



Cooperative Learning Activities: Putting Things Together

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews literature on the use of Cooperative Learning (CL) approach in language classrooms. Specifically, the paper aims to identify CL activities used in language classrooms in promoting learners' oral skills. Past studies using both quantitative as well as qualitative research approaches were reviewed, and ten CL activities explored by researchers to facilitate learners' oral skills were identified. Findings from the studies reviewed show promising results. Following that, this paper further presents how these ten CL activities can be used by language practitioners in their language classrooms to promote their learners' oral skills.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning, TEFL, oral skills, language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Johnson and Johnson (2018) said that "Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that learners work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (p. 59). In cooperative learning approach, learners work individually and with one another to accomplish goals set for them successfully. When learners work in cooperative learning (CL) environment, they contribute positively and succeed to achieve mutual benefits together. Unlike teacher-centred paradigm, learners become the centre of the learning process since they are required to work with one another to accomplish the assigned tasks provided by the teacher in the class. Language

practitioners in the CL environment are facilitators and mediators who coach the learners on how to use the CL approach effectively.

There are different types of CL activities that were used by researchers in the past. These different activities were used for different teaching and learning purposes. According to Turgut & Gülşen Turgut (2018), cooperative learning has a positive effect on the learners' achievement in mathematics. Cooperative learning benefited learners' learning results in the natural sciences as well. Rahim and Atuna (2019) mentioned in their study that Teams Games Tournament, used as a cooperative learning module, was able to enhance learners' performance in the natural sciences. Additionally, it was discovered that cooperative learning had an impact on the learners' attitudes, interests, and contentment with their biology classes. Cooperative learning is encouraged in schools, according to Rabgay (2018), because it raises learners' interest knowledge of biology.

The study by As (2021) revealed that learners' interest in physics improved as a result of cooperative learning, and that they thought the topic was interesting and fun. Cooperative learning is believed to significantly improve learners' academic progress in chemistry, particularly in organic chemistry. According to Udu (2018), cooperative learning techniques boosted learners' proficiency in organic chemistry. According to Ahmadi et al. (2018), cooperative learning encouraged learners' inventiveness in geography instruction. They added that while studying geography, learners' elaboration, flexibility, initiative, and fluidity were improved via cooperative learning.

Jiannan et al. (2021) mentioned that cooperative learning has a positive impact on the learners' oral skills. As for Kandasamy and Habil (2018), they think that CL approach provides learners with a suitable environment to communicate orally while working in groups. However, cooperative learning approach comes with some challenges that makes some language practitioners reluctant to use it with their learners. Kamarudin (2021) indicated that practicing CL approach creates noise and chaos within the classroom. Some language practitioners believe that CL is time consuming and takes longer time than traditional ways of teaching (Alghamdy, 2019). Also, some language practitioners showed negative attitude towards the use of CL approach since they think that it is difficult to apply CL approach especially with large number of learners in the classroom. Wangda and Dorji (2020) mentioned in their study that CL approach may discourage some language practitioners from applying it if they have a huge number of learners in their oral activities. Despite the challenges that CL approach presents, most researchers still think it is an effective approach especially with language acquisition.

In a nutshell, cooperative learning offers EFL learners a good opportunity to practice their language skills in a secure setting. According to Astuti and Lammers (2017), CL offers learners several opportunities to speak the target language, which helps them to develop communicative competence in the CL learning environment. Cooperative learning encourages pupils to acquire the English language, which is a good thing. According to Kandasamy and Habil (2018), cooperative learning aided learners in their CL groups' use of English for communication purposes.

Based on the advantages of the CL approach in promoting learners' competency in oral skills, this paper aims to review CL studies conducted on language learning, specifically in facilitating oral skills, and identify the CL activities used. Ultimately, the paper aims to discuss how language practitioners can use the CL activities in their own language classrooms. It is guided by the following research question: *How are CL activities used to teach oral skills?*

Cooperative Learning Approach and the Oral Skills

Studies have shown that the CL approach is an effective way to facilitate learners' oral skills. Various CL activities used in language classrooms have shown promising results in promoting learners' oral abilities. The following paragraphs includes some of CL activities and its role in teaching oral skills.

Rahmah (2020) conducted a study on the effectiveness of using *gallery walk* activity on students' oral skill at tenth grade of MA Annajah Jakarta. A quasi-experimental design was used and the results of the study show that gallery walk activity was effective on students' oral skill. Nurhasanah and Suwartono (2019) conducted a study on cooperative learning using *Jigsaw*. Their study aimed to investigate the effect of Jigsaw on increasing English oral skill. They conducted quasi experimental design and the results show that *Jigsaw* technique was effective to enhance English oral skills.

Jupri and Haerazi (2022) conducted a study on *Two Stay Two Stray* as a CL strategy and its role in teaching oral skills for 10th-grade learners. A quantitative and qualitative methodology was used within action research to collect the data. The researcher found that using *Two Stay Two Stray* enhanced the 10th grade learners' oral skills. Putri et al. (2020) conducted a study on the influence of *Think-Pair-Share* in enhancing learners' oral skills ability. A quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design was used and the results indicated that *Think-Pair-Share* is an effective way to improve learners' oral skills ability, especially in short monologue.

Arafah et al. (2021) made a study on the impact of a *Three-Step Interview* on learners' oral skills ability. An experimental study was conducted and the results show that the usage of the *Three-Step-Interview* had a beneficial influence on learners' oral skills. Holovko and Drach (2020) conducted a study on the role of some cooperative methods and their modifications in developing foreign language communicative skills of the learners at higher educational institutions. An analytical study was conducted and the results show that *Stirring Up the Class* can be effectively used for developing foreign language communicative skills.

Asmara (2019) conducted a study on *Four Corners* as a strategy that enhances oral skills. A quasi-experimental design was conducted and the results indicated that the learners' oral skills ability was more fostered since they were involved directly in the process of stating, debating or arguing toward the given topic. Namaziandost et al. (2020) conducted a study on the impact of cooperative learning approach on the development of EFL learners' speaking fluency. The researchers used *Numbered*

heads and *Think-pair-share* strategies. An experimental study was conducted and the results show that applying cooperative learning approach can help to develop the learners' fluency and communicative skills.

Fadhil and Mekki (2020) in their study investigated the effect of *Round Table* as a CL strategy on teaching oral skills. A close-end test was used to gather the data and the results of the study show that CL approach is a good teaching approach that helps learners to enhance their oral skills. Widaryanti (2019) conducted a study on *Gallery Walk* as a cooperative learning strategy to investigate its effectiveness on the learners' oral skills. The study conducted an action research methodology and the results indicate that *Gallery Walk* provides a suitable atmosphere in teaching English especially in oral skills. Veldman, et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effect of cooperative learning on young children in Grade 1 of primary education while working together in groups. They used *Placement* activity and the data was collected using a quasi-experimental design where learners were put into control and experimental groups. The findings indicate that *Placemat* activity enhanced the young pupils (6–7 years old) oral skills.

In brief, the previous studies support the use of CL activities in teaching oral skills. Researchers found that different CL activities can be used if they wish to improve their learners' competence in oral skills.

A summary of the review above is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Past Studies Related to CL and Speaking

	Title of Paper	Authors / Year	CL Activity	Research Approach	Results
1.	The Effectiveness of Using Gallery Walk Activity on Students' Speaking Skill in Describing Place and People (A Quasi-Experimental Study at Tenth Grade of MA Annajah Jakarta in Academic Year 2019/2020)	Rahmah, A (2020)	Gallery Walk	Quasi-experimental design	gallery walk activity was effective on students' oral skill
2.	Increasing English Speaking Skill through Jigsaw Cooperative Learning	Nurhasanah, A., & Suwartono, T. (2019)	Jigsaw	Quasi experimental design	Jigsaw technique enhanced English oral skill
3.	Teaching English Using Two Stay Two Stray in Improving Students' English Speaking Skills Integrated with Foreign Language Anxiety.	Jupri and Haerazi (2022)	Two Stay Two Stray	A quantitative and qualitative methodology was used	using Two Stay Two Stray enhanced the 10th grade learners' oral skills
4.	The Influence of Think-Pair-Share in Enhancing Students' Speaking Ability.	Putri, H., Fahriany, F., & Jalil, N. (2020)	Think Pair Share	A quasi-experimental design	Think-Pair-Share is an effective way to improve students' oral skills ability

5.	The Impact of a Three-Step Interview on Students' Speaking Ability	Arafah, R., Danim, S., Dharmayana, W., Anshori, S., & Prihantoro, P. (2021)	Three Step Interview	Experimental study	Three-Step-Interview had a beneficial influence on students' oral skills.
6.	The role of some cooperative methods and their modifications in developing foreign language communicative skills of the students at Higher educational institutions.	Holovko, O. Y., & Drach, O. I. (2020)	Stirring up the Class	Analytical Study	Stirring up the class can be effectively used for developing foreign language communicative skills
7.	Four Corners: A Strategy to Enhance Speaking	Asmara, R. (2019)	Four Corners	Quasi-experimental design	Four Corners fostered the students' oral skills ability
8.	The impact of cooperative learning approach on the development of EFL learners' speaking fluency	Namazandost et al. (2020)	Numbered heads and Think-pair-share strategies	An experimental study	Numbered Heads and Think-Pair-Share can help to develop the learners' fluency and communicative skills.
9.	Utilizing Round-table Strategy in Teaching Speaking	Fadhil and Mekki (2020)	Round Table	A close-end test was used to gather the data	Round Table is a good teaching approach that helps learners to enhance their oral skills.
10.	Enhancing young students' high-level talk by using cooperative learning within Success for All lessons	Veldman, M. A., Doolaard, S., Snijders, T. A. B., & Bosker, R. J. (2019)	Placemat	A quasi-experimental design	Placemat activity enhanced the young pupils (6–7 years old) oral skills

How to Conduct CL Activities in the Classroom?

In this subsection, details on how the previous tenth CL activities can be used in a language classroom to promote learners' oral skills are discussed. It is important to note that when using the CL approach, it is not simply putting learners in small groups. Language practitioners who are interested in CL approach should be aware of the CL elements before conducting any cooperative learning activity in their classes. Johnson and Johnson (2018) stated that putting learners into groups does not plainly indicate that it is a cooperative learning process. Language practitioners need to have positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal and social skills, and group processing to make sure that their activities work efficiently in

the learning environment. Figure 1 shows the cooperative learning grouping and the traditional group work.

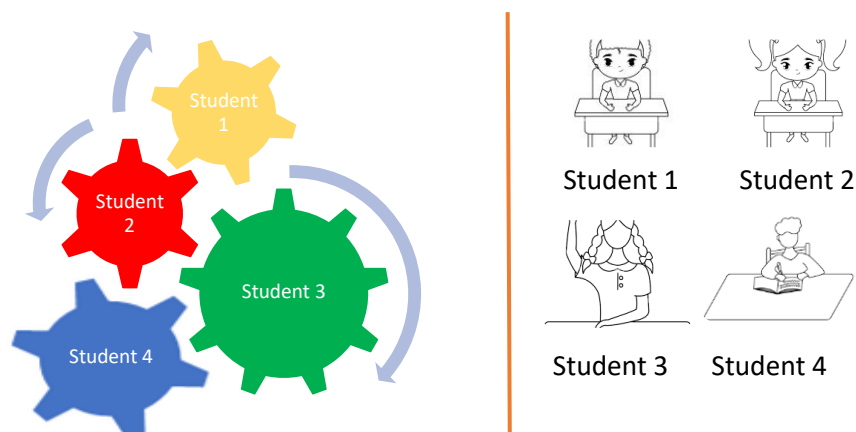


Figure 1. Cooperative Learning Groups vs. Traditional Groups

In positive interdependence, language practitioners need to understand that all their learners within their groups should work as a team to gain mutual benefit (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). As for face-to-face interaction, Ifeoma et al. (2015) mentioned that language practitioners should allow their learners to sit face-to-face to enhance their interaction and create a communicative environment since they will be able to observe members' expressions and praise or assist each member in the CL groups. Regarding individual accountability, Johnson & Johnson (2014) indicated that each group member should be responsible for a different task and that member should understand that his accomplishment of the task is essential for the whole team to succeed. Thus, members start asking for help, assist one another and take the tasks seriously. Without having individual accountability in CL groups, some learners may do all the work while other members sit passively in their groups.

Furthermore, language practitioners should bear in mind that one of the critical elements of CL is interpersonal and social skills. Since working in groups requires learners to interact with one another, they need to know the necessary social skills to cooperate with one another effectively. Buchs and Butera (2015) said that members in CL groups should learn to accept criticism and others' behaviours if they wish to succeed in their tasks. Since CL approach is a learner-centred approach, the element group processing is considered critical if group members wish to succeed in working within a team. Group processing is defined by Johnson and Johnson (2008) as a process where members in teams reflect on their behaviours and take decisions if their actions need to be changed or continue. Therefore, language practitioners need to direct their group members of their development in the learning process and make decisions or actions about their group members' behaviours. Loh and Ang (2020) indicated that group processing is important to ensure the efficiency of the learning process within CL groups. Figure 2 shows the cooperative learning elements according to Johnson and Johnson (2018).

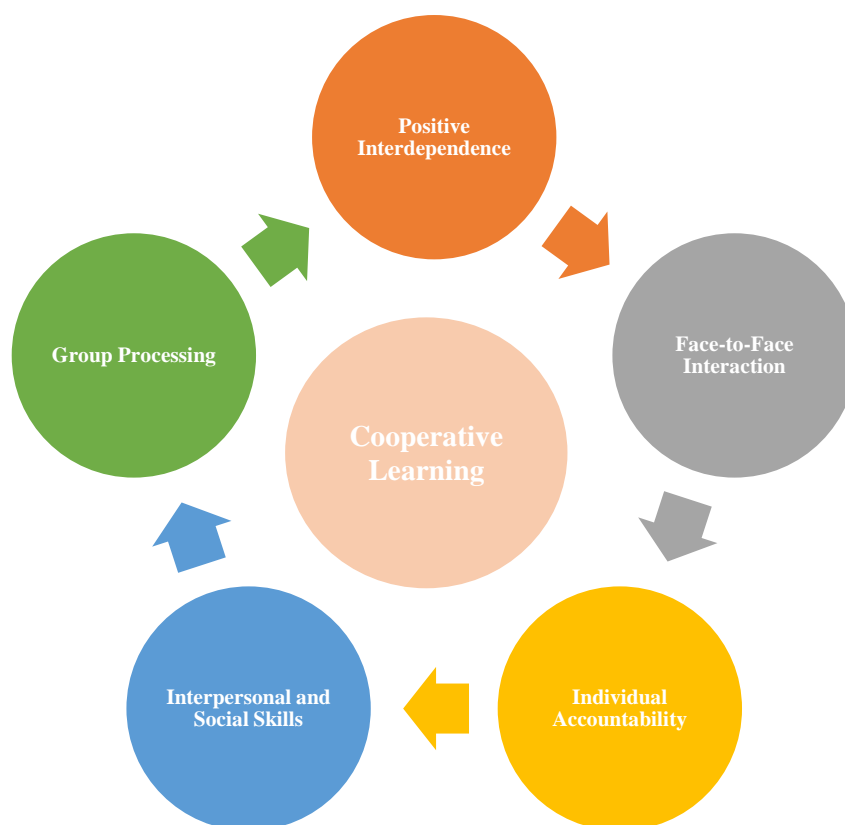


Figure 2 Cooperative Learning Elements

Having CL elements in mind, there are many CL activities that language practitioners can conduct in their classrooms. Table 2 presents some of these activities and how they can be used in language classrooms to boost learners' oral skills.

Table 2: How to Conduct CL Activities?

	Name of CL Activity	Reference	How to conduct CL
1.	Numbered Heads Together	Namaziandost et al. (2020)	Teachers can divide students into groups and provide each student with a different number. Teachers, then, can distribute various assigns to each student and ask them to work on them individually and with each other. Each group has to make sure that each student has finished his assignment successfully. Once students finish their tasks, teachers call numbers randomly from each group and ask them to present their tasks in front of the class.
2.	Placemat	Veldman, M. A., Doolaard, S., Snijders, T. A. B., & Bosker, R. J. (2019)	Teachers divide students into groups and then prepare pieces of papers for each group. Teachers should number each student and choose students according to their numbers. They draw a square divided according to the number of students in each group. Each student will have a pen and write his opinion regarding a specific topic the teacher introduces. Once all students write their opinions, they are asked to discuss their points of views with the students. Then the whole group will be asked to share its opinions with the whole class.

3.	Jigsaw	Al-Yaseen (2020) Nurhasanah and Suwartono (2019) Bakara and Pasaribu (2022)	The Jigsaw method requires the teacher to divide the class into small groups and give each group an assignment. Each student is responsible for a different aspect of the assignment. After the "home" group members discuss the task, students move to the "expert" groups and discuss with them their sections. Then, students get back to their "home" groups to pass on what they have learnt in the "expert" groups. Once the assignment is finished, the teacher can test the students to examine what they have learnt.
4.	Gallery Tour/walk	Hakim et al., (2019) Ildikó, L. (2020) Rahmah (2020)	Groups in Gallery Tour usually consist of three or four students. Teachers can project a problem or a specific topic and the students then transform this topic into a picture, diagram or even a story map. These pictures or diagrams can be hung on the board. Once the teacher gives a signal for each group, they stand up and go visit that display and discuss it together. Students can take notes or they can leave their descriptive on that display. When they finish, they can go back to their group table. They start discussing other groups' displays and compare them with their own. It is preferable that teachers assign each student within the groups with specific roles. For example, teachers can number the students and once students are finished, they can pick a random number from each group and ask him to introduce his group's point of view. The teacher can pick more than one student from each group as much as possible to allow the maximum number of participations to take place in the classroom.
5.	Two Stay Two Stray	Rasdiana et al. (2019) Iswanto et al. (2020) Aprianoto (2021) Jupri and Haerazi (2022)	Teachers provide students with pictures about a topic and then asked to create for example, expressions of commanding and prohibiting. Once they finish, two students from each group will stand up and visit other groups while the rest two students will keep sitting in their home group. Once visitors come to the groups, they start guessing the expressions made by that group and discussing the topic with the two host students. Once they finish, they can go back to their home groups and share their experiences with the rest of their group members.
6.	Think-Pair- Share	Putri et al., (2020)	Teachers ask students to consider a topic, pair them up and discuss it, then present it to the class as a whole. Thinking comes first in the Think-Pair-Share approach. The teacher uses a question, prompt, or observation to get the students to think. The pairing process comes next. Students pair up with assigned partners to discuss the solution they each came up with. Sharing is the final phase. The teacher asks pairs to share their thoughts with the class after the pupils have spoken in pairs for a short while.
7.	Three-Step Interview	Aristy et al. (2019) Pratama et al. (2021)	The teacher first presents a topic for a discussion with some questions that students can address. Students then in their groups start interviewing each other about the topic and they write each other's answers down. Therefore, each student will play the role of the interviewer and the interviewee. Once the interviews are done, teachers can pick random students to read the interviews aloud in front of the whole class.
8.	Stirring Up the Class	Holovko and Drach (2020)	The teacher in this method divides the class into groups of three or four students. Students are counted off in each group and each student should memorise his number. The teacher starts the activity by asking a question or introducing

			a problem where students start to think by themselves and then discussing their ideas within their groups. When the teacher gives the order, it could be by blowing a whistle, all the students who hold the number one, start rotating and sharing their old group's answers and discussions with the new groups. Once the students go back to their original groups, the teacher introduces another problem and the whole process goes on like before except this time the students who hold number two will move. The rotation procedure should keep going until all the members of the group move from their seats.
9.	Four Corners	Asmara (2019)	Teachers divide students into corner groups. Each group will select its leader that will go and meet the other leaders in the head group. The teacher then will present a topic or a controversial issue for discussion and give it to the leaders. The leaders will go back to their corner groups to discuss the issue. The teacher can number the students and pick any student randomly for an answer or he can just allow the leaders to go back to the head group and represent his own corner group in front of the whole class.
10.	Round Table	Aprianoto (2021)	Teachers divide students into groups. The teacher poses a question or a topic and students should write their opinions about it on a piece of paper. Once they finish, they should start telling their point of view one by one. Students can rotate inside the group "go round the table" until all students express his point of view. Teachers can number students to control the process even more. Once they call a number, that number can start talking. They also can pick a random number from any group and let him say his opinion in front of the whole class.

CONCLUSION

Cooperative learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes collaboration and active participation among students in the learning process. It stands in contrast to traditional teacher-centered approaches where the instructor is the primary source of knowledge dissemination. Cooperative learning encourages students to work together, share ideas, and collectively solve problems. While it has been recognized for its effectiveness in enhancing various aspects of education, this essay will focus on the role of the cooperative learning approach in improving oral skills among students. Effective communication is a vital skill in today's interconnected world, and cooperative learning provides an excellent platform for its development.

In terms of active participation, in cooperative learning settings, students are actively engaged in discussions, presentations, and group projects. This active participation fosters a comfort level with oral communication, as students frequently express their ideas and opinions. As for collaboration, students work together in cooperative learning groups, where they are encouraged to interact and communicate effectively to achieve common goals. Collaborative activities, such as debates or group presentations, provide opportunities for students to practice and refine their oral skills.

Regarding peer feedback, peer assessment and feedback are integral to cooperative learning. Students receive input from their peers, enabling them to identify areas for improvement in their oral communication. Constructive criticism and

suggestions for improvement are valuable tools for skill development. As for diverse perspectives, cooperative learning often involves group members with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. Engaging in discussions and projects with peers from different backgrounds helps students become better communicators who can adapt to various audiences and situations.

Additionally, CL approach increases confidence as students actively participate and receive positive reinforcement from their peers, their confidence in oral communication grows. This increased self-assuredness is a vital factor in enhancing oral skills. In terms of problem solving and critical thinking, cooperative learning requires students to analyze and solve problems collectively. Engaging in discussions and debates within groups hones their critical thinking and argumentation skills, which are crucial elements of effective oral communication. Last but not least, CL increases motivation since the interactive nature of cooperative learning often results in higher motivation and engagement among students. A motivated student is more likely to invest the time and effort necessary to improve their oral skills.

In brief, cooperative learning is a valuable pedagogical approach that can significantly enhance students' oral skills. By promoting active participation, collaboration, peer feedback, diverse perspectives, confidence, problem-solving abilities, and motivation, it equips students with the tools they need to communicate effectively in various contexts. In a world where effective communication is a key skill, cooperative learning offers a dynamic and engaging platform for students to develop their oral skills and become proficient communicators who can thrive academically, professionally, and personally. Educators and institutions should continue to explore and implement cooperative learning strategies to help students unlock their full oral communication potential.

Thus, this paper has provided several CL activities and how language practitioners can conduct them in the learning environment which can be used as a reference for language practitioners and researchers in general.

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