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Cooperative Learning as a Tool to Mitigate Speaking Anxiety in English Language Learning

A Case of First Year EFL Students at the University Center of Mila

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedication I

First and foremost, Alhamdulillah—all praise and gratitude be to Allah—for blessing me with the strength, guidance, and the honor of experiencing and celebrating these unforgettable moments.

*It is with profound pride and heartfelt emotion that I dedicate this work to my dearest mother, **Nabila**, the embodiment of unconditional love, unwavering support, and boundless affection. Her presence has been my refuge in times of uncertainty and struggle, always standing by my side with unwavering faith.*

*To my beloved father, **Laid**, whose steadfast encouragement, love, and strength have been a constant pillar throughout my journey.*

To my treasured grandparents—those who are still with us and those whose loving memory lives eternally in my heart—I am forever grateful for the warmth and wisdom they imparted.

*To my cherished brothers, **Mehdi**, **Sami**, and my precious little sibling, **Wassim**, your love and support have meant the world to me.*

To everyone who believed in me and supported me throughout this endeavor, your kindness and encouragement will never be forgotten.

*And finally, I dedicate this achievement to **myself** for the perseverance, the sleepless nights, the countless hours of hard work, and the unwavering commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.*

Feryal

Dedication II

To the One who guided me with light, lifted me with mercy, and strengthened me when I could not stand—All praise is due to Allah, always and forever.

*To my dear father, **Abd Elhamid**—thank you for being my strength, my guide, and my greatest support. This achievement is a reflection of your sacrifices. I am proud to be your daughter.*

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*To my beloved siblings—**Hamza, Besma, Halima, Fatima, Fayza, Mohammed Amine, and Adel**—I grew up in your care, wrapped in your love, always the little one you protected. Today, as I graduate, I carry with me all the strength, warmth, and comfort you gave me. To Amina and Fadia—thank you for being more than sisters-in-law. Your kindness and presence made our family even more beautiful.*

*To my precious nieces—**Zaynab Hibat El Rahmane, Douaa, Djoumana, Soudjoud, Anfel, Meriem, Assawer, Sidra, and Arwa**—And to my little gentlemen—**Aymen, Abd Elrahman, Mohammed Iyad, Modie**, and our tiny sunshine **Ghaït (Toto)**—You are the joy in my days and the smile in my heart. Your hugs, laughter, and love have been a light in my life. I hope one day you'll be proud of me, as I am so proud to be your auntie.*

To my dearest friends—each of you, name by name—Thank you for being more than just company. This success holds your laughter, your loyalty, and the quiet love that carried me through. I'm forever grateful.

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Abstract

The current study investigates the effectiveness of cooperative learning as a tool to reduce speaking anxiety among first-year university students studying English. It aims to raise awareness of the anxiety as a psychological barrier that affect students' speaking ability. Specifically, the research examines how cooperative-learning strategies contribute to mitigating anxiety in students' oral performance, particularly among English as a foreign language university freshman. This study was conducted at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center in Mila during the academic year 2024 –2025. A mixed approach was adopted. Concerning the data, it was collected through a questionnaire administered to 70 participants. The findings were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings indicate that first-year university students experience significant levels of anxiety, especially during oral performance tasks. The results also reveal that the use of cooperative learning, particularly the Team-Games-Tournament strategy, significantly reduces speaking anxiety, boosts students' self-confidence, and promotes more active participation during oral performances. Overall, the study demonstrates that cooperative learning techniques in an EFL setting foster an engaging and supportive classroom environment and promote students' speaking proficiency in EFL settings.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

CL: Cooperative Learning

STAD: Student Teams Achievement Divisions

TGT: Teams-Games-Tournament

TPS: Think-Pair-Share

CLT: Communicative language teaching

FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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Résumé

الملخص

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Cooperative learning (CL) is an approach that involves learners working in small groups to enhance their oral performance. Even though speaking is a significant skill in language learning, speaking anxiety is a common problem for students, especially English as foreign language (EFL) learners. Such anxiety often stems from fears of making mistakes or being judged, along with low self-confidence, stress, and discomfort—all of which significantly hinder students' oral performance and classroom participation. This anxiety prevents students from becoming involved and reduces their participation in class activities.

Horwitz, Michel, Horwitz, and Cope identify anxiety as a major obstacle in language learning. They mention “anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language”. (1986, p. 125) For students to achieve academic success and personal growth, they must develop the skills needed to communicate clearly and engage in real-life interactions. Through the CL, learners can engage in meaningful interactions with their peers due to the supportive and participatory environment that CL provides. This interaction can help foster confidence, reduce anxiety, and improve speaking skills. Kagan (1994) emphasizes four basic principles of CL: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, and Simultaneous Interaction. These principles strongly encourage students to develop their speaking performance. Prior studies have investigated the effectiveness of the cooperative learning techniques in educational contexts. Although previous research has explored CL in education, few studies have examined its specific role in reducing speaking anxiety among EFL university freshmen. Most research focuses on general academic performance and language acquisition, with limited attention to learners' psychological and emotional states and how cooperative learning can help mitigate speaking anxiety.

In the context of our university, this issue has not yet been addressed, especially among first-year English university students, who are vulnerable to speaking anxiety for several reasons. One significant factor is transitional pressure; the sudden shift from secondary schools to university involves major changes in the learning environment and academic expectations. Most secondary schools focus on teaching grammar and writing, resulting in students' lack of prior exposure to oral communication. Moreover, freshmen are often unfamiliar with the academic contexts and terminology and tend to experience self-consciousness in public speaking, all of which contribute to increased student speaking anxiety.

Understanding this relationship could help educators implement more effective classroom strategies to foster confidence and improve oral performance. This study will benefit EFL learners, teachers, policymakers, and researchers in determining the most effective cooperative learning techniques to mitigate anxiety in oral performance.

2. Overview of the Relevant Literature

Anxiety that learners encounter while speaking in the foreign language classroom is widely recognized as one of the most significant factors that can prevent learners from learning the target language. These psychological barriers can obstruct learners' ability to engage in constructive communication. Also, it may reduce their confidence and restrict their comprehension in mastering a second language. Young (1990) pointed out that foreign language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. According to him, debilitating language anxiety can have a profound impact on the language learning process. It can lead to learners' avoidant behavior towards their ESL/EFL learning attitude. Furthermore, Motoda (2005) claimed that the debilitating effects of ESL/EFL could manifest as learners becoming confused when using the target language or skipping SL/FL classes. Cooperative learning can serve as a promising pedagogical solution for reducing learners' anxiety and

fostering a more engaging, low-stress learning environment. According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1990), it has been “suggested as one possible means of reducing this anxiety in classrooms” (Oxford, 1997; Slavin, 1991, p. 4).

Empirical studies confirm these assertions. For example, Pattanapichet and Changpueng (2014) conducted a study titled “Cooperative Learning: An Approach to Reduce Students’ Anxiety in Learning English”. This study examined the effectiveness of CL in mitigating anxiety among students in EFL classrooms. The study was grounded in MacIntyre (1995) Model, which suggests that anxiety causes students to divide their attention between external conditions and their cognitive responses, thereby hindering their academic performance. The study aimed to identify strategies for overcoming anxiety in EFL language learning. The findings revealed that CL significantly alleviated students' anxiety levels. When collaborative techniques were implemented in speaking classes, students felt more comfortable, engaged, and motivated. This research supports the current study by demonstrating how cooperative learning can directly alleviate speaking anxiety, one of the key challenges faced by Algerian EFL students. However, since it was conducted in a different cultural and educational context, the generalizability and transferability of its findings to the Algerian setting may be limited.

Similarly, Al-Duwaile’s (2014) study, “The Effectiveness of Using Specific Teaching Strategies in Reducing EFL Learners’ Speaking Anxiety,” considered CL an effective strategy for alleviating speaking anxiety. The study explored the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies to reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners. It aimed to identify the causes of anxiety, stress, or embarrassment when speaking a foreign language. Furthermore, the study linked these causes to learners’ attempts to maintain their self-image, their language learning process, and the situations in which they must use the language. The results showed that the

experimental group of EFL learners demonstrated a significant improvement in their enthusiasm and confidence. This study is relevant to the current research, as it highlights the positive impact of CL on learners' confidence and enthusiasm in learning EFL, factors that are particularly important in the context of Algerian universities. Enhanced confidence and enthusiasm contribute directly to improved student performance and more active classroom participation.

Falkner, Vivian, and Falkner (2013), through their study “Collaborative Learning and Anxiety: A Phenomenal Study of Collaborative Learning Activities”. Investigated the role of collaborative learning in reducing students' anxiety, particularly in academic settings. The researchers examined students' reflections on group-based learning, including their perceptions and behaviours. Data were collected through interviews, which consisted of three questions, and aimed at understanding students' attitudes towards classroom anxiety. The findings indicated that students' anxiety can be reduced by a CL strategy, as working in groups provides a supportive environment that encourages participation and reduces the fear of negative evaluation, a key factor in language learning anxiety.

In traditional English classrooms, using textbooks, lecture notes, and handouts is mainly the key element for teaching materials. However, this teaching method does not encourage learners to actively participate with knowledge. This method directly refers to a teacher-centered approach. Moreover, due to their limitations in addressing student engagement, conventional teaching methods have been considered impractical. In response, CL emerged, which considered a student-centred approach as a more effective approach that enhances meaningful learning, particularly in enhancing speaking skills for teachers and students.

CL have become one of the most widespread and fruitful areas of research, theory, and applied instructional strategies in education. These strategies incorporate key elements such as positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, small group & interpersonal skills, and group self-evaluation. Johnson et al. (1990) defined it as the organisation of small teams to work together, aiming to promote mutual support and shared responsibilities. It is rooted in Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) and Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, particularly the concept of the zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which highlights the role of social interaction in the learning process. The ZPD refers to the gap between what a learner can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer or instructor.

Peter E. Doolittle (1995) also reinforces this theoretical framework by stating in his book: "Cooperative learning is an effective formal education strategy for transmitting these cultural experiences. CL and its social basis, is a strategy well suited to the tenets of Vygotsky's theory of human development" (p.25). This viewpoint aligns with the idea that learners develop and enhance their cognitive and social development through collaborative learning. In the context of language learning, the cooperative learning technique is presented as a powerful strategy in language acquisition as it helps students develop their social interaction through discussions, group work, role-plays, etc. These activities not only provide the opportunity for learners to practice the language but also to reduce their anxiety and boost their self-esteem.

Numerous studies have explored the link between CL and oral performance. For example, AlTamimi and Attamimi (2014) investigated the Effectiveness of CL in the Yemeni, focusing on its influence on students' speaking skills and attitudes toward Learning English. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group and a pre-test-posttest format. The result suggested that collaborative learning not only enhanced students' speaking

skills but also significantly improved students' attitude. The researchers argued that integrating CL into the EFL curriculum has the potential to enhance both language proficiency and learners' attitudes. In this field, several studies have been conducted by many researchers to investigate the effectiveness of CL in reducing anxiety during students' oral performances.

Another study by Ehsan Namaziandost et al (2019) examined the impact of cooperative learning on improving oral proficiency and motivation among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The findings indicated that cooperative learning had a significant positive impact on students' speaking proficiency and motivation. The researcher carried out an experiment involving a control group and an experimental group, both of which were at nearly the same level in speaking proficiency. After implementing cooperative learning in the experimental group, the post-test results showed a significant improvement compared to the control group, with a large reported effect size. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the cooperative learning technique in mitigating students' speaking anxiety.

Furthermore, Kagan (1994) introduced cooperative learning as a method to improve student engagement and reduce anxiety in the classroom. He considered it a supportive strategy to develop students' speaking performance by encouraging students to work collaboratively rather than in isolation, highlighting the effectiveness of social interaction as a key component in minimizing speaking anxiety.

3. Aims of the Study

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of CL strategies in reducing speaking anxiety among first-year English university students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center in Mila.

This study examines how structured CL activities and peer interactions can create a supportive learning environment that helps students overcome their fear and hesitation in speaking English. Specifically, the research seeks to identify the prevalence of communication apprehension among these students and evaluate how collaborative learning techniques can alleviate such anxiety while enhancing their oral communication abilities. By exploring the relationship between CL and speaking anxiety, this study intends to provide educators with evidence-based insights and practical strategies to improve the language learning experience and outcomes for EFL students, ultimately fostering increased confidence and oral proficiency in the target language.

4. The significance of the Study

The significance of the current study stems from its focus on the role of CL in reducing speaking anxiety among EFL learners—an area that has garnered increasing attention in recent years due to its critical implications for language learning outcomes aspect of language education. The study investigates the factors causing language anxiety among English as a second language (ESL) and EFL learners, particularly in speaking skills. It highlights the psychological barriers learners face, often rooted in fears of making mistakes and negative judgments from peers. Furthermore, it sheds light on the nature of CL as an approach that effectively provides a less pressuring context through group-based discussion, creativity, and collaborative thinking, relying only on whole-class instruction. Additionally, this research gains importance from its consideration of educators' attitudes towards the incorporation of cooperative strategies to reduce EFL learners' speaking anxiety. Teachers' awareness of the learners' needs and psychological factors will help to minimize their anxiety and improve participation.

Overall, the current study strives to provide valuable insights into how CL can be applied as a pedagogical tool to create a positive learning atmosphere, enhance critical thinking, improve classroom performance, and encourage teacher creativity. Importantly, it aims to address a noticeable gap in the Algerian EFL educational context, where teacher-centered methods still prevail in English language classrooms. Despite recent curricular reforms, many EFL learners in Algeria continue to struggle with speaking anxiety due to limited opportunities for meaningful communication and peer collaboration. CL has been described as one of the “greatest educational innovations of recent times” (Slavin, 1999, cited in Gillies et al., 2008, p. 1). This research explores how the integration of CL can be adopted to support Algerian EFL learners and improve classroom practices. By doing so, it offers practical recommendations for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to enhance language education across Algeria.

5. Research Questions

Considering that speaking anxiety is a serious issue facing EFL learners at the higher education level, CL has gained increasing attention as a solution to this problem. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the implementation of cooperative learning strategies help reduce speaking anxiety among EFL students?
2. Which cooperative learning techniques are most effective in minimizing speaking anxiety among EFL students?

6.Means of research

To meet the research aims and answer the research question, a student questionnaire was adopted to collect the necessary data for this study.

The questionnaire was administered to first-year EFL university students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University-Mila. 70 students were selected as a sample to represent a target population of approximately 240 students. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the effectiveness of the CL and its impact on reducing students' speaking anxiety.

7. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized into two main chapters: the first addresses the theoretical framework, while the second is devoted to the practical findings.

The first chapter, entitled “Speaking Anxiety and Cooperative Learning in English Language Classrooms”, consists of two sections that provide a comprehensive theoretical understanding of both anxiety and cooperative learning. The first section, “Anxiety in English Speaking Performance”, begins with a psychological perspective of anxiety, categorizing it into state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. It then examines the concept of EFL anxiety and its core components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative judgment. Subsequently, the section discusses speaking skills as an essential element of communicative competence, highlighting its main types and the common barriers learners face. The discussion concludes by proposing a set of strategies for both teachers and learners aimed at reducing speaking anxiety in EFL settings.

The second section, “Cooperative Learning as a Tool for Effective Classroom Practice,” offers insights into CL by defining the concept and emphasizing its significance as a

learner-centered instructional approach. It outlines its major benefits in boosting the learner's motivation and reducing their anxiety. Furthermore, the section examines various levels of collaboration, and essential elements of cooperative learning. Several practical techniques are introduced, such as STAD, Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Numbered Heads Together, with real-world examples illustrating their use in classrooms. The section also discusses the theoretical foundations supporting cooperative learning in EFL settings, including Social Interdependence Theory, Sociocultural Theory, and Motivation Theory. Through these dimensions, the use of CL in EFL classrooms is explored. Through these dimensions, the section demonstrates the effectiveness of CL as a dynamic and student-centered instructional strategy in EFL contexts.

The second chapter provides the practical components of the research. It begins with the research questions designed to achieve the study's aims, followed by a description of data collection procedures and instruments. The methodology is then detailed, particularly the description and analysis of the student questionnaire. The chapter emphasizes the interpretation of findings and their implications, concluding with a discussion of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research and practice.

Chapter One: Speaking Anxiety and Cooperative Learning in English Language

Classrooms

Section One: Anxiety in English Speaking Performance

Introduction

Affective factors in language learning have garnered significant attention from educators and researchers. It is widely acknowledged that acquiring a new language is a demanding, multifaceted, and prolonged process influenced by cognitive as well as emotional components. One of the major emotional barriers is anxiety, a complex, multidimensional feeling characterized by psychological tension and apprehension, particularly in the context of English as a EFL. FLA can negatively affect learners' confidence, lower their willingness to participate in classroom activities, and ultimately hinder both their oral proficiency and academic achievement.

This section, therefore, aims to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on language anxiety within the context of EFL. It will explore the concept of anxiety by offering a general definition, discussing its categories, and exploring the specific components of FLA, particularly as they relate to speaking activities. It will also provide an overview of the types and sources of anxiety that may affect language learners. The discussion then shifts to exploring the different strategies that can help reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners.

1.1.1. Definitions of anxiety

Although the term anxiety is widely used, providing an exact definition for it proves to be a daunting task that cannot be carried out efficiently. A large number of definitions can be associated with it, depending on the context in which the term is used. However, what is

commonly agreed upon is the etymology of this term: anxiety is an unpleasant feeling and a complex construct that deals with one's psychology.

According to Spielberger (as cited in Awan et al., 2010, p.33), anxiety is "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". This indicates that when a person experiences anxiety, their psychological system initiates a response. Such activation is characterized by heightened physiological arousal, rapid heartbeat and breathing, and muscle tension. These physiological responses often result from the release of stress-related hormones, such as adrenaline.

In line with this, Horwitz provides a definition that offers a more specific perspective, describing anxiety in the context of foreign language learning. He defines anxiety as "a feeling of tension, apprehension, and nervousness associated with the situation of learning a foreign language" (1986, p.113). He further describes it as "a distinctive complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

It is important to mention that anxiety is not always a purely negative phenomenon. In some cases, it can also play a functional role and generate a marginal perspective Mussen et al. (1974, p. 387) argue that "Anxiety is not a pathological condition in itself but a necessary and normal physiological and mental preparation for danger ... anxiety is necessary for the survival of the individual under certain circumstances. Failure to apprehend danger and to prepare for it may have disastrous results." This perspective expands our comprehension of anxiety, suggesting that while it can be stressful, it may also serve an important adaptive function.

1.1.2. Categories of Anxiety

Anxiety is categorized into three major types: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and specific situation anxiety.

1.1.2.1. Trait anxiety

Trait anxiety is a generalized and long-term anxiety that makes individuals feel worried and anxious in different situations. In other words, trait anxiety is a stable personality characteristic. Tovilović et al. (2009, p. 492) defined it as “stable individual differences in a tendency to respond with an increase in state anxiety while anticipating a threatening situation”. Trait anxiety can be noted by chronic worry, hypersensitivity to stress, overthinking, and difficulty relaxing, as it affects humans’ behavior, thinking, and feeling. An example of trait anxiety is when some learners always feel worried and anxious about exams, both before and after, even though they have prepared themselves very well. Furthermore, Gidron (2013, as cited in Stickel, 2019) describes trait anxiety as relatively stable over time and part of the personality domain neuroticism. In other words, Trait anxiety is a stable personality tendency that makes individuals feel worried and anxious over circumstances, even though they are not often dangerous.

Spielberger (1972) provides valuable insights into this field. He argues that trait anxiety is not directly observed in behavior; however, it can be inferred from the frequency and intensity of a person's state of anxiety.

1.1.2.2. State anxiety:

State anxiety is a temporary psychological and physiological tendency that occurs in specific situations when an individual faces a threatening or stressful moment. State anxiety is defined by Leal, Goes, Silva, and Teixeira-Silva (2017, p. 148) as “... [reflecting] the psychological

and physiological transient reactions directly related to adverse situations in a specific moment”. For further explanation, state anxiety causes individuals to feel anxious and worried in response to a particular circumstance. MacIntyre (1995, p. 93) states, “state anxiety is an immediate, transitory, emotional experience with immediate cognitive effect”. MacIntyre explains that state anxiety is a temporary emotional state that emerges as a response to a specific situation, which affects one’s cognitive learning. Spielberger (1972) refers to it as a temporary situation in which an individual experiences feelings of threat and anxiety. Its intensity depends on the level of stress the person is exposed to at a given moment. He states, “An anxiety state (A-State) is evoked whenever a person perceives a particular stimulus or situation as potentially harmful, dangerous, or threatening to him. States vary in intensity and fluctuate over time as a function of the amount of stress that impinges upon an individual.” (p. 482).

Even though state and trait anxiety are two different types of anxiety, trait anxiety is defined as a stable and permanent personality characteristic. It causes a person to feel worried, nervous, and anxious all the time, whether facing a problem or not. On the other hand, a state anxiety is a temporary emotional situation that makes an individual feel anxious, nervous, and threatened in a specific circumstance. Spielberger maintains that trait and state anxiety have a positive correlation; they are interrelated. He explains that a person with high trait anxiety, which makes them feel anxious in different situations, is likely to experience a high level of anxiety. For example, if a student has a high trait anxiety and feels anxious about an oral presentation for days before presenting, this feeling will increase as state anxiety when the day of the presentation arrives. Spielberger (1972, p. 482) states: “Persons who are high in A-Trait, for example, psychoneurotics, are disposed to perceive the world as more dangerous or threatening than low A-Trait individuals. Consequently, high A-Trait individuals are more vulnerable to stress and tend to experience A-State reactions of greater intensity and with greater frequency over time than persons who are low in A-trait.”

1.1.2.3. Specific-situation anxiety

This type of anxiety is situation-bound. It means that the emotional responses, such as anxiety, stress, and worry, tend to appear in predictable circumstances, including public speaking or speaking a foreign language. MacIntyre and Gardner (1999, as cited in Barkat & Hadji, 2018) explain it as “The probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labeled test anxiety), when solving mathematics problems (math anxiety), or when speaking a second language (language anxiety)” (p. 10). To illustrate, specific situation anxiety appears only in certain contexts, such as when students may feel comfortable and relaxed during activities like writing, reading, or listening, but when it comes to speaking, they cannot practice it due to being emotionally overwhelmed and tense during speaking activities. Although trait anxiety is stable and permanent in an individual's characteristics, and state anxiety is temporary and occurs in specific situations, specific-situation anxiety is not always present. It is about feeling nervous and mentally distracted in certain situations.

1.1.3. Definitions of Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been identified as a crucial affective factor in language learning. Foreign language anxiety can be understood as a psychological state that involves feelings of fear, tension, and hesitation, often experienced during the process of learning a new language. The first scholars to label anxiety associated with learning a foreign language as foreign language anxiety were Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). They believed that language learning anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon, often greatly influenced by the learner's self-perceptions, beliefs, and emotional responses to the language they use. These factors stem from the nature of the language itself and predominantly express negative emotions. Researchers further argue that this form of anxiety is quite distinct from

general anxiety because the learner goes through this journey individually, confronting all the challenges on their own to acquire the language, especially in an academic environment.

Clement (1980) defined FLA as a complex construct that deals with learners' psychology in terms of their feelings, self-esteem, and self-confidence. This definition highlights the psychological aspects of FLA, explaining how learners' emotional states, such as frustration, and their self-perceptions affect their language learning experiences. Clement's perspective also points to the internal psychodynamics that contribute to FLA. This anxiety is not only a response to the learner's fear of failure, but it is also related to the self-image they have and their confidence in their linguistic abilities. This fear affects their linguistic performance, leading them into a vicious cycle of indecision.

Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1999, as cited in Brown, 2007) distinguished FLA from other types of anxiety, emphasizing its negative effect the language learning, including fear of evaluation and hesitation to speak. In this context, MacIntyre & Gardner (1993) defined language anxiety as the fear or apprehension that occurs when learners anticipate performing in a second or foreign language. Further, MacIntyre (1999) defined it as the worry and negative emotional reaction when using or learning a second or foreign language. Furthermore, Zhang (2001, p.32) defined anxiety as "the psychological tension that the learner goes through in performing a learning task."

Examination of the above definitions of FLA shows that anxiety can be considered as an uncomfortable emotional state. It is not just a fear of making mistakes, but a deeper psychological phase that is linked to the learner's entire experience. This anxiety does not emerge spontaneously; rather, it is formed as a result of a set of cognitive, social, and

educational factors. It can be internal, as some people are sensitive by nature, and there is also an external aspect related to the environment and the nature of teaching.

This form of anxiety can be a motivator for individuals who know how to leverage it strategically, as it may motivate them to learn more. However, if the anxiety arises at a crippling level, it will completely hinder the learning process.

1.1.4. Components of foreign language anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) theorize that foreign language anxiety in the classroom is influenced by three performance factors. They state that, “Because foreign language anxiety concerns performance evaluation within an academic and social context, it is useful to draw parallels between it and three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 127)

1.1.4.1. Communication Apprehension

The concept of communication apprehension refers to nervousness or anxiety when speaking in front of people. Many researchers and scholars have provided different definitions. McCroskey defined communication apprehension as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons"(cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 12).

A learner's speaking skill is often influenced by communication apprehension, a type of anxiety experienced when using a language in which they feel less proficient. Thus, he always inclines to avoid these situations due to a fear of making mistakes. Such learners may struggle to express themselves clearly and may also find it difficult to understand others.

Likewise, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope defined it as "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (1986, p. 127). They also add that communicative apprehension is "any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, selfconsciousness, and fear or even panic (Horwitz et al, 1986, p.128).

It represents the level of discomfort or uneasiness one may suffer when communicating with others. Examples of communication anxiety are manifested not only in difficulty expressing oneself verbally, in group discussions, or public speaking, but also in difficulty listening, understanding, and absorbing verbal information (Horwitz et al., 1986). Learners who face speaking or listening challenges in a foreign language, particularly in front of others. tend to exhibit high levels of communication apprehension (Horwitz et al. 1986). Feelings of shyness, often described as a typical fear of communication, appear to emerge in social situations, in which the individual is aware that he or she is interacting with others who are psychologically unfamiliar to them.

1.1.4.2. Test anxiety

Test anxiety is the second type of performance anxiety. It is widely recognized that tests are an integral part of language learning and are used as a means to assess a student's learning progress, language proficiency, and general comprehension. It is defined as "the type of performance anxiety resulting from a fear of failure in an academic evaluation setting" Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986, p. 127).

Equally, Aydin (2009) reported that test anxiety is "a fear of failing in tests and an unpleasant experience held either consciously or unconsciously by learners in various situations" (p. 129). That is to say that English learners often feel anxious and stressed before

and during their exams due to their fear of failing to achieve high marks. More importantly, test anxiety can stem from different factors. It can arise from insufficient preparation, poor time management, or ineffective organization of study materials (Birjandi & Alemi, 2010).

1.1.4.3. Fear of negative evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is the third type of performance anxiety, according to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p. 128). It is the “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations”.

Watson and Friend (1969, as cited in Berbar, 2019) defined this as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 28).

Fear of negative evaluation often results in students being reluctant to actively participate in oral sessions. This fear has a broader scope in connection with social evaluation situations such as interviews, oral presentations, or speaking contests. It is associated with a strong desire for accuracy and perfection in language use and a fear of embarrassment. Learners who fear negative judgment “remain silent and do not participate in the classroom activities” (Subaşı, 2010, p. 43). They may hesitate to speak because they worry that their peers will laugh at them or that they will be negatively evaluated by the teacher. Therefore, educators must reassure students that mistakes are a natural part of the language-learning process and should not be a cause for concern.

1.1.5. Speaking skills

Speaking is a fundamental skill in language teaching involving the delivery of the language through the mouth. Nakhalah (2016) identifies speaking as the creation of sounds

using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth, and lips. This involves producing oral utterances (words, phrases, sentences) to express an individual's thoughts, ideas, emotions clearly. It reflects learners' capacity to communicate effectively by using basic sounds to construct meaningful language.

In the same line of thought, Kathleen M. Bailey (2003) states, "speaking is the production of aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning". Expanding on this, it can be said that the nature of speaking is not a random activity, but rather it is a purposeful and systematic operation. She emphasises that speaking requires organization, clarity, and intention to communicate in a comprehensible way.

Furthermore, speaking is a system that allows an individual to express and share information, which Herlina Dewi (2016, P.342) defines as: "a system of communication to obtain and share information with others." From a linguistic perspective, speaking is the ability to express oneself in orally, coherently, fluently, and appropriately in a given meaningful context. It aligns with communicative competence, which includes both transactional (goal-oriented) and interactional (social communication) purposes (Torkey, 2006).

1.1.6. Types of speaking

Speaking is regarded as one of the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communication is the major purpose of learning a language. It can take various types and forms depending on the purpose and the context. The subsequent lines explore the most significant types of speaking:

1.1.6.1. Informative speaking

The word 'informative' originates from 'inform', which means to give knowledge or inspire someone or a group of people. It can appear in everyday informal speech, as explained by Schreiber (2011, P. 01)

"Every day you give others information in an informal way, whether you realize it or not. You give your grandparents driving directions to a college campus. You tell your professor about a breaking news story. You teach a friend how to ride a motorcycle. You explain to your significant other your spiritual philosophy. You show a co-worker how to operate the cash register."

The main purpose of informative speaking is to give or inform individuals about something they did not previously know.

1.1.6.2. Entertaining speaking

This type of speaking seeks to entertain and evoke positive emotions such as joy and amusement, or even fun. The speaker's purpose here is to try as much as they can to make the individual laugh or at least smile. Yustisia Bherti (2022, p. 2) defines it as "one whose sole purpose is to have the audience enjoy the presentation. The purpose of an entertaining speech, besides to educate, inform, or inspire it is to make the audience smile, relax, and enjoy."

1.1.6.3. Ceremonial speaking

This type of speech is often delivered on special occasions, including weddings, business, toasts, and congratulatory speeches. Chen (2020) explains that "ceremonial speech aims to extend welcome or thanks, open or conclude an event, give or accept an award, etc. As an important part of communication in social life and foreign affairs, ceremonial speeches are often seen as an integral part of banquets, ceremonies, conferences, and business." (p. 237)

1.1.6.4. Narrative speaking

This speech is commonly used in in storytelling contexts such as recounting personal experiences, telling stories, novels, and narrating events. It involves an organized narration of events typically, aiming to entertain, educate, or inform an audience. Iranmanesh (2012, p. 127) defines it as a speech “... which explains a story and has a storyteller.”

1.1.6.5. Interactive speaking

Interactive speaking involves producing dialogues and direct interaction between participants, where individuals exchange and express their ideas and thoughts. It highlights turn-taking and real-life communication as key elements. Interactive speaking requires high self-esteem and the ability to produce words without fear of making a mistake. Namaziandost and Nasri (2019, p. 219) state, “... Interaction has been considered an important factor to experience real communicative situations in which the learner can learn how to express their views and opinions.”

1.1.6.6. Persuasive speaking

The primary aim of persuasive speaking is to influence or convince the audience to adopt or be persuaded by a particular perspective. It emphasizes the influence of thoughts, ideas, viewpoints, beliefs, or attitudes. Daniel A. Mabini (2023) points out that persuasive speaking “highlights the dynamic ability of language to influence a person’s mind and decisionmaking” (p. 12). Persuasive speaking is a key skill in several contexts, including campaign speeches and student debates. It helps speakers convince others by relying on emotional appeals, logic, and authority.

1.1.6.7. Directive speaking

Directive speaking is derived from the verb ‘to direct,’ which means to give instructions, commands, or guidance to the audience to complete a task, perform an action. This type requires clarity and precision, since any misunderstanding can lead to errors. It is commonly used in educational contexts, military settings, and offices. Murcia-Bielsa (2000, p. 1) defines directive expressions as those “whose aim is to get the addressee to perform an action or a group of actions, and whose typical realisation is thought to be the imperative form”.

1.1.7. Obstacles that Face Students in Developing Speaking Skills

Learning English as a foreign language in a non-English-speaking country is a challenging task. It has been adopted as a foreign language subject in public schools (primary, middle, and high schools) as well as in universities. However, learning this language presents many challenges for learners, particularly during oral performance. These challenges include the lack of grammatical structure and vocabulary, the differences between the mother tongue and the second language, low motivation, classroom instruction methods, and learner attitudes. These are key obstacles explained by Mohamed (2023, p. 48). He states: “There are various factors that affect language learning, such as difficult grammatical patterns, difficult vocabulary, variation in L1 and L2, motivation, classroom practices and pedagogies, learners' attitudes, and so many”.

Nakhalah (2016) categorizes the problems students face in speaking into four obstacles, as follows:

1.1.7.1. Fear of making mistakes

Learners are afraid that their classmates or friends are judging them or even bullying them. They fear receiving negative comments, being criticised, or simply feeling shy when speaking.

1.1.7.2. Nothing to say

Students struggle to find something to say due to the non-engaging topics that do not allow self-expression. Additionally, a lack of encouragement can lower student motivation to participate.

1.1.7.3. Low or uneven participation

Due to large class sizes, teachers may not provide students with sufficient opportunities to speak. Often, only one or two students get the chance to speak. Moreover, some teachers dominate the speaking session by focusing on expressing their own thoughts, which creates an imbalance and prevents all the students from practicing their speaking skills.

1.1.7.4. Mother-tongue use:

Learners often rely on their mother tongue during speaking classes because it feels easier and results in fewer mistakes, which in turn makes them feel confident. In addition, many learners feel anxious due to a lack of vocabulary, which leads them to revert to their mother tongue in order to express their perspectives clearly and reduce their anxiety.

1.1.7.5. Anxiety

Although all the previously discussed elements are considered obstacles to speaking, anxiety is one of the major barriers that hinder oral presentation. Speaking anxiety is described by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) and Horwitz (2001) as “situation specific”. Sokip (2020) further explains that anxiety influences their production of sounds and their quality. This occurs when students feel uncomfortable in their environment. He maintains: “It influences the quality

of producing sound and becomes less fluent than before or original. The indication of the anxiety occurrence is due to the student's feelings in terms of discomfort in his environment".

Fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, stress, and other negative feelings can be considered contributing factors to anxiety. Bao and Liu (2012) argue that anxiety negatively influences students' academic performance, their self-esteem, their written and communicative skills, as well as their self-confidence.

In addition, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1981) strongly supports this view. The term 'affect' here refers to a learner's motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional state. The affective filter refers to the imaginary or metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring the language from the available input. The affective filter hypothesis explains that a learner who feels tense, anxious, or bored may "filter out" the input, making it unavailable for acquisition, on the contrary, if the affective filter is low. Bakht Rahman, Salman Hamid, and Asma Gul (2019, p. 60) state:

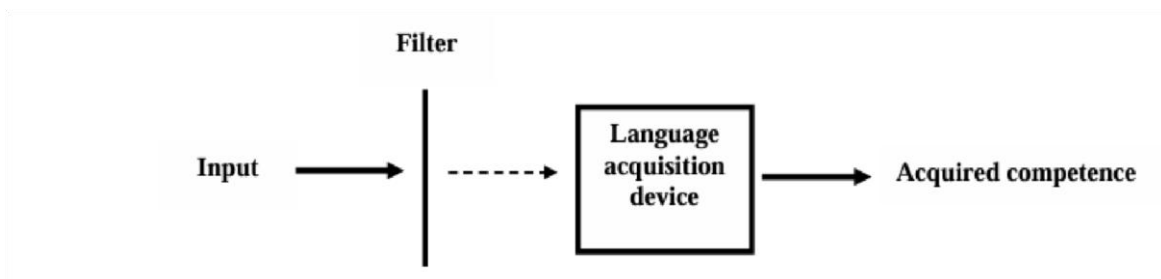
"Affective Filter Theory is based on the idea that if a student has not received enough comprehensible input, their learning will be affected. Affect suggests an affective filter, which is the level of anxiety or stress. If the filter is up, due to stress, it will prevent the input from passing through; as a result, there can be no acquisition. If, conversely, the filter is low or down, which means a low or no stress, and if the input is comprehensible, it will reach the acquisition device, which, according to Krashen, represents the mind, and acquisition will take place."

Krashen's affective filter hypothesis has a significant influence on the development of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the use of language for meaningful interaction and task completion over rule-based learning. Understanding and

managing learners' emotional states is therefore crucial in language teaching, as reducing students' affective filter through encouragement, engaging materials, and positive reinforcement can significantly improve students' oral fluency and language acquisition.

Figure 1-1

Operation of the “affective filter” (Krashen, 1982, p. 32).



1.1.8. Ways to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety

1.1.8.1. Teachers' Strategies to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety in EFL Classes

In their theory of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) suggest several evidence-based strategies for educators and learners to alleviate anxiety and foster a more positive language learning environment.

From their perspective, educators should detect and recognize the existence FLA among their students. They emphasize: “But if we are to improve foreign language teaching at all levels of education, we must recognize, cope with, and eventually overcome, debilitating foreign language anxiety as a factor shaping students' experiences in foreign language learning.” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 131).

To address anxiety efficiently, Horwitz and colleagues suggest that “In general, educators have two options when dealing with anxious students:

- 1) They can help them learn to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situation, or
- 2) They can make the learning context less stressful” (Horwitz et al., 1986, as cited in Berbar, 2019, p. 55).

Anxiety remains a widespread issue among students, often hindering their academic performance. Educators play a crucial role in addressing this issue by motivating their students to think positively, providing opportunities to confront these fears, reducing verbal assessments, and creating a more comfortable environment. This allows them to express themselves in various ways and encourages emotional and intellectual growth. Aida (1994, as cited in Berbar, 2019, p. 56) urged teachers to build “a friendly, supportive atmosphere” and to help students develop “effective study and learning strategies”.

Similarly, Phillips (1992, as cited in Berbar, 2019) suggested that teachers should make students aware that anxiety is a natural experience and can be controlled. She further recommended evaluating students in pairs rather than separately, as this could significantly minimize their sense of fear. Ultimately, educators act as students' primary supporters, guiding them through their anxiety and maintaining a safe environment for them (p. 55).

1.1.8.2. Students' Strategies to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety in EFL Classes

Anxiety is a widespread problem experienced by learners, which can impact their academic performance. While instructors have a significant impact in supporting this apprehension, learners themselves are obligated to acquire successful methods to regulate it effectively. There are many effective ways to reduce stress during oral exams, including good

preparation and practice. Speaking slowly and organizing thoughts reduces the chances of stuttering and gives the learner enough rest and time to speak.

As a psychological technique, positive self-talk is an effective cognitive skill that allows individuals to reframe difficulties as a learning process and adopt a more productive mindset. According to Young (1991), positive self-talk is a strategy that anxious students use to help themselves. For example, “I can handle this.... Just relax... Take a deep, slow breath and I'll start as I rehearsed it” (p. 431). Moreover, Bassett (1989) stated that learners should overcome negative thoughts to develop their learning experience: “To begin to replace negative, depressive thoughts and replace with compassionate, respectful, comforting thoughts” (p.3-1)

Furthermore, minimizing the fear of making mistakes is a successful strategy to help students reduce anxiety during the oral performance. Therefore, the fear of making mistakes may sometimes be beneficial for students' performance, but not always, as such negative thoughts about making mistakes can reduce students' self-confidence. Additionally, students must understand that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process and not a sign of weakness. Bassett (1985) further emphasizes the value of replacing negative, discouraging thoughts with positive ones in order to enhance the learning experience. He asserts, “Mistakes are opportunities for growth, nothing more” (p. 3-9).

Consequently, students should understand that making mistakes is an essential part of acquiring new skills. Their main focus should shift from avoiding errors and seeking perfection to conveying their thoughts clearly and effectively.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of (FLA) has attracted the attention of many researchers due to its detrimental impact on students' learning processes. Through the exploration of its definitions, causes, and types of anxiety. Has revealed a complex nature and a negative effect on language development. A clear understanding of its sources and components enables educators to identify appropriate and effective strategies for reducing its impact and supporting learners more effectively.

Among various instructional approaches, (CL) stands out as an effective strategy. By utilizing group-based activities, teachers can create a supportive classroom environment that not only minimizes anxiety but also improves students' communicative competence and language proficiency.

Section Two: Cooperative Learning as a Tool for Effective Learning

Introduction

Cooperative learning has garnered widespread attention from researchers and educators, and has had a significant impact in the field of education. It first emerged with Morton Deutsch (1949a), who was the first to investigate the dynamics between cooperative and individualistic learning contexts (Gillies & Ashman, 2003). It was further developed in the 1980s by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, particularly following the first educational conference in 1981. Their work marked a turning point, shaping educational theory, research, and real-world teaching practices across the globe.

In the context of mitigating the impact of FLA, CLL offers a practical and effective pedagogical strategy. Through group collaboration and peer support, cooperative learning creates a relaxed, non-threatening environment in which learners feel more comfortable expressing themselves and making mistakes without fear of judgment. This collaborative setting enhances learners' self-esteem, minimizes their sense of isolation, and enables them to develop their speaking skills more confidently and naturally. As Gillies (2016), Johnson and Johnson (2005), and Zhang (2010) explained, CL mitigates anxiety when speaking, highlighting how structured group work and mutual interdependence foster psychological safety and motivation among language learners.

This section outlines the theoretical framework of the cooperative learning technique; it highlights the importance and levels of CL as well as its essential elements of CL, major types, and underlying theories.

1.2.1. Definition of Cooperative Learning

Johnson and Johnson (1994) describe it as “cooperation is the heart of our biology” (p. 12). They presented CL as something embedded in both our bodies and our spirit. CL was relatively overlooked during the mid-20th century, as researchers and educators, whether in schools or universities, prioritized individualism and competition. This inclination was heavily shaped by Social Darwinism, a prevailing ideology that promoted the notion of the ‘survival of the fittest’, encouraging educational systems to prepare students to compete rather than collaborate. Therefore, academic success became associated with individual achievement, competition, and ranking, rather than collaboration and mutual support.

Spring (2022) highlights that public education has often historically served to reinforce dominant political and economic ideologies, at the expense of inclusive and humanistic educational approaches. Within this context, cooperative strategies were seen as counterproductive to the prevailing belief that students must "earn" success independently without relying on peers. Spring (2022) clearly states that:

Education does not always benefit the individual or society. Public and personal benefits depend on the content of instruction. Educational goals are a product of what people think schooling should do for the good of society. Consequently, they often reflect opinions and beliefs about how people should act and how society should be organized. Since there is wide variation in what people believe, educational goals often generate a great deal of debate (p. 5).

This viewpoint highlights the role of ideologies like social Darwinism, and the myth of rugged individualism, which hindered the adoption of CL. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999, p. 11), the rise of individualism and competition in education was largely shaped by the ideology of Social Darwinism, which emphasized the notion of “survival of the fittest” and encouraged schools to prepare students to compete rather than collaborate. As a result,

educational system came to prioritize individual success and competition, at the expense of cooperation and mutual support.

Despite these challenges, CL has changed the rules, emerging as an influential pedagogical approach that has progressively transformed educational practices by placing collaboration at the heart of the learning experience. Today, CL is widely applied across all levels of education, from elementary schools to universities, since it has become one of the most interesting areas of research, practice, and theory. CL has proven to be a successful approach at both the psychological and educational levels (Gillies, Ashman, & Terwel, 2008).

CL is a learner-centered approach that has gained great attention since the 1960s, as it shifted the focus from an approach that emphasizes learners' abilities to acquire knowledge independently through teamwork, discussion, problem solving, critical thinking, and peer interaction. Slavin (1995, p. 2) explains that "students are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge, and fill in the gaps in each other's understanding".

CL involves learners working in small groups to achieve a common goal, as defined by Gillies (2007). It is about encouraging students to collaborate, interact, and discuss to complete a task or a shared goal set by the teacher, sometimes framed within competitive or playful contexts. According to Johnson and Johnson (2012, para. 4), "In the ideal classroom, all students would learn how to work cooperatively with others, compete for fun and enjoyment, and work autonomously. The teacher decides which goal structure to implement within each lesson".

Slavin (1995, p. 2) asserts, "cooperative work rarely replaces teacher instruction, but rather replaces individual seatwork, individual study, and individual drill." To elaborate, the

teacher's role is to provide guidance and instructions, and to organize the materials and activities that help students acquire the knowledge individually. Many teachers think that grouping students or pairing them up is sufficient to apply the cooperative technique effectively. However, this is a misconception; CL techniques are about encouraging students to interact, express themselves, and gain input independently. The teacher's role is to provide supportive guidance, organize materials and activities, and set aims and goals to help learners. Without the teacher's instruction, the implementation of cooperative strategies is incomplete and ineffective. The teacher must follow steps to apply the cooperative technique, such as making pre-instructional decisions, explaining the task and cooperative structure, monitoring and intervening, evaluating, and processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

CL is considered effective in heterogeneous classes, since the different levels and mindsets of learners help to make the class engaging. For example, one student can be a more confident speaker, while for instance might be a native speaker of the target language. One learner might be shy, and another might want to express their opinion frequently, even if they are not necessarily fluent. This diversity makes the class resemble a diverse and stimulating environment. On the other hand, learning in homogeneous classes is usually less effective, as students tend to have similar levels of knowledge. This limits opportunities for peer learning, as students are less able to challenge or complement each other's skills. For example, in a classroom where all learners share the same intermediate level, the teacher provided them with identical tasks and materials. Subsequently, interaction decreased, and creativity and diversity were limited accordingly. (Slavin, 1995).

1.2.2. Advantages of Cooperative Learning:

CL is a learner-centered approach that enhances both the effectiveness and engagement of the learning process, making it more active than traditional and passive. It stands out as an

effective teaching method, enhancing student achievement and facilitating greater opportunities for interaction and communication among learners. It encourages students to share ideas, discuss topics, and solve problems together, which strengthens their communication abilities. McGroarty (1989) presents six educational advantages of CL for ESL, divided into linguistic, curricular, and social benefits:

1. Increased Frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction.
2. Greater possibility to use the language in ways that promote cognitive development and enhance language skills.
3. Opportunities to integrate language learning with content-based instruction.
4. Inclusion of opportunities for a more diverse set of curricular materials for both language and concept learning.
5. Freedom for teachers to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication.
6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning. (p130)

Beyond academic gains, CL offers significant psychological advantages. By working together, students experience emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and build a sense of belonging. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), "Extraordinary achievement comes from a cooperative group, not from the individualistic or competitive efforts of an isolated

individual” (p. 67). This suggests that the psychological rewards of CA extend beyond academic results, helping to cultivate self-esteem and intrinsic motivation.

Regarding anxiety in learning environments, many investigations have focused on addressing this intricate phenomenon. Among the strategies identified, cooperative learning has frequently been recognized as an effective means of reducing anxiety levels. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1991) emphasized that “Cooperation typically produces less anxiety and stress and more effective coping strategies to deal with anxiety than does competition” (p. 37). This finding is particularly relevant for FLA, as cooperative learning settings can provide a less stressful and more supportive atmosphere for language learners.

Researchers have indicated that involving students in CL groups boosts their motivation and engagement in the learning process. According to Dörnyei (1997, as cited in Barbar, 2019), collaborative learning creates “a special motivational system” that activates learning (p. 487). In addition, introducing key cooperative learning principles into the classroom significantly enhances student motivation. As Zhang (2010) affirms, “In the cooperative groups, face-to-face promotive interaction as well as resource, reward, and role interdependence can be powerful supports and encouragements for insecure students. Learners are thus motivated to pursue larger academic success” (p.83). Such motivational benefits are especially valuable in foreign language classrooms, where anxiety often affects student participation and learning progress. Students are given time to prepare their answers before presenting them to the teacher and classmates; consequently, their anxiety and fear of failure may decrease (Zhang, 2010, p. 82). CL techniques further, “provide important incentives that strengthen motivation and alleviate anxiety” (Guskey, 1990, p. 38). Moreover, Artzt and Newman (1990) note that anxiety decreases when students help and encourage one another to learn (p. 452).

1.2.3. Levels of Cooperative Learning:

Johnson and Johnson (1999) elaborated further on work in the field and stated three types of (CL) groups:

1.2.3.1. Formal Cooperative Learning:

This type of CL occurs when groups are organized for a predetermined period. These groups work collectively to achieve educational purposes with clear objectives and teacher supervision. According to Johnson et al. (1991), “Formal CL groups might last for one class period to several weeks to complete a specific task or assignment” (p. 4).

Johnson and Johnson (2014) emphasized that the effective use of formal CL involves several key teachers’ roles. First, teachers must specify lesson objectives. Second, they must decide on group structure, including group size, students’ roles, learning materials, and classroom arrangement. Third, they must teach the students the academic concepts for participation, the strategies needed during the activities, positive interdependence, individual accountability, and appropriate social behaviors. Fourth, they are responsible for monitoring the performance of each group and providing the support needed. Fifth, they must also carefully evaluate each student’s work, ensuring the effectiveness of the group's work. In EFL classrooms, Formal CL is most effective when students engage in complex assignments requiring sustained teamwork, including group presentations, research tasks, or projects. The organized duration of these activities enables learners to deepen their comprehension, enhance communicative skills, and strengthen language proficiency through continuous collaboration with peers.

1.2.3.2. Informal Cooperative Learning:

Informal cooperative learning is identified as the second type of CL. It occurs when the teacher organizes small groups to work together over a brief period. The findings of Johnson and his colleagues indicate that: “Informal cooperative learning groups are temporary, ad hoc groups that last for only one discussion or one class period” (p. 5). In this context, it is important to emphasize the teacher's role in fostering students' cognitive engagement: “to ensure that students do the intellectual work of organizing material, explaining it, summarizing it, and integrating it into existing conceptual structures” (Johnson et al., 1991, p. v; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 105). This approach is particularly beneficial for short-focused activities in the EFL context, including discussion prompts, rapid problem-solving exercises, and oral practice drills. These short-term interactions help reduce anxiety by facilitating immediate social support and boosting student engagement.

1.2.3.3. Cooperative Base Groups:

Cooperative base groups are “long-term, heterogeneous CL groups with stable membership” (Johnson et al., 1991, p. vi). These groups typically last for at least one semester and provide students with a platform to help, encourage, and support one another in achieving academic success (Johnson et al., 1991, p. vi). Group members are accountable for each other's progress, ensuring the group's success and assisting one another in completing assigned tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 31). Teachers are responsible for organizing heterogeneous groups, scheduling regular meetings, assigning tasks, applying CL principles, and guiding reflection on group actions (Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 31). This stable structure provides learners, particularly foreign language students, with a sense of security and ongoing, which is essential for sustained confidence and perseverance despite challenges.

1.2.4. Elements of cooperative learning

Many teachers mistakenly believe that simply grouping learners equates to effective learning, ensuring that CL strategies are followed. However, this is a misconception. The application of the CL technique requires five basic elements that are emphasized by Johnson and Johnson (1994), namely: positive interdependence, Individual accountability, face-to-face promotive Interaction, Interpersonal and Small Group Skills, and Group Processing. Understanding and establishing these elements is a condition for making a successful cooperative classroom.

1.2.4.1. Positive interdependence

Johnson and Johnson (1994, p. 9) consider positive interdependence to be the most important and the core element in the cooperative learning technique, and without it, cooperation cannot occur. The idea of this element is to encourage the learners to rely on each other and engage them in collaborative work that links them together to achieve a shared goal. The concept is encapsulated in the principle that students succeed or fail together. In other words, students must understand that each one's efforts and knowledge contribute to and benefit the others as well, which ultimately leads the entire group to success. Therefore, this understanding raises the sense of responsibility and commitment, promoting collaboration as they work collectively toward success. Expanding on this, a task is not completed unless all group members work collaboratively. Robyn M. Gillies (2016, p.41) explains that group members must “understand that they are linked together in such a way that one cannot achieve success unless they all do, and they must learn to synchronize their efforts to ensure this occurs.” Moreover, positive interdependence creates a situation where all students share their resources, exchange help, and encouragement. Therefore, they bring their work to success and celebrate their accomplishment together (Johnson & Johnson 2002, p 97).

1.2.4.2. Individual Accountability

Johnson and Johnson (1994, p.9) assert that students must be responsible for achieving a common task, not only collectively but also individually. Every student should contribute actively to the group rather than relying on the other learners. This behavior is often referred to as “hitchhiking,” which describes relying on others without contributing. The group must clearly understand the goal as well as track the progress to achieve it. To elaborate, it leads to the student's awareness of participating in the group as one's efforts contribute mainly to the entire group. Johnson & Johnson (2002, p.41) explain that individual accountability involves “ensuring that he or she completes his or her share of the work while also ensuring that others complete theirs”.

1.2.4.3. Face-to-face Promotive interaction

Exchanging ideas and thoughts, sharing resources, offering help, providing encouragement, mutual support, and motivating each other's efforts to learn and understand are all key aspects of face-to-face interaction. According to Johnson and Johnson (1994, p. 10): “they promote each other's success by sharing resources and helping, supporting, encouraging, and praising each other's efforts to learn”. Expanding on Johnson and Johnson's perspective, this promotive interaction, preferably face-to-face, not only improves academic performance, but it also fosters personal growth, socially and psychologically. Explaining, discussing, and sharing knowledge with their peers promotes a sense of personal commitment and accomplishment. Gillies, Ashman, and Terwel (2008, p.23) state: “promotive interaction occurs as individuals encourage and facilitate each other's efforts to accomplish the group's goals”. Gillies explains clearly that in CL, one member must aid and support the other with all their knowledge and skills to accomplish the shared group goal.

1.2.4.4. Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

Johnson and Johnson (1994, p.11) argue that the CL is inherently more complex than individual learning. While individual learning requires task work, CL involves both teamwork and task work. To implement the cooperative learning technique effectively, students should develop their interpersonal and small group skills as well as promote effective leadership, respect others' opinions, make decisions, encourage and motivate each other, build trust, solve problems collaboratively, and communicate respectfully. Teachers play a vital role in teaching them explicitly all these interpersonal skills and resolving conflicts, as they contribute significantly not only to academic performance but also to social development and psychological well-being. As Gillies (2016) states, "These skills need to be explicitly negotiated (older students) or taught (younger children) and are the fourth key component in successful cooperative learning" (p.41). This emphasizes that interpersonal and small group skills need to be taught by the teacher to younger students directly, while being discussed and negotiated with older students.

1.2.4.5. Group Processing

Group processing is considered the final element of the implementation of CL techniques (Robyn M. Gillies, 2016, p. 42). It refers to the reflection on their processing of the task and working relationships. Students, by the end of their progress and cooperation, are encouraged to reflect by asking themselves the following questions:

1-What have we achieved?

2- Is there anything still needed to achieve?

3-How might we do this?

In other words, Johnson and Johnson (2002, p.98) state that group processing involves describing, analyzing, and monitoring student progress during their cooperation to evaluate how their actions have contributed to the group's success or hindered it. Furthermore, group processing aims to enhance academic performance as it raises student performance and motivation. Group processing improves relationships among students by developing their interaction and social skills as well as their self-esteem and problem-solving abilities.

Overall, the application of CL in the classroom requires a careful understanding of its essential elements; teachers must thoroughly understand it and be able to implement it effectively.

1.2.5. Cooperative Learning Techniques

By encouraging active student participation and improving reading comprehension, CL techniques can enhance traditional English learning activities and raise classroom enthusiasm.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1995), Johnson et al. (1995), and Slavin (1995), “Cooperative learning methods increase motivation for learning, redirecting attributions for success and failure, fostering positive feelings toward classmates, and increasing performance on tests of comprehension, reasoning, and problem solving” Numerous techniques can be applied in the classroom setting. The following section outlines several of the most prominent methods.

1.2.5.1. Students Team Achievement Division (STAD)

Developed by Slavin (1992), STAD is centered on fostering student understanding and aligns well with modern pedagogical methods. According to Slavin (1995), STAD consists of five major components: class presentations, teams, quizzes, individual improvement scores,

and team recognition. Students are organized into heterogeneous groups of four. After the teacher delivers the lesson, students collaborate to ensure every team member has mastered the content. Over multiple sessions, learners engage in collaborative activities, such as discussions, comparisons, questioning, memorizing, and building a conceptual framework. This model nurtures interdependence and reinforces a shared commitment to collective success.

1.2.5.2. Think-pair-share:

The Think-Pair-Share technique was originally proposed by Layman and was later refined and expanded in 1994 by Kagan and other educational theorists. In this model of CL, students proceed through three steps. Students first reflect silently and individually on a question presented by the teacher. Next, they collaborate through peer discussion to exchange ideas and perspectives. Finally, they share their responses with the whole group (Brown, 2000).

This technique encourages students to explore and express their thoughts in a supportive environment. It provides learners with a platform to present their ideas creatively. Arends (2012) further explains the process through the following diagram:

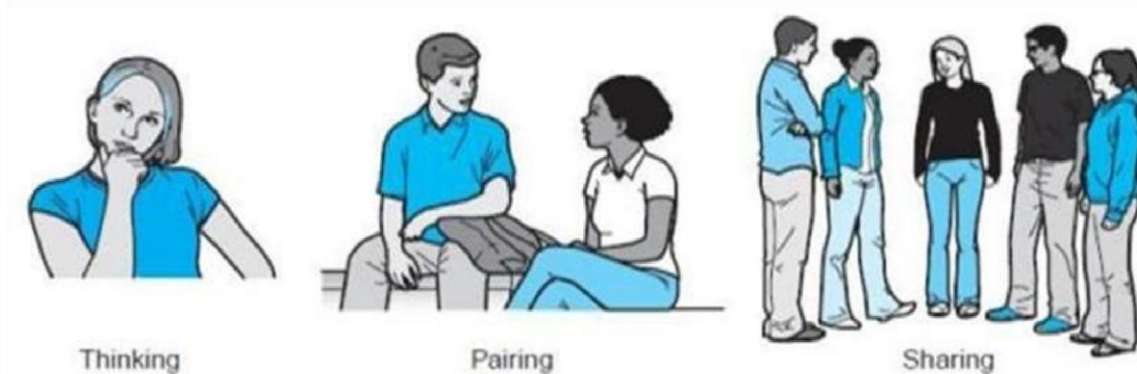


Figure 1-2 Steps of Think –Pair- Share (Arends, 2012, p. 370):

1.2.5.3. Jigsaw Technique:

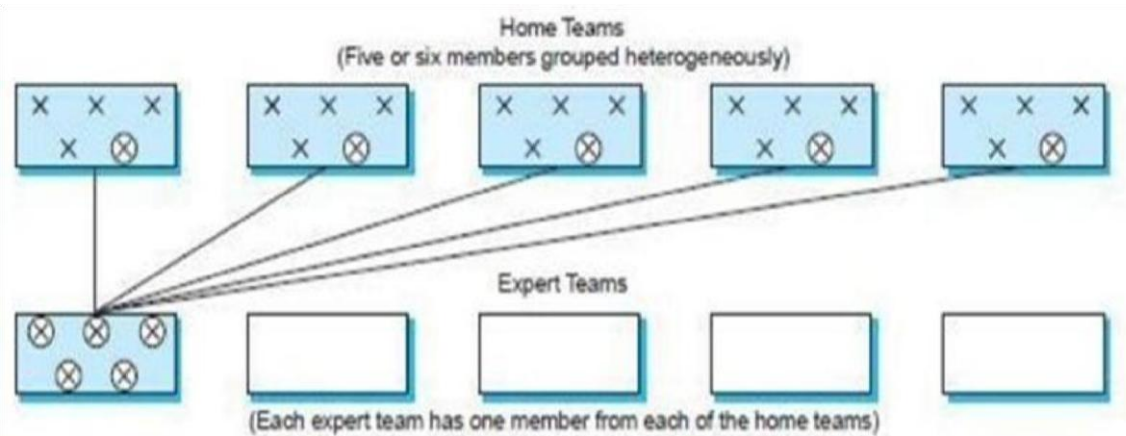
The original Jigsaw method, originally developed by Aronson (1987), was later adapted into Jigsaw II by Robert Slavin (1980). Further elaborations on the model were provided by Bossert (1988) and Coelho (1991). This CL technique is widely regarded as an effective strategy that is most appropriate for teaching literature, biography, or textbook chapters. As part of the Jigsaw technique, Gaith (2004) describes a process in which students are grouped into small teams and given segmented academic material. Learners first study their part individually, and then join their “expert groups” to discuss and clarify the material. Finally, they return to their original teams, where each student teaches their assigned content, helping the group collaboratively reconstruct the whole lesson.

In her 1996 study, Pica highlights the Jigsaw technique as a valuable tool in language learning environments. Engaging in vocabulary and core concepts within expert groups, learners enhance both their confidence in comprehension and their communicative competence. This participatory setting promotes the negotiation of meaning, a key element in second language acquisition.

Bossert (1988) and Coelho (1991) describe the method as follows: “All students read the same material, but each team member is assigned a topic on which to become an expert. Expert groups meet to discuss their topics, and then students return to their groups to teach the topic to their teammates. Scores on individual quizzes are used to compute an improvementbased team score, and the highest scoring teams and students are acknowledged in a class newsletter” (p. 231).

Figure 1-3

Jigsaw Structure (Arends, 2012, p. 369)



1.2.5.4. Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT)

TGT is a cooperative learning strategy developed by Robert Slavin as part of the student team-learning model. Slavin (2002) describes TGT as one of the easiest CL models to apply. The TGT method is based on the principle of tournament, wherein students engage in friendly competition while representing their teams. These competitions involve grouping students with similar academic performance to ensure fairness and balanced participation. Incorporating games into the learning process not only promotes collaboration but also creates a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

In alignment with this, Harmer (2001) highlights the significance of interaction and communicative practice in a language classroom. He asserts that CL techniques, such as games and group-based activities, create a dynamic classroom atmosphere, lower students' affective filter, and provide meaningful contexts for language use (pp. 169–171). TGT is often favored by teachers for being both enjoyable and effective. Slavin (2002) shares feedback from teachers who have successfully used the method; one described it as “the best technique I ever used” (p. 14). Teachers have observed that TGT fosters trust, interdependence, and confidence within students, particularly during tournaments. Some even reported that students regularly ask when they will have the chance to play TGT again, showing their enthusiasm for the method.

1.2.5.5. Three Numbered Heads Together

Three Numbered Heads Together was designed by Kagan (1998). It creates a low-stress and supportive environment for evaluating learners' comprehension through four progressive phases

Step 1- Numbering: Teachers divide students into three- to five-member teams and have them number off so each student on the team has a different number between 1 and 5.

Step 2- Questioning: Teachers ask students a question. Questions can vary. They can be very specific and in question form, such as "How many states in the Union?" Or they can be directives, such as "Make sure everyone knows the capitals of the states that border on the Pacific Ocean."

Step 3- Heads Together: Students put their heads together to figure out and make sure everyone knows the answer.

Step 4- Answering: The teacher calls a number and students from each group with that number raise their hands and provide answers to the whole class. (Arends, 2012, p. 371).

1.2.6. Theories of cooperative learning techniques:

1.2.6.1. Social interdependence theory:

Social interdependence theory represents major perspectives that have informed research on CL. It was first introduced in 1900 by Kurt Koffka, who based the concept on two foundational notions or forms. To begin with, teamwork is primarily based on the interdependence of members, aiming to achieve a common goal. This creates a dynamic environment in which

change occurs naturally. Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each individual's outcomes are affected by the actions of the others (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Second, the tension between group members motivates them to work hard and achieve results. The core idea is that the structure of interdependence shapes the level of interaction, which ultimately affects the outcomes.

Johnson and Johnson (2005, p. 288) highlight that: " Positive interdependence exists when there is a positive correlation among individuals' goal attainments; individuals perceive that they can attain their goals if, and only if, the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked attain their goals."

In this framework, social interdependence arises when the success or failure of one individual affects the outcomes of others. Interaction is unlikely to take place in the absence of interdependence. As one of the most important social psychology theories in education, it serves as a basis for instructional design, helping teachers to structure lessons, promote cooperative learning, and address group-based challenges. (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, pp.1012).

1.2.6.2. Sociocultural Theory:

Originally proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), the Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the significance of social interaction as a fundamental aspect in understanding the world. He believed that learners acquire knowledge through exchanging ideas and thoughts, which shapes their culture and how they learn. His theory focuses on the relationship between the teacher and learners, and how information is shared through language. The process of language acquisition occurs as children absorb linguistic patterns by observing, listening to, and actively participating in communicative interactions.

Vygotsky highlights that learning relies on dynamic interaction between external social and cultural experiences in conjunction with inherent cognitive capacities. To support this perspective, he introduced the construct of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The concept of this theory assumes that learners start with a current knowledge base, though accompanied by guidance and structured scaffolding from a more knowledgeable other (MKO), their abilities will be improved. Vygotsky defined ZPD as: "the distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky argues that learners can reach higher levels when they receive the appropriate scaffolding or learn from a MKO. This scaffolding enhances their cognitive development, enabling learners to become independent over time. To illustrate further, a student struggling with a mathematical problem may seek guidance from MKO, such as a teacher, sibling, or peer. Eventually, the learners become independent and no longer require help.

The sociocultural theory provides a fundamental basis for CL. This theory and its key concepts align with the idea of CL, as Vygotsky introduced the notion of MKO, and how scaffolding occurs when peers work together, supporting and developing each other. When children learn together through the zone of proximal development, it helps them improve their language and social interaction skills.

1.2.6.3. Motivation theory

Motivation theory, or motivational perspectives, seeks to explain the reasons behind learners' behavior and how reinforcement (such as goals and rewards) can engage them in activities and influence their learning process. Richard M. et al. (2000, p. 69) state, "... [learners] can be motivated because they value an activity or because there is strong external

coercion". This theory plays a vital role in cooperative learning techniques, as it emphasizes how rewards and goals motivate learners when they learn collaboratively. According to Salvin (1995, p. 2), CL creates an atmosphere where learners understand that achieving a personal goal depends on the success of the whole group, which motivates them and encourages them to help one another, as it is the only way to attain the reward. Consequently, motivation theory also informs how positive reinforcement in group contexts can help reduce learners' speaking anxiety.

In this context, motivation theory helps reduce speaking anxiety by highlighting the shared goal in group work. When learners work together to achieve a common goal, they are rewarded. The pressure on individual performance becomes softened; students feel less exposed, as they are not alone in the learning process. Therefore, they become less stressed and afraid of making mistakes, which helps lower their anxiety.

Integrating key educational theories provides valuable insight into how cooperative work contributes to reducing speaking anxiety. Interdependence theory emphasizes positive collaborative work that fosters emotional security and mutual encouragement. This assists students in performing orally, especially those who hesitate to speak. Similarly, Vygotsky, through his concept of ZPD, highlights how learners gain more confidence and support when they are guided by an MKO. In this context, motivation theory helps alleviate speaking anxiety by highlighting the importance of shared goals in group work. When learners collaborate to achieve a common goal and are rewarded, the pressure on individual performance is softened. Students feel less exposed, as they are not alone in the learning process. Consequently, they become less stressed and less afraid of making mistakes, which helps lower their anxiety. Taken together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of how speaking anxiety can be mitigated when learners are both motivated and supported emotionally and academically.

Conclusion

To conclude, this section provided a comprehensive overview of the concept, importance, core elements, and theoretical foundations of CL. It is a powerful instructional strategy that shifts the educational field from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach. It is more than simply organizing learners to work in a group; it is a structured pedagogical approach grounded in intentional design and clear objectives.

The discussion has explored the benefits of CL, its various forms, consisting of formal, informal, and base group, and its five essential elements as classified by Johnson and Johnson: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small-group skills, and group processing.

Furthermore, the section has examined three foundational theories that support CL: social interdependence theory, sociocultural theory, and motivation theory. These theories illustrate how CL fosters meaningful interaction, promotes learner autonomy, and supports emotional and academic development. In particular, they highlight the role of collaboration in reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing language performance.

Overall, this section aims to deepen understanding of CL and demonstrate how its application encourages students to overcome speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom.

Chapter Two: Practical Part

Section One: Data Analyse Cooperative Learning and Speaking Anxiety

Introduction

Building on the theoretical foundations discussed earlier, this chapter focuses on the empirical dimension. It outlines the practical procedures for data collection relevant to the research objectives and questions. This chapter is structured to provide an in-depth overview of the fieldwork, highlighting its key components. It begins by restating the primary aims of the research, which revolve around exploring the role of CL as a pedagogical strategy. This is followed by the methodological framework, which details the participants and the data collection instruments.

Particular attention is given to the analysis and interpretation of the responses obtained from the student questionnaire. The responses are examined with a specific emphasis on how CL techniques influence learners' engagement and alleviate speaking anxiety in the classroom context. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the main limitations encountered during the research process. It also presents recommendations for future studies, based on the outcomes and implications drawn from the data analysis.

2.1.2. The Sample

The sample for the current research consisted of first-year English as a Foreign Language students in the Department of English Language at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center, Mila, during the academic year 2024-2025. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 70 students, aged between 17 and 22 years, who were selected purposively as they fit the research needs and represented the initial phase of their academic journey. First-year

students were chosen deliberately because they were starting their educational experience. As a result, they are more likely to face obstacles and negative emotions during their speaking performance. Their perspective as newcomers offers valuable insight into the reasons behind their speaking anxiety and the effectiveness of CL in addressing this issue.

2.1.3. Research Methodology:

Methodologically speaking, and based on the aim of answering the research questions, this study adopts a mixed approach, focusing on numerical data collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cooperative learning techniques can help minimize anxiety during oral performance.

The target population of this study consists of 70 participants, selected purposively from approximately 240 first-year English language students enrolled at the University center of Abdelhafid Boussouf in Mila. The data collection instrument used in this research was a 22-item questionnaire that included open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, and Likert scale items.

These items were divided into three main sections, aiming to investigate the causes of speaking anxiety, its impact on learners, their attitudes toward CL strategies, and their preferences for various cooperative techniques. The questionnaire was distributed in person during regular class sessions. Before distribution, the researcher clearly explained its purpose, assuring participants that it was anonymous. They were given approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The data collected were analysed quantitatively using (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to interpret the results. To enhance clarity and accessibility, the results were presented in the form of pie charts on the designated date.

2.1.4. Data Collection Instrument

This study relied on a questionnaire as the primary instrument for collecting data from students, due to its effectiveness in obtaining quantitative information from a large sample in a short period. The questionnaire was systematically designed to align with the research's aims, previously outlined, emphasizing the sources of speaking anxiety and examining learners' attitudes toward CL techniques. It included a set of closed-ended questions (e.g., multiple-choice questions and Likert scale items) as well as open-ended questions, allowing participants to freely express their opinions. The following subsections examine the structure, intended purpose, and implementation of the questionnaire in further detail.

2.1.4.1. Description of the questionnaire

To achieve the aims of this study and to address its central research question, a structured questionnaire was carefully designed to evaluate the effectiveness of CL techniques in minimizing speaking anxiety among first-year English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center in Mila. In addition, it seeks to explore the relationship between collaborative work and anxiety reduction. The questionnaire also aimed to identify which cooperative strategies students perceived as most effective.

Participants were informed of the academic nature of the study and assured that their responses will be anonymous, voluntary, and be used exclusively for educational objectives. They were encouraged to respond honestly and assured that participation was entirely voluntary. The questionnaire includes twenty-two items, categorized into three sections: closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, and Likert-scale items. Notably, the number of questions was intentionally limited, focusing on the most important key aspects that directly

address the research aims. It is assumed that including additional questions may lead to student fatigue, which could, in turn, negatively influence the reliability of responses.

The initial section, entitled “Background Information,” seeks to explore students' exposure to English. It attempts to shed light on students' demographic data, including gender and age. Participants are asked to indicate their gender (Male/Female) and age group (16/17 or 17/18) by ticking the relevant box.

The second section, titled “Anxiety on English Speaking Performance”, is composed of nine items that investigate students' reflection and emotional states concerning spoken interaction in the classroom. It begins by categorizing students' self-perception as active or passive participants in oral discussions, aiming to understand their engagement levels. It then proceeds to consider their emotional states when speaking in front of others, investigating specific situations that influence their confidence and make them feel uncomfortable. This section also explores the impact of negative past experiences on the students' speaking confidence and negative emotions. Moreover, it investigates the potential influence of preparation in alleviating anxiety and students' typical behavior during classroom speaking. Subsequently, it examines how students feel during oral tasks, what factors contribute most to their anxiety, and which activity formats they find less stressful. The section concludes with a self-evaluation asking respondents to rate their level of speaking anxiety on a Likert scale from one to five.

The third section is entitled “Cooperative Learning Techniques,” aiming to underscore the second variable in the current study. It begins with a question designed to investigate whether students enjoy working collaboratively with their classmates.

Subsequently, the sections assess the extent to which group work contributes to students' understanding during lessons. It also aims to determine the impact of group collaboration on learners' self-confidence and their exposure to new ideas. Students are also asked to indicate their preferred mode of classroom work, whether individual, pair, or group, and to justify their choice. The section continues by exploring students' emotional responses, preferences, and perceptions regarding CL in the context of oral communication. Additionally, it examines their attitudes toward team-based learning, including levels of comfort and participation challenges.

A subsequent question specifically seeks to determine the degree to which students agree that cooperative learning improves oral performance compared to individual learning.

This section continues by examining students' attitudes toward interactive activities such as role-plays, dialogues, and games. Finally, the section concludes with two final questions that assess the perceived effectiveness of cooperative techniques in reducing speaking anxiety and ask students to identify the most helpful strategies.

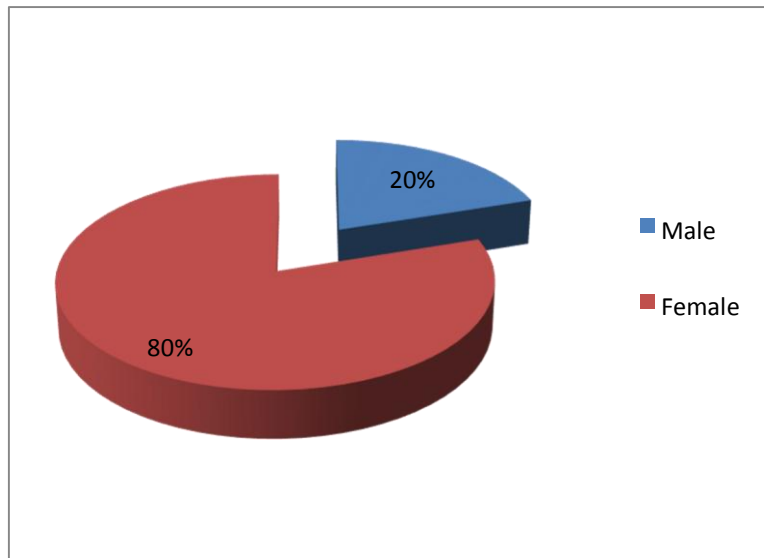
2.1.5. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question 01: Specify your gender

Figure 2-1

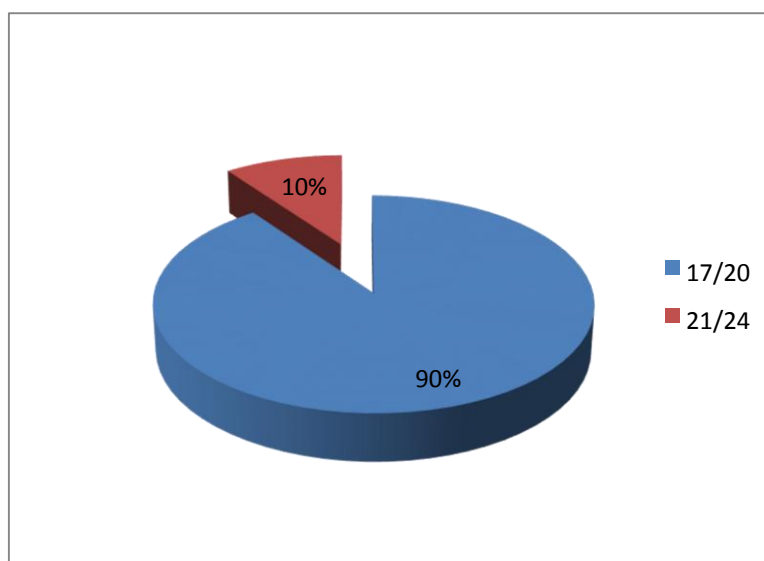
Students' gender classification



According to the pie chart, the majority of the participants in the study are female. Out of the total sample, 56 participants are female (80%) are female, whereas only 14 (20%) are male. This indicates that females are clearly the dominant group within this sample. Such a gender gap might indicate a typical enrolment pattern within the English Department and could potentially influence students' interaction in learning activities.

Question 02: Specify your age

Figure 2-2 Students' age group

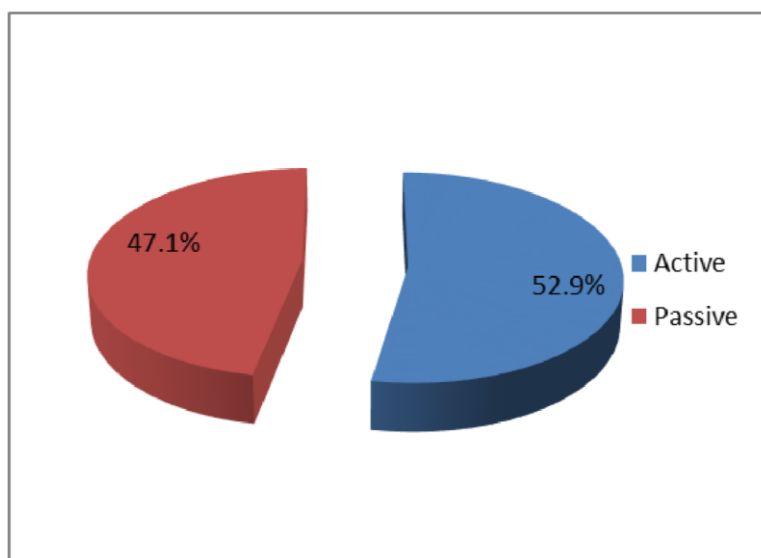


Based on the figure, most students, 63 participants, (90%) are aged between 17 and 20. Only 7 students (10 %) fall within the 21 and 24 age range. These findings suggest that most participants are relatively young, which may affect their classroom experiences and anxiety levels.

Section Two: Anxiety in English Speaking Performance:

Question 01: Do you perceive yourself as an active or passive participant in the classroom?

Figure 2-3 Students' perception of the classroom discussion



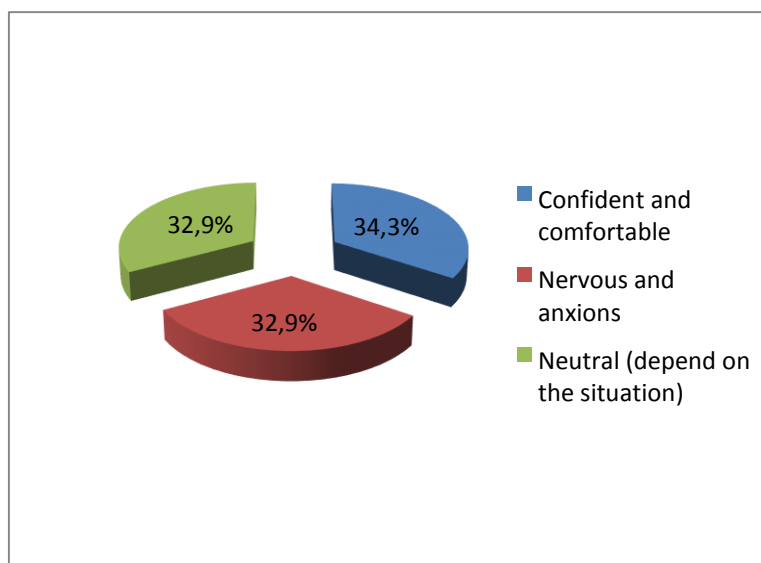
This question aims to determine whether students perceive themselves as active participants, who share and express their opinions in class or as passive participants who tend to remain silent during speaking activities. The results show that 37 students (52.9%) consider themselves active, while 33 students (47.1%) identify as passive.

Active participants justify their choice by emphasizing a desire to share their ideas, thoughts, and perspectives, and to interact with their peers and teachers. Many also reported having a sense of self-confidence. Conversely, passive participants attribute their silence to

factors such as shyness, limited vocabulary, and a fear of fear of negative evaluation by either the teacher or their peers. This relatively balanced distribution suggests that speaking anxiety is not the only factor that affects classroom participation; other elements such as personality traits or teaching style, or learning environments may also be influential.

Question 02: How do you feel when you speak in front of others?

Figure 2-4 Students' Feelings when speaking in front of others



This item aims to examine students' emotional reactions when they are required to speak publicly during class. The responses show a nearly even distribution among different emotional states. A total of 24 students (34.3%) reported feeling confident and at ease when speaking in front of others. In contrast, 23 students (32.9%) admitted to feeling nervous and anxious, while the same percentage, 23 students (32.9%), stated that their feelings vary depending on the situation. Although slightly more students feel confident, the findings highlight that a significant number experience discomfort, suggesting that emotional distress can hinder their participation and speaking fluency.

Students were also asked to specify the circumstances in which they felt least confident while speaking. Their answers showed that the behavior of the teacher played a crucial role in

shaping their comfort levels. Encouragement, support, and a non-judgmental attitude from the teacher were associated with increased student confidence, while criticism or pressure led to heightened stress.

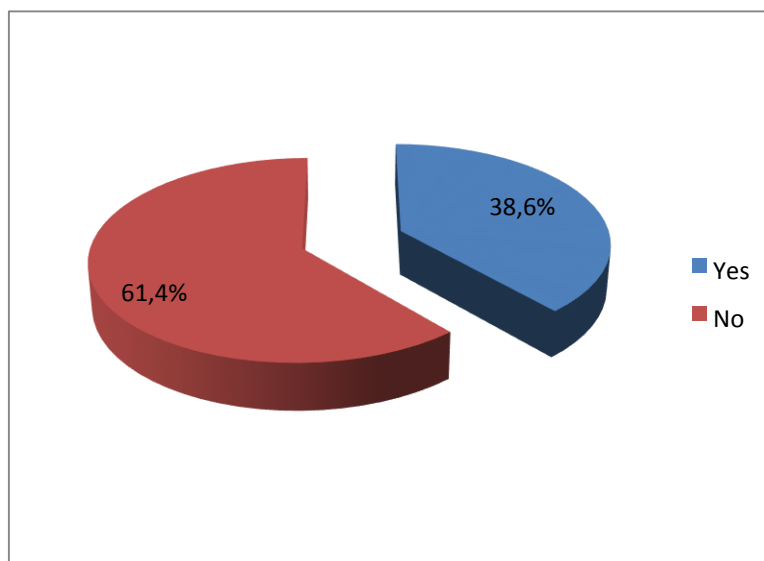
Another frequently mentioned situation involved classroom presentations, during which many students reported difficulty in responding to questions or interacting with peers. Their anxiety was further exacerbated by a fear of making mistakes or being judged by classmates and instructors.

Lack of preparation and poor organization prior to speaking were also identified as significant factors contributing to reduced confidence, whereas students who felt well-prepared expressed higher levels of self-assurance.

Additionally, students cited emotional challenges such as stress, mental blocks, and shyness, along with linguistic limitations such as a restricted vocabulary, as barriers to effective oral expression.

Other contributing factors included fear of public speaking, anxiety during first-time interactions, and discomfort with making eye contact. In contrast, several students mentioned that receiving high grades and positive reinforcement from teachers had a motivating effect and boosted their self-confidence.

These observations are aligned with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1982), which asserts that negative emotional states, such as anxiety, can heighten the affective filter and hinder language acquisition by obstructing input processing.

Question 03: Has a previous bad experience decreased your confidence?*Figure 2-5 Impact of Past Negative experiences on Students' confidence*

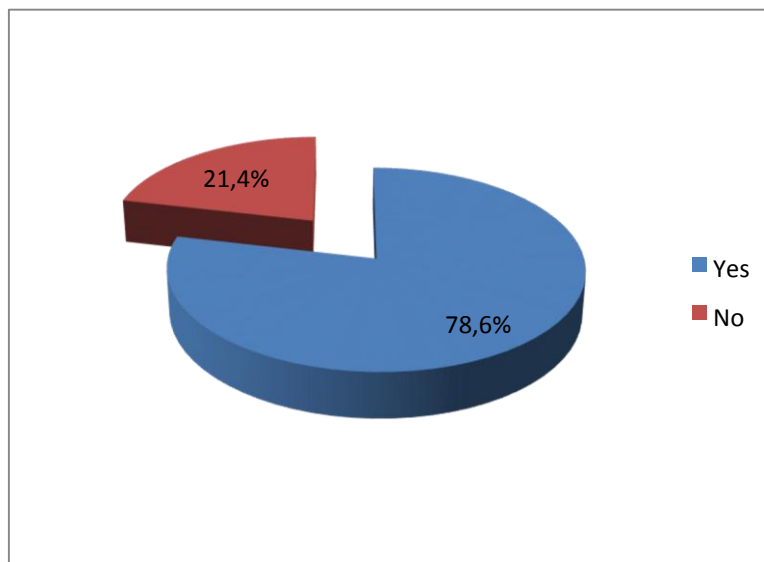
This question investigates the extent to which past negative experiences have influenced learners' confidence in speaking English. The results illustrated in the pie chart show that 27 students (38.6%) reported that negative experiences, such as being laughed at, negatively diminished their speaking confidence. In contrast, 43 students (61.4%) indicated that they were not adversely affected by such experiences.

Students who answered “yes” attribute their reduced confidence to some specific past experiences in which they were laughed at by their friends, classmates, or teachers. These incidents contributed to a decline in their confidence, particularly when speaking about their past experiences, answering questions, or expressing opinions. Additionally, some students explained their answers by citing shyness, hesitation to speak, or fear of judgment, especially when they had trouble answering teachers' questions.

Question 04: Does preparing your ideas in advance make English less stressful for you?

Figure 2-6

Effect of Preparation on students' stress levels



This question highlights the effect of preparation on reducing speaking anxiety in English. According to the data, the majority of students with 55 participants (78.6%), feel less stressed about speaking English when they prepare their ideas in advance. This suggests that having a clear plan or structure provides a sense of control and reduces the pressure to think on the spot. However, a notable minority of students with 15 students (21.4%), indicated that preparation did not alleviate their stress levels.

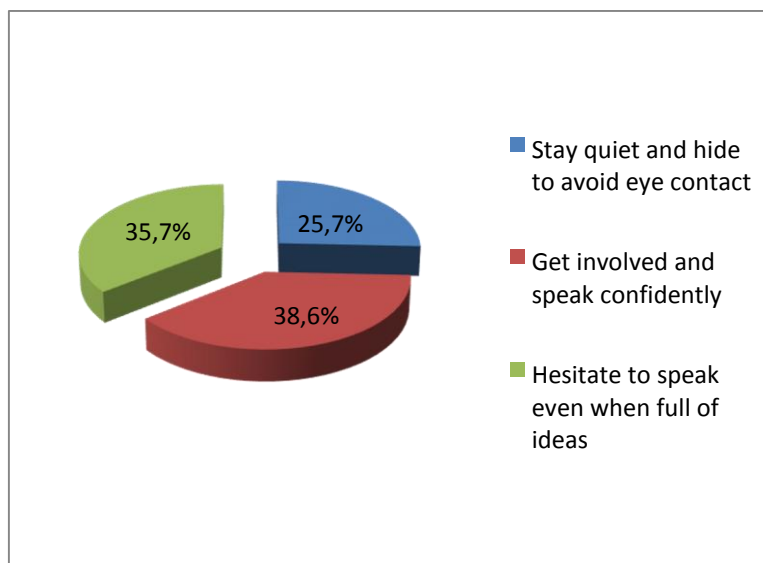
While this finding clearly indicates that preparation plays an important role in reducing speaking anxiety, other psychological or environmental factors such as personal anxiety, fear of negative judgment, or past negative experiences may still meaningfully contribute to speaking anxiety in certain students, reducing the benefits of preparation alone. This result supports Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) theory that preparation can help reduce language anxiety by giving learners a greater sense of control over speaking tasks. When students feel

well-prepared, they are less likely to experience intense anxiety because preparation decreases uncertainty and fear of negative judgment. However, for some students, other factors beyond preparation may still contribute to their speaking anxiety.

Question 05: During a class discussion, how do you usually behave?

Figure 2-7

Students' Behavior during Class Discussions



This question assesses the behavioural patterns of students during classroom discussions. The data reveal that 18 students (25.7%) reported that they often remain quiet and avoid eye contact during discussions, while 27 students (38.6%) indicated that they participate actively and speak with confidence. 25 students (35.7%) reported that they hesitate to speak, despite having ideas to contribute.

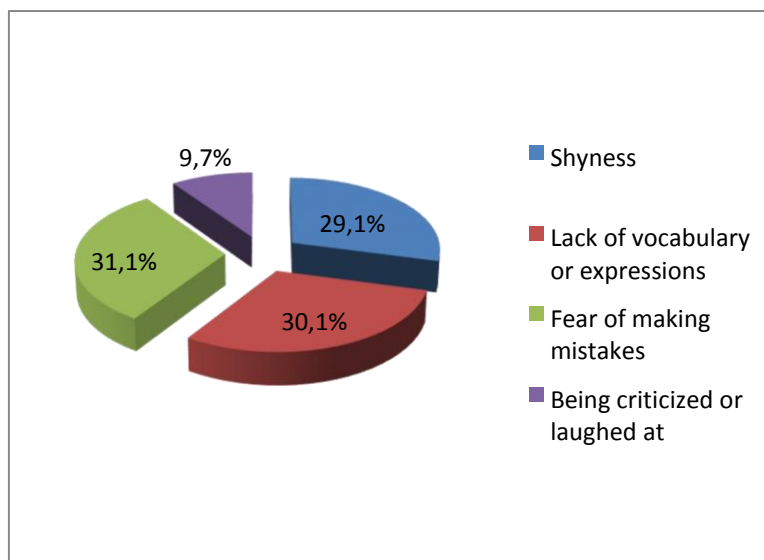
The results reflect a broad range of student behaviors during class discussions. It is evident that not all learners feel the same level of confidence or ease when participating orally. Some are active contributors who engage comfortably in discussions, whereas others prefer to remain silent or avoid interaction altogether. Additionally, a number of students reported

feeling reluctant to speak, even when they had relevant ideas to share. This reluctance is often linked to emotional challenges such as nervousness, fear of being wrong, or general discomfort with speaking in front of peers. These variations in classroom behavior suggest the importance of creating an inclusive and encouraging learning atmosphere where students feel safe and supported in expressing themselves.

Question 06: What are the main reasons for your anxiety during oral activities?

Figure 2-8

Students' Sources of Speaking Anxiety



Speaking tasks in the classroom frequently trigger various emotional responses among students, which this question seeks to investigate. The answers suggest that 30 students (29.1%) chose shyness as their main source of anxiety. 31 (30.1%) students reported having a Lack of vocabulary or expressions. Meanwhile, 32(31.1%) students indicated that their fear of making mistakes increases their anxiety. Only 10 (9.7%) students stated that their anxiety stems from a fear of being criticized or laughed at for their expressions or opinions.

This shows that the appearance of speaking anxiety is linked to several factors, including fear of making mistakes 32 (31.1%), lack of vocabulary and expressions 31 (30.1%), shyness 30 (29.1%), and the fear of being criticized or laughed at 10 (9.7%).

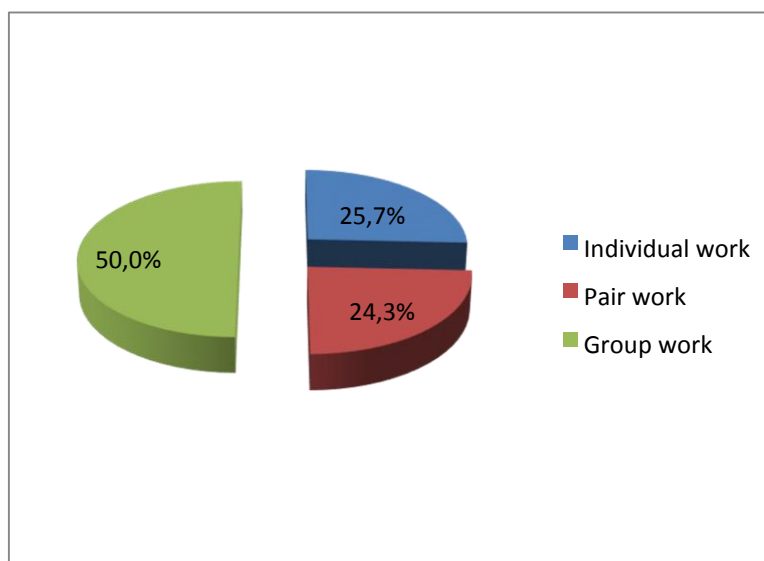
To expand the analysis, the question further invited students to mention other reasons that make them anxious during their oral performance. “Overthinking” was highlighted by several students as another cause of anxiety.

It became evident from the participants' responses that students' anxiety during classroom sessions is linked to several negative feelings, such as shyness, a lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and overthinking. These findings align with the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Theory proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), which identifies fear of negative evaluation and communicative apprehension as a central sources of language anxiety.

Question07: What kind of activities make you less stressed in oral sessions?

Figure 2-9

Preferred activities to reduce Students' oral stress

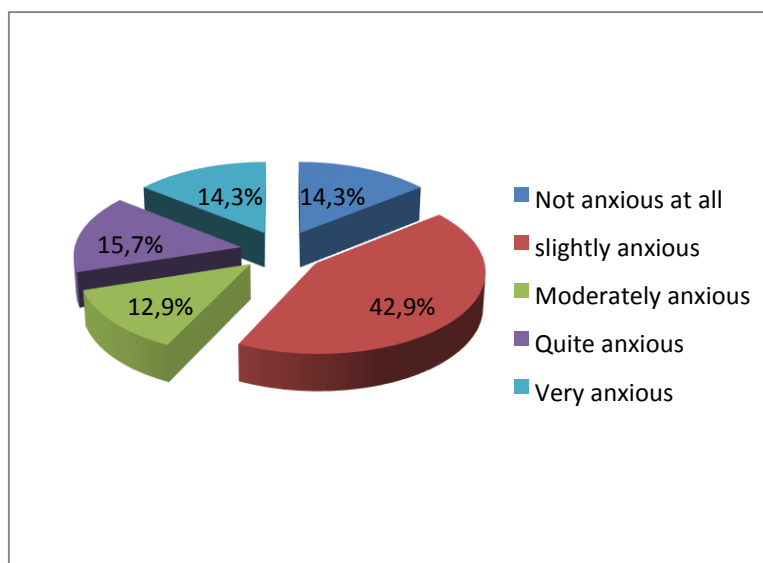


A majority of the students, 35 participants (50%), indicated that group work helps them feel less stressed, while 18 respondents (25.7%) declared that individual work is more helpful, and 17 students (24.3%) reported that they are more comfortable with pair work. The answers to this question indicate that most students feel less stressed and anxious when engaged in collaborative work. This highlights that collaborative work can significantly help reduce speaking anxiety during oral tasks.

Question 08: On a scale from 1 to 5, how anxious do you feel when speaking in front of others?

Figure 2-10

Students' Anxiety Scale When Speaking in Public



In this Likert scale question, students were asked to rate their level of anxiety when speaking in front of others. The results suggest that 10 students (14.3%) reported no anxiety, 30 students (42.9%) reported feeling slightly anxious, 9 students (12.9%) indicated that they felt “Moderately Anxious”, 11 students (15.7%) reported high anxiety, and 10 students (14.3%) described themselves as very anxious.

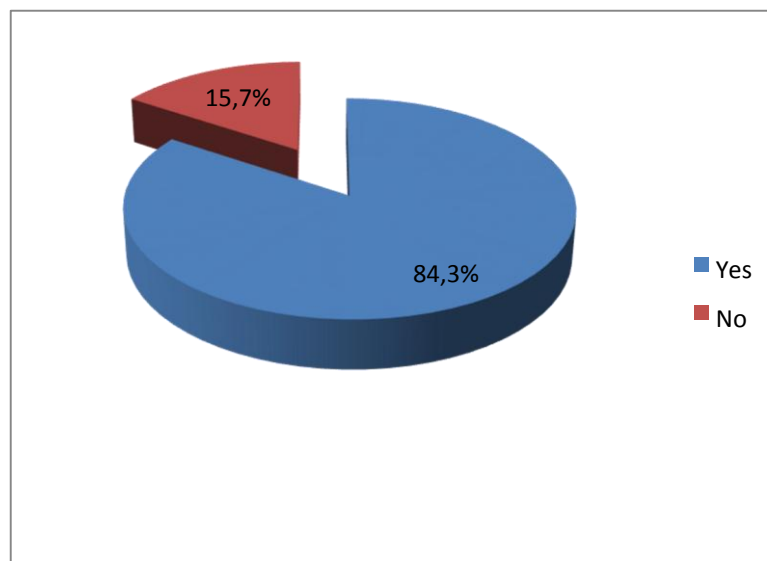
The results above show that students display a range of anxiety levels when speaking in front of others, with the majority ranking their anxiety between low and moderate. This variation suggests that speaking anxiety is a common yet unique experience, influenced by personal traits such as self-confidence, past experiences, and the speaking environment.

Section Three: Cooperative Learning as a Tool for Effective Learning

Question 01: Do you like working with your classmates?

Figure 2-11

Students' perspectives Toward Working with Classmates

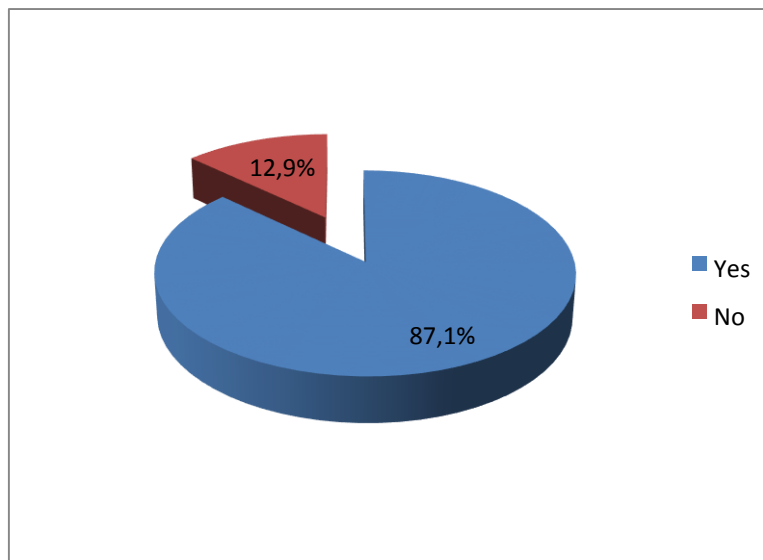


According to participants' responses, the majority of students, 59 participants (84.3%), reported that they prefer working collaboratively with classmates; meanwhile, only 11 students (15.7%) indicated that they do not prefer working collaboratively. This highlights that cooperation is widely accepted and preferred by most of the learners.

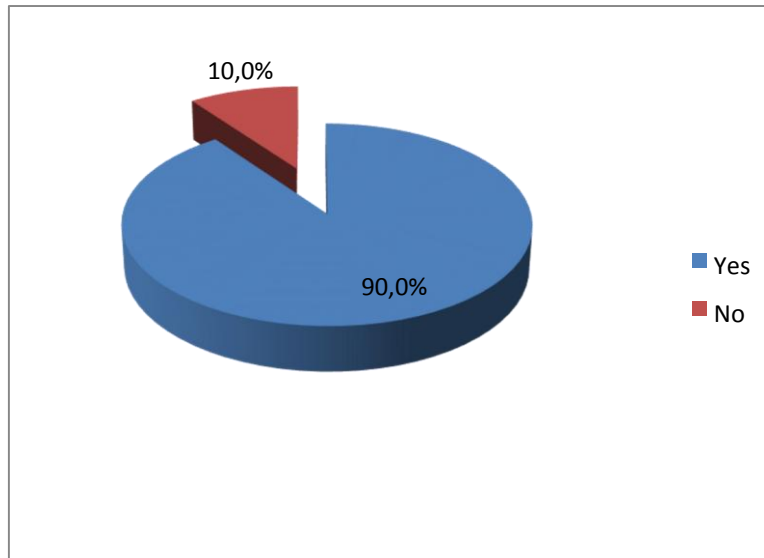
The findings indicate that students generally respond positively to CL. Working collaboratively appears to lower stress and encourage open communication by creating a classroom environment that is both inclusive and supportive (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Question 02: Does working in groups help you develop your understanding during lessons?

Figure 2-12 impact of Group Work on Students' Understanding

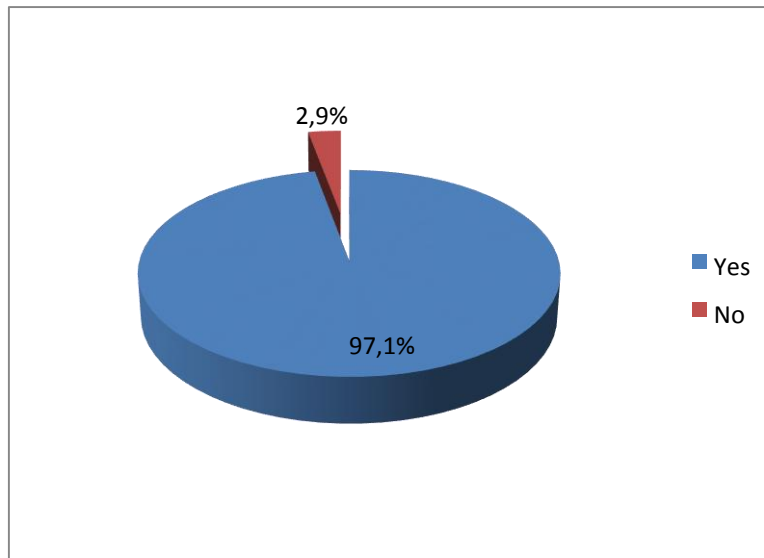


This question examines whether working in groups and using cooperative strategies contributes to students' understanding during the lessons. The data indicate that the majority of participants, 61 participants (87.1%), believe that cooperative techniques help them understand the lesson. In contrast, 9 students (12.9%) indicated that cooperative learning does not enhance their comprehension. It is inferred from these results that CL has a significant influence on enhancing students' understanding during lessons, emphasizing its value as a useful teaching strategy.

Question 03: Do group work activities help you feel more confident?*Figure 2-13****Impact of Group Work on Students' Confidence***

The data indicate that a large majority of 63 students (90%) feel more confident due to group work activities, highlighting the value of collaboration in building self-confidence. However, a minority of 7 students (10%) who disagreed did not share this view. These outliers may reflect individual differences, such as social anxiety, lack of familiarity with group work, or limited prior experience with collaborative learning environments, which can reduce the confidence-building potential of such activities.

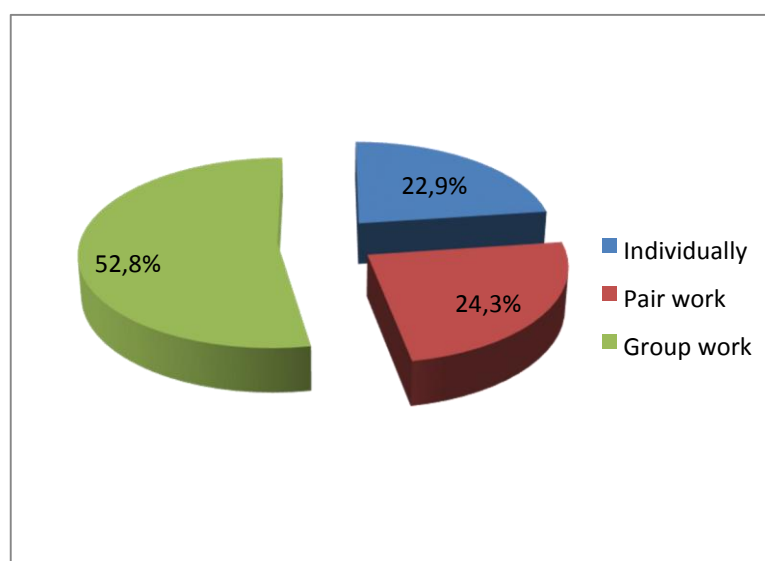
Question 04: Do you learn new information when you work in groups?*Figure 2-14 Knowledge Gained Through Group Work by Students*



The overwhelming majority of 68 students (97.1%) reported learning new information in group settings. This supports the idea that CL fosters knowledge sharing and peer interaction, which are essential for deepening understanding. However, a small minority of 2 students (2.9%) did not benefit from group work.

Question 05: In EFL classrooms, do you prefer to work?

Figure 2-15 Students' Preferences in the EFL Classroom Activities



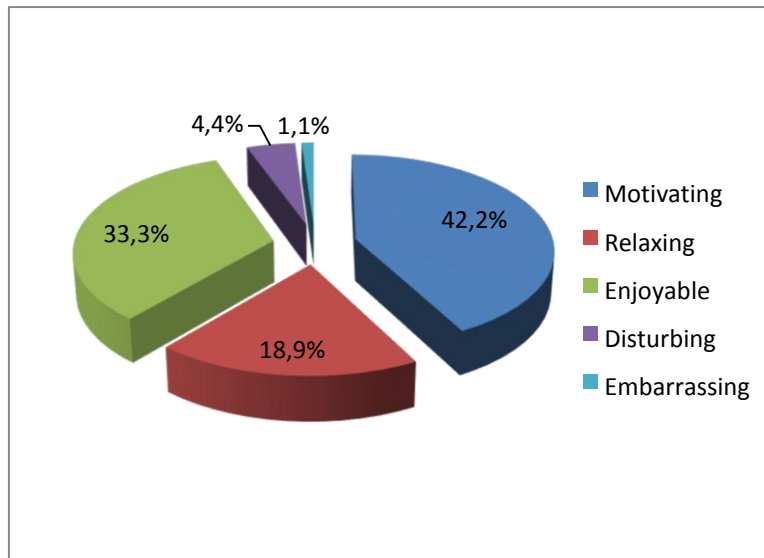
Among 70 participants, 37 learners (52.9%) preferred group work, mentioning multiple reasons such as increased comfort, engaging in idea-sharing, peer support, and greater opportunities for shy students to participate and build self-confidence. Meanwhile, 16 students (22.9%) preferred individual work, often due to a desire for autonomy, discomfort with group noise, or a variation in competency levels among peers. Lastly, 17 students (24.3%) selected pair work, appreciating the opportunity to interact socially within smaller groups.

The majority of students preferred group work, as for them, it facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge, provides mutual support and motivation, boosts self-confidence, and creates a comfortable learning environment that fosters participation. Other students who preferred pair work noted that exchanging ideas in a freely, especially with their friends or best friends, alleviated feelings of pressure. On the other hand, students who preferred to work individually explained that shyness or fear of being judged preventing them from engaging in group activities.

This distribution emphasizes the need to incorporate diverse formats of interaction in EFL classes to meet students' varying preferences and psychological needs.

Question 06: What do you think about collaborating with others in a group setting?

Figure 2-16 Students' Opinions on Group Collaboration

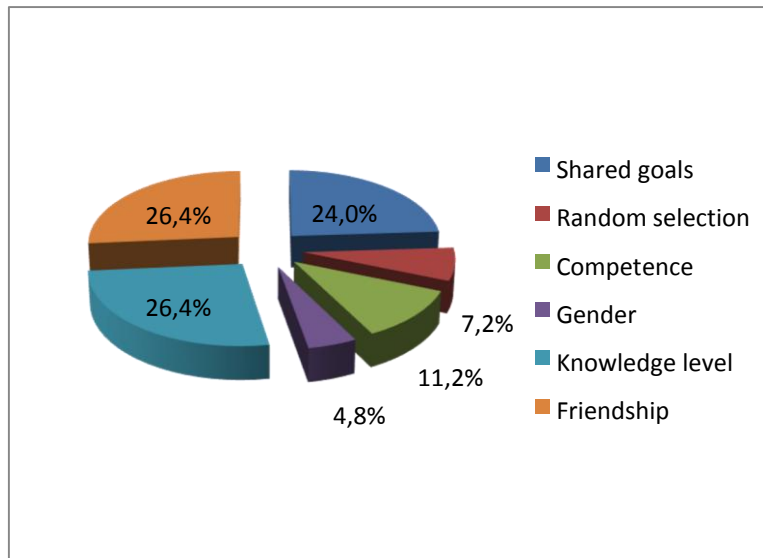


The answers to this question indicate that students generally have a positive attitude toward group work. The largest group of respondents consisted of 38 participants (42.2%), who described it as motivating, while 30 participants (33.3%) found it enjoyable. 17 students (18.9%) found it relaxing. However, a minority of participants reported negative feelings toward group work, with a total of 4 students (4.4%) describing it as disturbing and 1 student (1.1%) reporting feelings of embarrassment.

These results highlight the fact that although the majority of students perceive group collaboration as preferable, not all of them prosper in collaborative settings. This might indicate the need for tailored strategies that meet the individual needs of each student.

Question 07: On what basis do you prioritize when choosing a study group?

Figure 2-17 Students' perspectives toward choosing teamwork



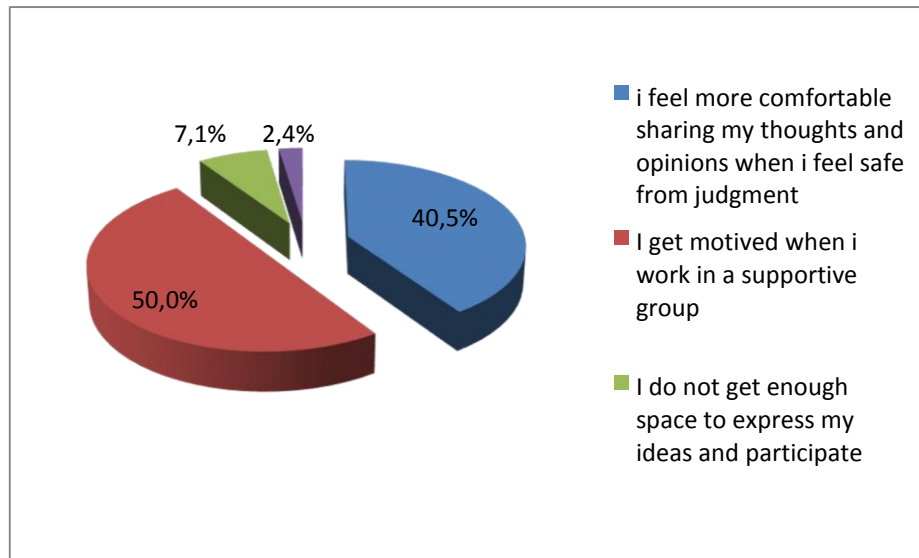
The data show that 30 participants (24.0%) prioritized shared goals when choosing a group for the study. 9 participants (7.2%) reported being placed in groups based on random selection. 14 participants (11.2%) suggested competence as the main criterion, while 6 participants (4.8%) selected group members based on gender. In addition, 33 participants (26.4%) prioritized knowledge level, and another 33 (26.4%) chose friendship as their primary consideration.

This data demonstrates that most participants choose their study groups work based on educational compatibility and social connections, such as shared knowledge and friendship.

Question 08: What are your attitudes on working in a team?

Figure 2-18

Students' Attitudes toward Teamwork

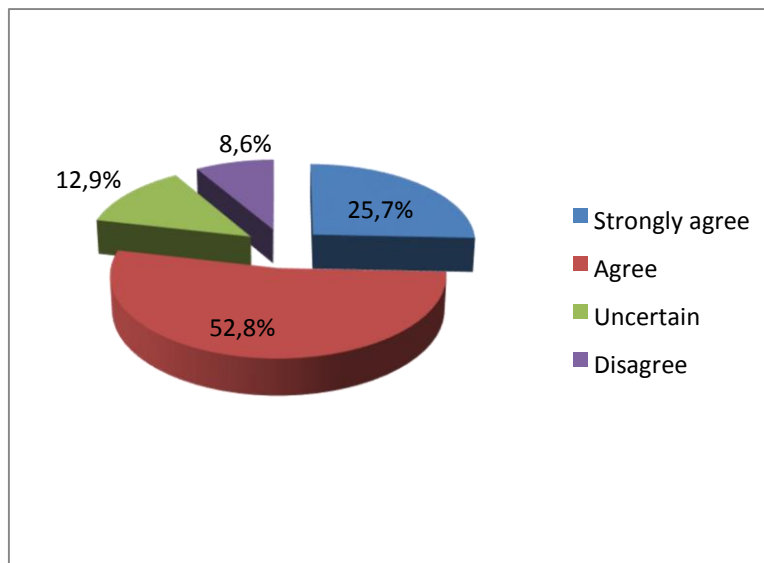


The responses indicate that students tend to feel more positive about teamwork when they are in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Half of the participants, 42 (50%), stated that they feel motivated when working in a supportive group. Similarly, 34 students (40.5%) emphasized that they feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions in an environment where they are free from judgment. On the other hand, a smaller proportion, 6 respondents (7.1%), reported that they lacked the space to express their ideas, and only 2 students (2.4%) struggled to express their arguments due to shyness or embarrassment.

This indicates that students' views on teamwork are highly influenced by the emotional environment of the group. Positive and judgment-free environments can significantly enhance students' feelings of motivation and comfort. These findings highlight the importance of creating emotionally safe classrooms, as such environments not only increase motivation and comfort but also encourage greater participation and more effective collaboration among learners.

Question 09: To what extent do you believe that cooperative learning contributes more to oral performance improvement compared to individual learning?

Figure 2-19 Students' agreement About Cooperative Learning and Individual learning



As illustrated in the pie chart, the majority of participants, 37 students (52.9%), selected “Agree”, while 18 respondents (25.7%) chose “Strongly Agree”. This suggests that most students benefit from the collaborative environment, especially when they feel supported and free from judgment. Conversely, 9 participants (12.9%) were “Uncertain”, which could reflect limited prior experience or doubts about the extent to which cooperative learning improves their oral skills. A small minority, 6 participants (8.6%) selected “Disagree” while none chose “Strongly Disagree”.

The majority of participants who agreed emphasized several significant benefits that CL provides. For them, it encourages respect for others' point of view, promotes the practice of speaking abilities, and facilitates the acquisition of new vocabulary and knowledge. Additionally, they reported improvements in social intelligence, interpersonal skills, and emotional well-being, such as increased confidence, and a reduction in shyness and hesitation when speaking.

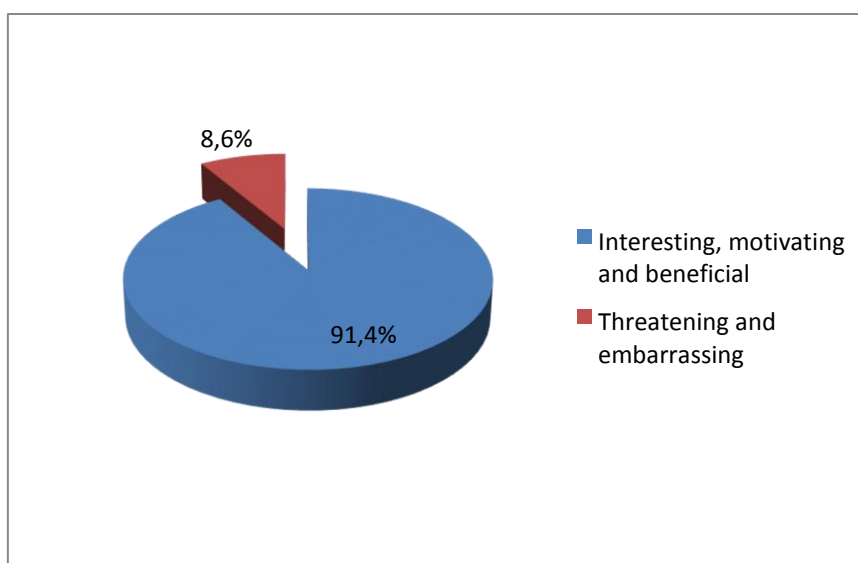
Those who selected “Strongly Agree” highlighted that CL effectively contributes to the development of speaking skills and social interaction. It also helps reduce fears of making mistakes or being judged.

A portion of the “Uncertain” participants noted that the impact of group work is influenced by the nature of the group members, which may sometimes lead to a lack of concentration. The participants who disagreed did not provide reasons for their responses, and none selected “Strongly Disagree”.

Overall, the results affirm that CL can enhance oral performance, though its effectiveness may differ depending on group interactions and individual characteristics of learners.

Question 10: How do you find these pair/group activities: role-plays, dialogues, and games?

Figure 2-20 Students’ Evaluation of Pair /Group Oral Activities

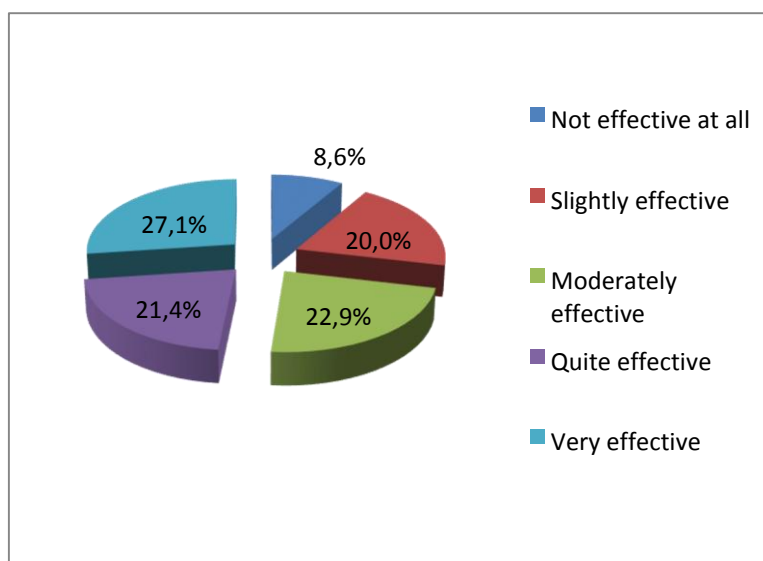


The results indicate that pair/group activities, such as role-plays, dialogues, and games are perceived as valuable Instructional techniques, with a significant majority of students 64 (91.4%) describing them as interesting, motivating, and beneficial. However, a small minority of 6 students (8.6%) perceived these activities as threatening and embarrassing. This suggests that instructors should carefully consider the psychological well-being of all students when incorporating such interactive activities in the classroom.

These findings indicate that although interactive pair\group activities like role-plays and games are generally successful in fostering oral participation and motivation, their effectiveness is not uniform. The negative feedback reported by some students highlights the impact of affective variables, such as anxiety, fear of judgment, or lack of self-confidence, on students' attitudes toward these activities.

Question 11: On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the effectiveness of the cooperative learning technique to reduce speaking anxiety?

Figure 2-21 Students' Rating of Cooperative Learning Effectiveness



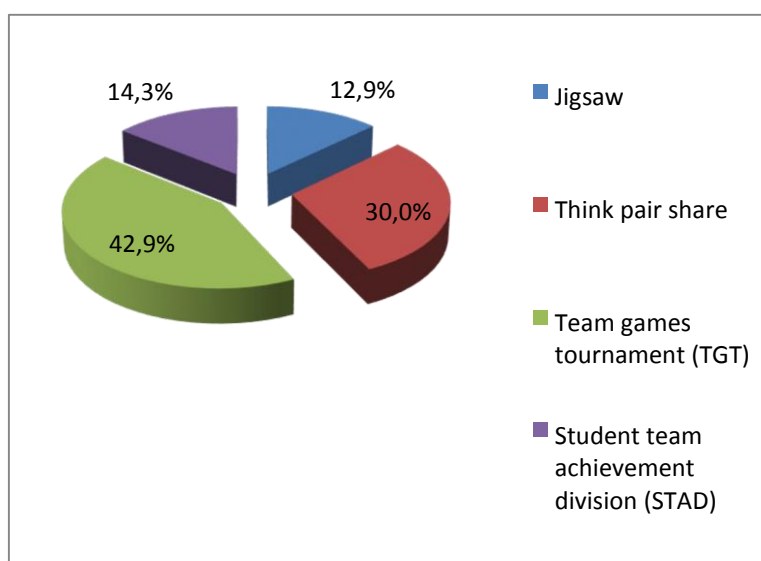
As shown in the pie chart, 6 participants (8.6%) indicated that the cooperative learning technique is not effective at all, while 14 participants (20.0%) noted that it is slightly effective.

A group of 16 students (22.9%) revealed that it is moderately effective, and 15 participants (21.4%) found it quite effective. The highest proportion, 19 students (27.1%), rated it as very effective. The findings illustrate that CL has a significant positive effect on the student learning process.

While most students considered the technique beneficial, a significant few remained doubtful about its effectiveness. This difference could be due to variations in learning preferences, the intensity of speaking anxiety, or how the method was applied. These findings highlight the need to tailor cooperative learning approaches to accommodate the diverse characteristics and needs of learners to achieve better outcomes.

Question 12: Which cooperative learning techniques do you think are the most effective in reducing your oral communication anxiety?

Figure 2-22 Students preferred Cooperative Learning Techniques



The findings reveal students' preferences for specific cooperative learning strategies in controlling their oral communication anxiety. The most favoured technique was Team Games Tournament (TGT), endorsed by 30 (42.9%) of participants. This suggests that competitive activities may significantly help transform oral activities into enjoyable and less stressful challenges. Likewise, the fact that Think-Pair-Share was the second most chosen option, 21 (30%), also highlights its significance as a safe and structured format for expressing ideas. In contrast, lower preferences for STAD 10 students (14.3%) and Jigsaw 9 (12.9%) may indicate that students are less comfortable with larger group engagement and instead prefer more immediate and focused small-group interactions.

The findings imply that to effectively minimize speaking anxiety, teachers need to prioritize CL techniques that provide both clear structure and comfort, considering the students' emotional reactions to group size and task demands.

2.1.6. Discussion:

The focus of this study was to examine the students' perceptions and attitudes toward the effectiveness and implementation of the CL method in reducing speaking anxiety. It also explored whether there is a correlation between CL and speaking anxiety, as well as to identify which CL strategies are perceived as the most effective during students' learning.

To achieve the aims and address the research question, a questionnaire was distributed to 70 first-year English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center in Mila. The collected data served as a basis for interpreting learners' experiences and perspectives on CL and its effect in mitigating their speaking anxiety.

The findings reveal that a significant number of students experience speaking anxiety, often due to fears of being ridiculed or judged by teachers and classmates. Other factors such as a lack of vocabulary, fear of errors, and feelings of shyness further limit students' oral participation.

The results indicate that working collaboratively helps students reduce such negative emotions. The majority of the students welcomed CL, as it offers both support and motivation. It helps them feel more comfortable and confident in expressing their viewpoints with less stress and worry. This, in turn, creates a more engaging learning environment and enhances their self-confidence.

Among the CL techniques evaluated, TGT proved to be the most effective strategy. Students reported that TGT helped them feel more relaxed and engaged, turning oral practice into an enjoyable and less stressful experience.

The results of the current study are in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the crucial role of social interaction in language development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learners develop their language through the zone of proximal development, particularly when they are assisted by a more knowledgeable peer. In this regard, the CL method, as applied in this study, fosters an interactive learning environment that scaffolds students and helps them overcome speaking anxiety.

In the same line of thought, a study was made by Ehsan Namaziandost et al. (2019) on the impact of CL on oral proficiency and motivation among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The findings indicate that CL has a significant and positive effect on students' speaking abilities and motivation.

2.1.7. Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

2.1.7.1. Implications of the Study

Considering the major findings elicited from questionnaires administered to students, the current research is said to bring about significant implications for theory and practice. While the main findings of the present study are at variance with theoretical premises that postulate speaking anxiety as an inherent and unchangeable aspect of second language acquisition, the current study provides evidence that CL techniques substantially contribute to reducing such Anxiety. This lends strong support to the pedagogical value of integrating CL strategies in speaking-focused instruction.

Another important conclusion is the need to distinguish between traditional group activities and purposefully structured cooperative activities aimed at reducing anxiety. In other words, while group interaction offers some benefits, the findings of this study highlight that the use of cooperative techniques, which foster peer support, build confidence, and create a low-anxiety environment, that appear to significantly contribute to lowering speaking anxiety. Therefore, EFL teachers must be equipped to adopt cooperative strategies that are designed to ease psychological pressure and enhance speaking confidence.

2.1.7.2. Limitations of the study

Several limitations affected the research process. the study is geographically limited, as it reflects data from only one institution within a single Algerian university. The results may not be applicable to a broader to other contexts, educational levels, or institutions. Moreover, students' overall level of English proficiency is relatively low, as they are at the beginning of their academic journey. Their limited familiarity with didactic terminology could have influenced their ability to fully understand the questionnaire items or to articulate their responses accurately.

2.1.7.3. Recommendations for Pedagogy and Research

In light of the data analysis conducted in this study, it is important to highlight a set of recommendations that target both pedagogical practices and future research. These recommendations aim to help students and teachers develop a deeper understanding of the role and effectiveness of CL techniques in reducing speaking anxiety in English language classrooms.

It is therefore recommended that more space be allocated for the implementation of CL techniques within diverse pedagogical practices. Teachers should be encouraged to incorporate well-structured cooperative activities that foster peer interaction, reduce speaking anxiety, and build students' oral confidence.

Similarly, future research that shares a similar focus is encouraged to further explore the effectiveness and applicability of CL across different educational contexts. Such research can broaden the scope of application and enrich existing findings, considering variations in student profiles, educational institutions, and cultural backgrounds.

2.1.7.3.1. Recommendation for students and professors

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are directed to students and professors.

1. Professors should be more aware of their students' emotional states, especially during speaking sessions.
2. Professors should help students develop their self-confidence and reduce their anxiety during speaking.

3. It is advisable for professors to offer a supportive learning environment that encourages students to express themselves freely.
4. Professors should encourage group work activities during oral performance.
5. The researchers advocate for the implementation of various cooperative learning techniques by teachers, as these contribute to both emotional well-being and language development in students.
6. The researcher emphasizes the necessity for instructors to acquire comprehensive knowledge of cooperative learning elements and to integrate them effectively in practice, as these components are central to the success of the cooperative learning approach.
7. Students should increase their awareness of the importance of speaking skills.
8. Active engagement in oral activities allows learners to enhance their speaking abilities while simultaneously building self-confidence.
9. Students are encouraged to support and motivate themselves while working in groups.
10. Learners should understand that feeling anxious and overwhelmed during speaking is a natural phenomenon that anyone can experience.
11. Learners should embrace mistakes as a natural part of the learning process and should not feel ashamed or hesitant to express their viewpoints.
12. Educators should be knowledgeable of cooperative learning techniques and their impact on enhancing language learning.

2.1.7.3.2. Future Perspectives

Based on the findings obtained in this study, further research is encouraged in the following areas:

To obtain a deeper understanding of CL's impact on EFL speaking anxiety, observational studies are recommended within classroom oral tasks. Future research should evaluate the psychosocial and linguistic effects of cooperative strategies, specifically ThinkPair-Share, Jigsaw, and STAD, on lowering anxiety and fostering oral proficiency within a collaborative framework. Special attention should be given to the emotional and interactive dynamics of students during cooperative speaking activities.

Future studies should look into the issue from the perspective of EFL educators, whose instructional practices and classroom interactions profoundly influence learners' emotional and linguistic development. In particular, further methodological research is needed to investigate how instructors' negative feedback impacts students' oral performance, and its potential role in triggering or exacerbating foreign language speaking anxiety.

Due to the heightened importance of fostering 21st-century skills, it is essential to explore how CL promotes the development of higher-order thinking, especially creativity and critical thinking. Studies could examine how structured group activities and interdependent learning processes encourage creative expression, critical analysis, argumentation, and solution-oriented communication among EFL learners.

Additional research is needed to explore the different factors that hinder oral communication in EFL settings. This may comprise internal factors (e.g., anxiety, low confidence, fear of judgement) as well as external ones (e.g., classroom dynamics, task design,

lack of grammar accuracy). Such studies may offer deeper insights into the elements that can hinder students' willingness to speak and their actual performance.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has thoroughly examined the practical part of the current research, which focused on describing, analysing, and discussing the findings collected through the research tool used in this study, namely the questionnaire. Indeed, the results reveal that shyness, lack of vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes or being laughed at are major factors that increase students' speaking anxiety. Furthermore, the implementation of CL techniques significantly enhanced students' speaking abilities, with the TGT strategy being perceived as highly effective in creating a supportive learning environment.

Taken together, the results, implications, limitations, and recommendations provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential of CL as a pedagogical approach. While the study remains limited in scope, it offers appropriate recommendations for professors, educators, and pedagogical staff to support the effective integration of cooperative learning in EFL contexts in contemporary education, increasing emphasis is placed on learner-centered methodologies designed to boost student engagement and minimize psychological hindrances such as anxiety. Among these, CL strategies have emerged as powerful pedagogical tools that not only enhance academic outcomes but also promote communication, teamwork, and selfconfidence among students.

General conclusion

In today's educational landscape, the focus has shifted towards more student-centered approaches that aim to enhance learners' engagement and reduce psychological barriers to learning, such as anxiety. cooperative learning techniques stand out as an effective pedagogical tool that supports academic performance and fosters communication, collaboration, and confidence among learners.

In search of achieving the previously mentioned aims of the study, a questionnaire is administered to 70 EFL students at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Mila. This study examined the role of group based learning in alleviating speaking anxiety among EFL learners, with a particular focus on the Algerian context..Interestingly, we have figured out that speaking abilities are improved when using CI methods. Therefore, the conclusion that can be drawn from this Investigation is that cooperative learning plays a significant role in teaching and learning process as it enhances the students' motivation, fosters positive peer interactions, and encourages all students to be more actively involved in classroom participation as well as enhances students' confidence and reduces their speaking anxiety.

This dissertation pursues two main objectives. The first is to examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in reducing speaking anxiety among first-year students. The second objective is to identify the prevalence of communication apprehension among these students and evaluate how collaborative learning techniques can alleviate such anxiety while enhancing their oral communication environment. IT is also aimed to uncover their perspectives towards cooperative learning and its influence on learners' willingness to speak in English. The study is grounded on two major theoretical frameworks: Johnson and Johnson's (1994) model of cooperative learning and Slavin's (1995) framework. Both theories have

provided us with valuable insights into the use of cooperative learning strategies in reducing speaking anxiety in classroom settings.

To address the advanced research questions and to test the proposed hypotheses, they adopted a quantitative research method. It has also used a questionnaire administered to first-year students. The quantitative data are analyzed by using a computer program called (SPSS) a social package for social sciences. As previously hypothesized, the findings of this study suggest that the cooperative learning technique has a strong impact on reducing anxiety during speaking performance. Furthermore, the results indicate that techniques such as Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, and Team Game Tournament can help students at the higher education level to enhance their oral performance abilities. In conclusion, the findings demonstrated that cooperative learning is an effective strategy for minimizing speaking anxiety and strengthening oral communication in the EFL classroom. The students recognized that working in groups creates a supportive classroom atmosphere where learners feel less judged and more motivated to participate.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that Algerian teachers integrate cooperative learning into their teaching practices, supported by institutional training and resources to ensure successful implementation. This approach can make language learning a more engaging, less stressful, and more productive experience for students.

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Appendices

References Student's questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of a research study on the effectiveness of cooperative learning techniques and their impacts on speaking anxiety among the First-Year English Language Students at the University of Abd Elhafid Boussouf, Mila. Your answers will greatly contribute to our research. We would be very thankful if you could answer the following questionnaire seriously to furnish us with the necessary data to bring our dissertation to an end. You are kindly requested to tick ✓ the corresponding box and make statements whenever necessary. We appreciate your collaboration and time. Please note that your answer will be ANONYMOUS.

Thank you in advance.

Section One: General Information Q1.

Specify your gender:

Male

Female

Q2. Specify your age:

17/20

21/24

Section Two: Anxiety in English Speaking Performance

Q3. Do you consider yourself as an active or passive participant in the classroom discussions?

Active

Passive

Please explain why:

.....

.....

Q4. How do you feel when you speak in front of others?

A- Confident and comfortable

B- Nervous and anxious

C-Neutral (depends on the situation)

Q5. Has a previous bad experience decreased your confidence?

Yes

No

If yes, can you describe an experience that affected your confidence?

.....

.....

.....

..

Q6. Does preparing your ideas in advance make English less stressful for you?

Yes

No

Q7. During a class discussion, how do you usually behave?

A-Stay quiet and hide to avoid eye contact

B- Get involved and speak confidently

C-Hesitate to speak even when full of ideas

Q8. What are the main reasons of your anxiety during oral activities?

Shyness

A-Lack of vocabulary or expressions

B-Fear of making mistakes

C-Being criticized or laughed at

Are there any reasons that cause your anxiety?

.....

.....

Q9. What kind of activities make you less stressed in oral sessions?

A- Individual work

B- Pair work

C-Group work

Q10. On a scale from 1 to 5, how anxious do you feel when speaking in front of others?

A- Not anxious at all

B- slightly anxious

C- Moderately anxious

D-Quite anxious

E- Very anxious

Section Three: Cooperative Learning as a Tool for Effective Learning Q1.**Do you like working with your classmates?**Yes No **Q2. Does working in groups help you develop your understanding during lessons?**Yes No **Q3. Do group work activities help you feel more confident?**Yes No **Q4. Do you learn new information when you work in groups?**Yes No **Q5. In EFL classrooms, do you prefer to work?**A-Individually B-Pair work

C-Group work

Please, explain why:

.....

.....

.....

Q6. What do you think about collaborating with others in a group setting?

A- Motivating

B- Relaxing

C-Enjoyable

D- Disturbing

E-Embarrassing

Q7. On what basis do you prioritize when choosing a study group?

A-Shared goals

B-Random selection

C-Competence

D-Gender

E-Knowledge level

F-Friendship

Q8. What are your attitudes on working in a team?

A- I feel more comfortable sharing my thoughts and opinions when I feel safe from judgment.

B- I get motivated when I work in a supportive group.

C- I do not get enough space to express my ideas and participate.

D-Struggle to express my arguments due to shyness and embarrassment.

Q9. To what extent do you agree that cooperative learning contributes more to oral performance improvement compared to individual learning?

A-Strongly agree

B-Agree

C-Uncertain

D-Disagree

E-Strongly disagree

Whatever your answer is, please

explain.....

.....

.....

Q10. How do you find these pair/group activities: Role-plays, dialogues, and games?

A-Interesting, motivating, and beneficial

B-Threatening and embarrassing

Q11. On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the effectiveness of cooperative learning technique to reduce speaking anxiety?

A - Not effective at all

B - Slightly effective

C - Moderately effective

D - Quite effective

E - Very effective

Q12. Which cooperative learning techniques do you think are the most effective in

reducing your oral communication anxiety?

A-Jigsaw

B-Think pair share

C-Team games tournament (TGT)

D-Three Numbered Heads Together (TNH)

Résumé

La présente étude examine l'efficacité de la technique d'apprentissage coopératif en tant qu'outil de réduction de l'anxiété à l'oral chez les étudiants de première année d'université qui étudient l'anglais. Cette recherche vise à mieux faire connaître l'anxiété comme un des barrières psychologiques qui affectent les capacités d'expression orale des étudiants. L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner comment les stratégies d'apprentissage coopératif contribuent à atténuer l'anxiété dans les performances orales des étudiants, parmi les étudiants de première année d'anglais langue étrangère. Cette étude a été menée à l'Université Abdelhaffid Boussouf de Mila durant l'année universitaire (2024_2025). Pour ce faire, une méthode quantitative a été adoptée. Les données ont été collectées à l'aide d'un questionnaire administré à 70 participants et les données ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Les résultats indiquent que les étudiants de première année d'université éprouvent des niveaux significatifs d'anxiété, en particulier lors des performances orales. Les résultats montrent également que la suggestion de l'apprentissage coopératif comme solution pour réduire leur anxiété a fonctionné efficacement car elle permet de renforcer la confiance en soi des étudiants et de promouvoir une participation plus efficace lors des performances orales. Ces résultats démontrent que l'utilisation de la technique d'apprentissage coopératif dans le cadre de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère favorise un environnement de classe engageant et motivant et promeut les capacités d'expression orale des étudiants.

المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة فعالية تقنية التعلم التعاوني كأداة لتقليل القلق أثناء التحدث لدى طلبة السنة الأولى الجامعيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء بشكل أفضل على القلق كعائق نفسي الذي يؤثر على قدرات الطلبة في التعبير الشفهي. كما تهدف إلى دراسة كيفية مساهمة استراتيجيات التعلم التعاوني في التخفيف من القلق المرتبط بالأداء الشفهي لدى طلبة السنة الأولى في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وقد أجريت هذه الدراسة في جامعة عبد الحفيظ بوسوف - ميلّة خلال السنة الجامعية (2024-2025). ولتحقيق ذلك، تم اعتماد المنهج الكمي، حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال استبيان وُزِعَ على 70 مشاركًا، وتم تحليلها باستخدام الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية). أشارت النتائج إلى أن طلبة السنة الأولى يعانون من مستويات ملحوظة من القلق، خاصة برنامج أثناء أداء المهام الشفهية. كما أظهرت النتائج أن اقتراح استخدام التعلم التعاوني كحل لتقليل هذا القلق كان فعالًا، حيث ساعد في تعزيز ثقة الطلبة بأنفسهم وشجع على مشاركة أكثر فعالية خلال الأنشطة الشفهية. وتُظهر هذه النتائج أن استخدام تقنية التعلم التعاوني في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يسهم في خلق بيئة صفية محفّزة وتفاعلية، ويُعزز من قدرات الطلبة على التعبير الشفهي.