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## Investigating EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards using Cooperative Learning to Enhance Their Speaking Skills

A case study of English Students at the University of Ghardaia

**Dissertation Submitted to University of Ghardaia for Obtaining the Master's Degree in  
Didactics**

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## **Dedication**

I would like to thank Allah for his blessing, and for giving me the strength to succeed and reach this point.

I dedicate this work to my parents: To my beloved Mother, the woman who has been supporting me since I began my academic journey, my greatest source of inspiration, love, and determination.

To my amazing Father, the man who never hesitated to offer part of his life to see me achieve my goals.

To my brothers, Yahya, Hamza and my sister Nadjwa for always being by my side.

To my friend and colleague, Fatma, to her continuous support and shared effort.

And to my friend Daoud, who left a lasting mark of friendship and encouragement.

YAZID MOSBAH

## Dedication

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## **Abstract**

In many traditional EFL classrooms that are notorious for the dominance of the teacher which have significantly hindered the development of learners' oral proficiency. Students often remain passive recipients of knowledge in these settings. And despite cooperative Learning's effectiveness in addressing this issue by promoting interaction, limited research has specifically examined learners attitudes toward using it to improve their oral proficiency. Consequently, this research attempts to investigate English as foreign language ( EFL) Learners' attitudes towards using cooperative learning (CL) to enhance their speaking skills. Speaking is a challenging skill that requires interaction, confidence, and fluency. CL provides learners with opportunities to actively engage in authentic communication.the study adopted a descriptive research design to explore this phenomenon. The study was conducted at the University of Ghardaia with EFL students across all levels in the Department of English, employing a mixed-methods research approach. A questionnaire was administered to students, and interviews were conducted with teachers. The findings revealed that most students held positive attitudes toward cooperative learning as a tool for improving their speaking skills, the study also highlighted the need to integrate CL into classroom practices to allow learners to speak freely, overcome shyness and move beyond a tendency to simply listen. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to embrace cooperative learning strategies to create a more interactive learning environment.

**Key words** : cooperative learning, oral communication, speaking skill, group work, attitudes, EFL learners

## **List of abbreviations**

CL = Cooperative learning.

EFL = English as foreign language.

OCS = Oral Communication Skill

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

CI = Classroom Interaction

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**General  
Introduction**

### **General Introduction**

Nowadays, the teaching of English as a foreign language has shifted from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one that emphasizes communication and interaction. While the four language skills; listening, speaking, writing, and reading, are all important, oral communication is considered the most crucial in learning. It is also the most complex skill, enabling learners to express their ideas, share their opinions, and participate effectively and actively in social and academic contexts. However, despite its importance, many obstacles remain for students, including significant psychological and linguistic barriers when attempting to speak in class.

Many university students still struggle to communicate fluently in English, perhaps due to overcrowded classes or teaching methods. Furthermore, lessons tend to focus on grammar and writing exercises, rather than effective oral practice. As a result, many students, especially those with issues such as lack of confidence or shyness, are often outperformed by their more inspired and confident peers. This situation underscores the need for innovative teaching methods that motivate all learners, and create a supportive environment for communication and learning.

Cooperative learning has emerged as one of the most effective educational systems for promoting interaction and participation among learners. It involves organizing students into small groups where they work together to achieve common goals, support each other, and develop their social and linguistic skills.

However, despite the well documented benefits of cooperative learning, significant gaps remain in the existing research. In particular, it is still unclear to what extent cooperative learning can effectively enhance learners oral participation, boost their confidence, and develop their communication EFL context, and what challenges associated when implementing this approach in classroom setting?

### **Statement of the problem**

Speaking is a fundamental skill in learning English; however, many learners find it difficult to express themselves orally, lack essential speaking skills, and avoid participating in class. Although cooperative learning is an effective approach to encouraging student interaction, there is limited information on learners' attitudes toward its use in improving speaking skills. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the attitudes of English as foreign language learners toward cooperative learning and its role in enhancing their speaking abilities.

### **Research questions**

In order to facilitate our investigation, we ask the following questions:

- What are EFL learner's attitudes toward using cooperative learning to improve their speaking skills?
- How does cooperative learning affect EFL learners speaking achievement?
- What challenges do EFL learners face when implementing cooperative learning in speaking activities?

### **Research hypotheses**

- EFL learners shows a positive attitudes toward cooperative learning as a method to improve speaking skill.
- There is a positive correlation between cooperative learning and the development of learners speaking skills.
- Learners may face various challenges, including time managements, shynes,and unigual participation, when applying cooperative learning.

### **Research objectives**

This research aims to:

- Examine the effect of cooperative learning on student speaking performance.
- To identify EFL learners' attitudes toward using cooperative learning approach.
- To explore the challenges learners face when using cooperative learning in speaking classes.

### **Research methodology**

For the purpose of investigating EFL learners' attitudes toward using cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills, a descriptive study was used through a mixed qualitative and quantitative method.

To collect data, a questionnaire was administered to 88 randomly selected EFL students of all levels (First Year, Second Year, Third Year, Master 1 and Master 2) in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia, and an interview was conducted with 5 oral expression teachers; three of them held doctoral degrees, and two held masters degrees.

The questionnaire focused on students' attitudes toward cooperative learning in speaking classes and the difficulties they may face during its use. In addition, the interview with teachers focused on their experience in using this approach (CL) to teach the speaking skill, as well as the main obstacles they face while applying cooperative learning in the classroom.

### **Rationale**

The research was conducted because many EFL learners face difficulties in speaking English confidently. Cooperative learning creates more opportunities for interaction and helps EFL learners improve their speaking skills and participate more actively in the class. It is also important because CL may benefit teachers to create more communication and learner-centered environments.

### **Structure of dissertation:**

The dissertation is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and the practical part. The theoretical part comprises two sections. The first section provides an overview of cooperative learning and its definition, the type of activities, strategies, and techniques. The second section offers a general overview of learner's attitudes toward CL and speaking skills (nature, speaking activities and role of speaking). The practical part of dissertation focused on the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire to students and the interviews with teachers.

### **Limitations of the study**

This study is limited to all levels of EFL student in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia who were asked about their attitude toward using cooperative learning to improve their speaking skill.

The study is limited by the short time available for data collection and analysis.

The study can provide a useful insight into how cooperative learning helps EFL learners improve their speaking skill.



**Chapter one:  
Literature  
Review**

**Introduction**

Oral skills are considered as an essential part of effective communication. Regarding the EFL classroom, most students seek to feel empowered to express themselves which is also challenging for them to achieve fluency. Moreover, nowadays in this modern teaching and learning world, learners find that collaboration work assists them with many possibilities for practicing and enhancing their speaking performance. Cooperative learning is deemed an effective tool for enhancing the speaking skills. In this chapter, we try to give a wide picture of cooperative learning by first exploring its various definitions and theoretical significance, followed by its five elements. Furthermore, the strategies of CL are presented aligned with teacher's and learner's roles. The present chapter also points out the techniques of cooperative learning. Finally, without forgetting to highlight its benefits and pitfalls.

**1: Cooperative Learning****1-1 Definition of CL**

Cooperative learning (CL) has been addressed in various ways by different scholars and researchers, as each approaches it from a unique perspective. Nonetheless, they all have a shared objective: fostering a supportive environment for learners to reduce anxiety.

Students come from distinct backgrounds and they are differing in their capacities and abilities from one student to another. Therefore, they have to work and interact with their peers to complete any common requested task. Cooperative learning is considered as a pedagogical use of small groups which enable students to maximize both their own learning and the other's one (Johnson, 1991, as cited in Alrayah, 2018).

Additionally, Olsen and Kagan (as cited in Ismail & Al Allaq, 2019) state that CL is a group learning activity that is set, so that learning depends on the exchange of information

between students when they are working together within a context of individual accountability and motivation to enhance mutual learning.

Sapon-Shevin (1994) define CL as "a way of organizing instruction that involves students working together to help one another learn" (p. 183).

Notably, In the 21st century, "what you know" is less important than "how you share and use what you know." Information is everywhere; the value lies in how a team communicates to solve problems with that information. Besides that because the workforce now demands teamwork, communication skills have become the primary goal of modern education. CL is the "practice ground" for these real-world demands (Smith,1996,p.72).

Following this line of reasoning, it becomes clear that "Cooperative learning is partly a reaction to societal changes which focuses more on team work as communication skills are becoming increasingly more important in the knowledge-based society" (Neo, Neo, & Kwok, 2009, p. 674).

Effandi and Zanaton (2007) argue that cooperative learning marks a transition away from teacher-led instruction toward a student-oriented model. This framework provides a superior setting for learners to tackle challenges collectively with peers rather than working in isolation. However, modern educators view cooperative learning as a shift toward student-centeredness, some scholars such as Taylor (n.d.) argue that these collaborative structures were already present in indigenous African education prior to the interruptions of colonization and missionary schooling. Consequently, implementing cooperative learning today represents a "rediscovery" of cultural cooperation, making it a highly appropriate intervention for modern African classrooms. (P.244)

According to Panitz (1999), cooperative learning is characterized by "a set of processes which help people interact together in order to accomplish a specific goal or develop an end product that is usually content specific". He further notes that this method is "more directive than a collaborative system of governance and closely controlled by the teacher".

"The word 'cooperation' has many different connotations and uses. Instructors need to define cooperation operationally by specifying the behaviors that are appropriate and desirable within the learning groups"(Johnson et al., 1991, p.82).It explains that for CL to be successful, it cannot just be a "vague idea", where the teacher must define it "operationally" by telling students exactly how to behave such as listening, taking turns, and supporting one another. He also notes that while CL is a long-standing tradition in education and arguably the most vital of the three primary learning types, it remains the least utilized method in modern college settings (Johnson et al., 1991, p.23). It refers that cooperation is the most vital for success and it is not a new "fad"; it is a deeply rooted educational practice that has been pushed aside by modern lecture-based methods.

Nevertheless, Aung and Khaing (2018) argue that the shift to Cooperative Learning (CL) is not just a preference, but a necessity to "meet the needs of the 21st century. By shifting from teacher-led instruction to learner-centered environments, In turn schools foster a "collective culture" of students at work. This shift is significant because it prepares students for contemporary society by prioritizing the development of social skills, oral language proficiency, and creative problem-solving." Cooperative learning is cognitive in nature. The teachers must realize that for students to be successful in the twenty-first century they need to be lifelong learners."(Aung &Khaing, 2018, p. 172),this means while the social advantages of this method are clear, it is notably a cognitive practice at its core. Consequently, it transforms

the classroom into a training ground for lifelong learning, which is a vital requirement for success in the 21st century.

Moreover, Felder and Brent (2007) assert that cooperative learning is an active method that provides multiple ways for enhancing the educational experience (p. 34). They also defined this approach as a structured form of group work designed to reduce unpleasant situations while increasing the overall learning and satisfaction of the student team (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 34).

CL is recognized as an inclusive teaching strategy that promotes social and emotional development while facilitating social inclusion through meaningful peer interaction (Ferguson-Patrick, 2020, p. 167). Paralleling with this view is Gillies's (2014) assertion that "cooperative learning is widely recognized as a teaching strategy that promotes learning and socialization," and further notes that students benefit when they engage in reciprocal dialogue where they listen, question, and draw inferences (p. 800).

Therefore, cooperative learning is defined as a methodology that involves placing learners in small group work, intentionally for optimizing their individual and collective learning .It is also about sharing distinct ideas and perspectives to ultimately access common goals, and through this structured method the group's success determines each member's success. CL is viewed as an instructional tool designed to boost learner motivation and interest by creating a supportive environment, thereby providing a real life practice ground for developing oral fluency and communicative competence.

## 1-2 Significance of Cooperative Learning

Making learning easier and more effective is one of the aims of educators. And in order to seek this, they should use proven and powerful techniques. As CL, one of the tools does more than just teach content but it creates a positive learning environment and provides an authentic communication practices where the students 'critical thinking is fostered and the social interaction is increased. And this is essential for improving students' speaking abilities. By working together on shared tasks, learners discover and use new language and skills naturally with peers in a low pressure setting. This process helps them gain confidence to use language they may not have used previously. So here CL turns the classroom into an active workshop ultimately making the process more effective and enjoyable. In this context ,Cohen (1994) asserts that groupwork is essential for improving "intellectual goals—conceptual learning, creative problem-solving, higher order thinking skills, and oral language proficiency"(p. 2).

Cooperative learning is effective because it forces students to move beyond passive memorization, following this line of reasoning, it becomes clear that "Students will learn from one another because in their discussions of the content, cognitive conflicts will arise, inadequate reasoning will be exposed, disequilibrium will occur, and higher-quality understandings will emerge"(Slavin, 1996, p. 49).

Furthermore, "several research studies have proved that cooperative learning creates great opportunities for the EFL classroom. For EFL learners, cooperative learning creates a positive learning environment for students to practice their English" (Al-Yaseen, 2014, p. 97).

As the foundation of CL is deeply entrenched in constructivism, the theory that learners actively construct their own knowledge rather than just receiving it. By calling it a "learner-centered approach",as Karmina et al., (2021) argued that "Among constructivist educational premises and practices, CL, a learner-centred approach, which was developed in

the United States of America in the 1970s, has been espoused as one of the most widespread and successful pedagogies”(p.34). It highlights that the focus shifts from the teacher delivering a lecture to the students actively engaging with one another to solve problems and understand concepts that made it accomplished in both academic and social outcomes.

As also agreed by the "Turning Points" Report (1989) identified cooperative learning as essential for success, encouraging schools to move away from traditional, isolated learning towards group work to build crucial 21st-century skills.

Moreover, Nastasi and Clements (1991) suggest that the cognitive and social benefits of cooperative learning experiences apply to a diverse range of students across all ability levels and cultural backgrounds, Which proves that CL is a universal solution, and supports the idea that the method isn't just for "average" students, but is effective for the "diverse range" of learners with different ability levels.

Besides, cooperative learning is viewed as an effective method for supporting individual knowledge construction because it requires students to actively evaluate and elaborate upon what they already know (Roth & Roychoudhury,1993).Therefore, by engaging in these social exchanges, learners do not merely share information; they fundamentally restructure their own understanding, turning the classroom into a dynamic space for both personal and collective development.

Botiraliyeva (2025) highlights that in the context of modern globalization, it is important for students to develop collective competencies. She pointed out that cooperative teaching is vital for "increasing the effectiveness of education" and fostering skills such as "teamwork, exchange of ideas, and solving various problem situations together with a team"(p. 226).

As noted earlier, this modern approach that represents a paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods was often teacher-centered to become a learner-centered that it not only prepares students for the practical use of the language but also equips them with communication skills, builds confidence and encourages them for real life conversations, conversely speaking practice was primarily limited which often resulted in anxiety and lack of fluency.

To sum up, cooperative learning plays a pivotal role in EFL settings, it is more than just a classroom activity. This tool's significance lies in transforming how learners think, communicate and engage also presents in several areas include academic improvement which the results show that CL leads to better performance across subjects, deeper understanding and higher retention and through common goals and peer encouragement students become more engaged. Therefore, Its value doesn't rely only in academic results but also in cultivating positive attitudes and interpersonal growth where learners deal with different abilities, personalities and backgrounds.

### **1- 3. Characteristics of cooperative learning**

There are five main characteristics of CL; positive interdependence, face-to-face interactions, individual and group accountability, interpersonal skills, and opportunities for group processing.

#### **1-3-1 Positive interdependence**

According to Loeser (2024), establishing this element necessitates that students rely on each other to finish a specific task or assignment. A teacher fosters positive interdependence by assigning roles to every student, promoting the sharing of materials among group members, ensuring the task necessitates consensus on strategies and outcomes, and employing group rewards to commend students. Moreover, Loeser et al. (1991) suggest that Students must

believe they "sink or swim together," meaning the group's success depends on the effort of every member.

Consequently, for interdependence to flourish students must first perceive one another as reliable partners. This is because people place a high value on trustworthiness because it is a fundamental requirement for the trust and cooperation necessary in group living (Buss et al., & Cottrell et al., as cited in Leary et al., 2015). Underlying this argument is the idea that for interdependence to be 'positive,' the classroom must first become a space where trust is intentionally cultivated.

### **1-3-2 Face-to-face interactions**

Educators should establish an area in the classroom where groups can gather, exchange ideas, discuss potential solutions, address conflicts, and reach agreement. Educators should additionally demonstrate suitable methods for resolving conflicts and engaging constructively in a group environment. The main result of in-person interactions is that students experience a structured setting where they assist, motivate, and aid one another in achieving a shared goal or aim. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (1991) emphasize that face-to-face interaction is not merely about proximity; it is about students actively supporting each other's cognitive growth through discussion.

A face-to-face interaction model within cooperative learning requires the total engagement of all students in the classroom. According to Dahniar (2022), this approach is highly effective because it links academic concepts to practical, real-life contexts, thereby increasing student motivation. Furthermore, this model does not just improve academic knowledge; it serves as a vehicle for enhancing essential soft skills, including student proactivity, collaborative ability, and professional communication.

### 1-3-3 Individual and group accountability

It involves the evaluation of both group dynamics and the end result, along with the methods used to deliver specific feedback to both the individual and the collective group. The key to achieving success is to link and close the divide between personal and collective feedback. The team should recognize that every member is crucial to the success of the whole group and, consequently, must be aware of how each person can enhance their skills and how the group can collectively improve. By offering motivating rewards and feedback, students ensure accountability among one another and thus anticipate that individuals will engage positively with each other, arrive prepared for the group meeting, stay focused, and effectively finish the assigned task (Loeser, 2024).

Johnson et al. (1991) think, “Each student is responsible for mastering the material and contributing their fair share, ensuring that no member can "hitch-hike" on the efforts of others” (P.37). The implication of this is that the principle of Individual Accountability, which is the "fail-safe" mechanism of cooperative learning. It ensures that the group’s success is a result of every member’s effort, not just the hard work of a few. Besides this particularly significant for the shy learner; by clarifying that every contribution is necessary and valued, the structure provides the external motivation needed to move from passive observation to active participation.

Individual accountability is a fundamental pillar for driving organizational success, as it has a direct correlation with employee productivity and retention rates. According to Trivedi (2013), fostering a culture of accountability allows team members to identify necessary actions while effectively eliminating negative behaviors such as procrastinating or blaming others. Moreover, research suggests that organizations with a strong emphasis on accountability consistently outperform those lacking this cultural framework.

**1-3-4 Interpersonal skills**

Interpersonal abilities involve actively listening, expressing thoughts openly, taking responsibility, and offering constructive feedback. Small-group skills encompass turn-taking, task sharing, democratic decision-making, understanding different viewpoints, and clarifying distinctions. To utilize these skills effectively, students need to familiarize themselves with one another and build trust, communicate clearly, accept and support one another, and address conflicts in a constructive manner. Students are ready to collaborate, express themselves clearly and positively, and support one another. (Gillies, n.d.).

From the perspective of Campbell (2000), students in these settings are increasingly expected to take personal responsibility for their learning through collaborative processes. These processes include essential professional competencies such as coordinating complex tasks, sharing information effectively, solving problems collectively, and making informed group decisions. Consequently, the cultivation of interpersonal and small-group social skills is not only vital for academic success but is also a critical requirement for higher education and professional environments.

**1-3-5 Group processing**

It serves as a reflective phase where students analyze their collaborative efforts. As defined by Johnson et al. (1990), this involves a comprehensive review of a group's session to identify which specific member actions were beneficial and which were counterproductive. Through this evaluation, the group can make informed decisions about which behaviors to maintain and which ones must be modified to improve future performance.

Additionally, Smith (1996) notes that this reflective process requires groups to identify helpful and unhelpful behaviors, allowing them to make strategic adjustments to their collaborative approach. This stage is essential because it provides members with direct

feedback on their participation and serves as a necessary reminder for students to apply their collaborative skills consistently throughout the learning process. In brief, group processing is a vital instructional phase where team members evaluate their progress toward specific goals and the health of their working relationships.

Ultimately, drawing on the principles of group processing, it is evident that successful collaboration requires a balance between academic rigor and social harmony. According to Johnson et al. (1984), this process involves two distinct stretches: the first focuses on academic reliability and peer accountability, while the second emphasizes the enjoyable and pleasant climate necessary to sustain long-term working relationships. By analyzing both task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors, students learn to refine their interactions for future success.

#### **1-4. Strategies of CL:**

##### **1-4-1 Teachers' roles**

Both students and teachers must be aware of the essential actions and approaches for effectively executing cooperative learning activities, because implementing this strategy requires more than simply placing students in groups, it requires a deliberate structural design. As Johnson and Johnson (1999) assert, “there are many conditions we need to set in order to make cooperative learning take place correctly, effectively and successfully.”(p. 43). In other words teachers must move beyond traditional instruction and adopt the specific strategies and roles that create these necessary conditions. Alonso (2014, as cited in Gudu, 2015) thinks that “fluency controlled activities for instance storytelling, discussions, debates, simulations and role play provide learners with room to practice using language for instance the use of vocabulary and formulaic expressions are communicative and interactive. These activities focus more on fluency and the teacher is a facilitator.” (p. 56). He asserts the use of specific communicative activities like debates and role-plays to shift the teacher's role toward

facilitation, in other words, it provides a pedagogical bridge, demonstrates that when the focus shifts to fluency, the teacher must transition from dominating work to facilitating the practice of vocabulary. In the same vein, Murdoch (1994) suggests that the modern educator should move away from dominating classroom work and instead act as a facilitator. By creating specific conditions and activities, the teacher allows students to use language authentically, motivated by their genuine interest in the results of the assigned tasks.

Furthermore, Harel (1992) highlights the teacher's role in the classroom as the 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 students and supplying resources (p. 169). This clarifies that the educators' role shifts from a deliverer of information to a facilitator of learning. They have to create a highly structured and well-organized atmosphere for classroom instruction.

The teacher's role is key to the achievement of students' oral proficiency. It significantly contrasts with the teacher's role in traditional teacher-centered instruction. While Harel (1992) demonstrates in this passage “that teachers speak less than in teacher-fronted classes. They provide broad questions to challenge thinking, they prepare students for the tasks they carry out, they assist students with the learning tasks, and they give few commands, imposing less disciplinary control.” (p.169) This underscores the fact that the role of the teachers in CLL differs from the role of teachers in traditional teacher-fronted lessons. Following this line of reasoning, it becomes clear that the teacher has to create a highly structured and well-organized learning environment in the classroom, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks,

establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles, and selecting materials and time (Johnson et al., 1994).

Paralleling this view, Arnold (1999) argues, "If CLL is to be successful, teachers need to be adequately prepared, and interesting, relevant topics and materials must be available. In addition, a number of strategies can be employed to facilitate cooperative language teaching" (p. 234). This implies that the transition to a cooperative model requires more than a shift in classroom seating; it demands a robust infrastructure of preparation. Consequently implementing cooperative learning into the classroom, Teachers must take into the consideration the following strategies for success of this technique:

#### **1-4-1-1 Preparing Learners for Cooperative Tasks**

Before students dig into cooperative tasks, teachers need to guide a transition from traditional lectures-based instruction into cooperative tasks through preparing learners accordingly, including training them in feedback and peer interaction, not just traditional skills. So instead of spending time just on learning structures ,grammar ...etc .learners have to be well prepared and well trained in collaboration and interpersonal skills, also educators should design structured, meaningful tasks with clear roles, goals, and interaction patterns, so that help learners participate effectively in cooperation. As Ghodbane (2020) demonstrates, successful implementation requires that "it is the teachers' job to first prepare his/her students before delegating them leadership, then monitor them and pay attention to the major and minute details as they go through student-student interactions"(p. 179).

According to Arnold (1999), "The greatest mistake that teachers can make in initiating cooperative learning is to fail to prepare the learners for the new approach. This is particularly so in an educational context characterized by teacher-fronted classrooms and a knowledge dissemination model of teaching"(p. 231).This implies that before tasks are assigned, the

teacher's primary role is to adjust student expectations and social skills for a non-traditional environment.

In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2001) emphasize the importance of teacher guidance, stating, "The teacher's attitude and authority are considered critical to preparing students for success in the learning to come. The pattern of learning and use is noted... so that students will know what is expected"(p. 167). Thus, educators need to actively prepare students for the shift toward cooperative learning by providing opportunities for them to become active participants rather than passive ones. This involves creating a classroom environment where students can practice higher-order thinking and obtain regular feedback from peers.

#### **1-4-1-2 Assigning learners to specific and meaningful tasks**

After ensuring that learners are prepared for cooperative tasks, it can be moved to the second essential strategy which is having prepared a set of interesting, relevant topics and tasks for cooperative activities. Where the success of the latter depends on the quality and relevance of the assigned work here educators should design interesting tasks that must be interdependent, meaningful, and require active participation from everyone. This ultimately leads to motivating students toward deeper understanding, rather than superficial group activity. As Achmad and Yusuf (2014) point out : In speaking class, teachers are required to create communicative and interactive activities by giving students a great deal of opportunities to practice the target language. Essentially, the class manifests student-centered backdrop rather than teacher centered... teachers are to prepare classroom activities that are devoted and best facilitate speaking exercises.(p.153).

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that "language learning is believed to depend on immersing students not merely in 'comprehensible input' but in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and engage in naturalistic and meaningful communication"(pp. 223-

224). This aligns with Alonso (2014), who lists specific tasks that serve as the foundation for meaningful communication, such as storytelling, debates, role play and discussions as the type of interactive activities that allow for this naturalistic. (cited in Gudu, 2015).

Furthermore, according to Shachar and Sharan (1992), the necessity of teacher-led structuring to foster group interaction is expressed as follows:

"Interaction among group members is critically important to the success of small group activities... This will only happen when teachers create conditions that enable students to work in small groups on tasks that require cooperation among group members" (p. 244). This underscores the fact that interaction is not automatic, it is a designed outcome of the teacher's planning, which one of his roles also is deliberately engineer interesting tasks where students can engage, thereby mandating the social interaction required for learning.

### **1-4-1-3 Debriefing learners on their experience with Cooperative Learning**

This strategy transforms the student from a passive learner into one who drives their own academic growth. According to Johns et al. (2017), "In classroom settings, a debrief is a teacher-guided discussion used to help students process what happened during an experiential learning (EL) exercise, identify lessons to be learned from participating in the experience, and apply those lessons to the real world and to their own lives" (p. 63). This indicates that a debrief is a guided discussion that helps students process what happened, identify lessons to be learned, and apply those lessons to the real world.

Therefore, transitioning students to a learner-centered instruction requires the teacher to adopt the dual roles of prompter and editor. Ur and Harmer (as cited in Ly, 2024) states that "the dual roles of a prompter and editor encourage independent thinking, active engagement with language, and reflective practices, promoting a learner-centered paradigm where students

drive their own progress (Ly,2024)" (p.89).As articulated in this passage ,by acting as a prompter, Instead of providing the correct answer immediately the instructor encourages active engagement and independent problem-solving. Furthermore, as an editor, the teacher facilitates the reflective practices, through providing students with sufficient time to evaluate their own learning progress and to reflect on their social, cognitive, and linguistic experiences during the group process.

#### **1-4-1-4 Involving learners in evaluating individual and group contributions**

Finally, by involving learners in evaluating individual and group contributions, is a core strategy in cooperative Learning where the teacher should involve students in the assessment of both individual and group efforts and reinforces the idea that CL is a method for individual knowledge construction rather than merely a group-based technique.

This strategy consolidates a sense of shared responsibility, enhances learner autonomy, and promotes fairness. Moreover, it helps students recognize the inherent value of their collaborative work by reflecting on their own contributions and those of their peers. This strengthens both academic engagement and cooperative skills. According to Falchikov (2003), the primary goal of assessment should be to facilitate student learning. Educators can achieve this by actively involving students in the assessment process, thereby transforming evaluation into a robust tool for academic and personal growth, Thus, shifting assessment from a purely teacher-led activity to a collaborative process that empowers students. Predominantly, using peer assessment as a technique to factor in individual contributions to group projects, ensuring that student efforts are recognized fairly. "There is no doubt that involving students in making choices and evaluations during their learning process is beneficial. It is also important that students should be involved in assessing one another's, not just performance, but efforts or contributions put into the learning process". (Hong Kong Polytechnic University,n.d.,p.15).

By implementing these strategies, teachers ensure that cooperative learning is not merely a classroom activity based on placing students in groups, but rather a highly structured instructional approach designed to improve both academic and social success. This technique is considered as a reciprocal process; For every structural condition set by the teacher such as group organization, role assignment, social skill development, and time management, there is a requisite responsibility for the learners. In turn they actively fulfill their own designated roles including managing interactions, and regulate their participation to ensure the effectiveness and the overall success of CL.

#### **1-4-2 Learners' roles:**

The roles of learners in cooperative classrooms witness a significant shift, moving from passive recipients of information to active participants who assume responsibility for their own learning. By adopting specific procedural roles, students take on practical functions that have traditionally belonged to the teacher, thereby supporting the delegation of authority (Arató, 2013, p. 69).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) define the student's responsibility in a cooperative setting stating, "The primary role of the learner is as a member of a group who must work collaboratively on tasks with other group members." This implies that as a student must engage in work with colleagues, share ideas ,help them and the responsibility of accessing the goal must be taken from each member. As well ,”learners have to learn teamwork skills. Learners are also directors of their own learning" (p.199). Following this line of reasoning, it becomes clear that beyond just completing tasks, learners must acquire essential teamwork skills and take an active role in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning process as a lifelong skill. Building on this view, Richards and Rodgers (2001) note that learners in cooperative settings are given distinct roles within their groups, such as noise

controllers, turn-taking facilitators, recorders, and summarizers, which promote responsibility and active participation.

In this regard, Smith (1996) advises educators to assign specific roles such as process recorder, group coordinator, and understanding-checker ensures that all students are given the opportunity to participate in various capacities.

Smith(1996) further suggests to teach students the teamwork skills by assigning students specific, differentiated roles within their groups which are represented on the following:

As a task recorder, the student learns how to record ideas and outcomes to document group work.

As a process recorder, the student monitors group dynamics and notes how tasks are carried out.

As a coordinator, the student organizes the group, directs tasks, and keeps members on track.

As a checker, the student ensures every member understands and can explain the group's work.

Jorgensen (2009) observes that traditional group roles like the time keeper or material manager often allow students to work in isolation rather than fostering the collective interdependence required for effective cooperative learning. Whereas, this latter focuses on fostering a classroom atmosphere where learners are self-motivated and take an active interest in the success of their classmates and teachers (Jacobs & Small, 2003).

This observation by Akili (2010) highlights that many students enter the classroom with traditional expectations, believing "that a student's role is to pay attention, to take notes, and to memorize the material presented" (p.6). To move beyond this passive cycle, teachers must introduce structured participation. However, these structures should not be rigid, as stated by Buchs et al. (2021) that roles should be" flexible roles introduced in order to facilitate

discussion".By utilizing roles such as Summarizers and Listeners, teachers can designate primary responsibilities that encourage engagement ,but without precluding interactive exchanges (p.7). Thereby, effectively turning a passive listener into an active participant in the negotiation of meaning.In a communicative and cooperative setting,"the main role that students play in this approach is that of negotiators between the self, the learning process and the object of learning"(Basta, 2011, p. 128). This asserts that by acting as navigator ,students are not passive recipients but active agents , because embodying this role is vital for developing speaking skills.

Furthermore, to foster oral proficiency, Brown (2007) suggests that classroom learners should be "imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal, and extensive".

Ultimately, in learner-centered and cooperative classrooms, students take responsibility for their learning through active participation and interaction rather than remaining passive recipients of information. Piaget's theory conceptualizes learners as active constructors of knowledge in which they play active roles as they engage in real or at least realistic tasks (Slavin,1995). In a broader sense, learning occurs when students are involved in meaningful and realistic tasks that challenge their thinking and promote cognitive development.

### **1-5 Techniques of Cooperative Learning**

One reason for the effectiveness of cooperative learning is that it enhances learners' motivation, since each group member can achieve personal goals (Johnson& Johnson, 1989, 1994; Slavin, 1995).

#### **1-5-1Group investigation**

Group Investigation begins when a teacher introduces a complex topic that sparks many questions such as how migration impacts local life, the effects of bilingualism, or the nature of

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poetry and invites students to plan how they will explore it. These kinds of open-ended questions lead to a lot more questions, which students are encouraged to ask. They are urged to connect the inquiry to their own knowledge, feelings, experiences, and curiosity. Students who collaborate ask questions, look for information, discuss and evaluate their results, and connect them to what they already know and understand. These actions are all conducted in distinct phase of the investigation, during which the teacher guides the process and provides necessary resources. The length and structure of a Group Investigation project vary depending on the teacher's assessment of students' ability to work in groups and their readiness to handle diverse perspectives and interests during the investigation.(Sharan, Y., & Sharan, S., 1992).

### **1-5-2 Peer tutoring**

A possible definition of peer tutoring is more capable students assisting less capable ones in learning within cooperative pairs or small groups, carefully structured by a professional teacher. However, as peer tutoring methods have rapidly developed and been researched in recent years, it became clear that peer tutoring is not necessarily only about transmission from the more able and experienced (who already have the knowledge and skills)to the less able(who have yet to acquire them) (Topping,1996).

### **1-5-3 Jigsaw puzzle**

The Jigsaw teaching method (Puzzle) is one of the models of participatory teaching that is suitable for educational environments. In this method, learners acquire perfect skills in some required subjects and then teach what they have learned to other members of their group. The jigsaw technique is a method of organizing classroom activities that makes students dependent on each other to succeed. It divides classes into groups that each assemble a piece of an assignment and synthesize their work when finished. . It was designed by social

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psychologist Elliot Aronson in the early 1970s to foster student participation, critical thinking, and collaboration (Aronson, 2008).

The jigsaw technique promotes positive interdependence among students, as each learner becomes responsible for a specific part of the learner task. Students first meet in expert groups to discuss and master their assigned topic and then return to their original groups to teach their peers. The process enhances communication, cooperation, and active participation while helping learners develop confidence and improve their speaking skill.

Furthermore, the technique encourages students to share ideas, exchange information, and learn from one another in a supportive learning environment.

#### **1-5-4 Constructive controversy**

Constructive controversy occurs when individuals hold conflicting ideas, information, conclusions, theories, or opinions and work together to find common ground. This type of controversy involves what Aristotle referred to as deliberate discourse—an exchange focused on evaluating the pros and cons of proposed actions—with the goal of developing innovative solutions through creative problem solving. (Sternberg, 2007, p. 6)

In this case, students should do critical thinking which can force them to enhance, to state, and then to write strong arguments about specific topic based on factual data. There is one method that can be used to make students think critically named as Constructive Controversy method. Constructive Controversy can be understood as managing the controversial topic discussed together within a group to share argument and learn about its problem. Constructive Controversy is to learn as much as possible by understanding the various arguments pertaining to both sides of the issue in question. The main value lies in engaging the students

in exploring, developing, and presenting arguments for a position with which they may not entirely agree (D'Eon et al., 2007, p. 32).

Constructive or Structured Controversy, introduced by Johnson and Johnson in 1979, serves as a method to engage pupils and enhance their comprehension. A group of students participates in a debate-style discussion on a controversial issue, where they must adopt opposing viewpoints in a method termed “Double Switch,” engaging in two rounds before reaching a conclusion (D'Eon & Proctor, 2001, p. 251).

Moreover, D'Eon & Proctor (2001, pp. 251-252) mentioned the steps or procedures conducting Constructive Controversy method known are as follow: In the first round, the instructor forms about four or five groups of controversy's teams. Then, determine issue or problem to be addressed by informing each group that they will identify the topic 2 times (two positions as pros and cons). Next, establish or draw each team on the position (pro or con) on this round, the instructor gives controversy sheets (topics and ideas must be inserted). Each team must think critically, expresses the main ideas and details in accordance with supporting information. Furthermore, each member of team is picked randomly against other teams. All teams gather to declare the position of consensus, based on the information and perspective of each (team discussion results). Last, the instructor gives time to each team member to express their opinions.

In the second round, the instructor asks the team to swap positions (if previous Pro, then become Cons, and vice versa). Next, instructor adjusts the position of the team against other teams (double switch). Afterwards, instructor gives a different controversy sheets (topics and ideas must be inserted again). Each team must critically rethink in different perspective or side; express the main ideas and details in accordance with supporting information. Then, students are asked to do the same procedures as in the first round.

Practically, Constructive Controversy has been widely used and modified in line with the implementation as it is explained above.

### **1-5-5 Reciprocal teaching**

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional procedure designed to teach students cognitive strategies that might lead to improved reading comprehension. The learning of cognitive strategies such as summarization, question generation, clarification, and prediction is supported through dialogue between teacher and students as they attempt to gain meaning from text.

Klingner and Vaughn (1996, p. 275) reported the following definition of reciprocal teaching defined by Lysynchuck et al., (1990): “The reciprocal teaching model has been used to improve comprehension for students who can decode but have difficulty comprehending text.” Palincsar and Brown (1984) added in an article reported by Hacker and Tenent (2002) “Reciprocal teaching is an instructional procedure in which small groups of students learn to improve their reading comprehension through scaffold instruction of comprehension-monitoring strategies” (p. 669). It consists of four main strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. It occurs in the form of dialogues between teachers and students. At first, the students learn the four key strategies and practice them. Second, the teacher models the entire process step by step using structured dialogues. Third, the teacher gives the students a chance to get involved and coaches them on how to ask appropriate questions, write adequate summaries, and so on. Gradually, the teacher’s role as a leader decreases. Finally, the students take on greater responsibility to carry out the whole process. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that reciprocal teaching is a scaffold discussion method that is based on reading comprehension strategies, scaffolding and modelling, and social interaction. This instruction allows a teacher to model and give the students enough practice

on those four main strategies to construct the meaning of a text in a social setting.(p. 669)The students monitor their own thinking through the reading process. Reciprocal teaching develops reading comprehension and promotes readers to be better in reading and helps them reach the most important goal of reciprocal teaching, becoming independent readers.

### **1-5-6 Numbered Heads Together**

Numbered Heads Together is a cooperative learning technique originally developed from ideas proposed by Russ Frank and later refined and formally named by Kagan in 1992. As a cooperative learning strategy, Numbered Heads Together aims to actively engage students in reviewing lesson content and assessing their understanding of the material (Arends, 2004).The method is easy to use and adaptable, making it suitable for repeated use with a wide range of teaching materials. It can be implemented in various subjects, across different grade levels, and at any point during a lesson.

The implementation of Numbered Heads Together typically involves four main steps. First, the teacher divides the class into small groups of approximately four students, and each member is assigned a number. Second, the teacher poses questions related to the text or lesson and provides students with time to think. Third, students are instructed to “put their heads together” to discuss the questions, agree on the best answers, and ensure that all group members understand them. Finally, the teacher randomly calls a number, and the student with that number responds on behalf of the group, after which the teacher may seek confirmation from other students.(Arends, 2004)

This technique requires active interaction among group members and promotes both positive interdependence and individual accountability. According to Kagan (1989), positive interdependence occurs when students support one another’s learning by sharing knowledge; if one student understands the answer, they help explain it to others, which also strengthen

their own understanding through peer teaching. Individual accountability is maintained because any student may be called upon to respond, encouraging all members to stay engaged. As a result, high-achieving students are motivated to assist their peers to ensure group success, while lower-achieving students pay close attention, knowing they may be selected to answer.

### **1-6 Benefits of Cooperative Learning**

In second and foreign language learning, theorists propose several advantages for cooperative learning: increased student talk, more varied talk, a more relaxed atmosphere, greater motivation, more negotiation of meaning, and increased amounts of comprehensible input (Liang et al., 1992). Besides, "A good deal of research exists in other areas of education suggesting that cooperative learning is associated with benefits in such key areas as learning, self-esteem, liking for school, and interethnic relations" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 52). This clarifies that cooperative learning contributes to both cognitive and social development, making it a comprehensive educational approach rather than merely an instructional technique.

In terms of academic benefits, it is viewed that "Weak students working individually are likely to give up when they get stuck; working cooperatively, they keep going. Strong students faced with the task of explaining and clarifying material to weaker students often find gaps in their own understanding and fill them in" (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 1). He also highlighted that students in higher education who are taught through cooperative methods significantly outperform those in traditional instructor-centered settings, typically moving from the 50th to the 69th percentile in performance outcomes (p.6). The findings reflected in this statement underscore the cognitive and motivational advantages of cooperative learning, as it contributes to higher academic performance among both weaker and stronger learners and helps them identify and address gaps in their understanding, compared to traditional instructor-centered approaches.

On the other side, cooperative learning is not just for the students who are academically deficient ; it significantly boosts performance for the top-tier students as well, addressing common concerns about gifted learners in group settings. As Slavin (1991) and Stevens and Slavin (1995b) highlights empirical evidence from two-year longitudinal studies indicating that cooperative learning produces positive effects across all achievement levels, with particularly large gains found among the highest-performing students; he notes that the most significant gains were often observed in the top 5% and 10% of them.

In terms of social and psychological benefits ,according to Lüthje (as cited in Efe et al., 2007) cooperative learning is most effective when it is mastery-oriented rather than performance-oriented. Under mastery conditions, learners demonstrate more positive behaviors, supportive leadership, and greater group effectiveness, whereas performance-focused settings tend to generate dominance and negative interaction. These findings highlight students develop supportive leadership, positive interactions, and teamwork skills. In particular, mastery-oriented settings promote positive behaviors, motivation, and a sense of competence, while reducing stress and negative competition. Consequently, cooperative learning has potential to create a friendly and encouraging environment that enables even shy learners to participate more confidently in oral activities.

Furthermore ,research indicates that cooperative learning "not only promotes academic achievement, but also reduces bullying, victimization, and stress among marginalized students"(Van Ryzin&Roeth, 2018, p. 17).This highlights that CL serves as a protective social shield especially for shy students, who often feel "marginalized" due to their silence, where this method comes to integrate them into a team with shared goals, so they are viewed as valued partners rather than "easy targets" for bullying.

Also, as Gudu (2015) explains that in cooperative settings, "students feel comfortable working, interacting and making mistakes with their partners rather than with their teachers," and he notes that "corrective feedback from peers is found to be less daunting than the correction by teachers"(p. 57).It explains how this strategy serves as psychological safety that reduces the "affective filter" the anxiety students feel when they are afraid of making mistakes in front of the teacher. This asserts that when they transition into cooperative roles, they feel comfortable working, interacting and making mistakes because peer feedback is perceived as less threatening than formal teacher intervention as it viewed in traditional teacher-led correction often creates a barrier to oral production.

Cooperative learning is a strategy that yields rewards across academic, social, and affective dimensions for all learners in this setting aimed to achieve the following:

By working among structured groups, learners benefit from peer explanations and shared problem-solving which enhances the performance and the understanding of every student, including those who are talented or learning-impaired.

It assists the educator in fostering positive interdependence between students, where they rely on one another to succeed. This strategy promotes mutual respect, trust, and cooperation, reducing social isolation.

Through cooperative tasks , students will be provided with the experiences necessary for positive social, psychological and mental growth.

Instead of dealing with traditional competitive settings that often emphasize individual success at the expense of others, CL substitutes this framework with a collaborative structure, which reduces anxiety and unhealthy competition while promoting shared goals and collective responsibility. (Johnson et al., 1994).

By organizing classrooms around teamwork, CL creates a high-performance structure through creating real-world collaborative contexts and prepares learners for academic, professional, and social collaboration beyond school instructions. (Johnson et al., 1994)

Hence, Smith (1996) emphasizes the cumulative impact of this method, noting that consistent participation in cooperative groups leads students to "learn more, the better they will understand what they are learning, the easier it will be to remember what they learn, and the better they will feel about themselves" (p. 72).

In closing, while the benefits of cooperative learning such as enhanced academic achievement, increased learner engagement, and the development of self-esteem are well-established. Whereas, the method is not without its complications, and to ensure a productive and enthusiastic learning environment, it is essential to remain mindful of its practical challenges including such as group dynamic dilemmas, disproportionate workloads, and the complexities of classroom management.

### **1-7 Pitfalls of Cooperative Learning**

"Although teachers freely acknowledge the benefits of students dialoguing together on academic tasks, they often express concerns about the most appropriate ways to group students to ensure the discussions are productive and that learning will occur" (Gillies, 2007, p. 4). This shows that without proper grouping, discussions might not be productive and effective and learning might not occur. This is especially addressed on shy students, as poor grouping can lead to dominance and negative behavior by high-level and more aggressive students. In his turn, he found that while students value the freedom to choose their partners, they often recognize that "friends may not always be ideal group members because of the conflict that can arise from being a good friend and being a good team member" (p. 9).

Moreover, this will minimize interaction and communication among the group members. Eventually, the outcomes will be affected negatively. Teachers with enough experience and patience usually create solutions to deal with such issues. Regardless, some educators with insufficient experience are disabled to solve these problems and implement the CL techniques effectively which eventually lead them to rely on the traditional teacher –centered instruction.

Additionally, Felder& Brent (2007) note that although the benefits of cooperative learning are theoretically and empirically well-established, educators must address challenges such as student resistance and the emergence of dysfunctional group dynamics, this explains that while CL is proven to work both in theory and in practice, it still faces specific challenges means that even a successful method has pitfalls or obstacles that can prevent it from working perfectly. Specifically, by referring to its challenges, Felder and Brent (1994) acknowledge that despite its advantages, cooperative learning often “meets resistance and sometimes open hostility from the students”(p. 3). They note that high-achieving learners may feel hindered by their peers, while less assertive members might feel overlooked in group settings.

Ismail and Al Allaq (2019) point out that several factors can act as significant obstacles to effective English language learning, including student anxiety, indifference, and a general lack of willingness to participate in collaborative work.

Despite the widespread adoption of cooperative learning, there remains significant academic disagreement regarding the theoretical mechanisms and the precise conditions that lead to its success (Slavin, 1996).It acknowledges that while almost everyone agrees that Cooperative Learning (CL) works, researchers are still debating exactly why and how it works, this means that the interaction inside the group is complex. What works in a math class might not work in an EFL class, and what works for a high student might not work for a weak one.

Paralleling this view is Keramati and Gillies (2022) reported that notwithstanding the pedagogical benefits of cooperative learning, its implementing remains challenging at the university level:

“In university, I think the biggest challenge of CL is the fear of losing control. I think the only problem with CL is disrupting the classroom. If instructors do not have a clear understanding of what CL is, how it works, and what its benefits are, they will be less willing to implement it.” (p.8)

Invariably, several scholars argue that cooperative learning is effective only when instructors are adequately prepared to manage its pedagogical and social demands. As Kagan (1999) argues that without proper implementation, cooperative learning can lead to several drawbacks, he mentioned seventeen of them, the common ones such as a lack of social skills among students who may put each other down or fail to resolve basic task conflicts, resentment caused by group grading, difficulties in managing learner diversity, fear of failure during peer interaction, unhealthy competition between teams, and informal tracking within the classroom. These pitfalls may significantly reduce learners' willingness to communicate orally.

Therefore, recognizing these challenges is essential for instructors to move beyond a simple "magic wand" approach and engage in the deliberate planning required for successful implementation.

## **2: Speaking skills**

### **2.1 Definition of Speaking Skills**

Speaking is considered one of the most important language skills in the process of language learning. Many researchers have provided various definitions of speaking due to its complexity and significance in communication.

Speaking is one of the most important skills in language learning, as it allows learners to communicate their ideas and interact with others in different situations. It plays a central role in both academic and everyday communication, especially in learning a foreign language. Developing speaking ability is often challenging for students because it requires the use of language in real time, as well as confidence and active participation. For this reason, speaking has received considerable attention in language teaching and learning. According to Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997), speaking is defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information.

On the other hand, Abd El Fattah Torky (2006) describes speaking as a two-way process that includes genuine communication of opinions, information, and emotions between speakers. This perspective emphasizes that speaking is not a one-sided activity but a collaborative process that occurs within a shared time and context. Therefore, effective speaking depends on active participation and mutual understanding between all involved in the communication.

Bygate (2003) also highlights the importance of speaking by stating that it deserves as much attention as literacy skills in both first and second language learning. Speaking is often the skill by which learners are judged, and it plays a crucial role in social interaction, professional advancement, and effective communication. As he also pointed out, speaking involves more than just accurate pronunciation or grammar; it requires the ability to convey meaning clearly, adapt language to different contexts, and engage actively with listeners to maintain effective communication.

From a historical perspective, speaking was long considered a secondary skill in language teaching, as early approaches mainly focused on grammar and reading. However, with the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching in the 1970s and 1980s, speaking gained

greater importance as a primary goal of language learning. During this period, speaking was viewed as a tool for real communication rather than mere repetition of structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In recent decades, speaking has been characterized as a complex skill that requires cognitive, linguistic, and affective processes to work simultaneously. Learners must plan what to say, choose appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and monitor their performance while interacting with others (Bygate, 2003). Therefore, speaking is not a simple act of producing sounds, but a dynamic process that reflects learners' overall language competence

Thus, Speaking is a key skill in language learning and an essential means of communication. Through speaking, learners are able to express their ideas, share information, and interact with others in different situations. The effectiveness of speaking does not depend only on linguistic knowledge, but also on the context in which communication takes place. In this respect, speaking is “an interactive process of constructing meaning both its form and meaning depend on the context, the participants, their experiences, the environment and the purpose for speaking”(Florez, 1999, as cited in Maharani, 2016, p. 172)

### **2.1.2. Nature of speaking skills**

Speaking is a core expressive skill that includes a person's ability to express their thoughts, feelings, and information through language spoken.

The nature of speaking skill takes multiple forms, each is crucial to speaking. One of the important natures of speaking is the interactive process (interaction), Khalid and Hamza (2023) describe that” speaking requires an interaction between students and their instructor. They could discuss ideas of certain topics, information or even feelings.”(p.30) this interaction helps the students improve their confident in speaking. In addition to interaction, another

crucial aspect of speaking is constructing meaning. Richards, J. C (2008) explained that speaking involve here the use of the language to express meaning so that other people can make sense to them, which shows that with organizing the thought and expressing them clearly, listeners can understand.

Another nature of speaking depends on the context, Halliday (1978) stated that language is social semiotic that meaning is influenced by the context of situation. This means that language depend on the situation, and understand the context helps us communicate more effectively. Besides context, another important part of speaking is how to balance speaking freely in the moment. Scott Thornbury (1999) point out that if speakers have time to think, they make fewer mistakes, so that planned speaking is more accurate then spontaneous speaking. Here the learner chooses words more carefully in order to communicate clearly and express.

All these deferent aspects of nature in speaking whether is context, preparation, and the situation, shapes how we speak, and understanding them, we can become clearer and more effective communicators.

### **2.1.3. Speaking Skill in the EFL Classroom**

Speaking is one of the important segments in English skills that should be mastered by students besides reading writing and listening, and it is considered as the most essential one in foreign language teaching and learning process. Speaking is not as an easy task for EFL learners to be acquired as it seems. It needs a huge effort for both teachers and learners in that process in order to master it. Speaking is considered the major skill to be developed because it helps learners to express their feelings, ideas, and opinions to communicate with others fluency and to display language proficiency.

#### **2.1.3.1 Speaking Activities in EFL Classes**

There are many activities that can be done in a speaking class to strengthen language learning, but they differ from one another depending on the students' perspective. The following are few applied activities in speaking class:

#### **2.1.3.1.1.Dialogue**

Dialogue is a basic exchange of spoken ideas between people and it becomes one of the ways to improve students speaking ability. According to Hardi (2019, p.9), "Dialogue is one of media in teaching speaking. It helps the students practice in speech pronunciation, intonation, stress. The primary objective of using dialogue is developing students' competence (pronunciation, intonation, stress) in teaching speaking like native speaker ". Consequently, it is widely used in teaching.

In addition, Wierzbicka (2006, p. 677) stated that "One sense in which dialogue is commonly used in ordinary language can be illustrated with sentences like the following ones, which refer to verbal exchanges between individuals in films and literature". under the same umbrella the term dialogue is used in everyday language, which used to refer to conversations between people, especially in films and literary works

All in all, dialogue can be considered as one of the optimal speaking activity that help the teacher bring the outside world inside the EFL classroom, which boost the students communication skills and level up them towards the fluency.

#### **2.1.3.1.2.Surveys**

A survey is a method of collecting information or data to understand opinions and experiences, and is widely used in scientific research, education, and social studies. But, From the teaching perspective (Harmer, 2008). British Council (n.d) noted that doing surveys in the class can be a fruitful way of getting students to interact, produce question forms, collect

and analyze real information. This later shows that survey goes beyond collecting data only ,but a learning activity that fosters the EFL learner's engagement and collaboration.

### **2.1.3.1.3. Picture description**

Picture description is a speaking activity where the learner present the details of visual content and practice vocabulary, grammar and oral communication skill. Wilson (1999) mentioned that “picture is worth a thousand words. It has been long documented the different capabilities in the two hemispheres of the brain. right side being more creative and visually imaginative and the left side being more verbally orientated” (p.1). Based on previous Wilson perspective ,we can say that picture description prompt learners analysis ,interpret and leading them to transform symbols to words , expression, sentences verbally which enhance their critical thinking ,enrich their vocabulary and proficiency level .Without denying that practice and training the both sides of the brain can cooperate and improve learning by integrating the verbal with the illustrative. which leading the learners to perform well .

In the light of the foregoing, speaking activities play a pivotal role on enhancing speaking skill, enriching vocabulary and grammar and improving the critical thinking of the EFL learners.

### **2.1.3.2. Role of Speaking in Classroom Interaction**

The need of speaking English has been highly required in EFL classroom interaction as its been known that interaction is considered as a significant strategy in the second language acquisition field which require at least two individuals in order to interact face to face when using the language in real communication.

Since interaction is the heart of communication, speaking is the primary tool through which classroom knowledge is co-constructed, negotiated and eternalized by the learners

According to Rivers (1987) “Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow

Thapa and Lin (2013 ) as cited in (Nisa, 2014) argued , “interaction in the classroom becomes the central factors which is able to enhance the students’ linguistic resources as well as equipping them with appropriate skills for communication.”(p.125)

Naimat (2011) thinks, “The communication skill, then, will be acquired through speaking activities, such as debates, discussions and about desired topics among students.” (p. 672)

Therefore, Speaking classroom interaction is important to activate the learning and helps learners move from the passive listening to engagement and practicing the language through constructing the meaning, negotiating the ideas and improve communication skills. as well as the effective interaction provides the learner with opportunities to express themselves and encourage a deeper thinking and peer collaboration by implementing interactive activities such as; debates, discussion, role play , dialogues and games .....etc. .

#### **2.1.4.Elements of Speaking Skills**

Effective speaking skills are made of several elements, with these keys learners can easily communicate clearly and confidently, the four important elements are fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

The first element of speaking performance is fluency and its one of the main goals for teachers to improve students speaking skill. Hughes (2002) explains that fluency of the learner is the ability to speak and deliver in clearly way to the listener in order not to break the communication and lose the interest between the speakers .This significant ability allows learners to engage effectively and keeping both sides involves and motivated.

The second element of speaking performance is pronunciation, and it's in the learner hands to master the phonological rules and maintain his pronunciation well and clear. According to Yudar et al. (2020), pronunciation leads students to understand better native speakers and native-like speakers properly and improves their ability to communicate with other people, especially native using English ( p.16). Learner should be aware of sounds and pronunciation and paying attention to it can get you speak English language accurately.

The third element is vocabulary. Kebede (2018) noted that" Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions and ideas, without which people cannot convey the intended meaning."(p.147) this later pointed out that vocabulary is the heart of a language, and to improve the ability it requires efforts, practice, and regular use to deliver strong vocabulary process.

Finally, Chomsky (1965) defines grammar as knowledge an individual possesses about their language, where grammar is a system that enables a speaker to form and understand an infinite numbers of sentences. This definition is really valuable because it shows that grammar is not just a set of rules but a natural part of how we understand and produce language.

With that been said, these several keys boost the skill of speaking and keep the focus on improving the ability directly.

### **2.1.5.The Importance of Speaking Skill in EFL Learning**

In the context of EFL classroom, speaking play vital role in language learning ,it helps the student use the language in real situations and share there ideas, and it allows them to practice the language actively and improve their ability to communicate.

According to Celce Murcia et al. (2014) "assumed that the goal of language teaching is the learners' ability to communicate in the target language" (p.8). She adds, (Celce Murcia et al.,2014) "Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer and negotiate meaning in situations in which one person has information that the other(s) lack" (p.8), therefore speaking in EFL class is a tool for building confidence, and getting them engaged in real world communication. Furthermore, the teacher should provide such a space where the learner can easily practice speaking during classes, and also outside of the classrooms. As Bachruding Musthafa (2001) explained that the teachers find it difficult to create the right environment; one reason is the teacher's confidence in conveying information, and the second could be the wasted time, which requires learners to get involved in social communication in the classroom.

With that being said, speaking has an important role in the teaching classroom, it leads the students to develop their communicative efficiency and improve the ability to express, convey and reveal their opinion and feeling. With speaking, students can develop their other skills like writing and progress the grammar and vocabulary.

## **2.1.6. Psychological and Classroom Factors Affecting Speaking Performance**

### **2.1.6.1. Psychological Factors**

#### **2.1.6.1.1. Anxiety**

It is an uncomfortable feeling that learners experience while the learning process especially during the oral classes due to some factors such as, linguistic, psychological, physiological and cultural factors. Rajitha K and C. Alamelu (2020) asserted "It can be divided into two different groups as Internal and External factors. Many factors can be responsible for causing anxiety. Some of the identified factors through this study are language factor, grammar and pronunciation factor, peer factor, stage fear factor, lack of confidence and shyness" (p.1045) as a result, this anxiety can make learners reluctant, they cannot express themselves easily, or even

defend their ideas and negotiate it with their classmates, subsequently, their speaking performance get affected.

#### 2.1.6.1.2. Fear of Making Mistakes

Making mistake is one of the common psychological barriers that hinder the mastery of the speaking skill among the learners. There are a various components that contribute to this fear for instance, being judged by their peers or trying to compare their level to their classmates, thus create language anxiety in classroom which hold them back and eradicate their engagement. From other lens fear of making mistakes can be an outcome of past bad experience ,That's left psychological impact on the learners because they are getting influenced by their emotion during practicing the language as ( Marcin,2024) mentioned “ Mistakes often evoke feelings such as frustration or disappointment, which, although uncomfortable, are integral to the learning process”(p.2)

Despite the fact that fear of making mistake hinder the learning process but mistakes itself cannot consider as handicap it is an essential phase in the learning journey. Since the learners making mistakes and trying to correct them that's a sign of advancement, that's what ( Marcin ,2024) explain that analysis of mistakes helps engage the learner in the process of reflection and dive in critical thinking which means that they explore why the errors occurred and lead to better learning outcomes.

#### 2.1.6.1.3. Shyness

Shyness is linked to a fear of negative evaluation, which effects student's participation. This fear is a form of social anxiety that show shy learners worry about being criticize and making errors. According to Antony and Swinson (2008) “Shyness and social anxiety are universal. From time to time, almost everyone has felt nervous speaking in front of a group or anxious when interacting with another person.”, this later explain that shyness are normal and

common experience. And prove that shyness come from feeling nervous when speaking in front of others or interacting in social situations.

### **2.1.6.2.CLASSROOM FACTORS**

#### **2.1.6.2.1. Teacher's Attitude and Feedback**

Teacher's positive or negative attitude in communicating with learners can significantly influence the course of their academic lives, and also affect the student development and impact their communication and creative abilities, that's way Ekperi, Onwuka, Nyejirime, (2019) claim that" A teacher's attitude to teaching will certainly affect his or her performance in the classroom "(p.205), furthermore, according to Ekperi et al. (2019) " Attitude is about emotions and feelings, and effective teachers willingly share emotions and feelings "(P.205).

A supportive teacher attitude encourages learners to participate more actively, while a negative attitude my discourage their involvement.

#### **2.1.6.2.2. Classroom Atmosphere**

Xia Zhao (2025) highlights that classroom atmosphere means the feeling or mood in classroom that comes from how the teacher and student interact during the lesson. This atmosphere can have a big impact on student engagement (student feeling) and how comfortable they are in participation.

This factor it's very important because healthy classroom environment help students feel safe, which allows them to focus and developing their speaking skill.

#### **2.1.6.2.3. Class size**

Size of a class is one of the major issue that teacher don't pay attention to, and this factor become harder in large classes because student wont evolve their skills in better condition and enough practice. Smith and Glass (1979) stressed that:

“Class size affects pupils' attitudes, either as a function of better performance or contributing to it. In smaller classes, pupils have more interest in learning Perhaps there is less distraction.”(P.7)

This highlight shows just how important class size is in shaping student performance. In smaller classes, student feels more comfortable to speak and share more ideas, which ultimately boosts their learning.

### **2.1.7.The Impact of Cooperative Learning on the Development of EFL Learners' Speaking Skills**

Many educational researches shows that learning in a group is one of the best ways to keep students involve, engage, and help them get better results. This effective tool can get the learner interested in the lesson and prove himself.

D. W. Johnson and R. T. Johnson claimed that in the 1960s, cooperative learning was not considered an activity that could develop a learner's speaking skills, but in the present, cooperative activities is one of the important tool used to enhance language aand speaking ability, and it's used at all educational levels, including universities.

To prove that cooperative learning has a mark on the EFL learner's enhancement, Namaziandost et al. (2019) conducted a study where they implemented cooperative learning strategy, and measured the improvement of EFL learners speaking skill. In his study, they did a pre test and post test, using oral activities such as describing a picture, reading exercises and expressing opinion on given topics. By applying these some same related activities again, he was able to observe a clear improvement in the learner's speaking skills as a result of his strategy.

As he mentioned, integrating this work shows that using these types of activities in the class can help student improve their speaking skills. In fact, his work shows three key factors among student:

Strong sense of trust and support

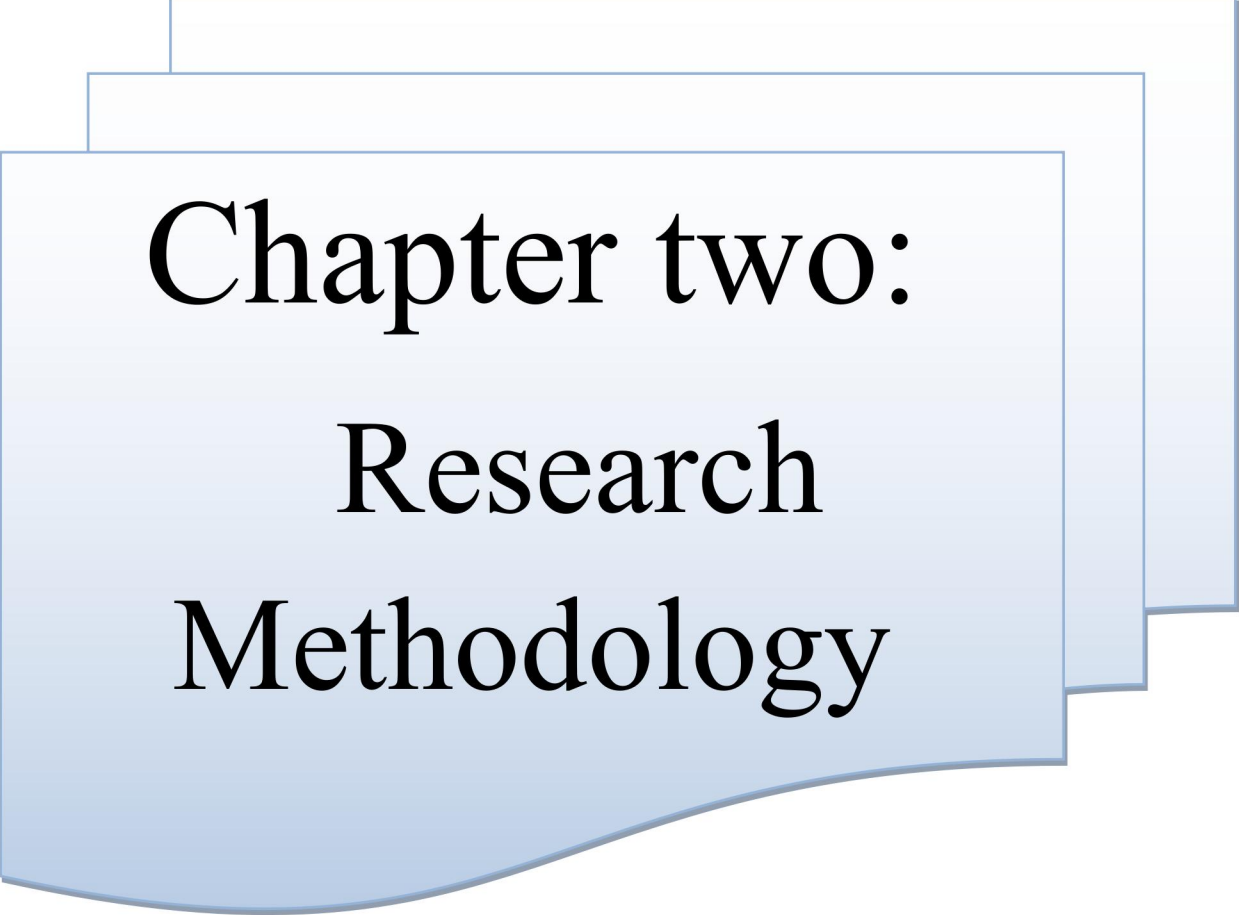
Clear shared goals

Active engagement from each member

To wrap up, the journey of cooperative learning, we can clearly say that this tool (CL) play a crucial role in improving students speaking skill. By working together, student gain confidence, practice more, and achieve better communication outcomes.

### **2.1.8. Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter provided a theoretical foundation for studying the attitudes of English as a foreign language learners towards using cooperative learning to improve their speaking skills. The review of the findings reveals that this approach provides an interactive environment that contributes to enhancing learners' communicative abilities. It also highlights the importance of speaking skills as a fundamental component of language teaching. Based on these conceptual basis, the next chapter will discuss the field results and their connection to concrete educational realities.



**Chapter two:  
Research  
Methodology**

## **Introduction**

This chapter aims to investigate the attitudes of EFL learners' toward using cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills. This investigation is based on a mixed-methods research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to gather information, a questionnaire was administered to all students from different levels in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia. In addition to ensure the validity of the findings and gain deeper insight, interviews were conducted with five teachers from the same department.

This chapter also includes a description of the research sample, data collection, and analysis of the questionnaire and interview results. Finally, recommendations are provided for further research.

## **II- 1Research Design**

the following study was conducted in an EFL context, aiming to investigate EFL learners attitudes toward cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skill. The study adopted a mixed method designe, guided by a descriptive approach, which enable an in depth exploration of the research objective.

### **II-2 Research Samples**

#### **II-2-1 Students sample**

The first sample for this study consists of students from different levels (first Year, Second Year, Third Year, Master 1 and Master 2) in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia during the academic year 2025-2026. The sample comprises 88 students selected randomly in order to obtain reliable and representative data. The decision to include students from different levels was made because they were considered suitable for providing different opinions and experiences about cooperative learning and speaking.

### **II-2-2 Teachers sample**

The second sample includes five teachers who were randomly chosen to participate in the interview. Among them, who hold doctorate, and master's degrees. These teachers have experience in teaching different modules such as oral, writing, literature, and civilisation.

### **II-3 Data Collection Methods**

In order to collect the necessary data for this study, two research instruments were used: student's questionnaire and teacher's interview. The questionnaire was given to EFL students to explore their attitudes toward cooperative learning and its impact on the oral ability. In addition a semi-structured interview was conducted with EFL teachers to gather a deeper experience about the use of cooperative learning in speaking classes.

#### **II-3-1 Description of students' questionnaire:**

The students' questionnaire consisted of thirteen (13) questions. It included close ended questions that required student to choose YES / NO or select the appropriate answer, as well as open ended questions that allowed them to express their opinions freely.

The question covered general information about the students experience with cooperative learning, and their attitude of using it to enhance their speaking skills.

#### **II-3-2 Teachers' interview**

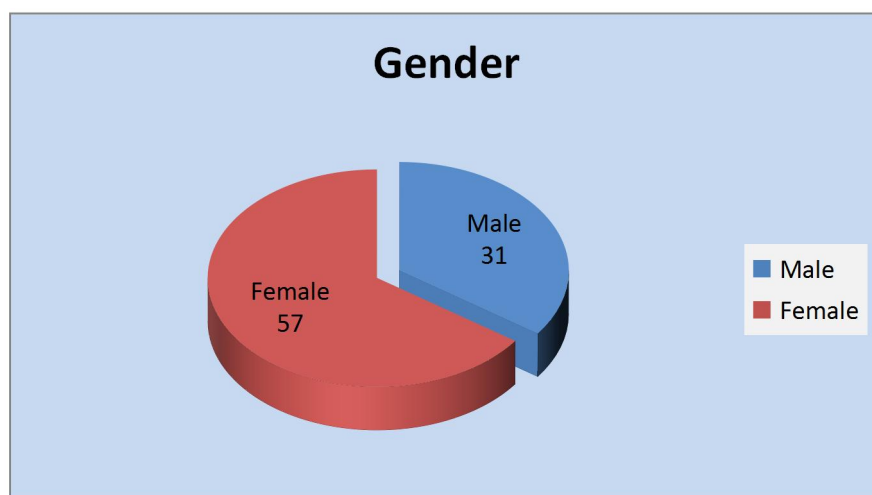
In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were directed with EFL teachers in order to explore their views about using CL in speaking classes, their awareness of students' attitude, and the benefits or challenges of using this method. The interview consisted of five (05) questions to support the objective of the study.

### **II-4 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS :**

The obtained data from the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The questionnaire included close ended questions such as YES\_NO and other scale options ( agree, disagree,neutral.....). the response were sorted and analyzed through frequencies and percentages, while interview responses were reviewed and interpreted to determine the main themes and ideas related to cooperative learning.

### II-5- Questionnaire Results Analysis:

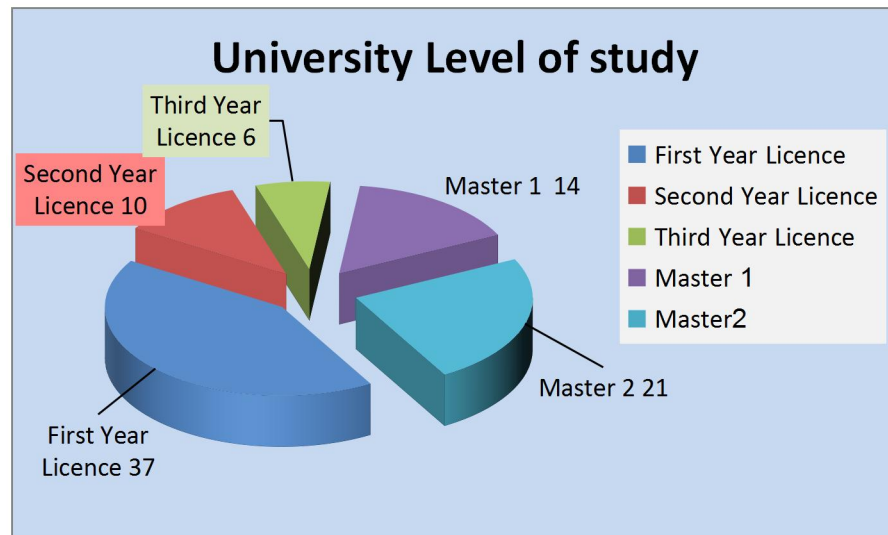
#### Question 01:gender



**Figure 1: Participants Gender**

Figure 1 presents the gender distribution which demonstrates that female participants(65.9%) are almost twice as numerous as male participants (35.2%) in the study sample. This visual representation that is mainly female, which reflects the gender composition commonly, observed in many EFL university classrooms.

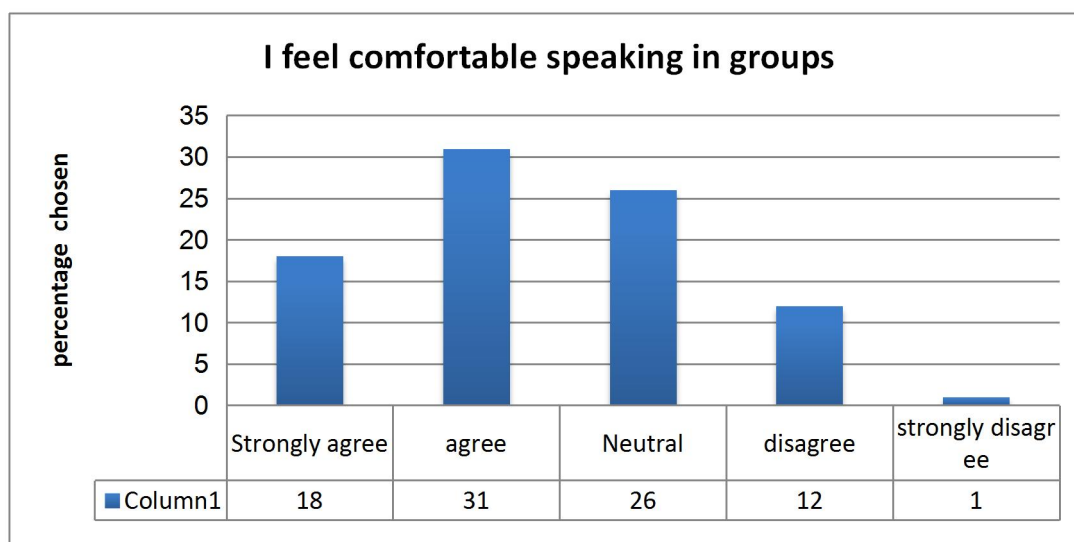
#### Question 2: University Level of study



**Figure 2: participants level of study**

The importance of asking this question is to know about students' university level. The result obtained and observed on the chart above (figure 2) show that the majority of learners who participated in the survey belong to the first year Licence (42%), followed by Master 2 students constitute (23.9%), followed by Master 1 students with (15.9%) of the respondents. A smaller percentage of participants come from second-year license students (11.4%), while third-year license students represent the minority of the sample (6.8%). Overall, this distribution show that the majority of participants belong to the early stages of undergraduate study, whereas fewer respondents are from the moderate license levels.

**Question 3:** I feel comfortable speaking in groups



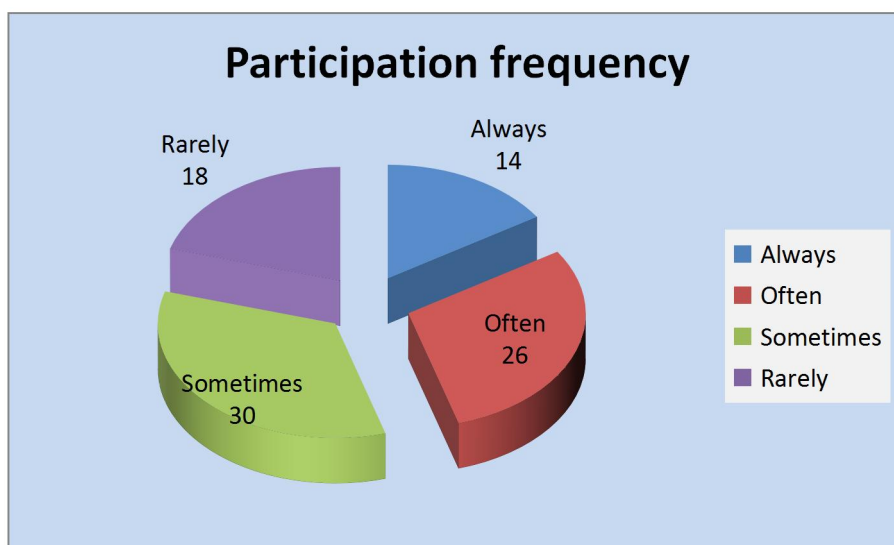
**Figure 3: students comfort level speaking in groups**

Figure (3) represents students' perceptions regarding their comfort when speaking in groups. It is clear that the largest proportion of respondents (35.2%) agreed that they feel comfortable speaking in groups, followed by (20.4%) who are strongly agreed. Together these responses suggest that more than half of the participants express positive attitude towards speaking in group activities.

Meanwhile, (29.5%) of the respondents selected the neutral option, which may indicate uncertainty or moderate comfort when participating in group work. On the other hand, (13.6%) of students disagreed, and only (1.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

We can conclude by saying that, these findings signify that the most EFL learners feel relatively comfortable speaking in groups, which supports the idea that cooperative learning environment, may encourage students to participate more actively in speaking tasks.

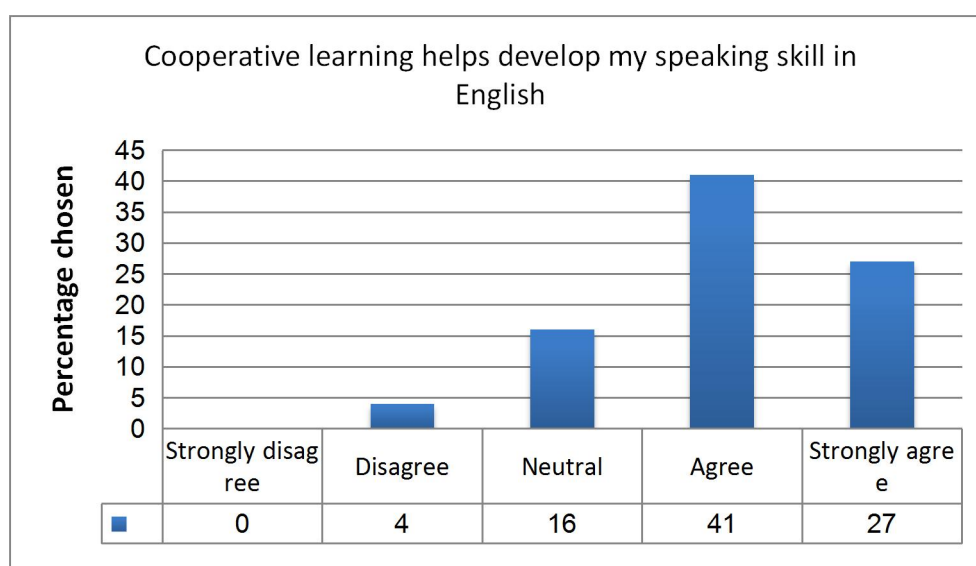
**Question 4:** How often do you participate in cooperative learning activities in speaking classes?



**Figure 4: frequency of students participation in CL activities**

Figure 4 highlights how frequently EFL students participate in cooperative learning activities during speaking classes. We observe that most students participate sometimes (34.1%) or often (29.5%) participate in cooperative learning activities, whereas fewer students rarely (20.5%) or always (15.9%) engage in such practices. This indicates that most EFL students participate in CL activities either sometimes or often. thus, reflects the positive role of CL in promoting classroom interaction.

**Question5:** Cooperative learning helps develop my speaking skill in English.



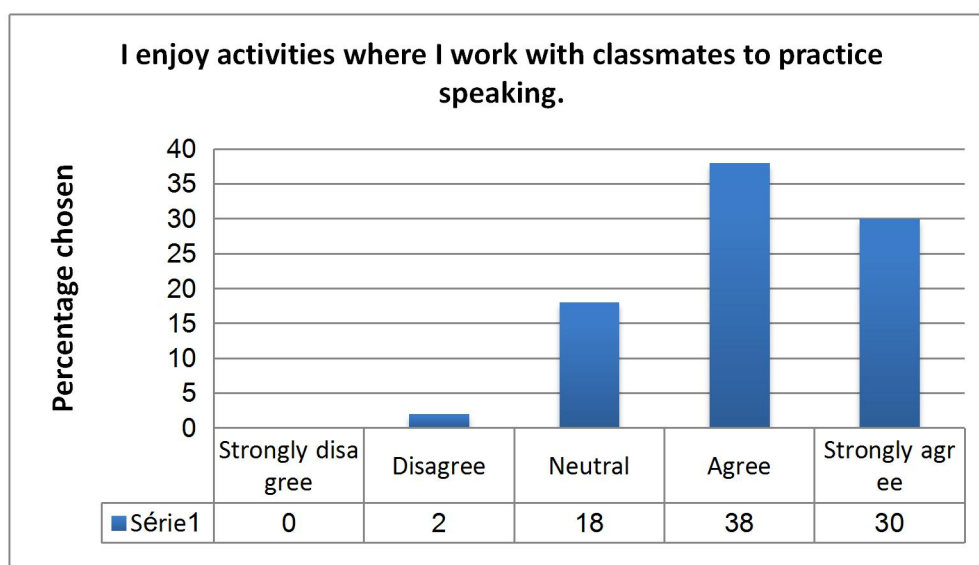
**Figure 5: the Impact of CL on students English Speaking skills**

Figure (5) presents students' responses to the statement "Cooperative learning helps develop my speaking skill in English."

The findings reveal a strongly positive tendency toward the role of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills. Nearly half of the respondents agreed (46.6%), representing the largest proportion, while a substantial percentage strongly agreed (30.7%). Taken together, these responses indicate that more than three quarters (3/4) of the participants express a favorable perception of cooperative learning in EFL classroom. In contrast (18.2%) of students are neutral, suggesting that some learners remain uncertain or have limited experience with cooperative learning activities. Notably the near absence of negative responses, with only (4.5%) expressing disagreement and nonstrongly opposing the statement.

From the acknowledgment of majority of students toward cooperative learning, we assert the perceived value of it as an effective strategy for developing speaking skills.

**Question 6:** I enjoy activities where I work with classmates to practice speaking.

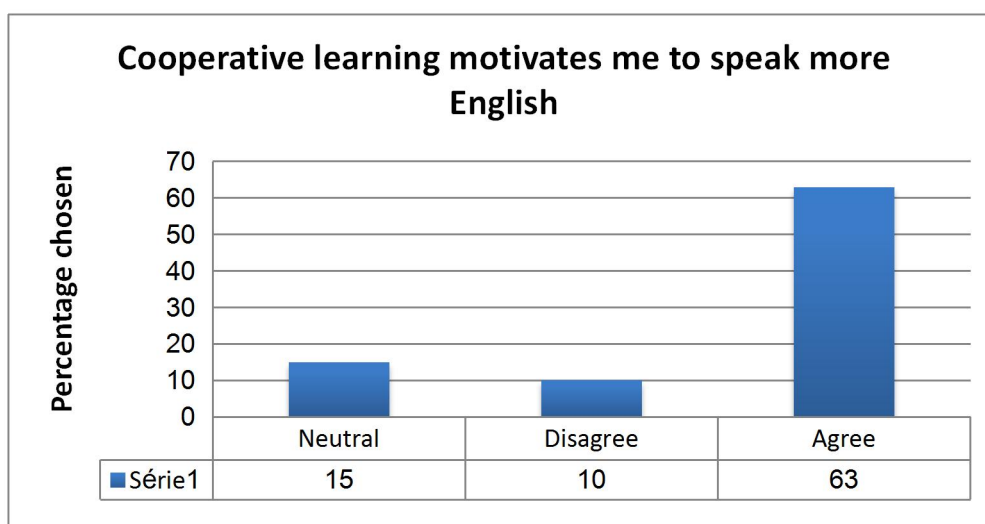


**Figure 6:** level of student interest in peers speaking tasks

Figure (6) shows students answers to the statement " I enjoy activities where I work with classmates to practice speaking". In comparison with the previous statement, the pattern remains similar which the positive responses dominate, underscores that students' perceived effectiveness of cooperative learning is accompanied by a high level of enjoyment. The majority of students agreed (43%), while a considerable proportion strongly agreed (34.1%), showing that most learners not only recognize the value of cooperative learning but also enjoy engaging in it.

On the other hand, neutral responses (20.4%) remain moderate. negative ones are very limited (2.2%) disagree and no students strongly disagree.

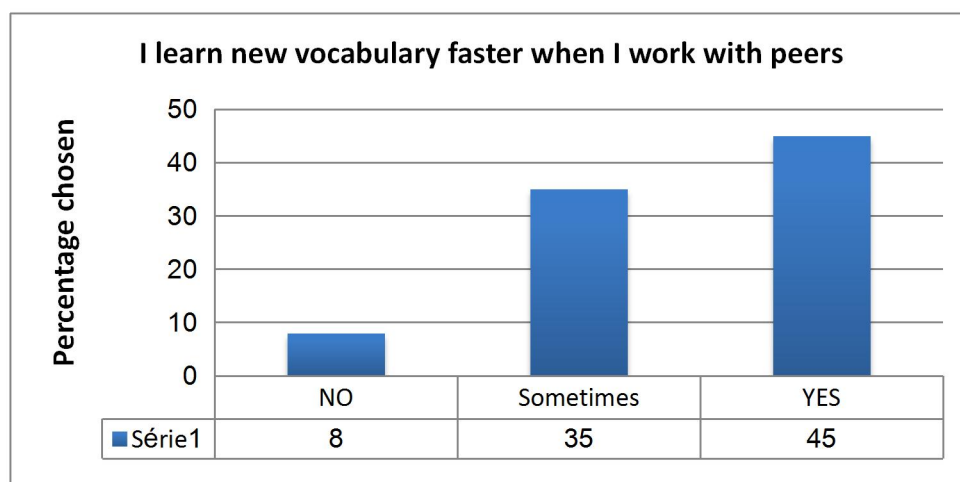
Question 7: Cooperative learning motivates me to speak more English.



**Figure 7: the impact of CL on students' motivation to speak English**

Besides the help and enjoyment that cooperative learning provides, it is visible from the figure (7) that the majority of students about (71,6%) agreed that this strategy motivates them to speak more English, this high percentage indicates that collaborative activities is not only beneficial and enjoyable but also plays significance role in encouraging active oral participation. Meanwhile (17%) of students remain neutral, and only(11,4%) disagree.

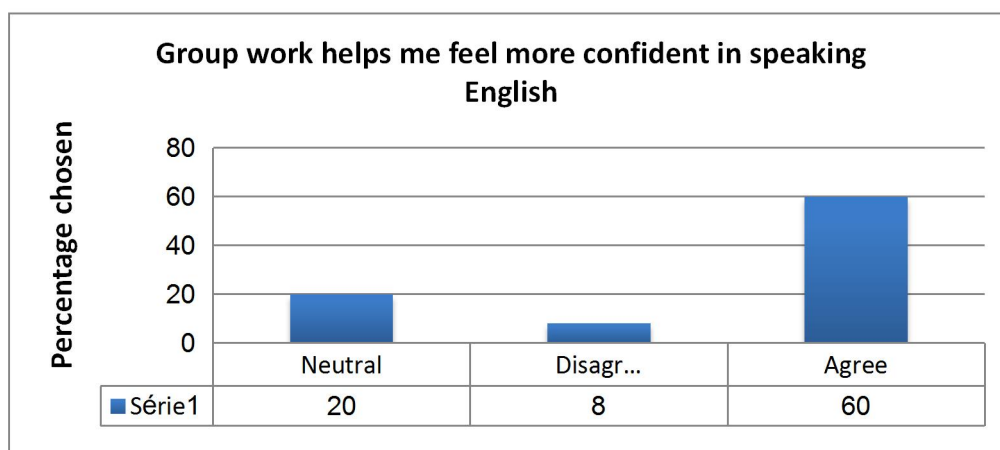
**Question 8:** I learn new vocabulary faster when I work with peers



**Figure 8: frequency of vocabulary development through peer interaction**

As seen in the figure (8), the results show a another positive perception of peer collaboration in vocabulary learning. More than half of the respondents answered "Yes"(51.1%) believe they learn vocabulary faster when working with peers. A large proportion (39.7%) answered "sometimes", indicating that working with classmates is often helpful but may depend on the activity, context or peer interaction. Whereas, only (9%) responded negatively, which probably indicates that some students' favor to work individually for some reasons. We conclude by saying that cooperative learning is largely seen as beneficial for vocabulary development.

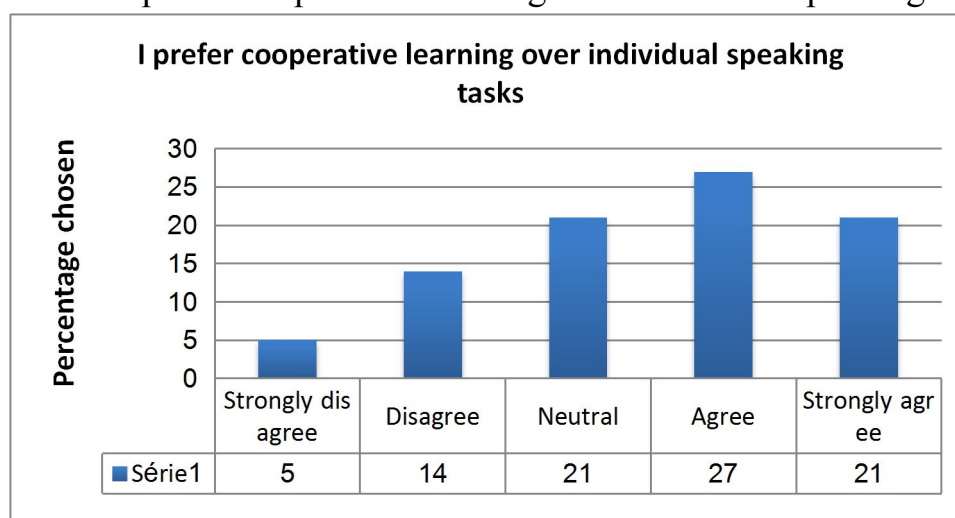
**Question 9:** Group work helps me feel more confident in speaking English.



**Figure 9: students levels of confidence in speaking English in group work**

When examining the distribution of responses, the results indicate that the majority of students agree 60 students (68.2%) that group work increases their confidence in speaking English. However some hesitation is reflected in neutral responses by 20 students (22.7%), negative attitude remains limited with just 8 students (9%) who don't perceive collaborative activity as beneficial for their speaking confidence. Overall, the data demonstrate that group work is effective strategy for creating a more comfortable speaking environment.

**Question 10:** I prefer cooperative learning over individual speaking tasks.

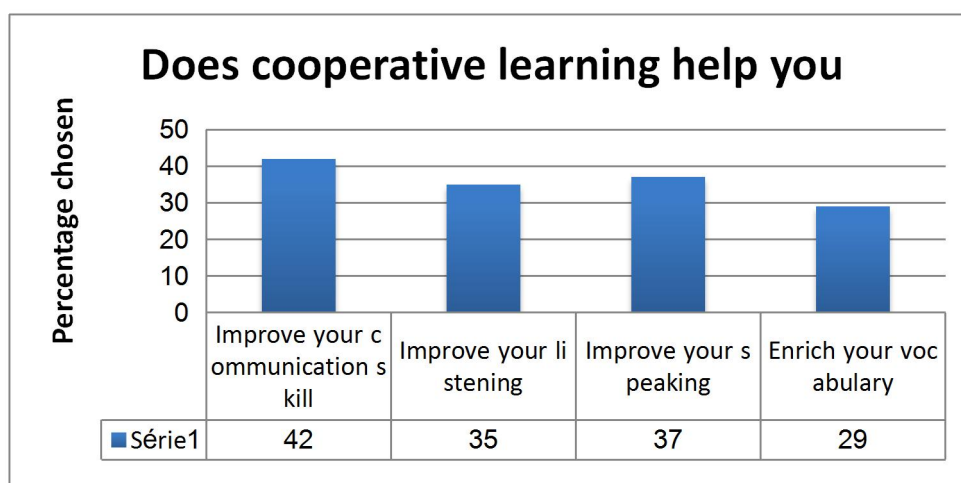


**Figure 10: students preferences for CL vs individual speaking tasks**

Figure 10 shows that the strong presence of agreement as the majority of students either agree (30.7%) or strongly agree (23.9%), indicating that more than of the respondents (48 students) prefer cooperative learning over individual speaking tasks. Despite the positive trend, few learners did not tend to same preference which 21 students (23.8%) remain neutral. On the other hand, 14 students (15.9%) disagree and smaller group strongly disagree (5.7%) suggesting that some learners still favor individuals speaking activities.

It becomes evident that students are more inclined to favor collaborative speaking over individual performance but it is important to balance both of tasks in EFL classrooms since not all students share the same preference.

### Question 11: Does cooperative learning help you.....??



**Figure 11: students perception of the effectiveness of CL**

Figure (11) presents responses from 88 participants, who were able to select multiple ways that cooperative learning helps them. The highest percentage is attributed to communication skills (47.7%), highlighting that interaction and collaboration play a central role in enhancing students' ability to communicate effectively. Closely following this speaking skills (42%), reinforcing the idea that group work creates opportunities for active verbal participation.

Similarly, the improvement in listening skills(39.8%), suggesting that collaborative work also enhances learners' ability to listen and understand others during interaction.

Although, vocabularyenrichment (33%) was selected by smaller proportion; It still represents a significant outcome, indicating that lexical development occurs naturally through interaction rather than direct instruction. These responses confirm that cooperative learning does not target a single skill, but rather fostering comprehensive development language abilities, with a particular emphasis on communication and speaking.

**Question 12:** what difficulties (if any) do you face when working in cooperative groups during speaking activities?

The students' responses underscored a variety of challenges encountered during cooperative speaking activities, with many pointing to affective barriers like shyness and performance anxiety as major obstacles. Several participants confessed that vocabulary limitations and difficulty retrieving words hinder their ability to express themselves fluently. A considerable number of learners complained about unequal participation within groups, observing that dominant speakers often overshadow quieter members. Some also said that balancing differing opinions and consistent interruptions make group discussions even more complicated. Disorganization and uneven allocation of time were two other logistical issues mentioned frequently, only a handful of respondents recognized that differences in culture and miscommunication sometimes lead to disagreement among members of the group. By contrast, a minority claimed they have no difficulties, often saying that this is the result of harmony and consensus within their groups.

In the end, the results highlighted that interpersonal dynamics and emotions are as vital as competency in language to students' experiences while engaging in cooperative speaking tasks.

**Question 13:**What do you enjoy most about cooperative learning activities?

Student feedback indicates that cooperative learning is an effective and versatile tool for enhancing their linguistic, social, and emotional development. Learners expressed their appreciation for the method and the benefits they see in it, with one student saying, "I love learning new vocabulary very quickly," and another stating that "cooperative learning corrects my basic grammar." Beyond the academic aspects, many learners noted that "cooperative learning eliminates anxiety and shyness," highlighting its importance. In response, many said, "Cooperative learning helps us feel more comfortable speaking in a group than alone." This encouraging environment fosters confidence, and one learner mentioned being "able to express their thoughts and opinions without making mistakes". One of the students made a significant point, stating that the unity fostered by cooperative learning is "a means of harmony, not competition," emphasizing its role as a tool for collaboration. While specific activities are often included, some students mentioned that they "enjoy fast-paced games that encourage participation and create a positive classroom environment." Another student explained that "storytelling is also beneficial."

However, some responses presented a completely different perspective. One student stated, "I feel more confident in myself than I do in a group," suggesting this could disrupt the balance of group work. Another student noted that "some individuals tend to be nervous, which affects their performance," and that "some individuals are passive listeners who don't actively participate in the group." Overall, these opinions reflect that while students recognize the importance of collaboration, they believe the effectiveness of cooperative learning hinges on its meticulous organization to mitigate potential drawbacks.

## **II-6-Interview Results Analysis**

**Question01:** How long have you been teaching English as foreign language(EFL)? And how would you define cooperative learning in this context?

**A. How long have you been teaching English as foreign language(EFL)**

Teacher (01): 10 years, 7 years at secondary school and 3 years at University

Teacher (02): 10 years

Teacher (03): 05 years

Teachers (04): 03 years

Teacher (05): 02 years

The feedback given from teachers about their English teaching experience indicated that the majority of them have five (05) years and less of teaching experience, except for two Teachers who have been teaching English for (10) years, which is considered as extensive experience in this field. Notably, Teacher(01) has worked across both secondary and university levels, suggesting a broader pedagogical exposure and adaptability to different learner needs. And one teacher has been teaching for (3) years while the other has been teaching for (2) years of experience respectively, representing early-career educators. While they may still be refining their teaching practices, they are often more open to experimentation and recent pedagogical trends. Overall the interviews revealed a mix of novice, mid-career, and highly experienced teachers. In turn all the teachers given their diverse experiences and a strong background in various levels and fields. They can serve as valuable resources in studies related to teaching methods.

### **B. And how would you define cooperative learning in this context?**

The analysis of the five teachers' responses converge on the idea that CL is a student-centred instructional approach based on group work, interaction and shared learning goals.

Several educators explicitly focused on the structural aspect of CL. Teachers (2) and (4) defined it as a strategy “in which learners are set small groups”<sup>2</sup>, “where carefully small of planned groups of students work together”<sup>4</sup> while Teacher (5) and (3) described it as an approach “where students work together in small groups to achieve shared learning goals”<sup>5</sup>, communication approach<sup>3</sup>. Whereas, Teacher (1) considered it as a method of teaching.

These definitions highlight the importance of organization and shared responsibility in CL settings.

However, Teacher (3) provided a more nuanced perspective by pointing out the challenges of implementation, stating that cooperative learning "is not always easy to implement" due to curricular constraints. Despite this, the teacher acknowledged its practical value, explaining that students "brainstorm and discuss ideas" and "develop each other's ideas" through small group work. This suggests that even when not explicitly used for speaking, cooperative learning still creates opportunities for oral interaction.

Overall, these definitions suggest that teachers perceive cooperative learning as an effective yet sometimes challenging approach that fosters communication, interaction, and learner engagement. This shared understanding aligns with its role in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills by creating a supportive and interactive learning environment.

### **Section 02: Teachers' Practices and Perceptions of Cooperative Learning in EFL Speaking Classes**

This section covers four (04) questions aimed at gathering information regarding the use of cooperative learning in speaking classes. It also focuses on the types of cooperative activities they implement, their perceptions of its impact on students' speaking skills, the challenges they encounter, and their overall recommendations. Which provides insight into how cooperative learning is applied in English classrooms at the university of Ghardaia and how it contributes to the development of its learners' oral communication.

**Question 02:** What types of cooperative learning activities do you usually use in your speaking classes?

The interviews with the teachers reveal a thoughtful approach to CL in EFL classrooms. Commonly used activities include Jigsaw, mentioned by Teachers (1),(2),(4)and (5) described as dividing students into expert groups, each group analyzing a different piece of content or

different scenario. Also they list diverse activities such as Think-pair-share, information Gab, dice/Table Activities, circle Storytelling, debates and pictures-based interaction. As noted by the Teacher (3) who focused on brainstorming tasks and highlighted the difficulty of implementing CL activities which indicate addressing diverse learner needs. However variations in responses suggest that the choice of activities often depend on classroom context, objectives and time constraints. Overall the findings indicate that teachers view CL techniques as essential tools for fostering interaction and creating a dynamic classroom environment.

**Question 03:** In your opinion, how does cooperative learning influence students' speaking skills?

To begin with, most teachers highlighted the benefits of CL for speaking skills. Teacher (1) for example referred to it as "a very effective tool" that "encourages students' speaking skills" and "improves fluency and practical communication skills ". This strong affirmation by Teacher (5) who states that CL has "a positive impact on students' speaking skill" This view is also reinforced by Teacher (4), who described it "as more than just grouping students, stating that it involves sharing ideas expressing their opinion" further noted that learning is "actively constructed and practiced through peer interaction" which helps "reducing the anxiety often associated with speaking a foreign".

Moreover, teachers highlighted the role of CL in fostering interaction and interpersonal communication. Teacher (2) pointed out that it "improves interpersonal skills and interaction in the target language ". This aligns with Teacher (4)'s view that this tool provides "far more opportunities to speak compared to teacher-led lessons," thereby increasing students' exposure to real communication.

In addition, a significant theme emerging from the responses is the impact on learners' psychological and affective factors. Teacher (3) explained that CL has "a great cognitive and socio-affective effect," as it "boosts their confidence" and allows students to feel "safe within

their groups." Similarly, Teacher (4) emphasized that working in small groups "helps to lower anxiety" and creates a "low-pressure environment," which encourages students to participate more freely. This reduction of anxiety is crucial in EFL contexts, where fear of making mistakes often limits willingness to speak. On the other hand from social lens, Teacher (2) and (4) noted that CL "serves to add social dimension to learning" <sup>2</sup>, "develop their social skills". In a nutshell, these perspectives underline the role of CL in shifting the classroom from a passive teacher-centered to an active student-center where learners gain confidence, engage in interaction, and develop their communication competence.

**Question 04:** What challenges have you experienced when implementing cooperative learning in speaking classes?

The teachers' feedback highlights various challenges that might be encountered when using CL. Firstly, one major issue is the emotional barrier students face such as "fear of speaking and shyness" as noted by Teacher(1). This emotional readiness is crucial, without confidence, students struggle to participate fully. Additionally, Teacher (1) mentioned the tendency of students to rely on mobile phones, reflecting a lack of motivation and engagement.

Secondly, aligning with the personal hurdles, educators face structural issues as Teacher (3) pointed out that "the challenges are mostly due to the language problem, students' age and the number of students in the classroom". These considerations matter significantly, as they can complicate communication and effective collaboration among diverse learners.

Also, group dynamics play a significant role, as noted by Teacher (2), who observed "disruptive behaviors" and students depending too much on each other. This reliance can lead to reluctance or disengagement in activities. Teacher(4) further elaborates on this point by emphasizing the need for balance, stating, "dealing with a dominant speaker" can inhibit quieter members. Ensuring all students feel included and encouraged to participate is essential for successful cooperative learning.

Additionally, Teacher (5) drew attention to classroom management concerns, such as "noise and disruption", which can hinder cooperative learning. Addressing "different proficiency levels" and fostering motivation among students are crucial interventions. Creating an engaging and supportive environment is essential for overcoming these barriers.

Furthermore, all the mentioned challenges lead to the biggest obstacle which is interaction issues. Teacher (4) highlighted this problem, particularly the varying proficiency levels among students. "A lack of shared vocabulary" can limit discussion depth, indicating that effective communication strategies are critical. Moreover, the time allocation for activities is vital to ensure structured and productive interactions, as emphasized in Teacher (4)'s response.

Finally, By recognizing and addressing these challenges collectively, educators can develop more effective strategies that promote communication, engagement in a positive learning environment. This holistic approach is vital for fostering successful cooperative learning experiences, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

**Question 05:** Based on your experience, would you recommend cooperative learning for improving speaking skills? Why or why not?

Teacher (01): Yes of course ,I do recommend it.

Teacher (02): Yes, I recommend it.

Teacher (03): I would recommend it.

Teacher (04): Yes , I do.

Teacher (05): Yes, I strongly recommend cooperative learning.

The answers to this question showed that teachers highly recommend CL as an effective pedagogical approach, particularly for enhancing students' engagement and participation. Their responses go beyond simple approval, revealing deeper insight into why and how this method should be integrated into classroom practice.

Several teachers' replies cross on the dominant theme which is the role of cooperative learning in promoting engagement and inclusion. As Teacher (1) noted it "makes students engaged", while Teacher (2) added that learners benefit from peers and develop "a sense of accountability". Similarly, Teacher(5) strongly supported its use for improving speaking proficiency.

However, Teacher (4) introduced an important consideration, stressing that its success depends on factors such as "learning objectives, learner needs,time management and cultural backgrounds". This shows that CL is not automatically successful but requires thoughtful planning and adaption to context.

All in all, the interview revealed a strong consensus among teachers on the effectiveness of cooperative learning enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. The findings show that this approach promotes interaction, improves fluency, builds confidence, and creates a supportive learning environment. Despite some challenges related to its implementation, teachers agree that, when carefully planned and adapted to learners' needs, cooperative learning remains a valuable and impactful strategy for developing students' communicative abilities.

## **II-7-Results and Discussion**

This section deals with the results of each study instrument on the light of the proposed hypotheses. The study aimed to investigate the attitude of EFL learners toward using cooperative learning to develop their speaking skills. And identify the benefits of using CL and any obstacles faced by learners. As it was address the following hypotheses to get a valuable comprehensive data.

Cooperative learning helps EFL student improve their speaking skill.

There is a connection between cooperative learning and the development of learners speaking skills.

There is positive attitude from the student toward using cooperative learning

A critical analysis of student's questionnaires and teacher interviews revealed that all the sampled students of the department of English at the University of Ghardaia expressed a positive attitude toward using cooperative learning.

They view cooperative learning as a valuable method for improving their speaking fluency. Teachers also recognized the effectiveness of CL and endorse its value in language learning. Additionally, the majority of student's reports that this approach helped them improve the skill and remove the tackles they have.

However, the questionnaire analysis indicates that most students faced difficulties and challenges when using cooperative learning, such as difficulties with confidants, shyness and teacher feedback. Despite these challenges, students report easy access to cooperative learning activities and note that they felt more confidants in their speaking skills after participating in them.

The finding of both student's questionnaire and teachers interviews supported the proposed hypothesis . While students expressed a positive attitudes toward cooperative learning and reported improvement in their speaking skills , teachers also confirmed its effectiveness in promoting participation, interaction and confidence among learners. These finding are consistent with the literature reviewed in chapter one, which emphasize the importance of cooperative learning in creating opportunities for meaningful communication and Language development . Although some challenges were reported, such as shyness, lack of confidence and unigual participation , both students and teachers agree that the benefits of cooperative learning outweigh its difficulties.

### **Conclusion**

As provided in this chapter the results obtained from the two research instruments that we included in order to explore EFL learners toward using cooperative learning in EFL teaching and learning, and contribution on developing speaking skill. Therefore, it is confirmed that the

effectiveness of cooperative learning as a learning technique enhances their speaking skills, as well as its value in language learning.

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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The Well-known statement by Benjamin Franklin «tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn».in line with this idea, Teaching techniques have been one of the paths that teachers rely on them to involve and enhance the learner skills. One of these strategies is collaborative learning, which offers valuable opportunities for the development of language skills, particularly speaking. Therefore, the research seeks to find out EFL students' attitudes toward the use of cooperative learning in oral expression classes and the challenges faced by teachers in implementing this method.

The research aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are EFL learner's attitudes toward using cooperative learning to improve their speaking skills?
- How does cooperative learning affect EFL learners' speaking skills?
- What challenges do EFL teachers face when implementing cooperative learning in speaking activities?

These questions led the researchers to formulate the following hypotheses:

- EFL learners shows a positive attitudes toward cooperative learning as a method to improve speaking skill.
- There is a positive correlation between cooperative learning and the development of learners speaking skills.
- Learners may face various challenges, including time managements, shynes,and unigual participation, when applying cooperative learning.

To answer the research questions and confirm/infirm the research hypotheses a mixed-methods approach was used. A questionnaire was administrated to 88 randomly selected EFL students of all levels (First Year, Second Year, Third Year, Master 1 and Master 2) in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia, and interview was conducted with 5 oral expression teachers; three of them held doctoral degrees, and two held masters degrees.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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The questionnaire focused on students' attitudes toward cooperative learning in speaking classes and the difficulties they may face during its use. In addition, the interview with teachers focused on their experience in using this approach (CL) to teach the speaking skill, as well as the main.

The findings revealed that cooperative learning affects EFL learners speaking skill, by providing learners with more opportunities to practice speaking in group activities, which helps them improve their fluency. Students reported that working in groups encouraged them to speak more frequently and participate in classroom discussions.

One of the hypotheses proposed that learners may face several challenges when using CL, however, the results from the questionnaire analysis reveals that some learners face difficulties such as lack of participation, unequal contribution among group members. Despite these challenges, most students found cooperative learning useful and demonstrated a positive attitudes toward using this effective instructional approach. Therefore, all the hypotheses are confirmed.

In conclusion, this research investigate EFL learners attitude toward using cooperative learning to enhance their speaking skills. The evidence showed a largely positive perception among most of the students; as they believed that collaborative learning build confidence and fluency in their English communication. Thus, it can be argued that integrating cooperative learning activities in EFL classroom can significantly support students language developments.

### **Recommendation and suggestions:**

Relying on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to improve the use of cooperative learning in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills:

- Educators should move away from teacher dominance through regularly integrating CL in order to promote active participation and ensure effective interaction through proper monitoring.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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- Teachers are encouraged to create a low-anxiety environment that promotes confidence and builds self-trust, while also engaging in training programs and workshops to develop effective strategies for implementing cooperative learning in EFL contexts.
- As a student, be an active one by collaborating with peers by sharing ideas, listening carefully, and respecting different opinions. While also creating a milieu for practicing foreign language inside and outside the classroom in order to gain confidence and fluency.
- Students should report any difficulties within their groups directly to the teacher and express their preferences for changing group members when necessary.
- As a future researcher, it is recommended to explore the long-term effects of CL and the role of individual differences on learners' attitudes.
- It would be beneficial to examine the role of technology in supporting CL for example online collaboration tools and its effect on developing speaking skills.

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### Appendices

#### Appendix 1

##### Students Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire Aims to Investigate EFL learners' opinions about using cooperative learning to improve their speaking skills. Please answer the questions honestly. There are no right or wrong answers, and all responses will remain confidential and used only for research.

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. University Level of study

- First Year Licence
- Second Year Licence
- Third Year Licence
- Master 1
- Master 2

1. I feel comfortable speaking in groups

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. How often do you participate in cooperative learning activities in speaking classes

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely

3. Cooperative learning helps develop my speaking skill in English

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I enjoy activities where i work with classmates to practice speaking

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Cooperative learning motivates me to speak more English

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

6. I learn new vocabulary faster when i work with peers

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

7. Group work helps me feel more confident in speaking English

- Agree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
8. I prefer cooperative learning over individual speaking tasks
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
9. Does cooperative learning help you .....
- Enrich your vocabulary
  - Improve your speaking
  - Improve your listening
  - Improve your communication skill
10. What difficulties (if any) do you face when working in cooperative groups during speaking activities?.....
11. What do you enjoy most about cooperative learning activities?.....

### APPENDIX 02:

#### Teacher Question

Dear teachers, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions about cooperative learning. Your responses will be used only for research purposes and will be highly appreciated

1. How long have you been teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)? And how would you define cooperative learning in this context?
2. What types of cooperative learning activities do you usually use in your speaking classes?
3. In your opinion, how does cooperative learning influence students' speaking skills?
4. What challenges have you experienced when implementing cooperative learning in speaking classes?
5. Based on your experience, would you recommend cooperative learning for improving speaking skills? Why or why not?

## ملخص البحث

في العديد من فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التقليدية، والتي تشتهر بهيمنة المعلم، مما يعيق بشكل كبير تطور مهارات التحدث لدى المتعلمين. غالبًا ما يبقى الطلاب متلقين سلبيين للمعرفة في هذه البيئات وعلى الرغم من فعالية التعلم التعاوني في معالجة هذه المشكلة من خلال تعزيز التفاعل، إلا أن الأبحاث التي تناولت على وجه التحديد مواقف المتعلمين تجاه استخدامه لتحسين مهاراتهم الشفوية محدودة. ونتيجة لذلك، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى بحث مواقف متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه استخدام التعلم التعاوني لتعزيز مهاراتهم في التحدث. فالتحدث مهارة تتطلب التفاعل والثقة والطلاقة، ويوفر التعلم التعاوني للمتعلمين فرصًا للمشاركة الفعالة في تواصل حقيقي. اعتمدت الدراسة تصميمًا بحثيًا وصفيًا لاستكشاف هذه الظاهرة. أُجريت الدراسة في جامعة غرداية مع طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من جميع المستويات في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، باستخدام منهجية بحثية مختلطة. وُرِّع استبيان على الطلاب وأُجريت مقابلات مع المعلمين. أظهرت النتائج أن معظم الطلاب لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه التعلم التعاوني كأداة لتحسين مهاراتهم في التحدث، كما سلطت الدراسة الضوء على ضرورة دمج التعلم التعاوني في الممارسات الصفية لتمكين المتعلمين من التحدث بحرية، والتغلب على الخجل، وتجاوز ميلهم إلى الاستماع فقط. لذا، يُشجع المعلمون على تبني استراتيجيات التعلم التعاوني لخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر تفاعلية.