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Using Cooperative Learning to Bridge the Achievement Gap in Oral Expression: The Case of 2nd Year EFL Students at Khenchela University

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in English Language and Education

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Name of the student:

Mr. Tarek Ghodbane

Date:../…/…

Signature:

Dedication

To My parents

To Khaled and Ali

To my sisters

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It is with honor that I seize this opportunity to give credit to the people that helped make this work possible. First I would like to express an immense gratitude to my supervisor and my favorite teacher of all time Prof. Hamzaoui-Elachachi Hafida for her invaluable support, guidance, and, especially, for her patience. Thank you for everything.

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Abstract

The notion of survival of the fittest has been adopted by many pro-folklore-teaching instructors who prefer to lead teacher-centered traditional individualistic classrooms. In such settings, students with the higher level of skills get the lion's share when it comes to participating and, thus, advancing. Such inequitable environments yield learning communities that are divided into two separate clusters, the high- and the low-achieving learners. The aim of the present study is to tackle the issue of the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the Algerian English as a Foreign Language classroom, specifically, in the context of oral expression, by employing a more equitable teaching method, which is cooperative learning. The study followed a true experimental, pretest-posttest, design with a, randomly assigned, sample of 44 second year English as a Foreign Language students from the University of Khenchela, Algeria. The intervention lasted for twelve weeks. The data gathering tools that were used to carry this investigation were, a pretest, a posttest, a students' questionnaire, and structured interviews with a sample of six English Language teachers at the University of Khenchela. Findings indicated that cooperative learning had a positive impact on the students' motivation and attitudes, and that the achievement gap was condensed in the experimental group after the intervention, whereas, in the control group, the traditional individualistic method was unsuccessful in reducing the gap between the high and the low-achievers. Hereupon, the researchers recommend the use of cooperative learning as a means to motivate the low-achievers, alter their negative attitudes toward learning into positive ones, and to help them keep up with their high-achieving partners.

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List of Acronyms

CAA Civil Aviation Authority

CAAi Civil Aviation Authority international

CL cooperative learning

CGH Control Group High-Achievers

CGL Control Group Low-Achievers

EGH Experimental Group High-Achievers

EGL Experimental Group Low-Achievers

CS Communicative strategies

CS conditioned stimulus

EALTS English for Aviation Language Testing System

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ES* True Effect-size

ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization

ID individual difference

L1 First language

LTAS Language Testing and Assessment Services Ltd

STAD Student Team-Achievement Divisions

TGT Teams-Games-Tournaments

UCS unconditioned stimulus

ZPD Zone of proximal development

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General Introduction

General Introduction

To this day, the issue of the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students still represents one of the major challenges in the Algerian university. Although a numerous of studies and efforts has been devoted for the sake of closing the discrepancy between individual students, still Algerian EFL teachers feel reluctant to base their teaching techniques on research and theory, and, instead, resort to the old folklore teaching methods, where "Recommendations to university instructors on how to teach seem more based on stories and promising ideas rather than on conclusions from rigorous research" (Johnson et al. 2013, p. 2).

Being stuck, to this day, with the traditional approach to learning which follows the notion "survival of the fittest" poses a threat to the Algerian university community, where it creates a gap between 'the fittest' and the less competent peers, leaving the teachers with the heavy burden of dealing with such dissonance and inequity in their classrooms.

For the small university community to function as a harmonious compound entity, it is necessary for the individual members, the students, to act upon their intrinsic social nature and to harmonize their energy and effort in order to achieve common goals together and reach a healthy state. For that very end, educational psychologists struggle to find teaching methods that benefit the students on both the academic and the social level.

Among the most recommended teaching methods that proved to be effective in enhancing students' achievement and in closing disparity and fostering equity between high- and the low-achieving students is cooperative learning, a teaching method where small groups of mixed-ability students coordinate their efforts in pursuit of a joint goal, celebrate joint success, and handle the responsibility of their own learning, as accountable individuals, as well as that of the others as interdependent partners. According to Johnson et al., the idea of getting students to teach and rely reciprocally on one another has been recommended since the old eras of, quintillion, Seneca, Johann Amos Comenius, and Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell, and since the

eighteenth century, where more than 1200 studies about cooperative learning were conducted in different spheres and contexts (Johnson et al. 2013).

A fair amount of promising research has been conducted for the sake of promoting such adequate teaching method in several domains of education. One of the domains in which cooperative learning shines is the field of language learning, which represents the context of our study, more precisely, English as Foreign Language (EFL).

Achieving language proficiency can only be reached through a comprehensible input and an adequate practice of the latter. However, in the teacher-fronted Algerian EFL classroom, not all students have both of these requirements, especially practice, where only some of them have the chance to be called on by the teacher and to take time to speak in the classroom without interruptions. This inequity can also be manifested through the lack of turn taking between high- and low-achievers, where in the best scenarios the low-achievers take shorter turns.

High-achievement in the oral expression exam correlates with one's possession of the required social and speaking skills and availing oneself of an equal amount of opportunity to practice that is adequate to sharpen those skills in order to be able to pull a high-level performance. Thus, treating the opportunity gap, which the individualistic method cannot control, is the first step to closing the gap in achievement between EFL students.

In the Algerian, teacher-fronted, EFL classroom, students feel pressure during oral English activities, where the low-achievers fear making mistakes and attempt to avoid negative feedback from their teacher and high-achieving colleagues. Another cause of the problem of the large achievement gap between students in oral expression is the ineffectiveness of the individualistic method in providing an equal opportunity for students to participate in the, skill-getting and the skill-using, activities and sharpen their speaking prowess.

Another factor that contributes to the disparity between students is the problem of status, which plays a main role in fueling inequity, where perceiving oneself to be

of low-status can really demotivate and disengage one, and being perceived as a low-status person by one's partners can lower the likelihood for one to be heard or encouraged to speak by one's peers. Therefore, eliminating factors that affect negatively, and contribute to the gap in, students' attitudes and motivation, like worries about self-esteem and negative expectancies, is inevitable in order to enhance students' engagement and narrow the achievement gap between students.

With regard to the study at hand, the aim is to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning, as an alternative to the traditional individualistic teaching method in bridging the achievement gap between high- and low-achievers in oral expression, and in fostering motivation and positive attitudes toward the oral expression activities among students.

The study is significant for three main reasons. First, it promotes awareness about the effectiveness of the cooperative learning method to the university staff, and to all the instructors who look for the betterment of the EFL classroom. Second**,** it can also be of interest to both, teachers and students, who believe in the positive effect of cooperation and teamwork on the quality and the enjoyability of the teaching/learning experience in the EFL classroom. The third reason is the fact that the notion of "every single student counts" (which bounds all students together, regardless, their skills' level) would encourage instructors to integrate cooperative learning activities into their syllabi, and benefit from the positive effects this method has on the classroom climate, students' interactions, and, more importantly, on the learners attitudes and motivation

The focus of this study is to accentuate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in closing the gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in oral expression and in increasing their motivation and altering their attitudes in the learning process. Drawing from that, the researchers seek to address these three research questions:

- How can well structured cooperative learning activities affect students' motivation in the oral expression classroom?
- What attitudes do students develop toward cooperative learning activities?

- How does cooperative learning affect the gap between high and low-achievers?

In order to carry this study, using the above research questions as the frame, the researchers hypothesize that:

- Cooperative learning helps to motivate passive EFL students in oral expression.
- Students show more positive attitudes when working in small cooperative learning groups.
- Cooperative learning can help to reduce the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in oral expression.

In order to examine the three hypotheses listed earlier, the researchers opt for a true experimental, pretest-posttest control group research design, where he employs a variety of data collection tools: a pretest and a posttest, before and after an intervention of twelve (12) weeks; a students' questionnaire, administered to a sample of forty four (44) subjects from a population of 120 second year EFL students at the university of Abbes Laghrour Khenchala-Algeria, where the sample was elected using a simple random assignment; and a teachers' interview conducted with a sample of six, randomly assigned, English language teachers from the same University. The data were processed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Regarding the structure of this work, the thesis is divided into five chapters: two chapters that represent the theoretical part, two chapters that represent the practical part, and one chapter for recommendations. In the first chapter the researchers devote two sections in attempt to shed light on two concepts which represent the two intervening variables of the study, attitude and motivation, by trying to explain some of the most influential theories and models that were propounded by pioneering theorists in the fields of attitude and achievement motivation study. The first section of the chapter expounds on the construct of attitude, where it provides a brief review of the latter as, a general concept, where it goes through definitions of attitude, the process of its formation, and attitude measurement methods, namely, the questionnaire and the interview; and, then, as a construct specific to the language learning sphere.

Finally the section devotes a space for the discussion of the relationship between language attitude and the achievement gap. The second section of Chapter One brings into sharper focus the concept of motivation where it provides details which include definitions of the different types of motivation as a general construct and as a concept specific to the language learning context. The second section also discusses correlations that involve motivation with the attitude, language achievement, and achievement gap, where it briefly goes through the expectancy-value model, developed by (Eccles, 1993), and Weiner's (1935) attribution theory.

The second chapter, Cooperative learning and Oral Expression, is divided into two main sections. The first section is intended to provide a brief review of literature about the concept of cooperative learning, its core elements, and its three main types. It also provides some insights into related theories and delves into major previous research about cooperative learning, in attempt to highlight the effectiveness of the latter as a teaching method. The second section of chapter two deals with oral expression. It provides a definition of speaking, details the process of the latter, and discusses some of the models of the activities that can be used to teach speaking in the EFL classroom, including cooperative learning. Finally, the effectiveness of cooperative learning in closing the achievement gap in oral expression is discussed.

The third chapter is devoted to the research design and data collection methods, where it gives the rationale behind the selected research methodology, the data gathering tools, and the methods of data analysis, then, it gives a detailed description of the intervention.

The fourth chapter represents the fieldwork, where it deals with the data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. First, the chapter deals quantitatively with the data gleaned through the pretest and the posttest, where it details the methods that are used in measuring and interpreting the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental and the control group separately. After dealing with tests' results, the second section focuses on the data obtained from the questionnaire, where all items are analyzed separately and the

quantitative data are displayed in pie charts, then an interpretation of the results is provided. Similarly, the third part of Chapter Four follows the same structure, where it provides a qualitative analysis and an interpretation of the data gathered by way of the teachers' interview. At the end, data obtained from all three research tools are combined and discussed altogether in order to address the three hypotheses of our study.

The fifth and the last chapter provides suggestions based on the results of the study. In this chapter, the researchers provide some tips and recommendations for the oral expression teachers who will to implement cooperative learning in their classrooms. Through this chapter, the researchers also attempt to bring into light some of the essential elements to build a healthy university community through the implementation of cooperative learning, where he tries to turn attention to concepts like, esprit-de-corps, positive interdependence, and status equalization.

CHAPTER ONE: Attitude and Achievement Motivation

1.1 Introduction

Social studies, chiefly, those pertaining to language learning have always emphasized the importance of factors such as Motivation and interest in orienting the learning process and have always stressed their effects on the students' achievement. As later research develops another variable started to gain more and more attention, where its influence in almost every field of social psychology was undeniably powerful. This factor is attitude, which can be defined as "…a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (Allport, 1935). Despite the complexity of the concept, many endeavors by psychologists led to a better understanding of attitudes where each scholar gave his own definition. The first section of this chapter provides a deeper understanding of attitude, its different definitions, and the growth of attitude theories on the timeline of social science. It, also, briefly sheds light on attitude development, attitude measurement methods, and finally provides a brief definition of the concept of language attitude and its relationship with language achievement and the achievement gap

The second section of this chapter deals with motivation, another concept that is regarded as one of the main prerequisites of learning, without which learners would suffer the lack of activeness and the unwillingness to commit to their learning. The second section discusses the concept of language learning motivation, where it, first, provides a definition of motivation, and then deals with some of the motivational theories that stem from different disciplines and standpoints. The second section, also, makes a distinction between the different types of motivation, and, finally, discusses the latter with respect to the sphere of language learning and attempts to explain the relationship between motivation, attitude, and language achievement, as well as the relationship between motivation and the achievement gap.

1.2 Attitude

In the field of educational psychology, attitude is one of the most complex concepts which overlaps and can be confused with other related constructs like opinions and beliefs. The current section attempts to define attitude in relation to other terms, where it starts with a brief narrative of the evolution of attitude studies, then discusses the development of attitude, attitude measurement methods, and finally discusses attitude within the context of language learning.

1.2. 1 The Birth of Attitude Studies

Through the timeline of the field of psychology, interest in the study of attitude went through episodes of change in terms of interest level, as attention toward the construct changed over time, where it increased in a period and plunged in another. Mcguire (1985, p. 135) divided these periods into what he calls "three peakings" and this idea inspired Crano and Prislin's (2008, p. 3) brief story of attitude's ebb and flow, where they stated that:

> The first peaking, in the 1920s and 1930s, reflected social psychology's concern with the fundamental nature of attitudes and their measurement. The second peaking, which occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, was focused on factors that affected attitude change. The third peaking, from the 1980s and (McGuire predicted) into the 1990s, was focused on attitude systems, a 'structuralist surge' that focused on the 'content, structure, and functioning of attitude complexes.

Figure 1.1 provides a visual of these three stages of the change of interest in the study of attitude.

After a more recent evaluation of changes of psychologists' interest in attitude study, Crano and Prislin (2008, p. 4) added a forth peaking to the three ones proposed by Mcguire, which they called the modern era, where according to them, this era was fueled by:

three important movements: the development of dual process models, which absorbed the energies of a considerable fraction of the field for a number of years;

the revitalization of the field that followed Moscovici's (1980, 1985) seminal work on the persuasive power of minorities (Crano, 2000); and a new focus on the implicit measurement of attitudes

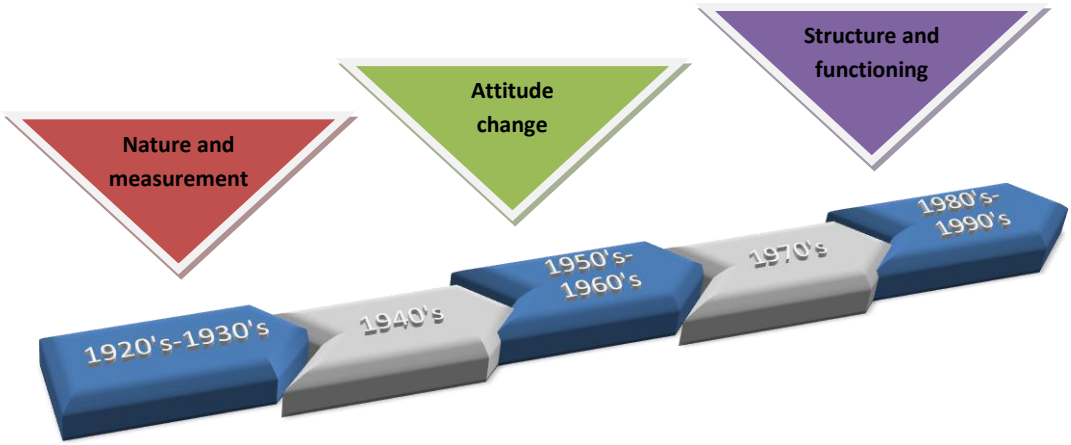


Figure.1.1. The change of interest in attitude study through time

1.2.2 The Definition of Attitude and Related Concepts

Nowadays, the term attitude is quite common among people and it is used to describe any favorable or unfavorable behavior. However, the scientific meaning is far from that used in the English slang (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). A dive into the history of the usage of the word "attitude" leads us to its original meaning, which is: "a person's bodily position or posture" (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 7). To support their claim, Oskamp and Schultz (2005) used the example of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta H.M.S. Pinafore (Gilbert, 1932, p. 31, as cited by Oskamp & Schultz, 2005) as it is demonstrated in figure 1.2.

In this example, the term attitude refers to the, British Tar's, stance or body position (which is not the concern of our study). However, in the scientific context, the word attitude constitutes the position of the mind toward something or someone. Even though it seems easy to define attitude, such vague definition cannot describe such a complex construct, in fact, many scientists attempted to define attitude and this only led to confusion, but, still, some overlapping has occurred between some researchers' views on the matter

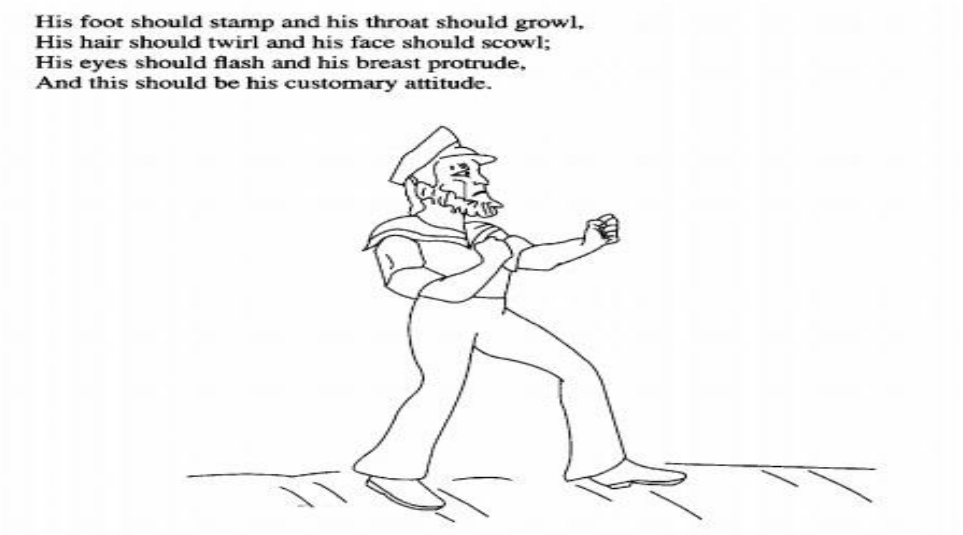


Figure.1.2. A British tar's stance (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005).

What contributed to the difficulty in finding a unanimous definition for attitude is the language used by researchers, where each one of them used different wording which caused confusion and a lack of clarity making it difficult to separate between attitude and different concepts such as opinion. Also, the fact that each researchers described attitude according to a different context generated different models of attitude and made it seem impossible to find a unanimous way to define the concept.

One famous description of attitude is that provided by Thurstone (1929) who, from a behaviorist point of view, regarded it as a sheer "affect" which either lets one approach (like) or avoid (fear) doing something. A similar definition is that of Bem (1970) where he states: "Attitudes are likes and dislikes" (p. 14). Other researchers such as Doob (1947) regarded attitude as part of the learning theory which represents the person's evaluation of his environment, the learned material and the teacher. This evaluative dimension of attitude was proposed by Rhine (1958). Rhine's definition of attitude involves not only the evaluative dimension, but also a "knowledge aspect" which represents what the person knows about the subject or the person he/she is holding the attitude about, and an "experience aspect" which represents the person's previous evaluation of something or someone in a particular situation, which affects his/her behavior when it comes to dealing

with similar situations in the future. A good example could be of a new English language student who has never been to an English class before. This person does not have knowledge about what studying English is like nor does he/she have enough experience to develop an attitude toward learning English. After a few months of learning English, gaining knowledge, and evaluating a learning experience, He/she can now hold an attitude about learning English, which may last for years.

According to Johnstone and Reid (1981), the reason why an attitude may last for a long time period is the fact that, attitudes are stored in the brain, specifically, in the long term memory, the very part responsible for storing knowledge, where the latter is, indeed, not synonymous with "attitude" and neither are concepts such as: Beliefs, values, or opinions (Oraif, 2007). As an attempt to clarify the distinction between these confusing concepts, in her PhD thesis, Oraif (2007) proposed a model which represents a hierarchy that shows the formation of attitude and it's relation to knowledge, beliefs, and values (figure 1.3).

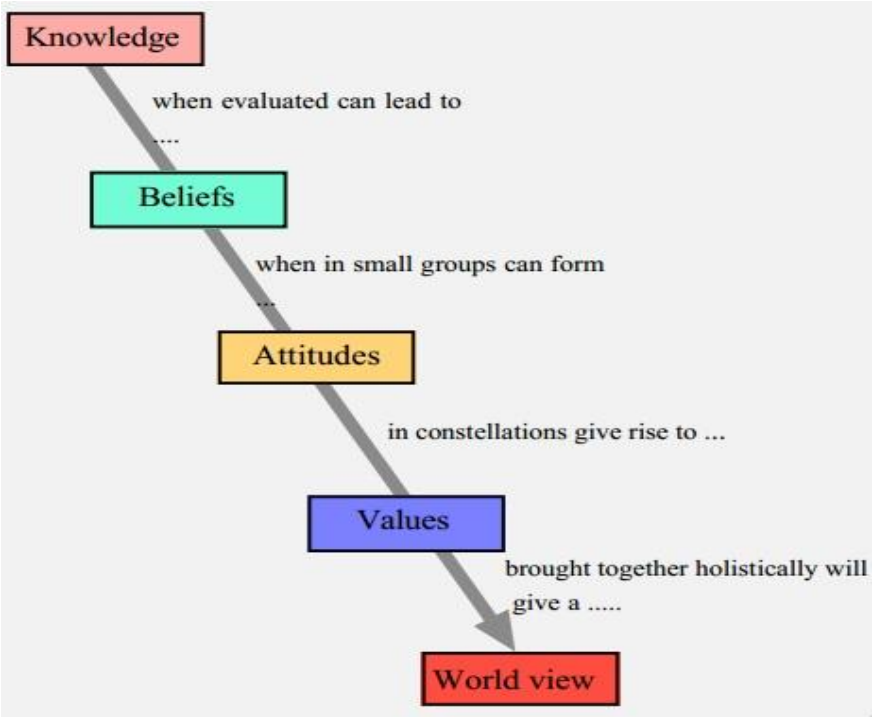


Figure.1.3. Attitude and Related constructs (Source: Oraif, 2007)

According to Oraif (2007), the basis to forming beliefs, attitudes and values toward something is knowledge about the target. As shown in figure 1.3, it seems that the formation of beliefs depends on a previous knowledge about a certain object or about the experiences from doing a certain activity. If we now go back to our hypothetical case of the English language student, the student's knowledge about learning the English language with a bit of experience can yield a set of beliefs about, for example, the usefulness of the mastery of the English language in the future, negative beliefs about the learning environment, or, even, negative thoughts concerning more specific areas like grammar. These sets of beliefs represent the units to building an attitude toward learning the English language which can snowball into values and, ultimately, into a world view. A remarkable thing here is, the fact that the notion of the existence of an evaluative dimension to attitude in this recent model (Oraif, 2007), only shows how influential and accurate is Rhine's (1958) view of Attitude.

Another construct which might be difficult to separate from, and maybe one of the most closely related concepts to, attitude is the term "opinion", where McGuire (1969, p.152) described the close relation between the two words as: "names in search of a distinction, rather than a distinction in search of a terminology". According to Oskamp and Schultz (2005), opinions can be compared to beliefs and not attitudes, for, the concept of attitude seems to be larger than a set of sheer cognitive judgments and evaluations, which in theory, represent one aspect of the larger tripartite construct we refer to as attitude, however, the term opinion is still being used synonymously with attitude especially in the field of survey studies.

1.2.3. Development of Attitude

An attitude cannot occur without the person interacting in a direct or an indirect fashion with the attitude object (be it another person, a material or an idea). Since attitude is considered to have a tri-componential structure, it seems fair to say that the formation of it takes the development of all or, at least one, of the three elements mentioned before: the cognitive, the affective, and the conative aspect. In fact, the formation of attitude might take, a mere, exposure to the object which,

when repeated, not only stimulates the occurrence of attitude, but, also, aggrandizes it more after each episode takes place (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005), especially, when the person is being stimulated subliminally (Zajonc, 2001).

An intensely influential factor that helps in forming attitude is the parents. At an early age, the child has no previous knowledge about his surroundings and the first, if not the only, source for him to learn the basic things about his environment is his first acquaintances, his parents. Normally, the child begins to learn by repeating what his parents say and imitating their actions (behavior) and this way of learning involves more than just a superficial mirroring of their behavior but, also, a modeling of the same attitudes held by the parents toward a certain object. A good example to illustrate can be a parent showing an attitude toward a cat and motivating the infant to hold the same (favorable) attitude toward it: "Nice kitty. Kitty won't hurt you. Pet the kitty" (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 168), here, by telling the child that the cat will not hurt him, this knowledge input, will encourage him to have positive beliefs (cognitive) about the kitty. After the experience of petting the kitty, positive feelings (affective) might develop here, leading the child to behave in a positive manner toward cats in the future (conative) and, regardless, which of these components (the cognitive, the affective, and the conative element) is predominant, the formation and the growing of attitude (toward the cat) are certain.

Concerning the cognitive basis for the development of attitude, the fact that the involvement of a medium like parents or friends can contribute to the fostering of attitude to, relatively, the same extent as direct experiences, shows that a direct contact with the object of attitude is not necessary, since, one can get information and learn from other persons who happened to have had an experience in, for example, the target domain of study, or with the target person (Oraif, 2007) and depending on the person's feeling (whether positive or negative), willingness to engage in a direct relationship with the object projects his/her behavioral attitude (conative). This idea of developing an attitude based on an evaluation of an

information input, springs from what cognitive scientists refer to as Information integration**.**

Based on what was mentioned so far, the idea of "cognitive element" and an "evaluative dimension" implies that the formation of attitude can be the result of an evaluative thinking about the object or a learned lesson about something after going through a direct experience with it. In other words, developing an attitude toward something means one has learned something about it.

According to Walther (2002), the process of attitude formation is similar to any simple learning process. Following the same idea, in their notable work "Attitudes and Opinions", Oskamp and Schultz (2005) compared the formation of attitude to the paradigm of classical conditioning, proposed by Pavlov, where they argued that, attitude toward an object is produced in the same way a response is produced toward a stimulus in the classical conditioning process. This means that, the person's affective attitude resembles the dog's conditioned response (salivation) to the stimulus (the sound of the bell ringing). A more simple way to put it is by using the example provided by Oskamp and Schultz (2005, p. 176):

> …We might consider being knocked down roughly as the UCS, which would automatically produce negative, unhappy feelings in a child. If this occurs every time the child is with a particular dog, the dog will soon become a CS, and seeing it even without being knocked down will produce negative feelings (an attitude).

Here, the UCS is shorthand for Unconditioned stimulus, which represents the knock-down hit the child receives, toward which he/she will develop certain bad feelings of anger or sadness (Affect). After being hit every time he/she sees the dog (the CS which represents the conditioned stimulus) the child starts to form the same attitude (feelings) toward the new attitude object (the dog) as a result of associating the unpleasant feelings to the presence of that certain dog. This attitude toward the dog may develop into a generalized attitude toward similar attitude objects, just as it

is the case with any established Stimulus-response association. This principle is referred to as Stimulus Generalization.

As explained before, attitudes can be reinforced and strengthened through repeated exposure. Similar to this is Skinner's operant conditioning, where, instead of using a stimulus to cause a certain behavior (conative), the experimenter waits until that certain behavior happens out of the child's free will and then reinforces it by a reward as stimulus. If for example, a teacher rewards his pupil every time he/she says "Jews are filthy" with a verbal praise or a piece of candy, here, the pupil is encouraged to say "Jews are filthy" more often, which might develop into an attitude toward Jews in the future.

After going through the aforementioned ideas about attitude development, as a concluding idea, it seems acceptable to state that the easiest way to understand the formation of attitude is to reflect on Reid's (2006) view of the concept, where he regards it as a concoction of three components (where each component can be the basis for the construction of attitude):

1. A knowledge about the object: the beliefs, ideas component (Cognitive).

2. A feeling about the object: like or dislike component (Affective).

3. A tendency-toward-action: the object component (Behavioral). (Reid, 2015, p. 7).

1.2.4. Measuring Attitudes

For the aim of measuring attitudes in a systematic way, researchers have developed different, context-dependent models and scales. Attitudes can be expressed in direct forms such as opinion statements, responses to a questionnaire, or can be quoted from an interview (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). As means for the collection and measurement of such concept, there exist two main instruments that are commonly used in social study research, which are to be discussed immediately in this section: questionnaires and interviews.

In the field of social, quantitative, research, "questionnaire" seems to be the term used by the majority of researchers when referring to any set of written questions handed to respondents to answer by themselves (Dornyei, 2003). However, according to Dornyei (2003), the term is not always accurate, for, what we refer to as a "questionnaire" might not always contain items and requests that end with a question mark. On the other hand, not every sheet that contains questions is a questionnaire, and the difference between a questionnaire and any other form, like a test paper, lies behind the purpose of each instrument and the variables they target. A further explanation is provided by Dornyei (2003, p. 7):

> A test measures how well someone can do something. In contrast, questionnaires do not have good or bad answers; they ask for information about the respondents (or 'informants') in a non-evaluative manner, without gauging their performance against a set of criteria or against the performance of a norm group. Thus, although some commercially available questionnaires are actually called 'tests,' these are not tests in the same sense as achievement or aptitude tests.

According to Dornyei (2003), questionnaires are used to collect, either, factual, behavioral, or attitudinal data, where, (1) factual data represent information about the respondents, like, age, race or gender; (2) behavioral data refer to respondents' answers about their current or previous actions; and (3) attitudinal data include information about respondents' attitudes, beliefs, values, and interests.

A well constructed questionnaire can be very useful for data collection. In fact, the reason behind the popularity of such a tool among social scientists is the fact that, questionnaires have many advantages compared to other data collection instruments (like interviews). Some of these advantages are: (1) less time-consuming, where a session may last, no more than, an hour; (2) requires less effort from the part of the researcher, as it can be administered to a captive audience, with the researcher explaining a few ambiguous terms and awaiting for the respondents to return the sheets; (3) Cost-effective, where, for example, the administration of the

questionnaire can be done via email, saving the money that would be spent on transportation, unlike the case of face-to-face interviewing (Dornyei, 2003).

The second predominant research instrument in the field of attitude qualitative research, which is the interview, plays a similar role as questionnaires do in the qualitative studies (Dornyei, 2003), However, interviews, require the researcher's involvement in live interactions with the interviewee, and this very advantage is what makes interviews more effective, compared to questionnaires when it comes to collecting subtle information, such as, people's opinions or emotions (Denscombe, 2003).

Even though it might seem like any ad hoc conversation, an interview is in fact a structured conversation that has a purpose, is guided by a specific knowledge about the studied phenomenon (Kvale, 1996) and "is fraught with hidden dangers and can fail miserably unless there is good planning, proper preparation and a sensitivity to the complex nature of interaction during the interview itself." (Denscombe, 2007, p. 147)

There are three main types of interviews, which differ according to their level of control and structure: (1) structured interviews, which "involve tight control over the format of questions and answers" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 149), are guided by a schedule, and follow a rigid structure, where, the interviewer respects the question order and the conversation flows in an inflexible way; (2) semi-structured interviews, which are less structured, and both the, interviewer and the interviewee, are allowed to be more flexible, however, the questions are prepared in advance; and (3) unstructured interviews, which are the least controlled, the least formal, and require the least amount of interference from the interviewer, where the interviewee plays the role of an narrator and the interviewer's role is restricted to asking opening questions, listening, and giving feedback (Dornyei, 2007).

When designing a questionnaire or preparing an interview schedule, depending on which approach the researcher follows (quantitative or qualitative), there are two main question formats, the open-ended and the closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that do not restrict the respondent's

responses and allow him/her the freedom to answer according to his/her interest. This kind of open-choice questions elicits in-depth data and is more suitable for qualitative research (unstructured interviews). On the other hand, closed-ended questions are choice-fixed that limit the participant's response to one of a number of alternative answers. Closed-ended questions are generally used in quantitative research (questionnaires) where they can be transformed into numeric data, unlike, open-ended question, where it is a challenging task to score them or code them to be used on a scale (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). However, closed ended questions can, too, be criticized for the fact that they sometimes lead to bias and may encourage the respondents to choose answers that are favored by the researcher.

Concerning the matter of which type of questions to use (open-ended or closed-ended) a wiser choice is to combine both types, for they have complementary strengths and weaknesses. A good example of using both formats is the funnel sequence, where at the beginning of the interview or the questionnaire, the researcher introduces the topic using, more general, open ended-questions and gradually narrows it using, more specific, closed ended questions (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005).

1.2.5. Language Learning Attitude

Based on the previously discussed general attitude definitions, attitude in any given context can be defined as: same construct with a different object. Many researchers have used the general attitude definitions to describe the more specific "language attitude" where most of their definitions circled around the broad attitude key descriptions like, a 'favorable' or an 'unfavorable' response and an 'evaluative' reaction toward the object. Subsequently, language attitudes simply represent the person's evaluative responses to the target language and can be "distinguished from other attitudes by the fact that they are precisely about language" (Fasold, 1987, p. 148).

However, language attitude in itself represents a broad term that involves a sort of sub-attitudes toward a number of related sub-objects like, the target language and the community of its speakers (Rayan & Giles, 1982; Lasagabaster, 2004),

attitude toward language varieties or dialects, language learning, the learning situation, or related behavior (Baker, 1992). The relations between these variables make language attitude rather complex, where an overall favorable attitude toward the language does not necessarily mean that all the sub-attitudes toward all the sub-objects are favorable; the person can have a positive attitude toward a language variety and a negative attitude toward its speakers at the same time (Gardner, 1985).

Literature concerning language attitude provides a plethora of different definitions where each one is based on a different premise and springs from a distinct standpoint (behaviorist, mentalist, and in terms of language use and language community). Table (1.1) provides some of these language attitude descriptions derived from Coronel-Molina (2009, p. 2-9).

Table. 1.1. Definitions of Language Attitude

Researcher (s)	Year	Point of view	Definition
Fasold	1987	Behaviorist	…attitudes are to be found simply in the responses people make to social situations. (p. 148)
Jaspaert & Kroon	1988	Mentalist	"…a mental construct offering an explanation for consistency in Behavior." (p. 158)
Bradac	1990	Mentalist	Persons have attitudes toward language which are especially salient and influential in initial interactions. This means that various linguistic features trigger in message recipients' beliefs ('Her way of talking leads me to think she is a professor') and evaluations ('She is intelligent') regarding message senders. (p. 387)
McGroarty	1996	Mentalist	…attitude has cognitive, affective, and conative components (i.e., it involves beliefs, emotional reactions, and behavioral tendencies related to the object of the attitude) and consists, in broad terms, of an underlying psychological predisposition to act or evaluate

			behavior in a certain way (Gardner, 1985). Attitude is thus linked to a person's values and beliefs and promotes or discourages the choices made in all realms of activity, whether academic or informal. (p. 5)
Crystal	1997	Mentalist	The feelings people have about their own language or the languages of Others. (p. 125)
Knops and van Hout	1988	Language, language use, language community	…relevant to the definition of speech communities, to the explanation of linguistic change, language maintenance and language shift, and to applied concerns in the fields of intergroup communication, language planning and education. (p.1)
Saville-Troike	1989	Language, language use, language community	Attitudes are acquired as a factor of group membership, as part of the process of enculturation in a particular speech community. (p. 182)
Richards et al.	1992	Language, language use, language community	The attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language. (p. 199)

From the aforementioned definitions, it appears that language attitude involves the learner's predispositions toward: 1) the language itself, how important it is, and its social status (Richards et al., 1992); 2) the speakers of the language (beliefs about and interest in their culture); and 3) the language learning process,

which involves learning situations and events that occur during the activity or other factors such as the emotions and beliefs toward, for example, the teacher, or a certain language related behavior (Baker, 1992).

1.2.5.1. Attitude in the language Classroom

Attitude toward language, in a classroom setting, like any subject being learned, depends on a set of variables such as, the quality of the content being studied, the quality of the teacher, and the way the material is delivered (Reid, 1979). In other words, Language attitude is the student's evaluation of "what is to be taught and how it is taught" (p. 4). Attitude is considered an important factor that influences the student's orientation toward language learning. It is for this reason that literature and findings about attitude and attitude change need to be taken into consideration and applied by curriculum planners (Reid, 1979) as Lewis (1981, as cited in Baker, 19.., p. 9) states that: "any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected"

Using attitude models in a language learning setting is very useful and can help foster positive attitudes or alter existing negative ones, and an adequate knowledge about the attitude development and attitude change mechanisms provides the teacher with a better insight as to what teaching method should be used and what content should be selected or excluded from the lesson plan. A teacher who knows how students, consciously or unconsciously, form attitudes is an expert when it comes to how the content needs to be taught.

Being a competent teacher plays a crucial role in shaping the students' attitudes not only toward the source of the knowledge input (the teacher) but toward the information they receive as well. Characteristics of the teacher, as a source of the information input, determine his/her credibility in the eyes of the student, while, on the other hand, characteristics of the students as audience or recipients of the content, can also affect the believability and the likeability of the teacher and, subsequently, the students' interest to process the information (Oskamp & Schultz,

2005). In the field of persuasive communication this concept is called the communicator's credibility (Johnson & Scileppi, 1969).

In his attempt to explain the stages of attitude development in the educational context, Reid (2007) suggests a model that involves five main elements: 1) input, which pertains to the quality of the subject, its personal relevance to the individual learner, and the credibility of the teacher; 2) reception, which includes the learner's motivation and ability to receive the content; 3) current attitude position, which represents the central aspect and relates to the student's current beliefs about the subject; 4) Processing, which stands for the evaluative assessment of the content, internalization of the information, and expression of behavior; and 5) the new attitude position, which constitutes the gains of the learning process and the new altered way of making sense of the environment (see figure 1.4).

Language teaching methods must take into consideration the nature of attitude and target all of its aspects, the cognitive, the affective, and the behavioral one (Reid, 1978). Also, the attitude teaching material needs to be interactive because "in such materials, opportunity is provided for deep levels of involvement which will give scope for necessary internalization" (p. 36).

In 1973, khan and Weiss proposed a model that explains what variables affect the individual's attitude in the educational setting, where they provided a list of factors that, either, pertain to the individual learner, which are age, gender, socio-economic status, personality, and achievement; or pertain to the learning environment, such as classroom climate, curriculum input, instructional strategies…etc (see figure 1.5).

Two of the most important factors on the list are the teacher and the achievement variable. An ideal teacher is a credible source who carries not only knowledge about the language but also his/her attitude toward the language, where the latter affects the students' attitude and, subsequently, their achievement as a result of a supportive classroom climate created by the teacher, which, supports Hovland's (1957) claims that, promoting a good atmosphere for learners and

providing them with opportunities for an active participation can bring about attitude change.

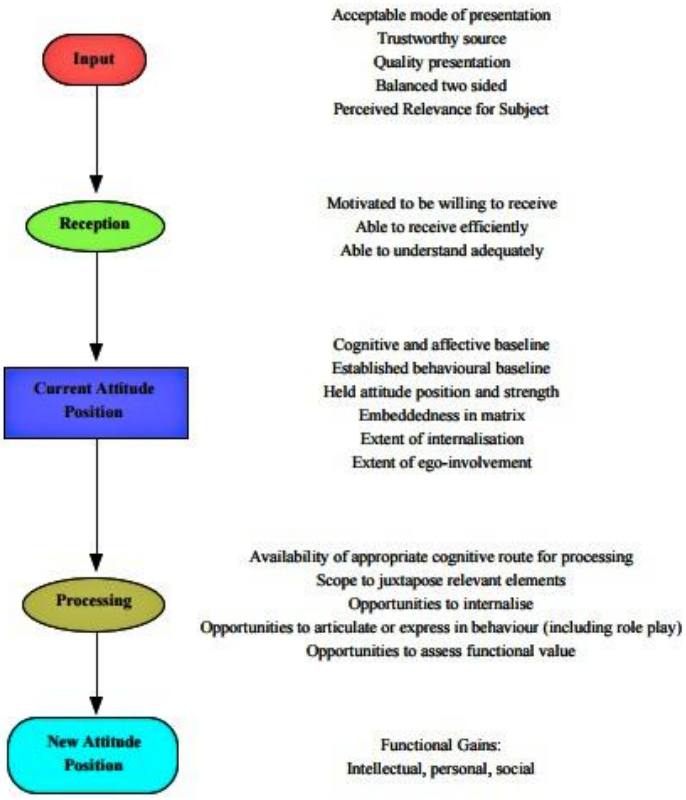


Figure.1.4. Stages of attitude change (Reid, 2007)

The relation between achievement and attitude is argued to be reciprocal (Christou et al., 2001), that is, students' perceived relevance of the subject and their beliefs about success in the task can affect either positively or negatively their achievement. At the same time, a high achievement in a certain task encourages the students to develop positive attitudes toward the subject and toward their capacities (self-esteem), and encourages them to engage more in similar tasks in the future (Schibeci, 1984).

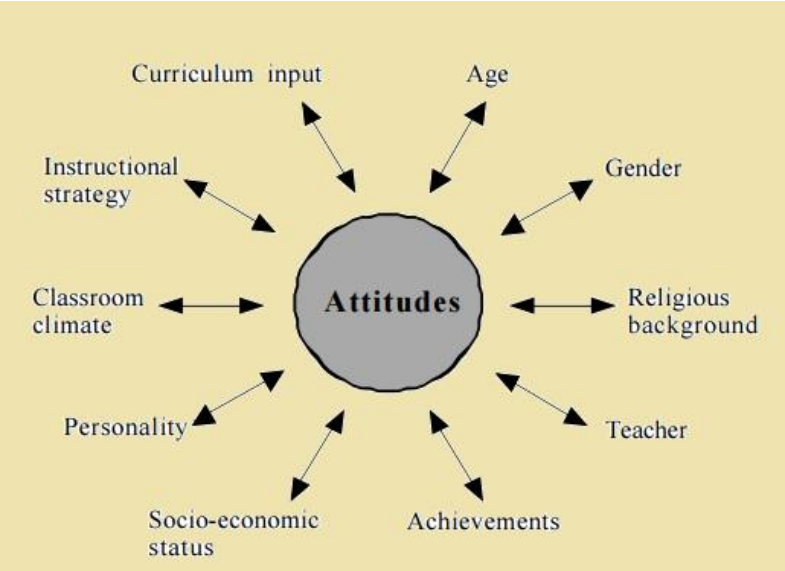


Figure.1.5. School attitude and associated variables (Khan & Weiss, 1973)

1.2.5.2. Language Attitude and Achievement gap

The existence of a correlation between attitude toward a language and achievement in language learning has been proved by a number of studies among which is the one conducted by Jordan (1941) where he measured the attitudes of 231 students toward five subjects which are mathematics, French, History, English, and geography. Results showed that there was a correlation between achievement in French and attitudes toward learning French, where the mean correlation represented the second highest (0.26) among the five subjects (Gardner, 1985).

Another study was the one conducted by Neidt and Hedlund (1967) who carried out a similar experiment and investigated the attitudes of university students in three subjects: English, German, and anatomy. After assessing attitudes repeatedly (five times) the results showed that all five correlations between attitudes toward learning German and achievement in German, which ranged between 0.30 and 0.33, were significant, whereas only two correlations were significant for English (0.13) and none of the correlations were significant for anatomy (Gardner, 1985). The conclusion made by Neidt and Hedlund was that, there is a relationship between attitude and achievement and that this bond is greater when it comes to the second language learning (German) compared to other contexts.

Here Gardner (1985, p. 43) contended that "it is reasonable to expect that some aspects of attitude are more highly related to achievement than others" where he supported his claim by findings of Randhawa and Korpan (1973) where they assessed correlations between achievement in French (final grades of 100 seventh and eighth grade students) and what they regard as the four factors of attitude toward learning French (tolerance, utilitarianism, aestheticism, and specific factor) where the factor of tolerance had the strongest correlation with achievement (0.57) and specific factor had the lowest one (0.26).

According to Gardner (1985) attitude toward learning a language can, itself, be influenced by a number of factors like gender, where he postulates that research in the matter shows that girls display more positive attitudes toward languages and are more successful in language learning than boys. Also factors like age and upbringing of the students evidenced to have an influence on the students' attitudes toward learning the language, however, the correlation between achievement and age did not directly involve age as a factor and was linked more to the fact that, as a language student grows older, early achievement in the target language affects later attitude toward learning it and consequently later achievement (Burstall, 1975).

Early research (60's-70's) concerning what language learning attitude aspects correlate more with achievement in the target language found attitude toward the language community to be correlated positively with language proficiency (Lambert et al., 1963; Mueller, 1971; Jacobsen and Imhoof, 1974), where Gardner and Smythe (1975a) found that:

> …students who drop out of second language study have a priori less favourable attitudes toward the other language community than those who continue language study, and that it seems possible that such differences could also characterize those who elect initially to either study or not study a second language (Gardner, 1985, p. 46)

Even though attitude toward the language and the language community seems to have a great impact on the achievement in the target language and are the

most common attitude factors, there are still more attitude aspects that are involved in the equation and can have an effect on the language learner's achievement as well. In order to assess the correlation between aptitude, attitude and language proficiency, based on the results of 33 studies and thus 33 samples with different ages and grade levels, Gardner (1985) assessed the correlations between five different attitude measures which were "attitude toward learning French, interest in foreign languages, attitudes toward French Canadians, evaluative reactions toward the French teacher, and evaluation of the French course" (Gardner, 1985, p. 47) and three aptitude or achievement indices which were adapted from Carroll and Sapon's (1959) Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) which are: words in sentences, spelling clues, and paired associates (Gardner, 1985). These eight measures were compared in terms of which of them were better correlates of nine different criteria which were self-rating criteria which included writing, understanding, reading, and speaking; Vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, grades, and behavioral intention.

The results showed that regarding the nine criteria, the two measures of attitudes toward learning French and interest in foreign languages "were consistently among top three correlates" (Gardner, 1985, p. 48) with the former standing out as either number one or number two correlate and the latter as either the second or the third best correlate.

For the self-rating criteria the highest ranking correlates were the three attitude predictors: attitude toward learning French, attitudes toward the French course, and interest in foreign languages. Regarding the test criteria of grammar vocabulary and comprehension, the highest correlates were attitudes toward learning French, words in sentences, and interest in foreign languages. For the criterion 'grades in French' the highest five correlates were a mixture of attitude and aptitude variables, which were attitudes toward learning French, interest in foreign languages, words in sentences, evaluation of the French course and paired associates (Gardner, 1985).

The information that this experiment adds to the current study is that some attitude measures correlate better than others with achievement. For example, if we

consider the highest correlate which is attitude toward learning French, it seems understandable to assume that French students who have positive attitudes toward learning French are more likely to achieve better than those who lack this variable or are driven by another type of attitude variable of, for example, attitude toward the French Canadian community, and since attitude measures proved to correlate better with language proficiency than do aptitude measures, it can also be drawn the conclusion that attitudes are more important than aptitude and are better predictors when it comes to achievement in the target language.

Based on that, the availability or lack of all or some of the five language attitude variable can determine the language student's achievement and the differences between the students in terms of these five attitude measures can lead to differences in achievement as Gardner (1985, p. 50) states that: "attitude measures account for a significant and meaningful proportion of the variance in second language achievement and that some attitude variables are more relevant than others". So an ideal high-achiever in language has a positive attitude toward learning the target language, is interested in foreign languages, has positive evaluations of the teacher and the language course, and has a positive attitude toward the language community. An important question that was raised by Gardner (1985) himself which is, "why attitudes are related to achievement?" is to be discussed in the next section which deals with the missing component that bonds these two concepts, which is motivation.

1.3 Achievement Motivation

The current section deals with another variable that has an undeniable influence on language learners' achievement, which is motivation. This section represents an endeavor to bring into light the concept of motivation where it provides a definition of the latter, discusses types of motivation and self-determination, and then the correlation between motivation, attitude, language achievement, as well as the correlation between motivation and the achievement gap.

1.3.1 Definition of motivation

Motivation, according to many researchers, represents the catalyst and the stream of zestful enthusiasm that motors someone to do something or pursue a specific end. It can also be considered as the outcome of a positive influence or motives that make someone interested in something or eager to do some sort of action. According to (Dornyei, 2001) it can also stand for the reason why people choose, persist and engage in a certain activity. However, whether motivation is a "cause" or an "effect" has been debated by theorists throughout history, where some researchers focused on the effect of motivation on the person's engagement in the action and some others focused on the effect of one's experiences on their motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2001). This remained the case until the two debating sides came to the conclusion that, intertwining both points of view would make more sense of such complex concept, and decided that there is a cyclical relationship between motivation and its outcome (Dweck, 1999) (be it negative or positive) as it is shown in figure 1.6.

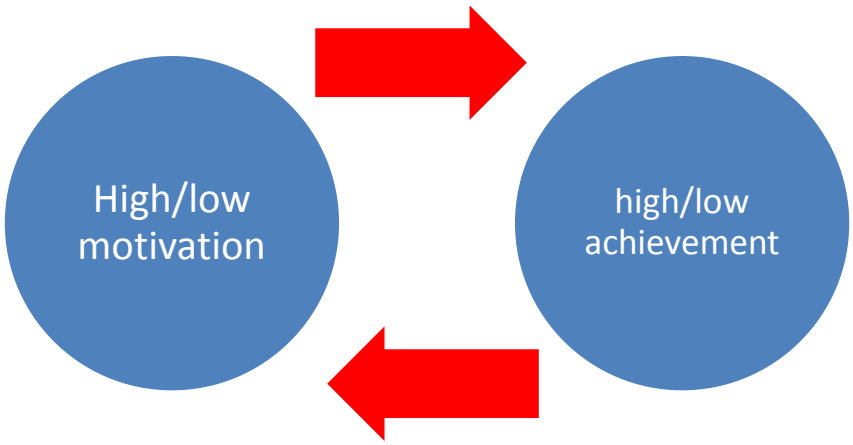


Figure.1.6. Motivation-achievement cycle adapted from (Dweck, 1999)

In the language learning context, we can say that a student is motivated when there is an increase in his/her tendency to learn and advance, which can be due to external factors (like a reward or punishment) or internal ones (like personal goals).

1.3.2 Types of Motivation and Self-determination

There are different types of motivation that vary according to the source of the factors influencing one to make a decision or undertake an action. The most

common categorization of motivation is intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation. Researchers say that if a person acts in a certain way out of an inner force, which might be referred to as enthusiasm, then, he is intrinsically motivated, whereas, he is considered to be extrinsically motivated if the will to do the action comes from external factors and influences. This subsection provides more details about these two opposing types of motivation and a brief description of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1992).

1.3.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation

We can say that one is intrinsically motivated, when he undertakes an activity for the sake of the activity itself, in other words, when his persistence does not come from a desire for a reward or as a product of external influences, but from a genuine enthusiasm that comes from within in a form of enjoyment, where, the activity in itself is the end to be reached. As Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 56) defined it:

> Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external products, pressures, or rewards.

However, according to Day and Berlyne (1971), the activity cannot possibly be considered as a stimulus in itself, but, rather, an instrument that can put one in a state (of enjoyment) which is, actually, the internal reward to be sought. This notion is known as the Premack Principle. The Premack Principle is a self-reward in the form of an enjoyable activity that the student chooses to be his recompense after completing a less enjoyable task (Covington, 1996), a good example is the one provided by Covington (p. 89) where the students were told: "first complete these 10 maths problems, then you may read the next chapter in the Star Trek adventure" where no tangible return and no reward is promised, except for more enjoyment.

Some signs of an intrinsically, motivated learner are endurance for tiredness, resistance for other drives, and an energized, organized flow (Koch, 1956). In the same vein, from a behaviorist view, intrinsic motivation, according to

(Montgomery, 1954), is considered as the result of an exploration drive, where one tries to discover novel things around him. Similarly, Myers and Miller (1954) suggested a drive to avoid boredom and Harlow (1953) suggested a manipulation drive and so many other researchers like Isaac (1962), Butler (1953) and Hendrick (1942) suggested, other drives like, sensory drive, a drive for visual exploration and the instinct to master, respectively.

This drive-naming approach to understanding intrinsic motivation was criticized by researchers like White (1959) and Hunt (1965) who argued that "exploratory" does not fit under the "drive" category for it does not have a consummatory response as it is with (actual drives like) the case of hunger (White, 1959). However, White added that this exploration drive can only turn one from a zestful state to a state of boredom for, according to him the reduction of the need for exploration can bring one into a state of inactivity and, thus, boredom which is, conversely, considered by Myers and Miller (1954) as the catalyst behind the need for exploration.

Intrinsic motivation, as stated by Harter (1983), comes from the person's need for attaining competence and effectance, and relates positively with one's beliefs about his competence. White's effectance motivation theory (1959) posits that one's intrinsic motivation comes from the desire to become competent and that this competence motivation is separate from any biological need and pertains only to the process of and the need for development. This theory is similar to Bandura's self-efficacy in the sense that they both accentuate the positive effect of perceived competence on the intrinsic motivation.

The main idea that comes to mind when speaking about intrinsic motivation is that, it is innate and does not take any external incentive to get the person to engage in the activity and, yet, diminishes if any external reward is used, which, totally, contradicts with the concept of extrinsic motivation. When one is intrinsically engaged in a certain activity, it means that the only justification for his engagement is his innate enthusiasm. In this case if the person receives a reward for completing this activity, then, a change in his view about the worthiness of the

activity starts to take place as a pursuit for the external reward starts to replace his intrinsically driven engagement where the latter starts to decrease (Bem, 1967; Carlson & Heth 2007; Deci, Ryan & Koestner, 1999). This situation is referred to as the over-justification effect which stems from Bem's (1967) self-perception theory, according to which, it can be said that, the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is antagonistic.

1.3.2.2. Extrinsic motivation

From a behaviorist view point, motivation can occur due to an external factor that persuades one to take part in an activity and which represents the "carrot" in case of an external reward or the "stick" in case of a punishment. This carrot-and-stick approach to motivation has been adapted by behaviorists where they focused on the macro aspects of motivation and the observable behavior. Extrinsic motivation can, simply, be defined as the antonym of intrinsic motivation. An extrinsically motivated engagement takes place when the actor is promised a, tangible, reward for completing the task. However researchers like Ryan and Deci (2000) argued that the relation between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can be balanced and that what might be considered an extrinsic incentive can be transformed and regulated into an intrinsic catalyst by internalizing extrinsic goals. This theory, which was developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), is called the self-determination theory (SDT).

Self-determination theory circles around the notion that it is possible for a person to internalize external factors and transform what is known as extrinsic motivation into a personal, internalized, motivation. According to Deci and Rayan (1992), this mechanism can only be possible if the three basic needs: Autonomy, relatedness and competence are satisfied (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011) (see figure 1.7).

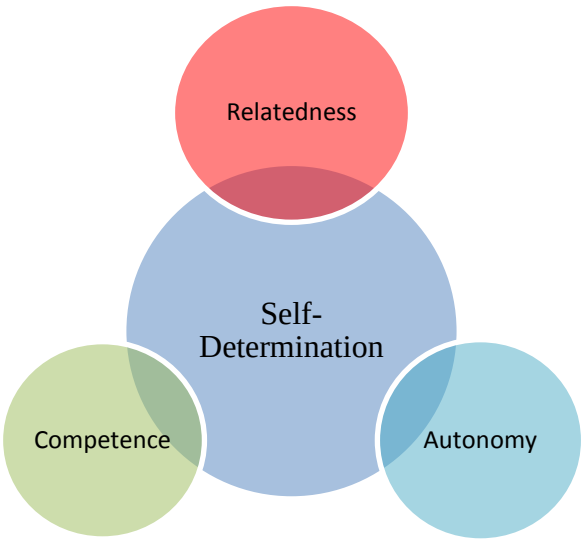


Figure.1.7. Self-determination needs

These needs can only be fulfilled in a positive and supportive environment where the learner feels less controlled and able to stir his/her own wheel, connected to the social environment and feels safe around his/her classmates, and also, competent and able to keep up with the same pace as his/her peers. With all these factors available, the learner's creativity and engagement increase, and if combined with positive feedback and attributions, the task can generate more intrinsic enthusiasm and foster more appreciation for the subject matter, especially when the learner's engagement results in better achievement and grades (McEvoy & Covington, 2000).

1.3.3. Language Learning and Motivation

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), two of the greatest pioneers in the field of language learning motivation, a person's need to learn a language springs from two different kinds of orientation, the orientation to master the language for the end of facilitating the attainment of a certain goal, and the orientation to "identify with members of another ethno-linguistic" and to acquire "their style of speech and their language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 135).

The first type of orientation where the language learner aims to master the language because such command of the language helps him/her reach another, pragmatic, goal (which might, for example, be a better job) is called the instrumental orientation. The second type of language learning orientation where

the learner seeks to acquire not just the language knowledge, but also the patterns and subtle behaviors of its native speakers or as Lambert (1959, p. 271) in his own words describes as: "the willingness to be like valued members of the language community" is referred to as the integrative orientation.

In his notion of integrative orientation, Gardner stresses the importance of affiliation with the community of the second or foreign language speakers, where he argued that one would not learn a language unless he/she liked the group of its native speakers (Gardner, 2001). In his definition of motivation to learn a language Gardner (1985) also added another important element which is attitude toward the language itself.

Although it did know a huge success and approval from the research community, Gardner's idea of integrative orientation did receive criticism, and doubts raised concerning the idea of an existing, direct, correlation between integrative orientation to the language community and success in learning, where, even Gardner (2001a, p. 16) himself stated that: "there is very little evidence, even in our own research, that orientations are directly associated with success in learning a second language".

Orientations according to Gardner represent the goals and the reasons behind one's willingness to learn the language and the factors that induce and direct motivation whether in a utilitarian way (instrumental) or in an interpersonal way (integrative). Motivation is regarded as goal-directed factor while orientation represents the reason why someone chose to pursue a certain goal, where according to Gardner the more internalized "integrative" the orientation, the higher are the levels of motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Another distinction between motivation and orientation is the fact that "on its own, orientation reflects only a goal which may lack motive power" (Gardner, 1985, p. 55), whereas, motivation represents the rest, i.e., the power of the motivational intensity, the desire to learn the language, and positive attitudes toward learning the language

1.3.3.1. Gardner's Integrative Motive

Expanding on the idea of integrative orientation, Gardner (1985) developed the concept of Integrative Motive, which represents a combination of three elements: integrativeness, attitudes toward learning situations, and motivation (Dornyei, 2001).

Integrativeness: This component represents the willingness to interact with the target language community (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) where, Gardner defines it as the willingness to be, "psychologically", like the speakers of the language. According to Dornyei and Clément (2001) this component is considered as the most important of all the integrative motive elements, and that integrativeness is the most powerful factor which plays quite the crucial role in "determining the language choice and the general level of effort students intended to invest in the learning process" (as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2001, p. 43).

According Gardner's (1985) model, the element of integrativeness includes three constituents: Integrative orientation which was defined above, interest in learning the foreign language, and attitudes toward the target language community (see figure 1.8).

Attitudes toward the Learning Situations: This constituent refers to the student's reaction to the target language and, based on Oppenheim's (1992) definition of attitude, how it can be acquired and modified by reacting to the attitudes of others, where Gardner divided them into two types of attitudes: attitudes toward the teacher and attitudes toward the language course.

Motivation: According to Gardner, motivation to learn a foreign language, which in this model is directed by the integrative motive, represents a set of three factors, which are: The desire (or the will) which represents the cognitive aspect of motivation to learn the language, the effort or motivational intensity, and finally, attitudes toward learning the target language which constitute the affective aspect (as shown in figure 1.8).

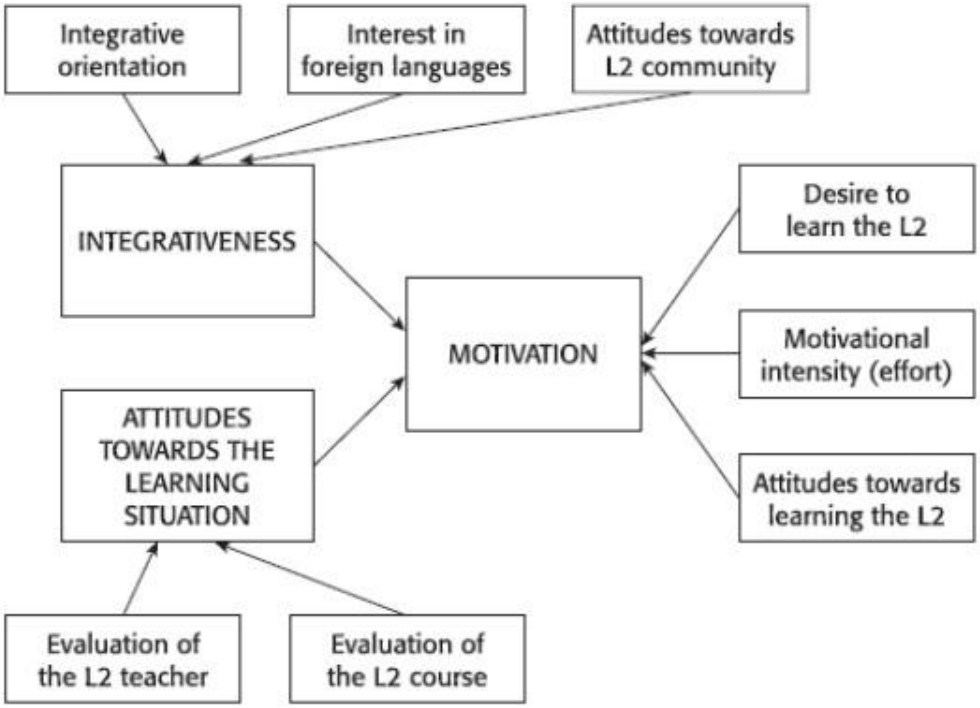


Figure.1.8. Gardner's model of the integrative motive (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011)

1.3.3.2. Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Motivation

Based on the works of (Lambert, 1974; Carroll, 1963; Bloom, 1976; Glaser, 1978; Burner, 1966) Robert Gardner (1985) developed a socio-cultural model that summarized the process of language learning and which relies on motivation as its backbone. This model of language learning comprises of multiple variables that are labeled under four categories: The social milieu, individual differences, language learning context, and the language learning outcome.

The social milieu category includes the element of cultural beliefs of the learner. The second category, individual differences, includes four elements which are classified as cognitive (two elements) and affective elements (two elements). The cognitive elements are intelligence; i.e., how well one can learn the language in a certain amount of time, and the language aptitude, which refers to the learner's linguistic abilities. The affective elements, on the other hand, are motivation, which includes attitudes toward the language learning (Gardner, 1985), and situational anxiety, which is regarded as a negative emotion toward the language learning situation.

The third category in this model deals with the language learning acquisition context, where, according to Gardner (1985), can be divided into two kinds of settings: The formal and the informal setting. The final and the fourth category in the socio-educational model is the learning outcome. There are, in fact, two different types of language learning outcome: The linguistic and the non-linguistic outcome. The linguistic outcome pertains to the language proficiency like, for example, fluency and vocabulary, while the non-linguistic outcome refers to affective gains from the language learning experience, such as, attitudes and values of the linguistic group (see figure 1.9).

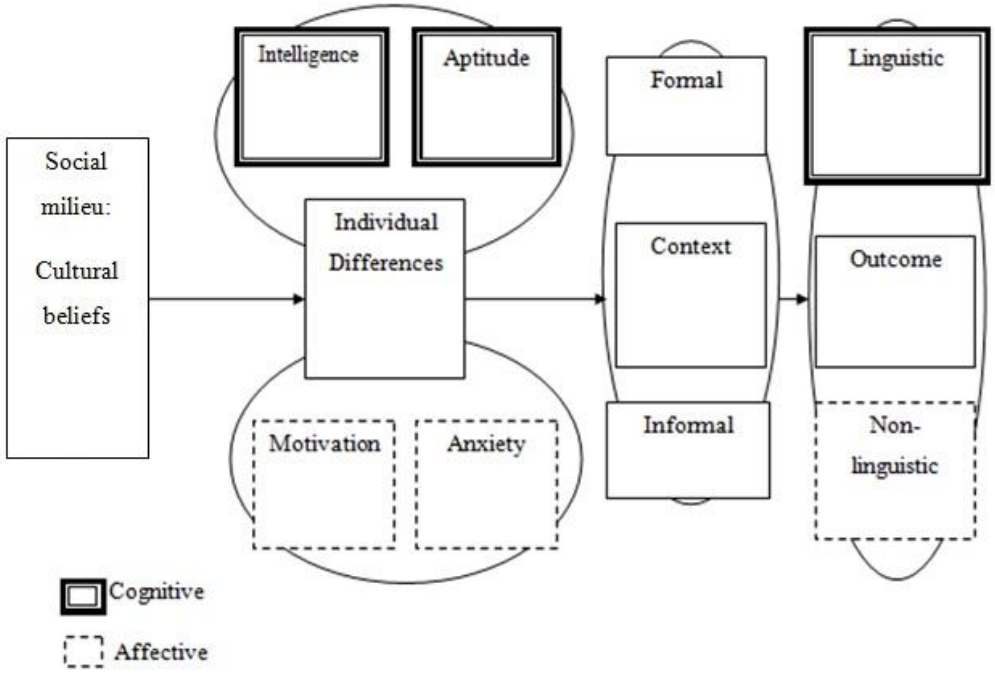


Figure.1.9. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of second language acquisition (adapted)

1.3.3.3. Motivational Conglomerates

The idea behind the concept of motivational conglomerates is that one cannot judge a learner by a single separate disposition (Webb, 2003), but rather, by the overall construct of the different motivational dimensions (cognitive and affective). Based on this notion, Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) proposed the idea of "motivational conglomerates" which encompasses four main components: Interest, motivational flow, motivational task processing and future self-guides.

Interest: In this model, unlike Gardner's, Interest includes both, cognitive elements which pertain to student's engagement and affective elements which stands for positive emotions (Hidi & Renninger, 2006), a larger concept indeed. According to Renninger (2009), interest in content develops with experience and can change according to the person's feelings, gained knowledge and his interaction with the learning environment (as stated in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) Also, interest represents the psychological state of the learner during engagement and the motivation behind his reengagement in the content (Renninger & Hidi, 2006).

Motivational Flow: A concept coined by Csikszentmihalyi (1988) which refers to a situation of an intense focus on, and a fully-fledged engagement in, the activity. Motivational flow can also be defined as the total involvement in a desirable activity which absorbs the student and, in extreme cases, causes one to lose track of time (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

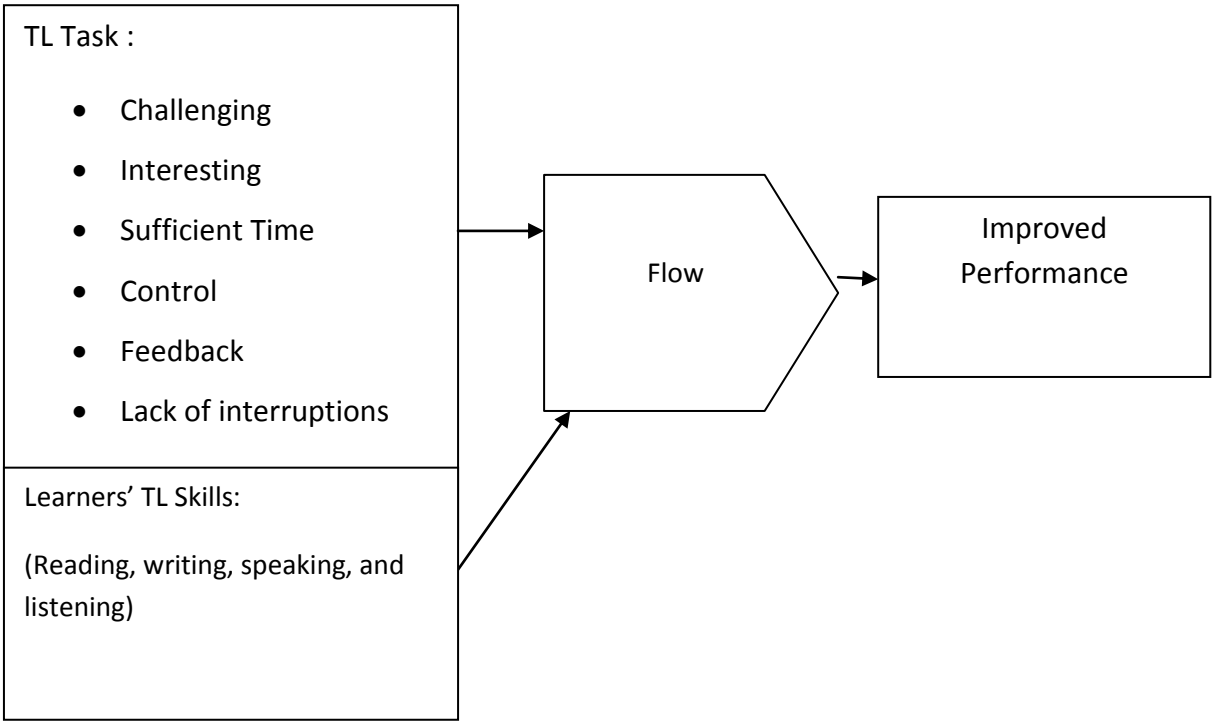


Figure.1.10. Egbert's (2003) Model of Flow in second language acquisition

The premise of the flow theory is the intrinsic self-rewarding, which opposes the traditional notion of extrinsic rewarding (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), where the language task either supports or decreases the student's flow. The more the

interesting and the challenging the task the more the students engage, and the less the interruptions the more they are focused on the activity. In a language learning flow model that was suggested by Egbert (2003), the relation between the task quality, learner's skills and flow is a cycle (see figure 1.10).

Motivational Task Processing: This element deals with the way students handle the task and which motivational strategies they use when engaging in the activity. Dornyei (2003) proposed a model that explains how students process and evaluate their progress during the task, which consists of three constituents: Task execution, appraisal and action control.

The relationship between these three components is circular (Dornyei & Tseng, 2009), where, during the task execution, the student's judgment or appraisal of the value of the task, can affect or trigger the action control techniques where the latter can accelerate the execution process (see figure 1.11).

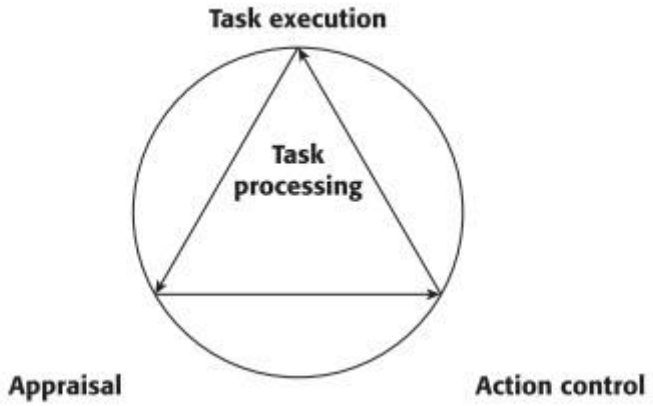


Figure.1.11. Motivational task processing model (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011)

Future Self-Guides: The importance of the future self-guides is that they prevent "cold cognition" where the learner's emotional system is activated (MacIntyre et al., 2009a) which, according to them, can influence and boost motivation and intrigue action.

1.3.4. Motivation, Attitude and Language Achievement

According to Gardner (1985) in order for a person to be considered motivated to learn a language, he/she must display four motivational components:

goal-directedness, the desire to achieve the goal, an expended effort to reach the goal, and a positive attitude toward achieving the goal (see figure 1.12). However, since the component of goal cannot be observed, measured, or compared among individuals, it is understandable that studies assessing language motivation need to rely more on the other three aforementioned motivational elements which according to Gardner (1985, p. 51) can be "reflected in the measures motivational intensity, desire to learn French, and attitude toward learning French" where the effort to achieve the goal is reflected in the motivational intensity, the desire to achieve the goal is reflected in the desire to learn the target language, and the favorable attitude toward achieving the goal is reflected in the learner's attitude toward learning the target language.

For a language learner to be motivated to learn the language, the motive behind him/her being in the language classroom needs to be related to a goal that is related to learning the target language. On this matter, Gardner (1985) regarded explanations that do not involve goals associated with learning the language, like 'I'm studying the language because I have to', as a sign of a lack of motivation.

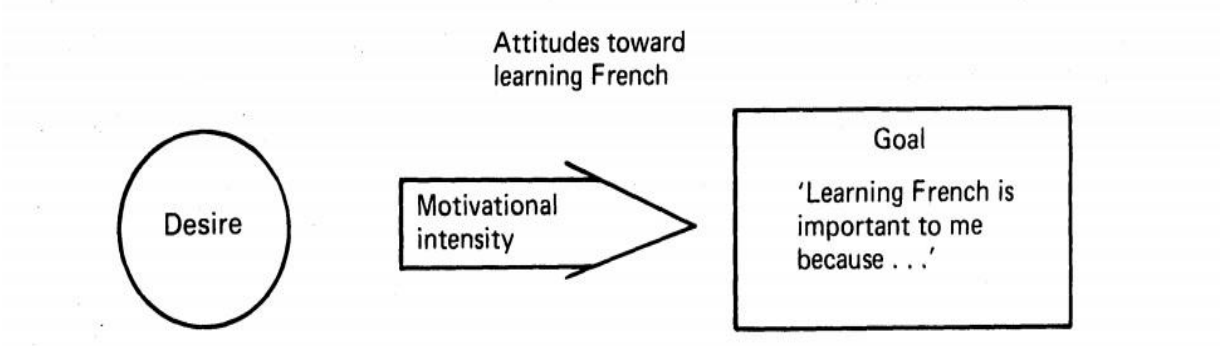


Figure.1.12. Gardner's (1985) Language learning motivation

An early study about the influence of motivation on the language student's tendency to either, persist and continue learning the language or drop out showed that the three motivational measures attitude toward learning the language, motivational intensity, and desire to learn the language were on the top of a list of variables that predicted persistence and distinguished drop-outs from those who continue learning the language (Clément et al., 1978). Other language motivation studies revealed that orientation is also an active component which influences the

mindset of the motivated language learner, where Gardner (1985) considered orientation as the reason behind learning the target language ('Learning French is important to me because…' as shown in figure 1.12).

However, Gardner (1985) still believes that studying orientation alone is not quite helpful when it comes to assessing motivation and that the best way to do so is first, to not confuse between motivation and orientation, and to treat these two concepts as two separate constructs; and second, to not neglect the other three components of motivation, attitude, desire and motivational intensity, for, again, if a positively orientated language learner lacks the willingness to put an effort or has no interest in studying the language, language learning may not take place.

The simplest way to explain why orientation is not enough for language learning to take place, is through Gardner's (1985, p. 55) explanation where he illustrates with a distinction between integrative orientation and the integrative motive, where he states that: "it seems very possible that some individuals may reflect an integrative orientation but not be strongly motivated to learn the second language", in other words, orientation, alongside motivation (with its three components) and other categories of attitudes (toward the language community and learning context, etc), is but a component that underlies, in a direct or an indirect way, the greater concept of integrative motive. That is why it is advisable to distinguish between motivation and orientation

From what has been said about the involvement of the motivational and attitudinal elements in the language learning process, the answer to the question about the link between attitude and motivation, which was posed in the previous section, seems to be in the integrative motive, where the latter links attitude and motivation and, consequently, facilitates language achievement, however, sometimes the correlation involves attitude, motivation, and other factors like language aptitude and orientations.

Evidence regarding the link between motivational/attitudinal elements and language achievement was accumulated through early studies that took the form of

factor-analyses and were conducted with samples from different communities. One of these studies is the one conducted by Feenstra (1968) with eighth-grade students in London, Canada. Findings from the study suggested that there was a lucid correlation between motivation and attitudes toward the speakers of the language (in this case French) and that these two factors also correlated with language achievement (Gardner, 1985).

Another early study is the one that was carried out by Gardner and Santos (1970) where they investigated measures related to English language proficiency among high school students in Philippine. Results from the study revealed that there was a relation between three factors, attitudinal variables (which did not include attitudes toward the language community), motivational variables, and orientation, which they labeled as integrative motive and which was found to be associated with oral English achievement (Gardner, 1985).

Following a series of factor-analysis studies, Gardner and Smythe (1975a) decided to focus on the validity and reliability of the measures used to investigate the attitudinal and the motivational variables, so they decided to develop a battery of tests which "had good psychometric properties and which was appropriate for students in grades seven to 11" (Gardner, 1985, p. 66). After cross-validating the results in two studies, where the first one involved 100 students and the second one involved 300 students from each of the grades seven to 11 (Gardner & Smythe, 1981), findings for all grades revealed that among the factors that were obtained there was the integrative motive and that, alongside language aptitude, the motivational variables: motivational intensity, desire to learn the language (French), and attitude toward learning the language were 'consistently' related to language achievement (Gardner, 1985).

In several similar studies (Gardner, Smythe, Clémant, & Gliksman, 1976), motivation, attitude, and aptitude were the most consistent predictors of language achievement with motivation and aptitude at the top and attitude with lower yet considerable correlations with language achievement (both in paper and pencil and in oral tests).

Turning to the question about the relationship between attitude, motivation, and language achievement, a hypothetical relationship which postulates that motivation mediates the link between attitude and achievement was tested and verified by Gardner (1979), where he concluded that the presence of the motivational effect is necessary for the attitude/achievement correlation, whereas the absence of attitude in the motivation/achievement correlation is less important and has less impact (Gardner, 1985). However studies like the one conducted by Muchnick and Wolfe (1982) revealed that positive attitude toward learning the language (Spanish) correlates significantly with language achievement for students with lower anxiety levels.

Even though there is, sometimes, an involvement of other variables like language aptitude in the correlation between attitude, motivation, and language achievement, this does not mean that attitude and motivation depend on these variables, that is to say that, if for example, factors of attitude, motivation, and aptitude were found to correlate with language achievement, this does not mean that aptitude is the reason behind the development of the attitudinal/motivational factors (Gardner, 1985).

From what has been said, it can briefly be concluded that the relationship between attitude and motivation can be explained through the integrative motive where either concept represents an important component or through Gardner's (1958) definition of language learning motivation where attitude represents a motivational variable and that the attitude/achievement complex definitely affects the language achievement.

1.3.5. Motivation and the Achievement Gap

Whenever language achievement gap is mentioned, the first thought that comes to mind is individual differences (ID) factors, where a set of variables, including motivation, separate the individual language learners and where the absence, presence, or the extent of the availability of these variables determine the extent of the mastery of the target language by the individual and, thus, his/her language achievement.

As one of the ID's, motivation differs from one person to another, in terms of intensity, flow, or source (intrinsic or extrinsic) or even in terms of situatedness, where the language learning motivation of the same person can differ from one learning situation to another. Since part of motivation springs from or at least is somewhat similar to cognition and emotions (Dörnyei, 2009b), it can be understandable that the involvement of such a non-universal factor in the language achievement can cause different levels of impact on the latter depending on the person's dispositions toward learning the language and the situations he/she is in and, subsequently, cause a gap in the achievement between individual. This argument can be simplified by using Parrot's (2004) analogy, where he attempted to distinguish the concept of motivation from cognition and affect, as he stated that cognition, motivation, and affect constitute: reasoning, appetite, and spirit respectively. Here, even though it sounds quite metaphoric, likening motivation to appetite implies that motivation changes from one person to another just like it is the case with appetite where desiring food or feeling of hunger differs from one person to another.

The motivation gap can also be seen from a cognitive standpoint as the differences between individuals' reasoning which involves intertwining factors like the attributions and expectancies which accumulate through the individual's unique language learning experiences as well as personal traits like approach and avoidance tendencies toward the learning goal (Eccles et al, 1983).

According to the attribution theory (Weiner, 1972), how people attribute their success and failure in previous language tasks affects their motivation to partake similar tasks in the future, and subsequently, their future achievement. This means that in the language classroom there can be learners with different types of attributions. Two extreme examples of these types of learners are those who attribute negative experiences of failure to static internal factors (like ability), and those who attribute positive experiences of success to the same stable internal factors (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Less extreme cases can be learners who attribute

success and failure to external controllable factors like luck and task difficulty (see table 1.2.

The information this theory adds to our discussion is that, having learners with different types of attributions leads to having a motivation gap among individual learners who, consequently, may not display the same level of engagement in the activities and thus reach different levels of achievement. This idea can simply be summarized in the correlation: attribution-motivation-achievement (figure 1.13).

Table.1.2. Weiner's Attribution Theory

Stability	**Internal**	**External**
Stable	Ability	Task Difficulty
Unstable	Effort	Luck

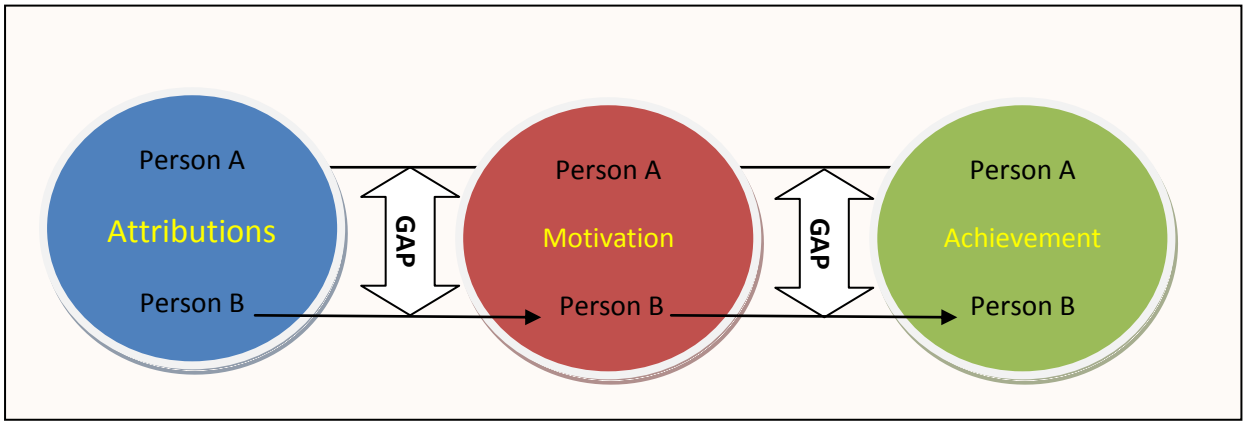


Figure .1.13. The attribution-motivation-achievement correlation

Another cognitive theory that can help explain the relationship between motivation and the achievement gap is the expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983) which theorizes that, a person's expectations about the outcome of his/her action, whether a failure or a success, and the extent to which he/she values his/her achievement and desires a specific learning goal are key factors that determine his/her motivation (Green 2002). This expectancy-value model of achievement

motivation posits that, a person's performance is influenced by different beliefs about his/her achievement, which depend on various factors, like previous experiences on similar tasks, task-difficulty beliefs, subjective values, goals, expectations for success (or failure), perceptions of socializers' beliefs and attitudes, and so many other variables (Eccles et al, 1983) which are shown in the figure 1.14.

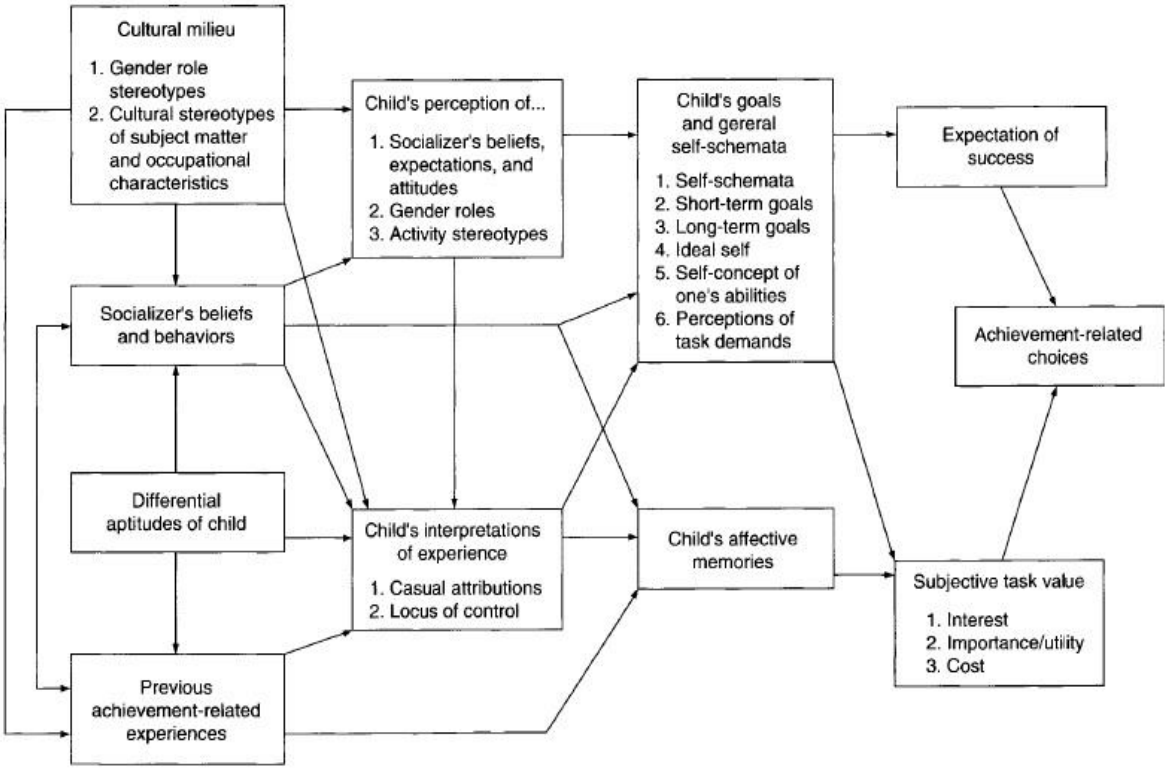


Figure.1.14. Eccles' (1983) expectancy-value model

From this expectancy-value model it can be understood that there is a cyclic relationship between one's previous achievement experiences, one's expectancy, one's motivation, and one's future achievement. The most important part of this model that can be zeroed in on is the correlation 'expectancies-motivation-achievement'. Since the learner's expectancies about success or failure in the task are mostly based on previous achievement which pre-exists them, it cannot be true the assumption that expectancies are necessarily the cause of achievement. The best way to describe the role of expectancies is to regard them as the bridge between

previous and future achievement and which involves the 'trilogy of mind' (cognition, motivation, and emotions) among which only motivation is regarded of interest in this study.

If a low-achiever's motivation is affected by his/her previous low achievement and the latter is attributed to stable inner factors, his/her future achievement may be affected negatively by the negative expectancies he/she develops about his/her competence, leading to the correlation: 'low achievement-negative attributions-negative expectancies-low motivation-low achievement'. On the other hand, if the low-achievement is attributed to external and unstable factors that has less effect on the learner's expectancies (like being sick during the test) the correlation may turn to**: '**low achievement-positive attributions-positive expectancies-high motivation-high achievement'. Thus, the correlation concerning expectancies, motivation, and the achievement gap can be explained as follows: different attributions of previous achievement lead to different expectancies of competence among individual learners, which can either engage or disengage students in the task, leading to the emergence of two different clusters: the motivated students who perform better and thus achieve higher, and the demotivated students who showcase lower levels of performance, if not shy away at all from performing, and thus achieve lower.

Even though understanding the relationship between motivation and the achievement gap needs deep understanding of the motivational and achievement theories and more validating concrete evidence than just theorizing, evidencing the existence of a correlation between achievement and motivation seems enough to hypothesize that, two differently motivated language learners may achieve differently in a certain activity regardless the fact that other factors like attitude and aptitude may be involved, as it was discussed previously. Unfortunately, the scope of the current study does not allow the space for the discussion of all the achievement motivation theories. This study is to only investigate the relationship between motivation, attitude, and the achievement gap within the context of

cooperative language learning, where the latter is to be discussed in the next chapter.

1.4. Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the two intervening variables of our study, attitude and language learning motivation. The first section of this chapter was mainly dedicated to the concept of attitude, where it dealt with attitude as a general concept before investigating it in the, specific, field of English as a Foreign Language. The main points that were discussed in this section were: attitude definitions, the development of attitude, and attitude measurement where it discussed the two most dominant instruments that are used in the field of attitudinal studies, the questionnaire and interviews.

The subsection 'language attitude', represented an attempt to define attitude in the field of language learning, where it listed a number of existing definitions of the concept from different standpoints: the behaviorist and the mentalist standpoint, and in terms of language use and language community. The next subsection 'attitude in the language classroom' discussed the concept of attitude in the field of education, specifically the language learning context, where it discussed Reid's (2015) model of stages of attitude formation in the language classroom,. This subsection also discussed factors that affect the individual's attitude in the educational setting, through a brief examination of a model provided by Khan and Weis (1973).

The final subsection 'language attitude and achievement' dealt with the link between language attitude and achievement in the language, and went through a list of attitudinal variables and a number of studies that investigated the correlation between language attitude and achievement.

The second section of this chapter was mainly dedicated to the concept of motivation, where it discussed some of its definitions, its different types, and shed light on some of the main theories that pertain to the construct of language achievement motivation. At first, the section started with an attempt to briefly

define the concept of motivation, where it goes through one of the most popular dichotomies in the studies of motivation, the intrinsic and the extrinsic motivation. Then, the concept of motivation was discussed in relation to the language learning context, where three pioneering models in the field of language learning motivation were reviewed Gardner's (1985) integrative motive and socio-educational model, and Dornyei and Ushioda's (2011) motivational conglomerates. Then the concept of motivation was explored in terms of its relationship with attitude and achievement, and finally an attempt was made to make sense of the relationship between motivation and the achievement gap through two of the most prominent classic achievement motivation theories, Expectancy-value (Eccles, 1983) and the attribution theory (1972).The next chapter, is intended to explore cooperative learning in the oral expression classroom and its effect on language achievement gap.

CHAPTER TWO: Cooperative Learning and Oral Expression

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (chapter one) dealt with the two intervening variable of our study, which are attitude and motivation, and their relationship with the dependent variable, the achievement gap. Coherently, the first section of the current chapter is devoted to the independent variable of the study, which is cooperative learning. This section defines the concept of cooperative learning and highlights some of its main characteristics, its five essential components (individual accountability, positive interdependence, face-to-face (promotive) interactions, interpersonal and small-group skills, and group processing), and its three types (the formal and the informal, and the cooperative base-groups). Then, the section provides some insight regarding the effectiveness of cooperative learning with respect to students' motivation and achievement by discussing some of the most dominant achievement motivation theories which are Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy, Covington's (1992)self-worth, and Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD). Afterward, data from validating research which support the use of cooperative learning strategies are to be discussed.

The second section of this chapter discusses the concept of oral expression, which represents one of the main, if not the most important, aspects of learning a language, where being able to maintain a conversation in the target language is, mostly, the foremost motive behind one's engagement in the language learning process. For this reason, knowledge of what oral skills to teach and how to teach them is the main concern of this section, wherein, the concept of speaking is to be defined, its process is to be explained and methods of how to reach an efficient level of oral expression are to be, succinctly, discussed. Also in this section, two of the well-known models of oral communicative activities, Temperley and Rivers' (1978) and Littlewoods (1981), are to be described. At the end of the section light is to be shed on the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing EFL students' Oral expression skills and in closing the achievement gap between the high- and low-achievers in the same context.

2.2 Cooperative Learning

The current section attempts to investigate one of the study's main variables, which is cooperative learning. The section starts with a definition of cooperative learning and its main components, and then briefly discusses its three types. In this section the researchers also discuss cooperative learning in comparison with the individualistic method and then discuss it in relation to achievement motivation and achievement.

2.2.1 Definition of Cooperative Learning

As generally accepted, cooperative learning (CL) refers to the group learning strategy where students with different levels of achievement sit together in a small group, with defined roles, where they share the responsibility to achieve a joint goal. In general, cooperative learning definitions accentuate key terms such as: "heterogeneous" "small groups", where students help, "each other" to achieve a "common goal" (Slavin, 1985, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1974). This goes to show that cooperative learning is about creating a social learning environment, wherein students are not only supposed to learn the content and help each other to learn it, but also to gain the social skills that help them cope with real life situations of cooperation.

The notion that students in the cooperative learning methods "discuss and argue with each other" (Slavin, 1995, p. 2) implies that the cooperative classroom is a democratic setting where students take each other's points of view seriously and discuss them as equal partners in a learner-centered fashion in order to fill each other's knowledge gap. In fact, cooperative learning methods are effective in overcoming hurdles, like racial, gender, and achievement related differences, and help the teaching/learning process to flow in a flexible manner, where Slavin (1985, p. 6) states that:

> Cooperative learning methods are structured, systematic instructional strategies capable of being used at any grade level and in most school subjects. All of the methods involve having the teacher assign the students to four- to six-member learning groups composed of high-,

> average-, and low-achieving students, boys and girls, black, Anglo, and Hispanic students, and mainstreamed academically handicapped students as well as their nonhandicapped classmates. In other words, each group is a microcosm of the class in academic achievement level, sex, and ethnicity.

It is very important to distinguish between cooperative learning and other group work methods, for there are some specific requirements for the group work to be cooperative, Where according Johnson and Johnson (1999, p. 68):

> Not all groups are cooperative. There is nothing magical about working in a group. Some kinds of learning groups facilitate student learning and increase the quality of life in the classroom. Other types of learning groups hinder student learning and create disharmony and dissatisfaction. To use cooperative learning effectively, one must know what is and is not a cooperative group (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998b).

According the majority of cooperative learning researchers (Johnson & Johnson, 1974; Gillies, 2007; Weidner, 2003), Cooperative learning represents a penta-partite concept that includes the following elements: individual accountability, positive interdependence, social skills, face-to-face (promotive) interactions, and group processing.

2.2.1.1. Individual Accountability

The element of individual accountability represents the sense of responsibility which cooperative learning instructions aim to instill in the individual learner. This very component is, in fact, quite the effective factor when it comes to eliminating free-loading and passiveness, and in compelling every member to contribute to the group's collective effort (Gillies, 2007). The point in implementing cooperative learning is not to only create strong groups that are competent together as one entity in handling certain tasks, but to, also, create group members who are, individually, "strong in their own right" and able to complete the same tasks (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2013, p. 44).

To ensure that, it is both the teacher's and the group members' duty to make sure that no member is social-loafing, where the teacher can assess the learners individually by asking them to report their work to the whole class, orally, at the end of the session; monitor the groups and take notes about members' participation; and/or ask the students to teach each other, pass remarks back and forth, and perform simultaneous explaining; on the other hand, teammates, usually students who are assigned the role of a checker, monitor each other and make sure that each and every member is contributing his/her fair share of the work.

2.1.1.2. Positive interdependence

The second element, which seems to be somewhat complementary to the element of individual accountability is, positive interdependence, which stands for the sense of reciprocity and mutual benefit between the group members. For the low-achieving students, being asked to be individually accountable might have a positive impact on their engagement, however, due to their lower level, compared to their partners', it might seem unfair to assign the same task to students with unmatched levels. Here, positive interdependence comes to play to allow the exchange of ideas between high- and low-achieving students, and to subsequently, permit low-level students to learn from, and advance with the same pace as, their high-achieving partners.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2009), the term positive interdependence, stands for dual the responsibility, that obliges the students' to both learn and make sure every other group member learns. In order to foster such mutual responsibility instructors may consider the following ways:

- **Positive goal interdependence:** Where the teacher structures a joint goal so that students feel tethered by the idea of, either, "sink or swim together".
- **Positive reward-Celebrate interdependence**: Which promotes positive goal interdependence, where group members celebrate the completion of the joint task together, which fosters a sense of mutual achievement among the students and motivates them to cooperate with their partners.

- **Positive resource interdependence:** This type of interdependence can be promoted through knowledge gap activities, where each member of the group is given a unique part of the material, so that students feel compelled to share their sources, and to cooperate with each other in order to complete the task.
- **Positive role interdependence**: Where the teacher assigns every group member a unique, indispensable, role that comes with limited responsibilities, which complement the functions of the other members, so that students have to combine their efforts to complete the assignment.

2.2.1.3. Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction

According to findings from different studies (Johnson, & Johnson, 2009), positive interdependence, when fulfilled in the classroom, can promote a healthy environment for the students to interact with each other. As a result, the element of promotive interaction creates networks between group members, through which students can reach each other, and subsequently, facilitate each other's learning by exchanging ideas and material, encouraging each other, and by discussing solutions to the problem orally (Johnson et al., 2013).

2.2.1.4. Interpersonal and small-Group Skills

This element of cooperative learning, which underlies the field of group dynamics (Johnson & F. Johnson, 1991), constitutes the skills needed for students to collaborate and interact with each other efficiently. It is essential that teachers teach the students the needed skills before stating to seat them in small groups. Gillies (1984) found that training students to master interpersonal skills, promotes higher-quality cooperation between students than when they do not receive any prior training. Therefore, interpersonal skills are considered as one of the main designations of cooperative learning and one of the advantages, which the latter has over the whole-class instructions.

2.2.1.5. Group-Processing

This element of cooperative learning represents the students' need to reflect on and assess the quality of their work in order to tackle any problems or conflicts

that might hinder the progress of the group in a learner-centered fashion. According to Johnson and Johnson (2009), during group-processing, at the end of the session, students discuss the ways in which group members are behaving, and based upon that decide what behavior to change and to keep. Simply, Group-processing can be defined as, the practice in which students attempt to reduce errors, resolve conflicts, and improve each other's interpersonal skills.

From the above mentioned it seems that the main elements of cooperative learning are interrelated and that the existence of one element is complementary to the existence of the other ones. For example, there would be no sense of positive interdependence if the students are not individually accountable, where having group members who are not individually responsible for their share of the work eliminates the sense of a dual responsibility and, instead, fosters free-riding and hitch-hiking.

There is also, a complementary relationship between the other three cooperative learning elements, which are face-to-face promotive interaction; interpersonal and small-group social skills, which represent the student's capacity to communicate, negotiate, and how good he/she is at creating bounds and friendships with the other group members; and group-processing, where, by maintaining healthy interrelationships and interaction with each other, group members are able to understand their teammates' as well as their needs, which enables them to better the quality of the group work process, fulfilling the fifth element of cooperative learning, which is, group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1974).

From the aforementioned descriptions of cooperative learning elements, these elements can be divided into two main categories:

- **The Cognitive elements**: this category includes elements of individual accountability and positive interdependence, which pertain to the students' knowledge and cognitive level, where the individual student can be a source and depend on his or her partner as a source, where being, simultaneously, individually independent and positively interdependent helps students to learn more, as individuals and as a team, for "What children can do together today, they can do alone tomorrow" (Vigotsky, 1962).

- **The social elements**: which include social skills, face-to-face interaction, and group processing, and pertain to the quality of the social aspect of the group work, where cooperative behaviors and skills are used, reflected on, discussed, and refined to be used in the next session.

based on Johnson and Johnson's (1974) description of the five elements of cooperative learning, an attempt to explain the interrelationships between the CL components is demonstrated in figure 3.1, where individual accountability, which can exist in competitive settings, is regarded as a prerequisite and as the starting phase with the individual student in it being an independent learner; and the three social elements as variables of the middle phase, with the student in it being an interactive learner, and which leads to the last phase of positive interdependence, where the latter is considered as the act of performing cooperation, wherein, the student is regarded as an (active) interdependent or cooperative learner, who is able to construct, receive, and transfer knowledge (Dewy, 1963) (see figure 2.1).

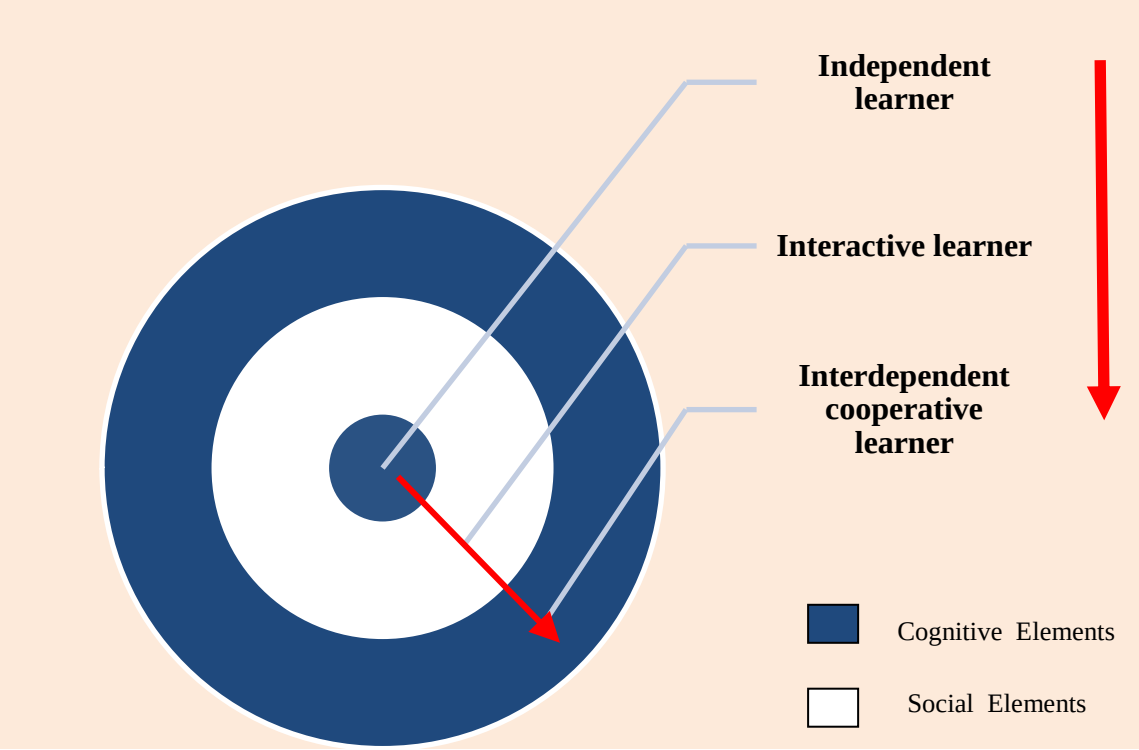


Figure 2.1. Cooperative learning elements' interrelationship

2.2.2. Types of Cooperative Learning

According to Johnson et al. (1998; 1998b), cooperative learning comes in three different types depending on the teaching purpose, whether it is used to 'teach specific content (formal cooperative learning groups)"; for other purposes like, ensuring "active cognitive processing of information during a lecture or demonstration (informal cooperative learning groups)"; or to "provide long-term support and assistance for academic progress (cooperative base groups)" (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 68).

Formal cooperative learning groups are structured in order to teach a specific subject, where students are assigned a shared task which might last for a one class period to a week or more. An example of such type of tasks is, students working together on a survey (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). During the formal cooperative learning activity, the teacher's role is to give instructions regarding group size and students' roles within the groups, and to determine task objectives and the learning material.

Other teacher responsibilities that come with this type of cooperative learning are, explaining the essence of cooperative learning to group members (elements like, individual accountability and positive interdependence); intervening when necessary, to help students understand the assignment and complete the task; and assessing students' performances (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

On the other hand, informal cooperative learning takes less preparation and lasts no more than a one class period. During this type of activity, the teacher supervises the students to make sure that they are paying attention to the content being delivered and that they are processing and organizing the material. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999, p. 69), the informal cooperative learning session is organized as follows: "3-5 minute focused discussions before and after a lecture and 2-3 minute turn-to-your-partner discussions interspersed throughout a lecture."

The most permanent and long lasting type of cooperative learning is cooperative base groups. Membership in such type of groups lasts from one to several years, during which a group of 3-4 students provide peer support to each

other. Such type of group instruction benefits the person on both, the social and the cognitive level, and promises a better learning in terms of quantity and quality (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

2.2.3. Cooperative and Individual Effort

> The crux of the difference between cooperation and competition lies in the nature of the way the goals of the participants in each of the situations are linked. In the cooperative situation goals are so linked that everybody sinks or swim together, while in the competitive situation if one swims, the other must sink. (Deusch, 1949, p. 129)

Comparisons between cooperative and competitive efforts yielded a wealth of data in the field of educational research in a variety of educational spheres. Over 100 years ago (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), a large number of "over 550 experimental and 100 correlational studies" (p. 71) were devoted to compare between the cooperative, the individual, and the competitive learning methods. Findings show that cooperation results better outcome compared to competition and individual work in terms of, achievement (over 375 studies), process gain, greater group-to-individual transfer of content, and more readiness for real life situations (Johnson, 1999).

Concerning the classroom environment, another difference that sets cooperative learning apart from the competitive and individualistic methods is the fact that, cooperative instructions minimize students' off-task behavior, where all students enjoy the learning experience and focus more on the learning that is taking place, where less engaged students hardly find the chance to act up during the session (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Other comparative studies (over 180), which targeted the question of "which method is more effective in promoting effective interpersonal relationships among learners?", revealed that, the cooperative method is more efficient in linking students together and fostering interpersonal attraction between them compared to the competitive and the individualistic methods (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), for,

creating healthy, positive interrelationships between students decreases anxiety, peer pressure, and social comparisons, and can turn the individual learner from a field-independent to a field-dependent, interactive, learner.

Moreover, going through interaction with peers in cooperative settings, enhances students' social skills level and prepares them for real life social situations. Also, having other peers depend on one to help them solve problem, increases one's sense of self-worth and positively changes one's beliefs about one's competence (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), in other words, feeling indispensable and relied on during the activity increase one's self-efficacy.

Cooperative learning is a group learning method where students enhance their cognitive and social competences and those of their peers. It creates the right environment for the individual to learn from, and transfer the information to, his or her teammates and make friends in the process. Johnson and Johnson (1989) summarized these cooperative learning outcomes and labeled them under three main categories, effort to achieve, positive relationships, and psychological adjustment and social competence (see figure 2.2).

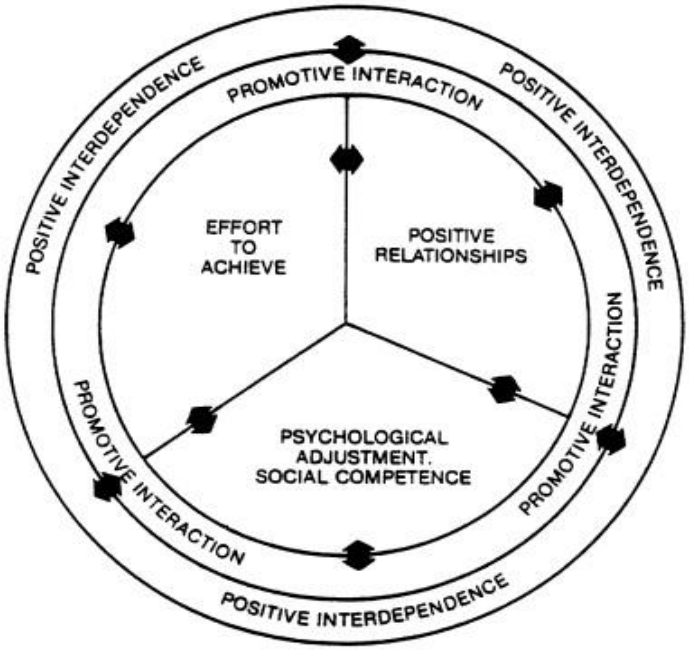


Figure.2.2. Cooperative learning outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 1989)

2.2.4. Cooperative Learning and Achievement Motivation

Cooperative learning research is based on a socio-psychological framework (Slavin, 1985) and is supported by multiple motivational and socio-cognitive theories. Some of the theories that were applied to cooperative learning are, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993), zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and self-worth theory (1992).

2.2.4.1. Cooperative learning and Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy theory posits that the individual's perceived beliefs and judgments about his/her capability to achieve a certain task and to reach a certain level of academic performance affect his/her willingness and motivation to undertake the action (Bandura 1993). In an educational context, Albert Bandura (1977, 1984) sets three characteristics through which self-efficacy can be judged which are, the efficacy level or magnitude, which refers to the person's perceptions about the level of task difficulty; efficacy strength, which represents the person's determination to engage in the task; and generality, that is, the person's generalized beliefs about a number of activities (Zimmerman, 1995)

In the cooperative learning setting, the learner's motivation and achievement are not only affected by personal beliefs and self-perceptions about the learned subject, but can also be influenced by, what Bandura (1995) refers to as, vicarious experiences. Watching one's high-achieving teammates, from a closer range, succeed in a certain task, persuades one to engage in similar tasks and helps one to make positive judgments about one's level of competence, and thus increases one's likelihood to achieve higher in the future, for new (positive) perceptions about competence replace the existing (negative) ones.

Also, receiving positive feedback from significant peers boosts one's confidence and motivation. This verbal persuasion, which stems from the general concept of communicative persuasion, can bring about positive change in one's self-efficacy and, thus, one's attitude toward the task, promising more engagement and more active processing of the content being taught.

Learning in small groups can provide the learners with a safer environment, compared to performing in front of a whole classroom, and can allow them the opportunity to observe others perform the task from a close distance, which permits the reluctant students, who doubt their competence, to indirectly experience a sense of achievement through a modeling of their teammates' manners of performance where having positive, enjoyable, experiences within the group can cause the individual learner to develop new, positive, attitudes toward the task, where Johnson et al. (2013, p. 9) found that Thirty-nine studies that have focused on attitudes prove that "Cooperative learning tends to promote more positive attitudes toward learning, the subject area, and the university than do competitive (effect size = 0.37) or individualistic (effect size = 0.42) learning."

2.2.4.2. Cooperative Learning and Self-Worth

One common issue among all types of classroom, which troubles teachers in all disciplines, is the problem of students' avoidant attitudes, where the low-achieving students are alienated from both the teacher and from their high-achieving partners, which provides the teacher with less insight about either, what his/her students have learned or about the effectiveness of the teaching method he/she is using. In the individualistic classroom, less self-efficacious students tend to avoid the implications of their poor performance, for, according to Covington (1992), a students' performance on a task, determines his rank within the classroom community.

For them to avoid being labeled as low-ranked, students shy away from what they perceive as difficult questions and might, even, resort to self-handicapping techniques in order for them to protect their self-worth from what they regard the greatest threat, the teacher.

Cooperative learning methods, on the other hand, create a safe environment for students where they not only sit in smaller less competitive groups of peers, but also, in an environment with less social comparisons and, thus, less anxiety and worry about their self-esteem, even when they seek help from their partners (Nadler, 1998). Cooperative learning also eliminates the bigger threat caused by the

teacher by promoting a learner-centered learning climate, where the teachers roles are limited, and where the teacher is not regarded as a know-it-all guy who fills passive students with information. In fact, multiple studies have revealed that, cooperative learning bests both the individualistic and the competitive method when it comes to preserving the learners' self-esteem and lowering their anxiety where (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p 8) contend that: "Within cooperative situations, individuals tend to interact, promote each other's success, form multidimensional and realistic impressions of each other's competencies, and give accurate feedback. Such interaction tends to promote a basic acceptance of oneself as a competent person."

2.2.4.3. Cooperative Learning and Zone of Proximal Development

One of the most popular theories that highlight the importance of the social aspect of learning is Vygotsky's (1978) theory of zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky postulates that learning is a result of disequilibrium among socializers, that is to say, that, learning takes place in the social environment where people interact, exchange ideas, and transmit information input to each other.

Based on the same premise, cooperative leaning, regards interaction between group members as a great source for them to hone their skills and learn new information from their partners. Not only that but, it also promotes the notion of help-seeking and interdependence between teammates, which is similar to Vygotsky's (1978, p. 86) idea of the "potential development" that can be gained from cooperating with other peers, in terms of meta-cognition.

2.2.5. Cooperative Learning Methods and Achievement

There is a variety of cooperative learning methods that can be used in different contexts and serve as either direct templates for the teacher to follow exactly the instructions that come with them (direct methods) or as flexible strategies which can be modified and customized to fit the content (Conceptual methods). The most generally used cooperative learning methods are, Student Team Learning (Slavin, 1980), JIGSAW, Learning Together, Round-Robin, Think-Pair-

Share, and Group Investigation (Slavin, 1980; Aronson, 1978; Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Sharan & Sharan, 1976).

According to Slavin (1980), the Student Team Learning includes methods like: Student Team-Achievement Divisions (STAD), where students study, together, the subject and then, take a quiz individually, where the individual student's achievement determines the achievement of the whole group; and Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT), which premise is close to that of STAD except the fact that, in TGT "the students play academic games as representatives of their teams instead of taking quizzes" (Slavin, 1985, p. 7).

Jigsaw is another team activity, which was propounded by Aronson (1978) and developed later (Jigsaw II) by Slavin (1980). In Jigsaw, the teacher gives every group member unique information about the subject and assigns every student an number, where students form "expert groups", which represent student from different groups who have the same number and are assigned the same portion of the material (for example, all number ones), and discuss the information with their colleagues and perform a simultaneous explaining. Afterward, students from expert groups return to their original groups and transfer the new information to their teammates. To make sure students have learned and understood the content, the teacher individually asks students non-expert question.

Similar to Jigsaw is the Think-Pair-Share method, except, in the latter, at first, students work individually, then discuss the topic in pairs, and then share what they have learned in front of the whole class. Another cooperative learning method is Round-Robin. In this activity, the teacher asks the students to think individually about the question and share their answers with their teammates, and assigns one group member the role of a recorder, who takes notes during the group discussions.

A more simple method is Johnson and Johnson's (1975) Learning Together. In this method, students receive a reward for working together on a shared topic, which can enhance their group processing skills. The last method is Group-Investigation (Sharan & Sharan, 1976). Group-Investigation is considered as one of

the most advanced cooperative learning methods, which gives the teacher the challenge of allowing students to decide what they learn and how they will learn it, where students prepare different topics, in small groups, and then share their work and present it to the whole classroom.

These activities are similar in that they all give chance for the individual effort to take place in their first phases, promoting more individual accountability and compelling free-loaders to engage in the activity. The following table is adapted from findings of a meta-analysis conducted by Johnson and Johnson (1989) where the effectiveness of the cooperative learning method, is investigated in comparison with the competitive and the individualistic ones' (see table 2.1). The magnitude of the effect is expressed through effect size.

Table.2.1.

Coopeative Learning Meta-Analysis (Johnson & Johnson, 1989)

Method	**Average Effect Sizes**		
Learning Together	**Effect**	**Sd**	**K**
Cooperation vs. competition	0.82	0.50	25
Cooperative vs. individual	1.03	0.69	56
Competitive vs. individualistic	0.06	0.47	10
TGT	**Effect**	**Sd**	**K**
Intergroup comp vs. competition	0.48	0.69	9
Intergroup com vs. individualistic	0.58	0.43	5
Group-Investigation	**Effect**	**Sd**	**K**
Cooperation vs. competition	0.37	1.19	2
Cooperation vs. individualistic	0.62		1
Jigsaw	**Effect**	**Sd**	**K**
Cooperation vs. competition	0.29	0.78	9
Cooperation vs. individualistic	0.13	0.29	5

STAD	**Effect**	**Sd**	**K**
Intergroup comp vs. competition	0.51	0.72	15
Intergroup comp vs. individualistic	0.29	0.71	14

Note. **Sd**= Standard deviation; **K**= Number of Effect sizes

Johnson and Johnson (1989) also reported findings concerning which cooperative learning method is more effective, from these CL strategies, we only selected the ones that were just discussed in this section. One comment to make about the data in table 2.2 is that, Learning Together proved to be the most effective CL method, where it spearheaded the list of cooperative learning strategies with an effect size of 0.85 against the competitive method, and an effect size of 1.04 against the individualistic method.

From the data presented in tables 2.1 and 2.2, it appears that cooperative learning methods, not only enhance students' social skills, but also facilitate learning and boost achievement. Compared to the competitive and the individualistic methods, elements like individual accountability and positive interdependence distinguish cooperative learning and make it stand out as the best method for both the teacher and the students.

Table.2.2. Cooperative Learning Methods' Ranks (Johnson & Johnson, 1989)

Method	**Cooperative vs. competitive**	**N**	**Method**	**Cooperative vs. Individual**	**N**
Learning Together	0.85	26	**Learning Together**	1.04	57
STAD	0.51	15	**Group-Investigation**	0.62	1
TGT	0.48	9	**TGT**	0.58	5
Jigsaw	0.29	9	**STAD**	0.29	14

Note. N= the number of studies

According to Slavin (1985, p. 10):

> The most successful methods for increasing student achievement were the ones in which group scores were composed of the sum of individual achievements, or in which each member had a unique task for which he or she could be held accountable.

After conducting 27 studies, Slavin (1983b) reported that, the most effective cooperative methods in enhancing students' achievement were those, where students were assigned unique roles or asked to do an individual effort at a certain stage during the activity. While, based on the results of 9 studies (Slavin, 1985), activities that neglected the individual effort or excluded rewards produced less achievement. Moreover, "Almost every cooperative learning study that included a self-esteem measure found significantly positive effects on this outcome" (p. 12).

2.3. Oral Expression

The present section is devoted to the context of our study which is oral expression. As the section expands, the researchers shed light on the concept of speaking, its process, and its nature as productive skill. The researchers then discuss some of the communication strategies and oral expression models, and then talk about the effect of cooperative learning on the oral expression achievement gap.

2.3.1. Definition of Speaking

The term speaking is by and large used to refer to the sheer skill of using a language verbally. This view of speaking as a skill, neglects the fact that speaking a language necessitates a bit of knowledge about aspects like, grammar and vocabulary (Bygate, 1987). The view of speaking as a skill, which was criticized by Mackay (1965) causes the shortcoming of the inability to transfer what the speaker has learned in the classroom to the outside world, or as Wilkins (1975) says: "from a language-learning situation to a language-using situation" (p. 76, as cited in Bygate, 1987).

Speaking is a challenging skill to master which requires a level of cognition and physical gestures (jaws, tongue, and vocal cords, etc.) which is unlike the popular thought which regards speaking as a facile effortless activity and which causes it to be taken for granted (Bygate, 1987). To speak a foreign language it is needed not only the knowledge of how to use words, their right order, and meaning, but also the knowledge of how the sounds are processed.

2.3.2. The Process of Speaking

Increasing research about human cognition and application of neuroscience principles in the field of language learning have permitted deeper understanding of how speech is produced and what mechanisms are involved in the speaking process. In 1995, Levelt propounded a model that details the process of speaking, which starts by a conceptual preparation of what the speaker intends to say; going through a formulation of "lexical concepts, lemmas, morphemes, phonological words, and phonetic gestural scores (which are executed during articulation)" (Levelt, 1999, p. 3); and followed by a monitoring of the speech output, which is conducted by the speaker (see figure 2.3).

The first phase of this model, the conceptual preparation, represents the speaker's attempt to select lexical concepts and where, the foreign language speaker is challenged by the task of choosing the right words that convey the intended message. In this phase, the speaker may face difficulties, depending on his/her vocabulary level or on the target language itself, for some languages do not have certain single-words to name certain objects, like for example, the lack of a unitary lexical concept to refer to a female elephant in the English language, where the speaker may, simply, refer to it as "female elephant" (p. 3), and, contrarily, the existence of a one word that refers to a person who is above hundred years, which is centenarian.

However, referring to the same object can be done in different ways during the conversation, depending on the background knowledge and the perspective of the listener, and as long as the speaker succeeds in describing the referent. The lack of a shared knowledge and momentary thoughts, between the speaker and the

listener, about the referent makes it impossible for the message to be understood. A good example can be when the interlocutors "Share knowledge that a particular woman had just been sitting in the chair, we may point at the empty chair and say: That woman is named Veronica and be confident that they will understand who we are referring to." (Clark & Murphy, 1982, p. 287).

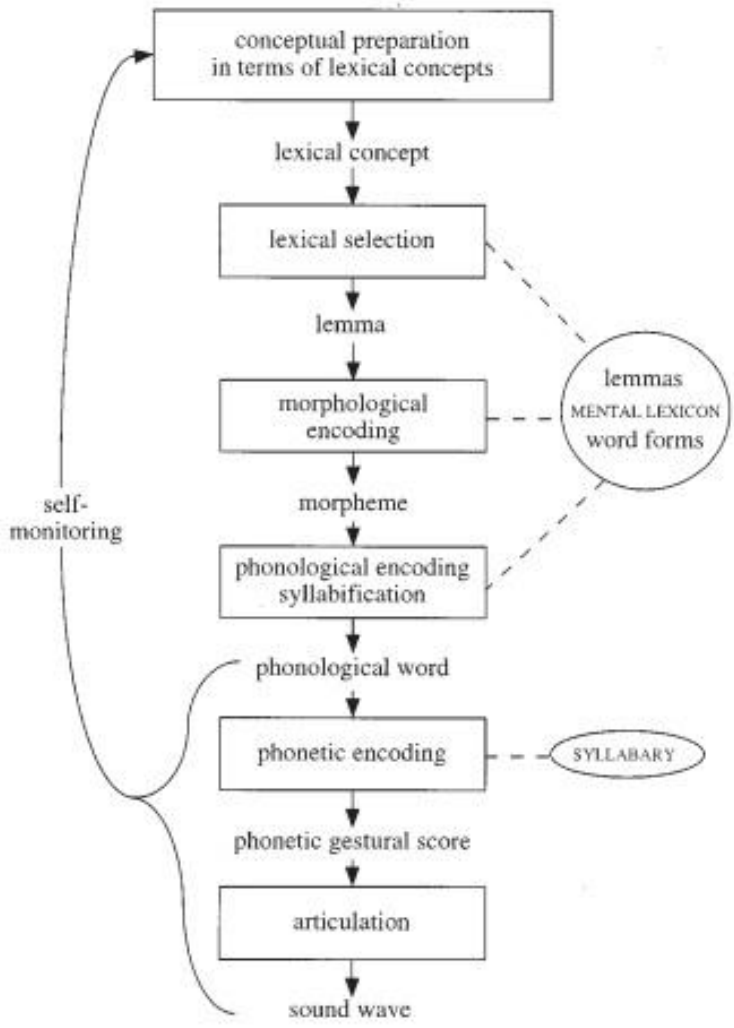


Figure.2.3. The speaking process (Levelt, 1999)

The speaker, in order to convey the message, tends to carefully select morphemes and syllables, with a rate of two or three words per second, from the mental lexicon (Levelt, 1999). This second phase of morphological encoding and syllabification is referred to as the formulation process. During this step, the speaker selects the suitable gestures to articulate the word as s/he recalls the "phonological shape" of the lemma before using the tip of his/her tongue, lips, and jaw muscles.

The speaker, in this phase, retrieves from the memory, word or syllable frames therein morphemes (fillers) are inserted to formulate the word (Dell, 1986; 1988; Fromkin, 1971; Garrett, 1975; Shattuck-Hufnagel, 1979, as cited in Levelt, 1999).

According to Levelt (1999), word structures are stored in the memory as "word and syllable skeletons" (p. 19) that serve as organized frames that can be filled with alternative phonemes or phoneme clusters or by exchanging segments (syllables) between two, or more, words (see figure 2.4). When exchanging syllable units, a word's onset can only replace another word's onset and not the nucleus or the codas, in other word, the exchange of segments goes as follows: Onset for onset, mell wade becomes well made; nucleus for nucleus, bed bugs becomes bud beggs; and codas for codas, where god to seen becomes gone to seed (Boomer & Lave, 1986; as cited in Levelt, 1999, p. 19).

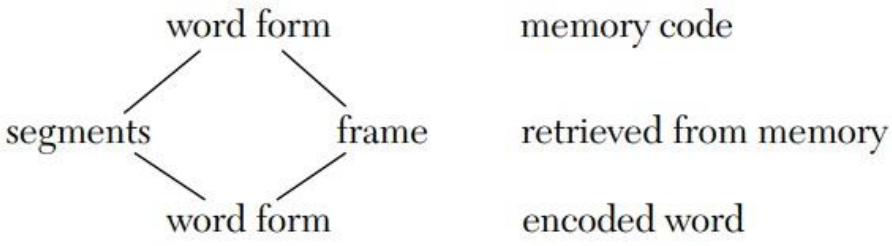


Figure.2.4. Word frames (Levelt, 1999, p. 19)

During phonetic encoding, the speaker goes through a process of a phonological representation by accessing a mental syllabary, a stock where the phonological gestures of a specific language are stored, where, in the case of the English language there are over 12000 syllables (Levelt, 1999). After a selection of phonological syllable gestures, the speaker starts to retrieve whole-word phonetic movements, and prepare the articulatory tasks in terms of many features, like timing, loudness, and pitch (Levelt, 1989; 1999).

The next phase of the speaking process is the process of articulation, which constitutes the execution of the word's phonological and phonetic gestures. Briefly, during this step, as it was mentioned, "not just the machinery that controls lungs, larynx, and vocal tract" is involved, but, also, "a computational neural system that

controls the execution of abstract gestural scores by this highly complex motor system" (Levelt, 1999, p. 6).

Self-monitoring is the last step on the continuum. According to Levelt, one analyzes one's speech in the same way one assesses others'. In view of that, the speaker can detect problems with his own speech output. In case a mistake is sensed, the speaker may stop himself and correct the mistake immediately after, or even before, the erroneous word is uttered. Interrupting the speech before the erroneous word is fully uttered (e.g., during the articulation of the nucleus) is regarded by Levelt (1989) as a result of the process of a phonetic plan, that is, a reflective analysis of the speaker's own "internal voice".

One possible source of speech errors is believed to be the failure to select the target lemma's node. For instance, when attempting to retrieve the target word, phonologically similar intruding words' nodes are activated leading to an error called the semantic substitution (Dell & Reich, 1980). One more type of error is the selection of two lemmas, where, words from the same syntactic category or with similar segments are more likely to enter the race for articulation, as the speaker produces the lemma that is ready the most (Levelt, 1999). If the intruding segment wins on the onset level, the anticipation error takes place, whereas, if the intruding segment wins the race to becoming the second syllable, then the perseveration error occurs. In the case where both errors are made by the speaker, at the same time, the error is called the exchange error (p. 34), where the faster the speaking rate the higher the possibility for these errors to come about.

Even though the process of speaking seems to be very complex, the aforementioned stages take place in a very short time, milliseconds (Hagoort & Levelt, 2009). During the production of the message, in addition to these skills, there is an involvement of cognitive and pragmatic processing of the message by the speaker, where the latter assesses the precision and the suitability of the message, in terms of grammatical structure, vocabulary, and the quality of the content and meaning as well.

2.3.3. Speaking as a Productive Skill

As one of the main four language skills, speaking, alongside writing is regarded as a productive skill. However, the situation of spoken language differs, in many ways, from that of the written one. During verbal interactions, the speaker's word choice and decisions are made immediately, without any preparations and where no chance is allowed to correct the speech output before it reaches the listener. This time constraint, which Bygate (1987) labels as a processing condition, represents one of the main differences between speaking and writing, where in the latter, the writer has more time to organize ideas and produce better sentences in terms of length, complexity, and accuracy (Bygate, 1987).

However, according to Bygate (1987), this disadvantage of time restraint during spoken interactions can be compensated by the factor of reciprocity. The reciprocity factor refers to turn taking during a conversation. When speaking to someone, the speaker can tell whether the listener has comprehended the message and whether it needs adjustment or not. This direct link between the interlocutors facilitates the speaker's mission, which is, to get his or her point across and to make sure that the listener has understood the intended meaning.

Conversely, the writer-reader link is not as direct as that between the speaker and the listener. When producing a piece of written language, the writer has no idea about the reader's prior knowledge or interests. In fact, the lack of reciprocity between the reader and the writer adds to the latter's responsibilities, the burden of predicting the reader's level, his or her reaction, and which areas he or she may find interest in, and in case "the writer gets this wrong, the reader may give up the book or article in disgust before getting far" (Bygate, 1987, p. 12).

The fact that the speaker has a direct contact with the listener allows him/her the chance to correct the errors that occur during the production of speech (due to the processing conditions). This, in fact, agrees with Levelt's notion of self-monitoring, where after the phrase is uttered the speaker analyses his/her own output, where he/she may end up repeating or correcting what he/she has said,

which is acceptable in speech, since one does not have to cross out words and create unreadable messy papers, as it is the case with writing (Bygate, 1987).

To compensate for the limitations and the difficulties caused by the processing conditions (time constrain), the speaker tends to use a number of strategies that allow him/her to sound more fluent and accurate at the same time. These strategies, which were suggested by Bygate (1987) are, (1) facilitation strategies, which involve a set of strategies that are used to facilitate the production of speech, like, the use of simple language, ellipsis, formulaic language, and fillers; (2) Compensation strategies, which include repeating, rephrasing and reformulating what the speaker has just said.

Speaking, as a productive skill, resembles the writing skill in that, they both require the language user to be active and to produce a language output, however, the nature of speech is different from that of the written language, where the former is less formal, less complex, and happens in a rather short time, where there is no time for preparation, and the latter is more formal, consists of longer and more complex sentences and phrases, and where the writer is allowed more time to prepare and sort out the content of the message. In order to overcome the aforementioned difficulties, the foreign language speaker needs to use a set of strategies through which he/she can convey his/her message during a conversation in the target language. These strategies are called Communicative strategies (CS) and are to be discussed immediately in the following subsection.

2.3.4. Communication Strategies

Communication strategies (CS) are the strategic plans a foreign language speaker employs to compensate for his/her linguistic inadequacy and inability to communicate in difficult situations (Trone, 1977; Coder, 1981; Faerch & Kasper, 1983a). These strategies can be employed by the speaker as psycholinguistic plans that serve as "substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement" (Elis, 1986, p. 86), or by both interlocutors, during the interaction, as a mutual effort to find alternative expressions and meanings that can be understood

when the "requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (Tarone, 1980, p. 420).

Faerch and Kasper (1981) regard CS as conscious plans that bring about communicative behavior. The reason behind this view of the communication strategies as plans is the fact that, communication strategies and plans, alike, are goal-oriented, need preparation, and result in an action (behavior). However, not all plans are strategic. For a plan to be called a strategy there need to be fulfilled two criteria, the criterion of problem-orientedness and that of consciousness (Faerch & Kasper, 1980).

Problem-orientedness is considered by Faerch and Kasper as the most important criterion that defines communicative strategy. What distinguishes a mere plan from a strategy is the nature of the goal that is being pursued. According to Faerch and Kasper (1980), only plans that are related to difficult goals are considered to be strategies. In other words, to satisfy this criterion, a problem must be encountered either during the planning or during the realization phase.

The other criterion, consciousness, represents a secondary criterion which is actually, a result of the problem-orientedness criterion, where, Faerch and Kasper (1980, p. 58) state that: "If the individual experiences a problem in reaching a goal, this implies that the learner is conscious about there being a difficulty. Hence the derived, secondary status of consciousness as a defining criterion of strategies."

According to Sharwood Smith (1979), the level of consciousness differs from one speaker/learner to another. This means that, some individual learners are more conscious during the process of problem solving than others. In fact, consciousness may raise or decline depending on the way the speaker employs the plan. Based on this notion, Faerch and Kasper (1980, p. 60) classified plans as:

(1) Plans which are always consciously employed;

(2) Plans which are never consciously employed; and

(3) Plans which to some language users and/or in some situations may be consciously used and which to other language users and/or in other situations are used unconsciously.

For foreign language learners to achieve competence, learning how to learn and being aware of their linguistic gaps are two important factors which can enhance their learning. Taking into consideration the criterion of goal-orientedness turns automatized learning into a meaningful conscious process where FL learners strategize to reach clear communication goals.

2.3.5. Oral Expression Models

This subsection provides some insights into the nature, criteria, and types of oral activities. It also, discusses two of the most popular frameworks in the field of oral communication, which are, Rivers and Temepley's diagram (1978) and Littlewoods' model (1981).

2.3.5.1. Rivers and Temperley's Diagram

According to Rivers and Temperley (1978), when teaching oral skills, two main things need to be taken into consideration, skill-getting and skill-using (see figure 2.5). This means that an oral English course design needs to help the learners achieve the goal of skill-getting, and to develop these new skills through practice, alongside the pre-existing ones, at the same time.

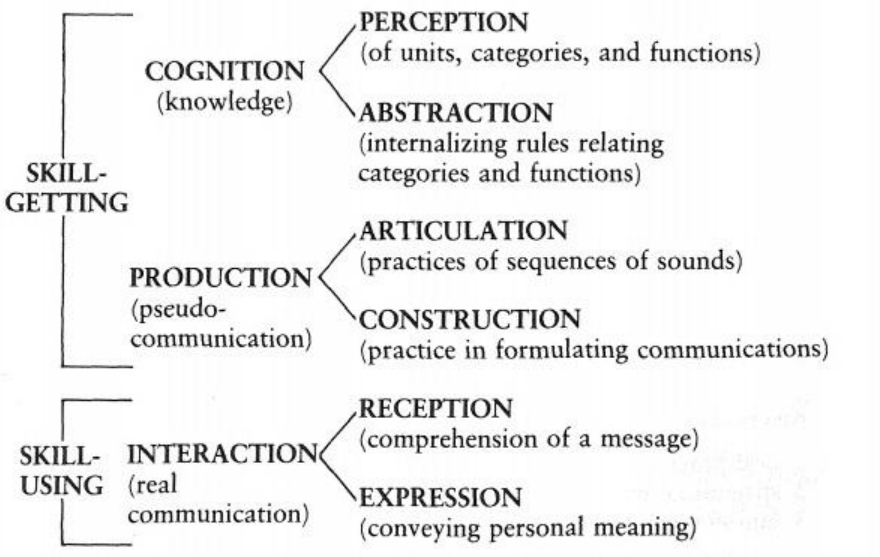


Figure.2.5. Rivers and Temperley (1978) diagram of oral skills

The main thing that Rivers and Temperley (1978) try to get across is the importance of creating courses through which the teacher prepares the FL learner for real life situations. The diagram, at the level of production, suggests involving the learner in pseudo-communication strategies, where he/she gets the opportunity to practice knowledge and master the usage of the language rules and functions (grammar) which are to be transferred to situations of real communication and in the back-and-forth process of reception and expression of messages.

2.3.5.2. Littlewoods Model

In his frame of communicative activities, Littlewood (1981) brought forward a similar model to that of Rivers and Temeprley (1978), where, he proposed activity types that serve the same role that pseudo-communication activities play in Rivers and Temperley's model (see figure 3.7). According to Littlewood, the first type of activities is the pre-communicative activities, which includes two sub-types: structural tasks that focus on learning grammar rules and structures; and quasi-communicative activities, which involve pseudo-dialogues and the practicing of communicative situations that help the learners to understand language meanings, functions, and their use in different social contexts.

The second type of activities, according to Littlewood, is the communicative activities. This category includes, functional communication activities, where learners are supposed to use the language effectively and to be able to handle real life, immediate, situations (Littlewood, 1981); and social interactive activities, where the learner experiences real communication activities within a "clearly defined social context" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 43, as cited in Bygate, 1987).

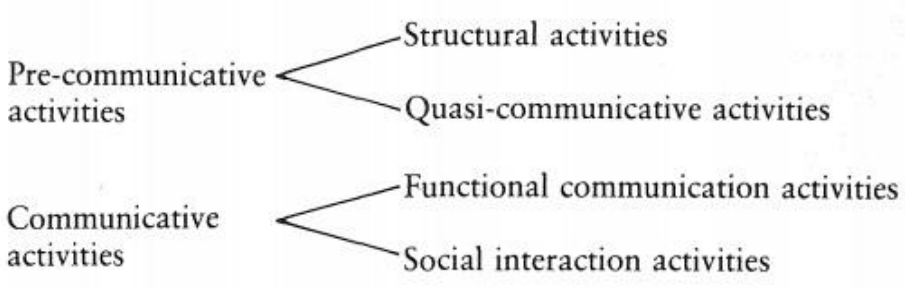


Figure.2.6. Littlewood's model of communicative activities

From the abovementioned, it appears that oral, communicative activities should focus on how to enhance the FL learners' ability to interact and to correctly use language in real contexts, and on providing them with the adequate amount of opportunities to do so. Communicative activities must be carefully designed, so that they can facilitate learners' acquisition of language skills and increase their level to match the complexity of real life situations.

2.3.6. Cooperative Learning and Oral Expression

"In interactive language teaching, comprehension and production retrieve their normal relationship as an interactive duo. To achieve this, we need an ambiance and relations among individuals that promote a desire for interaction" (Rivers, 1987, p. 9). For verbal interactions between peers to take place, it is crucial for instructors to set a suitable environment that lures students and encourages them to engage in the speaking activities. For oral expression skills to be enhanced, exchange between students must be promoted in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere.

The traditional, individualistic, method of teaching oral Expression received its share of criticism by many researchers like, Brumfit (1984) and Bown and Yule (1983). Brumfit (1984) recommended the use of group work and stated that, such methods increase the learners' engagement and turn the classroom into a "natural" environment where the students feel less pressure, compared to situations when they are put in teacher-fronted settings where it is very intimidating for the individual student to stand up and express his/her thoughts in front of a whole classroom.

"Cooperative learning means sharing, encouraging, and accepting responsibility for one's own learning and that of others" (Rivers, 1983a, p. 77). From this definition, and from many others which were mentioned in the previous section of the current chapter (section one), it seems that cooperative learning is quite the effective method when it comes to fostering reciprocity and interaction among FL learners, since, it allows more talk-time and creates a friendlier ambiance for the students, and reduces the visibility of the teacher as the center of the classroom, where Johnson, et.al (2013, p.10) argue that: "The more effort students

expend in working together to achieve, the more they tend to like each other. The more they like each other, the harder they tend to work to learn".

Such group work instructions increase the students' appreciation of each other and the uniqueness of their roles and contribution as equal partners. This sense of respect which students give to and receive from each other makes them shun less and engage more in conversations and encourages them to express their opinions and ideas with more confidence (Rivers, 1987).

Strategies like Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share stand as good examples of perfect instruction through which EFL students' can enhance their oral expression skills, where, in these types of activities one can imagine a cooperative learning scenario, where a group of EFL students (be it a triad or a dyad) are engaging in a conversation about a specific topic, and expressing ideas in English where, one of the low-level students stutters and struggles with a word, as he/she tries to get his/her point across. Here, on the part of the struggling student, who is a member of a positively interdependent cooperative group, he/she should feel comfortable using one of the cooperative, communicative, strategies which Faerch and Kasper (1983) refer to as "direct appeal", where he/she asks his/her partners for the English word, directly, without resorting to L1, and in the case of cooperative learning strategy, without feeling pressure or worrying about his/her self-esteem or resorting to the indirect appeal strategies or conscious transfer (Tarone, 1977).

On the other hand, on the part of his/her high-level partners, as cooperative group members whom were, also, instructed to be interdependent and were encouraged to help one another, in case of a shy interlocutor, they should take the initiative and help their low-achieving partner to prevent him/her from taking the avoidance or message abandonment route, where the former stems from the shortage in vocabulary, and the latter is due to the lack of the appropriate knowledge about the concept being discussed (Tarone, 1977). By doing so, students not only preserve each other's self-esteem during the conversation, but, also, help in closing each other's knowledge gap.

The cooperative learning classroom is a setting where "students use language purposefully and unrelentingly. They listen to instructions and explanations; they speak to ask questions and justify their conclusions. They collaborate with others to gather, evaluate, and communicate information" (Lotan, 2014). From this definition, it seems that cooperative learning instructions represent templates for pseudo-communication activities, which can be considered as both, pre-communicative activities, precisely, quasi-communicative ones, where the students go through pseudo-dialogues which helps them understand language functions and meanings; and as communicative, functional communication and social activities (Littlewood, 1981), where they use the language and practice real-life-like communicative situations, in small groups, and consequently improve not only their speaking skills (linguistic gains) but also their interpersonal small-group skills (cooperative gains) in the process.

According to Lotan (2014) "students' use of language depends upon and indicates active engagement as learning and constructing understanding occur through interaction with peers". This very notion of encouraging students to engage and interact with each other is promoted through one of the main elements of cooperative learning which is face-to-face interaction, where, the latter promises more, equal, chances for students to participate and take part of the conversation or the negotiation and, consequently acquire new skills from their high-level partners and, at the same time, get the opportunity to practice them, which fulfills Rivers and Temperley's (1978) criteria of skill-getting and skill-using.

2.3.7. Cooperative Learning and the Oral Expression Achievement Gap

Like in any area in the language learning, achievement gap in the oral language proficiency is mostly aggrandized by the inequity and the gap in opportunity in terms of students' rate of participation and the chances for them to be assigned by the teacher to answer the question, which contribute to the discrepancy in the speaking skills level among individual learners as only the high-level ones get to develop their prowess in oral expression through active participation. For the low-achiever, the dominant peers are not the only hurtle that hurdles his/her

improvement, but also the individualistic teaching method that encourages alienation and puts surpassing one's classmate as a the key to success. Teachers need to realize that the enhancement in the students' speaking depends on the enhancement of the teaching method and the quality of the tasks where the more the verbal exchange is maximized among students the better the quality of the activity and the more promising are the outcomes as it is the case with cooperative learning instructions (McGroarty, 1989).

One of the advantages that cooperative learning has over the individualistic method is the fact that less-proficient learners can use their high-achieving partners as a source of information and correction, where all group members are encouraged to rephrase and repair their partners' utterances and thus fill each others' gaps in the process (Cohen & Lotan, 2005).

Actually, the challenge of mixed-ability classrooms does not only affect the students, but the teacher as well, where it is difficult to choose between either assigning activities that fit the low-level students or the high-level ones. Here, the more advisable method is increasing the resources for the students, especially the low-achievers, who can benefit from their teammates by seating them in cooperative heterogeneous groups (Oakes, 2005). In fact the more the cooperative learning practice students get, while working in heterogeneous groups, the better the high-achievers can serve as linguistic resources for their low-achieving partners (Cohen & Lotan, 2005).

Evidence concerning how equitable cooperative learning strategies are can be manifested in the fact that high-achievers while serving as resources for their less-proficient partners, can still benefit from the act of explaining where, for them, it "represents one of the first ways to solidify their own learning (Webb, 1983)" (Cohen é Lotan, 2005, p. 23). Moreover, students who practice the skills of explaining and help providing benefit the most from the cooperative groups' discussions (Webb & Farivar, 1999) as long as equitable interaction is ensured, lest the high-achievers may dominate the conversation.

Just like all students need a comprehensive input of oral English they all need an equal output in order to practice and make sense of what they have learned. The idea behind using cooperative learning in the teaching of oral expression is to get all the students to improve their speaking skills with one another and to, consequently, reduce the gap in the achievement. One way to explain the effectiveness of cooperative learning in narrowing the achievement gap is through the fact that group members with mixed-abilities work on the same input, which may be difficult to the low-achievers at the beginning, and come up with the same output that is agreed upon and understood by all group members.

An example of that in the oral expression class can be: a heterogeneous group of students is assigned to solve a problem, here, the positive interdependence between group members obliges them to share ideas and help each other phrase them, and to explain difficult vocabulary and correct grammar errors for each other while negotiating and debating until an agreement is reach on a final product. In this example, equity and simultaneous improvement bring about the closing of opportunity and the knowledge gap, respectively, and ultimately lead to the closing of the achievement gap.

It falls upon the teacher the responsibility of assigning interesting and stimulating tasks that absorb both the high- and the low-achievers. Notions about interest and stimulus bring into the discussion two factors that intervene in almost every educational setting, motivation and attitude. In a well designed cooperative learning, students can be intrinsically motivated without the need for any rewards of external sources like grades, as Lotan and Cohen (2005, p. 67) state that when there is an equal, verbal, exchange "Most students care about making an engaging presentation and being recognized by their peers. They don't want to look foolish and unprepared". Here, in order to motivate students to engage in the group work activities, the teacher needs to make sure that two important elements are present and understood by the students, individual accountability and group goals (Slavin, 2010) where the success of the individual group member depends on his/her engagement and at the same on the engagement of his teammates. So without the

need for a group reward, the momentum that students gain from these two factors involves all members in the activity and closes the engagement gap between them by, simultaneously, intrinsically motivating both the high- and the low-achievers to interact with each other.

Assigning students a well designed cooperative learning activity helps both the teacher and the students to rip benefit of the peer pressure which would be considered as an obstacle in the traditional individualistic method. That is to say, when realizing that every member's contribution is mandatory, less active students feel pressured into participating in the conversation due to the intrinsic variables that play in the cognition of the learner like the tendency to avoid being the black sheep of the group, here, even if the student feels that he/she needs to protect his/her sense of self-worth the pressure is positive since he/she is worried about how to contribute to the group effort instead of how to avoid participating in the activity, unlike the individualistic instructions where the competitive peers represent a threat to the individual learner which he/she feels the need to avoid interacting with, leading to the dominance of the high-achievers which contributes to the achievement gap between the latter and their low-achieving classmates.

Another factor that can increase the cooperative group members' motivation is the fact that helping each other fill linguistic gaps increases not only the students' self-worth as indispensible contributors but their beliefs about their competence as well, which affects positively their motivation, for when the learner believes that intelligence is multidimensional and that his/her dexterity in a certain area of language learning (vocabulary) is needed by other group members, his/her intrinsic motivation to participate with and help his/her partner increases (Dweck, 2008), which adds to the teacher's responsibilities the task of convincing the students that "many different intellectual abilities are necessary to successfully complete groupworthy tasks" (Cohen & Lotan, 2005, p. 152).

A second main factor that affects the achievement gap in oral expression is attitude which represents a variable that differs from one individual to another. How cooperative learning can deal with attitude is an important issue to discuss. The first

thing that needs to be realized is that attitudes in the oral expression like in any other language learning subject stems from a variety of factors one of which is status, which stands for a tribute that is believed to have an association with worthiness and competence (Cohen & Lotan, 2005). Status affects indirectly the learners' attitudes toward the learning context, precisely toward their peers, which can be more harmful and less controllable in the competitive setting than in the cooperative one.

In the individualistic classroom, high- and low-status students develop opposite beliefs and attitudes toward each other where the high-status learners regard the low-status as incompetent and thus not worthy of interacting with, while, on the other hand, the low-status students regard the high-status ones as way too competent and difficult to interact with and, thus, shy away from participating and conversing with them. This may affect the students' attitude toward the assignment and raise doubts about the worthiness of participating in the activity.

This problem can be overcome or, at least, be minimized through a well implemented cooperative learning, where students are informed about how to interact with and treat each other, and more importantly when students are taught that the activity involves different types of competence and that intelligence is multi-dimensional. Here, the high-status start to expect more from the low-status where the latter start to feel better and to develop more positive beliefs about their ability to interact with their high-achieving partners. Also, when assigned competence by the teacher like, for example, being called on to summarize the final answer, the low-status students gain more confidence and develop a favorable attitude and positive expectancies regarding their ability and task difficulty, and at the same time become perceived by their high-status peers as worthy of interaction as a result of a change in the attitude of the high-status members toward their, formerly, low-status teammates.

The less the difference in status between the high-and the low-status students the more likely they are to interact, exchange ideas, and fill each other's linguistic gap, which is the essence of cooperative learning and the right trajectory to closing

the gap in attitude and motivation and, thus, the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the EFL classroom.

2.4. Conclusion

The current chapter dealt with cooperative learning and the achievement gap in oral expression in two separate sections. The first section of chapter two attempted at explaining the concept of cooperative learning, where it provided a brief definition of the latter, its main five elements (positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal small-group skills, and group-processing), and its three different types, the formal, the informal, and base-group cooperative learning.

This section also included some of the pro-cooperative learning theories which are Vigotsky's (1978) theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Covington's (1992) theory of self-worth, and Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy. Finally, in this section, data gleaned from previous studies in the field of cooperative learning were presented to back up the theoretical framework.

The second section of this chapter dealt with the concept of oral expression, which represents the context of the study, where, the definition of speaking was provided based on the work of Bygates (1987) and the speaking process was explained in light of Levelt's (1995) model. In this section we also discussed some of the communicative activities models, namely, those of Rivers and Temperley (1978) and Littlewoods (1981) and, also, went through some of the communicative strategies where we discussed Tarone's (1977) and Faerch and Kasper's (1983) comments on the matter. At the end of the section, the effectiveness of cooperative learning (which was discussed in the previous section) with respect to enhancing EFL students' oral expression level was discussed briefly. Finally, the effectiveness of cooperative learning in teaching oral expression and the effect of the latter on the achievement gap was discussed. This chapter concluded the theoretical part of our dissertation. Next is the practical part of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design

3.1. Introduction

After delving into details about the previously discussed concepts of attitude, motivation, oral expression, and cooperative learning in the preceding chapters, which represent the theoretical part of our dissertation, this chapter is devoted to the more technical part of our research, which is design and intervention.

This chapter starts by describing in details the research design and methods, where it discusses aspects of the elected research type and the rationale behind it, the three variables of our study, which are: the independent variable of cooperative learning, the two intervening variables which are motivation and attitude, and the dependent variable which represents the achievement gap; and the data collection methods used to carry the investigation, which are the pretest and the posttest, the questionnaire, and the interview. The chapter also highlights the methods used in collecting and processing the data and attempts to explain how the data gathered from the different research tools is triangulated.

This chapter also deals with the intervention, where it provides information about the activities that are used to implement cooperative learning. These details include instructions and activity plans concerning the objectives, the time, the process, the accountability, and the debriefing. Following that, comments are to be raised for a further understanding of the intervention.

3.2. Situation Analysis

During this age of globalization, English language use has known a wide spread and reached a status of a paramount priority over all the languages around the world. This leading position which English has taken made it an indispensible language through which international relations, trades, technology, and science are made possible and accessible. The teaching of English has become mandatory, where even countries whose first language is not English, integrate English teaching in their curricula in early educational stages like middle-schools and high-schools, as it is the case with Algeria.

Algeria, a country that was colonized by the French and consequently adopted the French language as a first foreign language, with Arabic as L1, had, but to subscribe to the global view of the English language as the first language in the world, where it became one of the most studied foreign languages in the country, however, the use of this language, whether inside or outside the country happens only with foreigners who cannot speak either Arabic or French or in the classroom.

However, reaching communicative competence in English is crucial not only for academic purposes, but also, for cases of oral communications, where it can be useful in handling situations abroad or when traveling to another country where it may play the role of a shared code. In the Algerian situation, the context where English is studied and used the most is the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

3.3. English as a Foreign Language in the Algerian University

In the Algerian university EFL classroom, the dominant way of teaching is the traditional individualistic method, where, in a teacher-centered flow, the lesson is delivered in a non-interactive manner and where an important aspect of learning a foreign language, without which communicative competence cannot be achieved, skill-using (Rivers & Temperley, 1978), is neglected.

Among the four language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), the one which is most affected by the individualistic teaching practice is the speaking skill (oral expression). In the Algerian university, oral expression is taught in laboratories, which are, in fact, classrooms that are equipped with computers, which enable the students to listen to recordings and practice their comprehension skills (listening). However, when it comes to expressing ideas and practicing the language verbally, students, facing the teacher, answer questions individually, with the individual learner feeling pressure in front of his/her classmates and the teacher controlling the students' talk time, if not consuming most of it, and only assigning the excellent learners**.**

Having only the high-level students participate in the activities, takes away the advantage of reciprocity, which the oral communication has over writing and reading, and increases the gap between the high- and low-achieving students by alienating them from each other and by following an unfair policy in terms of providing them with equal opportunities.

In the Algerian society, where English is not a language one can hear in public places, it sounds inadequate for an EFL learner, who only attends one oral expression session per week (one and half an hour), to spend the session as an audience, who passively listens to the teacher and only participates when he/she thinks that he/she has the right answer.

This method of teaching Oral expression, which limits students' time, affects negatively the Algerian EFL learner whose only place for practicing his/her speaking skills is the classroom. Moreover, minimizing the students' opportunities to practice pseudo-communication situations in the classroom yields out, non-competent language users who cannot cope with real life situation.

During the last two decades, attempts to target the issue of the lack of oral English practice were made by Algerian researchers, this was manifested in doctoral dissertations, articles, and master theses (Mebarki & Boudjemaa, 2016; Benfateh & Maddour, 2013; Boussiada & Moumen, 2010; Ghodbane & El Achachi, 2019; Hmdini & Bousbai, 2019) which encouraged alternative teaching methods, namely, cooperative learning. This study at hand, is also, intended to serve the purpose of contributing to the increasing body of research in the field of cooperative learning studies, where it aims at highlighting the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing Algerian EFL students' speaking skills and reducing the gap between high- and low-achieving students. Details about the current study's design and methods are to be discussed immediately in the following section.

3.4. Research Methodology

This section is intended to detail the methodology that was carried through the research process, the instruments used for data collection, and the rationale

behind choosing such research strategies. It also inspects the sample population of the study.

3.4.1. Research Design

This study was carried out following a true experimental, pretest-posttest control group design. This type of research design is the most common among all other experimental types (one-shot case study, one-group pretest-posttest design, and Solomon four-groups design, etc). In this type of research, the sample is achieved through a random assignment, where the researcher divides it into two sub-groups, the experimental and the control group. The experimental group represents the group of subjects that receive the treatment, while, the control groups represents the witness group, against which the effectiveness of the treatment on the experimental group will be compared. In this study, the treatment, which is the independent variable, is cooperative learning.

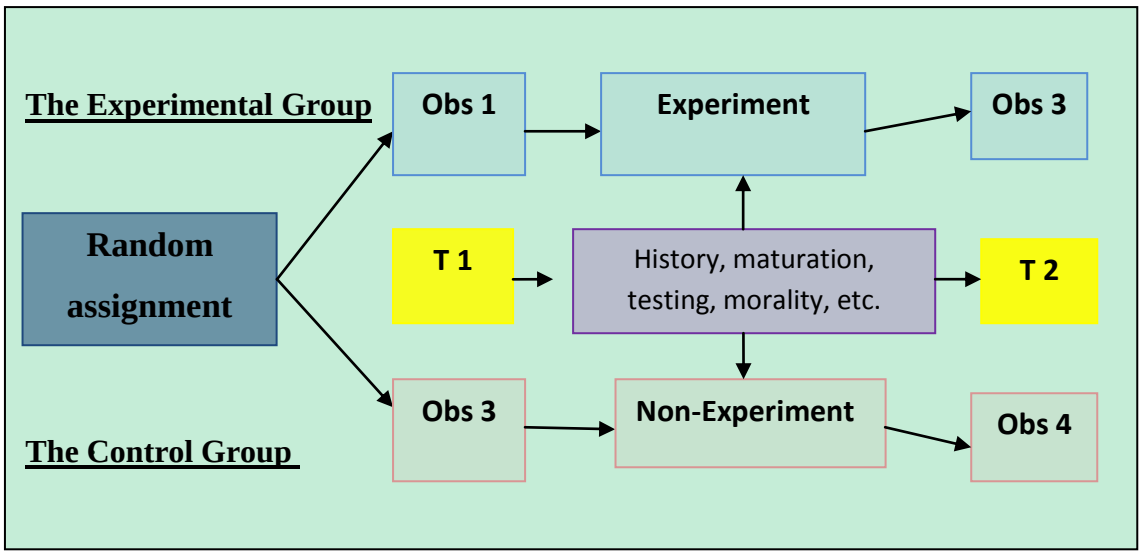
Before the treatment (using cooperative learning strategies) takes place, both, the experimental and the control groups are tested. The test that occurs before the manipulation is referred to as a pre-test, while, the one that proceeds it is called a posttest.

The reason behind resorting to such methodology is because, in the pretest-posttest control group design, factors threatening internal validity are controlled if not eliminated, where Bryman (2012, p. 50) states that: "true experiments tend to be so strong in terms of internal validity". One of these factors is the intra-session history (or simply, history), which represents the possibility that the set of events that happen in the period of time between the pretest and posttest may intervene and be part of the variation that happens in the dependent variable, which in our case could be the assumption that other rival variables (other than cooperative learning) might have increased the performance of the experimental group subjects.

This variable can be controlled, in the case of a well practiced experiment, by running, simultaneously the experimental and the control sessions, under the same circumstances (as it is in our case), which can also, lead to the controlling of other

related factors such as, maturation and testing (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Campbell, 1957; Campbell & Cook, 1979), where the former refers to the possibility for the experimental subject to develop or change "anyway", without the need for the intervention; and the latter refers to when the students become "more experienced at taking a test or may become more sensitized to the aim of the experiment as a result of the pre-test" (Bryman, 2012, p. 52).

So, by using a control group and running the sessions, simultaneously, in both settings, it can be ensured that the same history and maturation factors took place in both the experimental and the control settings, and that the only difference, which caused the dependent variable to change, is the presence of the independent variable in the experimental, and its absence in the control, group (see figure 3.1)



Note: Obs1 and Obs 2= pretest and posttest in the experimental group, respectively; Obs 3 and Obs 4= pretest and posttest in the control group, respectively; T1 and T2 =the two occasions, before and after the intervention, when the pretest and the posttest took place.

Figure.3.1. Research process and internal validity threats adapted from (cook & Campbell, 1979; Bryman, 2012, p. 52)

As it is shown in figure 3.1, the steps of the current research flow in the following order: the experiment starts with a random assignment of the sample, where it is divided into an experimental and a control group; afterward, a pretest takes place, before the intervention, where the treatment and the placebo sessions

are run simultaneously, and during which only the experimental group receives the independent variable (CL); and finally, the posttest takes place.

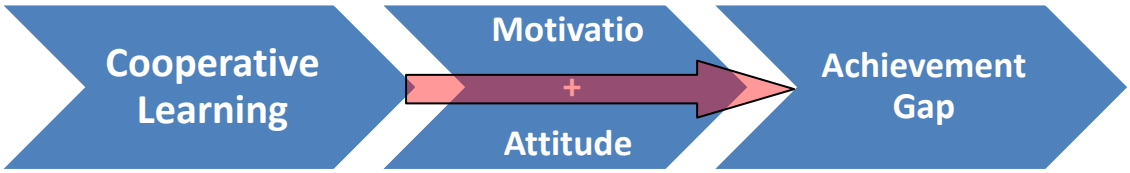
Other threats to the internal validity are, instrumentation, which refers to the situation when the criteria used in testing change when posttesting after the intervention; and the experimental morality, which stands for the loss of subjects, in studies that last for long periods of time.

Another reason for choosing the experimental design is because of its suitability for the context of the EFL classroom research. Thus, in the context of the current study, the used methodology is regarded as a field experiment and not a laboratory one for the reason that, field experiments are designed for real life environments, like a classroom setting, and is more compatible when it comes to social studies, whereas in the laboratory experiments, the setting is more controlled and suffers from the lack of naturalness, which affects, subsequently, the ecological validity of the study (Bryman, 2012).

Other advantages that field experiments have over laboratory experiments are, that the former promise more external validity and that there is less, if not no interaction between setting and treatment, or between the latter and selection (Bryman, 2012).

3.4.2. Variables of the study

This study, like any other social experiment, attempts to establish "causal propositions supported by data and logic" (Davis, 1985, p. 10). The two main variables of this investigation are, the independent variable, which is cooperative learning; and the dependent variable, which constitutes the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students. However, there is another type of variables which is involved in this equation, which is, the intervening variables (also mediating variables) a term that was coined by Edward Tolman (as Cited in Innis, 1999), which refers to unobservable behavior that helps explaining causal relationships between independent and dependent variables. Our two intervening variables are motivation and attitude (see figure 3.2).



Figue.3.2.The independent, the dependent, and the intervening variables

3.4.3. Sample Population

The sample of the study represents forty four (44) from a population 120 second year EFL students at the university of Abes Laghrour Khenchala-Algeria. The sample was selected through a simple random assignment. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, The researcher defined the population, where he opted for second year EFL students at the University of Abbes Laghrour, Khenchela-Algeria, which represents N=120 students; then, decided the sample size and, randomly assigned a sample of n=44. The sample consists of mixed level students (17 males and 27 females) with different ages which range from 20 to 40 years.

Regarding the students sample, the questionnaire was submitted to the experimental group of the study at the post-intervention phase. The experimental group includes 22 students and consists of seven males and 15 females with different ages that range between 20 and 40 years.

The teachers' sample includes six English Teachers from the same university with different levels of experience (where 3 of them hold a master's degree and 3 hold a magister degree with teaching experiences that range between 2 to 7 years), gender, and age (between 27 and 45 and who have taught oral expression before).

3.4.4. Methods of Data Collection

In order to collect data, the researcher employed a variety of data gathering strategies. This section is committed to the data collection tools that were used in this study, which are, the pretest, the posttest, the questionnaire and the teachers' interview.

3.4.4.1. The Pretest and the Posttest

The pretest took the form of a conversation or a dialogue between a pair of students. At the beginning, the examiner shuffles a number of small cards and then, one of the participants randomly picks up one card. Each one of these cards has, written on it, a statement or phrase which represents the subject to be discussed between the students. After preparing their ideas, for one minute, the students start their conversation and during the three-minutes-dialogue, the examiner rates the students' speaking skills level.

This method of testing is adapted from the English for Aviation Language Testing System (EALTS) speaking test, which is used by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The reason behind adapting this multi-level speaking test is because of the fact that it has language proficiency assessment components that not only pertain to the aviation domain but to general English as well and helps n measuring different levels of speaking skills which range from pre-elementary (1) to expert level (6) (see appendix A).

Another reason is the reliability of this EALTS test which is managed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority international (CAAi) and language testing and assessment services Ltd (LTAS), where, according to the CAAi EALTS Handbook (2012), the latter is certified and empowered by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to function as an Aviation English proficiency evaluator.

The researchers also adopted the same assessment method that is used in EALTS speaking test, where students' performance was judged against what is known as the holistic descriptors, a set of criteria used by the EALTS examiners to evaluate the participant's speaking proficiency. These descriptors are, structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and interaction. The use of such a recognized test as a guide helped our study to gain more construct validity.

For the test, which is designed for aviation English learners, to fit into the current research objectives, the criteria which pertain to the field of aviation were omitted, so that the test would be well-matched with the EFL context. These

aviation-related criteria comprise, work related topics, routine, familiar, and unfamiliar situations which are related to the aviation domain, and which were included in the Vocabulary, the comprehension, and the interaction columns (see table 3.1). The EALTS speaking test rating scale contains six levels of proficiency.

In order to avoid the effect of threatening variables on the internal validity, namely the instrumentation variable, the posttest took the same form, matched the same level of difficulty, and followed the same evaluation method used in the pretest. The posttest took place after the intervention.

The purpose of using the pretest and the posttest is to measure the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students. The sample represents 44 second year EFL students at the University of Khenchela, Algeria, who were randomly selected and assigned into two groups of 22, the experimental and the control group.

After each test, each of the experimental an control groups were divided into two sub-groups, according to their achievement in the test, the high-achievers, which represent the students who scored between four and five (4-6) on the scale; and the low-achievers, those who scored between three and one (3-1). Then, the achievement gap between the high- and low-achieving students in the pretest and the posttest was calculated to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (cooperative learning), in reducing the achievement gap, compared to the individualistic method.

Table.3.1. EALTS speaking test holistic descriptors

Level	**Vocabulary**	**Structure** **Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.**	**Pronunciation** **Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the Aeronautical community.**	**Fluency**	**Comprehension**	**Interaction**
Expert 6	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of ~~familiar and unfamiliar~~ topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and ~~sensitive to register~~.	Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.	Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues, and responds to them appropriately.
Extended 5	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, ~~and work related~~ topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.	Able to speak at length with relative ease on ~~familiar topics~~, but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors	Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and ~~work related topics~~ and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.

Operational 4	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and ~~work related topics~~. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in ~~unusual or unexpected circumstances~~.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.	Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting	Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and ~~work related topics~~ when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an ~~unexpected turn of events~~, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an ~~unexpected turn of events~~. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying
Pre-Operational 3	Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete, or ~~work related~~ topics but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding	Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language	Comprehension is often accurate on common, concrete, and ~~work related~~ topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible	Responses are sometimes immediate, appropriate, and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on ~~familiar topics~~ and in ~~predictable situations~~. Generally inadequate when dealing with an ~~unexpected turn of events~~.
Elementary 2	Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorized phrases.	Shows only limited control of a few simple memorized grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding.	Can produce very short, isolated, memorized utterances with frequent pausing and a distracting use of fillers to search for expressions and to articulate less familiar words.	Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorized phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.	Response time is slow, and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple ~~routine~~ exchanges

Pre-Elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below	Performs at a level below	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.

Results from the pretest and the posttest were measured after each phase in both settings: the experimental (which was exposed to the independent variable, cooperative learning) and the control setting (where no manipulation took place). The statistical method that was used to calculate the achievement gap was an effect-size procedure called Cohen's d.

Cohen's d is an effect-size measurement which helps to gauge the magnitude of an intervention's effect. The great advantage of using such a measure is the fact that: "Unlike significance tests, these indices are independent of sample size" (Lipsey & Wilson, 1993, as cited in Dattalo, 2008, p. 149). In other words, using Cohen's d eliminates two problems, which can threaten the validity of our current study, which are, the small sample size as well as the, likely, low statistical significance of the results**.**

According to Cohen (1988), d, which in our case represents the standardized difference between two groups (the high- and the low-achievers), is the difference between the two means divided by the pooled standard deviation of both groups (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996), where the latter is "root mean square of the two standard deviations" (Cohen, 1988, p. 44):

$$d = M1 - M2 / S_{pooled}$$

Where: $S_{pooled} = \sqrt{[(S1^2+S2^2) / 2]}$

In fact, Cohen has suggested a rule for interpreting the value of the effect size, where he considered "d=0.2" as a small effect-size, "d=0.5" as a medium difference, and "d=0.8" as a large one.

In many studies, Cohen's d effect-sizes are converted into what is called "true" effect-size (ES*) in order to increase the accuracy of the observed scores and, consequently, the reliability of the results. However, in this study we preferred to deal with the phenomenon as it is observed, in other words, the researchers chose to use the "observed" results of the groups since they represent what is real which fits better field-experiments unlike the processed "true scores". A second reason is

because the observed effect-size values help us report the achievement gap as it is and that using the corrected "true scores" instead would be misleading since the corrective process reduces the magnitude of Cohen's d, the achievement gap, and produces artificial results. This is not to imply that reliability is a minor concern in this study, but is to give more naturalness to the results and to show that they are not manipulated. However, we encourage the use of the (ES*) in cases of meta-analyses where what is regarded as an unthreatening bias in a single study can be serious when combining multiple studies.

3.4.4.2. The Questionnaire

As it is commonly structured, the questionnaire starts with a brief introduction, which begins with a greeting and trough which, the purpose of the research is explained for the respondents. The respondents were also informed about how to answer closed-ended questions, where they were instructed to choose a point on the scale and tick the corresponding box.

The questionnaire is a total of 14 items divided into three sections (Appendix B). The first section asks (two) questions about students' age and sex. The second section deals with the concept of students' attitudes and preferences in terms of which methods of learning they do favor. This section consists of seven items. The third section of the questionnaire seeks information about students' motivation. This section contains five items. The questionnaire contains closed-ended questions, with the answers arranged horizontally, and where most are followed by a contingency question to elicit more information; as well as open-ended questions.

The method used to distribute the questionnaire, was a supervised administration, where the respondents were treated as a captive audience, sitting in the classroom. This method of administration allowed the researcher the chance to have a direct contact with the respondents and helped him clarify difficulties to them. It is also less time consuming and promises a higher response rate compared to other methods.

Another advantage of administering the questionnaire to the respondents in a natural setting is the fact that, putting respondents in settings that are usual to them like a classroom, and distributing the questionnaires in a manner that is familiar to them, like an exam-like fashion, promises more ecological validity (Bryman, 2012).

During the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher supervised the students, so that less talk and copying between students can take place. The informants were instructed to answer the questions by themselves and were encouraged to seek clarifications from the researcher whenever an ambiguity is encountered. After the respondents finished, the researcher collected back the sheets. At the end the participants were thanked and dismissed.

Data gathered from the questionnaire were processed quantitatively, through a univariate analysis, where each variable was treated separately and where the data were displayed in pie charts. The researcher decided to avoid treating the students' attitudes as scores because of the misleading nature of such method, where, some respondent may achieve the same scores but answer differently to separate items (Shah, 2004, as cited in Reid, 2015). Simply put, attitudes "cannot be reduced to a number" (Reid, 2015, p. 26).

3.4.4.3. The Interview

The researcher conducted a structured interview with English teachers from the University of Abess Laghrour Khenchela, Algeria. The interview schedule includes, both types, closed- and open-ended questions (Appendix C) and the participants' answers are recorded on a phone. The researcher used a phone to record and later analyze the respondents answers thoroughly, and also to benefit from many other advantages, which are according to Heritage (1984, p. 238):

- It helps to collect the natural limitations of our memories and of the intuitive glosses that we might place on what people say in interviews;
- It allows more thorough examination of what people say;
- It permits repeated examinations of the interviewees' answers;

- It opens up data to public scrutiny by other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data;
- It therefore helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher's values or biases; and
- It allows the data to be reused in other ways from those intended by the original researcher-for example, in the light of new theoretical ideas or analytic strategies.

The teachers' sample consists of six, randomly assigned, English language teachers from the English department at the University of Abbes Laghrour Khenchela, who are expected to have adequate experience and knowledge about language teaching which can benefit and cater to the study at hand.

After the interviewees were contacted through a face-to-face meeting at the University and on the phone, the interview appointments were set in convenient settings, where some of them took place at the university, with four teachers, and others were held in, a cafe, with one teacher, and at the interviewer's house, with just one teacher.

Most of the interviews conducted lasted for about 20 to 25 minutes. The interview schedule consisted of fourteen items organized under three sections. The first section sought personal information about the interviewees, while, the second one was concerned with teacher's perceptions about teaching methods. The third section asked the teachers questions about the effect of cooperative learning on their students' motivation and attitudes.

The reason behind sequencing the items in this order (with the questions that target opinions and attitudes preceding the ones that target knowledge) is because; knowledge questions are "less affected by question order than do questions that tap opinions and attitudes" (Bryman, 2012, p. 222). Data gathered from the interviews are analyzed qualitatively and are used to explain and supports the quantitative data that are collected from the pre- and the post-test, and the questionnaire.

This study represents a true experimental investigation that follows a pretest-posttest control group design. The data collection tools were combined in order to measure and illicit more information about the studied variables, which are, cooperative learning (the independent variable), the achievement gap (the dependent variable), and students' motivation and their attitudes toward cooperative learning, which represent the intervening variables of the study (see table 3.2). The data were analyzed using, both, the quantitative and the qualitative approach (see figure 3.3).

Table.3.2. Variables and data collection methods

Variables	The questionnaire	The interview	Pretest/posttest
Attitude	**X**	**X**	**X**
Motivation	**X**	**X**	**X**
Achievement gap		**X**	**X**

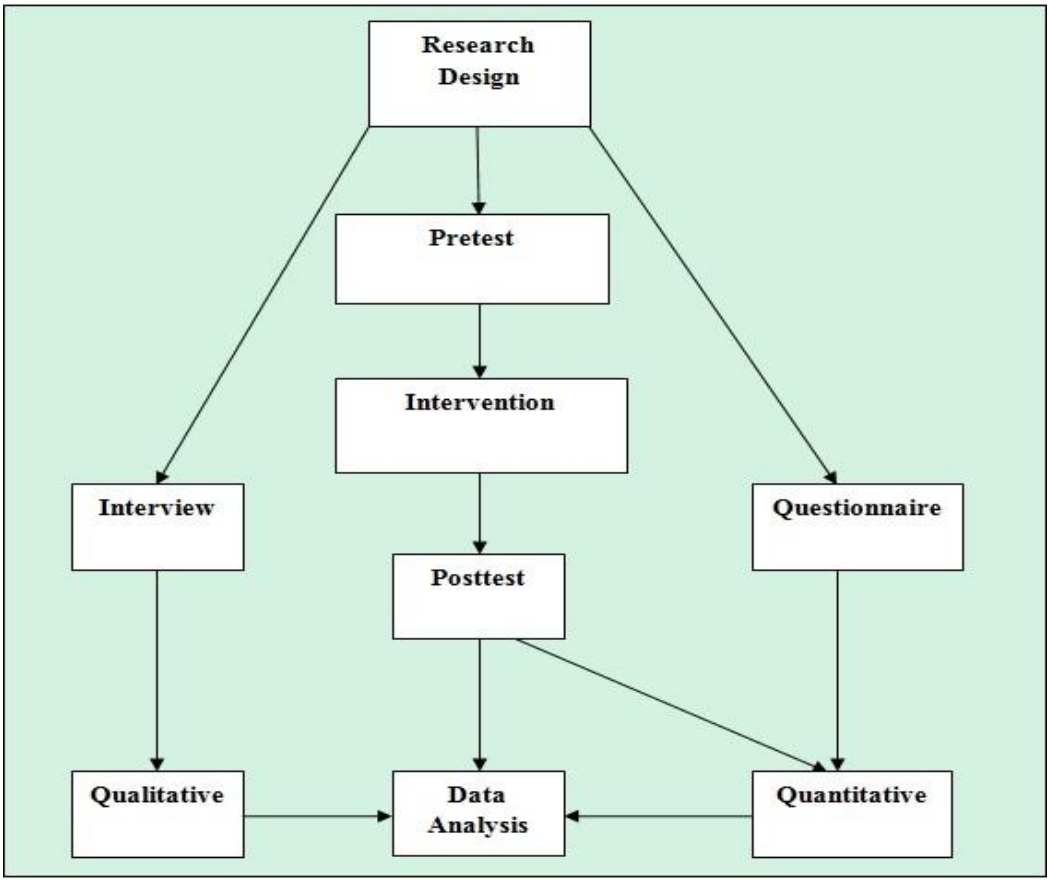


Figure.3.3. Data collection and analysis process

3.4.5. Data Analysis

Throughout the research process, the researchers collect different types of data using a variety of methods. The data collected come in two formats, which are quantitative through the pre- and the post-test and the questionnaire, and qualitative which are the information that are elicited from the interviews. To be able to analyze both types of data, the researcher followed a mixed approach to data analysis, where, the qualitative data, generated from the interview, were used to explain and support the numeric findings from testing and the questionnaire.

The use mixed-methods or the triangulation strategy in a research enables the researchers to cross-check the quantitative findings against the qualitative ones. In the current study, the qualitative interview is used to corroborate with, explain, and to check the quantitative results from the pretest/posttest and the questionnaire.

The type of triangulation used to carry this research is what Denscombe (2007) refers to as methodological (between-methods) triangulation, where the view of the subject-matter from different angles, allows the quantitative and the qualitative methods to complement, and compensate for the flaws and drawbacks of, each other. Where he states that:

> The notion of triangulation draws on trigonometry and the geometric laws associated with triangles. There are many applications of these laws but one extremely valuable application concerns the ability to find the exact location of a point if it is viewed from two other known positions" (Denscombe, 2007, p.135)

Another type of triangulation that was employed in this research to check the validity is the informant triangulation, which constitutes the use of different sources of information (Denscombe, 2007), which, in the current case, are the second year EFL students (questionnaire) and the English teachers (interviews) at the University of Abbes Laghrour Khenchela-Algeria.

3.4.6. The Intervention

During the intervention which took place during the first semester and lasted for, precisely, twelve weeks, the students were exposed to a variety of cooperative learning activities that were used to teach oral expression skills (see Appendix D). This section provides information about the treatment and about how these cooperative learning strategies were implemented.

The intervention took the form of cooperative learning tasks, which were adapted from a book called "Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College courses" by Alice Macpherson (2007), a tool kit for teachers, which provides activities, in template form, that are structured and designed for the cooperative learning classroom (table.3.3). These templates serve as guides that can be used to "support instructors in enabling learners to effectively assimilate and apply curriculum material to meet the learning objectives" (Macpherson, 2007, p. IX).

These structures' usefulness lies in the fact that, they are flexible and suitable for teaching a variety of subject matters, including oral expression, and because they come with details and instructions which facilitate the teacher's mission, make clear the steps needed for the completion of the activity, and also, and more importantly, save time. These details include activity name, organizer, objective, pre-assessment, time, technique/equipment, process, group success/assessment, accountability, debrief, and summary, where Macpherson (2007, p. 30) explained them as follows:

Table.3.3. Template for Cooperative Learning Activities (Macpherson, 2007,p 20)

Purpose: What is the activity intended to do for the participants?

time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
# min	Provide information Guide the activity	Work interactively on objective	<type of> group, equipment
10 min	Complete accountability Debrief activity	Achieve content objective Discuss aids to process	Whole group

Activity-name of the activity

Organizer: A statement about how the activity bridges the content

Objective: A clear objective that can be achieved by the end of the activity

Pre-Assessment: Can the learner already accomplish this skill?

Time: How many minutes the activity will take. This will vary with the groups.

Techniques/Equipment: All equipment and materials that will be needed. All instructor actions. Monitor and support participation and the exchange of ideas.

Process: Type and size of the groups

- Steps in the activity
-
-

Group Success/Assessment: Everyone in the group has to able to explain the objective and how it was reached**.**

Accountability: How each person will be individually accountable for their part of the process?

Debrief: The group processes for how the activity went for each of them and how others helped them in their group.

Summary: The instructor's statement that wraps up the process.

3.4.6.1. Task Design

The lessons were designed to fit intermediate level students' capacity. The lessons involved materials and subjects that pertain to general English, where the same content was delivered, through cooperative structures for the experimental group, and the individualistic method, for the control group. The objectives included the achievement of linguistic (speaking) skills, however in the experimental group emphasis was put on the cooperative learning objectives, which represent the achievement of the five cooperative learning elements, which are,

positive interdependence, individual accountability, social skills, face-to-face (promotive) interaction, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Before the teacher started delivering the input (verbal statements, video, or a recorded conversation) one of his first responsibilities was to inform students about cooperative learning, its elements, and how the groups function. Learners must know that cooperative learning does not simply mean working together, and in order for this to happen, the teacher prepared the students on the outset of every session, informed them about what kind of skills they need to use, and introduced cooperative learning norms, where, the internalization of the latter helps "not only to produce the desired behavior but a willingness to enforce expectations for the behavior of others within the group" (Lotan, 2014, p. 41).

The internalization of these norms, which are displayed in table 3.4, plays a great role in facilitating cooperation and interaction between students, where, when internalized, these norms cause students to display, positive, helpful behaviors that can help them build better relationships with each other, and subsequently, exchange ideas and learn from each other more easily.

Table.3.4. Groupwork norms and behaviors adapted from (Lotan, 2014, p. 61)

Norms Required for Productive Groupwork	Behaviors
Responding to the needs of the group	• Pay attention to what other group members need. • No one is done until everyone is done
Learning to help, ask questions, and explain.	• Discuss and decide. • Give reasons for your suggestions. • Explain by telling how. • Everyone helps. • Help others do things for

	themselves. • Find out what others think. • Tell why.
Preventing dominance.	• Everyone gives information. • Make a plan. • Agree on strategies. • Describe accurately and in details. • Say your own ideas. • Listen to others; give everyone a chance to talk. • Ask others for their ideas • Give reasons for your ideas.

The absence of the knowledge about these cooperative norms can lead to the development of anti-social behaviors and conflicts between group members. Some of these anti-social behaviors are illustrated in the examples provided by Lotan (2014, p. 59), where she mentions some of the problems that one of her colleagues, Diane Kepner, faced during her experience with students working in groups:

- Two members site beside each other and hold or turn the book, the task card, or computer screen so that the other members of the groups cannot see it;
- Two group members sit across from each other and form a wedge to exclude a third member as they write and talk about their project;
- Group members actively discuss while one member withdraws;
- During a discussion, group members show by facial expressions and other movement that one member's contributions are never accepted;
- As one members joins the groups, another member shows that he or she wants nothing to do with this person;

- During a presentation to the class, one person shows that he or she does not want to be associated with the rest;
- During preparation for a skit, one member of the group is treated as if he or she cannot do anything right.

The teacher also had to decide on the group size and selection. According to Johnson et al., (1994), the smaller the group the easier and the more manageable the task, where, they suggest triads as the optimum form and argue that "In twos, no one is left out. Three's take more skill, but provide more resources. It takes careful planning for someone not to be left out of a four-some" (p. 5). Also, the task of group selection must not be left for the students, to prevent off-task behaviors (between friends), to give the learners the chance to work on their relations, and practice team building skills with the other classmates (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994), and to guarantee the heterogeneity of the groups. Change of the groups is advised, so that, best friends and worst enemies do not get stuck with each other (Macpherson, 2007).

3.4.6.2. Task Components

The tasks were designed following David Nunan's (1989) model, which includes six main components, Goal, input, activity, teacher role, learner role, and setting (see figure 3.4).

Figure.3.4. Task components adapted from Nunan's model (1989, p. 11)

In the current study, the tasks were designed to fit the cooperative learning setting where:

- **Goal**: represents clear objective(s) for both the teacher and learners which include cooperative learning objectives (the five cooperative learning elements) and linguistic objectives (the achievement of oral expression skills).
- **Input**: Includes inter-mediate level materials for teaching speaking skills which compromise different subjects that pertain to the use of general English.
- **Activity**: represents a set of cooperative learning activities that followed Macpherson's (2007) model of cooperative learning activities for college students.
- **Teacher Roles**: which were mainly to make pre-instructional decisions, monitor, intervene, and to explain the tasks to the students.
- **Learner Role**: includes, the previously mentioned, cooperative learning norms and helpful behaviors.
- **Setting**: represents group types, which were mostly pairs and Triads.

3.4.6.3. Notes about the Intervention

As means to implement cooperative learning in the oral expression classroom, the teacher used activities that encourage face-to-face interaction and engage the students in conversations about different topics. The purpose behind having students interact with each other is to increase the student-talk-time and the use of a greater variety of talk (Long & Porter, 1985).

Another benefit of allowing student-student interaction is increasing the chances for students to get to know each other and to build good relationships with their team members, leading to the creation of a positive friendly atmosphere for learning, which is one of the teachers responsibility, where the "good speaking teachers create a non-threatening environment and encourage learners to leave their

comfort zone and engage in tasks that require creative language use" (Nunan, 2015, p. 49).

Also, by giving students interactive activities, the teacher aims to help students internalize grammar rules and vocabulary use which, build up to the goal of achieving accuracy, and to, at the same time, help them practice the language for short and long turns, to help them reach another important goal, which is fluency. This, in fact, is application of the phrase "learn to speak by speaking" (Nunan, 2015, p. 55).

To encourage positive interdependence between group members, the teacher used activities that use an information gap between students to make mandatory the dependence of the individual learner on the other members, and at the same time, the dependence of other group members on the individual student (who is accountable for his/her contribution to the group's effort). So, giving students complementary portions of the information (Jigsaw) amalgamates students and makes indispensible the role and the contribution of every single member of the group.

To ensure individual accountability, during the activity, the teacher integrates a cooperative learning technique which is called Numbered-Heads-Together (which was integrated in session six), to call out a random student, and ask him/her a question which relate either to the content being discussed, or to the group process (which is another cooperative learning element that is being targeted). Another way that was used to ensure group-processing took place during the debrief phase, where the teacher asks the students to answer a question about how well the working in groups helped them understand the content, and how it can be improved.

The two techniques that were mostly relied on by the teacher are Think-Pair-Share and JIGSAW. Before the activity, the teacher was responsible for, assigning students to pairs/groups, by balancing the teams to maximizing heterogeneity and make sure no team has the advantage over the rest of the groups (Slavin, 1978); assigning roles, to ensure cooperation; arrange the students' positioning to a "knee

to knee and eye to eye" (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994, p. 5) position; and to explain to the students the cooperative leaning norms and how the activity works.

During the activity, the teacher is to monitor, walk around the room and approach one group/pair at a time to make sure that all members are interacting, encourage the reluctant ones, and to also check if the students need help with problem (a trouble-making member) to prevent any off-task behavior. As a way of encouraging the students to practice their conflict resolution skills, the groups were instructed to seek help from the teacher only when student-student interaction seems to fail at resolve the problem or to explain the task, objectives, etc.

AT the end of the activity, the teacher helps the students to reflect on their learning, and assess their team work, by allowing them to summarize and give the gist of what happened in terms of, cooperation or linguistic gains. Unlike in the traditional classroom, where the teacher is the one that does the debriefing, in cooperative learning, students are required to debrief, while the teacher plays the role of a listener (Raths, 1987).

On the effectiveness of debriefing, James Raths (1987, p. 27) states that: "Debriefing gives students relatively free rein to organize, compare, classify, evaluate, summarize, or analyze an experience" which also agrees with notion that cognitive rehearsal which take place during (the students') debrief, represents one of the most effective variables that determine the success of cooperative learning in helping the students recall and understand the content (Johnson & Johnson, 1995, Raths, 1987).

Regarding the task difficulty, the teacher decided to start from less complex to more complex activities, where in the middle of the intervention, some of the activities, like icebreaker tasks, were included again, for reasons that relate to the suitability of the technique for teaching a specific content, or for targeting a certain cooperative learning norm/element. Icebreaker activities help students develop the social skills that involve trust- and team-building. Think-Pair-Share and JIGSAW took the lion's share in the intervention and taught more complex content, involved

larger numbers, and focused on more cooperative learning elements and group skills.

At the end of every session the students were asked to celebrate task completion with their teammates as a means to foster a sense mutual success and interdependence between group members.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research design and the intervention phase. The content discussed included the research type and the methods employed for data collection, and a brief description about the teachers' and the students' sample. It also briefly discussed the correlation between the variables of the study, and, finally, provided details about the intervention phase and the activities that were employed to implement cooperative learning in the oral expression class. The next chapter is to deal with rest of the practical art of our study which involves data analysis, interpretation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

In this Chapter, data gathered from the previously mentioned research tools are to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and discussed for the purpose of answering our three research questions. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the results extracted from the pretest and the posttest, where the magnitude of the students' achievement gap is to be measured separately in both the experimental and the control settings and then findings from both groups are to be compared in order to determine which method is more effective in closing the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in oral expression.

The second part of the chapter is devoted to the data drawn from the questionnaire, where it provides a quantitative analysis followed by interpretation of the students' responses. In the third part of the current chapter, provides a qualitative analysis and an interpretation of the results obtained from the teachers' interview. Afterward, data from the three instruments are to be combined and discussed altogether in an attempt to confirm the three hypothesis of our study.

4.2. Tests Results

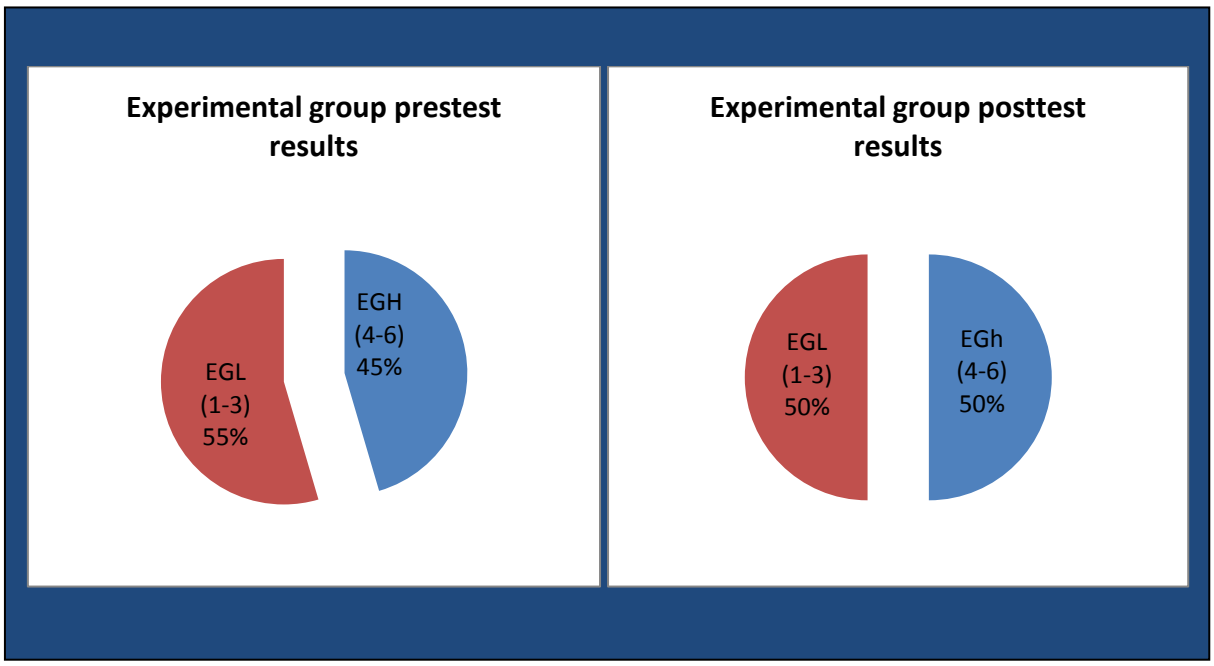
In the pre-intervention phase the researcher used the pretest with a sample of 44 students, and as it was explained in the previous chapter, the students took the test in the form of pseudo-communication activity, which was a simulation of the EALTS speaking test precisely the third task, which was modified and adapted so as to fit the EFL context. After that, students, from both the experimental and the control groups were assigned as either high-achievers (those who score between 4 and 6) or as low-achievers (those who scored between (1 and 3).

In this section, results from the experimental and the control group will be discussed separately, the achievement gap will be measured in the form of effect-size (Cohen's d) and the change in the achievement gap between the pretest and posttest scores will be compared, in both the experimental and the control settings,

to determine which method is more effective, cooperative learning or the individualistic method.

4.2.1. Experimental Group

The experimental group includes 22 subjects, who receive the independent variable (cooperative learning). After taking the pretest, the group is divided into two subgroups, the experimental subgroup of high-achieves (EGH), which represents participants who score between level four and six (4-6); and the experimental group of low-achievers (EGL), which consists of those who scored between level one an level three (1-6). The scores are displayed in pie chart 4.1.



Pie chart.4.1. The experimental group results in the pretest and the posttest

Data from pie chart 4.1 show that in the pretest the low-achievers represent the larger portion (55%), while, the low achievers represent the lower number which is (45%).

Concerning the posttest results, it seems that the number of students who scored higher than four (4) has increased from (45 %) in the pretest to (50%) in the posttest, whereas, the number of the students who achieved less than four (4) has slightly decreased, from (55%) in the pretest, to (50%) in the posttest.

4.2.1.1. Measuring the Experimental Group Achievement Gap in the Pretest

In order to measure the achievement gap between the high- and low-achievers in the experimental group the researcher decided to use an effect size measure known as Cohen's d (as it was explained previously in chapter four) in the pretest and the posttest separately. The current subsections deal with the experimental group's pretest results**.**

To calculate the effect size (d), the researcher employed the data displayed in table (4.1).

Table 4.1: Results from the Experimental Group Pretest

Group	Mean	Number	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
EGH	4,6000	10	,84327	,000
EGL	2,2500	12	,75378	,000

*p<0.005

To calculate the effect size d, values of the mean and standard deviation are used displayed in table 4.1 are used, where:

$\mathbf{d = M_1 - M_2 / S_{pooled}}$ and $\mathbf{S_{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(s_1^2 + s_2^2) / 2]} = \sqrt{[(0{,}84327^2 + 0{,}75378^2) / 2]}$

$= 1.22016$

Thus: d=4.6-2.25/1.22016

d=1.925

When it comes to evaluating the effect-size d, Cohen (1998) suggested a rule of thumb that helps judging the magnitude of the Cohen's d values, where d=0.2 means the effect-size is small; d=0.5 means medium; and d=0.8 means a large effect-size. See table (4.2).

Table 4.2: Evaluation of Effect Size d Adopted from Cohen (1988)

Significance	Value
Small	0.2
Medium	0.5
Large	0.8

Since the pretest effect-seize is d=1.925, it can be said that, the effect-size between EGH and the EGL is of large magnitude. In other words, the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in the pretest is large.

4.2.1.2. Measuring the Experimental Group Achievement Gap in the Posttest

After the intervention, the posttest which follows the same criteria used in the pretest, and matches the same level of difficulty as the latter's, was administered. To assess the students' achievement, the researcher followed the same steps used in the pretest, where the students were assigned to EGH and EGL according to their scores. Results from the posttest are displayed in pie chart 4.1. The mean, standard deviation, and the p-value are displayed in table 4.3.

Table. 4.3: Results from the Experimental Group Posttest

Group	Mean	Number	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
EGH	4,8182	11	,87386	,000
EGL	2,2727	11	,64667	,000

*p<0.005

To calculate the effect-size between EGH and EGL in the posttest, the values from table 5.3 were used to fill the following formula:

d= $\mathbf{M_1 - M_2/S_{pooled}}$ and $\mathbf{S_{pooled}}=\sqrt{[(s_1^2+ s_2^2) / 2]} = \sqrt{[(0, ,87386^2+ 0,64667) / 2]}$

= 1.52027

Thus:

d= 4,8182-2,2727/1.52027

d=1.674

Since the effect-size value d=1.674 is greater than d=0.8, it can be said that, the effect-size between the EGH and EGL is large, in other words, the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the posttest is of a large magnitude. However, it appears that the gap decreased in the posttest (1.674) compared to the pretest (1.925). The change of the achievement gap is the matter we are going to turn to in the following subsection.

4.2.1.3. Interpretation of the Experimental group results

In many studies that involved the use of effect size, one of the most common ways that were used to interpret Cohen's d was through transforming the d values into percentile standing and using the latter to compare, and report the amount of overlap between, the scores of two different groups. Cohen (1988) suggests three different ways of interpreting d as a percentage of non-overlap, which he refers to as the U measures (see table 4.4). According to Cohen (1988), in order to use these U measures, the groups of population need to be (or at least approximately) equal in terms of the number of subjects assigned to each group.

The first U measure is U_1, which represents the area where the distribution of, a given, population 2's scores does not overlap with, and is not superimposed on, that of population 1's scores (Cohen, 1988). For example, with d=0.7, the percent of non-overlap between the distribution of population 2 and that of population 1 is 43%. In other words, 43% "of the area covered by both populations combined is not overlapped" (p. 21).

The second measure of non-overlap is U_2. This measure stands for the percentage of the upper proportion of population 2 that surpasses the same percentage, but, of the lowest proportion of population 1, i.e., using the same example, d=0.7, the corresponding U_2 value which is 63.7 % indicates that the highest 63.7% of population 2 exceeds the lowest 63.7% of the population 1.

The third U measure, U_3, signifies the percentage of the population 2 that bests 50% of population 1, given that population 2 is the one that has the highest mean. For d=0.7, the U3 value is 75.8%, which means that the highest 50% of population 2 surpasses 75.8% of population 1, in other words, 75.8% of population 1 score below the average person from population 2.

Table.4.4. Cohen's d and the U Measures (Cohen, 1988, p. 22).

d	U_1	U_2	U_3
0	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
.1	7.7	52.0	54.0
.2	14.7	54.0	57.9
.3	21.3	56.0	61.8
.4	27.4	57.9	65.5
.5	33.0	59.9	69.1
.6	38.2	61.8	72.6
.7	43.0	63.7	75.8
.8	47.4	65.5	78.8
.9	51.6	67.4	81.6
1.0	55.4	69.1	84.1
1.1	58.9	70.9	86.4
1.2	62.2	72.6	88.5
1.3	65.3	74.2	90.3
1.4	68.1	75.8	91.9
1.5	70.7	77.3	93.3
1.6	73.1	78.8	94.5
1.7	75.4	80.2	95.5
1.8	77.4	81.6	96.4
1.9	79.4	82.9	97.1
2.0	81.1	84.1	97.7
2.2	84.3	86.4	98.6
2.4	87.0	88.5	99.2
2.6	89.3	90.3	99.5
2.8	91.2	91.9	99.7
3.0	92.8	93.3	99.9
3.2	94.2	94.5	99.9
3.4	95.3	95.5	*
3.6	96.3	96.4	*
3.8	97.0	97.1	*
4.0	97.7	97.7	*

Another method of interpreting the effect size d is the one known as the Common language Effect size (CL) which was propounded by McGrow and Wong (1992). The CL interprets the effect size in terms of probability, where it transforms

values of cohen's d into statement about the probability that "a score randomly sampled from one distribution will be larger than a randomly sample score from a second distribution" (Dunlap, 1999, p. 706).

According to McGraw and Wong (1992), CL can be computed from two populations' means and the standard deviation, and since d can, also, be computed from "sample means and variances (or from proportions in the case of nominal-level data), Dunlap (1999) has provided an index that can help understand better and interpret more easily Cohen's d through CL (see table 4.5), where the latter represents the point of intersection between the row and the column that match with the corresponding d Value. For example, for an effect size d=0.85, the CL value is the point where the row labeled 0.7 and the column labeled 0.5 intersect, which is 0.726.

Table 4.5: Common Language Effect Size Index (Dunlap, 1999)

d	.00	.01	.02	.03	.04	.05	.06	.07	.08	.09
.00	.500	.503	.506	.508	.511	.514	.517	.520	.523	.525
.10	.528	.531	.534	.537	.539	.542	.545	.548	.551	.553
.20	.556	.559	.562	.565	.567	.570	.573	.576	.578	.581
.30	.584	.587	.590	.592	.595	.598	.600	.603	.606	.609
.40	.611	.614	.617	.619	.622	.625	.628	.630	.633	.636
.50	.638	.641	.643	.646	.649	.651	.654	.657	.659	.662
.60	.664	.667	.669	.672	.675	.677	.680	.682	.685	.687
.70	.690	.692	.695	.697	.700	.702	.705	.707	.709	.712
.80	.714	.717	.719	.721	.724	.726	.728	.731	.733	.735
.90	.738	.740	.742	.745	.747	.749	.751	.754	.756	.758
1.00	.760	.762	.765	.767	.769	.771	.773	.775	.777	.780
1.10	.782	.784	.786	.788	.790	.792	.794	.796	.798	.800
1.20	.802	.804	.806	.808	.810	.812	.814	.815	.817	.819
1.30	.821	.823	.825	.827	.828	.830	.832	.834	.835	.837
1.40	.839	.841	.842	.844	.846	.847	.849	.851	.852	.854
1.50	.856	.857	.859	.860	.862	.863	.865	.867	.868	.870
1.60	.871	.873	.874	.875	.877	.878	.880	.881	.883	.884
1.70	.885	.887	.888	.889	.891	.892	.893	.895	.896	.897
1.80	.898	.900	.901	.902	.903	.905	.906	.907	.908	.909
1.90	.910	.912	.913	.914	.915	.916	.917	.918	.919	.920

Compared to other effect size equivalents, CL is easier to calculate and interpret, where it does not require any prior knowledge and even non-statisticians

can use (McGraw & Wong, 1992) "and requires only that one understand the concept of probability" (Dunlap, 1999, p. 707). Table 4.6 provides a summary of the previously discussed measures, where it combines the data in tables 4.6, and 4.7.

Table.4.6: Summary of Effect Size d, U measures, and Common Language Effect Size.

Significance	Value	U_1	U_2	U_3	CL
Small	0.2	14.7%	54.0%	57.9%	0.556
Medium	0.5	33.0%	59.9%	69.1%	0.638
Large	0.8	47.4%	65.5%	78.8%	0.714

If we now turn to our findings, calculation of effect size between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group yielded out a d=1.925, in the pretest; and a d=1.674 in the posttest. Also, it is noticeable the decrease in the non-overlap values U1, U2, and U3**,** and the CL values**,** as shown in table 4.7 and are to be discussed immediately.

Table.4.7.
Summary of the Experimental Group Results

Group/phase	d	U_1	U_2	U_3	CL
Experimental pretest	1.925	79.4%	82.9%	97.1%	0.913
Experimental posttest	1.674	73.1%	78.8%	94.5%	0.881

For the experimental group's scores in the pretest, the effect size d=1.925 means that, there is a 79.4% of non-overlap, which means that the distribution of the high-achievers (EGH) is not superimposed on the distribution of the low-achievers EGL and that these distributions only overlap in 20.6% of the area. From

the fourth column, U2 value indicates that, the highest 82.9% of EGH surpasses the lowest 82.9% of the EGL.

Concerning the U3 column which is, the most relevant U measure in our study, the data show that 97.1% of EGL scores are lower than the mean of FGH, in other words, the average person from EGH score higher than 97.1% of the EGL, which is in fact, a considerable discrepancy between the two distributions.

Regarding the common language (CL), column six, the data show that there is a probability that a stochastically elected subject from EGH would score higher than 91.3% of EGL, which is also, an indicator of a large gap in the achievement between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group in the pretest, in addition to the fact that d=1.925>0.8.

Moving on to the posttest's results, the effect size d=1.674, suggests that 73.1% of the area covered by both distributions, the EGH and EGL, is non-overlapped, which denotes that, there is only an overlap of 26.9%, which is slightly higher than the one measured in pretest. The U2 value from the posttest results shows that the upper portion, 78.8%, of the EGH exceeds the lowest 78.8% of the EGL.

Concerning U3, it can be said that, 94.5% of the EGL have achieved lower than the average person from EGH. This value means that there still is a large gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group, however, it can also be note that the gap has a smaller magnitude compared to the pretest's result, where it decreased from 97.1% to 94.5%. For the CL, the data indicate that there is a probability a randomly selected person from the EGH would achieve higher than 88.1% of the EGL.

After comparing the data obtained from the pretest and posttest it can be deduced that the gap between EGH and the EGL, though still large, has declined after the intervention, in other words, since the data show less non-overlap, and slightly smaller U3 and CL values in the posttest (compared to the pretest), it can be inferred that the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving student

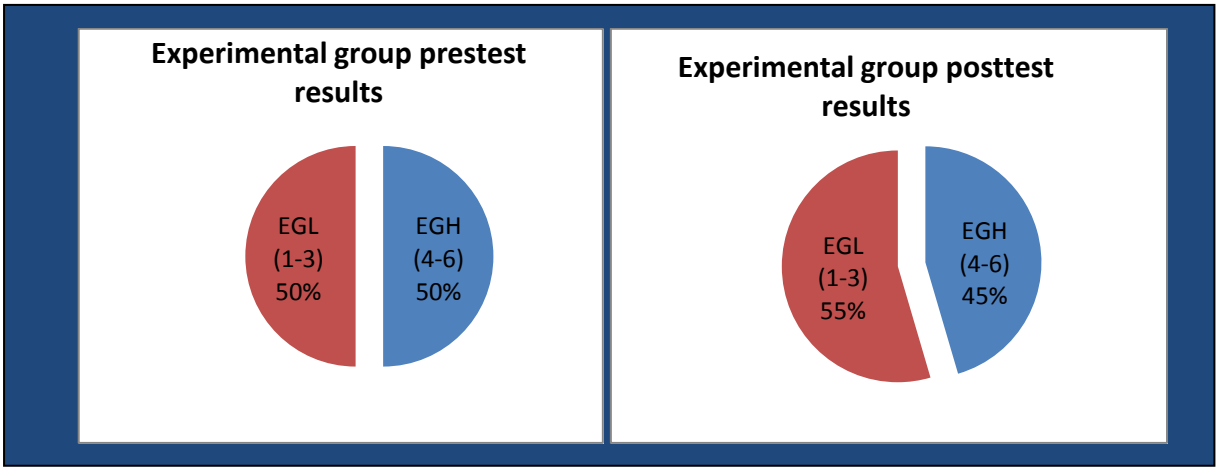
of the experimental group has declined after the intervention (the use of cooperative learning strategies).

4.2.2. Control Group

As it is the case with the true experimental design, sessions of the experimental and the control group were run simultaneously to eliminate factors that threaten the internal validity of the research, especially, the intra-sessions history. The control group was assigned through a complete randomization and consists of 22 subjects who were not exposed to the independent variable (cooperative learning).

This subsection deals with the control groups' results, where it discusses findings in both the pretest and the posttest, where following the same way used in experimental group, subjects from the control groups were assigned into a group of high-achievers, who achieved between the score of four and six (4-6), which will be referred to as the CGH; and a group of low-achievers, who scored between one and three (1-3), the CGL.

The results obtained from the control group in the pretest and the posttest are displayed in pie chart 4.2.



Pie chart.4.2. The control group results in the pretest and the posttest

As displayed in pie chart 4.2, the data obtained from the control group show that in the pretest 50% of the students achieved between one and three (1-3) and that

the other 50% achieved between the score of four and six (4-6), which means that the high- and the low-achieving students are equally numerous.

Concerning the posttest results, the data show that the number of CGH has decreased (45%), and that, on the other hand, the number of CGL has increased from 50%, in the pretest, to 55% in the posttest.

4.2.2.1. Measuring the Control Group Achievement Gap in the Pretest

To calculate the gap between CGH and CGL, the researcher calculated the means and the standard deviation of the two subgroups. The data are displayed in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Results From the Control Group Pretest

Group	Mean	Number	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
CGH	4,5455	11	,68755	,000
CGL	2,1818	11	,75076	,000

*p<0.005

Measuring the effect size between the CGH and CGL:

$d= \mathbf{M_1 - M_2 / s_{pooled}}$ and $\mathbf{s_{pooled=}} \sqrt{[(s_1^2 + s_2^2) / 2]} = \sqrt{[(0{,}68755^2 + 0{,}75076^2) / 2]}$

$= 1.43831$

Thus: d=4,5455-2,1818/1.43831

d=1.643

After calculating the effect-size d between CGH and CGL and since, d=1.643, it can be said that the achievement gap between the high- and low-achievers in the control group is of a large magnitude (d>0.8).

4.2.2.2. Measuring the Control Group Achievement Gap in the Posttest

After, the period of the intervention, during which the control group was not exposed to the independent variable, which represents cooperative learning, the control group took the posttest. Results from the latter are presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9.
Results from the Control Group Posttest

Group	Mean	Number	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
CGH	4,8000	10	,91894	,000
CGL	2,1667	12	,71774	,000

*p<0.005

Data from table 4.9, the means and standard deviations, are used to calculate the effect-size d, where:

d= $\mathbf{M_1 - M_2 / s_{pooled}}$ and $\mathbf{s_{pooled=}} \sqrt{[(s_1^2 + s_2^2) / 2]} = \sqrt{[(0{,}91894^2 + 0{,}71774^2) / 2]}$

$= 1.27781$

d=4,8-2,1667/1.27781 thus: d=2.06

The control group's posttest results show that the effect-size d between the CGH and CGL is d=2.06, that is the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the control group is of a large magnitude (d>0.8), in fact, lager than the one measured in the pretest where the discrepancy increased from d=1.643 in the pretest, to d=2.06 in the posttest.

4.2.2.3. Interpretation of the Control group results

Results from the control group show that, the calculation of the effect-size in the pretest yielded out a d=1.643, which is, in fact, considerably large. Concerning

the posttest, after computing the effect size between the CGH and the CGL, which is estimated d=2.06, the gap between the two subgroups shows to have increased.

In order to interpret the control group's results, the researcher employed the same U measures and common language effect size index used for the experimental group (tables, 4.4 and 4.5). A summary of the control group's results is displayed in table 4.10.

Table.4.10.Summary of the Control Group Results

Group/phase	d	U_1	U_2	U_3	CL
Control pretest	1.643	73.1%	78.8%	94.5%	0.877
Control posttest	2.06	81.8%	84.1%	97.7%	0.980

The results from the control group's pretest show that, with an effect size d=1.643, the CGH and CGL distributions are non-overlapped in 73.1% of the covered area (U_1), and that the highest portion of the CGH (78.8%) surpasses the lowest portion (78.8%) of the CGL (U_2).

The data, also, show that 94.5% of the CGL achieved lower than the average person from the CGH (U_3), and that there is a probability that a randomly selected subject from CGH would achieve higher than 87.7% of the CGL (CL the sixth column).

Concerning the posttest, where d=2.06, the results show that there is a non-overlap (U_1) of 81.8% between the CGH and the CGL distributions, and that the highest 84.1% of the CGH exceeds the lowest 84.1% of the CGL (U_2). The findings also indicate that, 97.7% of the CGL scores are lower than the mean of the CGE, which means that, the average person from CGH scores higher than 97.7%.

Regarding the common language effect size indictor, a CL of 0.980 means that there is a probability that a haphazardly picked subject from the CGH would score higher than 98% of the CGL.

From the control group's results obtained from the pretest and the posttest, it can be concluded that the non-overlap percentages have increased and that the gap between the high- and low- achievers in the control group became larger, where it escalated from d=1.643 and CL=0.877 in the pretest; to a d=2.06 and CL=0.980.

4.3. The Students' Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire is a total of 14 items divided into three sections. The first section asks (two) questions about students' age and sex. The second section is intended to deal with students' attitudes and preferences toward different methods of learning including cooperative learning. This section consists of seven items. The third section of the questionnaire seeks to elicit information about students' motivation. This section contains five items.

The questionnaire contains closed-ended questions, where most are followed by a contingency question to elicit more information and follow a scale of nominal variable, as well as constructed-response items.

4.3.1. Participants

The questionnaire was submitted to the experimental group of the study, a sample of 22 second year EFL students from the department of English at the University of Khenchela-Algeria which consist of seven males and 15 females with different ages that range between 20 and 40 years. The sample was assigned through a random sampling. At the end the participants were thanked and dismissed.

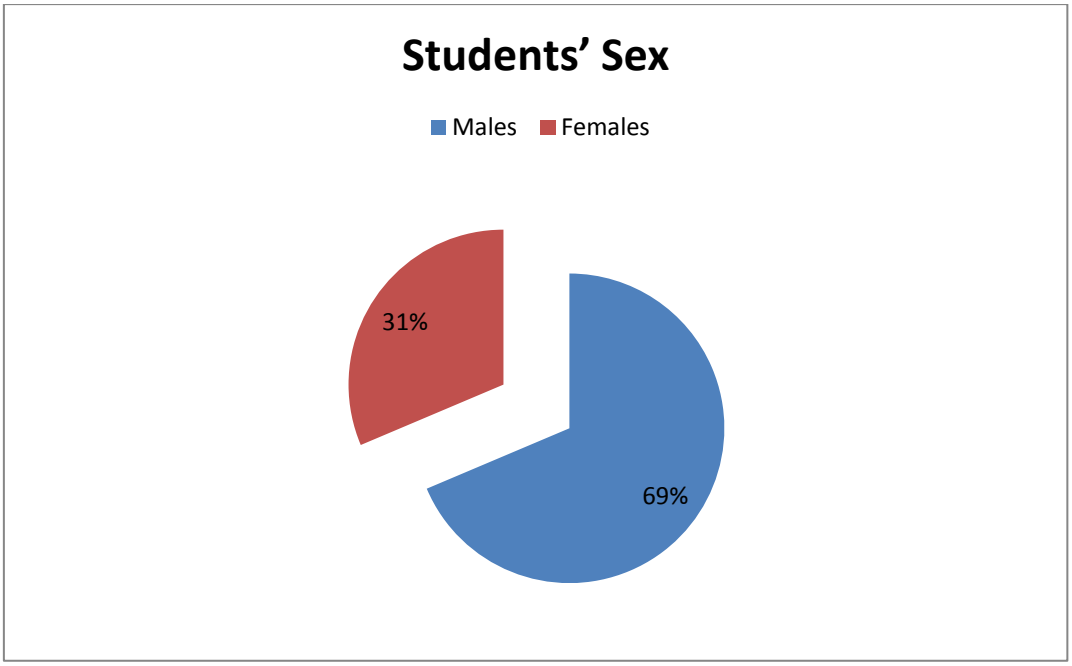
4.3.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

In this subsection, data gathered from the questionnaire are to be reported and interpreted, where each section will be treated separately. At the end of this

subsection, information from all the items will be combined together and compared for a better interpretation and understanding of the results.

Section One: Personal Information

1. **Students' sex:**

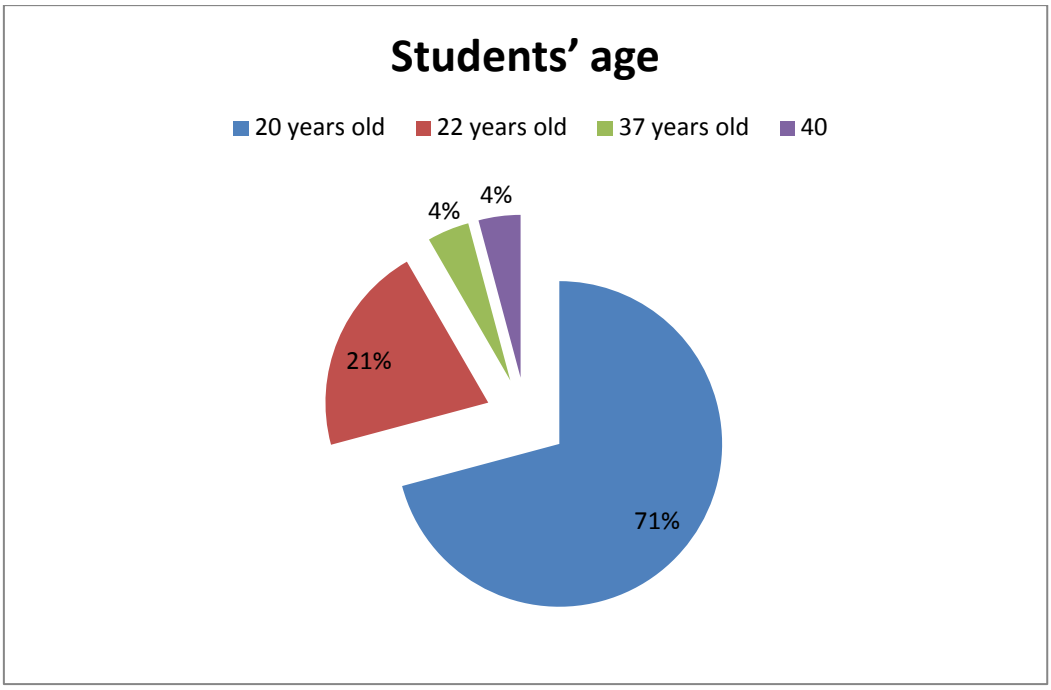


Pie chart.4.3. Students sex

Responses show that the sample consists of seven males (31%) and 15 females (69%). The aim of this question is to merely provide more details about the participants, for, gender is not considered as a factor or a variable in this study.

2. **Students' age:**

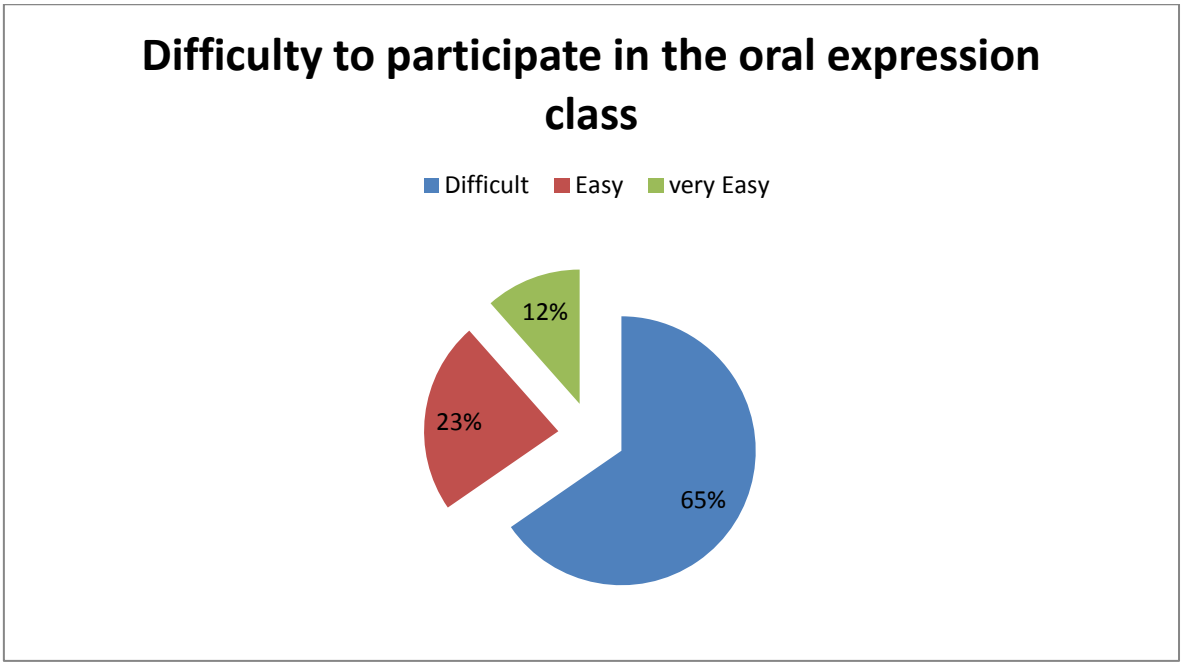
As it is shown in pie chart 4.4, participants' age varies between 20 years and 40, where 17 students (71%) are at the age of 20 while five (21%), one (4%), and one student (4%) are at the age of 22, 37, and 40 respectively. Just like the case with students' sex, age does not represent a variable that is to be studied in this research and this question seeks but demographic information about the sample.



Pie chart. 4.4. Participant's age

Section Two: Students' Attitude

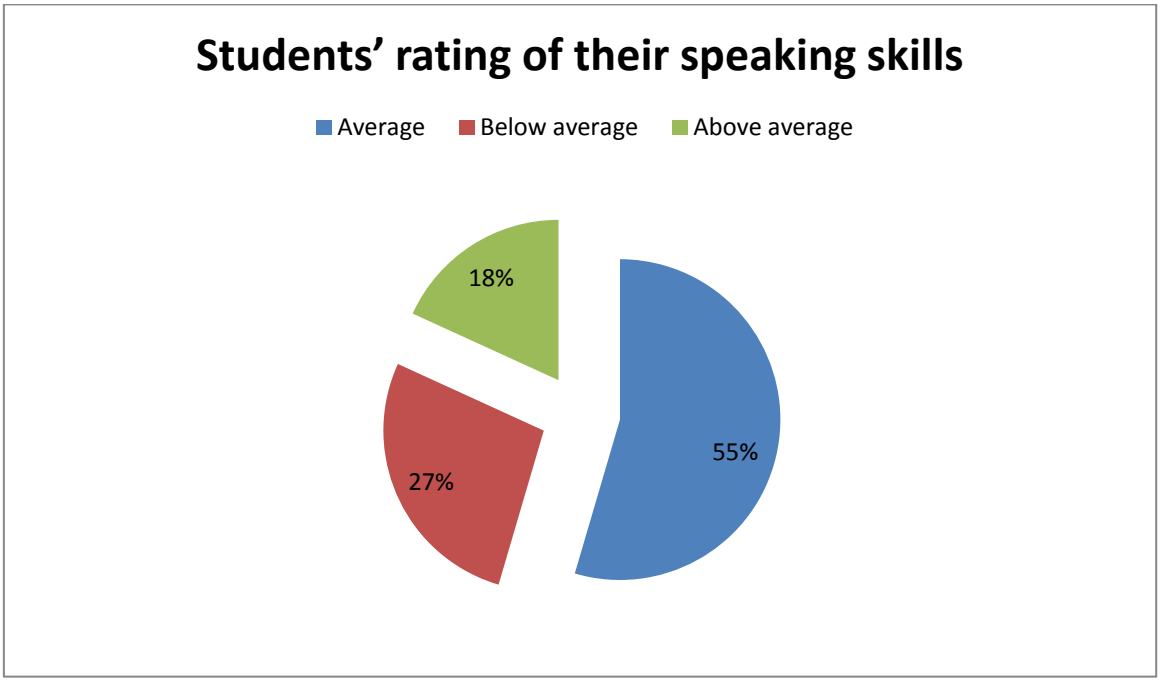
3. **Difficulty to participate in the oral expression class**



Pie chart 4.5. Students attitude about the difficulty to participate in the classroom

Students' answers to the first question of this section show that, the majority, of respondents (65%), find participation in the oral expression session difficult, while only (23%) and (12%) find it easy and very easy respectively. The sought end behind this question is to investigate the participants' attitudes toward the activities assigned to them by the teacher to have an idea about the number of students who represent the benchwarmers (12%) and those who represent the active participants (65%).

4. Students' rating of their speaking skills

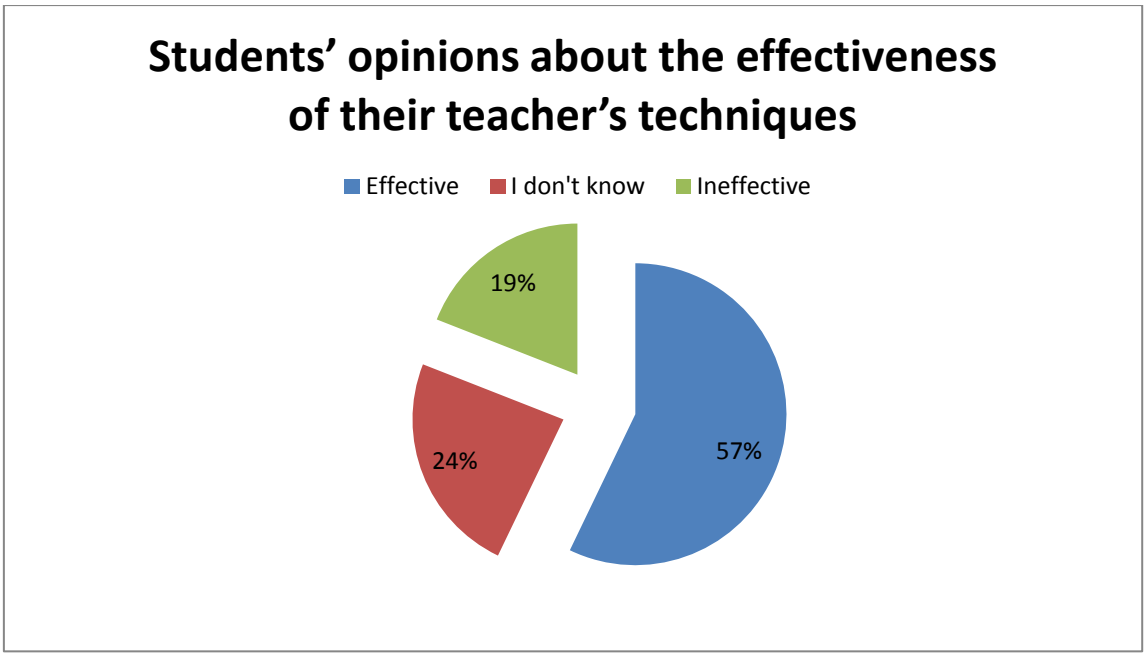


Pie chart.4.6. Students' rating of their speaking skills

From the Pie chart 4.6, it appears that most of the respondents (55%) believe that their oral skills are average. 27% of the respondents rate their skills as below average and (18%) consider their speaking skills s above average. Students' rating of their oral skills is not necessarily assumed to be accurate. The problem is with the self-rated "average", for, among this category of respondents, there might be a mixture of high- and low-achievers, because the students do not have a clear scale or any sort of descriptors that can guide and help them choose the category to which they belong. Then again, they still can cater information based on their previous

achievement in the oral English exams. Students who rate their skills as above average are assumed to be the high-achieving ones, while, those who choose the rate "below average" are the ones considered as low-achievers.

5. **Students' opinions about the effectiveness of their teacher's techniques:**

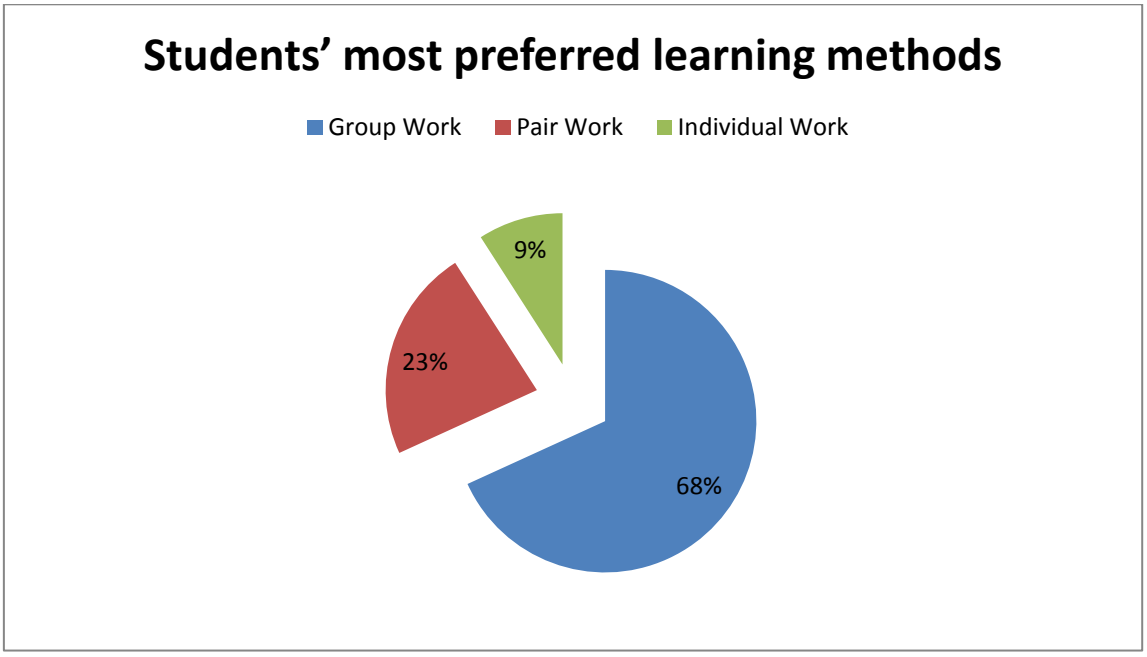


Pie chart.4.7. Students' opinions about their teacher's techniques

The responses to this question show that, 57% of the respondents think that their teacher's techniques are effective, while, 19% of participants consider them ineffective and only 24% of them believe that they do not know. Regarding the contingency question where the participants are asked to list some of the activities which their teacher uses, students' answers seem to vary from group work activities to pair work and role play.

What can be understood from this is that, most of the students believe that the techniques used in the classroom help them hone their speaking skills. Yet, some students do not have the same opinion and display a different attitude toward their teacher's teaching methods.

6. Students' most preferred learning methods



Pie Chart.4.8. Students most preferred learning method

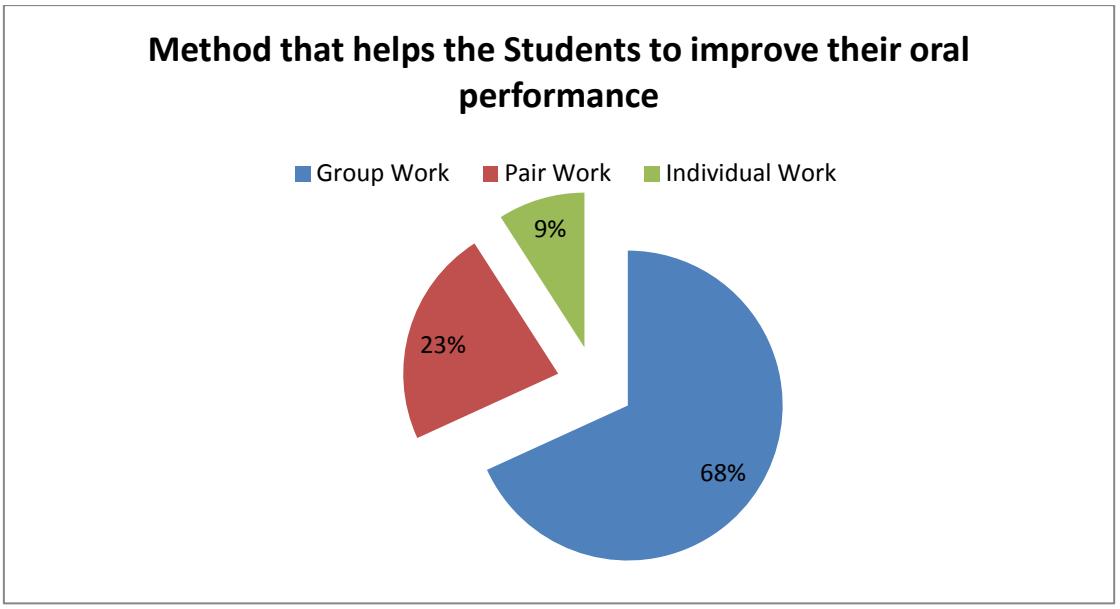
When the students were asked about which method of learning they favor, the participants' responses indicate that 68% of the participants prefer group work, 23% prefer pair work, and only (9%) of them favor the individual method.

When asked to justify their answers, statements from those who prefer 'group work' and 'pair work' show that they "enjoy" working with their classmates and that they love working with their friends. On the other hand, students who prefer individual work state that they love individual activities because they feel more "independent" and that they love "competing" with other classmates.

7. Methods that helps the Students to improve their oral performance

The data gathered from the respondents' answers show that, 68% of the informants feel that group work is the best method, while, 23% and 9% of them reckon that pair work and individual work are better (respectively). When asked to justify their answers, statements from those who choose group work and pair work indicate that, working with partners makes learning "easier" and allows the students more chance to develop their oral skills. On the other hand, answers from those who

prefer the individual method show that, the sense of competition fuels the individual learners to push their limits and practice more in order to surpass their classmates.



Pie chart.4.9. Method that improve students' oral performance

The answers to this question help make sure that the students' answers to the previous item (number six) are neither an attempt from them to give strong responses nor a result of an acquiescene bias, where respondents give answers that they assume to be acceptable by others, which relate to a prestige bias. In other words, this item plays the role of a bogus question. By comparing the respondents' answers to the follow-up part of question of this item with the students' answers to question six it can be made sure that their answers are genuine.

8. Familiarity with the concept of cooperative learning

When asked whether they are familiar with the concept of cooperative learning, answers show that all the respondents (22) agree and only nine participants tried to explain it. Some of the definitions to quote are: "we study in a group", "I work with my friends and play different roles", "discuss together" and "collective activity".

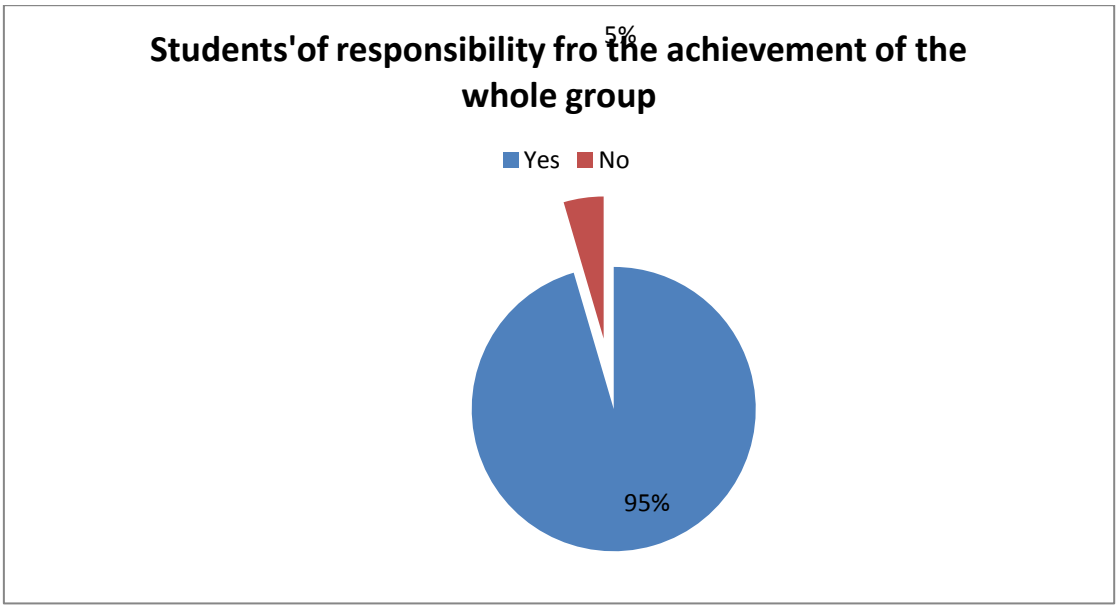
The reason behind asking this question is to know whether the students are well informed about the cooperative learning techniques and to, furthermore, help the researcher see cooperative learning group work through the students' eyes.

9. The Effect of working in groups on students' attitude toward the tasks

This question elicited answers from, only, 86% of the informants, where, their responses show that, they agree that working in groups boosts their engagement ("It makes me participate more in the classroom"). Others feel that working in a group is enjoyable and that it creates the ground for them to "share" knowledge and ideas.

Section Three: Students' Motivation

10. Responsibility for the achievement of the whole group

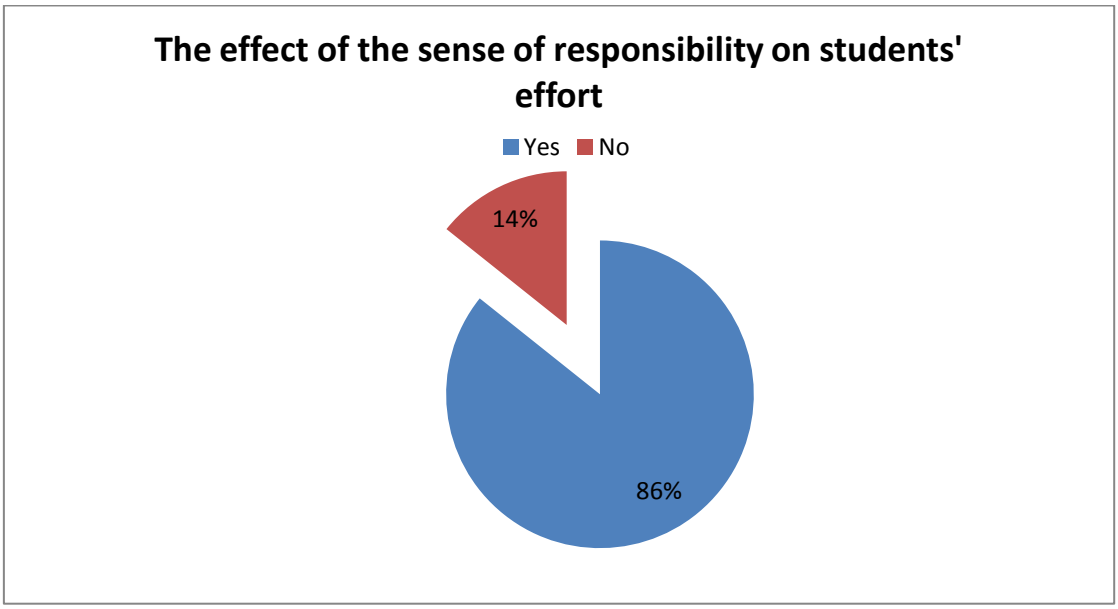


Pie chart.4.10. Students' responsibility about the achievement of the whole group

When asked if they feel responsible for the achievement of the whole group, as shown in pie chart 4.10, responses to this question show that, 95% of the students agree, while only 5% of them disagrees.

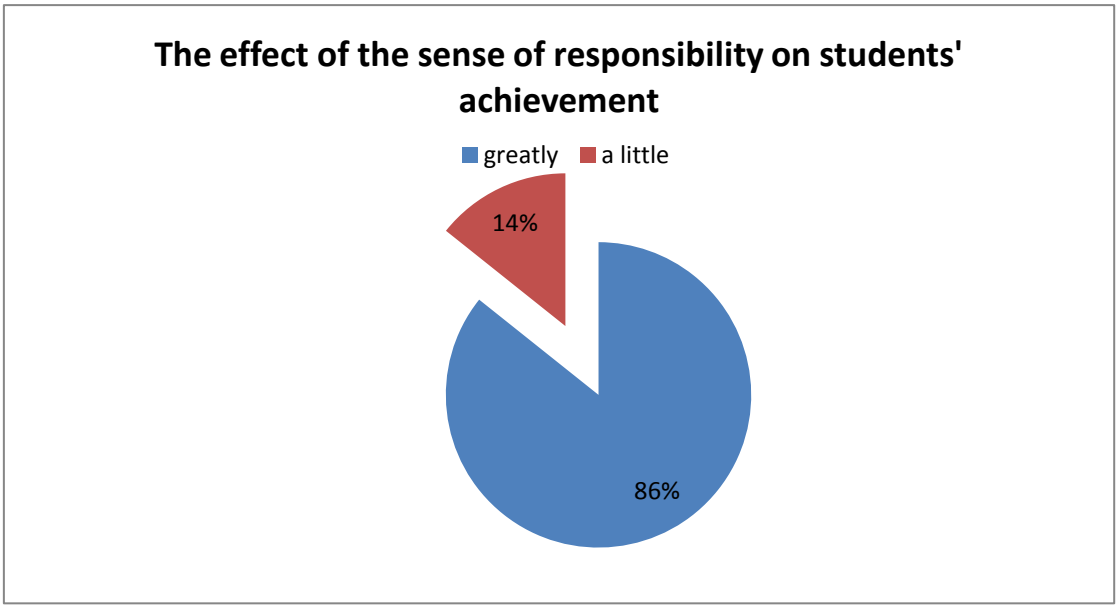
Answers to the follow-up question, which is: "If yes, does that sense of responsibility drive you to put more effort?" indicate that the majority of the

participants (86%), agree that the sense of responsibility boosts their willingness to put more effort, while, only 14% disagree (pie chart 4.11).



Pie chart.4.11. The effect of the sense of responsibility on students' effort

The aim of these two questions is to accentuate the correlation between the individual accountability and motivation of the students.

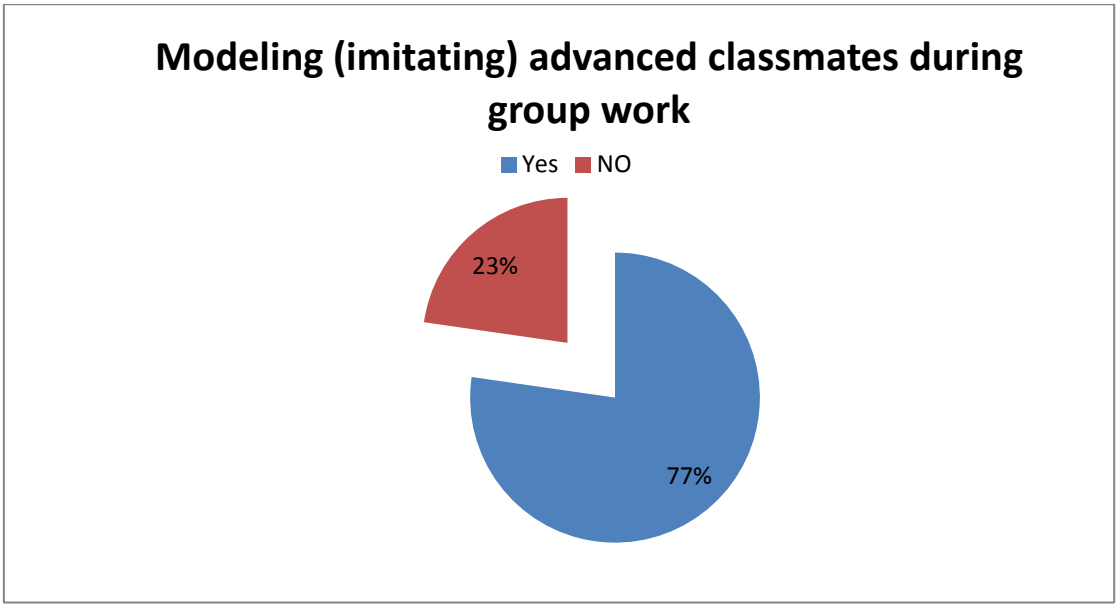


Pie chart.4.12. The effect of the sense of responsibility on students' achievement

From answers to the second follow-up question, “If yes, how does that affect your performance and achievement?”, data reveal that, the predominant number of

respondents (86%) think that it affects "greatly" their performance and achievement, while, only 14% of them believe that it affects it "a little" (see pie chart 4.12). Through this question it is sought the extent to which group work can affect students' performance and consequently their achievement.

11. Modeling (imitating) advanced classmates during group work

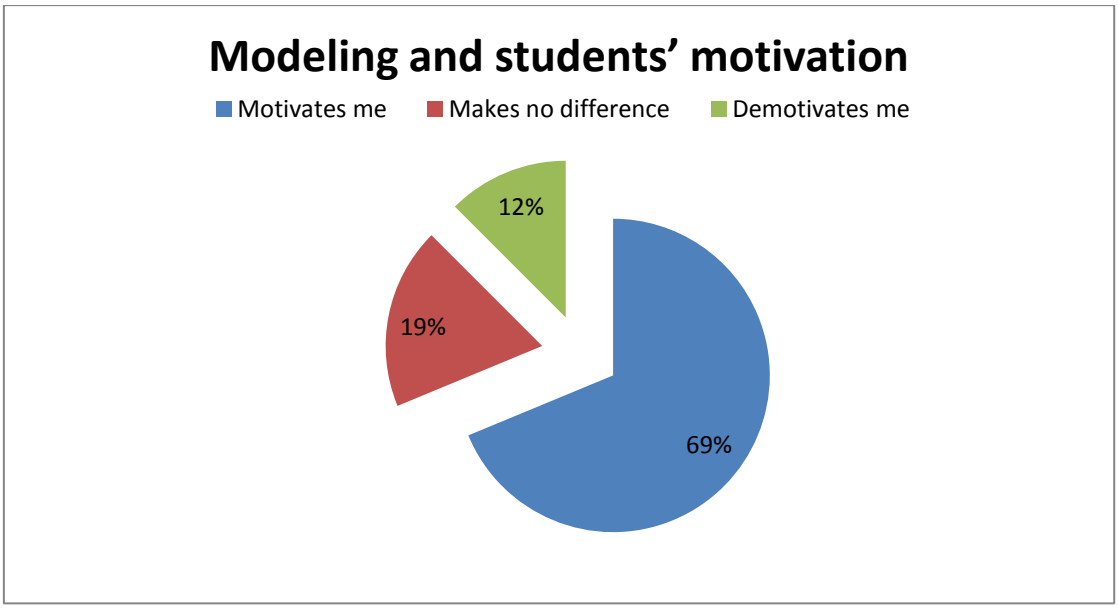


Pie Chart.4.13. Model (imitating) advanced classmates during group work

Respondents' answers pertaining to this question (as shown in pie chart 4.13) reveal that, the majority (77%) agree with the assumption that they do imitate their partners, whereas, 23% of the participants disagree.

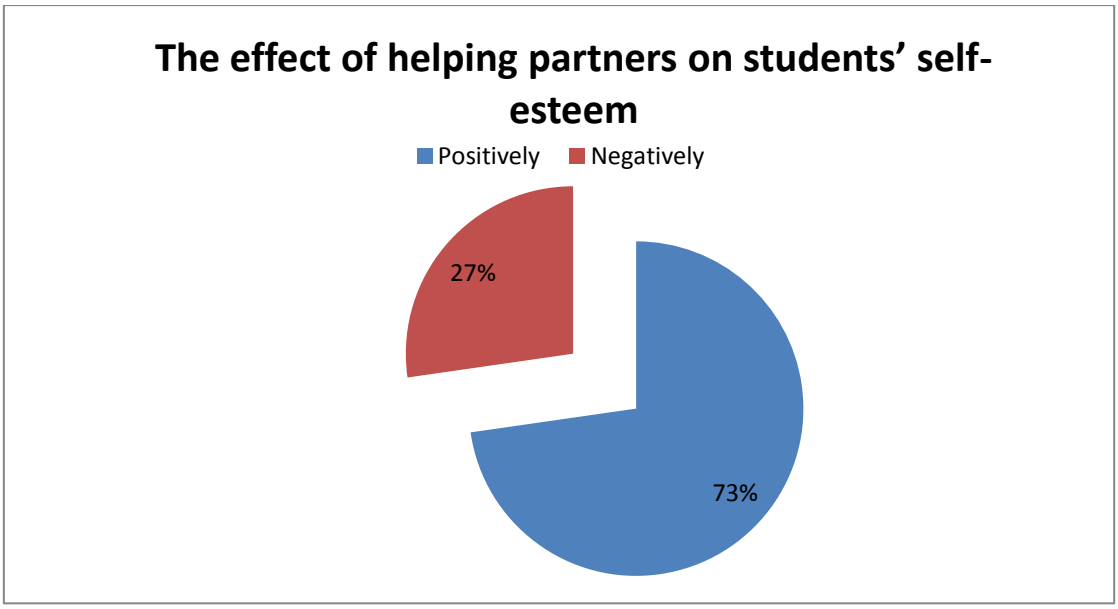
When asked "If yes, does that "motivate", "demotivate" you or "make no difference?" (pie chart 4.14) students' answers show that, most of the "yes branch informants" (69%) agree that modeling does motivate them, while 19% of them think that it "makes no difference", and only 12% think that it "demotivates" them.

The information siphoned through this question help the researcher to see, if working in heterogeneous groups does stimulate passive learners by allowing them the chance to emulate and copy their advanced classmates.



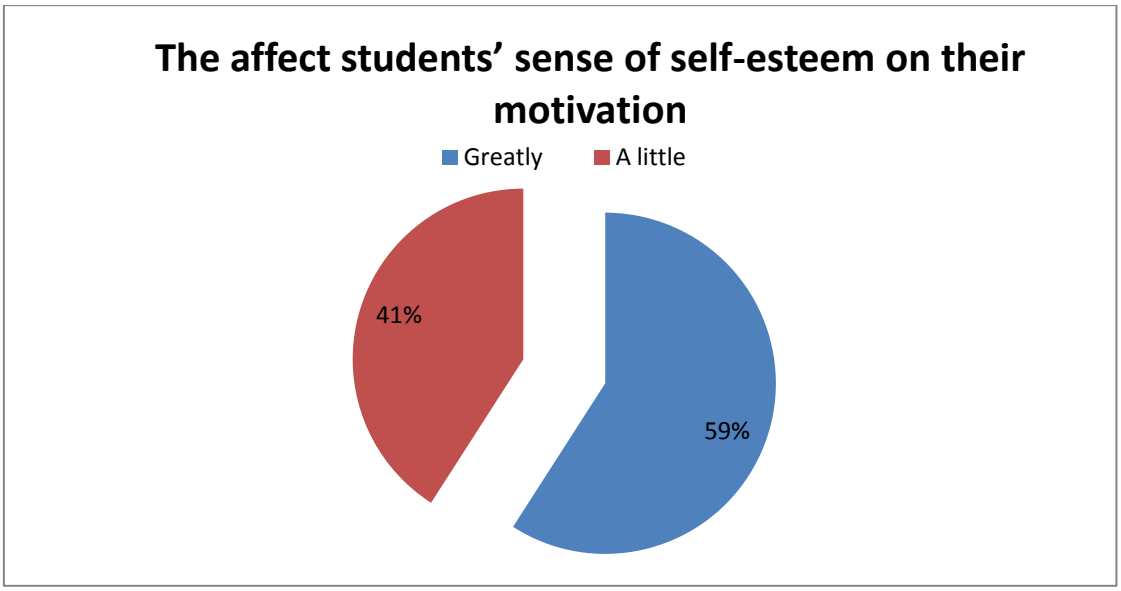
Pie chart.4.14. Modeling and students' motivation

12. The affect helping partners on students' self-esteem



Pie chart.4.15. The effect of helping partners on students' self-esteem

The data from Pie chart 4.15 indicate that 73% respondents think that helping their partners affects their self-esteem "positively" and, only, 27% of them believe that helping their partners does affect their self-esteem negatively.



Pie chart.4.16. Students' sense of self-esteem on their motivation

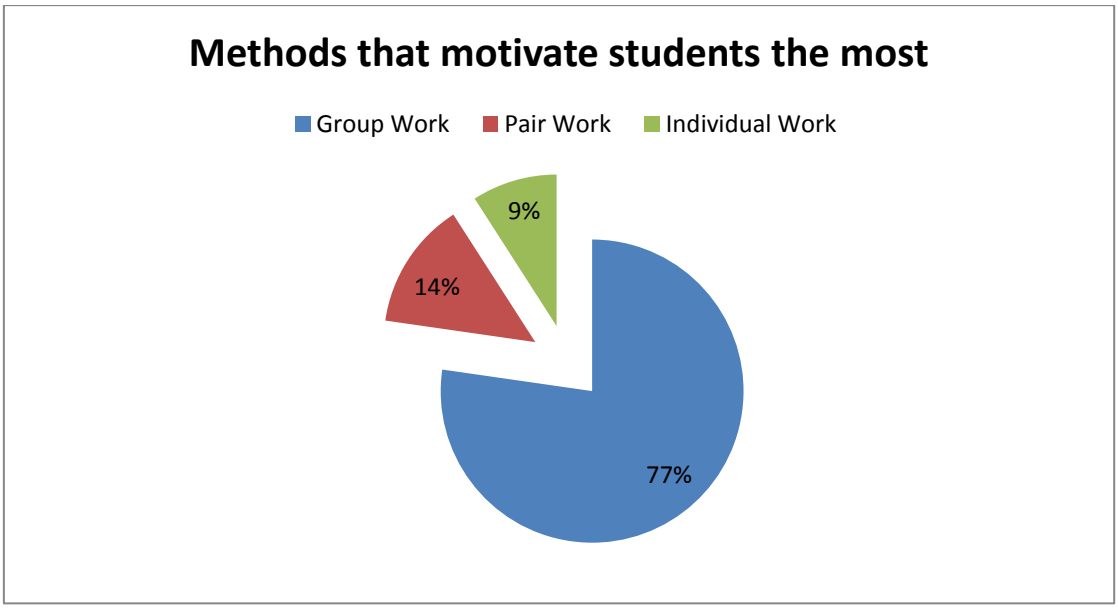
Students' answers to the question about the extent to which that sense of self-esteem increases their motivation, reveal that 59% of the informants claim that it does increase it "greatly" while the rest (41%) believe that it does increase it a little (see pie chart 4.16).

Most of the explanations that students used to justify their answers circled around the "positive feeling about their level" which makes them "confident" and makes their "presence very important" instead of dismissed.

This question is complementary to the previous one (item 11), for, the latter is more likely to address low-achievers, while question 12, is more likely to address the high-achievers, creating a balance for the sake of being fair to both sides.

13. Methods that motivate students the most

Students' answers regarding which learning method motivates them the most, data from pie chart 4.17, show that 77% think that group work motivates them the most, 14% believe that they feel more motivated during pair work, and, only, 9% of them find individual work more motivating.



Pie chart.4.17. Methods that motivate students the most

14. The effect of the social element of group work on students' motivation

Responses to this open-ended question indicate that students have positive perceptions about the impact of the social element, of learning in groups, on their motivation. Some of responses to quote are that the social element of working in groups makes the learners feel "In a good way" about themselves where they "feel very energetic" and that during group work, they "Feel at home" and "Like a one family".

4.3.3. Interpretation of the Results

The first section of the questionnaire consists of two items, the first one asks students about their sex and the second one, which is a numeric question, asks students about their age. The aim of this section is to paint a clearer image of the sample. From the students' answers to question one and question two from the first section it can be noted that, the sample of the study consists of 22 students, 7 males and 15 females whose age varied between 20 and 40 years old.

Data gathered from items of the second section of the questionnaire were discussed for the sake of measuring students' attitudes, which represents one of the two intervening variables in this study.

From items three and four, we can say that the sample represents a heterogeneous group with different levels and abilities, where the predominant number rated their oral proficiency level as average and only a few said that their level is above and below average. Most of the (65%) respondents said that they find participation in the oral English activities difficult.

Based on the students' answers to item five, where they were asked about the effectiveness of their teacher's techniques, most of them said that their teacher uses effective teaching techniques. Some of these techniques, as listed by the students, are group work and pair work activities. In fact, these activities are all types of cooperative learning strategies which were implemented by the teacher during the period of intervention.

From answers to item six, the majority of the students said that their most preferred learning method is group and pair work because they believed that these methods are more enjoyable and create a friendly atmosphere for them. Concerning answers to item seven, most of the students said that group work is the most effective technique in terms of improving their speaking skills and justified their answers by saying that group work makes learning easier for them and allows them more chance to practice in the classroom, which is due to the roles assigned to each member which makes everyone's participation mandatory.

This question played the role of a bogus question as it guaranteed that the students' answers to item six were genuine and, more than that, it served our first hypothesis which says that cooperative learning fosters positive attitudes among EFL students toward the activities, as, most of the students preferred group work and most of them said that group work is the most effective technique; which means that the most effective teaching methods are the ones that appeal to the students the most.

When asked if they were familiar with the concept of cooperative learning (item eight), all of the students said "yes" which means that they were informed about instructions and elements of cooperative learning during the experiment,

though, only nine of them took the time to provide answer and tried to define the concept of cooperative learning.

Answering item nine, which was: "How does working in groups with your classmates affect your attitude toward the tasks? Eighteen students tried to answer this question, where they said that cooperative group work represents the ground for them to share ideas and knowledge, and which, helps them participate more in the classroom and that they "like" it.

From what has been discussed so far, from the second section of the questionnaire, it can be deduced that cooperative group work helps EFL students show more positive attitudes toward oral English activities.

The third section of the questionnaire aimed at investigating students' motivation, which represents the second intervening variable in this study. Regarding item ten, most of the respondents reported that they feel responsible about the achievement of the whole group and that, that sense of responsibility drives them to put more effort. This means that, there is a correlation between, two elements of cooperative group work and the "drive" that pushes students to work harder.

These two elements of cooperative learning are the individual accountability which makes every member responsible for his own contribution and the fulfillment of the role assigned to him; and the positive interdependence, which makes, on the other hand, individuals responsible for the progress of every other member of the same group, where, no member is left behind.

So, according to the students' answers, these two elements of cooperative learning "motivate" learners to make an extra effort. Answering the follow-up question, most of the students said that, the sense of responsibility (positive interdependence) affects "greatly" their performance and, consequently, their achievement.

Based on their answers to item eleven, it is noted that, most of the students do model or imitate their advanced classmates and that this emulation of the high-level students motivates and gives the low-level students the chance to learn and try to keep up with them. This goes to show that, working in heterogeneous groups invites the less competent members to simulate and try to close the discrepancy between them and their more competent members, not to mention the fact that they can learn new information from them.

From the respondents' answers to item twelve, we can say that, the predominant number of students do believe that helping their classmates in the classroom affects "positively" their self-esteem and that this sense of self-esteem increases their motivation "greatly" because it makes them feel good about their proficiency level, increases their confidence and makes their presence very important instead of dismissed.

By combining results from this item and the previous one (item eleven) it can be deduce that, the low-achievers are fueled by the need to emulate and model high achievers, while, at the same time, the high-achievers are fueled by the positive sense of self-esteem which they get from helping their low-achieving partners.

4.4. The Teachers' interview

The researcher conducted structured interviews with a sample of six English language teachers from the University of Abess Laghrour Khenchela. As it was mentioned previously (in chapter four) the interview schedule included, both types, closed- and open-ended questions and sessions were recorded on a phone.

4.4.1. Analysis of the Interview

After recording all the interviews, the interviewer listened to each recording for several times while, taking notes and writing down information that mainly pertain to certain important aspects of the study, where, some parts of the interviews were written down verbatim when necessary, for the purpose of using them as quotes. Data gathered from the interviews were treated qualitatively. The interview schedule consists of three main sections; the first section seeks information about

the interviewees' careers and degree, the second sections, is intended for eliciting data about teaching methods, including cooperative learning, while the third section, asks the teachers questions about the link between teaching methods and students' motivation.

Section One: Personal Information

This section consists of three personal questions about the interviewees' career and experience.

1. **What degree(s) do you hold?**

Amongst the teachers being interviewed, three of them said that they hold a Master's degree in English and three of them said that they hold a Magister degree.

2. **How long have you been teaching English?**

The teachers' experience ranged between two to seven years of English language teaching at the University, where, two teachers have been teaching it for four years, two have been teaching it for three years, one have been teaching it for two years and the most experienced teacher reported that he has been teaching it for, seven years.

3. **For how long have you been teaching oral expression?**

Concerning oral expression teachers' answers ranged between one to four years of experience.

Section Two: Teachers' Perception of Cooperative Learning and Teaching Methods

This section includes eight items which seek information about how teachers at the University of Abess Laghrour Khenchela regard cooperative group work and some other information concerning the implementation and the effectiveness of the latter.

4. **How do you rate your students' level in oral expression?**

When asked to rate their students' levels in oral expression, all the participants said that their classrooms have students with different levels.

5. **How does the gap between students, in terms of achievement, affect the quality of the teaching process?**

All six participants agreed that the gap in the students' achievement is problematic to them, especially as EFL teachers for, EFL teachers deliver " modules that require high a level of abstraction and high cognitive levels… if students' level don't match with the modules being taught this can create problems to the teacher" and as another teacher said that "when there is a gap in students' levels, low level students slow down the teaching process… teachers make more effort but less progress can be seen and that's what we call a rocking horse".

6. **Which of these methods do you use the most? A) Group work? B) Individual work? Or C) Pair work?**

From the teachers' answers to this question, it appears that, group work was the most used method. However, some teachers said that they also do use pair work and, rarely, individual work "not to bore" their students, and because they take into consideration the fact that "… a few students prefer individual work". Another teacher stated that he encourages the use of group work because such kinds of activities "play on the psychology of the students….especially role plays and hot debates".

7. **When you use group work, on what basis do you set up the groups?**

Teachers reported that, mostly, they choose groups randomly, but they still sometimes give the freedom students to choose their partners according to their preference "after informing them that the groups must include students with different levels", another teacher stated that she sometimes assigns "high level students with low level students to have mixed groups".

8. What is your perception of cooperative learning?

The teachers were familiar and well informed about the way cooperative learning works and provided rich descriptions about the concept. Some of these definitions are quoted below.

"… A type of group work where excellent students push the poor-level students to take a step forward and be part of the discussion or be part of an activity"

"… This method creates an autonomous learning process and environment whereby students… all of them… engage in the activity unlike the individual method where only the best students participate."

"I have a positive attitude toward cooperative learning… and I think it's a successful way of achieving teacher goals."

These answers show that teachers are aware of cooperative learning elements, especially the positive interdependence, which makes the students both, receive new information and contribute their own share at the same time.

9. Do you think it is applicable in your university?

Teachers from the University of Abess Laghrour Khenchela, believe that cooperative learning method is applicable in their university, because, according to them "… it does not need special materials and equipments to process his type learning… all it takes is a classroom and that's it" and because "the administration encourages creativity… so there is no problem at all".

10. Which method is more effective in oral expression, cooperative or individual learning?

The teachers agree that cooperative learning is more effective, because they believe that "… the learner's best teacher is another learner" and that "… it makes the learners feel obliged to interact with each other" and "… unlike the individual method, it helps them practice their skills together" whereas "… most of the time, working alone is uncomfortable for the learner". From these answers it can be noted

that the teachers encourage cooperative learning and regard it as a very instrumental method.

11. **According to you what is the most important role that the teacher must fulfill in the EFL classroom?**

Among a plenty of roles which the teachers mentioned, the one which was mentioned the most was the "guide". Other roles which the teachers felt were of no less importance were: Prompter, motivator and controller.

Section Three: Teachers' thoughts about Cooperative Learning and Students' Motivation

This section consists of five items which deal with the use of cooperative learning and its effect on students' motivation according to the teachers' experience.

12. **Do you think your students are more motivated when they study individually or in cooperative groups?**

Teachers believe that students are more motivated when they work in groups. However, one of the teachers adds that "… it depends on the type and quality of the activity… if the learner finds it boring, then, the results would be less than expected… But if the activity is good enough to draw his attention and make him excited, then cooperative learning can be useful". Another teacher claims that, during cooperative learning "… students with lower level do their best not to look less capable compared to their excellent friends"

13. **How does working in small groups affect students' attitudes toward the activities?**

All the teachers believe that students show positive attitudes when working in small groups. Some think that working in small groups "… absorbs the student and makes him part of the active group where all other members around him are engaged in the activity" and that "… they show more responsibility" during group

work. Another response was that "In a positive way…they interact with each other in a safe environment and this gets the best out of them".

14. Does the cooperation that students go through boost the shy students' activeness?

Regarding this question, the results show that all the teachers agree that cooperation boosts activeness and helps shy students get more involved in the activities. Some of the teachers' answers are as follows:

"Participation in front of the whole classroom can be intimidating for shy students… but it's less difficult in front of a small group… Students here will not hesitate to engage and make mistake."

Also:

> The use of cooperative learning can be problematic at the very beginning because the shy students won't take part in the activities… as time goes on, there would be noticed progress in the students who are shy… all the teacher has to do is be patient and observe the students' progress because cooperative learning, as any other method, cannot bring about immediate change

15. How does that affect their engagement in the activities?

Teachers this question are quite similar, all the responses to this question show that teachers believe in the positive effect that cooperative learning has on the learners' engagement. Some of the answers are quoted below:

"… They find a safer environment during group work and that helps them focus more on the activity"

"It makes them confident enough to get involved with other group members with no hesitation"

"Students look more enthusiastic during group activities…"

16. To what extent do you think building good relationships with each other encourages students to work in the classroom?

Answers to this question indicate that the teachers feel that good relationships between students are crucial for their progress. Where some of their responses are:

"… Good relationships represent a bridge between the students through which they can interact and exchange information"

"… They consider themselves friends and not just classmates and this makes them enjoy the activities more" and that cooperative learning "bring about positive results by the end of the teaching process, and I have witnessed that...in my lectures… that was really evident".

4.4.2. Interpretation of the Results

From the results gathered from the interview, it seems that all the interviewed teachers agree that the gap in students' achievement hinders the learning process in their classrooms where, according to them the learning process is similar to "a rocking horse" "more effort but less progress". The teachers are familiar with the concept of cooperative learning and all of them use it with their students.

The teachers' perceptions about cooperative learning are positive and similar, where they regard it as the most effective method compared to pair work and individual work because, according to them, cooperative learning, unlike the other methods, creates a safer environment where students are equal in terms of getting opportunities to participate in the classroom and more than that, a place where students help each other and feel responsible about the progress of the whole group and not just their individual improvement. In fact, this is one of the main elements of cooperative learning which (Johnson, 1991) refers to as positive interdependence.

Also, one of the teachers mentioned how students in cooperative groups can learn from each other where he claims that "the best learner's teacher is another learner" and this is why teachers say that "sometimes" they take charge of forming

the groups and purposefully bind students with different levels together, so that, the high-level students can teach the low-level ones.

Data from the teachers' interview, also, stress the importance of interaction between the students in oral English activities which can be promoted through one of the elements of cooperative learning, the face-to-face (Promotive) interaction that can give the students a chance to practice their oral skills, discuss and negotiate ideas with each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005).

When asked about the most important role the teacher should fulfill, participants mentioned "guide" and "prompter". Actually, these two roles fit perfectly into the context of cooperative learning, where as a prompter, the teacher lets the students figure out the solution by their own, pushing the students to, both, do more effort on the individual level and ask for each other's help as a whole group, and only interferes after the students show symptoms of group-processing failure.

The second role which is, teacher as a guide, is pretty similar to the prompter, where the role of the teacher is to provide guidelines, let the learners take responsibility of their own learning and only, interfere only when necessary and not act like the all-knowing only source of knowledge in the classroom. This shows that cooperative learning obliges students to fulfill their roles but also assigns the teachers roles that benefit the learning quality and increase autonomy in the classroom.

When asked about the effect of cooperative learning on the students' motivation, findings show that, teachers believe that cooperative learning creates an perfect environment for motivation to foster and grow. Some argue that it is due to the fact that students feel more enthusiastic and engage more when working in smaller groups, where, even the shy students do not hesitate as much as they would do in front of the whole classroom (Brumfit, 1984).

Furthermore, participants claim that students display more positive attitudes toward and during group work activities, where they show more responsibility and a sense of willingness to participate and take the initiative.

Another factor which the teachers think boosts students' motivation is the good relationships between members of the group. Two elements of cooperative learning can help promote this kind of positive relationships: face –to-face interaction and interpersonal and small group skills (Johnson & F. Johnson, 2009). These two elements help in bettering the quality of cooperation between the students and thus the progress of students as individuals and as members of a small group, which represents a small community, at the same time.

In conclusion, the results obtained through the teacher interview prove that cooperative learning is beneficial to the learners in terms of creating a common ground for high- and low-achievers to work together, which might lead to closing the gap between them.

Another benefit that can be gained from the use of such method is that, it boosts students' motivation by eliminating factors that can restrain the learners and prevent them from engaging in the activities.

At last, cooperative learning, according to the interviewed teachers, has a positive effect on students' attitudes, motivation and the classroom environment.

4.5. Discussion

Since the 1960's there has been a wealth of research in the field of education concerning the issue the achievement gap between high- and the low achieving students in the individualistic classroom, which, in fact, has an adverse effect on the learning process, and which stems from a variety of reasons, amongst which is the lack of equity in the classroom. Having an apportioned classroom community adds more obstacles for both the teacher and the students, were the gap in the opportunity for practice and participation contributes to the disparity in the achievement level,

where the high-level students keep advancing, while, the low-level ones make little to no progress.

Alternative to such negative scenario is the one where students get equal opportunities to practice and feel encouraged to engage in the task alongside their classmates. Such notion, which has been promoted by cooperative learning theorists, has gained currency in the late decades, where research about group work, namely cooperative learning, has become a trend and a great deal of articles and meta-analyses have been published to recommend, and invite attention to, such an instrumental teaching method.

The study at hand represents another attempt to highlight the effectiveness of cooperative learning in closing the fissure between the low- and the high-achievers in the EFL classroom, precisely in the oral expression module. Through this study, the researcher puts under the scope the assumption that, cooperative learning might help the low-level students to achieve communicative competence by fostering a sense of reciprocity and equity between them and their high-achieving partners, and consequently, close the distance between them.

This section deals with the three hypotheses of the study, where the data marshaled via the instruments are to be discussed and amalgamated in order to answer the research questions of our study.

With respect to the first hypothesis of the study, which postulates that students show more positive attitudes toward cooperative learning activities, the results from the questionnaire demonstrate that, most of the students surveyed believe that cooperative learning is more enjoyable compared to the individual method. Also, from the answers to item nine, results show that the majority of students agree that working in groups with their partners affects positively their attitudes and creates a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, wherein they feel at home with their colleagues, and eager to engage and take part in the activities. What seems concordant with that are the data gathered from the teachers' interview, which indicate that, according to the teachers, students show more responsibility

during group work activities and feel more attracted to the task, to approximate one of the responses, one of interviewed teacher reports that, cooperative learning "absorbs the student and makes him part of the active group…". The effect of cooperative learning on students' attitude can yield autonomous students who react actively to the activities assigned to them, where one of respondents suggests that: "… this method creates autonomous learning process and environment whereby students… all of them… engage in the activity unlike the individual method where only the best students participate" and, on top of that, the positive relationships between group members help students create a positive environment where they "… consider themselves friends and not just classmates and this makes them enjoy the activities more", Which concurs with the responses to item six from the questionnaire, where results demonstrate that 68% and 23% prefer group work and pair work (respectively) over the individualistic method. From what has been discussed, it can be said that the data collected by way of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview confirm the first hypothesis of the study which suggests that "Students show more positive attitudes toward the activities when working in small cooperative groups".

Regarding the second hypothesis which states that "Cooperative learning could be the solution to motivate passive EFL learners", the information collected through the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview denote that cooperative learning has a significant impact on students' motivation. From the students' responses to the questionnaire, it seems that cooperative learning boosts students' motivation in different ways, one of which is that cooperative learning allows low-level students to model and imitate their excellent partners from a closer distance, where responses to item eleven reveal that 69% of the students believe that imitating their partners boosts their motivation to approach the task, due to their newly altered, positive, expectations about the feasibility of the task, which corroborates with the crux of Wigfield & Eccles' (2000) expectancy-value theory.

Another way in which cooperative learning can target students' motivation is by giving students the opportunity to help one another, which affects students'

self-esteem (mostly the high-achievers) and consequently, gives them a motivational shot in the arm (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

The sense of mutual benefit, that students experience when working with peers, has a positive impact on the their engagement in the activities, which owes to the elements of positive interdependence and individual accountability, where evidence for the effectiveness of the latter can be drawn from students' answers to item nine, where 81% of the respondents show appreciation of the assumption that cooperative learning helps fostering a sense of responsibility among group members, and that 78% of the yes branch respondents believe that, that sense of responsibility motivates them to work harder.

Even beyond that, the social element, which cooperative leaning accentuates, plays a great role in fueling students' motivation where, according to one of the students, it makes them "feel very energetic", which, in fact, agrees with Deutsch's (1992) belief that, compared to the competitive settings, cooperative learning is a setting where students are more likely to develop positive feelings for one another, enjoy each other's confidence, and influence each other. From the teachers' points of view, cooperative learning boosts even the shy and less-motivated students' impetus to participate in the task, as one of the interviewed teachers contends that "Participation in front of the whole classroom can be intimidating for shy students… but it's less difficult in front of a small group… Students here will not hesitate to engage and make mistakes" which seems to agree with Brumfit's (1984) view of the group work environment, where he asserts that: "the setting is more natural than that of the full class, for the size of the group resembles that of normal conversational groupings. Because of this, the stress which accompanies 'public' performance in the classroom should be reduced." (p. 77).

Also, when high- and low-achieving students work together, "… students with lower level do their best not to look less capable compared to their excellent friends" as one of the teachers states. And here, a combination of the need to keep up with, and to simulate, their high-level partners, can trigger the low-level

students' motivation and drive them to make more effort in order to complete their share in the task. Concerning the information drawn from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview, items that took aim at the students' motivation, elicited positive perceptions about the correlation between the use of cooperative learning and the students' motivation, therefore, it can be said that, there is evidence to suggest that the second hypothesis, which states that "Cooperative learning could be the solution to motivate passive EFL learners" is confirmed.

Regarding the third hypothesis of the study, which postulates that "Cooperative learning could be effective in closing the achievement gap between the high- and low-achievers in oral expression", the data gathered from the students' questionnaire, the teachers' interview, are to be combined to help better explain and discuss the data yielded from the pretest and the posttest. From the teachers' interview, it seems that most of the teachers believe that cooperative learning is a method of teaching which main goal is to target the link between the high and low-achievers and turn it into a bridge where mutual benefit and reciprocity take place, fostering a sense of positive interdependence between group members, as one of the interviewed teachers defines it as "a type of group work where excellent students push the poor-level students to take a step forward and be part of the discussion or be part of an activity".

Moreover, the answers provided by the students in response to item five, which asks the students about the effectiveness of their teacher's techniques, where the results show that 57% of the respondents find the teacher's teaching method, which constitutes cooperative learning strategies, effective, and that the latter, according to 91% of the informants, are more effective in honing students oral skills compared to the individualistic method. More evidence about the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' achievement is shown in the students' answers to item ten, where the data show that 86% of the respondents think that cooperative learning strategies affect "greatly" their achievement.

The results from the pretest and the posttest, which assessed directly the change of the dependent variable (the achievement gap), showed that the gap between the high and the low-achievers in the experimental group decreased after the intervention, where the value of the effect size d dropped off from d=1.925, in the pretest; to d=1.674 in the posttest. Also measures of non-overlap plunged from U_1=97.4%, U_2=82.9%, and U_3=97.1% in the pretest; to U1=73.1%, U2=78.8%, and U3=94.5% in the posttest (table 4.7), which means that, after the intervention, the distance between the means of the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group (EGH and EGL respectively) were reduced compared to the distribution of both populations' means before the intervention, and that the rank of the average subject from the EGH compared to the scores of the EGL, which was 97.1% in the pretest, was reduced to 94.5% in the posttest.

Another indicator which demonstrated a decline in the achievement gap between EGH and EGL was the decrease in the Common Language Effect size indicator's value, which denoted that cooperative learning succeeded in closing the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group.

On the other hand, in the control group, where students were taught using the traditional individualistic method, the statistics showed that findings from the control group have made quite a contrast with those of the experimental group, where, as shown in table 4.10, the achievement gap between the high-achievers (CGH) and the low-achievers (CGL) had increased.

Another indicator of the increase of the achievement gap in the control group was the increase in the values of non-overlap, which signifies that there was more non-overlap between the distribution of the achievement of the CGH and CGL subject.

Concerning the CL value, data showed that the probability that a randomly selected person from the CGH would achieve higher than 87.7% of the CGL in the pretest, increased to 98% in the posttest, which indicated that the traditional

individualistic method failed in reducing the gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the control group.

The data culled from the pretest and the posttest concerning the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' achievement agree with previous studies, chiefly, the one meta-study conducted by Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000), where they collected data from a large number of "164 studies investigating eight cooperative learning methods" (Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000, p. 1) in comparison with the individualistic and the competitive teaching methods, where they stated that: "All eight cooperative learning methods had a significant positive impact on student achievement" and proved to be more effective compared to the individualistic and the competitive teaching method, where, their comparison of the JIGSAW with the competitive and the individualistic methods stood as an example, where the results showed that JIGSAW exceeded the individualistic method, in five different studies (k=5) with an average effect size of d=0.13; and the competitive method, in nine studies (k=9) with an average effect size of d=0.29.

As for our study, it seems that, the current investigation, where the researcher made use of the JIGSAW strategy, bares resemblances with the aforementioned examples, apart from the fact that, these examples were conducted in different contexts, where most of the studies investigating the achievement gap, assessed the latter with respect to different independent variables, like economical status, or as a black-white discrepancy, and were conducted by different researchers using different types of measures. However, there is a plethora of theories that are supportive of the findings yielded from this study, among these theories, is the theory of social interdependence (Deutsch, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1989) based on which is one of the main elements of cooperative learning, which is positive interdependence.

During the intervention, students were exposed to a number of activities that promoted positive interdependence, namely, Think-Pair-Share and JIGSAW, where, being instructed to depend on each other, helped the students learn from, and exchange information with, each other. By doing so, learners helped close the gap

between each other, where the high-achieving group members, lead the way for their low-achieving partners to advance. This was evident in the student's scores in the posttest, where the distribution of the means of the high-achievers (EGH), slightly, slightly overlapped with those of the Low-achievers CGL. Literature about the effectiveness of cooperative learning, 375 studies that were conducted for over 90 years, showed that working interdependently with partners promote better achievement and productivity, than working individually (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). These studies included comparisons between cooperative learning strategies, including the original Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978), and the individualistic and competitive methods.

Together these studies provided insights into the superiority of cooperative learning over the competitive and the individualistic method in enhancing students' achievement, interpersonal attraction, social support, self-esteem, time on task, attitude toward the tasks, quality of reasoning, and perspective taking.

From the aforementioned, it seems that the data excerpted via the pretest and the posttest, showed that cooperative learning was successful s it was able to reduce the achievement gap between high- and low-achievers in the experimental group, and that, on the other hand, the individualistic method failed to do so in the control group where the results revealed that the gap between CGH and CGL increased in the posttest. Therefore, our third hypothesis which states that "Cooperative learning could be effective in closing the achievement gap between high- and low-achievers" was confirmed.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data marshaled through the research tools, where, findings yielded from the questionnaire, the interview, the pretest, and the posttest were analyzed (quantitatively and qualitatively), combined, assessed against each other, and against previous studies from the literature.

The results obtained by means of pretest and the posttest, the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview helped us reach the following conclusions: one is that cooperative learning proved to be effective when it comes to fostering positive attitudes among students toward the oral expression activities, second, cooperative learning is quite instrumental in enhancing EFL students' motivation, and third, Cooperative learning helped closing the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in the oral expression classroom. The results gained through this study, encouraged the researcher to make some recommendations in relation to the use of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom and which relate to the context of teaching oral expression. The next chapter will mainly provide suggestion and recommendations based on findings from this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This section, based on the findings of the study and what has been discussed earlier in the literature review, provides some recommendations which may help teachers bring the best out of their students in cooperative learning classrooms. Through this section, the researcher attempts to encourage the implementation of cooperative learning in the EFL university classroom, by highlighting some of the main concepts that distinguish, and confirm the effectiveness of, such teaching method, which are esprit-de-corps, positive interdependence, and status-equalization. This section also, goes briefly through the different roles that teachers need to occupy in group work, in general, and in cooperative learning, as a specific type of group work. The last part of the section goes through a brief discussion about the students' roles in cooperative learning.

5.2 Implementing Cooperative Learning in the EFL University Classroom

"…university faculty should base their teaching practices directly on theory and research" (Johnson et.al, 2013, p. 2). Indeed research findings should be applied in the coal face of education, as Johnson et.al (2013, p. 10) state "it is necessary to operationalize the theory into a set of practical procedures that university instructors may actually use". When it comes to implementing cooperative learning in the university, there has been a plethora of validating research that pertain to elements of such instructional method of teaching, chiefly, social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1949).

As it is the case with the early grades, students in the Algerian university need a supportive learning environment, for, even at this advanced stage in their life, students still need a setting that encourages them and attracts them to the university life not only as classes to attend but also as a new, friendly, community (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013) which, in fact, corroborates with the findings yielded from the present study, where data collected by means of the questionnaire revealed that EFL university students find that building good relationships while

working together and exchanging ideas with each other affects positively their attitudes toward the learning environment.

In the individualistic and the competitive university settings, students are more likely to leave university before graduating. These two types of teaching methods lead students to suffer more social and intellectual isolation which are two of the main reasons behind students' failure to complete the university degree according to Tinto (1993).

Listing more causes, for students leaving university can further support what has already been obtained through this study where findings prove that both students and teachers favor the cooperative learning instruction over the individualistic one, this indicates the ineffectiveness of the traditional when it comes to dealing with the following list of obstacles, which are mostly related to goal-setting and to the social element of learning: academic failure, uncertainty about personal goals, lack of academic and social integration into university life, lack of intellectual and social adjustment, lack of commitment to completing a degree, incongruence between university goals and students' interests, and financial hardship.

As to this study, results from the questionnaire, the interview, and the tests revealed the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in promoting higher and less discrepant achievement through a concoction of the elements of positive interdependence and individual accountability. Moreover cooperative learning created better relationships between students where all group members developed a sense of belongingness and created bonds with one another; which led to a third benefit, which is a sense of psychological positivity, where responses to the questionnaire and the interview revealed that, in a social comparison-free environment, students worry less about their self-esteem and are more likely to experience less pressure from their peers.

For more supportive evidence, the researchers selected concordant claims which were made by Johnson et al., (2013), where they contended that cooperative learning can benefit the university students on three different levels:

- **Achievement:** where, based on findings from previous research in different domains, cooperative learning proved to be quite the instrumental in promoting high academic achievement, where factors relating to intellectual adjustment and integration, and goal setting can be overcome by allowing students the opportunity to help each other set and refine goals by creating, new, joint ones. Cooperative learning can, also, boost students' intellectual commitment and grow their interest in the university curricula.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Cooperative learning can promote a better social university life and facilitate the students' social integration into the university community. The list of the benefits of the positive interpersonal relationships cooperative learning promotes starts with the fact that, cooperative learning helps increase the social pressure to achieve, facilitate social adjustment and social goal setting, turn students into interdependent friends who help make possible the social integration of each other, commit to their friendships (as a result of group-processing), and, thus, attract each other to attend university.
- **Psychological health:** Learning in coalitions can be quite helpful for students who worry about their self-esteem and suffer uncertainty. Cooperative learning, as it was discussed previously (in chapter three) preserves and promotes students' self-esteem and allows them the chance to model, and exchange ideas with, their partners, which can lead them to overcome indecision and set clearer goals. Moreover, cooperative learning can increase students' sense of self-concept and self-efficacy.

Table 5.1 represents a list of factors hindering university success and how cooperative learning can help overcome these obstacles (Tinto, 1993).

Table.5.1. Cooperative Learning and University attendance

Factors (Tinto, 1993)	Achievement	Interpersonal Relationships	Psychological Health
Academic Failure	Academic Success	Social Pressure To Achieve	Self-Concept, Self-Efficacy
Adjustment	Intellectual Adjustment	Social Adjustment	Psychological Adjustment
Relevance Of University To Goals	Academic Goal Setting	Social Goal Setting	Setting & Achieving Meaningful Goals
Uncertainty About Life Goals	Academic Success Creates Possibilities	Friends Create Possibilities	Ability To Deal With Uncertainty
Commitment To University Education	Academic Commitment	Social Commitment To Be With Friends	Ability To Commit To Goals
Finances	Increases Eligibility For Financial Aid		
Integration Into University Life	Intellectual Integration	Social Integration	Develop & Maintain Relationships
University Life & Needs Incongruent	Intellectual Interests & Curricula Congruent	Relationship Goals & Attending University Congruent	Ability To Adapt Personal Goals To Current Situations
Academic & Social Isolation	Intellectual Integration	Social Integration	Form Coalitions To Achieve Goals

Regarding the factor of finances, which does not possibly seem to be targeted directly through cooperative learning as a classroom instruction, and which is not of interest in this study, the researchers suggests that it can somehow be overcome through the sense of empathy and understanding that grow between group members, especially in cooperative base groups (one of the three types of cooperative learning), where members get to bond with each other for long periods of time (which can be years), meet at the end of every week or day, and help each other inside an outside the university setting.

> For most universities and for most students, the primary contact among students and between students and faculty occurs in the classroom. Any attempt to create an academic and social community thus begins in the classroom. If the students do not engage with each other and with the faculty in the classroom, they tend not to engage elsewhere (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013, p. 13).

As it was elaborated previously (Chapter.2.2), cooperative learning comes in three types, informal, formal, and base-group cooperative learning. All of these three types are based on the premise that, students must take their share of responsibility for organizing the material, explaining it, correcting misconceptions, and filling each other's knowledge gap. In the oral expression class, lecturing students less, and engaging them in student-centered conversations about the topic is the key to increase the length of their talk-time, and to allow them the opportunity to hone their linguistic as well as their cognitive and social skills in the process.

Our study revealed that integrating cooperative learning strategies like Jigsaw or even pair-work activities like Think-Pair-Share has a powerful impact on the students' oral English proficiency as they get to participate actively in verbal exchanges of ideas about the subject, and learn not just new ideas but how to phrase them in correct, error-free, English as well. This not only helps the low-achieving students to improve their oral expression skills, but also benefits their high-achieving partners at two levels: the linguistic one, where it allows them to solidify what they already know as they explain, correct utterances, or repair phrases for their partners; and secondly, cognitively and psychologically, where they become more motivated and gain more sense of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and expectancy-value after playing the role of higher-level thinkers and knowledge resources for their low-level teammates. This was evidenced through scores in the pretest and the posttest, and through data gleaned from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview.

Based on the results that were reached through the study which states that, assigning students to dyads and tryads is quite motivating, the researcher recommends a list of effective activities suggested by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2013), Turn-To-Your-Partner-Discussions are instrumental when it comes to motivating students during sessions that involve the teacher lecturing the whole classroom, where, they contend that, dividing lectures into shorter segments that last from 10 to 15 minutes and instructing students to go through Turn-To-Your-Partner-Discussions, during the breaks, can keep the learners motivated and reduce

the likelihood of them getting bored or demotivated, for,(1) an adult learner can only stay focused and motivated for periods that last about no more than 15 minutes; and (2) Students feel more motivated when they work together on a joint goal (Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000).

Turn-To-Your-Partner-Discussions are informal cooperative learning activities which, start with the teacher asking a specific question, relevant to the lecture being delivered, then the students thinking about the answer individually, discussing it in pairs, and finally giving a summary of their discussion to the whole classroom. This type of pair work activity, in truth, can encourage the students to negotiate and exchange ideas and to construct more superior thoughts compared to their initial individual ones (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2013), and also decreases off-task behavior by forcing students to focus on the content, increasing their cognitive processing of the information being delivered by the teacher.

Cooperative learning tasks ensure the teachers that every student is participating in the activity, by maximizing interaction between group members, especially when it comes to complex instructions, where, instead of telling the student to "either master one skill or abandon the task", higher levels of cognition are required and a set of different skills is employed, where the students who are deficient at certain areas of language learning get to use their partners as sources to master the lacking skills and, at the same time, get to better the ones that they are proficient at (Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999).

5.3. Building a Cooperative community

Building a cooperative community in the EFL classroom requires adequate knowledge about group dynamics on the part of the teacher. Results of the study revealed that, what university EFL students look for in a learning environment are positive relationships with their partners, safety, and equity. As an attempt to further expand what already has been deduced from the analysis of the teachers' interview and the students' questionnaire, in this subsection, the researcher suggests three key

elements to instilling a cooperative team spirit among EFL learners in the oral expression class: esprit-de-corps, positive interdependence, and status equalization.

5.3.1. Esprit-de-Corps

The positive relationships among students, cooperative learning promotes, increase students' interpersonal attraction, liking for each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), and also foster academic support among classmates. Thanks to the element of positive interdependence, teaching the content becomes not the responsibility of the teacher alone, but a shared task between him/her and his/her students. From what has been obtained from the teachers' interview, having a community of students where the teacher is not the only knower, creates a sense of autonomy where, the students not only carry the burden of transmitting ideas to their partners, but, to motivate each other as well, where the motivated students turn to motivators, alongside the teacher.

Esprit-de-core, which stands for the sense of loyalty and attachment to the group, can be propelled through the group-processing that students go through at the end of the cooperative learning activities, where they negotiate possible solutions and discuss potential ways to tackle the problems that may hurtle the advancement of the group as a whole, and understand each other's need in the process. This can also be promoted through the sense of pride they get from being individually accountable where it was observed from the students' questionnaire that, feeling individually accountable boosts the students' self-esteem and motivation, as they feel that they are indispensable, equal, contributors who are able to add to the collective effort of the group.

Through cooperative learning instructions, teachers can build a students' community wherein, the students handle their own learning and that of others in a learner-centered manner, feel attached to, and appreciated by, their partners, and responsible for the progress of their teams, and where the teacher, as a leader and not a dominant know-it-all-guy, can monitor, guide, and only intervene when necessary.

At the beginning of the session, the teacher can give the students instructions about the essence of esprit de corps, how it can be achieved, and what kind of behavior it involves. The crux of esprit de corps, which entails, feelings of trust, attachment to, and pride of being member of, the group; in truth, agrees and streams from a similar perspective as that of the social interdependence theory, which underlies the concept of cooperative learning. That is why it is advisable to instruct students about the essential cooperative learning elements, especially, positive interdependence. Requiring the students to be positively interdependent, individually accountable, interactive, aware of the needs of their partners, and considerate about the progress of the whole group is, in fact, how the teacher can instill and boost the sense of esprit-de-corps among students.

Coalitions cannot only be formed between students, but also among teachers and faculty staff, where every member of the university community contributes to the cooperative effort which ultimate end is to achieve the joint goal that is, the betterment of the learning and the university life quality, where cooperation between instructors and planners can help to bring about change in terms of university policies and teaching methodologies, where the latter can be replaced or refined to fit students' needs and expectations, and subsequently, help to increase the students' interests in, and liking of, the curricula and, thus, reduce the chances of them dropping out or quitting.

5.3.2. Fostering positive Interdependence

The foundations for the social interdependence theory can be traced back to Kurt koffka's (1900's) notion that groups are dynamic wholes wherein members are interdependent, and which was carried and modified later by Kurt Lewin in 1920's-1930s' where he added to the existing definition, the idea that, the core of a group is the interdependence between its members and that it is the individual members' intrinsic tension that stimulates the advancement of the whole group in the direction of achieving the joint goal (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013).

This was later refined by Morton Deutsch in the late 1940's, where he distinguished between three different types of interdependence: (1) positive

interdependence, which exists among members of cooperative groups, in which students help each other and believe that their success is correlated with the success of others; (2) negative interdependence, which stands for the competition that occurs between individual learners in the competitive classroom, where the success of one student is correlated with the failure of others, in other words, it is survival of the fittest; and (3) no interdependence, which exists in the individualistic classroom, where each student has his/her own goals, and where his/her success depends on no one's but his/her own advancement. This is highlighted in figure 5.1, which is adopted from Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2013).

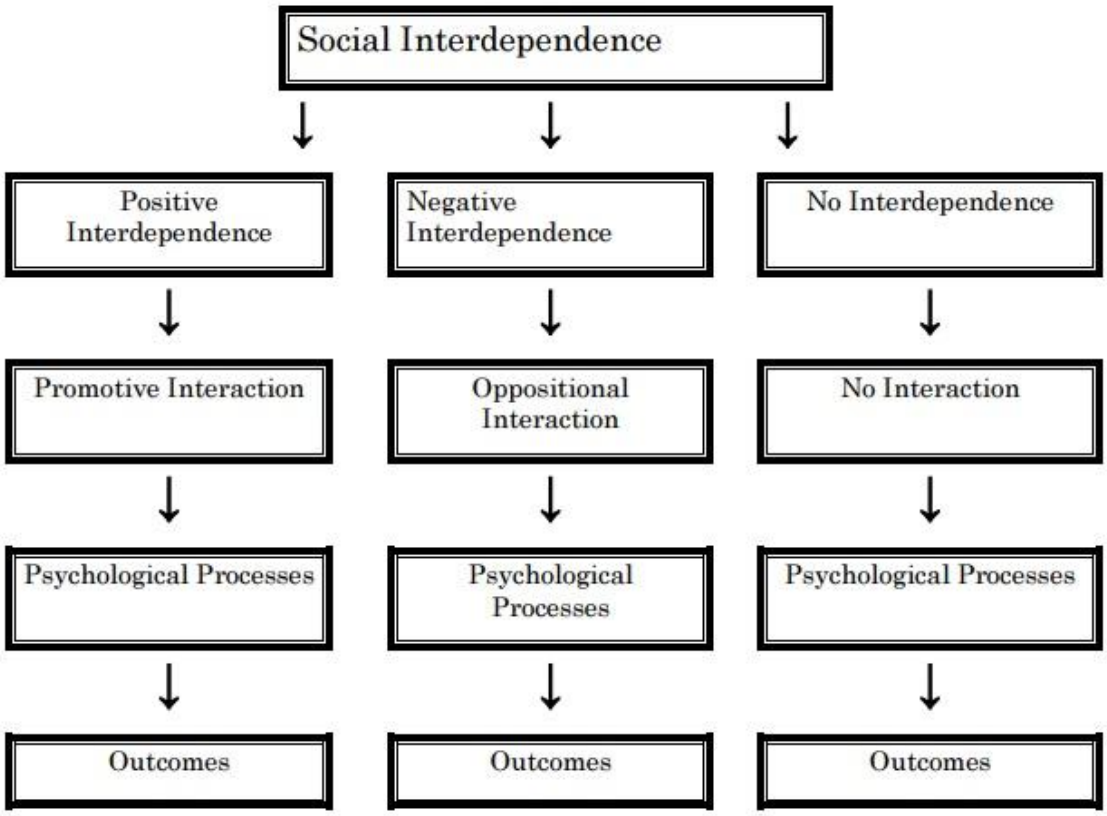


Figure.5.1. Types of interdependence (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013, p. 21)

Through the analysis of the teachers' and students' responses to questions concerning their perceptions about cooperative learning, it was highlighted that the implementation of cooperative learning techniques in the EFL classroom, especially, in the oral expression session, promotes positive interactions between learners, thanks to the sense of, positive, goal-interdependence that amalgamates the

students as individual learners feel obliged to network with, and facilitate the processing of the content to their teammates, where not only learning takes place among them but also teaching, as the high-level students teach the low-level ones which is, in effect, quite beneficial to both the tutor and the tutee for "when you teach you learn twice" (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, p. 11).

As it is shown in figure 5.1, according to Deutsch (1949a), interdependence produces three different types of psychological processing that pertain to the presence or absence, and the nature, of the interaction and reciprocity that take place between individuals, these three psychological processes are:

> Substitutability (i.e., the degree to which actions of one person substitute for the actions of another person), cathexis (i.e., the investment of psychological energy in objects outside of oneself, such as friends, family, and work), and inducibility (i.e., the openness to being influenced and to influencing others)" (Johnson & Johnson, 2011, p. 42).

Among the three types of interdependence, positive interdependence, which cooperative learning promotes, is the one that results and can be resulted through positive interactions where students do not feel threatened by the sense of rivalry, but instead, tend to negotiate and exchange ideas, and help, and rely reciprocally on, each other, which was revealed through the students' answers to the questionnaire and was observed from their scores in the posttest. Negative interdependence on the other hand (the individualistic method) is believed by the interviewed teachers to result in less frequent interactions during which students, are mostly, disputant, and regard their partners as adversaries, who only strive to surpass, or even, hinder the advancement of, their classmates. No interdependence yields out alienated students who are avoidant of their partners and who only set and pursue individual, personal, goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2011).

Positive interdependence is very crucial when it comes to creating and maintaining healthy learning environments wherein learning communities can grow and survive. In order for university students to succeed as a learning community, it must be instilled, from the beginning, in the students' minds the belief that

university life is the opportunity for them to encounter other individuals who share the same goals with them, who are open to influencing and being influenced by them, and who are there to help them throughout difficult situations and to either swim or sink with them.

5.3.3. Equalizing Interaction

In the EFL classroom, students come in different linguistic and academic levels, as well as, different skills and abilities. The dilemma faced by EFL teachers is the difficulty to foster equity between the students in terms of, providing them with equal opportunities to learn and participate in the task, and, also, in terms of assigning a task that is achievable by all members of the class. The reason why the researcher decided to recommend such concept is because it involves the concept of status which is related to the subject of cooperative learning and understanding such concept can greatly help oral expression teachers to avoid the problem of inequity and opportunity gap which can lead to a gap in achievement.

According to Cohen et al. (1999), two main reasons behind this inequity are, tracking and ability-grouping which take place at stages as early as primary school, where students are segregated and labeled as high- and low-status learners, where the former are the social isolates and the latter are the influential and the dominant members of the class.

The problem of status represents a dilemma not only in the traditional, competitive or the individualistic classrooms but in the cooperative learning settings as well. Even inside a heterogeneous group of interdependent students, the notion of "the poor stay poor and the rich get richer" still troubles the teachers, and requires them to monitor the students' interactions and intervene whenever there is a problem that cannot be solved the learner-centered fashion, or whenever some students show symptoms of failure to cooperate or inability to interact and engage with their teammates.

Failure to assign students to heterogeneous groups can backfire and yield the exact opposite of what is expected from well structured cooperative learning

strategies, where more discrepancy and alienation between the high- and low-status members start to take place, causing more inequity and unfairness, which can divide the cooperative classroom into two different strata, that represent two separate clusters, where one consists of sheer high-status students and the other one includes sheer low-status ones. Moreover, failing to foster heterogeneity among groups is a fatal mistake, which can lead to enlarging the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students.

Even though, well structured cooperative learning activities ensure heterogeneity in the classroom, still seating students in mixed-ability groups does not, completely, solve, the problem of status discrepancy. In fact, the lack of supervision on the part of the teacher may cause the low-status, reluctant, intimidated, group members to hesitate more and shy away from engaging in direct conversations with their high-status, intimidating, partners, causing the gap between the high- and the low-achievers to widen: "As high status students interact more in the group, they learn more from the task; as low-status students interact less, they in turn learn less" (Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999, p. 84). For this reason, it is recommended that teacher play the role of a monitor during the cooperative task to ensure that all members are engaging in the discussions and are being heard and not neglected by their teammates.

Among students, status can be perceived based upon three different characteristics, (1) diffuse characteristics, which are contingent upon different, general, social attributes and differences such as race; (2) specific characteristics, which are based upon the student's perceived proficiency level at a certain ability or skill, by both the teacher and peers; and, more importantly, (3) local characteristics, which have a greater influence on students' interaction compared to the two previous types of characteristics, and which pertain to peer and academic status (Cohen &Lotan, 1997; Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999, p. 84).

In the traditional individualistic classroom, the problem of status is even greater and is more likely to obstruct the language learning/teaching process, especially, for the students with dull social skills, whom are alienated from their

peers and who, barely, get the opportunity to interact with their partners and work on their social prowess. On the other hand, students who are perceived to be of high-status, are more popular, dominant when it comes to participating in the activities, and less likely to be ignored during discussions.

The fact that cooperative learning stresses the social element of language learning and that it, based on validating research, reduces social comparisons, peer-pressure, and so many factors that can cause alienation among students, makes it more promising a teaching method when it comes to creating a friendlier and less status-infected environment in the classroom. However, it would be an overestimation to say that, setting students in small, heterogeneous, groups can completely eliminate the problem of status.

A heterogeneous cooperative group is but a microcosm of a larger community, which is the classroom. When the students join small groups, they bring with them different levels of ability, social skills, and even, already perceived, academic and peer status. That is why teachers need to keep in mind that, even in cooperative groups, high-status students will participate more and attempt to take over the talk-time since the low-status ones will hesitate to interact with their partners, if not be ignored by them (Cohen & Lotan, 1995).

In the cooperative classroom "Those who talk more, learn more" (Cohen & Lotan, 1995, p. 100) and based on that, those who talk less, learn less. However, the goal sought from implementing cooperative learning in the oral expression session, is not to get certain students to talk more than others, but, to get small group members to interact and talk equally, and to, consequently, allow them all an equal chance to practice and enhance their speaking skills. Here, instructing students about the required behaviors related to turn-taking and being individually accountable is of paramount importance.

In order to modify the students' initial perceptions about their own, as well as, each others' status, Cohen et al. (1994) suggest two ways of intervention that the teacher can use to treat the status problem and prevent it from causing inequity

between group members. These two methods are: the multiple-abilities treatment and assigning competence to low-status students.

5.3.3.1. Multiple-Abilities Treatment

This multiple-abilities treatment is based on the premise that intelligence is multidimensional and that students have strengths and weaknesses when it comes to cognitive and linguistic abilities. "For example, the highly verbal student may have difficulty with tasks that require spatial and visual competence. Likewise, the student who scores poorly on a vocabulary test may be an astute scientific observer" (Cohen et al., 1995, p. 84).

According to Cohen et al. (1995), multiple-abilities treatment can be fulfilled following two main steps. The first one occurs at the beginning of the session, where, as it is the case with any cooperative learning task, the teacher starts by explaining the task structure, and, here, as a first step, besides clarifying the criteria for success in the activity, the teacher needs to: (1) make sure that, the students understand that the task at hand requires a variety of skills and abilities; and to (2) list these skills and abilities.

The second step in multiple-abilities treatment is to "create a mixed set of expectations for each student" (Cohen et a., 1995, p. 85) and to alter the low-students' perceptions about the utility of their unique abilities. In order to do so, the teacher needs to tell his/her students that none of them has all of the abilities required to complete the task, and that each one of them has strengths and weaknesses that complement the strengths and weaknesses of the others, which is, in fact, the crux of positive interdependence. For a successful treatment, another crucial thing students need to understand is that, the contribution of every single member of the group is mandatory, valuable, and indispensable.

5.3.3.2. Assigning Competence to Low-Status Students

Assigning competence to low-status students involves the teacher as a "reliable" source of evaluation whose judgment about competence is perceived as quite valuable by the students. As it is commonly known, the issue with evaluation

is not, simply, about whether or not students are being evaluated, but, about the content of the evaluation itself, which can either affect positively or negatively the students' perceptions about their abilities (Ames, 1992; Mac Iver, 1987). In the same vein, a successful assignment of competence is a public evaluative statement, which content is positive and specific, and which aim is to alter students' beliefs about their own, as well as each other's, competence (Cohen et al., 1995).

Another point to stress is that, when it comes to assigning competence to low-status students, it is important that the teacher observes carefully the behavior of the neglected group members during the interaction and that he/she only provides public evaluations after the low-status students do something or showcase an ability that is relevant to the requirements of the activity, in other words, public evaluations must not come out of the blue. The teacher, then, as the person with the highest status, needs to make sure that, the high-status students hear and believe the positive evaluations that the low-status ones receive, so that, their initial negative perceptions about their partners' status can change in a positive trajectory, and, consequently, lead the group members to regard their teammates as effective, reliable, partners (Cohen et al., 1995).

Most cooperative learning instructions require the group members, regardless their level, to regard their partners as equal contributors through the implementation of positive interdependence and individual accountability, however, the idea of equalizing status through multiple-abilities treatment and assigning competence to low-status, provides a method that stresses the role of the teacher as a monitor and as a source of evaluation, and gives more meaning to teacher's presence in the learner-centered cooperative classroom. It, also, provides cooperative learning instructors with the means needed to foster equity, which represents one of the main criteria of a successful cooperative learning classroom.

5.4. The Teacher as a Group Work Instructor

In any kind of classroom, the teacher is regarded as the leader who decides on the way in which learning takes place, assigns tasks, sets classroom policies, and

represents the major resource of knowledge. However, the degree of teacher-centeredness is what concerns group work instructors, where the latter follow a less teacher-centered and more student-centered manner of teaching, especially when it comes to implementing cooperative learning. Base on what has been siphoned from the teachers' answers about the need for autonomy, student-centeredness and for a restriction of the teacher's roles in the classroom which included roles like guide, prompter, controller, and motivator, the researcher devotes this subsection, to highlight the teacher's roles in group work and namely in cooperative learning, where he succinctly discusses the role of the teacher as a leader and, then, as a cooperative learning instructor.

5.4.1. The Teacher as a Democratic Leader

In 1939, Lewin and his colleagues, Lippitt and White, conducted an experiment where they intended to test the effect of three different leadership styles on children from a summer camp. These leadership styles were: the autocratic leadership, where the leader takes supreme authority; the democratic leadership, where the teacher, allows room for students to participate in decision-making and, to some extent, function as leaders; and the laissez-faire leadership, where the teacher's sense of authority is kept to a minimum.

The study yielded out different results for each of the three leadership styles, where the democratic leadership proved to be more effective when it comes to the quality of the products, promoting a friendlier climate and better interpersonal relationships, and eliminating hostility among group members. On the other hand, in the autocratic group, the students showed higher a level of productivity, however, only in the presence of the leader, and a higher level hostility among children. The laissez-faire leadership proved to be the least effective when it comes to reducing stress, promoting organization, and fostering the aforementioned variables among subjects (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003).

Commenting on the outcomes of the experiment, Dornyei and Murphey (2003, p. 91) state that: "These pioneering results have been reproduced by a great number of studies over the past 50 years, and there is a general agreement that the

evidence is consistent and clear in support of democratic, participatory leadership". More research concerning democratic leadership show that, activities are more enjoyable and satisfactory when the students are allowed to participate in, and be part of, the group's decision-making discussions (Mullen & Salas, 2000).

According to Shaw (1991; as cited in Dornyei & Murphey, 2003), besides being less effective, being an autocratic teacher, who gives strict orders to his/her students and has tight control when it comes to decision-making, is easier a task compared to being a democratic teacher, who acts as a leading member f a group and puts more effort in the process, and is more involved in what is going on between members of the group, which is quite essential for the group work to work, for "the challenge in teaching is not covering the material for the students, it's uncovering the material with the students" (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013, p.14).

5.4.2. The teacher as a Facilitator

Another concept that supports, and is in fact similar to, the concept of a democratic leader, is the role of the teacher as a facilitator whose role in the classroom is restricted to "providing an appropriate climate and resources to support learning" (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 92). According to Carl Rogers (1961), there are three attributes that a good facilitator must have, which are: (1) empathy, which stands for the ability to understand what the students are going through and to interpret their emotions; (2) acceptance, which involves displaying favorable attitudes toward students and tolerating the fact that they have good as well as bad qualities; and (3) congruence, which stands for being real and authentic.

Before planning group work tasks, which involve playing the role of a facilitator, it is recommended that teachers take into consideration the taxonomy propounded by Carl Rogers (1961), which can, in fact, benefit, both, the teacher and his/her students and ensure a better student-centered educational experience with the two first attributes, empathy and acceptance, helping in providing a safe and friendly, stress-free learning climate for the learners, and the third one, congruence, helping in creating a stress-free climate for the teacher, where being genuine and

honest to the point of admitting limitations in front of the students saves the teacher all the pressure that comes from the fear of getting embarrassed when failing to explicate, or lacking the knowledge about, a certain subject (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003).

For the sake of balancing the two aforementioned concepts, the participatory leadership and facilitative teaching, it is helpful to recommend another model that explains how the combination of leadership styles and facilitation operates. This model is known as Heron's (1999) System of Facilitation. Heron (1999) postulates that, there are three facilitation modes:

- **The hierarchical mode:** where the teacher takes full charge when it comes to making decisions and structuring and organizing the learning process, which is the equivalent of Lewin's autocratic leadership style.
- **The cooperative mode:** which is when the teacher/facilitator is more democratic, and tolerant with the idea of letting the students share part of the authority and be responsible about their learning, alongside the teacher.
- **The autonomous mode:** in this mode, the teacher's role as a facilitator is to provide the students with a highly student-centered climate, wherein their autonomy is accepted and guaranteed, which goes hand-in-hand with Lewin's laissez-faire leadership style.

According to Heron (1999), a good facilitator is one who is flexible when it comes to switching facilitation modes when necessary. Since Heron contends that none of the three facilitation modes is superior to, or can cancel, the others, it makes sense, then, to recommend that teachers use all the facilitation modes in the same lesson (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003).

5.4.3. Specific Teacher's Roles in the Cooperative Learning Classroom

In most types of classrooms, the teacher plays similar, common, roles that involve being a guide, a motivator, and, of course, the leader of the learning process, however, in cooperative learning, as a student-centered instruction, the teacher has to play more specific roles that come with more responsibilities and

functions. According to Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998), the cooperative learning teacher has four main roles to fill, which are: to make pre-instructional decisions; explain task and cooperative learning structure; monitor and intervene; and to evaluate and process.

Making pre-instructional decisions involves: setting academic and interpersonal objectives; deciding on the group size and composition, where the groups should consist of an optimum number of two to three or a maximum number of four members with different levels of ability (heterogeneous); arranging the classroom, where “Group members should be "knee to knee and eye to eye" but arranged so they all can see the instructor at the front of the room “ (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998, p. 7); and preparing materials that make the students resource-interdependent, where every member would have a unique segment, which forces students to work together, or by giving the whole group one sheet of paper to work on.

The second role, which is to explain the task and cooperative learning structure, encompasses teacher’s duties, which involve bringing into sharper focus: the academic task and the criteria for success, where the teacher has to make clear for the students the objectives and the procedures and abilities that are relevant and required in order to complete the task, as well as the criteria based on which students are to be evaluated; fostering interdependence and a within-group as well as an in-between-groups cooperation, by establishing ‘sink or swim together” as the classroom’s motto, setting joint goals, and instructing students to celebrate their mutual success and achievement; structuring individual accountability by assigning roles or by testing random students individually (e. g., numbered-heads-together) at the end of the session; and identifying the specific behaviors and the small-group skills that the teacher wants to see students use during interactions.

The third major role of the teacher in cooperative learning is to monitor and intervene. This role involves structuring tasks that encourage the students to go through face-to-face interactions and monitoring them while they are doing so. Here, as a monitor, the teacher walks around the classroom and makes sure that the

students understand the task, gives feed-back and assigns competence whenever students do well, and intervenes whenever students need to be retaught or are unable to work together. According to Cohen and Lotan (2014), this role of monitor and the responsibilities that come with it cost the teacher the price of interrupting and decreasing the interaction between group members, that is why, the teacher needs to be cautious and only intervene at the right time and in situations that are worth that cost. According to Cohen and Lotan (2014) some of the situations that necessitate the intervention of the monitor/teacher are when:

- The group is hopelessly off-task;
- the group does not seem to understand enough to carry out the task;
- the group is experiencing sharp interpersonal conflict; or
- The group is falling apart because they cannot organize themselves (p. 135).

The last and fourth role for teachers to play in the cooperative learning classroom is to assess and process, where, they need to evaluate the quality of cooperation between students and to ask the latter to give their evaluation of their own work as a team. This takes place during the debriefing, at the end of the session, where students are asked to list some of the things that they did well as a group as well as the things that their groups are missing and which they are planning on honing in the next session.

5.5. Students in Cooperative Language Learning

In cooperative learning, it is helpful for teachers to inform the students about what behaviors they need to display during group work, but it is even more useful to split this burden among students by dividing labor and roles among group members. This subsection deals with some of the students' roles and activities in cooperative language learning.

5.5.1. Students' Demands in Group Interactions

Before group work activities are engaged by the students, the teacher has the responsibility of illuminating the students about what it is like to be a cooperative

small group and what skills does being cooperative entail. The abilities that the teacher expects to see his/her students to showcase do not only consist of social skills and behaviors, but also, the linguistic skills that can be used between group members during the interaction. Cohen and Lotan (2014) suggest three demands that students need to have so that they can complete the cooperative task successfully, which are to: access to the learning task, participate in group interaction, and to demonstrate intellectual growth and competence.

5.5.2. Access to the Learning Task

Access to the learning task requires the students to understand the objectives and the structure of the activity set by the teacher. In order to do so, students need to seek clarifications and ask questions about ambiguous aspects of the task from their peers before resorting to the teacher, which represents an opportunity for them to go through interactions and to practice their oral expression skills with their partners. Going through such discussions in the target language, English, allows the students to work on developing their repertoire of routines, which includes the information and the interaction routines (Bygate, 1987).

Information routines include "stories; descriptions of places and people; presentation of facts; comparisons; instructions" (Bygate, 1987, p. 23). By engaging in conversations about certain subject that involve expository or evaluative routines, students can overcome difficulties that pertain to their linguistic competence when it comes to telling a story or describing a certain concept, where they employ different, cooperative communicative strategies, correct and, even, help each other to complete phrases and sentences, which, in fact, represents a form of information exchange, in other words, positive interdependence, whether on the level of grammar, vocabulary, or any other sub-skill.

According to Cohen and Lotan (2014, p. 103):

> Structurally, a greater proportion of students have opportunities to speak during groupwork as compared to whole-class settings where, legitimately, only one student speaks at a time. More students have

opportunities to ask clarifying questions or seek further explanations. They can ask for definitions of new vocabulary words or idiomatic expressions and practice using them in the context of grappling intellectually and linguistically with the task.

The other kind of routines which students can work on (while and, in order to get access to the learning task) is the interaction routines. These routines are "based not so much on information content as on sequences of kinds of terms occurring in typical kinds of interactions" (Bygate, 1987, p. 25). Teachers need to inform about these routines during the pre-instructional phase of the cooperative learning task. Interaction routines involve behaviors that can promote friendly relationships among group members, like politeness, sensitivity toward the others, and respect in terms of turn-taking.

5.5.3. Participation in Group Interactions

As it was explained earlier, the premise of cooperative learning and positive interdependence is to get students to work together on joint tasks and to become "academic and linguistic resources for one another" (Cohen & Lotan, 2014). For interaction to take place between students, the teacher needs to set a safe climate where students feel less pressure and get less scrutiny from the teacher, so that, anxiety and fear of making mistakes does not prevent the learners from expressing their thoughts and opinions and being part of the conversation.

During cooperative groups' conversations, language students do not just improve their social and small-group skills, but, get to practice functions of the language as well, where, assigning different roles to the students, requires them to use specific phrase and functions related to these roles, and thus, requires the teacher to instruct them about which phrases are associated with which role. A good example to illustrate is the one provided by Cohen & Lotan, 2014, p. 104) where they list some of the language functions and expressions that are expected to be used by a student playing the role of a facilitator:

- Who will read the directions?

- Does everyone understand what we need to discuss and do?
- How much time do we need for each part of the task? What else do we have to do?
- Let's get back to work! . . . We have minutes left to finish up.
- What's the question for the teacher? Can we answer it for ourselves?

Participation in group interactions requires the students to use the language appropriate for group conversations. Cohen and Lotan (2014) suggest language frames that teachers can give to their students to boost their performance during group discussions and which they can use, for example, to:

- explain why or how by using logical connectors (because, consequently, as a result of), temporal (first, second, then, next), or comparative ones (more … less, rather, instead, also);
- connect reasons with what needs to be explained or to evidence (As a result of …; This is why …; As a consequence of …; One reason for …is; another reason is …; This argument is supported by/is based on ...; We know this because …; When we look at …, we can see that …);
- respond analytically to complex texts and ideas (By saying …, the author implies that …; The protagonist felt …, because he …; The story ended abruptly, consequently …); and
- persuade (There is little doubt that …, therefore we need to …; Let's improve our report by including more detail…). (p. 105).

5.5.4. Demonstrating Intellectual Competence and Growth

Enabling the students to engage in conversations with their partners and, thus, allowing them to take turns in being either a speaker or listener in the process, represents an opportunity for them to go through a process of peer-evaluation, where peers correct, scaffold, and provide each other with feedback (Cohen & Lotan, 2014). This, also, gives them the chance to showcase their speaking prowess and be recognized by their partners as well as the teacher. For this reason, teachers need to take advantage of moments when the students display a high-level thinking

or intellectual competence and to, accordingly, provide immediate feedback and assign competence to them in front of their teammates as a way of encouraging them, as speakers, to speak louder and, as listeners, to listen more closely and to appreciate the effort and contribution of their counterparts.

5.5.5. Specific Roles for Students in Cooperative leaning

Assigning students specific roles and names within their groups, is quite the strategic way for teachers to promote, both, individual accountability, as students feel that their roles are unique and entail matchless responsibilities and functions with those of their partners, and, subsequently, cannot hitch-hike; and positive interdependence, where they have but to help each other put together the pieces to the overall, joint, product (Cohen, 1994).

Some of the most common positions that can be assigned to cooperative group members are those suggested by Cohen (1994) were she propounds a list of roles, some of which are: a facilitator, a reporter, and a materials manager.

The role of facilitator entails (1) keeping the group on-task; (2) making sure that every group member is being cooperative, and (3) soliciting help from the teacher when necessary (Cohen, 1994). The role of facilitator, which is somehow a leader, similar to that of the group moderator (which on the other hand deals more with the social and interpersonal aspect of the group work) demands cautiousness on the part of the teacher regarding the fact that a misuse of such leading roles by the students can cause a problem of status among the learners, where the facilitator or the moderator can perceive themselves and be perceived by the other group members as dominant bosses who control the process of group work, and consequently speak less and listen more, and refrain from expressing their ideas and opinions (Cohen & Lotan, 2014).

Moreover, having a leader deciding who is next to speak and taking charge of making decision can turn the advantage of cooperative learning, which is being student-centered, into an activity similar to the teacher-centered instructions with the group leader as the center of the discussion (Cohen & Lotan, 2014). So, this is a

convincing reason for teachers to be cautious as to assigning strong leaders the role of facilitator, to limit the latter's functions to three aforementioned activities, and to make it clear for all group members that they all share the right of participating in decision-making. The role of facilitator can be assisted by another one, the checker, whose job is to check if everyone has done their part of the report.

The second role on the list, the reporter, involves asking questions as to how the task is going to be carried and the steps that are going to be taken, writing down the key ideas produced from the group discussion, and reporting them after the whole group has decided that they have reached agreement and are ready to announce their findings. Here, as a way of manifesting positive interdependence, the reluctant reporters can ask for assistance from their partners when feeling unable to present the findings by their own. The third role, material manager, includes laying down materials such as sheets, badges, and instruction cards, and which can be assisted by another role which is the setup, the person who makes sure that the material is placed right in the center of table and that everyone can get access to it.

In university setting, where students are more mature, the role of a facilitator is quiet handy and more likely to be understood and fulfilled by older students than by a group of middle-school pupils. However, roles like material manager and safety-officer are barely necessary for individuals mature enough to know how to place the materials on the tables. However, there are still more roles which are suitable for adult learners, besides facilitator and reporter, like the role of synthesizer (Cohen et al., 1994) which job is to foster objectivity and to "depersonalize disagreement" (p. 91) between students, which lessens subjective conflicts between group members and creates a space for constructive negotiations and, consequently, leaves no room for negativity in the classroom climate.

A final point concerning students' roles is that, in the oral expression class, as it is the case with any cooperative language learning activity, assigning roles cannot be effective unless students switch positions and get to play different roles. By switching roles, students get to practice a variety of language frames, as it was explained previously, e.g., by playing a facilitator and a reporter, in the same

activity, the learner can practice phrases that are exclusive to each role and, thus, get to experience situations that necessitate different language functions and enhance his/her speaking skills in the process. Another advantage of switching roles is that, exchanging positions eliminates status problems where all members get to play all the roles, which allows them to, equally, occupy the roles that may be presumed to be of a high status, by their partners, as well as those regarded as low-status-roles. Tips on assigning students roles are as suggested by Cohen and Lotan (2014, p. 123):

- Make the assignment of the job to a specific member of the group public knowledge. Other group members will recognize that you have given this person the authority to act as facilitator, reporter, or materials manager;
- Rotate role assignments so all group members eventually play all roles;
- Specify in great detail what the person playing the role is supposed to do and what the role responsibilities are;
- Make sure that all group members know what the responsibilities of each role are.

Finally, the researchers suggests a list of criteria that characterize a successful interaction between learners, against which oral expression teachers can assess the progress of their students, and which they can use as guide to an appropriate implementation of cooperative learning ,which is proposed by (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013, p. 7):

1. Providing each other with efficient and effective help and assistance;

2. Exchanging needed resources such as information and materials and processing information more efficiently and effectively;

3. Providing each other with feedback in order to improve the subsequent performance of their assigned tasks and responsibilities;

4. Challenging each other's conclusions and reasoning in order to promote higher quality decision making and greater insight into the problems being considered;

5. Advocating the exertion of effort to achieve mutual goals;

6. Influencing each other's efforts to achieve the group's goals;

7. Acting in trusting and trustworthy ways;

8. Being motivated to strive for mutual benefit;

9. Having a moderate level of arousal characterized by low anxiety and stress.

5.6. Conclusion

In order to implement cooperative learning in the EFL classroom, it is the teachers' job to first prepare his/her students before delegating them leadership, then monitor them and pay attention to the major and minute details as they go through student-student interactions. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the importance of what may be perceived by some teachers as, trivial details, and to get across the notion that it is the subtle details that snowball into major issues if not dealt with, properly, at the right time. In this chapter the researchers, in light of the findings yielded from the study and the literature review, attempted to suggest some of the elements that can ensure an effective way of implementing cooperative learning in the EFL classroom, which can help them to get a full advantage of such teaching method.

The chapter went, briefly, through concepts that underlie a promising process of building a learning community, which include: esprit-de-corps, positive interdependence, and status equalization. As the chapter expanded, light was shed on the teachers' roles as leaders and as cooperative learning engineers; and the students' roles as delegates of the teachers and as individually accountable and positively interdependent, equal, partners. In a nut shell, based on validating research, cooperative learning represents a panacea to a variety of problems that

might hinder the language learning process, especially the ones that pertain to inequity and gaps between individual learners. Therefore, it would be worth the effort for the EFL teachers to set “we sink or swim together” as the motto of their classrooms and to guide the students and to facilitate the path for them to act accordingly.

General Conclusion

Creating an equitable classroom is the first step to building an evenhanded community. In the traditional individualistic EFL classroom, students suffer the lack of healthy relationships through which the social element of learning plays on the learners' motivation and attitudes, and more importantly, on their achievement. Decades of research about this matter have yielded a variety of solutions among which the most paramount is cooperative learning whose effectiveness has been validated by a plethora of studies in a variety of domains and educational settings.

The main focus of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in closing the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving EFL university students in oral expression, where the researchers suggested cooperative learning as a promising strategy for providing students with an equal chance to practice and engage in the interactive activities and to, consequently, hone their speaking skills and reach a higher proficiency level. The study also involved two intervening variables that have an acknowledged influence on learners' decisions and engagement: students' motivation and attitudes, which were discussed in the literature section of the thesis and treated as a link between the dependent and the independent variable during the investigation process.

The work started by providing a literature review about the variables involved in the study, where the first chapter dedicated two sections for the two intervening variables of our study, attitude and motivation, where the first section was devoted to shed some light on the concept of attitude, its definitions and related constructs, its formation and change, and methods of attitude measurement. The second section reviewed, briefly, the concept of motivation, in general and in relation to language learning, where it provided an insight about the different types of motivation and brought to light some of the most influential theories and models in the field of motivational studies. The second chapter, also, consisted of two main sections. The first section, represented a brief discussion of the main aspects of cooperative learning, the independent variable of the study, where it provided some details concerning the core elements of cooperative learning and its types, and discussed some of the theories that underlie the concept. Finally, cooperative

learning was defined and discussed in the context of language learning. The second section, oral expression, was intended to give a brief discussion of speaking as a skill and as a process, and to provide some details about some of the main models and frameworks that can be used to teach such an important skill. Concerning the third chapter, the research design, rationale, and methods were detailed, where the researchers provided a thorough description of the steps followed to carry the investigation. The fourth chapter was mainly devoted to the analysis and discussion of the findings. The fifth and the last chapter, was devoted to provide a set of recommendations concerning the proper use of cooperative learning to teach oral expression.

The research took the form of a true experimental design, where a randomly assigned sample of 44 second year EFL students, at the University of Abbes Laghrour Khenchela-Algeria, was divided into two subgroups, the control and the experimental group, where the latter received a treatment, which represents the implementation of cooperative learning activities during an intervention that took place after the pretest and lasted for twelve (12) weeks. After the intervention, in order to assess the effectiveness of the treatment, the researchers administered a posttest that is similar to, and at the same level of difficulty as, the pretest. Afterward, the researchers distributed a questionnaire to the experimental group, twenty-two (22) subjects, and conducted qualitative interviews with a sample of six, randomly assigned English teachers from the same university, for the aim of investigating the two intervening variable of the study, students' motivation and attitudes.

With respect to the first research question, which is "Does cooperative learning affect the gap between high and low achievers?" the researchers used the data yielded from the pretest and the posttest to measure and compare the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in both the control and the experimental settings separately. In order to do so the researchers first, employed an effect size measure known as "Cohen's d" to calculate the values of the achievement gap, then interpreted those values using different non-overlap

guides that were proposed by Cohen (1988), as well as, McGrow and Wong's (1992) Common Language Effect-Size (CLES).This permitted to the researchers to interpret the achievement gap in terms of percentiles that are easy to construe and understand by non-statisticians. The data gleaned through the pretest and the posttest scores showed that the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the experimental group decreased in the posttest compared to the pretest, whereas it, contrarily, increased between the high- and the low-achievers in the control group.

The fact that true experimental designs entail running the implementation of the independent variable (in the experimental group) and the placebo treatment (in the control group) simultaneously, has gained the research more internal validity (as it was discussed in chapter 3.4.1), which enabled the teacher to attribute the decrease of the achievement gap in the experimental group to the latter's exposure to cooperative learning instructions during the intervention.

On the other hand, it was concluded that the increase in the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in the control group was due to the ineffectiveness of the traditional, individualistic teaching method. Thus, based on the data gathered through the pretest and the posttest, the researchers confirmed the first and main hypothesis of this study, which stipulates that, cooperative learning can help to reduce the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students in oral expression.

Regarding the second question of the research, which is "Do well-structured cooperative learning activities boost the students' motivation in the oral expression classroom?" What was inferred from the data marshaled, by means of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews together, was that the students felt more motivated during group work, and that working interdependently with their partners increased their motivation, where they experienced a strong sense of self-esteem when helping their teammates. Students' responses also showed that the sense of individual accountability alongside the notion of mutual benefit increased their engagement and willingness to participate in the activities. Moreover, some of the

teachers' responses indicated that working in small cooperative groups boosted the shy and passive students' impetus to engage and take part in the group discussions with less anxiety about their self-esteem and without fear of making mistakes. Drawing on the aforementioned results, the researchers came to the conclusion that second the hypothesis of the study, which contended that Cooperative learning helps to motivate passive EFL students in oral expression, was confirmed.

With respect to the third research question: "Do students show more positive attitudes toward cooperative learning activities?" The researchers, once again, combined the data collected through both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews, where the teachers' and the students' responses indicated that the learners displayed more favorable attitudes toward the group work activities compared to the individualistic method, and felt more attracted to the tasks assigned to them during the intervention.

Answers from the students' questionnaire also showed that students believed that working in small groups affected positively the classroom climate, where they felt "*at home*", which seemed concordant with the teachers' assumptions that working on the interpersonal skills and relationships allowed the students to create a friendly learning environment for everyone. Based on that, the third hypothesis of the study, which stated that students show more positive attitudes when working in small cooperative learning groups, was confirmed as well.

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers provided some suggestions for university teachers, where he stressed some of the elements that represent the core steps to build a cooperative university community namely esprit-de-corps, positive interdependence, and status equalization. The researchers also attempted to provide some guidance for oral expression teachers on how to implement successful group interaction activities as well as what roles both teachers and students need to play in a perfect cooperative language learning classroom.

The present study has gone some way toward highlighting the effectiveness of cooperative learning in treating the problem of the achievement gap in the EFL

classroom, where the findings obtained made contributions to the current growing body of literature in the field of cooperative learning studies. However, the results in this study are subject to two main limitations that need to be considered. The first one is the narrow scope of the study, where the researchers limited this research to the examination of the effectiveness of cooperative learning on the achievement gap in relation to students' attitudes and motivation which came merely as an attempt to exclusively answer the three central questions of the study. This very drawback encouraged the researchers to suggest further and deeper investigation, in the future, of other factors that contribute to the achievement gap, such as gender, economic status, and race.

The second limitation faced in this study is the small sample, which puts the generalizability of the findings in question. However, as it was discussed earlier, in chapter 3.4.4.1, the researchers used "Cohen's *d"* effect-size as a measure to calculate the achievement gap for many reasons, the most important of which is the fact that using "Cohen's *d"* disregards the statistical significance that can be generated from using a large sample, and instead yields out findings that are *practically* significant, valid, and independent of the size of the sample (Lipsey & Wilson, 1993) unlike the probability value. Moreover, the researchers suggest replication of the study using different research designs to test and/or to confirm the reliability and the replicability of the study.

Finally, a reconciliation of current research about cooperative learning and classroom practices seems to be the solution to the present issues facing the EFL instructors. This study was meant to encourage EFL teachers, especially those who are reluctant to apply their research findings, to implement cooperative learning activities in their classrooms and to address the problem of the achievement gap with an equitable approach through which students not only learn how to advance and surpass, but also how to cooperate with their partners, develop their social skills, and learn how to balance between their roles as individuals and as members of an interdependent community.

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Appendix A: The ICAO speaking Test Scale

ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale						
Level	Pronunciation Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community	Structure Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interaction
Expert 6	Pronunciation,stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.	Both basic and complex grammatical structuresand sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and sensitive to register.	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.	Comprehension is consistently accurate innearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and culturalsubtleties.	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues, and responds to them appropriately.
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics, but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.	Comprehension is accurateon common, concrete, and work related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.
Operational Level 4	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere withmeaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances.	Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.	Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying.
Pre-operational 3	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete, or work related topics but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.	Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Fillers are sometimes distracting.	Comprehension is often accurate on common, concrete, and work related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. May fail to understand a linguistic or situational turn of events.	Responses are sometimes immediate, appropriate, and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on familiar topics and in predictable situations. Generally inadequate when dealing with an unexpected turn of events.
Elementary 2	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding.	Shows only limited control of a few simple memorized grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorized phrases.	Can produce very short, isolated, memorized utterances with frequent pausing and a distracting use of fillers to search for expressions and to articulate less familiar words.	Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorized phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.	Response time is slow, and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple routine exchanges.
Pre-Elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.

Appendix B

The Students Questionnaire

This questionnaire is conducted for the purpose of gathering information concerning your attitude toward studying in cooperative groups in the oral expression session, and to what extent does the cooperative learning method affect your motivation during oral English activities. To answer the questions, tick the box that corresponds to your answer.

Thank you in advance.

Section One: Personal information

1. **Sex:**

Male ☐ **Female** ☐

2. **Age:**

……..

Section Two: Attitude

3. **How do you find participation in oral English Activities?**

Difficult ☐ **easy** ☐ **very easy** ☐

4. **How do you rat your oral skills**

Below average ☐ **average** ☐ **above average** ☐

5. **How affective are the techniques which your teacher uses in improving your oral skills?**

Affective ☐ **I don't know** ☐ **Inaffective** ☐

Can you mention some of these techniques?

……
……
……

6. **Which one of these learning methods do you prefer?**

Individual work ☐ **Pair work** ☐ **Group work** ☐

If others please specify

……

……

7. **Which method do you think can, best, help you improve your oral performance?**

Group work ☐ **Pair work** ☐ **Individual work** ☐

Please justify your answer.

……

……..

8. **Are you familiar with the concept of cooperative learning?**

Yes ☐ **Not sure** ☐ **No** ☐

If yes, please explain it.

……

……

……

9. **How does working in groups with your classmates affect your attitude toward the tasks?**

……

……

Section Three: Motivation

10. **During group work, do you feel responsible for the achievement of the whole group?**

Yes ☐ **Not sure** ☐ **no** ☐

If yes, does that sense of responsibility drive you to put more effort?

Yes ☐ **Not sure** ☐ **No** ☐

If yes, how does that affect your performance and achievement?

……

……

11. During group work do you model (imitate) your advance classmates?

Yes ☐ **Not sure** ☐ **No** ☐

If yes, does that?

Motivate you ☐ **make no difference** ☐ **demotivate you** ☐

12. Do your self-esteem and confidence increase when you help you partners solve problems in the classroom?

Yes ☐ **Not sure** ☐ **no** ☐

If yes, how does that affect your motivation?

Greatly ☐ **a little** ☐ **makes no difference** ☐

13. Which of these methods motivate you the most?

Group work ☐ **pair work** ☐ **individual work** ☐

14. How does the social element of working in groups affect your motivation?

……
……
……

Thank you.

Appendix C

The Teachers Interview

Section One: Personal Information

1. What degree(s) do you hold?

2. How long have you been teaching English?

3. For how long have you been teaching oral expression?

Section Two: Teachers' Perception of Cooperative Learning and Teaching Methods

4. How do you rate your students' level in oral expression?

5. How does the gap between students, in terms of achievement, affect the quality of the teaching process?

6. Which of these methods do you use the most? A) Group work? B) Individual work? Or C) Pair work?

7. When you use group work, on what basis do you set up the groups? a)students' preference b)Random selection?

8. What is your perception of cooperative learning?

9. Do you think it is applicable in your university? Why?
10. Which method is more effective in oral expression cooperative or individual learning?

11. According to you what is the most important role that the teacher must fulfill in the EFL classroom?

Section Three: Teachers' thoughts about Cooperative Learning and Students' Motivation

12. Do you think your students are more motivated when they study individually or in cooperative groups?

13. How does working in small groups affect students' attitudes toward the activities?
14. Does the cooperation that students go through boost the shy students' activeness?

15. How does that affect their engagement in the activities?

16. To what extent do you think building good relationships with each other encourages students to work in the classroom?

Appendix D: Cooperative Learning Activities Used in the Intervention

Since students do not have adequate experience with cooperative learning structures, while preparing the first tasks, the teacher opted for less complex activities, like icebreakers, which serve as the first steps to the cooperative learning environment, and, at the same time, as team building activities, through which students get to know each other. After a few sessions, students were assigned more complex activities, which required more skills and involve larger numbers of group partners.

The current subsection provides detail about the activities that were used during the intervention.

Table.4.4. Session One

Find Someone Who			
Purpose: To encourage initial interaction with the group			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide information: • Vocabulary for describing persons. Guide the activity	Find someone who has things in common with yourself (physical and personality traits) Identify differences	Pairs
10 min	Complete accountability Debrief activity	Introduce other person to group Discuss what was surprising	Whole group

Activity-Icebreaker-Find Someone Who

Organizer: Since we will be working together we need to get to know each other.

Objective: Find someone who has things in common with yourself. Describe the difference between you and him/her (include both physical and personality traits).

Time: 20 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Face-to-face interactions/ a pen and a paper, to record names and attributes of the persons.

Process: In pairs:

- Find things in common between you and your partner.
- Identify the differences that you have.
- Switch partners

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to explain commonalities and differences and use vocabulary that pertains to the person's physical and personality traits.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions with different partners and get to know more about their partners, setting a friendly climate and fostering better understanding among group members.

Accountability: every student is responsible for collecting information about the other person and introducing him/her to the rest of the group.

Debrief: What did you learn (about your partner) that was surprising?

In the first session, the teacher provided the students with the input, where he taught them the necessary vocabulary for 45 minutes, then, he explained to them the cooperative learning elements for 15 minutes. The remaining 30 minutes were devoted to the activity, during which the teacher kept monitoring and reminding the students about the group norms and the helpful behaviors that they should perform.

Both the teacher and the students had few roles to achieve. The icebreaker activity is suitable for introducing cooperative learning and helping students achieve, chiefly, the elements of face-to face interaction, social skills, and individual accountability. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table.4.5. Session Two

Three-Step Interview			
Purpose: To encourage initial interaction with the group			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide information: • Strategies for asking questions. Guide the activity	Interview a partner BE interviewed by a partner Observe an interview	Triads
10 min	Complete accountability Debrief activity	Introduce other person to group Discuss what was learned	Whole group

Activity-Icebreaker-Three-Step Interview

Organizer: Since we will be working together we need to get to know each other.

Objective: Interview each other and prepare an introduction of a person whose interview you observed.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Face-to-face interactions/ a pen and a paper, to record names and information about the persons.

Process: In triads:

- Play the role of an interviewer (1) and interview a partner.
- Play the role of an interviewee (2) and be interviewed by a partner
- Play the role of an observer (3), observe an interview, and prepare an introduction of the interviewee.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to use different questioning strategies.

- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in small groups, get to know more about their partners, experience turn-taking, play different roles (simultaneously accountable), and pay attention to each other.

Accountability: Introduce one other person to the rest of the group.

Debrief: What did you learn about your partners? About interviewing?

The second session, like the first one, included an icebreaker activity, except it involved a larger number of group members (triads) and, subsequently, required more social skills, turn taking, and more interaction. Compared to pairs, triads are richer in terms of knowledge resources and the opportunity for performing cooperation. The activity focused on the elements of, interaction, social skills, individual accountability, and positive interdependence. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.6. Session Three

'Let me begin by saying…and that concludes' (Cole et al., 2007)			
Purpose: To encourage interaction with the group and increase confidence			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide input: • Phrases that are used to open, sustain, and conclude a conversation. Guide the activity.	Discuss the topic with partners. Assist partners. Switch roles (speaker, listener, and reporter).	Triads
10 min	Complete accountability. Debrief activity.	Summarize the work. Discuss what was learned.	Whole group

Activity- 'Let me begin by saying…and that concludes'

Organizer: Discuss the following topics in small groups, using the phrases you learned.

Objective: form informal groups.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Face-to-face interactions/ a pen and a paper, to report.

Process: In triads, discuss the topic with you partners, and during the conversation play the following roles:

- A speaker: for 3 minutes.
- A listener: for 3 minutes.
- A reporter: for 3 minutes.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to utilize phrases that can used to open, sustain, and conclude a conversation.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions with different partners, achieve positive interdependence by helping each other while playing different roles (speaker, listener, and reporter), become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention to each other.

Accountability: One student summarizes the group's discussion in front of the whole class.

Debrief: Which part of the activity was difficult? Which phrase did you teach or learn from your partner, tell that person directly?

In the third session students were exposed to a more complex activity, which requires more social skills, turn-taking, positive interdependence, and individual accountability. The teacher's job was to teach a set of phrases that are used for opening, sustaining, concluding a conversation for 50 minutes, assign groups and explain roles for 10 minutes (before the activity), and to monitor and guide the students during the activity. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.7. Session Four

Paraphrasing			
Purpose: To practice paraphrasing techniques and encourage active participation			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide information about paraphrasing. Guide the activity.	Choose a topic to discuss with your partners. Practice paraphrasing.	Triads
10 min	Complete accountability. Debrief activity.	Discuss what was easy and what was difficult.	Whole group

Activity- Paraphrasing

Organizer: Paraphrasing helps to assure others that they are being heard and ensures that what is heard is understood.

Objective: Practice paraphrasing.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: personal experience/ a pen and a paper, to record observations.

Process: In triads, as:

- A speaker: for 3 minutes, talk to your partners about a personal experience.
- A listener: for 3 minutes, paraphrase the speaker's content without asking questions or giving advice.
- An observer: for 3 minutes, observe the paraphrasing skills of the listener, then, give him/her feedback.
- Switch roles.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to identify and utilize paraphrasing techniques.

- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions with different partners, achieve positive interdependence by learning paraphrasing techniques from their partners while playing different roles, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Everyone has done all the roles

Debrief: Which role was the most difficult? Which one was the easiest? Which of your partners did better at which role? Tell him/her directly.

During this activity, students were encouraged to participate actively, where there were no chance for hitch-hiking and where students were required to be simultaneously accountable for the fulfillment of three different roles. The teacher's job was to introduce information about paraphrasing and to explain it to the students by providing examples for 50 minutes. Students were prepared for the task for 10 minutes, and groups were selected by the teacher. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.8. Session Five

Think-Pair-Share			
Purpose: To encourage active participation and interdependence			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Present vocabulary related to media. Guide the activity.	Share information on and feelings about media	Pairs
10 min	Collect and comment on information. Debrief activity.	Share information and feeling with others.	Whole group

Activity- Think-Pair-Share

Organizer: What the positive and the negative implications that media have on our lifestyle.

Objective: Share thoughts on and feelings about media.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Vocabulary that pertains to the subject of media and face-to-face interaction.

Process: Individually:

- Think about media and its implications on our lifestyle.

In pairs:

- Discuss the implications of media on our lifestyle and exchange thoughts about the situation.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to utilize vocabulary about media and to express his/her feeling about the topic. Both students can explain the point of view of the other.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in pairs, achieve positive interdependence by learning and exchanging information and explaining points of view, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Share information and personal feeling with the whole class.

Debrief: How did the discussion add to your prior knowledge about the implications of media? What new words or expressions did you learn from your partner?

In the fifth session students were introduced to a list of vocabulary items and phrases which pertain to the topic of media, for 50 minutes. Afterward, the teacher explained to the students how Think-Pair-Share works and assigned pairs, for 10 minutes, and then, monitored the activity, which lasted for 30 minutes. The activity focused on positive interdependence, through the exchange of information and ideas; face-to-face interaction; and individual accountability. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.9. Session Six

JIGSAW			
Purpose: To encourage positive interdependence			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Form groups and provide them with materials to teach the four types of conditional. Guide the activity.	Learn and rehearse the materials	Expert groups
20 min	Ensure major points are correct.	Teach materials to others. Learn new material.	Home groups
20 min	Collect and comment on information. Debrief activity.	Answer questions about the learned material.	Numbered-heads-together

Activity- JIGSAW

Organizer: Students were assigned to groups of fours and each member was given a number (from 1 to 4) and was assigned one of four types of conditional. Then, students with the same number (all number 1's) form "expert groups" and rehearse the corresponding material together. In the next step, students return to their home groups and teach their partners what they have learned in the expert groups.

Objective: Master and rehearse the four types of conditional through expert groups.

Time: 60 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: segmented information. Monitor and encourage participation. Ensure accuracy.

Process: In expert groups of five:

- Discuss and summarize major points about the assigned type of conditional.
- Practice, prepare, and help the others prepare, the material they are going to teach in their home groups.

In home groups of four:

- Each expert explains his/her segment to his/her home group partners.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to use the four types of conditional appropriately.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions within expert groups, achieve positive interdependence by exchanging information and explaining the material to each other in home groups, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Including the Numbered-Heads-Together activity and randomly calling on students by number and asking them non-expert questions.

Debrief: How did the exchange of information (teaching and learning from your partners) help you understand the material?

After being exposed to five types of cooperative learning activities and becoming more aware of elements like individual accountability and face-to-face interaction, during the sixth session of the intervention, students were exposed to a more advanced and complex instruction called JIGSAW, which main focus is to foster a positive interdependence among students. The idea behind using such type of activity was to help students see each other as, equal, sources of information, by dividing the material between them so that each member's contribution is indispensible. This not only helps the low-achieving students to learn from the high-achieving ones, but also boosts their confidence, when they help their partners; and protects their sense of self-worth when they seek help from them, where help-seeking in small groups are less intimidating than in a whole classroom. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table.4.10 . Session Seven

Find Someone Who			
Purpose: To encourage interaction with the group			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide information about discourse markers. Guide the activity.	Discuss with your partner something that you like in common (sport, movie, activity, etc) Identify differences in your opinions.	Pairs
10 min	Complete accountability Debrief activity	Share your thoughts with the group Discuss what was surprising	Whole group

Activity-Icebreaker-Find Someone Who

Organizer: Let's get to know what are the things that we like in common?

Objective: Find something that your partner and yourself like in common. Identify the different opinions that you have about that certain thing.

Time: 20 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Face-to-face interactions/ a pen and a paper, to take notes.

Process: In pairs:

- Find something that you and your partner like in common and discuss it.
- As a speaker: use the right discourse markers.
- As a listener: right down the markers used by the speaker.
- Switch roles.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to explain commonalities and differences and to use discourse markers properly.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions with their partners and get to know more about them, setting a friendly climate and fostering better understanding among group members. Students will also listen actively to each other and, interdependently, help each other find the right words during the conversation.

Accountability: every student is responsible for his/her part of the discussion as a speaker, and has to observe his/her partner as a listener.

Debrief: What do you and your partner like in common? How many times did your partner use discourse markers?

The seventh session of the intervention aimed at teaching students discourse markers, a term which was coined by Deborah Schiffrin (1988) to refer to linking words and phrases. At the beginning of the session, the teacher provided information about the different discourse markers and their functions, and used marker sentences to illustrate (for 50 minutes). Students, then, were instructed about the activity and pairs were formed according to teacher's choice. The activity focused on the elements of face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table.4.11. Session Eight

Think-Pair-Share			
Purpose: To encourage active participation and positive interdependence			
time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Present vocabulary related to "Technology". Guide the activity.	Discuss opinions and feelings about technology.	Pairs
10 min	Collect and comment on information. Debrief activity.	Share opinions and feeling about technology with others.	Whole group

Activity- Think-Pair-Share

Organizer: Discuss with your partner the good side and the bad side of using technology.

Objective: Share thoughts on and feelings about technology.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: face-to-face interaction, a list of vocabulary (on the board) and a pen and a paper to take notes (optional).

Process: Individually:

- Think about technology and its positive and negative implications.

In pairs:

- Discuss your thoughts and your opinions with your partner.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to utilize vocabulary about technology and to express his/her feelings about the topic. Both students can explain the point of view of the other.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in pairs, achieve positive interdependence by learning and exchanging information and explaining points of view, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Share information and opinions with the whole class.

Debrief: How did the discussion add to your prior knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of using technology? What new words or expressions did you learn from your partner?

The eighth session followed the same steps as session five. Students, after being exposed to this type of instruction before, needed less instructions and intervention from the teacher, however, the teacher kept encouraging interaction and monitoring the students during the activity. The introduction of the material, vocabulary that relate

to the topic of technology, took 50 minutes, and the instructions and pair assignment took 10 minutes. The activity, which lasted for 30 minutes, focused on the cooperative elements of, positive interdependence, through the exchange of ideas; individual accountability; and face-to-face interactions. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.12. Session Nine

Discussion-Synthesis			
Purpose: To encourage interaction, individual accountability and positive interdependence			
time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Introduce vocabulary related to environment. Outline situation (industrialization and the environment) Guide the activity.	Exchange ideas and synthesize.	Small groups
10 min	Comment on synthesis. Debrief activity.	Explain synthesis of information. Describe group process.	Whole group

Activity- Discussion-Synthesis

Organizer: what is the connection between industrialization and the pollution of the environment?

Objective: Exchange ideas and synthesize industrialization with endangered environment.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: face-to-face interaction, a list of vocabulary (on the board) and a pen and a paper to take notes (optional). Monitor, encourage participation and interdependence.

Process: In triads:

- Discuss, with your partners, the link between industrialization and pollution of the environment.
- Synthesize the information to explain the link.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to utilize vocabulary related to environment. Everyone has to understand and be able to explain the link between industrialization and pollution of the environment.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in triads, achieve positive interdependence by learning and exchanging information and explaining points of view, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: one group representative explains the link.

Debrief: How did the positive interdependence you went through help you in achieving the task? Among your partners, who was the most accountable? Tell him/her directly.

The ninth session started with the teacher providing the students with vocabulary and phrases which pertain to the topic of environment. The teacher delivered the content by using model sentences and asking students to provide examples. The lesson lasted 50 minutes. During the next 10 minutes, students were informed about the activity and explicitly reminded about the cooperative learning norms and elements. The class was divided into triads (assigned by the teacher). The activity targeted the elements of individual accountability, positive interdependence, face-to-face interactions and group processing (during the debrief). At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.13. Session Ten

JIGSAW			
Purpose: To encourage positive interdependence			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Form groups and provide them with materials to teach tenses (present simple, past simple, present perfect, and the past perfect). Guide the activity.	Learn and rehearse the materials	Expert groups
20 min	Ensure major points are correct.	Teach materials to others. Learn new material.	Home groups
20 min	Collect and comment on information. Debrief activity.	Answer questions about the learned material.	Numbered-heads-together

Activity- JIGSAW

Organizer: Students were assigned to groups of fours and each member was given a number (from 1 to 4) and was assigned one of four these four tenses (the present simple, the past simple, the present perfect, and the past perfect). Then, students with the same number (all number 1's) form "expert groups" and rehearse the corresponding material together. In the next step, students return to their home groups and teach their partners what they have learned in the expert groups.

Objective: Master and rehearse the aforementioned tenses and their functions through expert groups.

Time: 60 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: segmented information. Monitor and encourage participation. Ensure accuracy.

Process: In expert groups of five:

- Discuss and summarize major points about the assigned tense and its functions.
- Practice, prepare, and help the others prepare, the material they are going to teach in their home groups.

In home groups of four:

- Each expert explains his/her segment to his/her home group partners.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to use the present simple, the past simple, the present perfect, and the past perfect, appropriately and understand how they functions.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions within expert groups, achieve positive interdependence by exchanging information and explaining the material to each other in home groups, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Including the Numbered-Heads-Together activity and randomly calling on students by number and asking them non-expert questions.

Debrief: How well did the group do, compared to the last time you used the JIGSAW activity? What can you do to make the group do better the next time?

In the tenth session the teacher asked the students to regroup the same partners from the previous JIGSAW groups (session six). The reason for that is to help student reflect on their relationships with each other, to use their group-processing, and to, also, help them evaluate their group progress. The session started with teacher preparing the groups for cooperation and providing them with the (segmented) input. The activity focused on the elements of face-to-face interactions, positive interdependence, individual accountability, and group-processing. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.14. Session Eleven

Three-Step Interview

Purpose: To encourage initial interaction with the group

time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Provide information about reported speech. Guide the activity	Interview a partner BE interviewed by a partner Observe an interview	Triads
10 min	Complete accountability Debrief activity	Introduce other person to group Discuss what was learned	Whole group

Activity-Icebreaker-Three-Step Interview

Organizer: Tell us about some of the most valuable advice that you received in your life.

Objective: Interview each other and prepare a report about the person whose interview you observed.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: Face-to-face interactions/ a pen and a paper, to take notes.

Process: In triads:

- Play the role of an interviewer (1) and interview a partner.
- Play the role of an interviewee (2) and be interviewed by a partner
- Play the role of an observer (3), observe an interview, and prepare a report about your partners' use of reported speech.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** Everyone has to be able to use reported speech.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in small groups, get to know more about their partners, experience turn-taking, play different roles (simultaneously accountable), and pay attention to each other.

Accountability: Share your work with the whole class.

Debrief: What similar advice did you and your partners receive?

Session eleven, used the same instructions that were used in session two, where the activity use was a Three-step interview with the objective of helping the students practice reported speech. The session started with teacher informing students about the reported speech, and how to use it (for 50 minutes), then, students were assigned to triads. The aim of the activity was to encourage interaction between students, help the practice turn-taking and social skills, and to foster positive interdependence and individual accountability within the group. At the end of the session students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

Table .4.15. Session Twelve

Think-Pair-Share			
Purpose: To… and encourage active participation			
Time	**Instructor activities**	**Learner Activities**	**Techniques/ Equipments**
20 min	Present vocabulary related to traveling and tourism. Guide the activity.	Share information on and feelings about traveling and tourism (in Algeria).	Pairs
10 min	Collect and comment on information. Debrief activity.	Share information and opinions with others.	Whole group

Activity- Think-Pair-Share

Organizer: Discuss with your partner tourism in Algeria and why you would recommend traveling to Algeria.

Objective: Share thoughts on and opinions about tourism and traveling in Algeria.

Time: 30 minutes.

Techniques/Equipment: vocabulary that pertains to the traveling and tourism, and face-to-face interaction.

Process: Individually:

- Think about tourism and its state in Algeria.

In pairs:

- Discuss thoughts about the reasons that would make you recommend traveling to Algeria.

Group Success:

- **Linguistic Outcomes:** everyone has to be able to utilize vocabulary that pertains to tourism and traveling and to express his/her feeling about the topic. Both students can understand and explain the point of view of the other.
- **Cooperative Learning Outcomes:** All students go through face-to-face interactions in pairs, achieve positive interdependence by learning and exchanging information and explaining points of view, become simultaneously accountable, and pay attention by listening actively to each other.

Accountability: Share opinions and personal feeling with the whole class.

Debrief: How did the discussion add to your prior knowledge about traveling and tourism in Algeria? What new places did you learn about from your partner?

Session twelve was the third time students were exposed to the Think-Pair-Share instruction. At the beginning, students were taught vocabulary which concerns tourism and traveling and were provided with examples to help them understand meanings and have an idea about the use of each item (for 50 minutes). In the next step, students were assigned into pairs and were asked to "*Discuss with your partner tourism in Algeria and why you would recommend traveling to Algeria*". The activity lasted for 30 minutes and focused on the elements of, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, and positive interdependence. At the end of the session, students were asked to celebrate the completion of the task.

ملخص

تمثل هذه الدراسة محاولة لتسليط الضوء على فاعلية التعلم التعاوني في سد فجوة الإنجاز بين الطلاب ذوي الإنجازات العالية والمنخفضة في التعبير الشفوي وتأثيره الإيجابي على دوافع ومواقف متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تضمنت الدراسة عينة من 44 طالباً وطالبة من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة عباس لغرور خنشلة ، الجزائر. لإجراء البحث ، اعتمد الباحث على تصميم تجريبي حقيقي واستخدم مجموعة من طرق جمع البيانات (الاختبار المسبق، الاختبار البعدي، الاستبيان، والمقابلات المنظمة). كشفت النتائج عن أن التعلم التعاوني هو أداة مفيدة للغاية عندما يتعلق الأمر بسد فجوة الإنجاز بين الطلاب ذوي الإنجازات العالية والمنخفضة وفي تحفيز هؤلاء الطلاب وتغيير مواقفهم السلبية تجاه أنشطة التعبير الشفوي إلى مواقف إيجابية. بناءً على النتائج ، يقدم الباحث بعض التوصيات المتعلقة بكيفية توظيف التعلم التعاوني في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، التعلم التعاوني ، فجوة الإنجاز ، الدافع ، الموقف ، التعبير الشفوي

Summary

The present study represents an endeavor to highlight the effectiveness of cooperative learning in closing the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achievers in oral expression and its positive impact on the Algerian EFL learners' motivation and attitudes. The study involved a sample of 44 second year English students at the University of Abbes Laghrour Khenchela, Algeria. This research adopted a true experimental design and employed a set of data collection methods (a pretest, a posttest, a questionnaire, and structured interviews). Findings revealed that cooperative learning is an efficient instrument to bridge the achievement gap between the high- and the low-achieving students and to motivate the latter and alter their negative attitudes toward oral expression activities into positive ones. Based on the findings, the researchers provided some recommendations concerning the implementation of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: EFL classroom, cooperative learning, achievement gap, motivation, attitude, oral expression

Resumé

Cette recherche met en évidence l'efficacité de l'apprentissage coopératif pour combler l'écart de réussite entre les élèves les plus performants et les moins performants en expression orale et son impact positif sur la motivation et les attitudes des apprenants algériens d'anglais comme langue étrangère. L'étude a porté sur un échantillon de 44 étudiants en deuxième année dans le département d'anglais à l'Université d'Abbes Laghrour de Khenchela, en Algérie. Pour mener cette étude, le chercheur a adopté un protocole expérimental et a utilisé un ensemble de méthodes de collecte de données (un pré-test, un post-test, un questionnaire et des entretiens structurés). Les résultats ont révélé que l'apprentissage coopératif est essentiel pour combler l'écart de réussite entre les élèves les plus performants et les moins performants, et pour motiver ces derniers et transformer leurs attitudes négatives envers les activités d'expression orale en des attitudes positives. Sur la base de ces résultats, le chercheur fournit quelques recommandations concernant la mise en œuvre de l'apprentissage coopératif dans la classe d'Anglais comme langue étrangère.

Mots-clés: anglais comme langue etrangere, apprentissage coopératif, écart de réussite, motivation, attitude, expression orale