



The Impact of Cooperative Learning on Speaking Performance among University Foundation Programme Students

أثر التعلم التعاوني على أداء مهارة التحدث لدى طلاب البرنامج التأسيسي في المرحلة الجامعية

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is two-fold: to investigate the impact of cooperative learning on speaking performance among university foundation programme students and to explore the extent to which CL affected students' attitudes. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, underpinned by the paradigm of pragmatism in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The sample size was 60 students from a private university in Oman in their first year foundation programme. One class was chosen as a control group and the other one as an experimental group. The experimental group got exposed to instruction based on CL techniques while the control group was taught without being instructed to use the CL activities. The instruments of the study included two speaking tests and a learners' questionnaire. The research insured the validity and reliability of the instruments and a pilot trial was done for the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the mean scores, standard deviation and paired sample t test.

A significant difference was noticed on the students' speaking performance after being exposed to CL instruction in comparison to the students in the control group. The students' attitude towards the use of CL was very positive and encouraging.

Keywords: cooperative learning, attitude, experimental group, control group, speaking skills

مستخلص

تركز هذه الدراسة على شقين: دراسة تأثير التعليم التعاوني على مهارة التحدث بين طلاب البرنامج الأساسي الجامعي واستكشاف آراء الطلاب حول مدى تأثير التعليم التعاوني على دراستهم. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجاً للطرق المختلطة ، يدعمه نموذج البراغماتية الذي تم فيه جمع وتحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية. كان حجم العينة 60 طالباً من جامعة خاصة في سلطنة عمان في البرنامج الأساسي.

تم اختيار المجموعة الأولى والمجموعة الثانية كمجموعة تجريبية. تعرضت المجموعة التجريبية للتعليمات حول كيفية تدريس التعليم التعاوني في حين تم تدريس المجموعة الأولى دون أن تعطى تعليمات لاستخدام أنشطة التعليم التعاوني. تضمنت أدوات الدراسة اختبارين للتحدث واستبيان للطلاب. تم تقييم مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب بشكل مستقل من خلال وصف الصورة (الاختبار 1) وهذا من شأنه أن يعطي فكرة واضحة عن قدراتهم على التحدث. وقد قيست استراتيجيات التعليم التعاوني وتقنيات المجموعات من خلال المناقشة الجماعية (الاختبار 2) .

تم إعطاء استبيان للطلاب التجريبيين لمعرفة موقفهم من استخدام التعليم التعاوني. أكد البحث على صحة وموثوقية الأدوات وتم إجراء تجربة تجريبية للاستبيان. تم تحليل المعطيات باستخدام الدرجات المتوسطة والانحراف المعياري واختبار العينة المقترنة

من حيث النتائج ، لوحظ وجود اختلاف كبير في أداء الطلاب وتطور ملحوظ عاى مهارة التحدث لدى المجموعة التجريبية مقارنة بالمجموعة الأخرى وكان موقفهم ايجابيا ومشجعا للغاية.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter one: Introduction:	1
1.1 Background of the study:.....	1
1.2 Rationale:.....	4
1.3 Purpose and research questions:.....	4
1.4 Significance of the study:.....	5
Chapter two: Literature review:.....	5
2.1 Conceptual framework:.....	5
2.1.1 Definition of CL:.....	5
2.1.2 Traditional group work and CL:.....	6
2.2 Components of CL:.....	7
1. Positive interdependence:.....	7
2. Collaborative skills:.....	8
3. Individual Accountability:.....	9
4. Interpersonal and Social Skills:.....	9
5. Group processing :.....	9
2.3 Techniques of CL:.....	10
2.4 Theoretical framework:.....	11
2.4.1 Theory for CL:.....	11
2.4.1.1 Cognitive Developmental Theory:.....	11
2.4.1.2 Cognitive Elaboration Theory:.....	13
2.4.2 Second language acquisition and CL:.....	15
2.4.2.1 The input hypothesis:.....	15
2.4.2.2 The interaction hypothesis:.....	16

2.5 Speaking skills:.....	17
2.5.1 Accuracy:.....	18
2.5.2 Fluency:.....	18
2.5.3 Pronunciation and intonation.....	18
2.5.4 Turn-taking:.....	19
2.5.5 Grammar:.....	20
2.6 Related studies:.....	20
Chapter three: Methodology:.....	25
3.1 Research design:.....	25
3.2 Research Setting:.....	27
3.3 Research Sample:.....	28
3.4 Treatment:.....	29
3.5 Research instruments:.....	30
3.5.1 Pre-test and post-test instruments:.....	30
3.5.1.1 Test 1: picture description:.....	31
3.5.1.2 Test 2: Group discussion:.....	34
3.5.2 Questionnaire:.....	35
3.6 The role of the examiners:.....	36
3.6.1 Examiner 1:.....	36
3.6.2 Examiner 2:.....	36
3.7 Validity:.....	36
3.8 Reliability:.....	37
3.9 Data collection procedures:.....	37
3.10 Statistical procedure:.....	38

3.11 Ethics:.....	38
Chapter four: Results:.....	39
4.1 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for pre-test 1 _ picture description:.....	39
4.2 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for pre-test 1 _ group discussion:.....	43
4.3 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for post-test 1 _ picture description:.....	46
4.4 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for post-test 2 _ group discussion:.....	49
4.5 Questionnaire responses:.....	54
Chapter five: Discussion:.....	65
5.1 The impact of CL on speaking skills:.....	65
5.2 Students' attitude and opinion on the use of CL:.....	70
5.3 Interpersonal skills based on students' responses:.....	71
5.4 (Fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and intonation) based on students' responses:...	71
5.5 Teacher's role based on students' perspective:.....	73
5.6 Negative aspects of CL:.....	73
Chapter six: Conclusion:.....	74
6.1 Recommendations:.....	75
6.2 Limitation of the study:.....	76
References.....	77
Appendices.....	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Differences between CL and Traditional Group Work.....	6
Table 2: Research Design.....	25
Table 3: Research Variables.....	26
Table 4: Topics and Interview Questions.....	32
Table 5: Pre-test results of test 1_ picture description.....	39
Table 6: The mean scores and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the pre-test of speaking performance of test 1_ picture description.....	42
Table 7: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 1 for both groups before the experiment.....	42
Table 8: Pre-test results of test 2_ group discussion.....	43
Table 9: The mean scores and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the pre-test of speaking performance of test 2_ group discussion.....	45
Table 10: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 2 for both groups before the experiment.....	45
Table 11: Post-test results of test 1_ picture description.....	46
Table 12: The mean score and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the post-test of speaking performance of test 1_ picture description.....	48
Table 13: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 1 for both groups after the experiment.....	49
Table 14: Post-test results of test 2_ group discussion.....	50
Table 15: The mean score and standard deviation of the control and experimental group in the post-test of speaking performance of test 2_ group discussion.....	52
Table 16: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 2 for both groups after the experiment.....	52

LIST OF APPREVIATOPNS

GFP General Foundation Programme

CL Cooperative learning

STAD Student Teams Achievement Divisions

CIRC Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

TL Target language

Chapter One: Introduction:

1.1 Background of the study:

English in Oman is valued by the authority and the official government. When the country was led by his Majesty Sultan Qaboos in 1970, English was accepted as the only foreign language. Ever since, Oman has acknowledged the importance of English locally and internationally. Huge resources and budgets have been allocated for teaching English in schools and higher education institutions. After decades of its implementation, it was found that the students lack sufficient English language proficiency skills. There have been studies conducted in order to find out the reasons for low proficiency because those who master it can reap social, academic and professional advantages (Al-Issa & Al-Balushi, 2012).

Learning and teaching in Oman aims to develop learners' abilities in oral skills, self-reliance and critical thinking skills in order to stay updated on the latest progress and development in technology and science (Al-Abri, 2008). As noted by Al-Abri (2008) in the above statement, oral skills are essential skills that should be gained by learners. For many Omani learners, speaking is considered a big challenge for different reasons. It was reported that students do not put an effort to speak inside the classroom and many of them cannot maintain long conversations due to limited vocabulary and not having enough motivation to speak English (Al Hosni, 2014). Al-Mahrooqi (2012) points out that Omani teachers also believe that college students' weakest skill is writing, so they need extra training in written communication. The oral skills are not valued as the written skills by teachers.

Speaking has been paid more attention since the transform from traditional learning to active learning. Through this transform, students get the opportunity to express themselves and get involved in different speaking activities as a means of communication (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Good spoken English is needed in the recruitment market. Furthermore, it is difficult to benefit from technology, research and science without enough knowledge of English and communication skills in particular (Crystal, 2010). The ability to speak is not determined by the endless lists of vocabulary a person knows. A person who can speak fluently, he or she can interchange information effectively. Thus, this will enable the person to interact effectively and create a good impression about him or her (Gorjian, 2015).

There are different ways to enhance the speaking skill with the aid of a learner-centered model, several teaching methods and appropriate tasks (Bashir, Azeem & Dogar, 2011). Through the use of a teacher-centered approach, the teacher does most of the talk while students are considered passive recipients of knowledge. This type of learning and teaching results in incompetent speakers of English (Ning, 2011). On the other hand, in the learner-centered approach, the learner gets the chance to develop their communicative skills. Cooperative learning is one of the learner-centered approaches that teachers should apply for promoting speaking and interaction (Ning, 2011). Many studies have proved that cooperative learning leads to a positive achievement among students (Ning and Hornby, 2010). Cooperative learning, which contradicts the traditional teaching, results in positive interaction among students (Levine, 2002). According to Khadidja (2010), students who speak and interact among other peers achieve much better than the silent students in oral skills.

In Oman, English is perceived as lingua franca and it is necessary for communication and advancement (Al_Issa, 2007; Al-Mahrooqi, 2012; Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2010). The outcome of higher education institutions is very weak in the oral and written skills.

Therefore, Omani graduates lack communication skills for many types of employment (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014). Findings from preliminary research show that students do not get enough focus on speaking skills in either schools or tertiary education. Weak writing and speaking skills characterize the product of public schools in Oman. Reading is another difficulty due to a lack of public libraries, books and workshops (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). Al-Abri (2008) argued that one reason for speaking difficulty is the lack of oral activities in coursebooks. He recommended using some oral materials such as stories, songs and rhymes to enjoy their learning.

Language learners should enhance their speaking abilities in an academic setting. The aforementioned situation indicates that the level of speaking abilities among higher education institutions needs to be improved in Oman. Effective decisions and actions should be taken to respond to this situation (Morozova, 2013). As mentioned previously, many studies have confirmed the positive effect of cooperative learning to enhance learner's speaking abilities (Ning & Hornby, 2010). This calls for further exploration to find out if cooperative learning holds a positive effect on students' speaking abilities in the Omani context. It is anticipated by the researcher that the students' level will become better if they are taught to be good speakers.

1.2 Rationale:

Communication skills are crucial for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Students in the General Foundation Programme (GFP) have to pass three levels; Elementary, Pre-intermediate and intermediate before proceeding to their undergraduate programmes. The researcher has experienced teaching English for many years in higher education institutions in Oman. Feedback from students shows that students do not only lack speaking abilities, but they also have a negative attitude towards speaking. Statements like: “It is very difficult to speak”, “Speaking in front of students is freighting”, “I do not want to work in groups”, and “I have a big problem in pronunciation”, have motivated the researcher to search deeper in this topic and identify the deficiency that hinder students’ progress in speaking. This issue will be investigated from different perspectives.

From the above scenario, it seems that there is a need to implement cooperative learning strategies to improve students’ oral skills. Teachers should play the role of facilitators and have to create a cooperative environment among students.

1.3 Purpose and research questions:

The purpose of the present study is two-fold: to investigate the impact of cooperative learning on speaking performance and to explore students’ attitude towards cooperative learning. This general aim can be broken down into two research questions:

1. What impact does cooperative learning (CL) have on speaking performance among university foundation programme students?
2. What is the attitude of students towards CL?

1.4 Significance of the study:

The importance of the study lies in the fact that CL plays a significant role in learner's oral skills. Research has shown that cooperative learning leads to interaction among students and consequently improving their speaking abilities. The study is utilizing up-date methods which will benefit teachers who may reevaluate their teaching methods and improve them. They should play the role of the facilitator and more student-oriented teaching should be adapted by teachers. If so, learners will feel that learning and teaching is fun and thus their speaking skills will be improved. Although there have been studies on the speaking skills of Omani students, the role of cooperative language learning has not been addressed in higher education institutions. This study will specifically focus on how cooperative learning can enhance the English speaking skills of Omani students.

Chapter 2: Literature review:

2.1 Conceptual framework:

2.1.1 Definition of CL:

CL is described as various teaching techniques and activities in which students work together and learn from each other in small groups (Slavin, 1995). CL is a group of activities structured so that learners depend on each other to exchange information socially in groups. Every learner is responsible for his or her own learning and is willing to foster learning among peers (Olsen and Kagan, 1992). Jacobs et al (2002) refer to CL as methods and strategies in which students work more collaboratively. They explain how to increase engagement and interaction among learners through employing the principles of CL in classrooms. According to them, CL does not require students to work

in a group only, but it also involves utilizing many techniques that help to increase interaction and learning among students. If pair and group work is managed appropriately, it will definitely improve learning.

2.1.2 Traditional group work and CL:

Structuring groups and forming groups of students who work together cooperatively are two different things (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). According to Jacobs (1998), there are several differences between cooperative learning and traditional group work as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Differences between CL and Traditional Group Work.

Components	Traditional group	CL
Seating	Students choose whom to sit with.	Teachers arrange the group's size and sit in a way that they can see and hear each other well.
Skills	Students assume they know how to work together.	Skills are taught explicitly.
Duration	Group members disband when they finish their task.	Students spend a lot of time together, perhaps for weeks.
Teacher's job	Teachers set time while students are in groups.	Teacher's role is to monitor the groups.

Participation	Group members assume they are interested in their participation.	Group members are responsible for their participation and learning.
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It is seen that there are various differences between traditional group work and cooperative learning vis-a-vis teacher's role, group arrangement and the collaborative skills. CL is structured appropriately while traditional group work is randomly formed. Still, Jacobs (1998) seems to be extremely decisive about these differences in favour of CL. For example, in teacher's role, the teacher is also busy monitoring the student. According to Johnson and Johnson (1994), forming groups does not lead to a cooperative relation between students unless it is structured and managed very well by the teacher. To elaborate, if the whole work is done by one member of the group, it is not a cooperative work. In CL, every member has to contribute to the task achievement. CL is based on principles which will be discussed below.

2.2 Components of CL:

Five components distinguishes CL from other types of group learning. If these five elements are found in students' learning, then cooperative learning exists (Johnson et al., 2009).

1. Positive interdependence:

All group members work together to achieve common learning objectives. If they succeed, they succeeded together and if they fail, they fail together. Learners depend on each other for support, guidance and information. Without help and support from all the group

members, they won't be able to accomplish their desired objectives. Teachers should form shared objectives, mutual resources and rewards (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Each participant in the group is required to work collectively to complete their task and achieve the academic objective. Siltala (2010) states that individual learning can be competitive but learning in groups, participants can share ideas and skills. They can monitor, consult and evaluate each other. Learners have the full responsibility of their learning. The instructor should divide the task equally among students. He or she has to make sure that everyone is contributing to the group.

2. Individual Accountability

Every member is responsible for his or her own sharing and contribution to the success of the group. Learners need to know who wants more help to finish the task. All members in the group should sense the responsibility towards the completion of the task. Individual accountability and positive interdependence are linked together. They claim that if cooperative groups are formed well, positive interdependence engenders. As a result, students are motivated to take responsibility of their group work (Jacobs et al, 2002). When each group member shares his own portion of the group work, this gives them a clear picture of the real level of each member in the group. Teachers can achieve individual accountability by asking students to answer specific questions or by asking some students to report their peer's ideas.

3. Collaborative skills

It is the interaction between students to achieve the desired goals. This interaction will encourage learners to accomplish their task. The verbal interaction is required to complete the task. Learners should explain, share and discuss their ideas together. Also, they should encourage the success of each other (Scheurell, 2010).

4. Interpersonal and Social Skills

It involves giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, communicating accurately and ambiguously. Learners should have the knowledge of all these skills to tackle any problems they encounter (Baker & Clark, 2010). Teachers should emphasize teaching the required skills such as decision making, communication and confidence. Teachers should play the role of a facilitator, guide, director and advisor. Learners feel the sense of responsibility through such skills (Fahraeus, 2013).

5. Group processing

This is another factor of cooperative learning in which group members put goals and periodically evaluate their effectiveness and contribution to the success of the group activities and tasks (Scheurell, 2010). The main function of group processing is the focus on the positive contribution of each member and not the negative aspects. The teacher can focus on one skill and try to improve students' abilities like speaking in this case. He or she can monitor the group work and then provide them with constructive feedback (Aldrich & Shimazoe, 2010).

The main function of group processing is to improve the group work for the better in order to achieve the desired objectives. Group members are required to communicate freely and

discuss their ideas openly for better achievements (Sitala, 2010). Group members can discuss the helpful and unhelpful actions and agree on the changes (Johnson and Johnson, 2009).

2.3 Techniques of CL:

Various techniques have been developed since its emergence and they were practiced in classrooms. Some of these techniques are student teams achievement divisions (STAD) (Jamaludin & Mokhtar, 2018), jigsaw (Timayi, Bolaji and Kajuru, 2015), cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) (Mubarok & Sofiana, 2017), learning together (Dundar & Soylu, 2012), teams-games-tournaments (Salam, Hossain, Rahman & 2015) and many other techniques. Some of these techniques that are relevant to this paper will be reviewed below. These techniques focus on interaction between peers and some for group processing. They will be employed in the current study to some extent.

(1) Think-pair-share (Lyman, 1992)

Step 1: A learner thinks silently and individually about a given topic by a teacher.

Step 2: Individuals think in pairs and share information.

Step 3: Each pair shares ideas with each other.

(2) Three-step interview (Kagan, 1992)

Step 1: Students interview each other in pair. One is an interviewer and the other in is an interviewee.

Step 2: Students' roles are exchanged.

Step 3: Each one share what has learned with the group or class.

(3) Roundrobin (Kagan, 1992)

Step 1: A speaking task is assigned for each group.

- Step 2: Each student speaks in turn.
- Step 3: The turn passes around several times.
- (4) Group discussion (Olsen & Kagan, 1992).
- Step 1: Students are assigned a topic to discuss.
- Step 2: They interact in a small group.
- Step 3: A summary is presented for the whole class.
- (5) Brainstorming (Olsen & Kagan, 1992).
- Step 1: Teacher presents a topic.
- Step 2: In the group, students brainstorm several ideas.
- Step 3: One team member presents to the whole class.

2.4 Theoretical framework:

2.4.1 Theory for CL:

2.4.1.1 Cognitive Developmental Theory:

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) were two recognizable developmental psychologists. Piaget's work reviewed by Wagner (2008) believes that schemas constitute a child's knowledge. Schemas refer to unit of knowledge that form the old experience and it facilitates the processing of new understanding. Cognitive development is divided into two phases in Piaget's work: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process in which information and ideas exist in a scheme. Accommodation describes the change of the existing schemas into new knowledge. It is an ongoing process throughout life and they are used interchangeably. Piaget states that if

there is a balance between accommodation and assimilation, a tendency for cognitive development occurs. In collaborative situations, such balance is likely to happen.

Students have different learning experiences and learning styles in classrooms. This is not related to content knowledge or reading levels. Students formulate their own thinking—both in process and in form—in reaction to the kinds of input they have been open to.

A childhood of ranging, varied thinking that varies in depth, form, and tone can provide a ‘schema’ that more readily accepts new ideas, or has provided the student with an increased sense of self-efficacy in making the effort to do so. This sort of divergence does not have to be academic, either. Experience is experience.

Know the basics: This is based on knowledge and more knowledge. The teacher will be able to differentiate and inculcate into the teaching and learning process the point at which there is assimilation and the point at which there is accommodation involved.

In Piaget’s view that interaction with environment and information from actions both result in cognitive development of a child (Wadsworth, 1989). A child observes a response when he interacts with environment and takes actions. If the response is positive and his mental growth is complete, the action will be happening repeatedly. Also, Piaget proposes that what happens at early stages of cognitive development will determine what will happen next in life. This argument was rejected by Berger (1988) and Wagner (2008).

Piaget’s theory has its implication in academic settings. One implication is that interaction among peers can foster the cognitive growth. Teaching practice has been influenced by this theory. Educators stress the existence of cooperative learning in classrooms because students play a dynamic role with their peers. Many scholars

recommend the use of CL in classrooms because it has a positive impact on students' progress (Nastasi & Clements, 1991).

Vygotsky (1978) proposes that children are curious and interested in discovering their learning. He strongly emphasizes the role of social communication in the development of cognitive growth. Vygotsky (1978) develops the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). It refers to the difference between actual development with guidance and encouragement and actual level without guidance. According to Vygotsky (1978), interaction, modelling and scaffolding are important things that foster the developmental stages. A skillful tutor may teach a child through social interaction such as modelling behaviors and verbal instructions. The child internalizes the information when he receives actions by the tutor. This is considered collaborative learning in Vygotsky's view. He perceives social interaction as an important concept for the cognitive development. The ZPD was supported by Doolittle (1995) who argues that it facilitates the inclusion of CL in the classrooms.

The concept of scaffolding was developed earlier by Wood et al (1976). It means providing the necessary support and assistance for learners to carry on their task. The scaffolding helps in the cognitive knowledge and skills. The scaffolding can be removed slowly so that learners can take responsibility for their own learning.

2.4.1.2 Cognitive Elaboration Theory:

This theory concentrates on individual elaboration of knowledge in the mental process of a child. It has been found that if information needs to be stored in memory and it has relation to some information already stored in memory, the learner has to get involved in

sort of elaboration and construction of the materials cognitively (Wittrock, 1978).

Explanation materials to someone else is one effective method of elaboration. Group work gives the chance to make changes for the learners through recalling and structuring information for better internalization. Also, peer tutoring is very important in learning (Slavin, 1995). Group work making a positive impact on individuals learning through formation of their own knowledge by connecting new ideas, schema and experiences to increase one's body of knowledge and functioning. Group work caters to this and therefore I have used it in my study here.

Cognitive learning takes place when groups work collaboratively to study or to find a solution to a problem, with each person accountable for understanding all areas. The small groups are good techniques at this stage because students can hear and be heard their peers, while in a traditional classroom setting students are passive participants of knowledge and instructions. Cognitive learning uses both goal interdependence and resource interdependence to ensure interaction and communication among group members. Change in the role of the instructor from lecturer to facilitator helps the groups to foster the social environment for students to learn through cooperation.

The theory has its implication in teaching and some cooperative learning techniques have been applied in teaching and learning. For example, three-step interview outlined by (Kagan, 1992) in which students take a dynamic role to interview each other and restate what peers said. Another technique is group discussion discussed by (Olsen & Kagan, 1992) in which students brainstorm ideas, take turns, agree, disagree, interrupt, invite someone to speak and give their opinion. Group discussion is a similar case to what has been investigated in this study. These techniques have been discussed in the above section.

2.4.2 Second language acquisition and CL:

2.4.2.1 The input hypothesis:

The input hypothesis was brought by Krashen (1985). It was argued by Lantolf (2005) that the ZPD is a theory of human development while Krashen's hypothesis is a model of language acquisition. Krashen discussed five hypotheses, but the input hypothesis is broadly utilized in discussion of second language acquisition. $i + 1$ is the representation of the input hypothesis. i refers to the information or language competence a person has acquired whereas '1' stands for the addition of new information to the existing one (Krashen, 1985). According to this hypothesis, language acquisition is a natural order and the understanding input is progressed through this path. This input is claimed to be higher than learners' competence. The input should be embedded contextually so that it is comprehensible. Also, the hypothesis supports the movement of an existing knowledge to the next structure in progress of language acquisition. Language acquisition is emphasized between learners and social interaction (Krashen, 2003).

A number of criticisms has been encountered because the term 'comprehensible' and 'language acquisition' are not clearly defined. In Krashen's view, if there is a comprehensible input, there is language acquisition. However, the theory did not succeed to take into consideration student output (Ellis, 1994).

White (1987) expresses disagreement to the idea that the comprehensible is vital in language acquisition. In his view, incomprehensible input is very important for language acquisition. He argues that incomprehensibility can give important negative feedback to learners.

Krashen (2009) expands his framework and it has been named the comprehension hypothesis. He states language is acquired when we understand messages. If individuals understand what they read and hear, the comprehensible input is received.

There are different ways in which groups might help construct comprehensible input. First, peers are more likely to produce input at appropriate level ($i + 1$) because teachers are unable to deal with different proficiency levels when communicating the whole class. Thus, universal comprehension is promoted. Second, different materials can be selected for different groups based on proficiency level. Third, while students are engaged in their group work, teachers can pay careful attention to low level students (Long & Porter, 1985).

2.4.2.2 The interaction hypothesis:

Long (1985) claims that the language acquisition is not limited to the comprehensible input by itself. Thus, interaction is vital to ensure language acquisition. According to him, input with interaction can have a great influence on language learning. He also states that if learners have the ability to negotiate meaning, it prompts comprehensible input and language acquisition. Pica (1994) states negotiating meaning helps learners to get comprehensible input, obtain feedback on their own use of L2 and reformulate their own utterances. There are many ways for negotiating meaning such as asking for repetition or clarification, paraphrasing utterances, comprehension checks and expressing lexical uncertainty. When meaning is negotiated, interaction is changed and leads to comprehensibility of the input (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). Mackey (2007) based on empirical studies, argues that when learners get the chance to negotiate comprehensive input, obtain feedback and modify output, positive feedback will be gained.

Teachers should provide learners with meaningful communicative behavior about relevant topics by focusing on learner-centered interaction. Studies have suggested that interaction in small groups provide learners with opportunities for meaning negotiation. This will have a positive impact on the communication patterns which fosters language acquisition. In CL, well-designed group tasks will provide students with the chance to interact and negotiate meaning with mates (Mackey, 2007).

2.5 Speaking skills:

Speaking is one of the four skills in English with reading, writing and listening. It is an important skill because people need it in every day communication. It should be developed with the other skills in an integrated way in order to strengthen the speaking abilities (Morozova, 2013). Speaking skills can be improved through repeating and listening. Teachers can practice conversation and short answers to improve students' skills while they are in groups (Bashir, Azeem & Dogar, 2011). Based on Efrizal (2012) and Gilakjani (2016), speaking has a great importance as it increases interaction between people in every day basis. Students should get exposed to real communication and do the same process to develop their speaking abilities. Students can improve their grammar, vocabulary and writing through the speaking skills.

English in Oman is viewed as the language of information, tourism, trade, technology and research. This makes it an international language. A lot tertiary learners in Oman view the General Foundation Programme as an obstacle. They have troubles in grammar, pronunciation, and turn-taking. Teachers should train learners to improve their communication skills (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2010). Brown (2007) states that oral communication is achieved through fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and intonation.

2.5.1 Accuracy:

Accuracy refers to the competence in elements such as grammar, utterances and discourse. Competence in speaking is determined by the good grammar and pronunciation without or with few mistakes (Thornbury, 2005). Building confidence can help learners to get rid of the fear of mistakes so that learners feel comfortable. One way to build confidence is that teachers should bring topics that stimulate students to speak in class. If students are motivated and have something to say, then they are likely to participate actively. Teachers should provide positive and useful feedback to overcome their mistakes and build up confidence (Patil, 2008). Teachers and students should pay attention to the completeness and correctness of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary (Mazouzi, 2013).

2.5.2 Fluency:

It is the ability to communicate naturally and appropriately, without any hesitation. Also, it refers to other aspects like good intonation and sounds (Richards, 2006). Learners do not speak very fluently because they are afraid of making errors and they do not have enough confidence (Trent, 2009). According to Mazouzi (2013) learners should be fluent in a second language.

2.5.3 Pronunciation and intonation

Communication is understood if there is clear pronunciation and accurate intonation. Therefore, communication has a great significance in social interaction to facilitate understanding among people in a community. Speakers of a native language may make mistakes that do not affect the meaning they want to convey. On the other hand, mistakes made by ESL learners change the meaning and this creates problems and listeners may

misunderstand them. Cooperative learning enables learners to practice pronunciation to sound like native speakers (Mahripah, 2014). According to Mahripah, 2014, pronunciation of some words is not the same as their spelling. Even some words with same spelling, they sound different because of some phonemes and tenses.

Pronunciation contains articulation of specific sounds, stress, intonation, timing and rhythm. It also contains supra-segmental and segmental features that work together in combination when people speak (Gilakjani, 2012). Pronunciation is given much attention in classrooms because it is a main skill that should be acquired by students. It affects the accuracy and comprehension (Gilakjani, 2016).

Based on Mahripah (2014), errors in intonation, timing and rhythm may occur due to interference or L1 transfer. Efrizal (2012) mentions that learners should always be encouraged to communicate in English and language experience can play a role on learners' ability to pronounce correctly.

2.5.4 Turn-taking:

Turn-taking refers to the process in which people decide on who to speak next in a conversation (Ning, 2010). Tuna (2010) identifies two groups of social skills. Group related skills indicate the way in which group members take turn, encouragement and praise. Collaborative and CL groups demand the teacher to supervise indirectly. Group members should discuss and agree on working together. This can be achieved through teaching techniques, group dynamics and interpersonal skills. CL can promote conversations spontaneously and provide opportunity to develop their interaction and participation.

Ning (2010) argues that learners can negotiate the content of a conversation to their level of understanding. Anxiety is at its lowest level in CL as it provides a social and comfortable situation. When students share information, they exchange ideas and resources and balance their effort to increase their productivity. Students need to learn how to express their opinion, criticize another member, adding new information, integrate ideas together and interrupt each other.

2.5.5 Grammar:

Grammar is defined as a system of regular patterns and rules that allow language learners to create infinite number of sentences (Assma, 2012). Incomplete grammar has been the topic of debate for a long time. Grammar is viewed as a determinant factor in the mastery of a foreign language. Teaching grammar has great significance in language acquisition. A lot of second language English teachers teach grammar without relating the grammatical patterns into real-life and language needs (Shamim, 2011). Competence in grammar will enable learners to speak fluently and unhesitatingly which in return will increase confidence among learners (Morozova, 2013).

Ahmadi (2017) emphasises that if interactive opportunities are given to learners in learning institutions, the competence of second language learners will inevitably improve. Therefore, cooperative learning has been chosen for the purpose of this study as an alternative to the traditional teaching.

2.6 Related studies:

A big portion of studies has been done to explore the impact of CL on learner's speaking abilities. In a study conducted by Yang (2005), he compares between the traditional

methods and CL techniques. The oral performance skills among Taiwanese college students were investigated. A quasi-study was implemented by which a pre-test and post-test were conducted. The experiment was conducted in eight weeks. General English Speaking Proficiency Test (GEPT) along with motivational intensity questionnaire (MIQ) were utilized. Additionally, ANOVA was used to analyze the results of GEPT and MIQ. The study was an attempt to find out the use of CL and motivation to learning. The results of the study were somewhat different from other research studies on the effect of CL for learners. The results revealed that cooperative learning was not better in improving speaking skills and enhancing motivation than the traditional teaching. The results of this study contradicts many studies such as Patternpitchet (2011), Ning and Hornby (2010) and Talebi and Sobhani (2012).

Patternpitchet (2011) conducted an experimental study, where he investigated the impact of using cooperative learning on enhancing student's achievement in speaking. Thirty-five undergraduate were the participants of the study. The participants were registered in an English course in a university in Thailand. The students were examined before and after some CL instructional tasks to examine their oral skills. Data were analyzed based on frequency, mean, standard deviation, t test and effect size. There was significant increase in students' speaking performance for the three tasks of the oral test in favor of CL (pre-test mean = 2.62, 2.97, 1.62; post-test mean = 3.71, 3.68, 3.00). The result is consistent with the result of Ahmed and Omer (2014) which showed a significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test. The study provided some suggestions for future research.

Ning and Hornby (2010) investigated the impact of CL on Chinese student. The competency of students in speaking, reading, writing, listening and vocabulary were tested. One hundred first year participants from a Chinese university were chosen for this study. Pre-test and post-test was carried out to find the effect of CL on the aforementioned skills compared to traditional teaching. Obvious differences were found in favor of speaking reading and listening but no difference was found in writing and vocabulary between the two approaches. The greatest difference between the impact of the CL teaching and the traditional teaching method was in the field of increasing students' speaking efficiency. This discovery supports the widely accepted view that CL facilitates the improvement of oral skills (Jacobs & Goh, 2007, Kagan, 1994). Similar results were found in Ahmed and Omer's study (2018) in which there was positive improvements on students' speaking performance after the experiment.

Ning (2011) also conducted another study to find out the impact of CL on improving tertiary students' fluency and communication. The objective of the study was to provide students with more opportunities for production, which was anticipated to improve their fluency and communication. The results indicate that student' achievement in speaking and vocabulary in CL classrooms were superior.

Talebi and Sobhani (2012) conducted a study to investigate the effect of CL on improving learner's proficiency in speaking. Experimental design was carried out with male and female students registered in speaking course of IELTS in Iran. Students were distributed randomly to the controlled and experimental group. Before the study, both groups were homogenous in their oral proficiency. Data collected through an interview. The experimental group was taught for one month while the control group was given

three sessions per week in speaking. The mean score of the experimental group was 3.97, while the mean score of the control group was 4.02 on the pre-test. On the other hand, the mean score of the experimental group was 6.40 whereas the control group was 5.15 on the post-test. The mean result of the experimental group was higher than the control group. The findings of this study support the findings of Ahmed and Omer (2014).

Ahmed and Omer (2014), conducted a study to investigate the impact of cooperative learning on enhancing students' speaking skills and their attitude. The study was conducted in Yemen with thirty-five undergraduates. A quasi-experimental interrupted time series was utilized among foundation students enrolled in Hadhramout University. The data were gathered at many times before and after the treatment to find out the impact of cooperative learning on students' abilities. Practically, an oral interview was held before the experiment and after the experiment with some CL activities given to the students. A five- Likert questionnaire was administered to find out the attitude of students towards CL learning. The data were analyzed based on basic and inferential methods such as mean, standard deviation, t test and effect size. The experimental group and the control group were similar in their speaking performance before the experiment. While the mean score of the experimental group was 63.37, the mean score of the control group was 63.63. On the post-test, the mean score of the experimental group was 69.00 while the mean score of the control group was 63.63. The overall mean of the experimental students was higher than the average score of the control students. The $t\text{-test} = 8.781$, $p = .000 < 0.05$ reveals significant difference between the two groups in favor of those who were taught with CL techniques. The results of this study show that there is confirmatory

confidence to support the results of Pattanpichet (2011), Talebi and Sobhani (2012) and Yang (2005).

Sühendan and Bengü (2014) examined the attitude of ELT students towards CL. 166 questionnaires were distributed to inquire students' attitude on CL. They are aged between 18-20. They were studying at different facilities. Data obtained through descriptive analysis. Results showed that 66.9% of the students preferred CL in ELT whereas 33.1% agreed that individual learning is more interesting. A focus group was planned and students mentioned both positive and negative aspects of cooperative learning.

Chemwei and Somba (2014) conducted a study to investigate the teacher-student views and experience with the use of CL in poetry classrooms in Kenya. A quasi-experimental design was employed with pre and post-test. Subjects were randomly decided on the experimental and the control group. Some teachers and students have been chosen for the interview and qualitative analysis was employed. The results showed a remarkable development in student' understanding of poetry. Teachers' perspectives also indicated that CL enhanced students' understanding in Poetry.

In short, these studies have tested the impact of CL over a period of two months on average. Also, they were constrained to investigate the speaking skill rather than other skills such as reading and writing. It is recommended that the application of CL should take longer time and it should be tested on different levels and different skills to validate the results of any research. It should be tested in different context. There has not been any study done on developing speaking skills using cooperative learning in Oman. This study is done in the context of General Foundation Programme. It will specifically investigate

the impact of CL on speaking performance of university students. The results will be useful for teachers and students.

Chapter Three: Methodology:

The chapter provides information about research design, setting and participants. Also, it discusses procedures, instruments, data analysis and ethics of research.

3.1 Research design:

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, underpinned by the paradigm of pragmatism in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. Quasi-experimental with non-equivalent control group pre-test and post-test design was used to collect the quantitative data. A questionnaire was administered to collect the qualitative data. Table 1 outlines the research design.

Table 2: Research Design

Research questions	Method	Sample	Instrumentation
1. What impact does cooperative learning (CL) have on speaking performance among university foundation programme students?	Quantitative	Control and experimental groups (60 participants)	Two main speaking tests
2. What is the attitude of students towards CL?	Qualitative	Experimental group (30 participants)	Questionnaire

This research design has been chosen because the study required a comparison between the performance of learners in English speaking skills pre-test and that of post-test. The design allows to control the variables that may affect the validity of the study. It also allows to evaluate the effect of interaction between the pre-test and treatment condition (Koul, 1993). This two-group comparison was to find out if CL approach (independent variable) had an efficacy on students' speaking achievement, and according to Opie (2004) the quantitative data determine whether differences observed were due to the independent variables or other factors. One class was chosen as a control group and the other one as an experimental group. The experimental group got exposed to instruction based on CL techniques while the control group was taught without being instructed to use the CL activities.

Table 3: Research Variables:

Independent variables	Dependent variables
CL instruction	Fluency Pronunciation Grammar/vocabulary Interaction Communicative effectiveness

3.2 Research Setting:

The study was conducted in the General Foundation Programme (GFP) at a private university in Oman. The GFP is a compulsory course for Omani degree programmes. It has three components: Computing, Mathematics and English (equivalent to IELTS 5). These areas provide intellectual understanding related to students' study. A placement test is conducted for students once they receive admission at the GFP. According to their results from the placement test, they will either be placed in elementary, pre-intermediate or intermediate. Those who score high are exempted from the GFP requirements and get direct entry into their faculties.

A word on the three levels might be in order here. **Elementary** is a 17 week integrated general English skills course designed for students who require extensive preparation and exposure to various components of the language with strong emphasis on developing basic grammar, reading and writing skills. When the course is completed, students should be able to write short paragraphs, read short texts and respond to questions. **Pre-intermediate** aims to develop students' integrated general English language skills across the skill areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Study skills and critical thinking skills are embedded in the course. The main objectives are to speak confidently, initiate and maintain conversation, read and understand comprehension texts and write well-planned paragraphs. Pre-intermediate students were selected to be the research sample for this study. In speaking skills in this level, a variety of speaking tasks is taught in order to develop the following skills: express opinions, agree and disagree, make comparisons, make and respond to suggestions, ask for and give advice, ask for and provide clarification, present and defend a position using monologues, work in pairs and

groups. In the **intermediate** course, students should have an English language equivalent of IELTS 5. It is aligned to B1 level based on CEFR. At this level, learners have partial command of language. They can cope with the meaning of different situations despite many errors. Basic communication can be handled in own field.

This university was chosen because learners at the GFP face big challenges in speaking as heard and noticed by the researcher and teachers. They find difficulty to convey information in the target language (TL). These learners have difficulty in pronunciation, grammar and turn-taking. This difficulty is observed and identified by many teachers in the GFP. Therefore, the results of this study will be a great benefit for the researcher, who is a lecturer there, and the academic staff.

3.3 Research Sample:

The participants were given a scholarship to pursue their studies by the Ministry of Higher Education. They were studying in the first year at the GFP. They were placed in pre-intermediate after they had taken the placement test or many had already passed elementary. They were chosen because they had studied English for more than 12 years before joining the GFP. Also, they had studied elementary in the GFP and were equipped with the basic skills. There were 60 participants in the experimental and the control groups. 30 students were placed in each group. They were both male and female students in both groups. The age of the subjects was similar ranging between 18 to 20 years old. They are all Omanis studying English as a foreign language. They were all homogenous regarding their age, language, ethnicity and exposure to the TL. Both groups shared the same learning content in elementary and pre intermediate. The same number of hours was provided over the two semesters. To ensure the homogeneity of the students' academic

level, the researcher was given access to see the final results of the students from the previous level, elementary. The total mark was out of 100. The mean score was calculated and it was found that the experimental group and the control group were almost homogenous in competency. The mean score of the experimental group was 62 while the mean score of the control group was 64.

The two groups were assigned experienced teachers to teach them. The experimental teacher was told by the researcher how to apply CL techniques before the commencement of the treatment. The control group teacher followed his regular way of teaching without being instructed by the researcher. The two teachers had experience in teaching speaking skills. The same number of hours was given for both groups. Also, they were provided with the same facilities at the campus. One facility is the academic advising. Students in the GFP are constantly advised by their academic advisors (class teachers). The main areas that the content of the advising sessions focus on is the following: GFP online services, assessment and Exams, study skills and high and low order thinking skill. Another facility is the extra support that is provided for students. Students are also made aware of the support mechanisms in place in the GFP in English. There are many resources around to support GFP students. Examples include the Learning Support Majlis, the Writing Studio, and extra support classes.

3.4 Treatment:

During the two-month treatment, CL activities were incorporated in their instruction. The participants in the experimental group got exposed to CL activities everyday as per the university schedule. Think-pair-share, three-step interview, brainstorming and group discussion were embedded in their speaking classes and reading classes as well. These

were used to increase students' interaction. Think-pair-share was used to answer questions individually. Brainstorming was employed to collect ideas and generate questions on various topics. Group discussion was taught based on the theme of each unit in the textbook. Three-step interview was used by students to give their personal opinions. The use of such techniques has been extended to different aspects. For example, three-step interview was used to describe pictures related to the theme of the textbook. Members were given an equal chance to interact with each other. They were assigned different roles: timekeeper, checker, secretary and monitor. Their roles were rotated.

3.5 Research instruments:

In education and social sciences, the most commonly used instruments are interviews, questionnaires and observations (Orodho, 2004). The two main instruments of the study will be discussed below.

3.5.1 Pre-test and post-test instruments:

Two main speaking tests were provided: picture description and group discussion.

They were used to measure English speaking skills. Students' speaking skills were assessed independently through picture description. This would give a clear idea of their speaking abilities. CL strategies and group dynamics were measured through the group discussion.

The pre-test was conducted with the experimental group and the control group before the experiment. Both groups were given a post-test again at the end of the experiment. The pre-test was conducted to assess and measure students' ability before the experiment and thus will enable the researcher to compare the findings of the groups at the end of the

experiment. The post-test was administered to find if there was a significant effect or change on learners' abilities in speaking after the treatment of the experimental group. The difficulty level of the topics of the pre-test and post-test were almost the same to avoid inconsistency. The test covered most of the speaking skills including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, tense, turn-taking and polite interruptions.

3.5.1.1 Test 1: picture description:

Procedure

1. Teachers project a picture on the board.
 2. Students look at the projected picture while teachers discuss marks of the previous students.
 3. Teachers start recording.
 4. Part One: Icebreaker – Teachers ask students questions about themselves. 1-2 minutes.
 5. Part Two: Picture description – Students describe a picture for 1-1.5 minutes.
 6. Part Three: Interview – Teachers ask questions related to the topic of the picture for 2-3 minutes.
 7. Students leave. Process starts again.
- Northstar is taught for pre-intermediate students. Topics and questions are based on the topics in Northstar Pre-Intermediate Listening & Speaking Student Book, units 1,2,3,5,6,7.
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Table 4: Topics and Interview Questions:

Unit	Topic	Picture	Interview Questions
1	Jobs	People doing jobs	About jobs
2	Study habits / Time management	Different classroom/learning scenes	About students study habits and how they manage their time
3	Money	Shopping scenes	Shopping and money related questions
5	Healthy & unhealthy eating habits	People eating fast food	Questions about the students' diet
6	Heroes / People we admire	Scenes of people being rescued in dangerous situations (fires, floods).	Questions about people we admire / famous people / people in our lives
7	Health	Hospital / clinic / accident scenes	Questions about health, illness and accidents

Part One: Icebreaker

- This is to make students more comfortable (**See appendix 1**). It's not really to test them. The assessors would be concerned if a student cannot answer simple questions about themselves. However, there is no need to worry about marking them at this stage.

Part Two: Picture Description

- Students talk for about 1 – 1.5 minutes about the projected picture (**See appendix 2**). However, if communication stops altogether, the assessor can feed them a prompt to get them going again. e.g., what are they wearing?

Part Three: Interview

- Teachers ask questions relating to the topic of the picture (**See appendix 3**). They can use the questions on the prompt sheet. Many of these questions use vocabulary (theoretically) learnt during the semester. If they don't understand, teachers can paraphrase or use synonyms. Teachers are also free to use their own questions too; the prompt sheets are just a guide. However, teachers have to stay on topic.

- Students are given time to think and formulate answers. They're not fluent English speakers.
- Understandably, some students struggle with questions about concepts.
Eg. What should the government do to prevent obesity in Oman? If so, teachers personalize it → What should you do if you want to lose weight?

3.5.1.2 Test 2: Group discussion:

Procedure

1. Students enter the room. Examiners sit in configuration which makes it easy for both examiners to interact with each other.
2. Students sign in. Examiner 1 has a quick chat with the students and Puts them at ease.
3. Examiners assign a topic and start recording. Examiner 1 begins discussion by asking a question.
4. Discuss.
5. Examiners stop recording, thank students and ask the next group to come in.

The students actively participate in a discussion on a topic relevant to their studies by asking questions, agreeing/disagreeing, asking for clarification, sharing information, and asking for opinions (**See appendix 4**). All of the discourse features mentioned above are covered in the core text in units 1,2,3,5,6 and 7. Each group contained four members. The group members were chosen by the teacher. Each member was assigned a role to do in

order to ensure interdependence. The teachers keep the discussion going by asking questions and giving prompts. The less prompts the teacher gives, the more successful the discussion, as this means that the students are using a variety of discourse features and strategies to interact successfully. The more prompts the teacher gives, the less successful the discussion, as this means the students aren't asking many follow up questions, aren't giving reasons, examples, opinions, aren't asking for clarification or repetition.

The criteria are based on a scoring rubric adopted by the university. It measures the performance of students based on (1) pronunciation, (2) range, (3) accuracy, (4) interaction and (5) communicative effectiveness (**See appendix 5**). The full mark is 10 and each criterion is 2 points. The two teachers take time discussing the marks. Teachers can agree to disagree with each other. If they can't come to an agreement, they make a note of it and a third opinion will be arranged after the exam. Full marks can be awarded to students who quite clearly exceed the expectations of the level. It does not mean that they didn't make any mistakes.

3.5.2 Questionnaire:

The study uses a questionnaire as a second instrument (**See appendix 6**). The baseline data of the questionnaire were collected from the literature review and the researcher's experience as a lecturer in the GFP. It was used to know the students' attitude and expectation on the use of CL in their speaking classes for the experimental group. It was administered to the experimental group after the experiment. The questionnaire has five points using Likert-type scale of items ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

A pilot trail was done on a chosen sample. Some adjustments had been made made before administering the questionnaire.

3.6 The role of the examiners:

3.6.1 Examiner 1:

The teacher leading the discussion is there to facilitate. He is there to help students do as well as they can during the test. Some will need his help more than others. He is given question prompt sheets for each topic but they are only a guide. The teacher does not have to ask all of the questions. He is there to keep the conversation going. This is achieved by asking questions based on people's answers so someone never knows which way a discussion will go.

If the students are able to have the discussion independently, with minimal input from the teacher, then teachers let go. If students are trying to control the discussion by delivering a pre-prepared speech, the teacher interrupts and asks another question. In short, the teacher is there to keep the ball rolling.

3.6.2 Examiner 2:

The second examiner does not interact with the students. He is there to listen and assess student performances based on the selected criteria. He can discuss the mark with examiner 1 before he brings in the next group.

3.7 Validity:

The validity of a test is essential in any research. When the test measures what it claims to measure, then it is a valid test. Thus, validity refers to the accuracy of data obtained in the study. Validity comes in three types: content validity, construct validity and criterion

validity (Wiersma, 2000). The test was prepared according to the standards and specifications of the GFP. It was composed by the pre-intermediate speaking skill leader. It was given to the testing committee to ensure the content validity of the test. A prepared checklist was used to revise and evaluate the test. The checklist was made of different components such as cover sheet instructions, solutions/marking scheme, marks weightage, and mapping outcomes to assessment. Then, it was submitted to the GFP coordinator for double-checking. All comments and corrections were incorporated in the test by the committee. The final approval was taken from the head of the department.

3.8 Reliability:

Reliability is applying a particular technique repeatedly to the same objects and obtains the same results each time (Babbie, 2010). The reliability of the test was obtained through the test-retested method. The same test was administered many times to pre-intermediate students of the GFP and consistent results were obtained. In addition, the reliability of the test was established by aligning it with IELTS speaking assessment criteria (See Appendix 7).

3.9 Data collection procedures:

Having obtained the permission from the authority of the GFP, one teacher was assigned to teach the experimental group. He was told by the researcher how to employ CL activities. Another teacher was assigned to teach the control group. The two teachers have Master degree in teaching English and experience of more than 10 years. All the classes were delivered according to the university timetable. Listening and speaking are taught together using North Star coursebook. They were given two hours of listening and

speaking every day over the period of two months. A pre-test was conducted to the control group and the experimental group before the commencement of the experiment. The experimental group was instructed for two months based on CL techniques. After two months of teaching, an achievement speaking test was conducted as a post-test for both groups. A questionnaire was distributed to the students from the experimental group to know their opinion and attitude on the use of CL at the end of the treatment.

3.10 Statistical procedure:

Descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviation of the pre-test and the post-test were utilized to find the impact of CL on students' achievement. Inferential analysis was implemented in which a paired sample t test was conducted to determine if there is a significant statistical difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test and the post-test. The results of the control group were calculated against the experimental group to examine the impact of CL on students' achievement. Quantitative data were interpreted in tables and graphs while qualitative data were explained through narration and reports.

3.11 Ethics:

The researcher is fully aware of the ethical requirements. A permission from the GFP head and coordinator was taken prior to the commencement of the experiment. An official letter was given to them (**See appendix 8**). The participants were informed that the data will serve the purpose of the study and the results will be kept with a lot of confidentiality. In addition, confidentiality of the participants' identity in the

questionnaire was ensured. And that the outcome will benefit the learners themselves, the teachers and stakeholders.

Chapter Four: Results:

The chapter presents the main findings of the study. The results of the pre-test and post-test of speaking performance were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The research questions were answered below.

4.1 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for pre-test 1 _ picture description:

Question 1: What impact does cooperative learning have on speaking performance among university foundation programme students? The results of students in **test one** which is the photo description are presented below in table 5. The mean and standard deviation were tabulated to find out if there is any difference in speaking performance between the control and the experimental groups before the experiment.

Table 5: Pre-test results of test 1_ picture description:

Students	Results: Experimental Group Pre-test	Results: Control Group Pre- test
S 1	7	4
S 2	6	4
S 3	6	4
S 4	4	5
S 5	5	5
S 6	6	6

S 7	4	3
S 8	7	7
S 9	6	5
S 10	4	5
S 11	6	8
S 12	6	3
S 13	7	6
S 14	6	7
S 15	5	3
S 16	5	8
S 17	5	4
S 18	5	5
S 19	4	6
S 20	4	5
S 21	6	4
S 22	5	5
S 23	4	5
S 24	6	4
S 25	6	7
S 26	5	6
S 27	5	4
S 28	5	5
S 29	6	5
S 30	4	4

The overall mean of the experimental group was 5.3 on the pre-test with a standard deviation of 0.9, while the overall mean of the control group was 5.0 with a standard

deviation of 1.3. As presented in table 6, the mean score of the experimental group was relatively similar to the mean score of the control group. Students in both groups were similar to each other in their speaking performance before conducting the treatment.

Table 6: The mean scores and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the pre-test of speaking performance of test 1_picture description.

Group	Students	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental Group Pre-test	30	5.333333	0.958927
Control Group Pre-test	30	5.066667	1.362891

A paired sample t-test was run to determine if there is any statistical difference between the control group and experimental group before carrying out the treatment. Table 7 shows that there is no significant statistical difference between the control students and the experimental students in their speaking performance before conducting the experiment. The value of the t-test (0.969160077) does not show any significant difference between the mean of the two groups in their pre-test ($\alpha=0.05$). It is a clear evidence that the students in both groups were homogenous in terms of competency before carrying out the experiment.

Table 7: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 1 for both groups before the experiment.

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Results: Experimental Group Pre-test</i>	<i>Results: Control Group Pre-test</i>
Mean	5.333333333	5.066666667
Variance	0.91954023	1.857471264
Observations	30	30
Pearson Correlation	0.193489325	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	0.969160077	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.170239694	
t Critical one-tail	1.699127027	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.340479388	
t Critical two-tail	2.045229642	

4.2 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for pre-test 1 _ group

discussion:

To answer the first question of the study, the second test was conducted as a group. The results of students in test two which is the group discussion are presented below in table 8. The mean and the standard deviation were calculated to find out if there is any difference in speaking performance between the control group and the experimental group before conducting the experiment.

Table 8: Pre-test results of test 2_ group discussion:

Students	Results: Experimental Group pre-test	Results: Control Group Pre- test
S 1	7	6
S 2	7	4
S 3	5	8
S 4	3	7
S 5	2	6
S 6	5	6
S 7	6	6
S 8	4	6
S 9	4	6
S 10	5	6
S 11	5	7
S 12	5	7
S 13	5	6
S 14	5	9
S 15	5	4

S 16	7	6
S 17	7	6
S 18	8	6
S 19	7	6
S 20	7	6
S 21	7	5
S 22	5	4
S 23	5	4
S 24	5	5
S 25	4	3
S 26	4	4
S 27	5	5
S 28	6	5
S 29	5	5
S 30	6	6

The overall average of the experimental group was 5.3 on the pre-test with a standard deviation of 1.3, while the overall average of the control group was 5.6 with a standard deviation of 1.2. As shown in table 9, the mean scores were almost the same in both groups. Students in both groups were relatively similar to each other in their speaking performance before the treatment.

Table 9: The mean scores and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the pre-test of speaking performance of test 2_group discussion.

Group	Students	Mean	Standard deviation
Experimental Group Pre-test	30	5.366667	1.351457
Control Group Pre-test	30	5.666667	1.268541

A paired sample t-test was run to examine if there is any statistical difference in students' performance among the control group and the experimental group. Table 10 indicates that both groups were equal in their speaking performance. The value of the t-test (0.883548542) proves that there is no significant difference between the mean of the two groups in their pre-test ($\alpha=0.05$).

Table 10: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 2 for both groups before the experiment.

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Results: Experimental Group post-test</i>	<i>Results: Control Group Post-test</i>
Mean	5.366666667	5.666666667
Variance	1.826436782	1.609195402

Observations	30	30
Pearson Correlation	-0.006704618	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	-0.883548542	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.192103152	
t Critical one-tail	1.699127027	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.384206303	
t Critical two-tail	2.045229642	

4.3 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for post-test 1 _ picture

description:

The results of the students in **post-test 1** which is the picture description are displayed below in table 11. The overall average mean and standard deviation were calculated to see the speaking performance of students in the control and experimental group after the experiment.

Table 11: Post-test results of test 1_ picture description:

Students	Results: Experimental Group Pre-test	Results: Control Group Pre- test
S 1	6.5	5
S 2	7.5	5.5
S 3	8.5	5
S 4	6	6

S 5	7.5	6.5
S 6	6	5
S 7	6	6
S 8	6.5	7
S 9	7	6.5
S 10	7	6.5
S 11	6.5	7.5
S 12	7	7
S 13	6.5	5
S 14	8	8
S 15	6.5	5
S 16	8	5
S 17	6	5
S 18	7.5	5
S 19	7.5	7
S 20	7	5.5
S 21	6	5
S 22	7	6
S 23	8	5.5
S 24	7	5
S 25	8	4
S 26	7	5
S 27	7	5
S 28	7	5
S 29	6	5.5
S 30	7	5

The mean score of the experimental group was 6.9 with a standard deviation of 0.7 on the post-test. On the other hand, the mean score of the control group was 5.6 with a standard deviation of 0.9. Table 12 shows that the mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group on the post-test. The results show a significant increase in the mean score of the experimental students on their post-test in comparison to their peers in the control group.

Table 12: The mean score and standard deviation of the control and experimental groups in the post-test of speaking performance of test 1_picture description.

Group	Students	Mean	Standard deviation
Experimental Group Post-test	30	6.966667	0.706294
Control Group Post-test	30	5.666667	0.940775

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine if there is a significant statistical difference between the experimental students who got exposed to CL learning and the control group. It can be seen from table 13 that there is a significant difference among the students' performance in the experimental group in their post-test with t value = (6.116552439). $p = .000 < 0.05$.

Table 13: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 1 for both groups after the experiment.

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means			
	<i>Results: Experimental Group Pre- test</i>	<i>Results: Control Group Pre-test</i>	
Mean	6.966666667	5.666666667	
Variance	0.498850575	0.885057471	
Observations	30	30	
Pearson Correlation	0.021623191		
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0		
df	29		
t Stat	6.116552439		
P(T<=t) one-tail	5.78724E-07		
t Critical one-tail	1.699127027		
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.15745E-06		
t Critical two-tail	2.045229642		

4.4 Mean, standard deviation and paired sample t test for post-test 2 _ group

discussion:

The results of **post-test 2** (group dissection) are displayed below in table 14. The overall mean and standard deviation were calculated between the two groups to find out the level of competency in speaking performance after carrying out the experiment.

Table 14: Post-test results of test 2_ group discussion:

Students	Results: Experimental Group post-test	Results: Control Group Post-test
S 1	7	6
S 2	6	6.5
S 3	5	6.5
S 4	6.5	6
S 5	9	6
S 6	7	6
S 7	6	6.5
S 8	6.5	7
S 9	6.5	7
S 10	7.5	6
S 11	7	6.5
S 12	6	7
S 13	6	6.5
S 14	6	7
S 15	6	6.5
S 16	6	5
S 17	7.5	5

S 18	8.5	5
S 19	6	5
S 20	7	8
S 21	7	8
S 22	7	8.5
S 23	7	7.5
S 24	7.5	5
S 25	8	4
S 26	7	5
S 27	6	5
S 28	6.5	5
S 29	8	5
S 30	7	5

The overall average of the experimental group was 6.8 on the post-test with a standard deviation of 0.8. On the other hand, the overall average of the control group was 6.1 with a standard deviation of 1.1. Table 15 shows that the mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group on the post-test. A significant rise was noticed among the mean score of the experimental group on their post-test.

Table 15: The mean score and standard deviation of the control and experimental group in the post-test of speaking performance of test 2_group discussion.

Group	Students	Mean	Standard deviation
Experimental Group Post-test	30	6.8	0.86702
Control Group Post-test	30	6.1	1.10952

A paired sample t test was conducted to determine if there is a significant statistical difference between the experimental students who got exposed to CL learning and the control group. It can be seen from Table 16 that there is a significant difference among the student's performance in the experimental group in their post-test with t value = (2.428222716). $p = 0.0216 < 0.05$. The findings of the first question reveal positive impact of cooperative learning on students' oral performance.

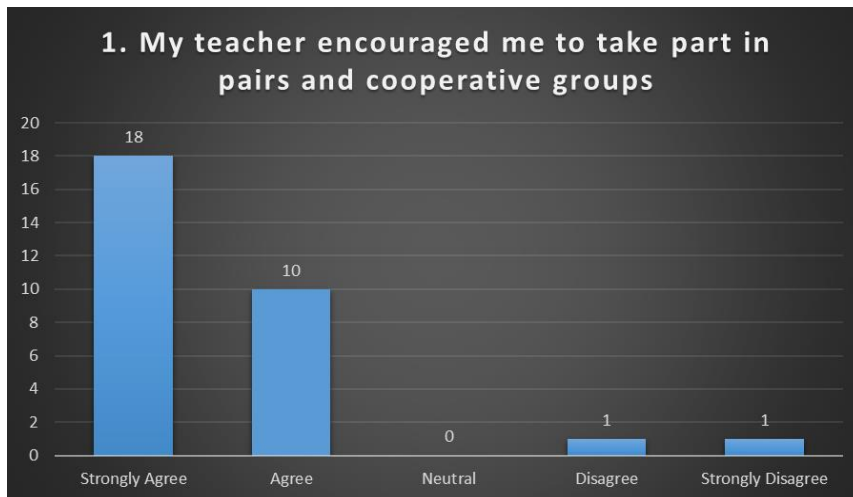
Table 16: Paired samples t test of speaking performance test 2 for both groups after the experiment.

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Results: Experimental Group Pre-test</i>	<i>Results: Control Group Pre-test</i>

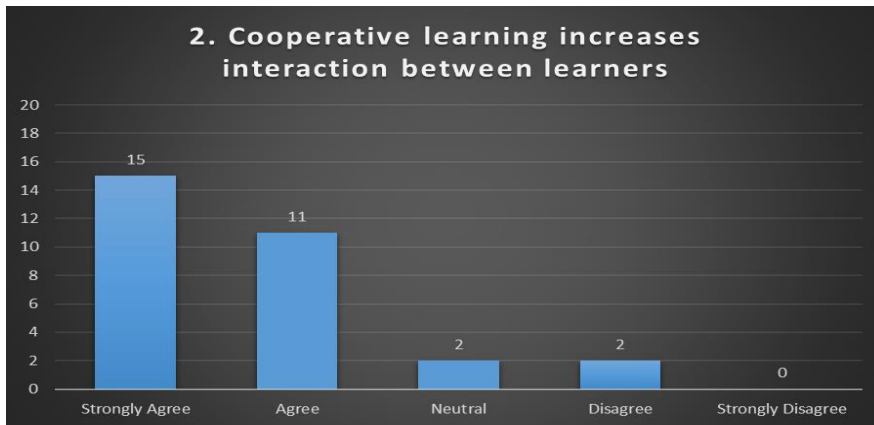
Mean	6.8	6.1
Variance	0.751724138	1.231034483
Observations	30	30
Pearson Correlation	- 0.265258534	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	2.428222716	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.010803665	
t Critical one-tail	1.699127027	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.02160733	
t Critical two-tail	2.045229642	

4.5 Questionnaire responses:

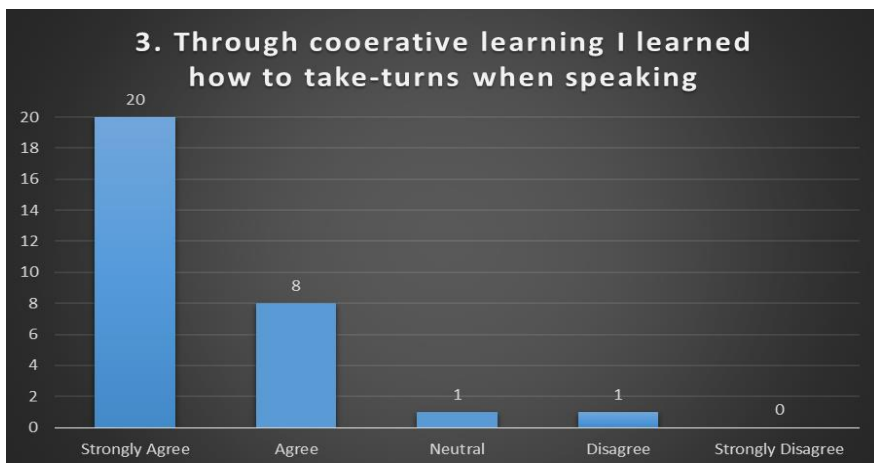
Research question two: What is the attitude of students towards cooperative learning? A questionnaire was administered to get an insight on students' attitude. Each statement of the questionnaire was analyzed in this section to know students' view and expectation towards the use of CL in classroom.



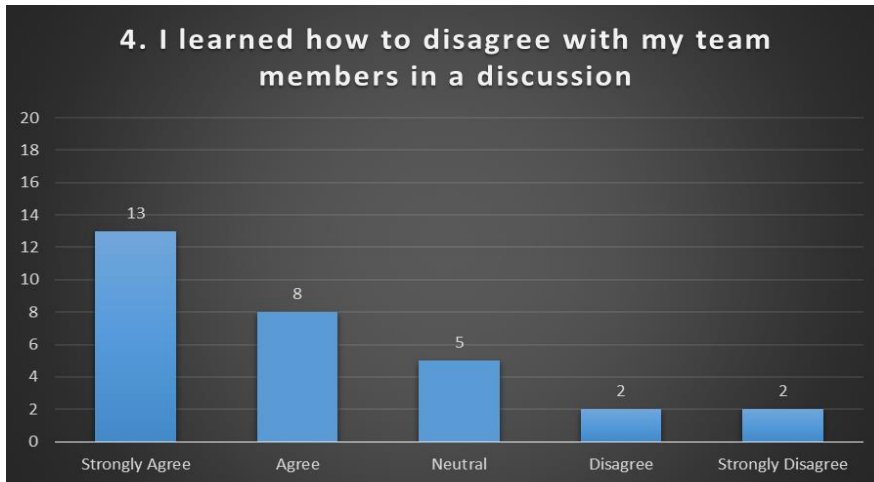
Approximately 60% strongly agree that the teacher encouraged them to take part in pairs and cooperative groups, while about 33.3% agree that they took part in pairs and cooperative groups. On the other hand, only 3.3% tend to disagree and 3.3% strongly disagree.



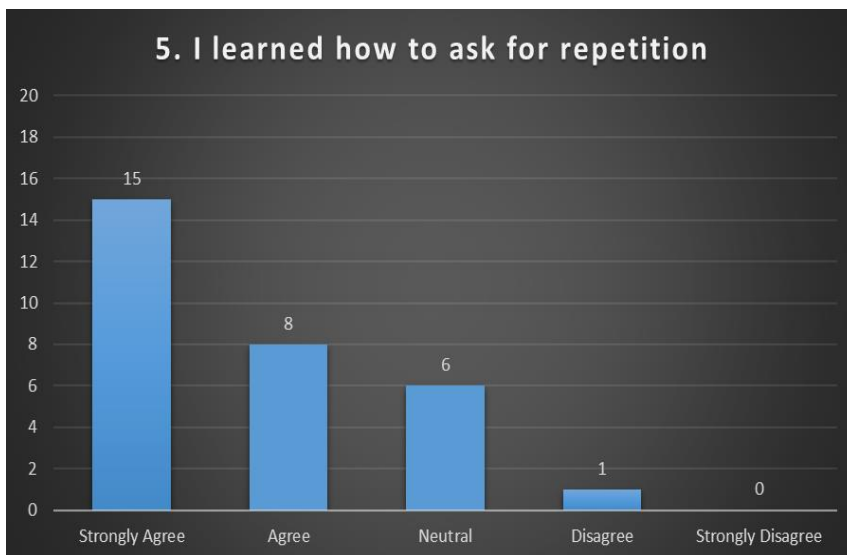
Around 50% strongly agree that CL increases interaction between learners, while almost 36.6% agree that CL increases interaction. Nearly 6.6% are neutral. About 6.6% think that cooperative learning does not increase interaction.



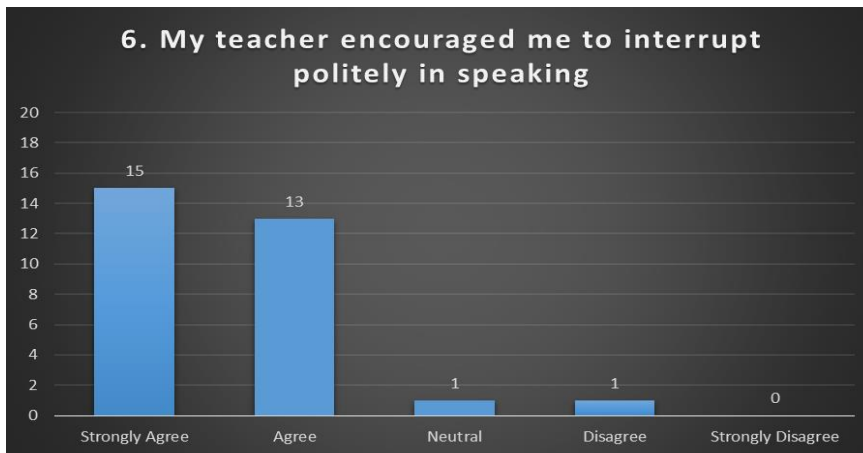
About 66.6% of students stated that they learned how to take-turns in speaking. Almost 26.6% agree with the statement. Only 3.3% of students are neutral and only 3.3% disagree.



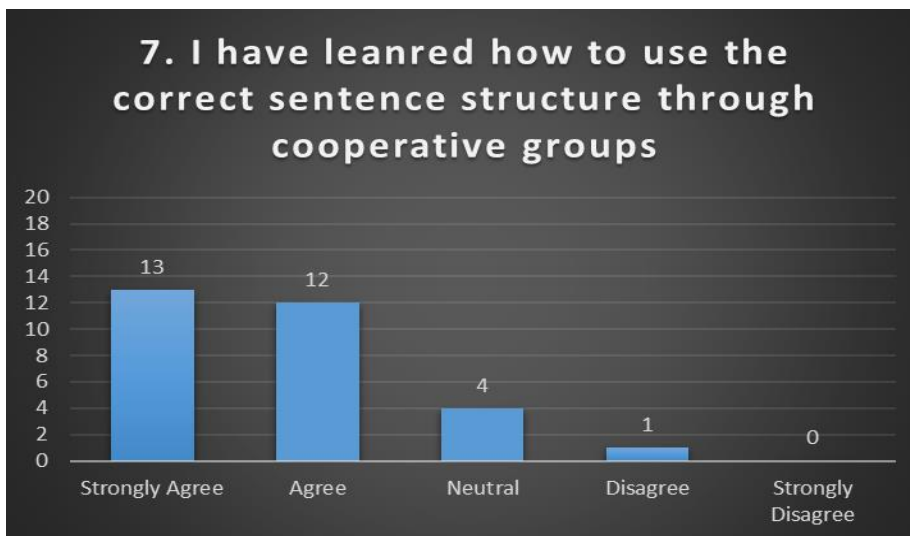
Approximately 43.3% of the participants strongly agree that they learned how to disagree with team members in a discussion. About 26.6% agree with the statement. Around 16.6% are neutral in giving their opinion to the statement. On the contrary, almost 6.6% of the participants disagree and strongly disagree.



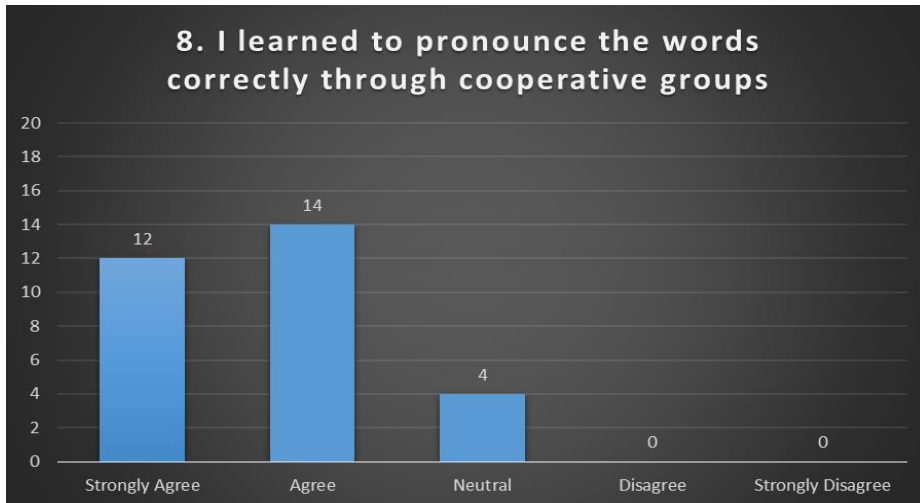
About 50% of the participants strongly agree that they learned how to ask for repetition. Almost 26.6% agree to the statement. 20% are neutral. On the other hand, only 3.3% disagree.



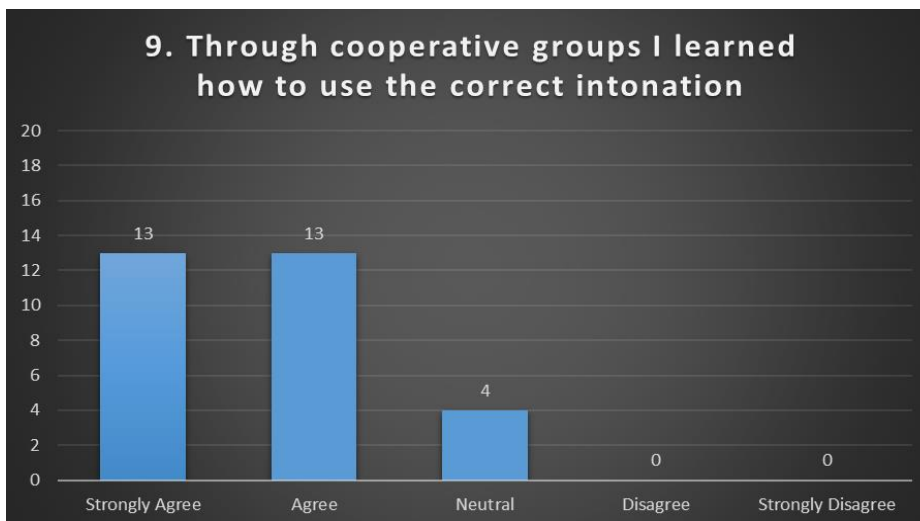
Around 50% of the participants think that they know how to interrupt politely. While almost 43.3% agree to the statement. Nearly 3.3% of the participants are neutral. Only 3.3% of the participants do not know how to interrupt politely.



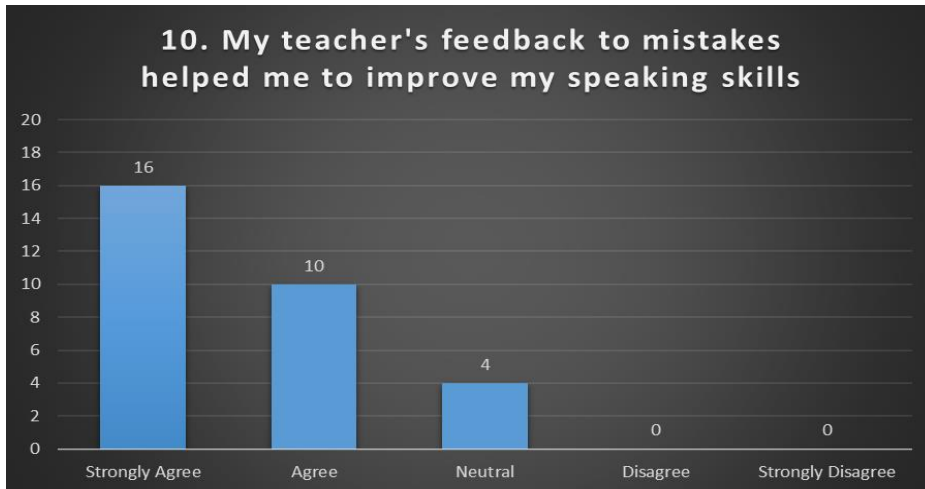
Approximately 43.3% participants strongly agree that their teacher helped them to use the correct sentence structure through cooperative learning. Almost 40% agree that they know how to use correct sentence structure. Nearly 13.3% decided to stay neutral. Only 3.3% disagree with the statement.



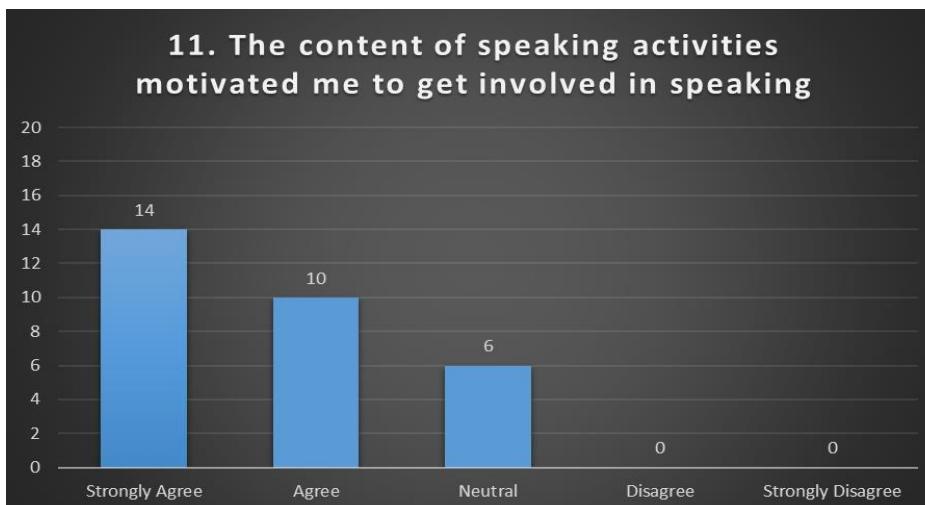
Around 46.6% of the participants agree that they learned how to pronounce the words correctly. 40% strongly agree that they learned the correct pronunciation. Closely 13.3% are neutral and do not support any side. None of the students disagree with the statement.



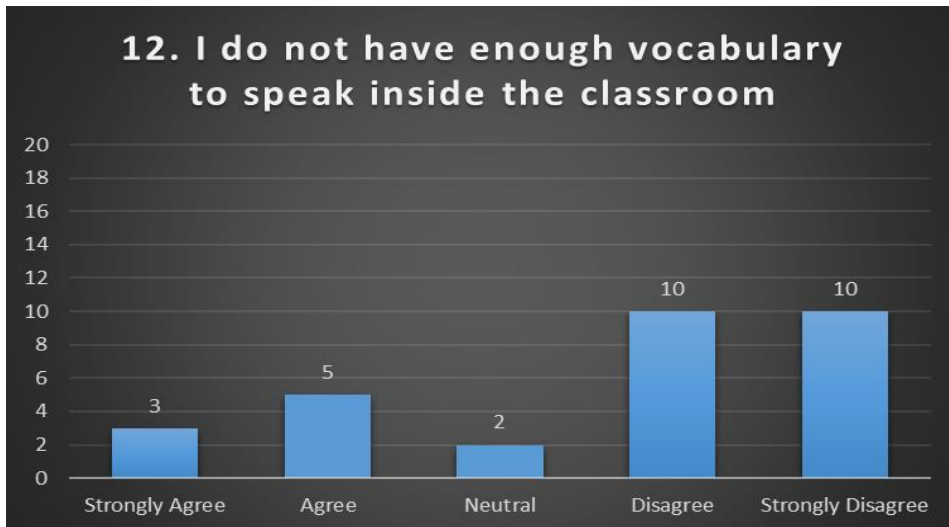
Approximately 43.3% agree and strongly agree that they learned the correct intonation in speaking. Around 13.3% decided to stay neutral. None of the students disagree with the statement.



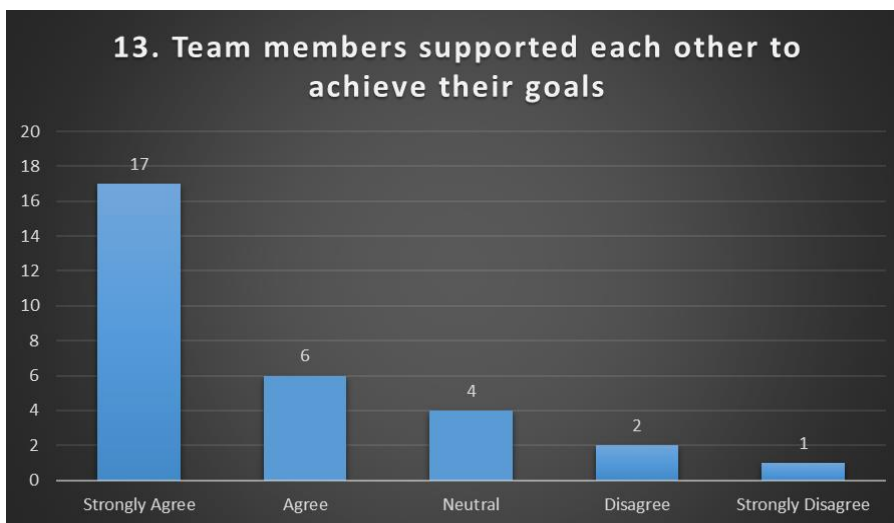
About 53.3% of the participants agree that teachers' feedback helped them to improve their speaking skills while almost 33.3% agree with the statement. Nearly 13.3% are neutral and do not support any side. No participants disagree to the statement.



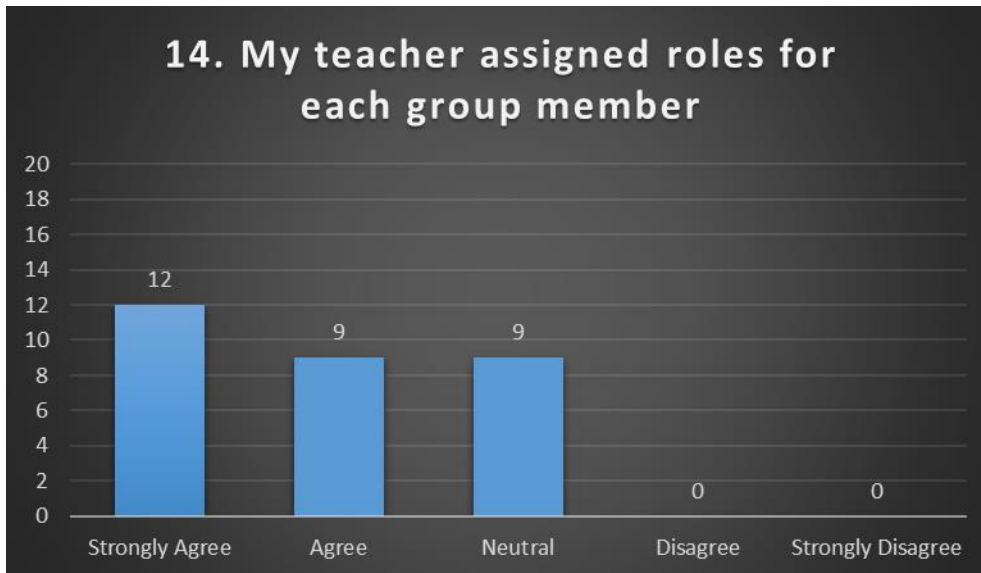
Approximately 46.6% of the participants agree that the content of speaking activities motivated them to get involved in speaking. Around 33.3% strongly agree the statement. 20% are neutral to the statement.



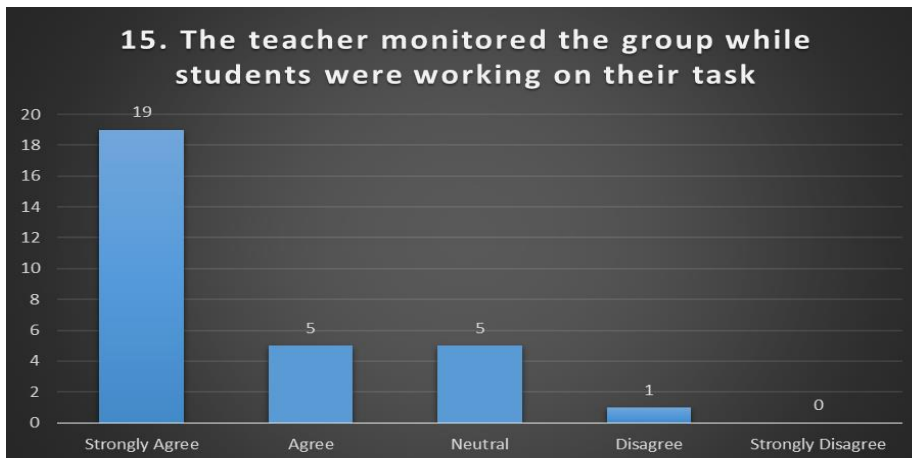
10% of the participants agree that they do not have enough vocabulary to speak inside the classroom. About 16.6% agree to the statement. Around 6.6% stayed neutral. Almost 33.3% tend to disagree and strongly disagree.



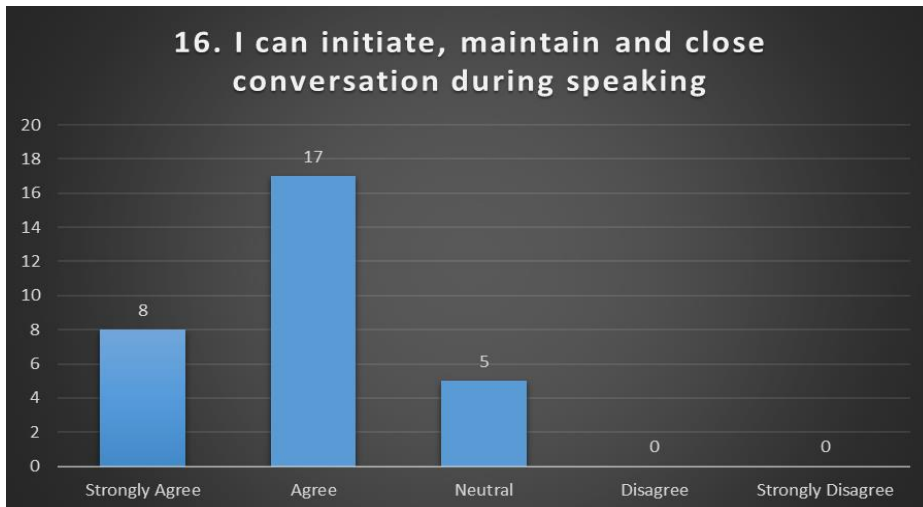
Approximately 56.6% strongly agree that team members supported each other to achieve their goals. 20% agree with the statement. Almost 13.3% are neutral. Around 6.6% disagree while only 3.3% strongly disagree.



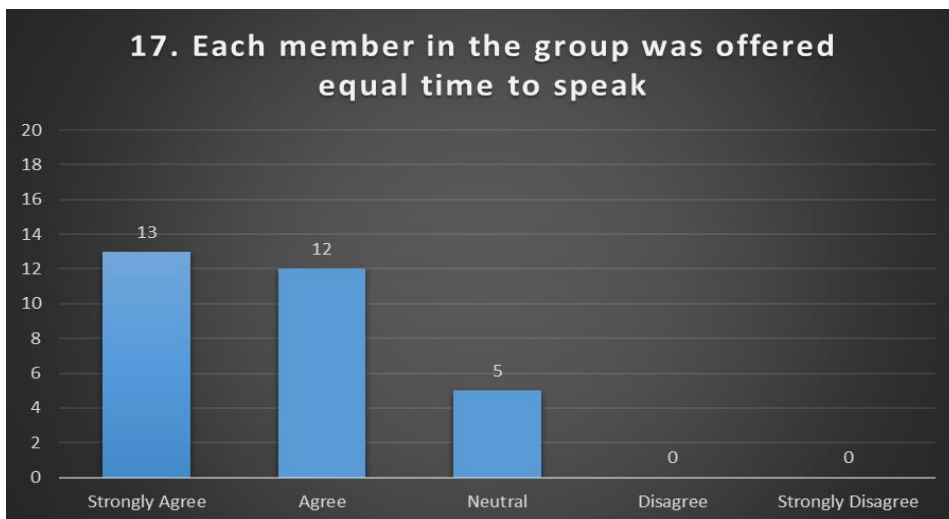
40% of the participants strongly agree that their teacher assigned roles for each group members. 30% agree that they were assigned different roles in their group. 30% are neutral. None of the students disagree to this statement.



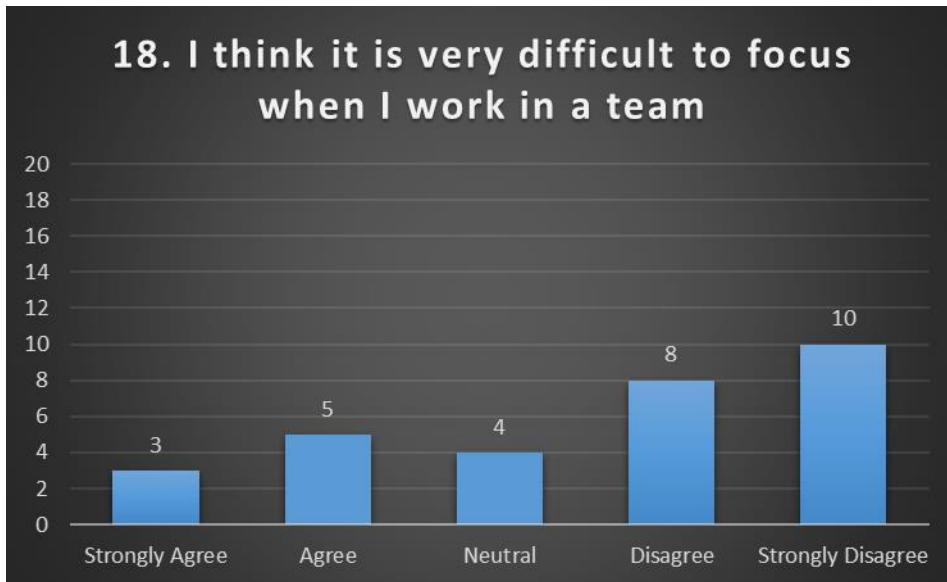
Around 63.3% of the participants strongly agree that the teacher monitored their group while they were working on a task. About 16.6% agree that they got monitored by their teacher. Nearly 16.6% stayed neutral. Almost, 3.3% disagree.



Approximately 26.6% of the participants stated that they have the ability to initiate, maintain and close conversation during speaking. Almost 56.6% agree that they have the ability to initiate and close conversation during speaking. About 16.6% decided to be neutral. No one disagrees.

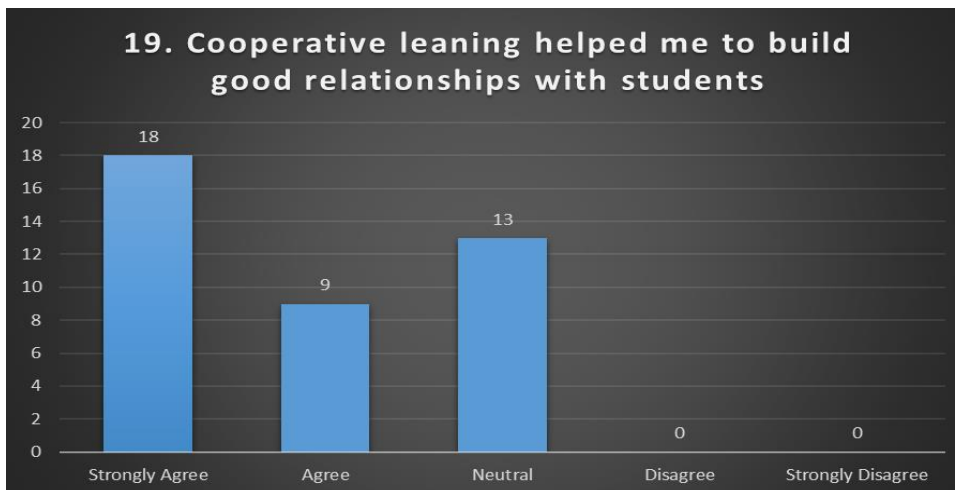


Nearly 43.4% of the participants strongly agree that they were given equal time to speak in their group. 40% agree to the statement while almost 16.6% are neutral.



10% of participants think that it is very difficult to focus when they work in a team.

Almost 16.6% agree to the statement. Around 13.3% are neutral. About 26.6% disagree while only 33.3% strongly disagree.



More than half of the participants (60%) strongly agree that cooperative learning helped them to build good relationships with students. 30% agree to the statement. 10% are neutral. No one disagrees.



About 53.3% strongly agree that cooperative learning strategies helped them to make decisions. Almost 33.3% agree to the statement. Around 13.3% are neutral.

Chapter Five: Discussion:

The findings of the study reveal a positive impact of CL approach on students' speaking performance and attitude. This chapter discusses the findings of the two research questions.

5.1 The impact of CL on speaking skills:

Research question one investigated the impact of using CL approach on the students' speaking performance. A significant difference was noticed on the students' speaking performance after being exposed to CL instruction in comparison to the students in the control group. CL approach was a good technique in teaching speaking. It resulted in positive outcomes on the performance of the experimental group. On the other hand, the performance of students in the control group that were taught without being instructed to use the CL activities showed slight or no significant difference between their results of the pre-test and post-test. This might be attributed to the normal way of teaching in which students are not given enough opportunities to practice speaking in classrooms. The current study supports the idea of Ning and Hornby (2010) about sharing teaching strategies to enhance learning in order to overcome difficulties facing learners of languages. He indicates that the CL strategy has a vital impact on the oral proficiency of the students. Ning and Hornby (2010) found a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in speaking, listening and reading in support of the CL approach. The mean score of the intervention group in their study was 6.906 in the pre-test and 7.721 in the post-test for the speaking skills. The mean score of the experimental group in the current study was 5.33, 5.36 in the pre-test of picture description and group discussion. While the

mean score of the post-test was 6.96, 6.8 accordingly. There could be three factors that led to the significant difference between the control group and the experimental group in their post test results of speaking performance in both studies. First, frequent CL activities were employed to the experimental group which increased the peer interaction. Think-pair-share, three-step interview, brainstorming and group discussion were implemented frequently in the lessons. Second, students were stimulated through real-life tasks and to use more language functions such as expressing opinion, asking for repetition, inviting someone to speak, paraphrasing and interrupting. Third, positive experience was gained through primitive peer interaction which motivated students in the experimental group.

The findings are also in line with the findings of Johnson and Johnson (2000) who supports the claim that CL improves students' individual performance. This was evident in the picture description test of the current study, which was done individually and showed a noticeable increase in the mean scores from 5.33 to 6.96 for the experimental group.

The findings of this study support the findings of Talebi and Sobhani (2012) in which an oral interview was conducted to find the effect of cooperative learning on students' speaking achievement. Their study indicates a positive impact of CL as an effective strategy equipping the students with the necessary sub-skills of speaking to enhance fluency. It is an ambition that its impact enhances the speaking proficiency at the GFP classes and suggests further studies to be conducted in the same field for improvement. The two studies were conducted in the region where English is taught as the second language. They are of similar research objectives and procedure. They took samples of the same age as in the researcher's participants and achieved positive findings.

In Ahmed and Omar's (2014) study, the findings revealed a significant increase in students' performance after the experiment. While the performance of the control group revealed no improvement between the pre-test and the post test. A similar situation is found in the interpretation of the students' results in the present study. They have been conducted in the same industry and bear the same variables. In addition, when a new teaching method is implemented, it increases the perception and expectation among the students expecting to overcome their difficulty in speaking. So, in the case of the current study and Ahmed & Omar (2014), it seems the students impressed by the method.

The finding of this study is consistent with Patternpitchet (2011). There was a significant increase in students' speaking performance for the three tasks of the oral test in favor of CL (pre-test mean = 2.62, 2.97, 1.62; post-test mean = 3.71, 3.68, 3.00). Similarly, in this study, the mean scores of the experimental group were higher than control group in the speaking post-tests one and two. The present study and Patternpitchet (2011) prove the positive impact of cooperative learning on students' speaking skills. Both studies were conducted on the same age group. The sample was undergraduate students aged between 19 and 22. Students at this ages are fascinated to work in groups. So, if they compete or share, they would definitely give positive results. Moreover, both studies were somehow similar in the treatment. Frequent pair and group activities were done inside the classroom or as homework through class discussion, brainstorming and authentic materials which can improve students' performance.

Yang (2005) compared traditional teaching methods versus the efficiency of CL in a college in Taiwan to test the oral proficiency. He found that CL does not a positive impact on the oral proficiency of the students who have undertaken the study in comparison to the

traditional method, so he suggested merging the two strategies to align the learning outcomes with the available sources in the college. It is observed that Yang's study does not approve the findings of the current study for a couple of reasons. If it is considered, the research sample in Yung's study was a major factor of difference. The sample was randomly selected for the CL and the traditional groups. The current study is experimental, so collecting data was done over a period of and the targeted sample was chosen in terms of homogeneity and background. Another factor is the teaching methods. Students are taught through traditional teaching in Taiwan. They are taught through lecturing and grammar-translation method. Students learning style and individual interests are neglected by teachers which will differently affect their desire to learn through a new method. In addition, in CL students are put in small groups, therefore, many times, leaders speak much more than other members without of giving equal chances to all to participate. This might affect the results when there is another option like the traditional method.

There are many benefits of using CL in the GFP classrooms. Firstly, collaboration between learners leads to establish a sense of unity and friendship. When students work together frequently, they become more and more familiar with the tasks and their peers. When they become familiar with each other, the level of anxiety is lowered and, therefore, they feel less stressed and more relaxed in class. Secondly, cooperative learning is an appropriate teaching strategy for large classes. Students are all engaged when they are arranged in pair and group work. The experimental teacher was able to run a big class of 30 students. While students are working together, the teacher is monitoring the group work. In this case, students feel the responsibility of their own study and a shared-knowledge environment is created. This is supported by the post-test results of

group discussion. The mean score was high at 6.8. In addition, CL creates a classroom environment that is similar to real-life situations in which students interact and discuss ideas with each other. For example, practical activities were done for the experimental group such role-play, interviews and brainstorming.

Finally, implementing cooperative learning in GFP classes have encouraged the students to improve their speaking skills and sub-skills. It is recommended that teachers should use this methodology to enhance the speaking skill.

5.2 Students' attitude and opinion on the use of CL:

Research question two explored the extent to which CL affected students' attitudes. The participants in the CL classes were very positive in their attitude towards using CL in classroom. Students are definitely more inclined to speak in groups because they feel at ease within a small group as opposed to the whole class. Overall, some students will speak more and do it better.

The results of the current study are in support of Sühendan & Bengü (2014) who concluded that CL approach improved student's attitudes. A lot of research studies have concluded that CL approach has positive outcomes. In this regard, students who got exposed to CL tasks, tended to achieve higher grades and better understanding of their studies (Slavin, 1991). In Ahmed and Omar's (2014) study, students' attitude was measured through a questionnaire and the results indicated that the experimental students had a positive attitude towards the application of CL compared the control group students. Similarly, the findings of the current study support Ahmed and Omar's study.

The present study found that through cooperative learning students could construct correct sentences in English, use the right tenses and learn common vocabulary. At the beginning of the study, students were not able to use correct sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary. By the end of the experiment, students had improved these skills. Majority of the students responded positively to items 7 and 12 in the questionnaire. They stated they can use the correct sentence structure and they have enough vocabulary to speak. For example, they were able to use correct tenses such present continuous to describe the pictures. This implies that teachers should adopt the individual

accountability in their teaching. Each member of the group should know their strengths and weaknesses. They have to take responsibility of their own work (Brown, 2009).

5.3 Interpersonal skills based on students' responses:

Cooperative learning has have a positive effect on students' interpersonal skills. For example, learners get the opportunity to actively listen to different opinions and ideas whilst cooperatively working together. They get a chance to work together as a team whilst also motivating each other. Some students started to lose their inhibitions when they worked in a team. Learners partake in problem solving and decision making. They not only learn to take responsibility but how to contribute. There is also the chance to develop quite a lot of interpersonal skills that you could not simply learn from a book, for example, acquiring or developing leadership skills or understanding empathy or even resolving conflicts or differences. Likewise, certain social skills naturally come about, such as being part of a team, i.e. team spirit; striving towards a common goal rather than individual achievements. At the end of the study, students were able to listen carefully, interrupt politely and take-turn appropriately. Items 3,4,5,6 in the attitudinal questionnaire showed very positive feedback. Most of them stated that they can take-turn, agree, disagree, interrupt, and ask for repetition. This implies that interpersonal skills should be adopted by the teacher to encourage learners improve such skills. The findings are supported by (Ning, 2011) who states that CL increases interaction and participation in class.

5.4 (Fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and intonation) based on students' responses:

Fluency is one area that shows marked improvement. Astute students may pick up accuracy and intonation by actively listening to their peers. While some students may improve their

pronunciation skills, there are some who will pick up inaccurate pronunciation along the way. Only some students may turn to an online dictionary to check and/or ask the teacher to correct their pronunciation. At the end of the study, most students were able to pronounce the words correctly with good intonation. This finding is in line with Talebi and Sobhani (2012) who states that group work is done interactively and feedback is provided for one another. Also, Students were able to use the correct stress and intonation through cooperative learning. Most students agree and strongly agree that they learned the correct intonation and stress in items 8 and 9 of the attitudinal questionnaire. This implies that positive interdependence should be enhanced by teachers so that students can use the correct stress and intonation. Senel (2006) states that errors in intonation, rhythm, and inspiration can be caused by L1 interference, but these errors can be eliminated in CL instruction.

Students always improve certain skills when learning speaking cooperatively. These skills include but are not limited to: being able to speak without being asked to repeat themselves the way they used to. Students have also developed a sense of self-confidence. Another important aspect worth mentioning is that they seem to be much more prepared for job interviews. Last but not least, they become more capable of understanding more when listening to video or radio. In addition to that, students become aware of the necessary speaking requirements like: sound production, syllable stress, word stress and reduction, Intonation and pitch as well as Linking. This is strongly supported by (Chen 2005).

5.5 Teacher's role based on students' perspective.

Teachers' role in the CL is a facilitator of knowledge in which a positive learner centered environment is created. The teaching environment helped students to participate actively in the group activities assigned to them by the teacher. Students who weren't confident to speak in the class felt comfortable to speak in small groups. The teachers' designed tasks that motivated students to communicate cooperatively. During the tasks, he monitored students, responded to their concerns and provided feedback when needed. This was supported by (Ning, 2011) in his study.

5.6 Negative aspects of CL:

There are some drawbacks that teachers should be careful about when grouping students. Many students will stray off topic (and in Arabic) when the teacher is not monitoring. There is also a tendency for strong personalities to dominate group work. Another problem is the resistance to accept mixed gender groups. It is mainly within the female students due to the cultural background. Students are usually group themselves socially. So when teachers group the students according to their level, they face the problem of mixed gender groups. It is not healthy to work in a group where the classmate is your friend because the friend can easily switch from the lesson or just chat. Having, unequal groups in a classroom has a negative impact on the lesson. Only one or two groups work with interest because they are aware of what the teacher says whereas others just sit and chat. As a result, weaker groups might not be motivated to work as they either lack confidence or interest in learning.

Chapter Six: Conclusion:

Based on the findings, CL approach has a positive impact on students' speaking skills and attitudes in this study. The mean and standard deviation were tabulated to find out if there is any difference in speaking performance between the experimental and the control groups before and after the two speaking tests. The mean score of the first test (photo description) was 5.33 for the experimental group and 5.06 for the control group before the experiment. After the experiment, the mean score of the experimental group was 6.9 with a standard deviation of 0.7. On the other hand, the mean score of the control group was 5.6 with a standard deviation of 0.9. Students in the experimental group marked a clear improvement after implementing the CL activities. For the second test (group discussion), the overall average of the experimental group was 5.3 with a standard deviation of 1.3, while the overall average of the control group was 5.6 with a standard deviation of 1.2 before the treatment. After the CL activities were taught to the students, the overall average of the experimental group was 6.8 on the post-test with a standard deviation of 0.8. On the other hand, the overall average of the control group was 6.1 with a standard deviation of 1.1. A significant rise was noticed on the experimental students.

The responses to the questionnaire showed that students have a very positive attitude towards CL. CL enables students to construct correct sentence structure, use a good range of vocabulary, and use correct tenses and grammar. In addition, it has a positive impact on students' interpersonal and social skills. It enables students to take-turn, interrupt politely, listen carefully and initiate a conversation when speaking. It also helps students to improve their pronunciation and intonation.

The social life of the students is better when they learn together. It has a positive impact on their behavior, too. Psychologically, some students enjoy working in pairs or groups. They learn the process of learning from each other. Those active students who have good methods of learning skills, shared with the other members of their group, so cooperative learning added another value to their everyday life. They tend to like working together and it does foster better relations.

Cooperative learning has some impact on learners and helps them grow the following skills: progressive interdependence, individual liability, face-to-face collaboration, interactive and small group social skills as well as group processing.

Teachers in higher education institutions should be made aware of the importance of using CL method in their classes. There are many benefits when teachers use the CL method in classroom. Based on evidence from this study, it is reasonable to mention that CL can improve student' speaking skills and attitudes. Therefore, it is recommended to use CL method regularly.

6.1 Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research study, the following recommendations are made to improve the speaking skills

- i. Teachers should use CL as an instructional method on a regular basis to improve students' speaking skills.
- ii. The stakeholders and policy makers should motivate teachers to implement CL as an instructional method to enhance the speaking skills.

- iii. The curriculum designers should incorporate CL activities and techniques in speaking course books.

6.2 Limitation of the study:

The implication of CL approach does not only improve students' speaking skills but it strongly leads to positive students' attitudes. Speaking skill was investigated in this study. Further research should be applied to investigate the impact of CL on other skills such as reading and writing. Also, future studies should be narrowed to test speaking sub-skills or the components of CL such as the individual accountability or interpersonal skills. What is more, future studies should test CL on different levels of schools and higher education programmes. This study was done over two months. CL should be tested on a long period of time to use more research instruments and to find out if consistent results will be yielded. The positive findings of the study imply that CL should be adopted regularly as an essential method to improve students' speaking skills. It is highly recommended to be a part of the teaching methods in higher education institutions. Teachers have a big responsibility to vary their teaching methods and bring the good practices to the classroom.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1:

Pre-Int Speaking Final Exam Q Prompts

Semester 2, 2019-2020

Part One: Icebreaker

1. What's your name?
2. What's your student ID number?
3. How old are you?
4. When is your birthday?
5. Who is your teacher?
6. What's your job?
7. Where are you from?
8. What time is your class?
9. What's your surname?
10. How do you spell your surname?
11. What's your nationality?
12. Are you married?
13. If yes, how many children do you have?
14. Where's your house?
15. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
16. What's your father's job?

17. What sports do you like?
18. What's your favourite food?
19. Do you like shopping?
20. Can you live without your mobile phone?

Appendix 2: part two: picture description

Unit 1:







Unit 2:







Unit 3:







Unit 5:







Unit 6





Unit 7





Appendix 3: part three: interview questions

THESE QUESTIONS ARE JUST A GUIDE: They do help maintain consistency but do not feel restrained by them. Please feel free to generate questions based on the student's answers.

Unit 1: Jobs

Would you like to do this job? Why / Why not?

Have you ever had a job? / Are you working now?

What does your father/brother do? / Does he like his job? – Why/Why not?

What do you want to do when you graduate? Why? When will you graduate?

What is your dream job? Why? / Do you think you will ever have this job? / Why / Why not?

What job do you think you will get after you graduate?

What qualifications do you need?

What skills do you need to do this job?

What qualities do you need to have to do this job?

What is a job that you don't want to do? Why not?

What is important to you when choosing a job? (e.g. Salary, hours, location, holidays, insurance, full-time / part-time, childcare, benefits – car, office etc...)

Unit 2: Study habits and time management

Do you like being a student at university? Why?/Why not?

How is it different from being at high school?

What do you like about being a uni student? / What don't you like about it?

What challenges do you face as a student? What is difficult about being a student?

What do you do to **prepare** for an exam?

Do you **manage your time** well? How do you manage your time?

Do you **set goals**? What are they?

Do you have any bad habits? Do you procrastinate / multitask? / Cram for exams / Get distracted easily?

What **strategies** do you use to deal with these problems?

Do you **reward** yourself if you finish your work? / How?

What do you do to **avoid distractions**?

Is it difficult for you to stay focused for long periods of time? / What do you do to stay focused?

Have you ever aced an exam? / bombed an exam? Which exam? When? etc....

Unit 3: Money

Do you like shopping? How often does your family do the shopping? / Where?

Do you like going shopping? / Where? / Your favourite place to go shopping? / How often?

What is the most money you have ever spent on one thing? What? / Why? / Was it a good deal?

Do you ever bargain for things at the suq? What's the best deal you ever got? How much? etc....

Tell me about something that you bought that was good value for money? (worth it / a bargain)

In your opinion, do you have too much stuff?

What do you do with the stuff that you don't need? Keep it? / give it away? / throw it away?

Have you ever.....

... won money in a competition? How much? / When? / Which competition? etc...

... lost money? How much? / How? / Where? / When? etc...

... found money? How much? / Where? / When? etc...

... paid an arm and a leg for something?

Unit 5: Healthy & unhealthy eating habits / Unit 7: Health

(These topics are interrelated so feel free to use questions from both topics as you see fit)

Is your diet healthy or unhealthy?

Do you eat junk food? – What type? / Why? / Who with? Etc...

What makes junk food unhealthy? Too much.....?

What kinds of food should I eat if I want to be healthy? e.g. fruit, vegetables, grains, meat, protein etc.....

What kinds of food should I avoid? eg. Junk food, too much fat, sugar, salt, carbohydrates etc.....

I'm overweight. What should I do to lose weight? / I'm too thin. What should I do to gain weight?

Have you ever been on a diet? Why? / What foods did you avoid? / How did you feel? / Were you happy with the result?

Could you give up eating something, e.g. Give up chocolate? How difficult would this be? Why?

What health problems does unhealthy food cause?

Is obesity a big problem in Oman?

What should the government do to deal with this problem?

Unit 6: Heroes / People we admire

Have you ever been in a dangerous situation like this? How did you feel? / What did you do?

Do these kinds of things happen in Ramadan? For example....?

Would you do this job? Why? / Why not?

What skills and qualities do you need to do a job like this?

Would you help people like this? / Do you think you are a helpful person?

Tell me about a time that you helped someone.

Tell me about a time that someone helped you.

Tell me about someone you respect and admire. Why do you admire them? What have you learnt from them? / Somebody famous? / Somebody you know?

During Ramadhan, what do people do to help others? Contribute money or time to charity? / Volunteer work? / Where? / How often? etc....

Can you give me some advice on what I can do to help others during Ramadan.

Unit 7

What do you do to stay healthy / avoid getting sick? (in general)

Do you do a sport or exercise? What type? How often? etc...

Have you ever been to hospital for treatment? Why? / What treatment did the doctor give you? / How long did you stay? / Were you happy with the services at the hospital?

Would you like to be a doctor or nurse? / Why? / Why not? / Do you think these jobs are difficult? / Why?

Should you only take medicine from a doctor or are home remedies ok too? Does your mother or grandmother use any home-made medicine at home?

What can the Omani Government do to improve healthcare services and hospitals in Oman?

Appendix 4: Group discussion prompts

Unit 1 - Jobs

What job do you want to do in the future? Why?	What skills / qualities / qualifications do you need to get this job?
What is important to you when choosing this job? (Benefits / Rewards) What are the drawbacks?	Is it easy to get a job in Oman? (Why? / Why not?) Can you give me some advice on how to get a job in Oman?

Skills / Qualities / Qualifications

You	must	have	good communication skills a diploma / degree in
	should		
	need to		
	have to	be	good with your hands / children / a computer at math / chemistry / driving
			hardworking reliable ambitious trustworthy / honest creative / imaginative motivated well-organised self-disciplined sympathetic naturally talented a good listener a good problem solver a team player

Rewards

Salary – a high-paying job
Hours – Full-time / part-time / Shifts
Holidays
Location – Indoors / outdoors / close to home
Opportunity for training & development / travel / promotion
Private health insurance
Car / house

Drawbacks

Stressful / dangerous / tiring
Low salary / not enough holidays / no insurance
No opportunity for training & development / travel / promotion

What is a job that you wouldn't like to do? Why?

Can you think of any unusual / offbeat jobs? Why is it unusual? /
What are the advantages / disadvantages of doing this job?

What can your teachers / university do to help you get a job in the future?

What skills are the most important to learn to get a job?

Have you ever had a job? Why not?

When will you graduate? / What do you want to do when you graduate?

What do(es) your father / brothers do?

Unit 2 – Study Habits and Time Management

<p><u>University Life</u></p> <p>Do you like university? Why? / Why not? What faculty are you going to after foundation? / When will you graduate? / What job do you want to do after you graduate? What's the difference between high school and university? What challenges do you face as a university student?</p>	<p><u>Good Habits</u></p> <p>Can you give me some advice on being a good student? Do you have a positive attitude toward study? Are you focused? What should you do to prepare for an exam? Do you set goals? What are they? Do you put them in order? Do you manage your time? How? (eg. Divide big jobs into smaller jobs? / How do you make time for everything - Study / family / yourself? What do you do to stay motivated?</p>
<p><u>Bad Habits</u></p> <p>Do you have any bad habits as a student? Do you.....procrastinate / ...multitask / ...get distracted easily - How so? Give reasons and examples What strategies do you use to deal with these problems? - Do you reward yourself? / Does your family reward you?</p>	<p><u>Experiences / Stories</u></p> <p>Have you ever aced / bombed an exam? Have you ever pulled an all-nighter / crammed for an exam? Are you under a lot of pressure from your family to succeed?</p>
<p>Avoid distractions Schedule / plan (v/n) Focus (v) / concentrate (v) Manage your time well / effectively Ace an exam</p>	<p>Procrastinate / multitask / get distracted easily Put things off (until the last minute) / Fall behind Cram for an exam / Pull an all nighter / Bomb an exam Be under a lot of stress / pressure Waste time</p>

Pre-Int / Speaking / Discussion / Study Habits & Time Management / Questions and Vocab Summary / Andy

UNIT 3: Money

<p>How important is money to you? Can people live without money? Why / Why not? Is money the most important thing in life? Why / Why not?</p>	<p>Is it important to save money? Are you good at saving money? If not, why not? Are you saving for something special at the moment?</p>
<p>Do you waste money? How? Can you tell us about something you bought that was a waste of money?</p>	<p>Do you ever borrow money from <u>OR</u> lend money to friends or family? From who? / To who? How much? / Why? Did you pay them back? <u>OR</u> Did they pay you back? Does someone still owe you money?</p>
<p>What is the best way to pay for things? (e.g. cash, credit?) What are the disadvantages of using credit cards? Do you ever buy things online? What? What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying things online?</p>	<p>Have you ever; won something in a competition? What? / When? lost money? How much? / How? Where? / When? found money? How much / Where? / When? paid an arm and a leg for something?</p>
<p>Do you ever bargain for things at the sup? What's the best deal you ever got? How much? etc... Tell me about something you bought that was good value for money. What is the most money you have ever spent on one thing? What? / Why? / Was it a good deal?</p>	<p>In your opinion, do you have too much stuff? What do you do with the stuff you don't need? Do you: Throw it away? Give it away? – To whom? Keep it? – Where do you put it?</p>

UNIT 5: Healthy and Unhealthy eating habits

Your diet

What is your favourite food? How often? Who makes it etc....
Is your diet healthy / unhealthy? How so? What do you usually eat for breakfast / lunch / dinner?
What should I eat if I want to be healthy?
What foods should I avoid if I want to be healthy?

Fast food

What makes it unhealthy?
How often do you have it?
What is your favourite?
Can fast food be healthy?

Health problems

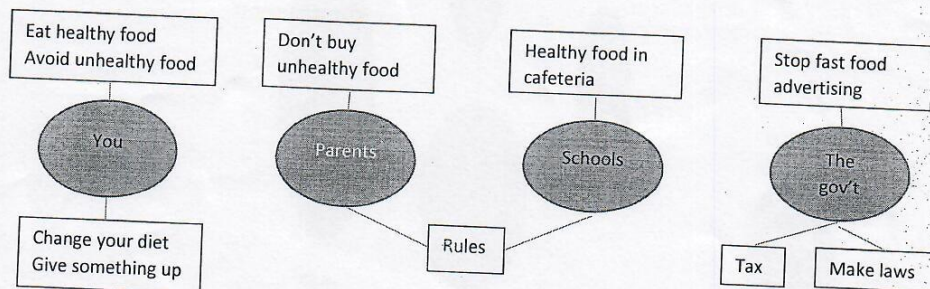
If you eat fast food regularly, what will happen?

Solutions

What can

you
parents
schools
the government

do to prevent these problems?



Extra Questions

Do you like cooking? Do you help in the kitchen? Is cooking a valuable skill to learn? Why?
Have you ever been on a diet? Was it successful? How much weight did you lose? etc...
Is obesity a big problem in Oman?
I need to lose weight? Can you give me some advice?

Appendix 5: Scoring Rubric

Pre-Intermediate Assessment Criteria

Mark	Pronunciation	Range: Lexical & Structural	Accuracy	Interaction	Communicative Effectiveness
8 - 10	Communicates clearly and naturally with good intonation and sounds. Very easy to understand	Communicates naturally and appropriately, without any hesitation, using a full range of vocabulary that is relevant to the topic.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy. Uses a full range of structures appropriately.	Can initiate, maintain & close conversation with little hesitation on familiar & complex topics. Speech is spontaneous and displays a very good understanding of others' views.	Communicates with clear, well-structured speech. Ideas are presented clearly and effectively. Elaborate use of cohesive devices as and when required.
5 - 7.5	Communicates almost always with correct intonation and sounds. The phonological errors do not seriously affect communication.	Communicates naturally with a good range of vocabulary that is relevant to the topic. May sometimes lack awareness of appropriacy. Has occasional errors though often self-corrects.	Maintains a good degree of grammatical accuracy. Partly memorized. While some errors are noticeable, the flow of communication is not seriously affected.	Can initiate, maintain & close conversations on familiar topics but with some hesitation and pauses that do not largely hinder communication. Mostly understands others' views.	Communicates mostly with clear, well-structured speech. Ideas are generally presented clearly. Mostly well-chosen use of cohesive devices as and when required.
3 - 4.5	Limited use of intonation and inaccurate sounds. Phonological	Communicates using limited range of vocabulary relevant to the	Maintains very basic degree of grammatical accuracy. Uses a lot of	Often unable to initiate, maintain or close the interaction. Can	Communicates but not effectively. Some ideas are presented

	errors often impair communication.	topic. Mostly unaware of appropriacy of vocabulary related to the topic. Lexical errors often prevent communication.	memorized phrases. Frequent errors often impair communication.	interact and present ideas in a limited way on simple topics. Displays a lack of understanding of others' views.	clearly. Uses very basic linkers. Cohesion is often affected and the task is poorly dealt with.
1 - 2	Very poor communication with mostly inaccurate intonation and sounds. Phonological errors are so frequent as to prevent any serious communication.	Uses very basic vocabulary and even then is unaware of their relevance to the topic. Lexical errors cause serious communication breakdown.	Maintains very low grammatical accuracy. Unaware of grammar rules and makes serious errors that prevent any sort of communication.	Can interact in a very limited manner but communication is plagued by repetition, rephrasing & repair. Unable to respond to others' views due to lack of understanding.	Unable to manage any level of effective communication even on simple topics. Unable to use linkers other than 'and' or 'but'. Lack of coherence causes communication breakdown.
ZERO	NO ATTEMPT				

Appendix 6: Questionnaire:

Dear Participant,

My name is Ibrahim A-Farsi. I am studying MA TESOL at the British University. I am conducting a study on the impact of cooperative learning on speaking performance among university foundation programme students.

Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Thank you for taking the time to help me in my study.

Personal Details

Nationality: _____

Gender: Male Female (please circle

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My teacher encourages me to take part in pair or cooperative groups.					
2. Cooperative groups increase interaction between learners.					
3. Through cooperative groups I learned how to take-turn when speaking.					
4. I learned how to disagree with my team members during a discussion.					
5. Though cooperative groups I learn how to ask for repetition.					
6. Through cooperative learning my teacher encourages me to interrupt politely in speaking.					

7. My teacher helps me to use the correct sentence structure through cooperative groups.					
8. I learned to pronounce the words correctly through cooperative groups.					
9. Through cooperative groups I learned how to use the correct intonation in speaking.					
10. My teacher's feedback to mistakes helps me to improve my speaking skills.					
11. The content of speaking activities motivates me to get involved in speaking.					
12. I do not have enough vocabulary to speak inside the classroom.					
13. Team members support each other to achieve their goal.					
14. My teacher assigns roles for each group member.					
15. The teacher monitors the group work while students are working on their task.					
16. I can initiate, maintain and close conversation during speaking.					
17. Each member in the group is offered equal time to speak.					
18. I think it is very difficult to focus when I work in a team.					
19. Cooperative learning helps me to build good relationships with students.					
20. Cooperative learning strategies help me to make decisions.					

Appendix 7: Speaking Descriptors:

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety sustains flexible use of features throughout is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures flexibly produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of pronunciation features sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies generally paraphrases successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of pronunciation features attempts to control features but lapses are frequent mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks with long pauses has limited ability to link simple sentences gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances makes numerous errors except in memorized expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pauses lengthily before most words little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> only produces isolated words or memorised utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no communication possible no reliable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend 			

Appendix 8: Survey Approval letter



6/26/2019

To whom it may concerns

This is to certify that Mr. Ibrahim Ahmed Al- Farsi with Student ID number 20170838 is a registered full-time student in the Master of Education offered by The British University in Dubai since September 2017.

Mr. Ibrahim is currently collecting data for his research (The impact of cooperative learning on speaking performance).

He is required to gather data through conducting surveys that will help him in writing the final research. Your permission to conduct his research in your organization is hereby requested. Further support provided to his in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Any information given will be used solely for academic purposes.

This letter is issued on Mr. Ibrahim's request.

Yours sincerely,




Dr. Amer Alaya
Head of Academic and Student Administration

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