

## THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN IMPROVING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS

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### Annotation:

This article aims to highlight the importance of implementing a collaborative education strategy to develop English learners' language skills. First, sophomores can develop good communication and speaking skills by incorporating collaborative learning into the learning process. Second, students' activities improved significantly and they developed a good attitude toward learning English through collaborative study. Third, students are more enthusiastic and reluctant to engage in collaborative classes.

**Keywords:** Cooperative learning, collaborative, academic environment, communication, acceptance, responsibility.

Cooperative learning is not a new instructional strategy but has recently emerged in the field of teaching and learning, but it has roots in the history of education, so it's important to remember that the collaborative learning strategy began just before World War II. According to Kessler, the collaborative learning strategy has its roots in classroom practice as early as the 1970s, when the US began designing a collaborative learning model for a collaborative context. The cooperative learning strategy was developed by Coleman to reduce competition among students, particularly in American schools. He believes that competition is a negative component of the education system. He also suggests not encouraging competition in the academic environment that affects the educational process; Schools should adopt more collaborative teaching approaches. Likewise, Sharan mentions that new waves of collaborative learning emerged in the early 1970s, following the pioneering work of John Dewey and later by Alice Miel and Herbert Thelen in the 1950s. Over



the years, 1975 to be precise, cooperative learning has become a strategy used by many people, helping them to foster mutual satisfaction, better communication, acceptance, and support among team members, and has had a variety of increases shown in thinking strategies between individuals in the group. Johnson introduce the five elements of cooperative learning as a) positive interdependence; b) personal responsibility; c) personal interaction; d) social skills and; e) processing information deemed essential for effective group learning. These elements are cornerstones for teachers using collaborative learning in their classrooms. By applying the above elements, teachers at a minimum ensure that each student is given appropriate opportunities to participate in classroom activities.

**Cooperative learning** can be used to teach any subject imaginable, not just the English language. This strategy requires learners to participate and share their knowledge with other classmates. Once they start studying in groups, they will unobtrusively engage in the oral practice. In contrast, in English, it is important to use cooperative learning strategies. It is a well-known fact that practice makes perfect; this refers to the expertise people acquire by repeating something many times. Therefore, practice is an important part of learning and everyone must become an expert in skills. For example, Slavin says that to achieve comprehensive results using all the language resources already acquired, students must practice. Therefore, collaborative learning helps learners to practice the language they are learning in a very understandable way. On the other hand, Wendy believes that the use of collaborative learning structures, both formal and informal, can make the classroom enjoyable when students are truly involved in their learning. He adds that collaborative learning structures create a situation where assignments won't get done if students don't cooperate. Therefore, each group member must actively contribute to the group to achieve their learning goals.

**Cooperative Learning and Speaking Skills Through** our discourse we get people to understand and get to know each other; Therefore, speaking is a mirror that reflects who we are and even more reflects a person's identity. Allah Almighty says: And if we wanted, we could show them to you, and you would recognize them by their mark, but you will surely recognize them by their tone of voice. And Allah knows your deeds. This verse shows that by speaking we let others know about us and our identity and in return, they will know them. According to Madrid,



collaborative learning activities aim to maintain and develop positive attitudes toward students of different learning levels and cultural backgrounds. Learners learn to look to their classmates as valuable sources of support and encouragement in their quest for social, language, and academic success. This means that with collaborative learning, students have the advantage of shaping their learning according to their interests. Similarly, Coelho contends that collaborative group instruction provides students with an opportunity to discover, clarify, and internalize ideas among their peers. Such teaching techniques help students develop a high level of thinking skills by analyzing, evaluating, and using the new information provided by other teammates in the group. The goal behind learning a foreign language is to be able to speak and communicate in that language (language should be spoken).

**Cooperative Learning and Teacher Centering** Because cooperative learning is a strategy of involving students in regular practice, it is so different from all other traditional teaching and learning strategies that mainly focus on the teacher as the center of the learning process. According to Astin, many studies have shown that changing the learning process from teacher-centered to student-centered collaborative learning is more effective and impactful than traditional learning. Webb supports the same idea, adding that it is an important caveat to distinguish between student-centered and teacher-centered because; When the student role is passive, it greatly affects academic performance and student progress. Likewise, Johnson found that placing the burden on the student to direct his or her learning leads to more positive interdependence among members of the group. Gillies supports the same point, adding that students feel responsible for managing their learning, known as individual accountability. He also believes that students need to learn how to communicate effectively with other teammates and that they also need to know how to articulate their thoughts, manage disagreements, accept others' points of view, and make undemocratic decisions.

**Designing Cooperative Group Work in the Classroom.** In our early childhood, we learned to play various games together that required us to work together with other children to feel happiness and joy. Before we started these games we made age groups because you can play each game alone but you won't live up to your instincts if you play it with others. Therefore, the importance of doing something cooperatively begins years ago in our lives. According to Cohen, group work is a



useful technique to achieve specific intellectual and social learning goals; It is also considered a superior technique for conceptual learning, creative problem-solving, and developing oral language skills.

**Collaborative Learning Methods** One of the challenges we face as English teachers and learners are adopting teaching and learning strategies that meet our needs and those of our learners and help them achieve their learning goals. In general, one of the teachers' efforts to improve the quality of learning that leads to a good student who will succeed in life lies in the preparation of a wide range of learning activities that take place in the classroom and in how we learn to implement these activities. Collaborative learning methods strive to enable students to take a high degree of responsibility for their learning, rather than perceiving learning as being imposed by others. This suggests that students are more likely to achieve this when they have the opportunity to practice their learning activities with other teammates.

**Cooperative learning and second language acquisition.** A fairly large body of research has been presented to examine the role of cooperative learning strategies in second language acquisition and students' perceptions of their own language experiences. The use of collaborative learning provides English learners with many opportunities to practice the language and leads to greater encouragement for acquisition, which helps them become more confident in using and producing English when working in groups. For example, Fathman, et al., believe that cooperative learning can maximize second language acquisition by providing opportunities for language input and output. They further add that many researchers have compared teacher-led discussions to paired discussions to ensure the quantity and variety of student conversations in both contexts. Their results show that students working in pairs generate significantly more volume and variety in student conversations compared to teacher-led discussions. Not only do they speak more, but they also produce a wider range of language functions (e.g., rhetorical, pedagogical, and interpersonal).

**Conclusion:** This study is an investigation into the implementation of collaborative learning strategies and their impact on the development of language skills in English learners. The study found that student performance improved significantly after the experiment compared to student performance before the experiment.



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