجابية نحو هذا الأسلوب لخلق بيئة تعليمية محفزة، كما أن الطلاب لديهم تصورات إيجابية نحو استخدام هذا الأسلوب الفعال في فصولهم الدراسية. تؤكد النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من مراقبة الفصل الدراسي أن الطلاب أكثر تفاعلاً واهتماماً في ظل CLL حيث يحققون تحسناً كبيراً.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم التعاوني للغة، مشاركة المتعلمين، التحفيز، مهارة التحدث.

1. Introduction

Individuals' necessity to engage cooperatively in order to work toward achieving group goals and to think critically has surely increased as the world evolves and develops over time in all sectors. Then, educational researchers, practitioners, curriculum designers, and teachers are all pressed to make urgent changes and reforms. They emphasize the need for more critical, social, and cooperative methods that would help students handle a variety of issues and develop their communicative skills in the classroom and the workplace. Learning a language is about developing effective communication skills that respect the norms of target language users in social, cultural, and academic contexts. In addition, oral proficiency is a process of student-teacher interaction that aims to accomplish communicative comprehension in the classroom.

It is true that teachers play an essential role in encouraging students' interaction and involving them in the educational process. Cooperative language learning is generally acknowledged as a means of improving students' interaction, engagement, and motivation in language learning by fostering peer support and interaction in the classroom. This is why the current study is being conducted to determine the efficacy of this strategy and how it affects both teachers and students. Involving students in the learning process enhances their concentration and interest and helps them develop their critical thinking. Teachers who apply a student-centered approach to teaching increase chances for students' engagement, which helps them achieve the learning objectives successfully. Students who are strongly engaged in the learning environment perform better in class and outside the university, and they show eagerness and perseverance in class better than students who are less engaged. Then, students who are engaged in classroom activities reveal more positive attitudes toward learning and academic achievement.

Numerous research have demonstrated the advantages and beneficial effects of cooperative learning, which result in more highly appreciated student speaking skill accomplishments (Kandasamy and Habil, 2018: 1). It can be used to improve speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills in English, and other language aspects. Namaziandost, Neisi, Kheryadi, and Nasri (2019: 3) claim that recent studies have advanced to a substantial degree to support students' attitudes and perceptions as well as to increase their learning behaviors and performance regarding their advancement in English speaking level. It is strongly believed that the cooperative learning approach fosters students' interest and involvement in the classroom, boosts their critical thinking abilities, and makes them feel more sociable and a part of a community (Warsah et al., 2021).

Teachers and students engage in dynamic interaction in a CLL classroom as students gain new perspectives and understandings, learn how to give and receive information, and practice socially acceptable communication. Through these exchanges, students develop new cognitive and learning strategies as well as competent language use, understanding, and explanation of novel experience situations.

Therefore, the following questions are addressed:

- What are students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of CLL in oral expression classes?
- How can teachers create a motivational and engaging oral classroom environment through the adoption of CLL?

It is hypothesized that:

- Teachers' and students' awareness of CLL would create an effective learning atmosphere that is engaging and motivating for developing students' oral skills

- The appropriate use of CLL would lead to an effective oral expression learning environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Motivational Strategies to Develop Students' Speaking Skills

Speaking is a human communication method that involves using a language orally (Fulcher, 2003). It is the most important ability that people often require in order to communicate in daily situations. Speaking is often defined as having the ability to communicate through spoken language. It just involves putting thoughts into words so that others can understand the message being conveyed. Nonetheless, the majority of EFL students have challenges that prevent them from speaking English fluently. Pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension are among their weak points. The tasks of EFL teachers are to assist students in developing their oral communication skills in order to address these issues.

Therefore, EFL teachers are required to use speaking tasks and activities that are creative and motivating. The selection of activities and materials relies on what teachers want learners to achieve and perform, for instance, creative activities consist of jigsaw puzzles, games, role-playing, simulations, information gap exercises, and problem-solving assignments. In order to support students and improve their speaking abilities, these exercises are employed in addition to cooperative learning (Hedge, 2008). According to Johnson and Morrow (1981), these exercises are important for teaching language for communication goals and for fostering connection and participation in the language classroom.

As a result, it is important to consider if the CL approach should be used to teach speaking in EFL classes. This can be accomplished by carrying out an empirical investigation to see how well CL fosters students' speaking abilities and how instructors and students feel about using it. It is beneficial for students to reach a high level of speaking proficiency because it is becoming more and more necessary to be able to articulate one's ideas both within and outside of the classroom. Shonfeld and Gibson (2018: 83) state that because cooperative learning encourages students to talk in academic settings, it makes them feel happier and more satisfied. The benefit of the cooperative learning approach raises students' speaking performance and participation in the classroom (Haidara, 2016: 1501).

The practice of inspiring others to take action in order to achieve goals is known as motivation. A managerial function, motivation has been defined by several academics. Motivation is the force behind the creation and maintenance of intention and goal-seeking behaviors, according to Ames and Ames (1989). Furthermore, Oxford and Shearin (1994) define motivation as the energy expended in pursuing a goal along with the desire to accomplish that goal. It is the process of trying to persuade someone else to follow your lead by offering a benefit or reward. Gardner (1985: 10-11) sees motivation as the culmination of work, a strong desire to learn the language, and positive attitudes toward language acquisition. A motivated organism is one in which the drive or effort is associated with the goal's favorable sentiments and desire to attain it.

Encouraging students is one of the hardest things to teach. In contrast to highly motivated students in a classroom, those who lack motivation struggle to learn and retain information. They don't participate in class activities or learn new material too often, which makes learning more difficult for them. A student may lack motivation for a number of reasons, such as paying less attention in class and not being satisfied with the way they are being taught. Additional causes or external disruptions, such as personal, financial, or psychological, may exist. A student who seems uninterested might be having trouble studying and needs additional assistance to get better.

Regarding motivating students, one should be aware of the various learning styles. Some students pick up challenging material quickly and with accuracy. Whereas surface learners

just want to avoid failure, strategic learners are motivated by causes. Since deep learners are self-motivated, it can be beneficial to raise the interest of strategic learners in the learning tasks in order to engage them. If not, their only motivation to learn and participate in class would be to advance to the next one. It takes different tactics to motivate a surface learner; in order to prevent failure; they need to feel more confident and capable. Developing the course material in an organized and educational manner is the sole means of advancing with these individuals.

Building strong relationships with students is another element of a teacher's behavior that motivates them. This can be accomplished by showing students that their teachers value them by actively listening to them. Selecting the right teaching approach is another tactic to raise students' motivation. As an illustration, CLL is an engaging strategy that is learner-centered and aids in the development of students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the way teachers interact with their student can affect how they view themselves, their ambitions, and their attitudes toward the subject. By using techniques like acceptance and particular attention, teachers can build strong relationships with their students (Dörnyei, 2001a). Then, it becomes clear that, in an L2 classroom, teachers can be a key factor in inspiring students. To effectively use motivational tactics in the classroom, however, a few prerequisites must be met. These requirements include acting in a way that is appropriate for a teacher, creating a welcoming climate in the classroom, and using CLL to help students form cohesive learning groups.

2.2. Cooperative Language Learning

The learning process is strongly emphasized in the CLL teaching methodology. It makes reference to the use of task-based learning or small learning groups. According to Crandell (1999), this approach gives students the chance to communicate and negotiate in the classroom while developing a variety of cognitive, metacognitive, social, and language abilities. Students work together in small groups when utilizing the cooperative learning approach to accomplish a shared goal. Students who participate in cooperative learning are accountable for both their own and their group members' education. This method encourages students to participate actively and to help one another socially and actively.

Every learner is believed to have great enjoyment in the ongoing process of acquiring knowledge through cooperative learning (Maznah and Naibi, 2017: 69). When students are engaged in group discussions and experience a sense of belonging, cooperative learning becomes meaningful and advantageous. Students in the cooperative learning group improve their speaking abilities both inside and outside of the classroom through regular communication (Tuncel, 2015: 2575). In turn, cooperative learning helps students succeed academically, boosts their self-esteem, and prompts their social skills to help them overcome individual learning obstacles like shyness or isolation.

The goal of the CLL approach is to establish a learner-centered environment where students actively support their own learning. It is also thought of as a collection of instructional techniques meant to encourage in-person communication amongst students and to enhance their communicative skills to function effectively in the classroom. Cooperative learning differs from traditional methods in many aspects including the followings:

a- Positive Interdependence

Positive interdependence describes the distinct functions that each member of the group plays and that are essential for the group to function in order to meet the objectives set by the instructor. As a result, the group's members depend on one another to complete the given tasks. Positive interdependence is "the basic and the typical part of cooperative learning," according to Webb (2002). Positive interdependence, according to Gaith (2002), is the belief that if one member of the group succeeds, everyone else does too, and the team succeeds, or if

one member fails, the team as a whole fails. It all comes down to the idea of "one for all, all for one," wherein members of the group acknowledge that each person's efforts are valuable and advantageous to everyone in the group, not just themselves, and foster a spirit of encouragement and support among one another.

b- Individual Accountability

When each person believes they are accountable for their own learning and can demonstrate it to their peers, then individual responsibility occurs. The goal of cooperative learning is to strengthen each member of the group as an individual learner and to encourage a sense of personal responsibility for learning in order to support the group's collective learning process. The individual growth of each member is then used to assess the group's success. The primary goal of implementing cooperative learning is to increase academic success for all students. Individual responsibility in this sense happens when every student receives a personalized assessment and the group is informed of the findings to determine who needs additional support and encouragement in completing the task.

c- Group Processing

The goal of group processing is to complete a job or produce a group product. This component arises when group members talk about how they view and accomplish their goals and maintain productive working relationships. Activities that impact the group's capacity to collaborate effectively and facilitate conversation about interpersonal skills reflect the principle of group processing (Brandt, 2002: 39). It occurs when students observe and talk about how their work is progressing and how their group might operate going forward. Group processing ensures that participants and their achieved work are given feedback, and facilitates the acquisition of collaborative abilities.

d- Social Skills

Webb (2002) indicates that social skills refer to the fact that members of the group must be motivated to use the necessary skills and possess excellent leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management abilities. It is based on how students connect with each other to achieve task aims, such as asking questions, paraphrasing, explaining, summarizing, and the ability to share materials. When cooperative learning strategies are applied, cooperative skills are effectively acquired. Then, social skills foster all group members to interact and participate evenly, and each member is provided with a chance to express or include extra or specific details that students need.

e- Face to face Interaction

With the use of this component, students collaborate to complete tasks, share resources, provide a hand, and encourage, support, and acknowledge the learning efforts of their group members. They encourage the success of their peers by doing this. According to Gaith (2002), face-to-face communication refers to the notion that groups may only flourish when their members converse with one another in order to clarify, dispute, support, and probe one another. Students gain the chance to model positive engagement and involvement through face-to-face interaction, which increases their opportunities to treat, communicate, and construct their learning collectively.

3. Research Methodology

Due to an experienced situation, it has been remarked that most students in the oral expression classes in the English Department at Hassiba Benbouali University do not perform well in oral expression classes and do not interact with each other and with the teacher as well, and they consider oral expression as a challenging subject that they need to develop to make their classes more engaging and communicative. This issue might be the result of a variety of reasons. One reason behind this problem is the non-effectiveness of the teaching methods adopted by the teachers which are mainly based on traditional ways like delivering

presentations by students and giving feedback by the teacher. Another reason is the fact that students are not motivated and they lack interest in addition to other factors like shyness and being afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, there must be a shift towards learner-centered methods in which much emphasis is given to the learner. Among these methods, cooperative language learning has been widely supported and adopted by teachers due to its motivational effect meaning that it creates an effective learning setting and increases the chances of interaction and engagement in the classroom. However, its use in teaching language is still bounded and if used, it is not well applied. Thus, the present paper attempts to spot light on the effectiveness of CLL and its implementation in the classroom as a way towards more engaging and motivating classes and to enhance the communication skills of students. The study also aims to suggest some tips and techniques for teachers to use CLL effectively to satisfy learners' needs and to reveal its effect on learners' and teachers' performance within the classroom.

The research instruments that suit the present study are chosen based on a variety of characteristics. According to Beiske (2002), the topic of the research should ultimately define the method chosen, even though variables like time and money undoubtedly play a significant role in choosing how to address a certain research challenge. Classroom observation has been used as a practical tool to test the validity of the research hypotheses, as it appears to be the most suitable method for achieving a "real life" in the actual world. An interview with the teachers has also been used as one of the research instruments in this study. (1991, Robinson).

The teachers' interview was administered to two teachers who teach oral expression to second year students in the department of English in the second semester. It consists of nine questions that are all open-ended to give the respondents the freedom to offer their views and suggestions. When describing classroom practices, materials, and methods, it is necessary to get involved in the classroom and investigate the learning/teaching situation directly to reveal what happens in the classroom. By using classroom observation, the observer participates in the life of participants under study by observing all that happens in the classroom. In conducting this research, the observation was carried out in oral expression classes during the first semester, and the observer took different roles; a separated role by sitting in the back of the classroom and taking notes and an active participant when it comes to teaching and discussion.

The present study was conducted in the English department at Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef. The population investigated in this study consists of two teachers and sixty-six second year licence students from two groups. Each group consists of thirty-three students.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The observation was conducted in second year EFL classrooms at Hassiba Benbouali University during the first semester of the scholar year 2023-2024. The observation aims to explore the extent of applying cooperative learning principles by EFL teachers and how they adopt them in teaching oral skills in the class. The physical environment, learners' connections, reactions, and behaviors, and the teacher's actions and behaviors were observed by using an observation checklist for over eight sessions. In most sessions, cooperative learning was implemented and sometimes individualistic methods were used by the teachers.

In order to include every student in the communication activities and to support their engagement and communication in the classroom, the teachers employed oral presentations, games, and discussion topics during the observed sessions. According to Wrench et al. (2009), student connection to the learning activities is one of the basic requirements that guarantees effective learning. The teacher's adeptness at teaching speaking skills is evident in the thoughtful and suitable selection of the subjects and resources. The usage of a three-part

checklist allows the observer to cover specific topics. The first section addresses the physical environment, the second looks for data regarding the groups' learning progress, and the final section addresses the various roles, behaviors, and actions of the teacher.

Section One: Overall Observation of the Classroom

1. The Appropriateness of the Physical Setting

The physical setting of the classroom allows for the adoption of cooperative learning. It is deduced from the observation that the learning atmosphere is suitable for cooperative learning. The observed sessions took place in large and systematic rooms in which the only problem the students and teachers face is moving tables and chairs to form small groups and circles around tables which leads to noise and waste of time.

2. Learners' Grouping

The observation reflects that in all the remarked sessions, the groups were always formed by students and not by the teacher. So, in one group, there may be students with different abilities and genders, and in other groups, you may find students of the same gender and language proficiency. Besides, it is remarked that the teacher does not get involved in the grouping of students. This may be explained by giving the opportunity to students to choose their peers whom they enjoy working with which may help in creating a relaxed setting within the groups, reducing anxiety and shyness, enhancing learners' encouragement to participate, and reducing group' disagreements and clashes. On the contrary, Kagan (2009) claims that groups that consist of students with mixed abilities, genders, and linguistic and ethnic differences develop good peer learning and help in classroom management, and the acquisition and presentation of new input and improve student's engagement and social connection.

3. The Time Spent in Classroom Management

The observation shows that the students spend a fair time in forming groups and arranging the tables and chairs in all the observed sessions to become suitable for cooperative tasks and activities. As an example, in the majority of the observed sessions, the time spent did not exceed five minutes because learners were responsible enough and familiar with this kind of structure as they knew how to manage their time to finish their work carefully, particularly in the sessions where the groups prepared and presented their role plays which they practiced in small groups.

4. Groups' Size

The observation of the cooperative learning classroom shows that teachers asked students to form groups of three to four members and scarcely the number of students per group exceeded. It was also observed that the number of members per group is always guided by the teacher. For instance, in the first and second sessions, the teacher ordered students to form groups of four to five members.

This may refer to the fact that teachers are aware that the groups that do not exceed four members are considerable enough to enhance interaction and communication between group mates and they are appropriate to permit each group member to collaborate and interact with each other and facilitate the teacher's role to observe their attitudes and actions. Gillies (2003) states that the appropriate size for successful cooperative learning groups is three to four members because, in small groups, students can be interested and engaged better in completing the task and have good opportunity to speak and discuss their topics and they can facilitate the role of the teacher when observing and controlling students' progress and performance.

Section Two: Observation of the Cooperative Groups

1. Learners' Participation in the Assigned Task

The observation shows that in all groups, almost all members participate in the completion of the task. For instance, in one of the sessions, each group was given a card with

a topic to be discussed and developed by group members and then presented in a role-play; it was remarked that in each group, every student gave his/her ideas for the achievement and success of the group work, but learners did not participate equally; the head of the group and the students with good language level participated more than their peers. This reveals that group members showed enough responsibility and awareness which are among the principles of cooperative learning.

2. Learners' Readiness and Motivation to Work with Peers

Remarks verify that during the majority of observed sessions, students demonstrate a readiness and motivation to work along with their classmates in small groups. It was observed that when students work in groups, they are at ease and driven to contribute in order to complete their tasks and reach the shared objective. This indicates that they have good perceptions on working in small groups. When the teacher asked the students to choose an activity during an observation session, for example, since several of their classmates were missing, some students suggested playing a group game. The entire class loved this concept and was excited to work in small groups.

3. Existence of Shy and Struggling Students in Groups

The findings show that during the observed sessions, there were students in nearly every group who did not contribute to the task's completion by offering suggestions or their thoughts. Because they were hesitant or uninterested in the subject, students were kept silent. This issue can be lessened if the instructor carefully observes and manages the groups to give students the impression that they are being watched over and supervised, which will encourage them to participate more. Group members may also support and encourage those shy students to get involved and engaged in the group to speak and participate. However, it is seldom observed that some groups were working properly in which members take different roles and are involved in the task regularly and effectively.

4. Learners' Responsibility and Support of Each Other

The findings demonstrate that students in nearly every group were accountable for their own education as well as the education of the other members; each member had a specific role to fulfil and worked hard to achieve it by contributing their ideas and opinions or encouraging silent and shy students to participate in group projects. The observation also reveals that some groups have students who are uninterested in completing the given activity, negligent, and noisy by speaking Arabic about other subjects. Subsequently, the group leader is tasked with pressing non-participating students to cooperate and take their work seriously. If they refuse to do so, he will have to complete the assignment by himself.

5. Students' Assessment of One Another's Contributions

The results reveal that learners in different groups do not always participate to provide direct criticism and rectify each other's errors and they seldom give remarks for their classmates and if there was any, it was frequently affirmative. Learners did not give negative feedback and criticize their mates' ideas and thoughts, or laugh at their mistakes and they did not try to cause conflict between their peers. This may refer to the fact that the majority of members do mistakes and they collaborate as a group, acting as a single entity rather than as separate individuals.

6. Learners' Mother Tongue Discussion of the Subject

The observation demonstrates that when it comes to assigning tasks to group members, providing instructions, and requesting assistance and clarification, students utilize their mother tongue, Arabic. The phrase "using one's mother tongue" may allude to the fact that learners find it easier to communicate with their group mates in Arabic than in English and that speaking the language makes them feel more at ease. In addition to their anxiety of making mistakes, some learners often lack the vocabulary necessary to communicate

effectively in English, in addition to mistakes in pronunciation so that they may be misunderstood by their group mates. The level of using the mother tongue was less in discussing and exchanging ideas regarding the assigned task.

Section Three: Observation of the Teacher

1. The Teacher's Assignment of Roles for Group Members

According to the observation, the teacher did not take part in assigning roles to group members; instead, she simply asked students to form random groups, explained the task at hand, and let the students choose the group leader and divide up the work. Teachers believe that this will lessen conflicts and problems amongst students, and the students will be satisfied with their roles and choices in the group. On the contrary, they become less interested in working with some members who are imposed by the teacher.

2. Teacher-Learners' Communication in the Classroom

The observation shows that communication between the instructor and the students occurred in every session that was observed. During one of the sessions, for example, the teacher gave the students some papers with various topics on them. The students then read the papers that each group had been given. Following that, the instructor began to question the class and spark discussions regarding their opinions and understanding of these subjects. The students also asked the teacher to explain certain confusing vocabulary and expressions. The instructor then emphasized the lesson's primary goal, which is to increase students' proficiency in using the English language to voice complaints and provide an apology. She also established certain ground rules and guidelines to direct the groups' work. Because she knew the students would have ample time to work together and debate the issues in order to build the knowledge and necessary abilities to conduct the role-play during the session, the teacher suggested the themes for the students to study. But in every other session, students were allowed to select the topic since it would improve their performance if they picked subjects that they were interested in. The teacher-student interaction during the oral presentation of the themes was higher than it was during the other stages because, following each group presentation of the role play, the teacher asked each member of the group a question while also providing comments and feedback.

3. Teacher's Motivation of Students

The observation shows that the teacher during the observed sessions motivates her students to speak and communicate using different ways like encouraging and supporting words and expressions. Also, she always shows her engagement and care when observing learners' progress in the achievement of the given task, and this enhances their efforts to participate and they become more motivated and seek positive feedback and to be praised by the teacher.

4. Teacher's Monitoring of Students

The teacher's observation during eight sessions showed that the teacher does not take part in the achievement of the tasks by groups, but she provides help or gives some guidelines as she moves around the groups to control learners' actions and behaviors and to see how well groups are working together to accomplish their tasks. In case there is a need for the teacher, she always responds to her students actively.

5. Evaluating the Groups' Output

The observation demonstrated how the instructor monitors, directs, and oversees her students during every stage of the assignment in order to continuously evaluate their progress toward completing their task. Additionally, it was observed that groups were evaluated by the teacher following each oral presentation, either individually or collectively. This is because the teacher consistently gives them feedback, which is crucial for students because it encourages those who received positive reinforcement and those who received unfavorable criticism to perform better the following time.

Moving around all the groups and observing the students at the same time proved to be difficult for the researcher. Even though classroom observation offered the opportunity to watch groups while they were working and provided pertinent data about the use of cooperative learning to enhance students' performance in oral expression classes, the results cannot be generalized due to the possibility that there were not enough observed sessions. Consequently, an interview with the teachers was used as another method to collect data and to give more reliability and validity to the present research.

An interview with two teachers was conducted in order to look at how they utilize the cooperative learning method, what challenges they encounter, and what opinions teachers and students have about using it to teach speaking skills. Three English instructors from Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef's Department of English are interviewed for this study. It seeks to determine whether EFL teachers use the cooperative learning approach and to demonstrate how they do so when instructing oral skills. The goal of the teachers' interview is to draw attention to some of the difficulties that educators have when implementing cooperative learning, as well as to offer practical and pertinent suggestions for how to make this successful approach work. Nine questions concerning the participants' experience in teaching EFL in general, and speaking skills in particular, and the methods they employ to teach speaking skills were also posed to them. Teachers were also questioned on how cooperative learning is implemented in their classes, how their students feel about working in small groups, what challenges they encounter, and how they contribute to the success of cooperative learning. Lastly, questions about how they evaluate students' and groups' work were posed to the teachers.

Question 01: Have you ever taught oral expression before?

All the teachers responded that they have good experience in teaching oral expression ranging between six to eight years, which helps the researcher to get a good insight into the effective ways teachers use when adopting the cooperative learning method in teaching speaking skills to solve problems of both learners and teachers.

Question 02: what techniques or methods do you use in your class?

All of the participants stated that they employ a variety of teaching strategies in their classes, namely, role plays, talks, games, cooperative learning strategies, and listening comprehension being the most often used methods. One instructor, for instance, claims that she employs various methods depending on the content she has taught. For instance, she used audio tapes to teach listening comprehension and role plays to help students improve their speaking and communication skills in the target language. Teachers who vary their methods of instruction help students become more proficient in speaking in particular, and learning skills in general. This fosters a positive and encouraging learning environment where students are excited to learn and are not bored when the same method is used every session. This is because different students in the classroom mean that each has a unique learning style and set of preferences.

Question 03: Do you adopt the cooperative learning method? If yes how often?

When asked how frequently they use cooperative learning, all of the teachers said that it depends on the subject matter being covered as well as the goals of the learning assignment. One teacher gives the following example: "Yes, I do use this technique at least three times a month." Actually, it depends on the goals of the conversation and the subject at hand. This shows that the instructors are aware of how cooperative learning improves students' communication abilities.

Question 04: Which Kind of Group Work do you Prefer your Students to Conduct when Implementing Cooperative Learning?

The respondents said that while they employ both ways; pair groups and small groups, the latter are the primary structure on which they rely more. As an example, one of the instructors said, "I use group work in most sessions, but the favor of using small groups or pairs often depends on the learning task or material." This may be related to the fact that students engage more when collaborating in four-to five-student groups, which makes it easier for teachers to supervise the groups. When students work in pairs, however, it can be challenging to watch every pair because of time constraints.

Question 05: Are your Students Grouped by you or by themselves?

All the teachers agreed that they always give freedom to their learners to choose their group mates to create harmony in the group, to avoid any kind of conflict, and to facilitate interaction between group members. The educators also mentioned that they consistently request that students work in groups of three to five people. "I let my students select their group buddies on their own so that they could work comfortably and without conflict. There are four to five students in each group so that they can share ideas and perspectives and learn from one another," stated one teacher.

Question 06: Is there a Difference in the Level of Communication between your Students in Cooperative Versus Traditional Learning Environments?

All of the teachers report that when collaborating in small groups, most students show a strong readiness and incentive to speak up, in contrast to individual situations when they feel anxious and stressed. This is particularly true when students watch presentations delivered by proficient students, as this makes them doubt their own skills and keeps them speechless the entire time. Additionally, a teacher pointed out that in competitive cooperative learning groups, students are prompted to collaborate and push their peers to achieve better. Students who are timid or reticent would then become more motivated as a result of enjoying learning in groups more and being eager to support their groups in winning. Students that are drawn to a competitive learning atmosphere want to be involved and socialize with other students.

Question 07: Do you Have Trouble Applying the Cooperative Learning Approach?

All teachers responded that using cooperative learning presents challenges. They listed a few issues and challenges, including loudness, the fact that some students are unfamiliar with this method and issues with groups having dominant leaders who favor using their views over those of their other members. "Yes, I have; some team leaders like to give commands and take charge of everything, impose their opinions on the other members of the group, and prevent the others from contributing to the task at hand," stated a teacher. In other situations, when the other students are not serious and don't like to work, one student completes all of the work even though he or she doesn't want to. In addition to making it more difficult for negligent and poor learners to gain from these techniques, these issues reinforce the notion that cooperative learning works best with capable students. The teachers also brought up group conflict, speaking in one's native tongue, and speaking off topic. To get over these obstacles, teachers should circulate among the groups to make sure everyone is focusing on the task at hand and speaking the target language. They can also encourage reticent or silent students to participate in their groups by assigning tasks and duties to their peers.

Question 08: What Part Does your Job as an Educator Play in the Cooperative Learning Approach's Success?

Every participant acknowledged that, depending on the content being taught, they play varied roles in the cooperative learning process. The teachers described their roles as follows: they serve as mentors, offering guidance and instructions when needed; they facilitate learning and act as a support system, motivators for students to improve; they move among the groups to observe how well the students are working to complete the task at hand; and occasionally, they even take part in the activity themselves. One educator described her roles as follows: they assist students with problems, act as a motivator to get them more engaged in

their work, and occasionally they participate in role-plays, discussions, or games. With these distinct roles, educators may address a range of issues that could impede the cooperative method's effectiveness and guarantee that every student is actively involved in the group and contributing to their own learning.

Question 09: Do you Depend More on Group or Individual Evaluations?

All of the teachers concur that they employ both kinds of evaluation. To be fair to all of the students, they did, however, affirm that they place a greater emphasis on individual evaluation by seeing how each student contributes to the completion of the given work. According to one educator, "I usually use both methods of assessment." While I may observe students and assess their work, participation, and progress, I primarily rely on individual assessments to determine each student's level of engagement and participation in the class".

5. Results and Implications for Teachers

The results of undergraduate students from Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef's English Department are highlighted in this study. The study's goal is to ascertain how well students are doing in cooperative learning, with a particular emphasis on speaking abilities. It is evident from the conducted study that there was a strong association between cooperative learning and the improvement of participants' speaking abilities. The findings from the teachers' interview and observation of the classroom demonstrate how conscious the teachers are of the benefits of utilizing cooperative learning to improve the speaking abilities of the students. It was interesting to note that speaking abilities improved better when students learned cooperatively in small groups. This indicates that the hypotheses, which demonstrated that cooperative learning would improve teaching strategies and methods as well as students' speaking skills and performance, would be validated if teachers implemented it appropriately to enable their students to interact with one another in a cooperative learning environment. It was also discovered that, despite the cooperative learning method's effectiveness and motivation, there are still certain negative aspects and drawbacks to the approach, including students' disinterest in working in groups, conflicts among group members that make classes noisy, and a tendency for students to speak in their native tongue a lot. The successful and efficient application of the cooperative learning approach can be achieved by fostering collaboration between the teacher and the students.

The results of the qualitative study thus confirmed the conclusions of studies by Gregersen (2017), Kandasamy and Habil (2018), and Jarvenoja and Jarvela (2009), which concluded that there is a substantial relationship between the development of speaking skills and cooperative group work. Furthermore, using the cooperative learning approach may help students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, there is a strong belief that speaking skills should be promoted through cooperative learning. The good and ongoing impact of social relations both within and outside the classroom by using cooperative learning is confirmed by the highest opinion of teachers. As a result, students who collaborate foster higher critical thinking and interactive speaking skills in the target language.

The small sample size of participants and learners is one of the study's primary drawbacks. Out of all the license levels and disciplines in English at University of Chlef, the results only showed one level and one subject. Other subjects that use cooperative learning in the same department have not been covered by the experimental study. In terms of teamwork division technique, the researcher suggested that cooperative groups consisting of no more than five students with varying skill levels and backgrounds should be formed. When students practice oral communication and speaking with will, motivation, passion, and confidence, both within and outside of the classroom, the benefits of cooperative learning are evident.

The researcher, then, offers some pedagogical recommendations that may assist instructors in overcoming their obstacles and ensuring the effectiveness of the usage of this

technique, taking into account the teachers' perspectives of the difficulties they frequently encounter while implementing cooperative learning in the teaching of oral expression.

- Setting goals and objectives would help students understand and appreciate what they are required to do as well as reduce disagreement and conflict among group members. It is advised that teachers acknowledge the benefits and objectives of the cooperative method at the beginning of every cooperative lesson in order to encourage their students' interest and engagement in learning cooperatively.

- Additionally, it is advised that teachers be mandated to make cooperative learning more appealing and engaging and to limit the negative actions and behaviors of students that could cause it to fail, such as a lack of interest in working in groups, bossy leaders, shy and lazy students, and so on. This can be achieved by assigning engaging and non-demanding assignments and ensuring that all students find them enjoyable; if not, teachers should allow the students to choose the topics on their own.

- It is emphasized that it would be advantageous if teachers varied the ways in which they divided up their class and did not allow students to choose their group members all the time. This would allow all students to have the opportunity to improve their social skills, and weaker students would be able to benefit from having good group members. Typically, when students choose their group members, they choose their friends, who they enjoy working with or who they can depend on to get the job done.

- To help students understand their roles and importance in the learning process, as well as the fact that their teacher is observing their participation and actions, it is also advised that teachers move around the groups to keep an eye on the groups' progress and performance. By doing this, students will be more motivated to use the target language and become more engaged in the task at hand. Additionally, the teacher should use affirming and upbeat language, such as "I value your contributions and think your ideas are good, and they may help other groups, or "I believe that you are working in a different way; continue," to help careless and lazy students get back to work.

- It is also recommended that instructors in the department work together to talk about the issues they frequently encounter while implementing cooperative learning, try to figure out how to solve those issues, and learn from one other's experience.

6. Conclusion

The present study has investigated two aspects related to CLL and its implementation by EFL teachers to teach oral expression for second year students. The first aspect refers to teachers' and students' attitudes towards CLL. The findings showed that students' attitudes of cooperative learning are favorable because of its social component and the psychological benefits it provides for students, which makes it appealing to them. Moreover, it is revealed that teachers are careful and insistent on improving the learning environment and always try to motivate and foster their students' learning by varying the techniques, methods, and teaching materials and CLL is one of the methods teachers use as a system reform to achieve their desired aims. For the second aspect, which is related to the effectiveness of CLL on students' performance and learning development, the results showed that, if appropriately implemented, CLL would have valuable effects on students' achievement in many aspects not just in oral expression. Then, the hypotheses are confirmed.

The research results in the oral expression classroom of the English Department suggest that improving students' speaking skills in group discussions is the main objective of the cooperative learning strategy. Because they feel more at ease, knowledgeable, skilled, eligible, confident, and valued when speaking and interacting in English, students participate more fully and support one another during the cooperative learning process. The students demonstrate a high degree of excitement, passion, and confidence in their ability to adapt to cooperative learning activities. They are aware of the advantages of introducing cooperative

learning into the classroom as well. Students have good attitudes toward cooperative learning because it provides social and motivational benefits, as well as a range of chances for them to enhance their English speaking skills in the target language both within and outside of the institution, including the workplace.

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