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# **The Impact of Cooperative Learning on Developing Students' Oral Production.**

**The case of Second Year LMD Students of the English Division at  
the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra**

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Master Degree in Sciences of Language

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# **Dedication**

To my beloved parents for their unyielding love and unparalleled support

To my brothers and sisters who are many to name

To my current and previous teachers and supervisors

To my dear and close friends everywhere, especially: B. Nacereddine,

B. Housseem, G. Mohamed Jihad, Ch. Kamel, and Soulef.

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# Abstract

Cooperative learning is a teaching technique that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to reach a common goal. Its effectiveness and importance had been documented through numerous research studies. Therefore, and in the same flow, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning and clarify students' and teachers' views and beliefs of its importance, and application in second year of LMD classes in the division of English at Biskra university. This study is made up of three chapters. It is hoped that it could help change through the first two chapters, the way of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Thus, raise awareness of the role that students could play by helping each other learn, and overcome problems of both students who have low classroom oral performance, and teachers who encounter some problems managing overcrowded classes and get students to practise speaking the foreign language. In the third chapter, data were collected through submitted questionnaires for participants (sixty six students and five teachers) containing open and closed questions. The method of this research work is quite descriptive. We gathered quantitative and qualitative data which were analysed, in a descriptive way, to investigate the real status and application of cooperative learning, contrasted to mere group work, in teaching oral expression for second year classes. Also, the analysis provided the insights of teachers' beliefs and views of implementing cooperative learning. Finally, the results have shown that cooperative learning is a very useful substitute-method, to traditional teaching, which helps to create suitable situations where students can use the language without hesitation and, therefore, increase and enhance their oral production. This study has certainly its limitations, but its findings revealed interesting implications. Thus, future research should be conducted experimentally to test out the applicability of the findings to a larger population of subjects.

# List of Abbreviations

CL : Cooperative Learning

EFL : English as Foreign Language

FL : Foreign Language

L2/SL : Second Language

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctora

OP : Oral Production/Proficiency

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## **General Introduction**

Education is a vital aspect of any modern society. This means that a great deal of importance is given to the quality of what children learn at school and the efficient strategies to teach them. As in our society, our educational system encounters a number of challenging goals such as enhancing students' critical thinking, confidence and self-esteem, promoting social skills, and emphasizing group work. In our universities, we see that a considerable number of teachers and students are not satisfied with how the lessons go, what activities are included, and what students should learn and improve, etc. Therefore, as being students and probably future teachers, we see it relevant to help raise awareness of what should be incorporated in a typical classroom and how that is possible. And in our case, we will be investigating the impact of cooperative learning on students' speaking-skill development.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

After almost five years of being students at the university, we came to see that many students are somewhat frustrated to read about and hear much ideal talk and see little done concerning how to best manage and give English lessons. Because of that, students are still having difficulties interacting with each other and communicating their ideas in English. Since classroom is the main situation in which learners are granted the opportunity to use the target language, the kind of methodology/technique followed surely has a great influence on language development. Indeed, this is due to the little attention given to the belief that students learn best when they are brought together in productive cooperative groups. Yet, learners may show variation in accepting this fact for many reasons such as, their cultural background, first language, gender, ethnics, affective filters, etc. Also, teachers may find it hard to shift from the traditional way of teaching in which they used to focus on information and ideas and how to transfer them to those passive learners. Therefore, the main problem we will be investigating throughout this research is the existing relationship between cooperative learning and developing students' speaking skill. So, the precise question that we will try to answer would be about the way and extent to which CL could affect the students' oral performance.

## **2. Scope of the Study**

The present study is an investigation of the cooperative learning's impact on students' speaking proficiency at the Division of English in the University of Biskra. More precisely, the investigation seeks to understand the mechanisms that can improve students' speaking abilities using cooperative learning as an effective strategy. Therefore, it is expected to contribute positively to the improvement of learners' oral performance, and would make the foreign language teaching more dynamic and effective.

## **3. Aim of the Study**

The present study, which is conducted with teachers and students of second year from the division of English at Biskra University, aims to reach the following objectives. First, it aims to identify the nature of cooperative learning and investigate its efficacy on developing students' speaking skill. Second, this work aims at describing the way(s) to implement cooperative learning in teaching English as a foreign language and how teachers should manage their classes through organizing groups. Third, to recognize the potential obstacles that learners may face when learning the target language and how to surmount them. In a more precise way, the following points can also be considered:

- Increase opportunities for students' talking time.
- To encourage teachers to understand and use cooperative learning in the classroom.
- To give teachers better opportunities and more time to implement cooperative learning techniques in EFL classes.

## **4. Significance of the Study**

The present study would be a contribution to the research in foreign language teaching and learning. More particularly, it can help EFL practitioners understand better the role of cooperative learning to enhance their learners' oral proficiency. The study also calls for encouraging teachers, students, and administration to come around one table and discuss their curriculum and future lesson plans according to the needs of all parties. As a result, students would be eager to participate in class, increase their opportunities for talking time and make use of small group work to achieve high level performance and better outcomes in the subject under study.

## **5. Research Questions**

This study aims to answer a number of questions. The followings are but a selection:

- Do teachers use cooperative learning in language teaching?
- How beneficial is cooperative learning to students' speaking skill?
- What are the challenges that both teachers and learners may encounter when using group work activities

## **6. Hypothesis**

In the present study, we hypothesize that:

If teachers use cooperative learning when dealing with the speaking skill, students would develop a range of communicative skills and, eventually, their oral production.

## **7. Research methodology and tools**

In this research, we will opt for a descriptive method to determine some facts of current situations inside EFL classes. And this is due to the nature of our work, which is based on investigating and describing the existing relationship between our two variables.

Also, we seek to clarify the status, advantages and importance of cooperative learning in students' learning experience. Moreover, the choice of this method can also be justified by the fact that this research methodology can provide us with consistent and comprehensive information and valid results without consuming time. Thence, the data collection method that will be used is a paper and pencil survey. This is mainly intended given the time allowed, and because it is the most efficient way to obtain adequate data rapidly. Two questionnaires will be issued; one will be handed to teachers, who have been teaching for long, so that their answers will be a product of many years of observation and evaluation of learners' needs at Biskra university. And the second one will be directed to a sample of students of second year, to collect data about their views on group work, oral skill, and their correlation.

Hopefully, the use of this data collection method can be of great use for our investigation. On the other hand, because of time constraint, we find it necessary to choose a sample from the whole population through random sampling process. This is in order to avoid subjectivity at all and serve the scope of the study as well. Participants of this investigation are students of the second year LMD of the Division of English at University of Biskra. Their number is 500. They are divided into two sections. The first one includes groups from 1-5, and the second one includes 6-10.

Since it is difficult to deal with this huge number of students, we have opted for a small sample. It is composed of 66 students randomly selected from all the 10 groups. We are also interested in the teachers of Oral Expression at the same division and we selected five of them, because they were the only ones available at that particular time (Mars 2014).

## **8. Structure of the study**

The present work is divided into three main chapters. The first two ones review the related literature of the two main variables which are CL and Oral Proficiency (OP)/Speaking Skill. And the third one is the practical field of this work.

The first chapter provides a better understanding of the nature of cooperative learning and learning in small groups. It includes the historical background of cooperative learning, definitions, characteristics, strategies, benefits and pitfalls. Also, the roles of teachers and learners will be briefly tackled to provide a clear image to those involved in the learning process.

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

The last chapter deals with data analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of both teachers and learners' questionnaires. It will help us to see whether the results go in the same direction of our hypothesis. And finally, we included our general conclusion of this whole research and a few pedagogical implications to be considered.

# **Chapter One:**

## Cooperative Learning

## **Introduction**

Cooperative learning (CL) is one of the most distinguished of all teaching practices for "[it] is a win-win situation" (Wong, H. 1998, p. 15). In foreign language learning, cooperative learning provides students with the opportunity to use the language in different meaningful situations. It has become a popular and relatively uncontroversial strategy to the organization of classroom instruction. Therefore in this chapter, we will provide a better understanding of cooperative language learning. It includes an overview and some definitions of cooperative learning as a strategy that can be applied in many academic subjects, its characteristics, and strategies. The roles of the teacher and learners are also discussed together with the benefits and pitfalls of CL. This chapter discusses some other elements, so it is not limited to those mentioned above.

### **1. An overview of cooperative learning**

After great endeavors in the field of education for more effective ways of how to best teach a L2/FL, and according to Slavin (1995), a learning strategy had been developed. With this learning strategy, students are meant to interact and communicate more with each other. In that way, learners will build their own understanding and enhance their social skills (Slavin *ibid*, p.20). Today, this strategy of teaching is known as cooperative learning which is more than a mere group work.

The history of cooperative learning can be traced back hundreds of years and longer as far as the early twentieth century (Slavin, 1995, p. 9). Research on CL began in the late 1890s when Triplett (1898) in the States and Mayer (1903) in Germany conducted a series of research on the factors associated with competitive performance. They were followed, in 1916, by John Dewey whose book "Democracy & Education" was one of the first to argue that the classroom should reflect the larger society and be a laboratory for real life learning (Slavin 1995, p.69). Around the middle of the twentieth century, CL was mainly based on the works of Lev Vygotsky's and (1962) Jean Piaget's (1965) developmental theories which emphasize the importance of discussion and problem-solving skills among peers. Both of them stress the role of social interaction in learning (Slavin, *ibid*, p 101)

Cooperative learning is founded on significant premises about the interactive and cooperative nature of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.194). Although the term may not have been frequently used, CL in some forms has been practised for decades, therefore, CL has an ancient root in education (Arnold, J. 1999, p.13).

Also there are pioneers in CL, such as: David and Rodger Johnson at the University of Minnesota, Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins University, and Elizabeth Cohen at Stanford. They have devoted years of detailed research and analysis on cooperative, competitive and individualistic efforts to learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 46).

## **2. Definitions**

Cooperative learning is now becoming an important and standard teaching method in instruction. It is widely accepted and highly recommended as being the most preferred teaching strategy in education. It seeks to surmount the weaknesses and pitfalls of the traditional instruction by structuring activities carefully (Slavin, 1995, p. 55). Also, Johnson & Johnson (1998) gave an explicit definition to cooperative learning in which they said that the main focus of cooperative learning is the student-student connection and, they also stated:

Cooperative learning is a student centered approach that believes that active learning is more effective than passive one where the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than an instructor. Through cooperative learning, students have to exchange ideas, make plans and propose solutions to accomplish a collaborative goal. Therefore, it can enhance students' social and personal developments (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, as cited in Seng, T.H. 2006, 8).

Cooperative learning for Johnson, et al, (1991) Boud, et al, (1999) is also defined to be the process of teaching and learning in which the students learn from each other and teach each other while the teacher is not involved directly in teaching or controlling the class (Johnson, et al, 1991, & Boud, et al, 1999, as cited in Dunn, G. k. 2006, p.6)

Also Macaulay & Gonzalez (1996) describe cooperative learning as being all about structuring students in small groups:

It is the instructional use of small groups so that learners are able to work together in a manner that enhances both group and individual learning. The key to cooperative learning is the careful structuring of learning groups. There are many ways to structure such groups, but some of the key elements are the building of interdependence, the designing of interactive processes, and accountability. The building of social skills around such areas as decision-making, communication, and conflict management is also fundamental to cooperative learning (Macaulay & Gonzalez, 1996, p.2).

In other words, cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their individual and collective learning. In 2004, Joubert explains that the teacher in cooperative learning plays different roles that contrast with his/her role in the traditional method of teaching. For example, the teacher can be an organizer, facilitator, prompter, guide, motivator, and observer (Joubert, 2004). Thus, what makes cooperative learning so special is that students spend much of their time in the classroom working together in small, heterogeneous learning groups, in which they help each other learn. Therefore, they feel dependent upon each other to achieve their goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 70).

### **3. Characteristics of cooperative learning (elements):**

Cooperative learning has been shown to encourage and support most of the affective factors which connect and correlate positively with language learning; reducing anxiety, and increasing motivation (Arnold, J. 1999, p.226). And those affective factors also connect and correlate with developing positive attitudes toward learning, promoting confidence and self-esteem, as well as supporting different learning styles and encouraging perseverance in the difficult process of learning a L2/FL (Arnold, J. *ibid*, p.227). And among the big number of models which describe the characteristics of CL, there are three models of Slavin (1983, 1990), Kagan (1989, 1994) and Johnson & Johnson (1989, 1999) that share the following five important elements /characteristics:

#### **3.1. Positive interdependence**

Students in cooperative learning are engaged positively and cooperatively in completing, or achieving a task; a common goal. Therefore, students are not just in groups; they work together in groups, playing an essential and significant role in each other's learning success. Because, cooperative learning requires social interaction and negotiation of meaning among heterogeneous group members engaged in tasks in which they solve problems through purposeful talk, collaborative arguing and reasoning (Crandall, 1990, as cited in Arnold, 1999, p.227).

For group members share a common goal; each learner has an important role to play, therefore they believe that their success rests on the success of the other elements of the group (they fail or succeed together). In other words, and according to Johnson & Johnson (1999) in cooperative learning activities, students have two responsibilities: 1) Learn the assigned subject matter. 2) Ensure that all members of the group learn and attain their task goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.19).

So, Crandall (1990) in this regard, said that cooperative learning is more than just collaboration in which groups work to complete a task or develop a product without the help or contribution of each of the members. Therefore, all of the individual members have to participate in the success of their cooperative groups (Crandall, 1990, in Arnold, 1999, p.227).

### **3.2. Face-to-face interaction (promotive interaction):**

This is the second feature of cooperative learning which puts emphasis on small group interaction, and this is important to the group members to promote each other's success (learners, while working cooperatively are motivated to help one another accomplish group goals). In his book in 1999, Arnold explains this by saying that some cooperative structures use pairs which is easier to manage, however; in order to provide the opportunity for more role-exchange, multiple ideas, and more interaction; a group that consists of 3-5/4-6 students is considered typical, specially for classes of big number. And that is since students can participate in both pair and group activities without the need to change each time the group as it may happen with pairs. Groups are purposefully made heterogeneous (consisting of members that are different from each other) in order to maximize each student's contribution to the group (Arnold J. 1999, p. 227).

Johnson, et al, (1991) believe that "Promotive interaction is when individuals facilitate, encourage, provide feedback, challenge and influence each other's efforts in order to reach the group goals" (Johnson, et al, 1991, as cited in Dunn G. k. 2006, p.6). Each group members provide their colleagues with opportunities to learn from others by explaining how to solve a problem or how to settle an argument, and that happens in activities requiring individual roles. Each group members play roles according to their potentials and characters. Finally, all members of the group help their peers to be equally prepared to participate in large group activities such as discussion or quiz (Arnold J. 1999, p.228).

### **3.3. Individual Accountability**

Individual accountability is the third essential element of cooperative learning. Arnold J. (1999) states that this is encouraged through the assignment of specific roles or tasks, and individuals are held accountable for the success of each of the other members. Individual accountability exists when the performance of individual learners is assessed, then returned to the team and the individual so that everyone sees the performance level of their team members. And in this way the results will be revealed and it becomes apparent to the team which one of them needs help, encouragement, and support, and makes it difficult to waste

time during activities. So each team member feels in charge of their own and their teammates' learning and makes an active contribution to the group (Arnold, 1999, p.228).

For Kagan (1989), the teacher here must be able to determine what each individual had learned, as well as what the groups had accomplished. There is a number of ways to check for individual accountability; by randomly selecting student papers, if each student was doing a written work, random oral quizzes of students, or written quizzes or examinations at the culmination of the work (Kagan, 1989, as cited in Liang T, 2002, pp.32-33)

### **3.4. Development of (interpersonal) small group social skills**

The fourth element of cooperative learning is the appropriate use of interpersonal and small-group skills. According to Arnold J. (1999); for cooperative learning to be successful group members are taught a number of social skills which make the tasks easy for team work, such as leadership, decision-making, negotiation, conflict and problem-solving; communication both verbal and non-verbal, and trust-building (Arnold J. 1999, p. 288).

Group members are trained in order to purposefully coordinate efforts to achieve mutual goals, learners must get to know each other, communicate accurately and positively, build their trust, accept and support each other and resolve conflict constructively (Isaacs, B.V. 2008, p. 10).

Johnson & Johnson (1999) stated that placing socially unskilled students in a group and asking them to cooperate does not guarantee their success. According to him, we are not born instinctively knowing how to interact and communicate effectively with others. Interpersonal and small-group skills do not magically appear when they are needed. Students must be trained and taught the social skills required for high quality collaboration and be motivated to use them if cooperative groups are to be productive (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.37).

### **3.5. Group processing**

The final component of cooperative learning is group processing. According to Arnold (1999), what learners need in addition to engaging in group tasks, is to reflect upon (process) and discuss their group progress, experience and/or the completion of their goal. Learners discuss how well they are functioning, i.e. how well they are achieving their goals, which problems they are encountering, what member actions are helpful and unhelpful, how group's effectiveness can be continuously improved, and make decisions about which actions to change or continue (Arnold J. 1999, pp.228-229). So, group processing provides invaluable

information that enables the teacher by listening to students' explanation to each other, to determine what they do and do not understand (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 40).

#### **4. Strategies of Cooperative Learning**

Many teachers when implementing cooperative learning their first time fail, because of many reasons. Most of all is students showing resistance and no interest that result from having no former experience (Kagan, 2009, p.217). For Johnson & Johnson (1999) that is expected because they generally do not know how to act and interact in systematic groups to achieve a common goal. There are many conditions we need to set in order to make cooperative learning take place correctly, effectively and successfully (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.43). So we need to provide both teachers and students with the necessary steps and strategies to implement cooperative learning activities successfully.

##### **4.1. Preparing learners for cooperative tasks**

Arnold (1999) stated that perhaps the greatest mistake teachers make in initiating cooperative learning is failing to prepare the learners for the new approach. Thus, we need to prepare the learners by allowing them to practice and receive feedback on skills such as active listening, and positive feedback, and then students will feel comfortable and ready to effectively take roles in their cooperative groups, and then learn how to be active and constructive to provide positive feedback on their peers' contribution (Arnold J. 1999, p.243).

##### **4.2. Assigning learners to specific and meaningful tasks**

The second important strategy is having prepared a set of interesting topics and tasks for cooperative activities. And that means, the quality of the activities is essential because it grabs the learners' attention, and urges them for further evaluation and discussion (Kagan, 2009, p.220). Therefore, Arnold (1999) suggests that these constructive learning activities such as investigating causes of hunger, interviewing family members to collect proverbs or folktales, or studying water or soil samples for environmental health will trigger meaningful interaction, keep the students motivated and active, and develop learning styles and strategies (Arnold J. 1999, p. 243).

##### **4.3. Debriefing learners on their experience with Cooperative Learning**

In cooperative learning important skills such as social, linguistic and cognitive are developed through the activities that take place during the session (Kagan, 2009, p. 221). And teachers need to provide some time for reflection and processing to help effectively the

students understand and review the facts not only on what was learned about language or content, but also on what was learned about social interaction and how it was learned, problems that happened and ways to solve them (Arnold J. 1999: p.243).

#### **4.4. Involving learners in evaluating individual and group contributions**

For Kagan (2009) learners have to feel responsible for their own and each other's learning, through having them involved in the assessment and evaluation of their experience. Even though, this may not easily happen because students are expected to not welcome this new task and do not appreciate it at first (Kagan, 2009, p.222) . So, sometimes it is effective if the teacher asks the students to evaluate themselves and contributions they made to the group, and then he/she may also ask them to assess their peers of the group and the group's work as a whole (Arnold, J. 1999, p.244).

These strategies of cooperative learning and others, proved helpful and effective to first; get the students used to the experience of cooperative group work and then, work on their skills for better improvement. And that, requires time and skills at group management.

### **5. Redefinition of the roles**

In cooperative learning Kagan (1987) and Kessler (1992) attempts to redefine the roles of both teachers and learners in the light of methodology, which relies more on cooperative group work and pair work activities (Kagan, 1987; Kessler, 1992, in Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p.100).

#### **5.1. Teacher roles**

The role of the teacher in cooperative language learning differs from the role of the teacher in traditional teaching system. Harel (1992) defines the teacher's role in the classroom as follows:

During this time the teacher interacts, teaches, refocuses, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates, and emphasizes. Depending on what problems evolve, the following supporting behaviours are utilized. Facilitators are giving feedback, redirecting the group with questions, encouraging the group to solve its problems, extending activity, encouraging thinking conflict, observing student and supplying resources (p.169).

The teacher's role changes from a deliverer of information to a facilitator of learning.

Besides, in CL, Hyland (1991), states that the teacher's role is to:

- Share the responsibility for managing both interaction and learning and with students.
- Structure the learning environment so that student cooperates to obtain learning goals.
- Stimulate interactive language use through group work and collaborative problem solving.
- Choose classroom tasks which involve information sharing, cooperative reasoning, opinion sharing, and values clarification.
- Coordinate group activities.
- Provide clarification, feedback, and motivation support (Hyland, 1991, as cited in Richards, and Lockhart, 1996, pp.102-103).

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

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

## **5.2. Learners' roles**

In CL, the essential role of the learner is as a group member who must work with other group members to make certain that everyone in the group has mastered the content being taught. In CL, the student plays the major role. Slavin (1995) believes that in order to ensure participation among students, “[they] are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding” (p.2). Through CL, students become responsible for their own learning. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) put it, learners “are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning” (p.199). In this context, this does not mean that the teacher has no role to perform. Instead, he is there as a counselor, educator, friend and facilitator of learning; his job is more than handing out grades and marking papers with red ink (Johnson and Johnson, 2009, p.186).

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

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

Table1: Possible students’ role in cooperative learning groups (Kagan, 1994; in Woolfolk, 2004, P.496).

## **6. Benefits and Pitfalls of Cooperative Learning**

### **6.1. Benefits of CL**

Cooperative learning offers many positive, affective features that can benefit the students at the emotional and intellectual levels, including the gifted, the supposedly average, and those who are academically deficient. CL activities make the students more interested in learning and more active participants in class (Harmer, 2007, p.118). Even for teachers, the traditional notion of instruction that involves the long hours of standing, providing information, and explaining disappears. Students become active constructors, discoverers, and transformers of their own information. Also, there are personal interactions among students in the classroom and also between teachers and students. And we will be viewing all these

benefits in details after reviewing briefly the aspects of traditional way of teaching/learning (Harmer, *ibid*, p.124).

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

The teacher typically begins a lesson by reviewing prerequisite material, then introduces and develops new concepts or skills, then the group in a recitation or supervised practice or application activity, and then assigns seatwork or homework for students to do on their own (as cited in Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p.147)

In these classrooms, Chaudron (1988,) finds that 70% of the classroom time is taken up by teacher talking time (p.51). This type of instruction can be very beneficial in undergraduate education because, “it enables the teacher to teach large number of students at the same time.” (Richards & Lockhart,1996, 148). Research suggests that whole-class instruction methods seem to have serious and dramatic effects than its benefits. Usually the teacher may feel that all the students have an equal opportunity to participate in the class, but this is not always true. Again, Richards and Lockhart (*ibid*) argue that “such instruction is teacher–dominated, with little opportunity for active student’s participation.” (P. 148).

On the other side, it is believed that cooperative learning activities can provide students with the opportunity to think for themselves, share their knowledge, conduct small research projects, discuss and negotiate with fellow learners.

Johnson et al, (1994) based on a review they made of around 600 experimental and more than 100 correlation studies to examine the effects of cooperative learning, found that cooperation leads all of the students to make great efforts to achieve the lesson goals, more positive relationships among students like self-confidence, mutual trust and understanding, interaction, and greater psychological health. The authors also noted that “the powerful effects that cooperation has on so many important outcomes separate cooperative learning from other instructional methods and make it one of the most important tools for ensuring student success”.(Johnson et al, 1994, p.12)

And that means, by negotiating meaning and explaining points of view, learners adjust their speech and ideas to their peers’ needs and levels. Thus, interaction is the most important component of cooperative group work that helps to build new knowledge.

Kraft & Tutuianu (2009) believe that cooperative learning is beneficial to students in terms of language learning and many social skills, and generally speaking it involves:

- Students -when they are brought together- learn better than when they learn individually.
- Students working together maximize both their own learning and that of their peers.
- Students learn efficiently faster and they meet their course objectives to a greater extent.
- Student feel more positive about the learning experience.
- Enhance students' satisfaction with their learning experience.
- Help students develop skills in oral communication.
- Develop students' social skills and promotes students' self-esteem.
- Increase self-confidence in using English and help promote intercultural exchange and understanding.
- Become more flexible and tolerant.
- Develop interpersonal skills by communicating and sharing knowledge, beliefs and experience (pp. 7-8).

#### • **Academic benefits**

In addition, because learners are actively involved in the process of learning, they are in a position to take full responsibility for the outcome of particular assignments that is group investigations. Learners receive training in social skill building, conflict resolution and team management (Harmer, 2007, p.211). The locus of control is with the learner because the teacher serves as a facilitator not an educator. Learners are given a chance to decide how they will function and what their group product will be. Cooperative learning empowers learners to take control over their education (Isaacs, 2008, p.18).

#### • **Psychological benefits**

According to Johnson & Johnson (1989), learners benefit psychologically from cooperative learning in many ways. Cooperative experience promotes more positive attitudes toward learning and instruction than other teaching strategies, because learners play an active role in their learning process. In addition, cooperative learning helps develop interpersonal relationships among learners. The opportunity to discuss their ideas in smaller groups and receive constructive feedback on those ideas helps to build learner self-esteem. In a whole-

class format, learners are called upon to respond to a question in front of the entire class without having much time to think about their answer. Cooperative learning creates a safe, nurturing environment because solutions come from the group rather than from the individual, then errors are corrected in the group before they are presented to the class (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, in Isaacs B.V. 2008, p.19).

- **Social benefits**

Another benefit of cooperative learning is improvement in learners' social skills such as initiating interactions, sharing information, asking questions, following direction and staying on task, in addition to increased self-esteem, and highly motivated students (Dishon & O'Leary, 1984, in Isaacs, B.V 2008: 19). In other words, it maintains the feeling that the student is belonging to a group or community and is loved by their members. Also, it provides respect for others and cooperation between students which would last even outside the school.

- **Teacher's benefits**

Cooperative learning promotes innovation in teaching and classroom techniques. Furthermore, groups are easier to supervise than individual learners (Slavin, 1990). Lander (1995) also points out that an obvious advantage of cooperative learning is that 6-7 learners are easier for a teacher to guide and supervise than 30-40 learners (Isaacs, B.V. 2008, p. 21).

And all of the above indicates that teachers would face lesser problems when implementing CL. Also, the teaching and learning of a second language would be much easier and fun. Both of teachers and students would enjoy their classes. And as for teachers, the FL lessons and courses will be less tiring and more exciting for everyone.

## **6.2. Pitfalls of CL**

While many potential benefits arise when CL is used, there are some important pitfalls that must be avoided if cooperative learning is to be instructionally effective. For example, some "students may not like the people they are grouped or paired with" (Harmer, 2005, p. 21). However, not all learners are positively disposed towards working collaboratively on tasks. Nunan (1989), for instance, states that the ESL learners often tend to favor 'traditional' over 'communication' activities, showing a preference for teacher-centered over learner-centered participatory structures. In cooperative tasks, some students find it more humiliating to make mistakes in front of their peers than in front of the teacher. In fact, to solve this problem, the teacher has to set up the groups on the basis of students' preferences (p. 200).

There are other pitfalls that make cooperative learning may be less effective. Slavin (1995) states that “if not properly constructed, cooperative learning methods can allow for the “free rider” effect, in which some group members do all or most of the work while aggressive students go along for most of the ride”. Such a problem is most likely to occur when the group has a single task, for example to hand in a single report, complete a single worksheet, or produce one project. Such assignments can also result in a situation in which students who are perceived to be less skillful are ignored by other group members. To solve this problem, the teacher assigns each group member responsible for a unique part of the work (Slavin, *ibid*, p.19).

Finally, in 2005 Harmer says that there are various problems associated with the organization of cooperative work that can create a negative effect on the outcome of the task. The physical characteristics of the classroom, in particular the arrangement of the furniture can go a long way toward encouraging communication. For the teacher, the biggest problem may be the crowded classrooms. Because of the number of the students, group discussion can become noisy and disruptive. There is also the risk of that students will engage in off-task talk. All of these problems are not as serious as they sound if the teacher provides and prepares convenient activities and gets everybody involved (Harmer, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

Unlike most traditional language teaching methods in foreign language teaching, cooperative language learning tends to promote productivity and achievement and more opportunities for classroom communication. And generally it targets three instructional goals; Academic achievement, Tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and development of social skills.

It is now possible for teachers to select from a wide variety of cooperative methods to achieve different purposes and to use cooperative learning as the main organizing scheme for classroom instruction and not just as an occasional activity. Thus, for Harmer (2007), bonds develop among learners which can lead to increased understanding and acceptance of all members of society, a benefit of cooperative learning that extends beyond the walls of the school itself.

# **Chapter Two:** **Speaking Skill**

## **Introduction**

The development of any language has always been influenced by speech. One of the major responsibilities of any teacher working with English Language Learners is to enable them to communicate effectively especially orally. Therefore, students speaking skill is regarded as the major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying the language proficiency in situations students will encounter daily (Luoma, 2004). Teachers responsible for and concerned with students' oral performance must address this question: Why is it difficult to teach students how to improve their speaking skill? To a large extent, it is because teachers are not focusing on what is important to be learned inside classrooms. They focus, in most cases, on information and how to transfer it to the students. The classroom, of course, is a convenient place for providing information and developing communicative skills. However, teachers' concern is not only to inform but also to develop learners' ability to use the target language for communicative purposes. And throughout our study, we will be using the two following terms interchangeably; oral production/proficiency and speaking skill.

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

### **1. The speaking skill**

As it was noted in the beginning of this work, the aim behind learning a foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language. For Luoma (2004), we speak -as the primary way of communicating- for many reasons; to be sociable, to ask for something, to respond to someone else, to express feelings and thoughts, to exchange information, and to refer to an event in the past, present, or future (p. 59). Thus, speaking is said to be an active or productive skill. And according to Thornbury (2005), second language speaking differs from first language speaking in terms of the lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge of learners, i.e. the process of building utterances accurately and retrieving words does not yet become automatic in second language speaking (Thornbury, *ibid*, p. 217 ).

## **1.1. Definition of Speaking:**

Speaking is a basic skill that Language Learners should master with the other language skills. It is defined as a complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves non verbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions (Luoma, 2004, p. 22). Also, Hedge (2000) defines speaking as “a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed.” That is to say, speaking is an important skill which deserves more attention in both first and second language because it reflects people’s thoughts and personalities (p. 261).

### **1.1.1. The nature of oral communication**

The speaking skill involves a communicative ability of producing and receiving information. Byrne (1986, states that: “Oral communication is tow-way process between speaker and listener (or listeners) and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding [or listening with understanding]” (p.8).

Because oral communication involves the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons, it is always related to the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experience, the physical environment and the purpose for speaking (Luoma, 2004). Both speaker and listener have a role to play, because speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. For Kramsch (1983) speaking involves “Anticipating the listener’s response and possible misunderstanding, clarifying one’s own and the other’s intentions, and arriving at the closet possible match between intended, perceived and anticipated meaning” (p.367).

The interaction between speaker and listener is a complex process. The speaker has to encode the message he wishes to convey in appropriate language, while the listener (no less actively) has to decode (or interpret) the message. However, the listener’s interpretation does not necessarily correspond to the speaker’s intended meaning. The speaker’s message usually contains more information that is redundant (Luoma, 2004, p.113). At the same time, the listener is helped by prosodic features, such as stress and intonation as well as by facial and bodily movements such as gestures. Despite that, speech is often characterized by incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical utterances and by frequent false starts and repetitions. Kramsch (1983), indicated that inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most commonly used skills. They are recognized as critical for functioning in an English language context by teachers and learners. Thus speaking in a classroom entails interacting with the teacher and

peers, depending on how classroom activities are organized. It follows that teachers who do more oral interaction activities in the classroom will have more opportunities to develop students' oral proficiency (p. 368). Activities should involve spontaneous practice of the target language.

Brown and Yule (1983) draw a useful distinction between two basic language functions. These are the transactional function and interactional function. The former is concerned with the transfer of information, is message oriented since the speaker assumes that less information is shared with the listener. On the other hand, the interactional function, in which the primary purpose of speech is the maintenance of social relationships and is listener oriented. The knowledge is shared between the speaker and the listener (Brown and Yule, *ibid*, pp.13-15). Another basic distinction we can make when considering the development of the speaking skill is between monologues and dialogue. The ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is quite distinct from interacting with one or more speakers from transactional and interactional purposes. While all native speakers can and do use language internationally, not all native speakers have the ability to extemporize on a given subject to a group of listeners. This is a skill which extensively has to be learned and practiced. Brown and Yule (*ibid*) suggest that:

...The teacher should realize that simply training the students to produce short turns will not automatically yield a student who can perform satisfactory in long turns. It is currently fashionable in language teaching to pay a particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns...It must surely be clear that students who are capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language (pp.19-20).

### **1.1.2. The Sub-Skills of Speaking**

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

- Think of ideas they wish to express, either initiating a conversation or responding to a previous speaker;

- Change the tongue, lips and jaw position in order to articulate the appropriate sounds;
- Be aware of the appropriate functional expressions, as well as grammatical, lexical, and cultural features to express the idea;
- Be sensitive to any change in the “register” or style necessitated by the person(s) to whom they are speaking and situation in which the conversation is taking place;
- Change the direction of their thoughts on the basis of the other person’s responses (p.140).

According to Luoma (2004), in speaking, the learner has to acquire these sub-skills of knowing what, how, why, to whom and when to say something. Once again, the teacher’s role is to monitor students’ speech production to determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need development. Hence, the responsibility of the teacher is to devise activities that can address different skills by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real life communication (p. 90).

## **2. The relationship between speaking and the other skills**

The aim of language teaching courses are very commonly defined in terms of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The teacher focuses attention on one skill at a time. Thus, in one lesson, special attention is on speaking, in another to writing and so on. This sometimes reflects the apparent needs of the learners, the objective of the course, and the method followed by the teacher. Although, often treated separately, the four skills are actively related (Thornbury, 2005, p.211).

Let us begin by reviewing what is usually said about the four skills. Listening and reading are called “receptive skills”, the other two "productive skills". The first two are useful sources of experience, but active participation in- and feedback on-speaking and writing the target language is essential to foster progress and reinforce learning (Thornbury, *ibid*, p.214).

### **2.1. Speaking vs. Writing**

Brown and Yule (1983) in their book begin their discussion on the nature of speaking by distinguishing between spoken and written language. They point out that for most of its history; language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language. This language is characterized by well-formed sentences which are integrated into highly structured paragraphs. Spoken language, on the other hand, consists of short, often

fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciation. There is often a great deal of repetition and overlap between one speaker and another (p.20).

Luoma (2004) suggested that major difference between speech and writing is that the speaker does not typically use full sentences when speaking. In this case we can use the term utterance rather than sentence. They are short phrases and clauses connected with 'and', 'or', 'but' or 'that', or not joined by any conjunctions at all but simply spoken next to each other, with possibly a short pauses between them (Luoma, *ibid*, p.200). The spoken language of idea units is simpler than written language with its long sentences and dependent and subordinate clauses. Written English is organized into paragraphs, pages, chapters and complete texts. There is also a situation where speakers use less specific vocabulary than written language. Examples of this include the use of 'things', 'it' and 'this'. They usually use syntax in a loosely organized manner and a set of fillers such as 'well', 'oh' and 'uh uh' make spoken language feel less conceptually dense than other types of language such as expository prose (Luoma, *ibid*, p. 203).

Harmer (2005) believes that it is important to define some differences between speaking and writing for better understanding of their nature. He claims that because the audience to whom we are writing is not always present and most of the cases are unknown audience. When we write, all the information have to be on the page. The reader cannot stop and ask a question to make things clearer, whereas in speaking, we have the advantage of interacting with 'co-participants', whether we know them or not (p.101). This is of course, highly beneficial because the speaker may modify his speech according to his co-participant reactions. Another important difference between the two productive skills lies in the concept of durability. Writing is more durable. However, when we speak, our words just live to few moments. When we write, our words may live for years or even centuries. For this reason, writing is used to provide a record of events (Luoma, 2004, p. 203).

There are also similarities between writing and speaking. Lindsay and Knight (2006) state that we speak differently depending on whom we are speaking to and for what reason. Similarly with written language, the type of writing varies depending on whom it is written for and why. To conclude, we should not think of spoken language as something unimportant or inferior. In fact, it is a very important element of language learning (p. 60).

## **2.2. Speaking vs. Listening comprehension**

Foreign language teachers need to understand that a high proportion of class time should be devoted to developing oral productive skills. However, listening or understanding cannot be left to take care of itself (Lindsay and Knight, 2006, p.65). In their book on listening, Avery and Ehrlich (1992) distinguish between reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. The latter refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or formal lectures where the transfer of information is in one direction, only from the speaker to the listener. Reciprocal listening refers to those listening tasks where there is an opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker and to negotiate the content of the interaction (p. 36). They stress the active function of the listening. Byrne (1976) states that the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill, because both the speaker and listener have a positive function to perform. Thus, what makes up the whole communication is the interrelationship between speaker and listener during face-to-face communication. Listening is essentially an active process (Byrne, 1976, p.8). Nunan (1989) states that: We do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our background knowledge (Nunan, 1989, p. 23).

According to Nunan (*ibid*), the listener has to identify and select those spoken signals from the surrounding sounds, to segment the signals into known words, to analyze syntax and extra meaning and then respond appropriately to what has been said. Usually, the listener's attention will be focused on the meaning rather than the form. Listening processes involve two models: bottom-up and top-down model. Bottom-up models work on the incoming message itself, decoding sounds, words, clauses and sentences. Working one's way up from smaller to larger units to obtain meaning and to modify one's prior knowledge. Top-down models use background knowledge to assist in comprehending the message (Nunan, *ibid*, p.97). Receptive but not passive, listening is an active skill because it requires from the listener not simply to hear utterances but to listen and to understand what has been said.

The scope of listening comprehension should be treated as an integral part of the speaking skill (Harmer, 2007, p.201). Consider what will happen when the learners try to use the target language outside the classroom and where they are exposed to natural speech. Understanding breaks down almost immediately. In addition, poor understanding often results in nervousness which will probably in turn inhibit speech. The reason behind this is simply not sufficient to expose the learners to those samples of spoken language (dialogue or teacher

talk) in order to provide the students with models of oral production. Byrne (1976) gives two main reasons why this is inadequate:

- a) The learners' ability to understand need to be considerably extensive in order to be "comfortable" in a foreign language and therefore to communicate effectively. Thus, the teacher has to provide learners with a broad receptive base.
- b) The learners need suitably varied models of natural speech. Thus, the listeners have to be taught to listen as well as to speak (Byrne, *ibid*, p.9).

In the communicative movement, both the listening and the speaking skills receive a special attention (Luoma, 2004, p.66). To sum up, the listening skill is as important as the speaking skill because to communicate face to face has to be developed in tandem.

### **3. Student's psychological problems**

The goal of teaching the oral skill is to enhance communication's efficiency. Every act of communication does not involve a rapid-fire exchange (Luoma, 2004, p.71). In fact, when learners try to express themselves, there is hesitation; cliché expressions which fill in pauses, much repetition and frequent indefiniteness as the speaker seeks the most convenient combination of element to express his intended meaning (Rivers, 1968, p.192). These difficulties are due to a lack of interest in the subject, poor listening practice, deficient vocabulary, or lack of self confidence and the fear of making mistakes.

#### **3.1. Lack of interest in the subject**

In a foreign language classroom, the student may often stay silent because he has "nothing to say" in that moment. The teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express in English (Harmer, 2007). As well as having something to say, the student must have the desire to communicate something to some person or a group of persons. According to (Luoma, 2004) if the student does not have a positive relationship with his teacher, or feel at ease with his classmates, they may feel that what they would like to say can be of little interest to them. On the other hand, he may be very aware of his limitations in the foreign language and feel that, by expressing himself in it, he is laying himself open to criticize or ridicule. For these reasons, again, he remains silent (Lindsay and Knight, 2006, p.34).

### **3.2. Poor Listening Practice**

Since speaking is essentially an interaction between two or more people, listening comprehension plays a major role. The student may have acquired skill in expressing himself in the foreign language, but he has little practice in understanding the oral language when spoken at a normal speed of delivery in a conversation situation. Lindsay and Knight (2006) believe the student therefore does not comprehend sufficient elements in the message to be able to make further contribution to the discussion. Students need much practice in listening to the target language functions which will provide them with the breathing space necessary for oral performance (Lindsay and Knight, 2006, p.49).

### **3.3. Deficient vocabulary**

In attempting to use the foreign language to express their own thoughts, students find themselves struggling to find appropriate words where their choice of expression is severely limited. When students are learning a foreign language, they are unable to express their thoughts in orally mature vocabulary (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Thus, finding themselves now limited to expressing themselves in childishly simple language, they feel frustrated and uncomfortable. The teacher must be aware of this psychological factor and conscious of his own contribution in the process of teaching. He must be aware of the fact that, although they are limited in their powers of expression, they are limited in their powers of expression; they are not really the immature persons this deficiency might make them appear to be (Johnson and Johnson, 1999, p.217).

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

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves when their oral participation may cause unpleasantness and embarrassment, while others hesitate to participate in the discussion simply because they are afraid of being continually corrected by the teacher for every slip they make (Richards and Lokhart, 1996, p.170).

However, students' mistakes must be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts he should be interrupted as little as possible. Instead, the teacher should note one or two errors of pronunciation or grammar which would affect communication or be unacceptable to a native speaker, and brings these to the attention of the whole class for a later practice (Luoma, 2004, p.198)

Developing oral proficiency in the foreign language can be done only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other. The

teacher must adopt a motivating attitude in such a way that all students are involved in the learning process (Richards and Lokhart, 1996, p.170).

#### **4. Teaching techniques for oral proficiency**

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

##### **4.1. Group Work**

Despite the need for whole-class teaching and individual work, or “seat work” in language classroom, the use of group work has been emphasized as another interactional dynamics of language classroom. A group work is a classroom situation where students are working within smaller units or groups. Through interacting with each other in groups, students can be given the opportunity to oral exchange (Richards and Lokhart, 1996,). For example, the teacher might want students to predict the content of reading a text of five paragraphs. Then, they are divided into five groups. Each group selects a paragraph of the text just reads and prepares to answer the questions put by the other groups. Each group has to scan a paragraph of the text for detailed comprehension and formulate questions to test the comprehension of the other groups. The aim is to get the students involved in oral interaction: asking and answering questions, agreeing and disagreeing with certain points of paragraph and proposing modifications. Indeed, it is through this kind of tasks that researchers believe many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence are developed (Bright & Mcgregor, 1970).

Oral interaction, in group, is based on a real attempt to find a collective solution to problems. Group work is a meaningful activity because the students need to focus on meaningful negotiation and information exchange. For this reason, students should be familiar with the discussion topic. The main concern of the teacher is, of course to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination. In addition to the benefits of group work activities, it has a number of additional advantages:

- It reduces the dominance of the teacher's talk over the class (Mackay & Tom, 1999, p.26).
- It increases the opportunities for students to practise and to use new features of the target language.
- It increases the opportunities for authentic negotiation.

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

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

- It may kill the spirit of self-reliance.
- From the student's point of view, the value of help from the colleagues is less than the teacher's.
- It may bring potential risks, too, because some learners resent being corrected by other members of the group.

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

## **4.2. Role-play**

Many students derive a great benefit from role-play. It can be used either to encourage general oral proficiency or to train students for specific situations especially where they are studying English for specific purposes. Role-play is an authentic technique because it involves language use in real interactive contexts. It provides a format for using elements of real-life conversation and communication (Forrest, 1992). Revel (1979), sees role-play as: “an individual’s spontaneous behavior reacting to other in a hypothetical situation.” (p.16) this implies that role-play invites students to speak through a fictitious identity in an imagined situation to present the view of a person without necessarily sharing them. Role-play involves an element of "let's pretend" which can offer two main choices:

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

Students usually find role-playing enjoyable, for example, they might be given the role of an angry father awaiting the late return of his middle school son from football game. Another student could be given the role of the son. Therefore, students have to prepare a dialogue for their presentation. Because role-play imitates real life, the range of language functions that might be used expands considerably. The role relationships among students call for practising and developing sociolinguistic competence to use the language skills that are appropriate to the situation and to the characters (Barker and Gaut, 2002, p.158).

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

Second, role play allows hesitant students to be more outspoken in their opinions and behavior than they might be when speaking for themselves, since they do not have to take the responsibility for what they are saying. Third, by broadening the world of the classroom to include the world outside, role play allow students to use a much wider set of language use.

Role-play is an effective technique when it is open-ended so that different people would have different views of what the outcome should be and consensus has to be reached. There is a dynamic movement as the role-play progresses with students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels (Dickson, 1981). To succeed with role-play, the teacher has to give each student who does not play his role appropriately a card that describes the person or the role played. The teacher needs not only to identify the situation which will stimulate the discussion but also give them the role that matches the requirements of their personalities. Topics for role play should be taken from students’ current interest and anticipated experiences. This will contribute to increase the student’s self-confidence as a speaker and his motivation to participate more (Mackay & Tom, 1999, p.165).

### **4.3. Problem solving**

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

A problem-solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making a decision based on their findings. The label has been used to group together a range of activities which require the learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds (p.160). Duff (1986, as cited in Nunan, 1989: 44) discovered that problem solving tasks prompted more interaction than debating tasks.

The problem tasks range from the imaginary to the more realistic. The latter involves processes which have some kind of realistic application in which the students become

involved in an effort to achieve a goal. In problem solving, students are involved in pooling information to solve a problem through oral expression and negotiation of meaning. For instance, the teacher describes the task to the students: "you are stranded on a desert island a long way from anywhere. There is a fresh water spring on the island, and there are banana trees and coconut palms. The climate is mild. Make a list of eight to twelve things which you think are necessary for survival" Barker and Gaut (2002). Apart from the activities focusing on the likes and dislikes of individual learners, which therefore need a initial phase where each student works on his own, most of the problem-solving tasks require pair or group work throughout. Thus, students can be asked to solve the problem individually or collectively. The latter is calling for cooperative negotiation. Problem solving activities demand that the learners themselves make suggestions, give reasons, accept, modify or reject suggestions and reasons given by others (Barker and Gaut, 2002, p.163).

Problem solving can be of two kinds: short-term task and long-term task or project. The former can be done in course of one class session while the latter is more time consuming that may take many sessions and more. An example of a short-term problem-solving task includes putting items in categories. For this kind of activities, Barker and Gaut (2002), say that the students have either to classify items according to categories giver by the teacher or to identify them by themselves. The students are given a list of 10-15 items, such as occupations (bank clerk, truck driver, policeman teacher lawyer, etc) and asked to locate them under heading according to different features. Like, physical /mental work, indoors /outdoors, with people / alone etc... Such short-term activities are task-centered and can be presented in a relatively simple way (i.e. they do not require a lot of explanation in order to set up; nor do they generally need any support materials). It can be comfortably done in one class session of 20-30 minutes. However, some teachers regard any activity which involves individual or group research over a period of time as project work (Mackay & Tom, 1999, p.167). Very often this kind of activity is topic-centered and results in the production of a piece of written oral report or both. For example, the teacher often asks students to develop a presentation on a particular historic period and to generate written products appropriate to the period. Students might conduct diagrams or realia to support the project. This example shows that teachers attach more importance to activities which get the learners out of the classroom, particularly those that involve the collection of data through information search, information exchange and information synthesis (Mackay & Tom, 1999, p.168)

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

#### **4.4. Discussion**

For Mackay & Tom (1999), discussion is any exchange of ideas and opinions either on a class basis with the teacher's role as a mediator and to some extent as participator, or within the context of a group, with the students talking among themselves. It may last for just a few minutes or it may continue for a whole lesson (in case of advanced learners who have a good command of foreign language). It may be an end in itself; a technique for developing oral expression through exchange of ideas, opinions, arguments and points of views. We can say that this technique is student-directed and teacher-guided discussion (Hill and Ruptic 1949, as cited in Byrne, 1976). For example, all students can be asked to read a single book or story which can be discussed in one session upon completion of the reading. Discussion groups (also called literature circles and book clubs) can last from one to two or three sessions depending on the length of the book.

While discussion has many advantages, some benefits for second language learners include: increased comprehension levels, opportunities to improve listening skills and develop spoken language proficiency, increased participation of quiet and shy students and more time for teacher observation of students learning (Mackay & Tom, 1999, p.170).

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

- Provide the students with a variety of sources of input (both topical information and language forms), newspapers, video-recording, or simply text so that they can have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices relevant to professional/educational level of the students to feel comfortable with the topic chosen from several choices. Discussion does not

always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs rather than how to combat pollution.

- Set a goal or outcome of discussion as group product, such as a letter to the editor.
- Use small groups instead of large groups or whole class discussion as, large groups can make participation difficult.
- Give 8-15 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop if run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way. Do not expect all of them to contribute to the discussion, some students may feel uncomfortable to talk about certain topics.
- Do "report back" session to report the main results of their discussion.
- Do linguistic follow-up at the end of the discussion; give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems (Barnes and Todd, 1977, p.81).

Through well-prepared discussion, the teacher's role is not to force his opinions on the students but rather to encourage them to express theirs. The teacher's opinion, if offered at all, should only serve to stimulate further ideas on the part of the students, not to inhibit them. Secondly, the teacher should appear more interested in the ideas at least in the beginning. Sometimes, of course the teacher may have to help students to get their message across, or make their meaning clear. Also the teacher also has to keep the channels of communication open not of course by doing all the talking himself, but by stimulating students talks through questions which server as stimuli for discussion as long as they generate controversial opinions amongst the students (Luoma, 2004).

## **5. The Roles of the Teacher**

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

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

This will stop the sense of frustration that some students feel when they come to a 'dead end' of language or ideas.

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

- Feedback provider: the teacher should be very careful of when and how to give feedback in the speaking activity, over-correction may inhibit them and take the communicativeness out of the activity. On the other hand, positively and encouragingly correction may get students out of difficult misunderstanding and hesitations. Everything depends upon teacher tact and the appropriateness of the feedback provided (Harmer, 2001, p.275).

## **6. Assessing speaking**

The term assessment refers to more than tests and grades. Actually, Haley and Austin (2004, p.117) state that “[it] involves development of materials, processes, activities and criteria to be used as tool for determining how well and how much learning is taking place.” Similarly, Lindsay and knight (2006) state that: "Assessment is the process of analyzing and measuring knowledge and ability, in this case, the learner's knowledge of the language and ability to communicate." (Lindsay and knight, 2006, p.121).

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

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

International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examination, and the examinations offered by Cambridge ESOL (Thornbury, 2005, p.124).

Testing can have a significant influence on how a teacher works with his learners and also influences how learners learn. It may seem easier to prepare a grammar test. However, testing speaking is not an easy task because of the complexity of the skill. The problem, however, with including an oral component in a test is that it complicates the testing procedure in terms of practicality and the way assessment criteria can be reliably applied. Setting and making a written test of grammar is relatively easy and time-efficient. A test of speaking, on the other hand, is not. As an example; we may use an oral interview which forms a common kind of foreign language tests. During the test, all the learners of a class have to be interviewed individually, the stress caused, and the time taken, may seem to be greater than the benefits. Moreover, the teacher may have different criteria or standards for judging speaking (Thornbury, 2005, p.125)

Language teaching program that prioritizes the speaking skill but does not assess it cannot be said to be doing its job properly. Testing plays a major role in foreign language learning, both as a motivational factor to 'do more speaking' in class and as tool for the teacher to determine what skills and knowledge the learners already have and what areas need more focus. Testing oral production means testing what the learner does with the foreign language, ability to comprehend the spoken language, ability to frame a ready response, and the ability to express his ideas intelligibly with correct structure and appropriate lexical items. Then, teachers might also be interested in articulation of sounds, stress, intonation, etc (Lindsay and Knight, 2006, p.122)

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

amount of power that learners feel when assessing themselves. It can be a real awareness raising activity (Thornbury, 2005, p.126).

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we have focused on the importance of the speaking skill and how to it is affected by regular practice. Also, we focused on the fact that for teaching speaking, teachers should provide learners with effective oral practice clearly. Also teachers have to adopt a wide range of techniques and procedures through which oral production can improve. Such techniques, should involve learners into real communication and interaction. The next chapter will be devoted to the practical part of this study.

**Chapter**  
**Three:**  
Questionnaire  
Analysis

## **Introduction**

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

The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used for eliciting information from some target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. In this study, we used two types of questionnaires: (1) The teachers' questionnaire is designed for teachers who are believed to be in good position to provide our study with relevant data. (2) The students' questionnaire is designed for students inviting them to contribute information on their actual state of learning. Then, this chapter will not only clarify the research design in terms of the aim, the administration and the description, but it will contain the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaire as well.

### **1. Description of Students' questionnaire**

**Section One: General questions:** In this section, the students were asked general questions about their different Baccalaureate streams, if English was their first choice, and what they need good speaking in English for.

**Section Two: students' perception of the speaking skill:** It consists of questions which seek information about learner's language level and the general atmosphere inside the classroom.

**Section Three: Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work:** These questions are centred on students' attitude, satisfaction with the methods used by their teachers, and their view and appreciation of group work and cooperative learning.

### **2. The analysis of students' questionnaire**

#### **2.1. The aim of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire is devised to second year students from the English division at Biskra University. It aims to find out and evaluate the actual facts about cooperative learning;

its application in 2<sup>nd</sup> year classes, and emphasize that cooperative learning plays a great role in students learning a foreign language specifically enhancing their speaking skill.

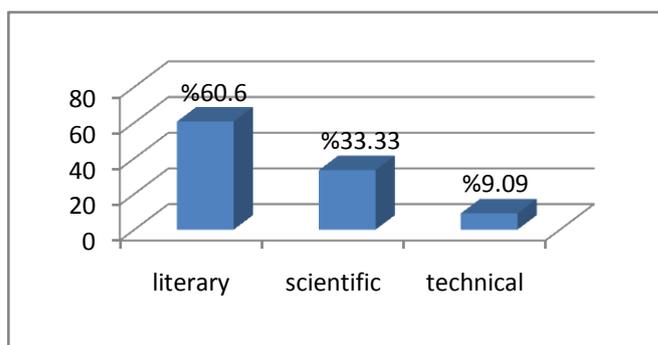
**Section one:**

**Q1. Type of baccalaureate:**

**Table 02: Type of baccalaureate**

Bac	Literary	Scientific	Technical
N	40	20	06
%	60.60	33.33	9.09

**Graph01: Type of baccalaureate**



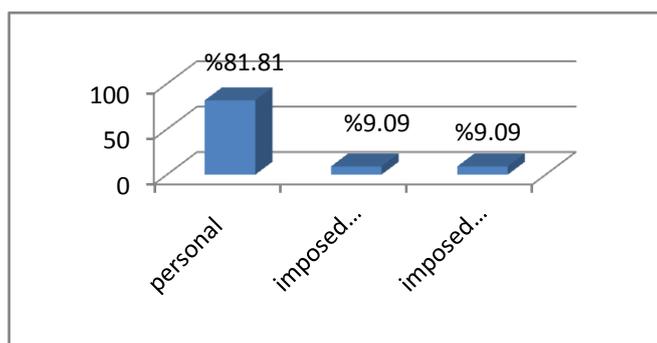
The results indicate 60.6% came from a literary stream, which forms the majority of the students, whereas 33.33% came from scientific classes and only 09.09% from technical streams. This indicates that second year students have different backgrounds, different types of knowledge that have great influence on their motivation, their interests, and the way they deal with the different tasks and information given in the English course. However, we find our classes as a mosaic of different levels and preferences. Those who are good at scientific subjects may find difficulty coping with literary subjects, but find it easy how to analyze, or how to apply scientific methods in their study. And those who are good at languages (Arabic, English & French) may find troubles coping with other subjects, while they find it easy in oral tasks and literary activities.

**Q2. Free or imposed choice to study English:**

**Table 03: Free or imposed choice to study English**

Need	Personal	Imposed by administration	Imposed by parents
N	54	06	06
%	81.81	09.09	09.09

**Graph02: Type of baccalaureate**



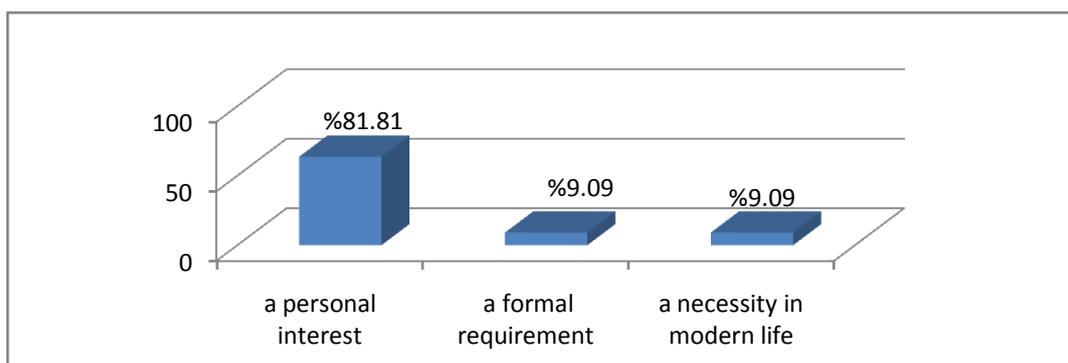
The great majority of students 81.81% personally chose to study English and this indicates the level of motivation and enthusiasm to learn the language or they may like other languages, like Spanish, German, etc. but because it is not being taught in the university they chose to study English. Six students said that they are sent to the English department because they did not fulfill the condition to subscribe or register in other fields. Only 06 students study English urged by their parents wish, though this does not mean they are incapable to study the language.

**Q3.The need for speaking English:**

**Table 04: The need for speaking English**

Need	A personal interest	A formal requirement	A necessity in modern life
N	42	06	18
%	63.63	9.09	27.27

**Graph 03: The need for speaking English**



According to the table, 63.63% of students aspire to be fluent speakers of English; whereas, 27.27% chose it, because it is a necessity for modern life. The remaining 06 chose it for formal requirement. From all that, it is obvious that our first year students are motivated to learn English, they like it and feel interested in it. So, the role of the teacher, here, has to be guided, enhanced, and integrated to develop students' oral production through designed cooperative tasks and activities. Because all students' wishes seem instrumental, they are in need for correlated attention and guidance, and collaboration of both the administration and teachers to set a perfect environment for the students learning that targets academic and social benefits.

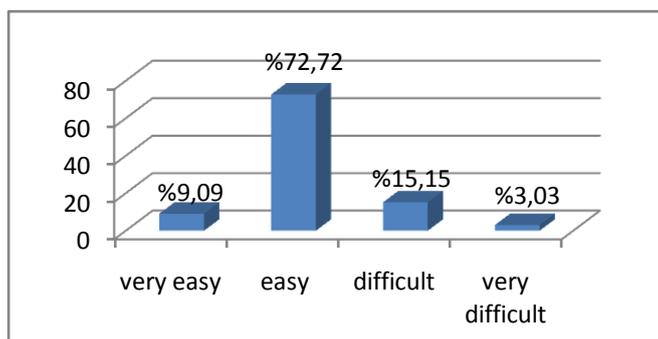
**Section two:**

**Q4. How do you find speaking in English?**

**Table 05: Students' attitude towards speaking**

Options	Subject	%
Very easy	06	09.09
Easy	48	72.72
Difficult	10	15.15
Very difficult	02	3.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph04: Students' attitude towards speaking**



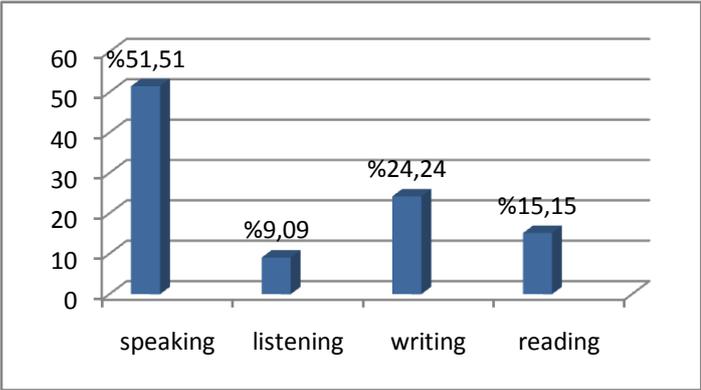
Students here are asked to say how do they find English speaking: whether easy, very easy, difficult or very difficult. The majority of them about 73% believe that speaking in English is easy, about 09.09% said it is very easy, against 15.15% who find it difficult and only 03.03% who find it very difficult. For ranking speaking by difficulty, most students (73%) find that speaking is easy. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are good speakers. Those who find speaking difficult and very difficult might represent the proportion of students who never participate in the classroom.

**Q5. According to you, which skill needs to be most developed?**

**Table 06: Emphasis on learning the four skills**

Options	Subjects	%
Speaking	34	51.51
Listening	06	9.09
Writing	16	24.24
Reading	10	15.15
Total	66	100

**Graph 05: Emphasis on learning the four skills**



For this section, students were asked to pick the most important skill that they think it needs to be developed most: 51.51% of the respondents picked the speaking skill first, while 24.24% of the respondents put the writing skill first. Then, it is followed by the reading skill 15.15% and listening skill 09.09%. The final classification we get from the above table is the following: the speaking skill first; the writing skill second; the reading and the listening skill are third and fourth respectively.

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

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

Unlike speaking, only 16 respondents believe writing is most needed; these form 24.24%. Those subjects believe that they should be able to write simple but correct and well-organized passages.

So far, reading had just 10 respondents who believed it to be first developed, this translated into 15.15%. Those who opted for this choice believe that reading provides them with a large supply of vocabulary items for future use.

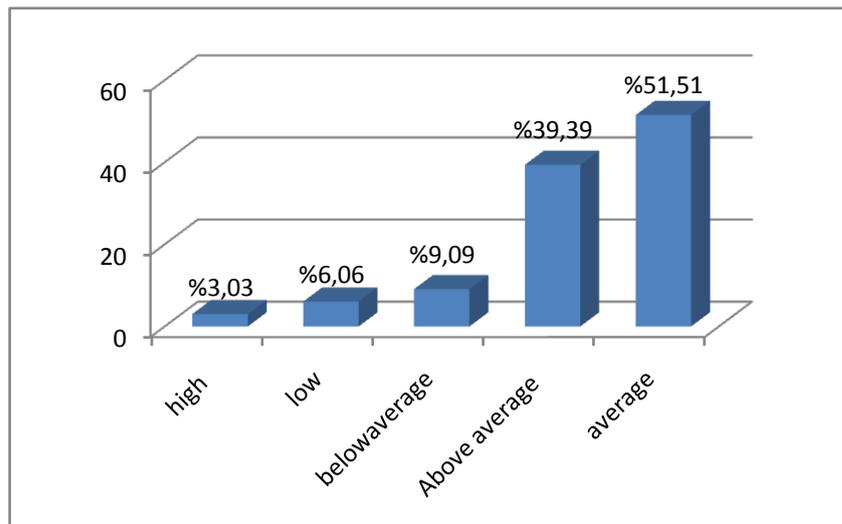
Last, but not least, and unlike the other skills; only 06 respondents (i.e. 09.09%) have put the listening skill in the first position. These students believe that one has to receive language first before any oral production takes place. Of course, following these classifications is not obligatory; still the data obtained remains valuable information on the students' needs.

**Q6. Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?**

**Table 7: Students' evaluation of their level in English**

<b>high</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03.03</b>
<b>Above average</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39.39</b>
<b>average</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>51.51</b>
<b>Below average</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>09.09</b>
<b>low</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>06.06</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph 6: Students' evaluation of their level in English**



This question acts as a support to the preceding one (pick the most important skill that needs to be developed most?). Students here, are asked to describe their speaking ability of English language in class. In answer to this, they are expected to rank themselves from high to low. We have recorded 34 respondents (51.51%) who have admitted that their level of oral performance was average. About 40% said that their level is above average; whereas about 10% and 6.06% confessed that their level is below average or low. Therefore, these are not likely to participate verbally in the classroom, and if they stay silent without any attempt to participate, then they will not advance any further.

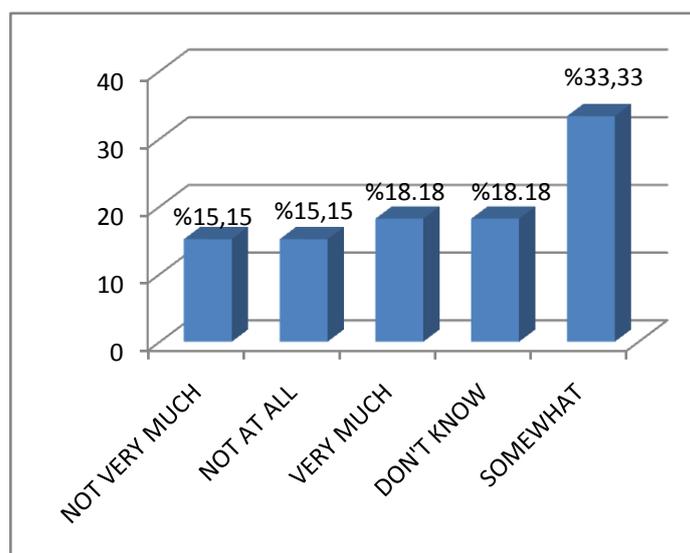
Those who said to be average and below average match the results obtained in student's needs in terms of skills, where speaking is felt to be the skill students need most to develop, however, these results do not match teachers' questionnaire .

**Q7. To what extent you think oral expression courses helped you improve your oral performance?**

**Table8: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses**

options	subjects	%
<b>Very much</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18.18</b>
<b>somewhat</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33.33</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18.18</b>
<b>Not very much</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15.15</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15.15</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph 07: Students' attitudes toward oral expression courses**



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

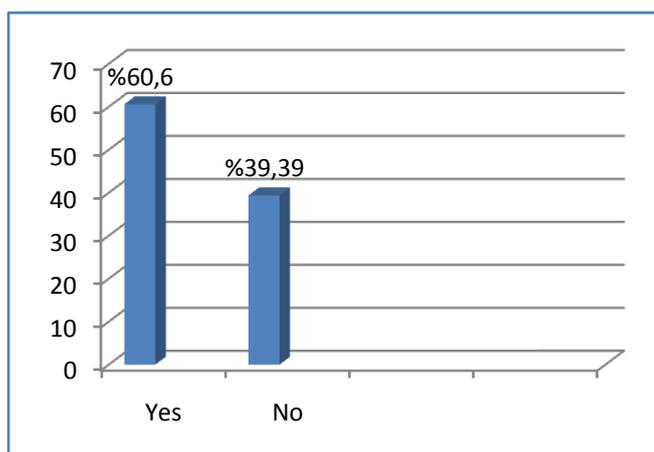
Many students do not contribute to language input partly because courses are not interesting enough to stimulate their verbal participation and communication. It goes without saying that if courses were motivating enough students would not be struggling to express themselves using the language.

**Q8. Do you feel afraid to speak in English?**

**Table 09: Confidence in the use of English**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	40	60.60
No	26	39.39
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 08: Confidence in the use of English**



This question aims to determine whether students are afraid to talk or not. An examination of the table above will reveal that the majority of respondents (60.60%) do not feel at ease to speak (they remain silent), while about 40% consider themselves as talkative or able to participate. Yet, not all subjects actually are motivated to speak in English, this might have several reasons such as: being uninterested in topics themselves. Another interpretation is that subjects are not motivated enough to speak. However, we cannot always consider their non-speaking to lack of motivation, although motivation can play a major role to initiate speech.

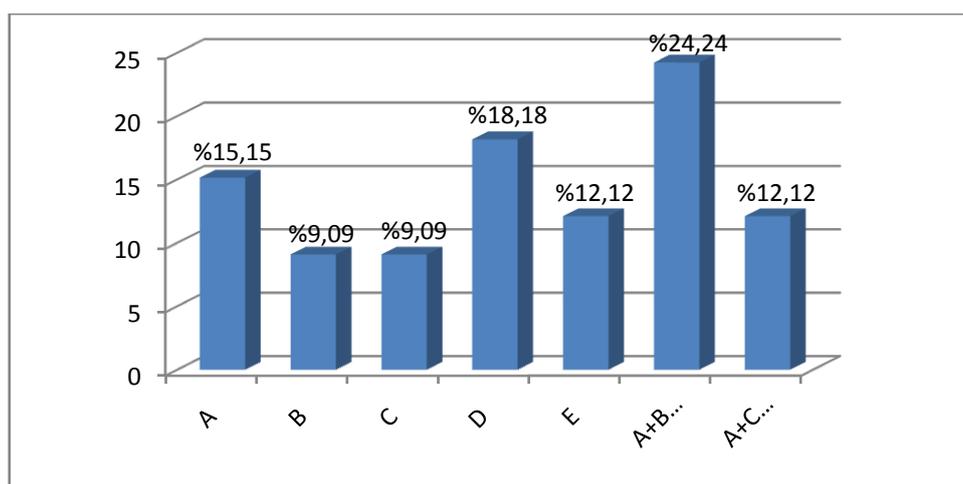
The next question gives us a clear idea of some possible factors which may prevent students from speaking a foreign language well.

**Q9. What makes you unable/afraid of speaking English?**

**Table 10: Reasons for the inability to speak accurately**

Options	Subjects	%
<b>A. fear of making grammatical mistakes?</b>	10	15.15
<b>B. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes?</b>	06	09.09
<b>C. Having deficient vocabulary</b>	06	09.09
<b>D. Fear of teacher's negative feedback</b>	12	18.18
<b>E. Lack of self confidence?</b>	08	12.12
<b>A+B+D</b>	16	24.24
<b>A+C+D+E</b>	08	12.12
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 09: Reasons for the inability to speak accurately**



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

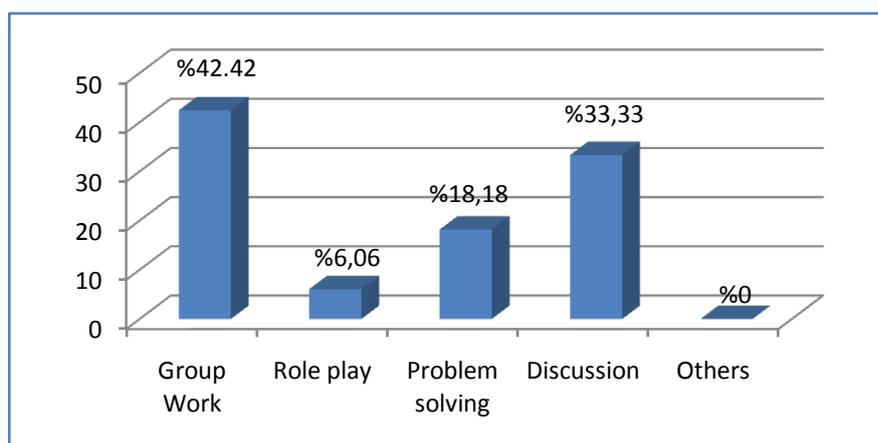
Whereas 10 subjects (i.e. 15.15%) have indicated that they do not participate because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and that their classmates would make fun of them, 06 students (09.09%) said it is because they have deficient vocabulary as they are not talkative, and 06 subjects out of the total sample do not participate as they are afraid of making pronunciation mistakes. In fact, this problem may prevent communication and slow down learning. Closely related to this is the fear of teachers' negative feedback. We have recorded 08 subjects (12.12%) who are reticent to speak in the classroom since they lack self-confidence; this might keep them from making their way toward fluency. So, it is the teacher role to create friendly and relaxed atmosphere that pushes them to speak.

**Q10. Which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?**

**Table 11: Kinds of techniques used for teaching**

Options	Subjects	%
<b>Group work</b>	28	42.42
<b>Role play</b>	04	6.06
<b>Problem solving</b>	12	18.18
<b>Discussion</b>	22	33.33
<b>Others</b>	00	00
<b>Totale</b>	66	100

**Graph 10: Kinds of techniques used for teaching**



This question is intended to ask students about the technique they enjoy best. The table above summarizes the most frequent techniques that teachers can use in order to carry out a speaking activity. As can be noticed in table N°11, there are no major differences between percentages of group work and discussion. In the first place comes group work with 42.42% followed by discussion with 33.33%. We have recorded 06 cases of subjects who considered problem solving as the technique that enjoys best and only 06.06% answers opt for role play.

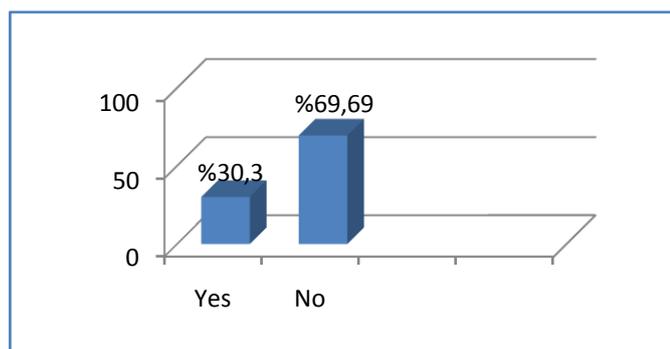
This indicates that in the first place, subjects are aware of these techniques and secondly those who find group work enjoyable are motivated when they set to work in groups.

**Q11. Are you given the opportunity to evaluate your oral production?**

**Table 12: Students' evaluation**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	20	30.30
No	46	69.69
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 11 : Students' evaluation**



Evaluating students' oral production is recognized as an essential feature for effective teaching. The final question on speaking was whether they are given the opportunity to evaluate their oral production or not. It was not surprising that the majority (69.69%) said "no", while only 20 subjects (30.30%) said "yes". So, the number of yeses shows that respondents are not given the opportunity to provide feedback on committing mistakes which can stimulate students' participation in the teaching process. Self-evaluation and peer review can be a useful technique in which students feel more responsible and thus more independent in their learning.

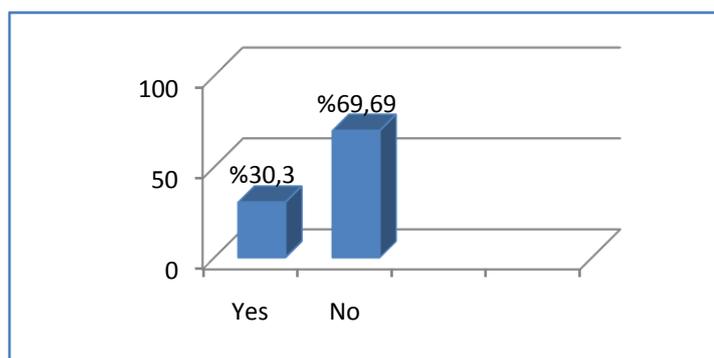
### Section three: Students' perception of their teachers' implementation of cooperative work

#### Q12. Have you ever heard of cooperative learning?

**Table 13: Students familiarity with cooperative learning**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	20	30.30
No	46	69.69
Total	33	100

**Graph 12: Student's familiarity with cooperative learning**



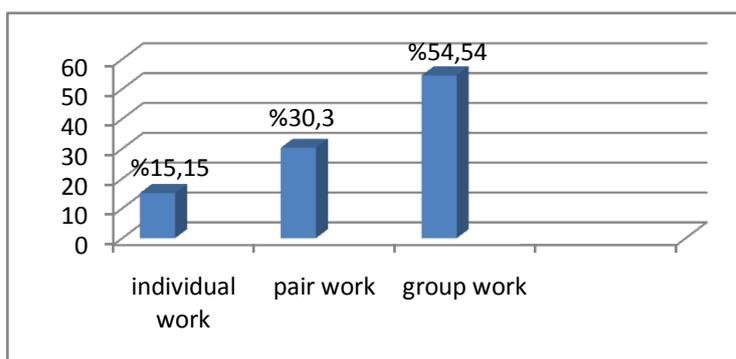
The statistics related to this item show that 30.30% of the subjects have heard of cooperative learning, against 69.69% who have not. That is to say, the majority of respondents are more likely to have a positive attitude toward cooperative work and this no doubt, will affect their learning outcomes.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

**Q13. In oral expression, do you prefer:**

**Table 14: Students' preference**

Options	Subjects	%
<b>Individual work</b>	10	15.15
<b>Pair work</b>	20	30.30
<b>Group work</b>	36	54.54
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 13: Students' preference**



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

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

**14. Whatever your answer is, please justify**

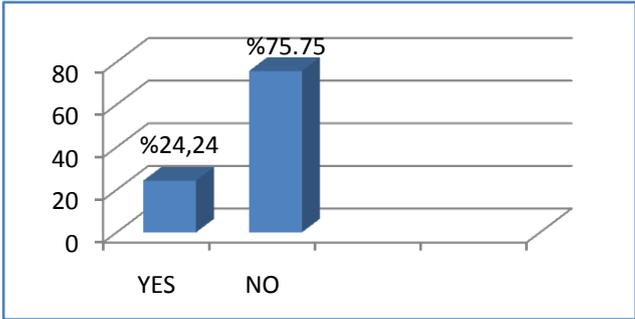
In all likelihood, those having opted for group work are sociable students who enjoy sharing and being with others. Students also like to feel that the space in which they meet belongs to them and strengthen their feeling to take risks in speaking. As for pair work, the subjects under investigation are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

**Q15 . Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?**

**Table 15: Difficulties encountered in group work**

Options	Subject	%
Yes	16	24.24
No	50	75.75
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 14: Difficulties encountered in group work**



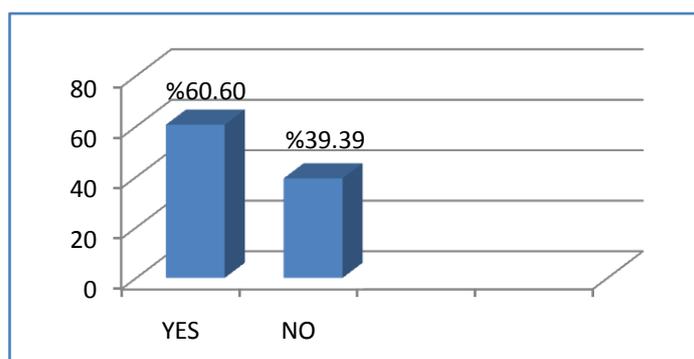
In this question, we have recorded a majority of 50 respondents (75.75%), who have indicated that they do not have difficulties when they work together with their classmates, this means that they are among students who would prefer working cooperatively for the communication of their thoughts. Sixteen of the respondents (24.24%) have problems when they work together with other classmates. One possible interpretation is that these subjects are in favor for individual work. There are also other factors that teachers should be aware when setting cooperative work in order to get its substantial benefits.

**Q16. Do teachers try to solve problems encountered when you are working with your peers?**

**Table16: Teachers' attitudes towards problems**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	40	60.60
No	26	39.39
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 15: Teachers attitudes towards problems**



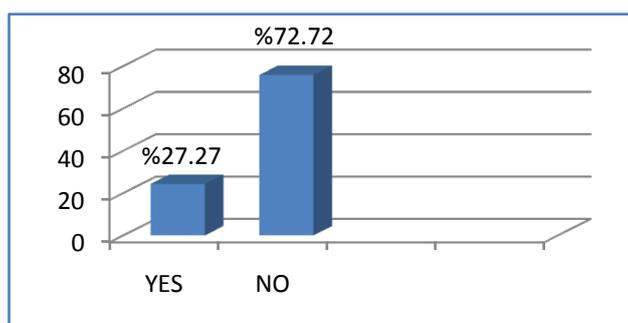
The aim of this question is to see whether teachers help their students to solve problems encountered while working with their peers. Apparently, the majority of yeses, translating into 60.60% are likely to be characterized by talkative students or perceived to be socially involved with their peers. On the other hand, 26 subjects out of total 66 (39.39%) who are likely to be characterized by silent students or perceived to be less skillful or ignored by other peers.

**Q17. Does your teacher raise your awareness towards skills of cooperative work?**

**Table17: Raising students awareness towards skills of cooperative work**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	18	27.27
No	48	72.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph 16: Raising students awareness towards skills of cooperative work**



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

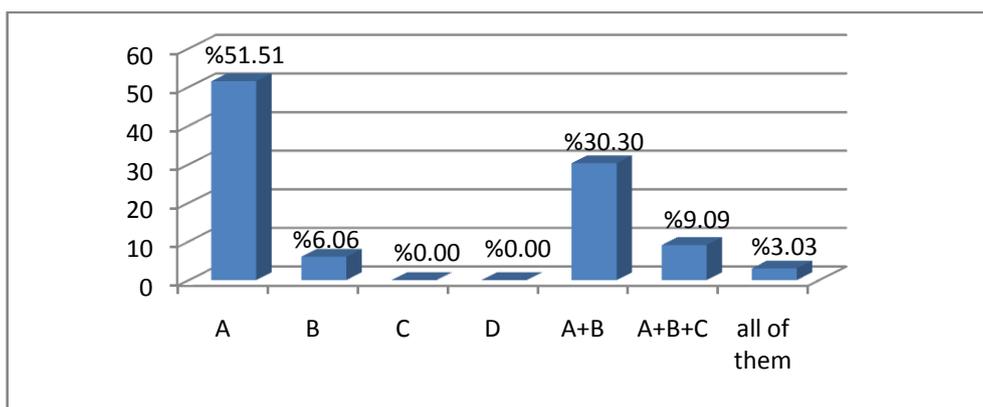
Eighteen respondents (27.27%) state that their teachers raise their awareness towards necessary skills for group work. These teachers seem to understand that group work does not mean putting students in groups. Rather, it involves more participation on both teachers and students' part.

**Q18 .What does group work help you to:**

**Table 18: Understanding specific skills of a successful group work**

Options	subjects	%
<b>a. Ask and respond to more questions?</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>51.51</b>
<b>b. Learn to listen to different opinions?</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>6.06</b>
<b>c. Evaluate your peers' performances?</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>d. Develop social skills for getting along with others?</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>a+b</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30.30</b>
<b>a+b+c</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>9.09</b>
<b>All of them</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>3.03</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph 17: Understanding specific skills of successful group work**



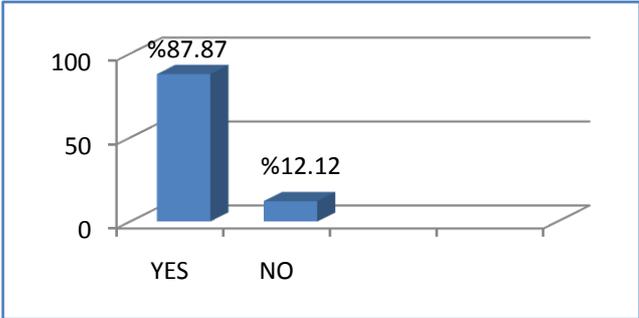
In this question, subjects are asked to say what group work helps them to do. As has been noted in the table above, 34 respondents out of 51.51% find that group work helped them to ask and respond to more questions, and these have placed this skill in the first position. The second position is opted for by just 4 subjects (i.e. 6.06%) who believe that group work help them to listen to different opinions. Furthermore, we have recorded no subjects opting for the second skill and no respondents have opted for the fourth skill which is developing the social skills for getting along with others.

**Q19 .Do you think that cooperative work helps you improve your speaking skill?**

**Table 19: Students evaluation of cooperative group work.**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	58	87.87
No	08	12.12
<b>Total</b>	66	100

**Graph 18: Students evaluation of cooperative group work**



In answer to the above question, 08 respondents (12.12%) have indicated that cooperative work does not help them to improve their speaking skill. In comparison, 58 subjects opted for the opposite situation. This translates into 87.87% yet, it communicates a deep fact that a high portion of the sample recognizes the benefit of cooperative work in improving their speaking skill.

**Discussion**

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

1. Foreign language teaching is not merely a process of transforming knowledge, but one which creates situations where students interact and express their thoughts using the

target language. That is to say, learning a foreign language is to speak and to communicate in that language.

2. With speaking, the majority of students express their needs in terms of speaking skills. Concerning the other skills (i.e. reading, writing, and listening) students do not seem to understand that they are interrelated. Thus, learning the speaking skill will reinforce the learning of the other skills.

3. Although some students may be motivated to learn English, they feel afraid to speak it for their inability to interact with others; lack of self-confidence, fear of operating foolish when mistakes are made (grammatical or pronunciation mistakes) and fear of teachers negative feedback. Because of many psychological problems (listed above) students have, teachers need to encourage students to talk inside the classroom to be exclusive in English.

4. As for teaching speaking, students seem to have different attitudes toward different teaching techniques. The majority of students are interested in discussion and group work. teachers' role is to adapt the technique that encourages more students participation.

5. Students showed different preferences for classroom arrangements (i.e. group work, pair work individual or seat work). However, teachers need to include the type of teaching that provides learners with a variety of opportunities for a better communicative interaction and language use.

6. Concerning the implementation of cooperative group work, students do not seem aware of skills they can adopt for a successful functioning of group work. We believe that teachers should raise their students awareness towards the importance of these skills

7. Students evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for teaching speaking implies student's readiness for such a technique.

### **3. Teachers' questionnaire**

#### **3.1 Aim of the questionnaire**

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

### **3.2 Administration of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was handed out to (05) teachers of oral expression in the department of English at the University of Biskra, have cooperated with our work and we feel very grateful to their comprehension.

### **3.3 Description of the questionnaire**

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

#### **Section 1: General Question (Q1, Q2)**

The first section aims to collect items of information on the sample. The first question (Q1) seeks information about teacher's degree. In (Q2), teachers are asked to give the numbers of years they have been teaching English; i.e. their teaching experience.

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

In this section, teachers are asked to state how far they focus on oral skills while teaching (Q3). In (Q4), teachers are asked to describe their students level of oral proficiency in English; whether it is high, above average, average, below average or low. This question seeks information whether teachers motivate their students to speak in English or not (Q5) and to explain how in case they give a positive answer (Q6). After that, teachers are asked to specify the most difficult aspect for teaching speaking: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary or sentence structure or any other aspects (Q7). In (Q8), respondents are asked to pick the technique they use most: multiple-choices were given; group work, role-play, problem solving or discussion. Then, they are required to state whether or not they evaluate their students oral production (Q9) and to specify the appropriate answer, in case of positive answer, from a set of options: whether they prefer, self-evaluation, peer- evaluation, teacher-evaluation, or all of them (Q10).

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

In this section, teachers are required to state if they have ever used cooperative language learning (Q11). In (Q12), teachers are required to indicate how far they agree with some statements characterizing cooperative language learning using strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. The next item (Q13) aims at investigating the role of the teacher in terms

of helping students see the value of cooperative work. In (Q14) teachers are required to indicate whether their students face problems working in groups or not.

**Section 4: Teachers’ Evaluation of CLL (Q15)**

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

**4. Analysis of the questionnaire**

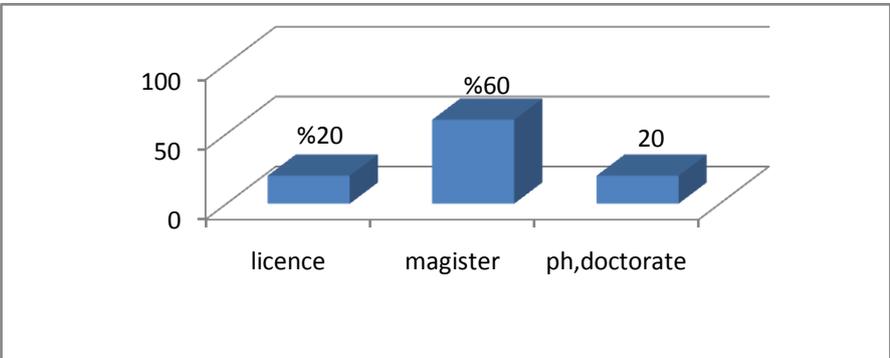
**Section 1: general questions**

**Q 1. Degree(s) held:**

**Table 20: Teachers’ Academic Degree**

Degree		Subjects	%
B A (licence)		01	20
M A	Magister	03	60
Ph.(Doctorate)		01	20
Total		05	100

**Grahp19: Teachers’ Academic Degree**



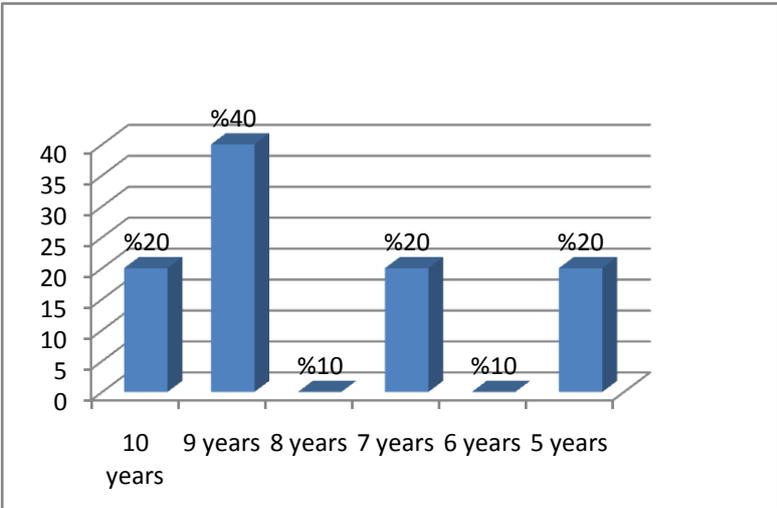
As the table indicates, the highest percentage is that of the teachers who have got a magister (60%). In the second position come those who have a degree of Doctorate (20%) (20%) of the teachers had a Licence. We believe that our sample is as representative as possible for the population to which it is designed

**Q 2: how long have you been teaching English?**

**Table 21: Experience in teaching**

Number of years	Subjects	%
10 years	01	20
9 years	02	40
8 years	00	00
7 years	01	20
6 years	00	00
5 years	01	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph: 20 Experience in Teaching**



Teachers, here, are required to give in numbers of how many years they have been teaching English i.e. their teaching experience. The most experienced have been teaching for 09 years (40%). We can notice that (40%) have 09 years experience in the field of teaching. Finally, the highest percentage is that of teachers who have been teaching for 05, 07 or 10 years (20% for each category).

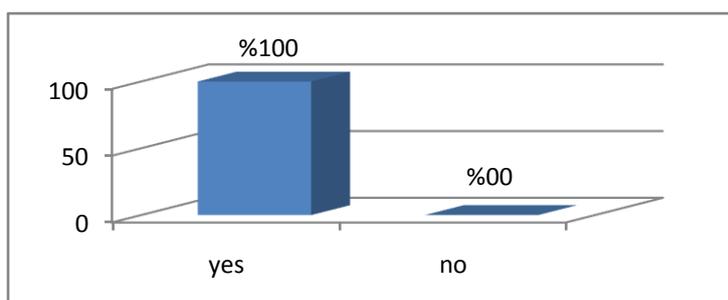
**Section 2: teachers' perception of the speaking skill.**

**Q3: Is oral skill your major teaching concern?**

**Table 22: Teachers' concern of the oral skill**

Options	Subjects	%
<b>Yes</b>	05	100
<b>No</b>	0	00
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph21: Teachers' concern of the oral skill**



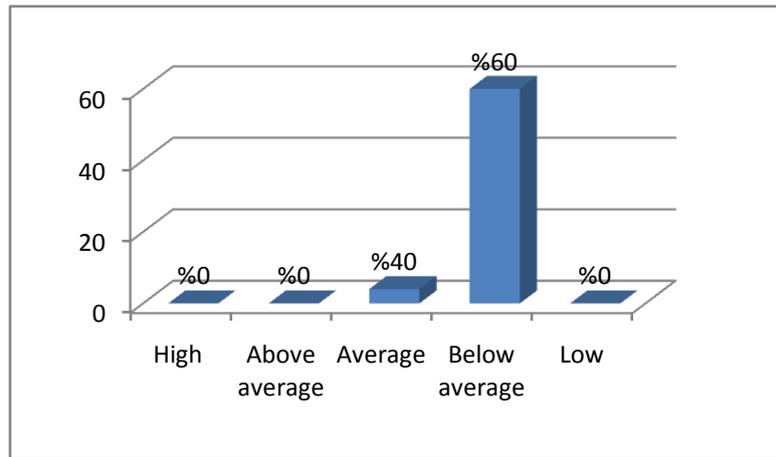
As shown in this table, expect one questioned teacher, i.e. All of the teachers (100%) who answered positively the question, indicating that the oral skill are their major teaching concern. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of enhancing their oral proficiency. These answers consolidate the belief that students need to develop their speaking skill, and that this skill will eventually enhance to a certain extent the other skills.

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

**Table 23: Teachers' evaluation of students' level of oral proficiency**

Options	Subjects	%
<b>High</b>	0	0
<b>Above Average</b>	0	0
<b>Average</b>	2	40
<b>Below Average</b>	3	60
<b>Low</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 22: Teachers' evaluation of students' level of oral proficiency**



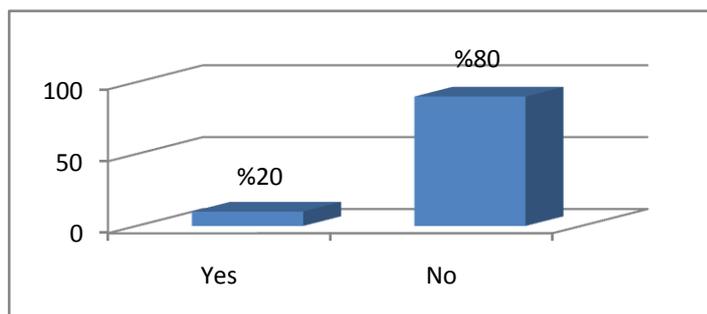
Teachers, here, are required to describe their students' level of oral proficiency. It seems to us that a majority of 3 teachers, translating into 60%, agree that their students have a below average in oral proficiency. However, 2 teachers out of 05 believe that their student's level in oral proficiency is average. No one teacher has opted for the 'high', 'above average' or 'low' options. If we lend ourselves to these results, it seems to us that the majority of students do not have a good command of English, probably, because they have poor speaking habits and practice, not interested in English, or demotivated to use the language. We believe that the main reason for which students' bad level is reticence. This means that students need practice in talking to be able to develop their speaking skill.

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

**Table 24: Teachers' perception of students' motivation in speaking**

Optios	Subjects	%
Yes	01	20
No	04	80
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 23: Teachers' perception of students' motivation in speaking**



Turning now to motivation, two aspects will be discussed here. The first point is whether or not the teachers are motivating their students to speak in English. The great majority has indicated that they do not motivate their students (a total of 4 teachers or 80%), while only 1 out of 10 (i.e. 20%) motivate their students. Unmotivated students can be due to many factors, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of interest in the speaking subjects, fear of making grammatical mistakes etc.... The role of teachers in enhancing students' motivation has been found to have great effect on enhancing students' performance in the target language; thus, teachers should find their ways to motivate their students.

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

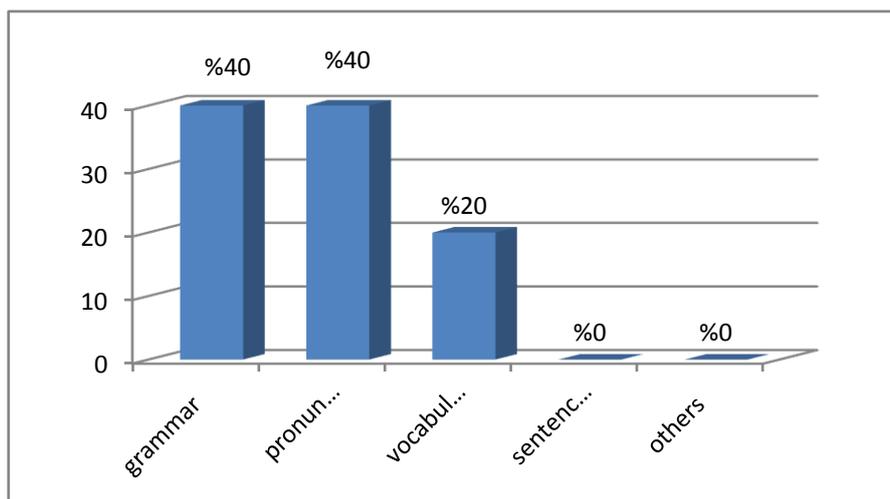
Only 1 teacher (out of 4) who answered "yes" did not provide any justification for his answer. For the rest who answered "yes", (3 of them) they explained that they raise their students' motivation through different ways. In the first place, selecting topics that interest students which stimulates them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

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

**Table 25: Teachers' perception of the most needed item of speaking**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	02	40
<b>Pronunciation</b>	02	40
<b>Vocabulary</b>	01	20
<b>Sentence structure</b>	00	00
<b>Others</b>	00	00
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 24: Teachers' perception of the most needed item of speaking**



According to this table, the majority of the teachers (40%) claim that their students need in spoken English are in terms of grammar and pronunciation (20% for each category). They are followed by sentence structure (20%). Then; vocabulary comes in the last position as the least needed item in teaching oral expression.

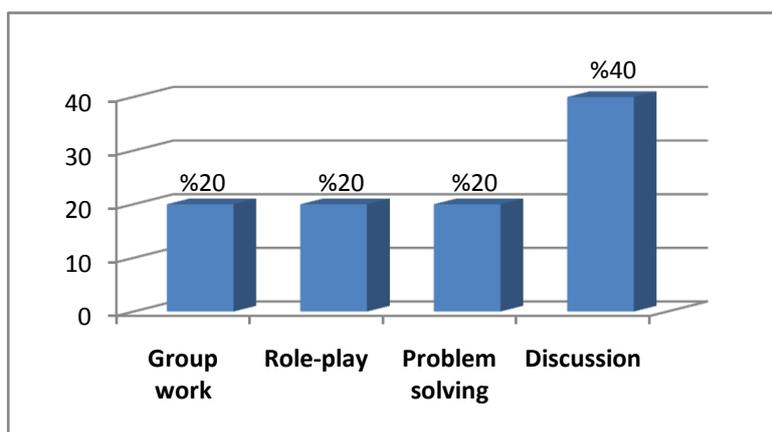
All teachers agree that all the language areas need improvement. To begin with, grammar helps in mastering the language and using it correctly. Also, the more learners practise, the better pronunciation they will get. As a conclusion, we believe that there is a need to create a better learning condition to help learners to acquire better.

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

**Table 26: Teachers' use of teaching techniques**

Options	Subjects	%
Group work	01	20
Role-play	01	20
Problem solving	01	20
Discussion	02	40
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 25: Teachers' use of teaching techniques**



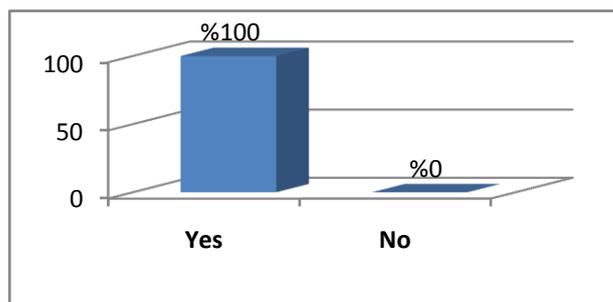
There are several ways for teaching the speaking skill. We have suggested four options for teachers to choose among them. The majority of teachers (40%) build confidence in discussion; to state differently, they focus less on grammar mistakes and insist on the communication of ideas. In the second position come those who make use of group work as a teaching technique. Teachers in favor of this type of technique may have their reasons such as that speaking is a social act in which two or more people are involved in oral exchange of information, and students feel less inhibited and more confident in themselves to speak. The last two categories of teachers have worked on role-play and problem solving (10% for each category). Teachers who opted for these choices believe that students may derive great benefits from such techniques. In sum, teachers realize that simply training students to produce sentences will not yield good speakers. In our opinion, speaking begins from participation and communication.

**Q9: do you evaluate your students' oral production?**

**Table 27: Teachers' evaluation of speaking**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	05	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 26: Teachers' evaluation of speaking**



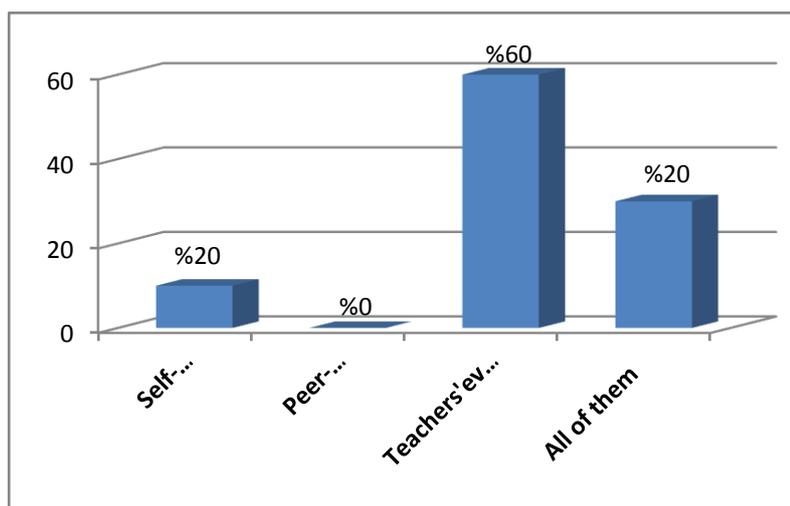
Evaluation is recognized by many teachers to be an essential aspect of foreign language teaching. Along the analysis of the results, we found that all teachers (100%) provide evaluation for oral production as shown in table 25. It is worthy to mention that teachers differ in terms of their focus when evaluating speaking production. Some highlight accuracy, others prefer Fluency; yet, our opinion is that all features must be taken into consideration when evaluating the oral proficiency. It is all about balance between this and that.

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

**Table 28: Teachers' preference for evaluation type**

Options	Subjects	%
Self-evaluation	01	20
Peer-evaluation	00	00
Teachers' evaluation	03	60
All of them	01	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>100</b>

**Graph 27: Teachers' preference for type of evaluation**



A large number of the teachers (60%) expressed their preference for teacher-evaluation. These teachers have a tendency for the belief that the teacher is the only one who can judge the students' production. They believe that it helps students get feedback from more proficient speakers. Like self-evaluation, peer-evaluation is another way of assessing students' production. Only one teacher (10%) has opted for this choice. We believe that this type of evaluation will develop in the students the sense of criticism autonomy. Similarly, another teacher (10%) has opted for peer evaluation while 3 teachers (30%) out of total 05 have opted for the fourth choice 'all of them'. Teachers' preference for one type or another depends mainly on teachers' approach to teaching.

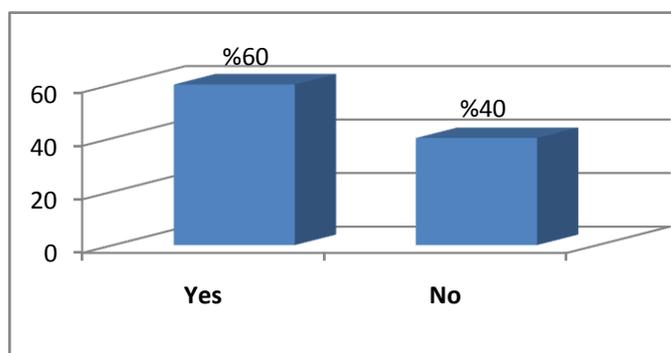
### Section 3: Teachers' incorporation of CLL

#### Q 11: have you ever used cooperative language learning?

**Table 29: Teachers' use of cooperative learning**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	03	60
No	02	40
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 28: Teachers' use of cooperative learning**



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

used cooperative learning, most of them do actually take it into account when practicing teaching.

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

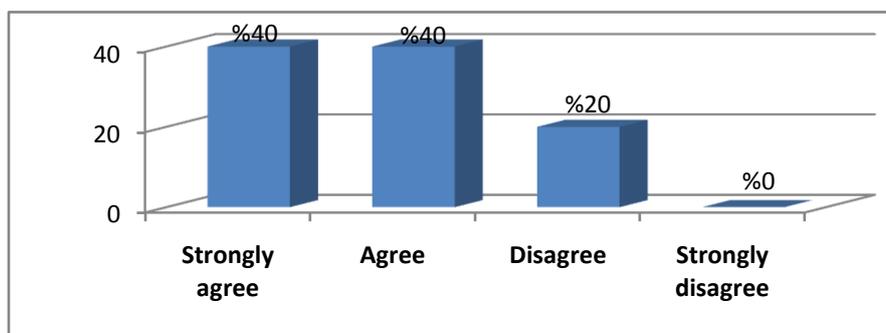
**1-Strongly agree 2-Agree 3-Disagree 4-Strongly disagree.**

- **Learning is facilitated through peer interaction in the target language:**

**Table 30: Teachers' perception of peer interaction**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Subjects</b>	02	02	01	00	05
<b>%</b>	40	40	20	00	100

**Graph 29: Teachers' perception of peer interaction**



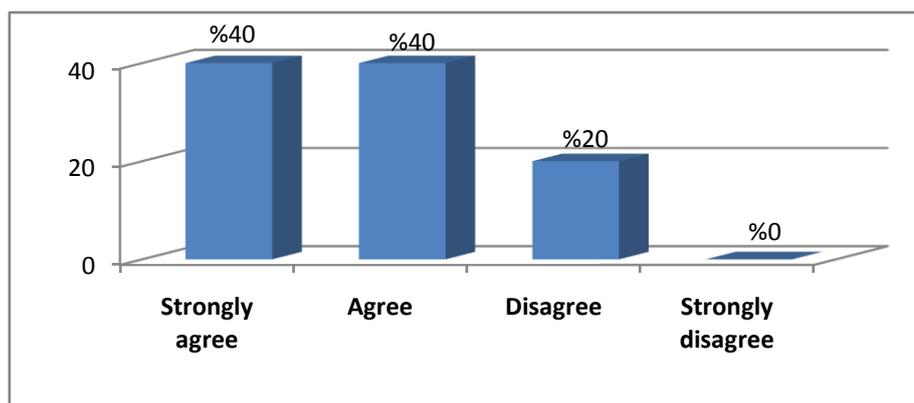
It is hypothesized that learning is facilitated through peer interaction. Teachers are, therefore, invited to express their agreement or disagreement. The majority (50%) agrees strongly with the statement presented above. On the other hand, we have recorded 4 cases (40%) of agreement and only one case of disagreement. On the whole, 4 teachers out of 05 seem to agree that language acquisition is facilitated by students interacting in the target language, i.e. they are involved in information gap activities. There is much talking as they help each other to solve problems and complete task. This involves students to use English in class and practise their speaking skill.

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

**Table 31: Teachers' perception of individual accountability**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<b>Subjects</b>	02	02	01	00	05
<b>%</b>	40	40	20	00	100

**Graph 30: Teachers' perception of individual accountability**



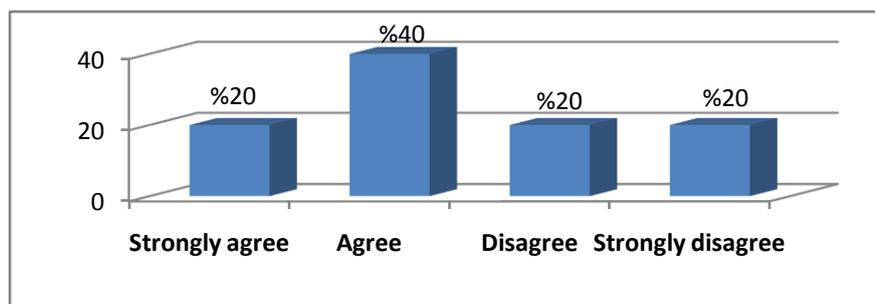
Each student needs to be made accountable for his own contribution to the completion of the task because some students may actively participate while others engage in "social loafing". A half of 6 teachers out of 10, translating into (50%), say they agree strongly to the statement presented to them,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

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

**Table 32: Teachers' perception of positive interdependence**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<b>Subjects</b>	01	02	01	01	05
<b>%</b>	20	40	20	20	100

**Graph 31: Teachers' perception of positive interdependence**



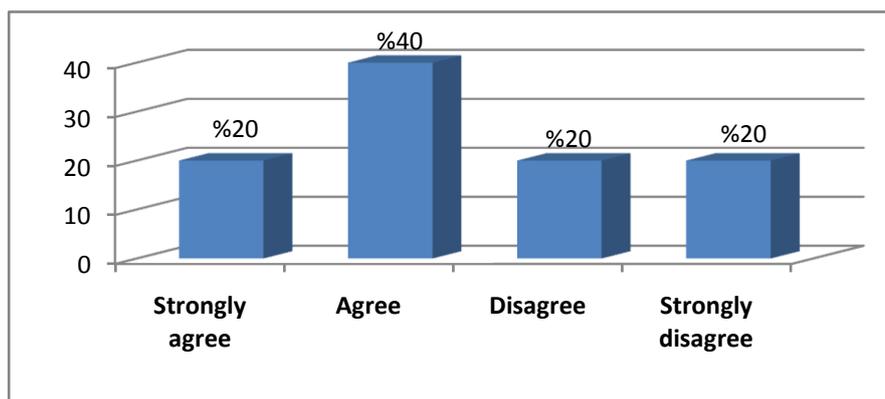
In this statement, cooperative learning is characterized by positive interdependence. Students are encouraged to think in terms of "**all for one and one for all**" (Alexander Damas). Teachers, here, are required to indicate how far they agree with this statement. As shown in this table, the half of teachers, i.e. 40%, agrees with the statement presented to them, and 2 (or 20%) agree strongly. All in all, we have 2 teachers (40%) who share our view that students have to support one another because success can be achieved only if each member makes a specific contribution to complete the task. On the other hand, we have recorded 2 cases of disagreement (20%) and another case which is strongly disagreement (10%). Probably, those teachers are in favor of traditional classroom competition. In our point view, this is not to say that competition is always wrong, if properly structured, competition between one group and another can be an effective means of motivating people to do their best; yet the forms of competition used in classrooms are rarely healthy or effective.

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

**Table 33: Teachers' perception of the social skills**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Subjects</b>	01	02	01	01	05
<b>%</b>	20	40	20	20	100

**Graph 32: Teachers' perception of the social skills**



In cooperative tasks, the teacher helps students how to learn more effectively. We believe that it is the teachers' job to teach their student's collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively. Teachers, here, are asked to state how far they agree or disagree with this statement. A majority of 2 teachers out of 05, translating into (40%), states that they agree with the statement presented to them, and 3 (or 30%) strongly agree. All in all, we have 7 teachers (70%) who share our view that students should realize that some skills are needed to engage in effective collaboration. These teachers seem to understand the principles underlying a successful cooperative work.

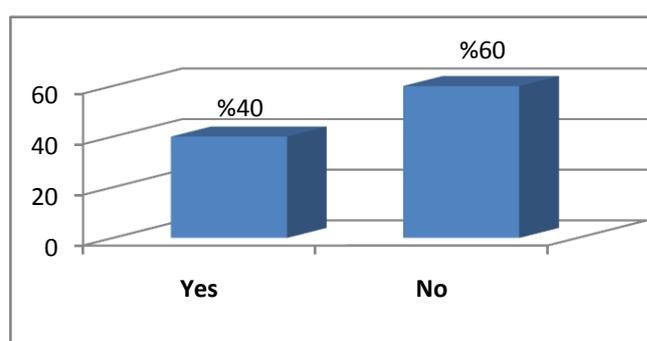
On the other hand, we have recorded 1 case of disagreement (10%) and another 2 (or 20%) case of strong disagreement. This can only be interpreted by their ignorance of the skills students should process. Again, cooperative learning essentially involves students in working together in groups. But it is not the group or pair work what makes cooperative learning distinctive; it is the way that students and teachers work together that is important. In sum, teachers can provide training in the strategies needed to engage in effective collaboration for example, how to ask and respond to questions, how to disagree, how to ask other students contribution and how to get along with others.

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

**Table 34: Teachers' perception of the value of cooperative work**

Options	Subject	%
Yes	02	40
No	03	60
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 33: Teachers' perception of the value of cooperative work**



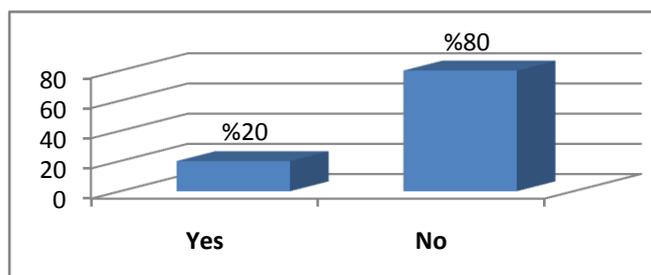
The aim of this item is to investigate whether or not teachers help their students see the value of cooperative work. As shown in this table, a high proportion of teachers (60%) answered negatively. It means that when they set students to work collaboratively in pair or group work, they do not try to make their students aware of the potential benefits of this technique. A smaller number has opted for the reverse situation in that 2 teachers (40%) do actually help their students see the importance of working cooperatively. This implies that our teachers are aware of the necessity of involving students in the process of learning and teaching. Thus, students are likely having a positive attitude towards learning. In sum, raising students' awareness of the value of cooperative learning is of great benefits to students because this would encourage them to participate more. Thus, it would give better results.

**Q 15: do your students face problems working together?**

**Table 35: Teachers' perception of students' problems in groups**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	01	20
No	04	80
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 34: Teachers' perception of students'**



As shown in this table, (80%) of the teachers say that their students do not have any problems working together. Regarding the 1 teacher who answered yes (20%), they seem to encounter some problems when their students work together with their classmates. In cooperative classrooms, teachers may encounter many problems. This might have several reasons; one possible reason is that some students prefer to work alone. Another possible interpretation is that some students are not interested at all in learning or they are lower in status for participating. In sum, cooperative learning demands constant control from the teacher in order to avoid problems.

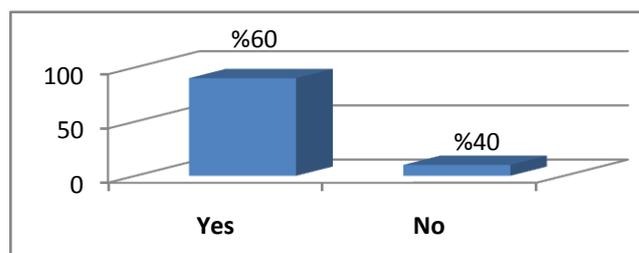
**Section 4: Teachers' evaluation of CLL**

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

**Table 36: Teachers' evaluation of cooperative learning**

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	03	60
No	02	40
<b>Total</b>	05	100

**Graph 35: Teachers' evaluation of cooperative learning**



The examination of the last item reveals that 04 teachers (60%) believe that cooperative work enhanced students' oral production. Only one teacher (40%) has answered negatively; i.e. denied any benefits from CLL in making students' oral production enhanced.

### **Because...**

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

### **Discussion**

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

1. In fact, approximately all teachers consider the aural/oral skills as their major concern while teaching. This implies that teachers are aware of students' needs in terms of developing oral proficiency.
2. For teaching speaking, most teachers opted for group work. As such, teachers would provide Students with language use and help them in increasing their oral proficiency.

3. Teachers need to better understand meaningful ways of assessing students' oral production. It is suggested that negative evaluation might inhibit students' future participation.
4. When teachers were asked the use of cooperative learning, some teachers confirmed about the use of cooperative group work in their practices.
5. As far as their implementation of cooperative group work as part of their instructions, some teachers admit that their teaching does not consist in making students aware of the skills they adopt for effective learning. However, other teachers show the importance of these skills for an optimal and more productive learning to take place.
6. When asked about possible problems encountered while teaching, teachers did not seem to notice any problem. This finding urges the need for teachers to be attached with students' problems and how to solve them.
7. Finally, teachers' evaluation of cooperative group work as a technique for improving students' oral proficiency reveals their recognition of the effectiveness of such a technique.

## **5. Results**

The analysis of these questionnaires of students and teachers, served us to make (design) a summary of our students and teachers' needs and difficulties they face in the English learning/teaching process. Following the division of the questionnaire, the results obtained are at three levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level.

Through the first part of students and teachers' questionnaire, we can infer that our students are motivated to learn English, even though they came from different streams, because English was the first and personal choice of the majority. And this implies that they have personal interest in English, specifically to get a job in the future as the majority stated. Therefore, they need to be integratively motivated and professionally guided to enhance their view of English to go beyond job requirements, because getting interested in English-speaking people and their culture is also as important as learning the language itself. On the other hand, our division of English seems to be dependent on experienced teachers which in turn will affect the way students learn and their enthusiasm about learning English.

The second category is at the level of the learner. Students seem to have good level in English, but the majority of them feel unconfident when it comes to communication inside the

classroom. Also, the questioned students seem to have different attitudes and feelings towards each other, and it was cooperative relationship for the majority of them. This is surprising since the educational system from the primary to college encourages individualism and competitiveness among students. So this cooperation between students has to be enhanced and nurtured to build a solid ground for more practical and productive group work and appreciation to literally helping each other learn. In addition, students expressed their dissatisfaction with the type of activities used by teachers in classroom, despite the fact that teachers try to incorporate some materials and methods. So, this is not enough if there is no serious motivation and purposeful collaboration between teachers, administration, and students in which they all work together to meet the needs of the students.

Concerning the learning situation level, in the third part when asked both students and teachers, the answers revealed contradiction. This is in terms of the variety of activities and materials, the use of cooperative learning, and the degree of students' satisfaction. Because students expressed their dissatisfaction with teachers' methods, their one-sided interaction, and no variance in activities, while teachers stated that they use cooperative learning and students are 100% satisfied. Also, when asked, both teachers and students showed that they suffer from large classes and the great number that reaches in most of times 45 to 50. That status with other factors made teachers being passive with the situation. Teachers lost their beliefs of effective learning and motivation, thus they try to make no effort to improve the situation; reach group cohesiveness or to make a classroom goal structure and that would be of course according to the learners' backgrounds and their levels of ability. Furthermore, teachers of different modules claim that they use cooperative learning to enhance students' communicative competence, but most of them were not completely aware of its characteristics, activities, and strategies as well as academic and social benefits as the questionnaire revealed.

In the end both teachers and students suffer from the lack of motivation, materials and administrative support and attention. But still teachers may bring their methods, techniques and materials to fit the conditions of our university and the status of our department.

## **6. Suggestions and Implications**

From the first chapter and the analysis of the questionnaire, we firmly believe that there are certain things that need to change in our educational system, and specifically in our English classes of oral expression. Teachers and administration should consider these

necessary changes, and apply them in our classes in order to enhance the productivity of students' oral performances.

We firmly suggest and emphasize the collaboration between teachers and department, the organization of conferences and workshops to enrich knowledge, and the discussion of new techniques of teaching & learning. Also, we suggest the exchange of experiences with teachers from other universities and even from other countries. The budget of the university allows it to grant scholarships to teachers to train abroad at least one teacher a year which is helpful because this teacher will be a trainer when they come back home.

- We suggest that teachers should get training courses, to get more experience, exchange ideas, knowledge, and experience of teaching with other teachers who have long experience.
- Contact teachers from foreign countries too.
- Teachers should incorporate more didactic aids like tape recorders and videos in their lessons and internet activities to make them more interesting and enjoyable, so that students do not lose focus and enthusiasm.
- Teachers should know more about how to use cooperative learning, its strategies, and its benefits in order to overcome the possible challenges and pitfalls that may occur during its application.
- We also suggest that cooperation and interaction between students should be promoted and supported by all the people concerned with the education field, and reduce the emphasis on competitiveness which is the traditional atmosphere inside our classes.
- In addition, teachers should provide a very safe and relaxed learning environment for the students to reduce the affective filters and make them interact positively with both teachers and fellow learners.

Finally, with cooperative learning applied in oral expression classes, we hope that it makes the needed changes and satisfy the needs of students and teachers, so that it enhances learning and makes it more enjoyable for both.

### **Conclusion:**

We conclude from the students' questionnaire that students are motivated to learn English. But in most of second year classes of English, cooperative learning is not applied in instruction as it should be, even though some group work is being used from time to time.

Despite that, teachers and students are somehow satisfied. In a way, students have an appreciation to cooperative learning and understand its importance and role in improving their communicative and social skills as well. In addition to that, through the questionnaire of teachers we have reached that most of them are not completely aware of the practical application of cooperative learning. So, this urges a strong need to have everybody involved and adequately trained to face students' difficulties in learning EFL and improving their oral production.

## General Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to confirm the research hypothesis which suggested that there is a strong need to implement group work in general, and cooperative learning in particular especially in our classes of English of Oral Expression. This is because CL plays an essential role in promoting students oral production and enhancing their social skills, as well as creating a very safe environment for them to interact and behave normally and without fear. So, all of the students learn better and faster when they are brought together and set towards the same goal.

Of course the needs of second year LMD students and the view points of teachers vary in general, but the great majority of the informants and through answers to the questionnaires, revealed that they agree on few facts such as, the loose learning status and the change that they need to make specifically in the oral expression sessions. In order to test all of that, we devised two questionnaires for our sample which consists of both students of second year and teachers of the same division of english. The main aim behind designing such a data gathering tool is to find out students' and teachers' viewpoints and beliefs of what happens inside our English classes and how to get the learning of English improved through cooperative learning activities and tasks.

Furthermore, the results obtained revealed that our teachers may need more motivation and guidance as well as our students, in order to promote collaboration and enhance learning. Also, we have to understand that it is the teachers' responsibility to create a relaxed and friendly situations where learners can use the target language without fear or hesitation. The other facts are the lack of materials and administrative support and attention which would make the task easy for teachers to use their different methods and activities to raise satisfaction of all sides. We have also found that there is hope to use cooperative learning, since there is a sense of collaboration between students, good relationships with teachers, and even application of some sort of group and pair work in second year LMD classes.

In the end through this work, we hope and intend to stimulate teachers to use cooperative learning in teaching English, because the role of the teacher and the type of activities are essential to make a perfect-like environment for students to come together and learn better in cooperative groups. So, the old atmosphere of individualism and

competitiveness inside classes change, and learning the language becomes an easy and enjoyable task for everybody.

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# Appendix

# Résumé

L'apprentissage coopératif est une technique d'enseignement qui se réfère à des petits groupes hétérogènes d'élèves qui travaillent ensemble pour atteindre un but commun. Son efficacité a été documentée par de copieuses études de recherche. Cependant, très peu de documents publiés ont été faites sur la relation directe entre l'apprentissage coopératif en tant que technique d'enseignement et de l'augmentation de la performance et des progrès orale des élèves. Par conséquent, le but de cette étude était d'étudier l'efficacité de l'apprentissage coopératif et de clarifier les vues et les croyances des étudiants et les enseignants de son importance, et l'application dans les classes de deuxième année LMD dans la division de l'anglais à l'université de Biskra. Cette étude a été composé de trois chapitres. Il est à espérer que cette étude, à travers les deux premiers chapitres, pourrait aider à changer la façon d'enseigner et d'apprendre l'anglais comme une langue étrangère. Ainsi, sensibiliser sur le rôle que les élèves pourraient jouer en aidant mutuellement à apprendre et de surmonter les problèmes de deux étudiants qui ont une faible classe de la performance orale, et les enseignants qui rencontrent certaines difficultés à gérer les grandes classes de taille et amener les élèves à pratiquer à parler la langue étrangère. Dans le troisième chapitre, les données ont été recueillies au moyen de questionnaires distribués aux participants (d'étudiants et des enseignants) contenue questions ouvertes et fermées. La méthode de ce travail de recherche est assez descriptive. Nous avons recueilli des données quantitatives et qualitatives qui ont été analysés, de façon descriptive, d'enquêter sur l'état réel et l'application de l'apprentissage coopératif, en contraste à un simple travail de groupe, dans l'enseignement de l'expression orale pour les classes de deuxième année. En outre, l'analyse a donné un aperçu des point de vue des enseignants et des vues sur la mise en œuvre l'apprentissage coopératif. Enfin, les résultats ont montré que l'apprentissage coopératif est un méthode substitut très utile qui contribue à créer des situations appropriées où les étudiants peuvent utiliser la langue sans hésitation et, par conséquent, d'accroître et d'améliorer leur production orale. Cette étude a certainement ses limites, mais ses conclusions ont révélé des implications intéressantes. Ainsi, les futures recherches devraient se faire expérimentalement pour tester l'applicabilité des conclusions à une population plus large de sujets.

## الملخص

التعلم التعاوني هو منهجية للتعليم تشير إلى كل مجموعة صغيرة من الدارسين يتعاونون فيما بينهم لتحقيق هدف مشترك. وقد تم إثبات فعاليته من خلال العديد من الدراسات الميدانية. ومع ذلك، فإن القليل فقط من هذه الدراسات قد بحثت في العلاقة بين الدور المباشر للتعلم التعاوني كمنهجية للتعليم وتطور مقدرة الكلام أو الحوار لدى الطلاب. لذلك، فإن هدف هذه الدراسة هو إثبات الدور الفعال للتعليم التعاوني، وإيضاح رؤية الطلبة و الأساتذة لأهميته، وكذلك بيان مدى واقع تطبيقه في أقسام الانجليزية للسنة الثانية لنظام الـ ل.م.د بجامعة بسكرة. هذا البحث المكون من ثلاث فصول ومن خلال الفصلين الأولين، نأمل أن يساهم في تغيير و تحسين منهجية التعليم و التعلم التقليدية للغة الانجليزية. و بذلك يزيد من الوعي بأهمية الدور الفعال الذي قد يلعبه الطلاب في تحسين عملية تعليم بعضهم البعض، و التغلب على العوائق التي يواجهها كلا من الطالب ذو المستوى الضعيف نسبيا، والأستاذ الذي عليه العمل وسط أقسام مكتظة بالطلاب ولعدة ساعات مرهقة وجعلهم يمارسون مهارة التكلم باللغة الأجنبية. في الفصل الثالث و هو الجزء التطبيقي، قمنا بتوزيع استمارة أسئلة للمشاركين وهم عينة الدراسة (سنة وستون طالبا وخمس أساتذة) تضمنت أسئلة مفتوحة وأخرى محدودة الخيارات. قمنا بجمع معطيات كمية و نوعية وتحليلها لبيان واقع التعلم التعاوني ومدى تطبيقه مقارنة بالعمل الجماعي العادي في تعليم اللغة الانجليزية. بالإضافة إلى أن هذا التحليل أوضح مواقف و آراء الأساتذة في تطبيق التعليم التعاوني. و في الختام ومع تحديات هذه الدراسة توصلنا نتائج جيدة إلى أن التعلم التعاوني بديل فعال يناسب جميع الطلبة على اختلاف مستوياتهم. لذلك فالأبحاث المستقبلية يجب أن تكون تجريبية و على عينات كبيرة للتأكد من مدى قابلية تطبيقها على نطاق أوسع للحصول على نتائج أدق و أشمل.