

أثر التعلم التعاوني على تطوير مهارات التحدث والكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى
طلاب المدارس الإعدادية: مدرسة الحرية الإعدادية للبنين في مدينة بغداد
أنموذجاً

**The Effect of Cooperative Learning on the Development of
English Language Speaking and Writing Skills in
Preparatory School Students: Al-Hurriya Preparatory
School for Boys in Baghdad as an Example**

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المستخلص

يهدف البحث الحالي الى معرفة كيفية تأثير التعلم التعاوني على المهارات اللغوية فيما يتعلق بتطوير مهارات التحدث والكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب المدارس الإعدادية في بغداد، وذلك باستخدام دراسة حالة لمدرسة الحرية الإعدادية للبنين في بغداد. استخدمت الباحثة التصميم بحث شبه التجريبي الذي تم اعتماده في الدراسة تكونه عينة البحث من ٦٠ طالباً تم اختيارهم بالطريقة العشوائياً وتم توزيعهم على مجموعتين، مجموعة تجريبية ومجموعة ضابطة، حيث استخدمت المجموعة التجريبية التعلم التعاوني كاستراتيجية أثناء تدريس الطلاب، بينما استخدمت المجموعة الضابطة أساليب تركز على المعلم أثناء عملية التدريس. تم الحصول على البيانات من خلال اختبار قبلي و الاختبار بعدي، والملاحظات المنظمة، واستخدام الاستبيانات، حيث تم جمع البيانات خلال فترة ثمانية أسابيع. أظهرت النتائج الإحصائية أن الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية قد تحسّنوا بشكل ملحوظ فيطلاقة ودقة التحدث، حيث بلغ متوسط درجاتهم في الاختبار البعدي ٣٢ % مقارنة بـ ١٢ % للمجموعة الضابطة. وتماشياً مع ذلك، تحسّن الأداء في الكتابة، بناءً على استخدام القواعد النحوية واستخدام الكلمات والترابط وبنية الأفكار، بنسبة ٢٨ % في المجموعة التجريبية و ١٠ % في المجموعة الضابطة. واتفقت هذه النتائج مع الأبحاث السابقة، والتي أكدت على أهمية التعلم التعاوني باعتباره أحد أكثر الاستراتيجيات التربوية فعالية لتعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية والإنجازات الأكاديمية للطلاب، الذين يعملون في بيئة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (Avellaneda Bu192999 Slovin، ٢٠٢٤، (EFL) Meena، ٢٠٢٠، Namaziandost et al.؛ ٢٠٢٠، Qureshi et al.؛ ٢٠٢١، Warsah et al.؛ ٢٠٢٣). وقد خلص هذا البحث إلى أن فلسفة التعلم التعاوني يمكن أن تترسخ في برنامج تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية خلال المرحلة الإعدادية، ويمكن أن تساهم بشكل كبير في إتقان اللغة بشكل منتج بين المتعلمين. وتقدم الورقة الآثار المترتبة على المعلمين ومصممي المناهج الدراسية وصانعي السياسات، بالإضافة إلى توصيات باتباع نماذج تعاونية منظمة في المدارس العراقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم التعاوني، تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، مهارات التحدث، مهارات الكتابة، التعليم الثانوي، العراق

Abstract

This paper under studies how cooperative learning has influenced language skills with regard to the development of English language speaking and writing ability among students in Baghdad preparatory schools using a case study of Al-Hurriya Preparatory School of boys, Baghdad. The quasi-experimental research design that was adopted in the study involved the random selection of 60 students and assigning them to both an experimental and a control group whereby the former involved the use of cooperative learning as a strategy during the teaching of the students and the latter involved the use of teacher centered methods during the instruction process. The data was to be gotten through pre- and post-test, structured observations, and use of questionnaires, whereby data were gathered within a period of eight weeks. Statistical outcomes showed that in the experimental group, the students significantly changed to improve speaking fluency and accuracy with a post-test mean score of 32 percent as compared to 12 percent of the control group. In line with this, writing performance, based on grammar use, word usages, coherence, and structure of ideas, improved by 28 percent in the experimental and 10 percent in the control group. The findings are the proof of the already conducted research, which emphasized the relevance of cooperative learning as one of the most effective pedagogical strategies to enhance communicative competence and academic achievements of students, working in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting (Meena, 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Avellaneda Bu192999 denada Bu192999 Slovin, 2024). Another theme that the results reveal is the greater contribution of collaborative practices to the development of critical thinking, creativity and student engagement (Warsah et al., 2021; Qureshi et al., 2023). This research paper has now concluded that

cooperation learning philosophy can be ingrained in English language teaching program during the Preparatory School level and it can significantly contribute to productive language proficiency among learners. The implications to teachers, curriculum designers and policymakers are given as well as the recommendations of following structured cooperatives models in Iraqi schools.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, English language teaching, speaking skills, writing skills, secondary education, Iraq

Introduction

Proficiency in the English language, and especially the speaking and writing parts, is very crucial in the academic performance and international competitiveness of students. But the fact is that in a typical EFL classroom environment, students would not be able to develop communicative competence due to the traditional teacher-centered and grammar-oriented approach to teaching (Meena, 2020). Consequently, students are often considered to be lacking the confidence, fluency and collaboratory skills to communicate effectively in the real world.

To overcome such challenges, cooperative learning (CL) has been found to be a good pedagogical concept that focuses a great deal on the concept of peer activity, collective responsibility, and full participation. Gradually, a number of studies confirm that cooperative learning does improve the oral fluency and the level of confidence in speaking process, especially when activities are set up to give a similar ground to the group members (Namaziandost, Homayouni, & Rahmani, 2020; Avellaneda Buynay, 2024). Besides oral skills, the other areas that have been found to benefit heavily in relation to cooperative and collaborative learning approaches include critical thinking and higher-order reasoning (Warsah,

Morganna, Uyun, Afandi, & Hamengkubuwono, 2021) and the skills of social interaction which are all important in language development (Ghavifekr, 2020).

The beliefs and practices of teachers promote the relevance of CL as an evidence-based practice of teaching as well. The collaborative learning is also perceived as a good management resource to establish autonomy among learners, a sense of group responsibility, and heightened interest in the study plan (Abramczyk & Jurkowski, 2020). The newest findings indicate its flexibility in other learning environments, including online learning during the COVID-19 outbreak, as cooperative models helped to keep both students engaged and stay active despite remote learning conditions (Silalahi & Hutauruk, 2020). Additionally, it is proposed that cooperative learning extends its benefits to learning outcomes when implemented alongside engagement practices that aim to motivate and encourage the peers (Qureshi, Khaskheli, Qureshi, Raza, & Yousufi, 2023).

Modern educational frameworks like the 4C model—constructive, critical, creative, and collaborative learning—which has been demonstrated to raise overall student achievement and problem-solving skills, are also closely related to cooperative learning (Supena, Darmuki, & Hariyadi, 2021). Other interactive strategies like the Three-Step Interview have shown quantifiable gains in oral proficiency (Haryanti, Indah, & Wahyuni, 2021), while specific cooperative strategies like Think-Pair-Share have been successful in promoting student participation in speaking tasks in the classroom (Apriyanti & Ayu, 2020). There is similar evidence in fields other than language learning, such as mathematics and programming education, where problem-based and

collaborative approaches enhance conceptual understanding and engagement (Boye & Agyei, 2023; Garcia, 2021).

Cooperative learning fosters the development of communication and interaction skills, which are critical in academic and professional contexts, in addition to language accuracy and fluency. For example, it has been discovered that encouraging natural interaction in business-oriented tasks improves communication competence (Agustina & Setiawan, 2020). As evidenced by their beneficial effects on children's reading and writing creativity, cooperative classrooms also foster literacy development and creativity (Marcos, Fernández, González, & Phillips-Silver, 2020).

Despite these encouraging findings, little research has examined how cooperative learning techniques affect students' speaking and writing abilities in Iraqi preparatory schools, where teacher-centered instruction is still the norm. By examining how cooperative learning techniques can improve students' English speaking and writing abilities at Al-Hurriya Preparatory School for Boys in Baghdad, this study aims to close this gap. In order to improve communicative competence, critical thinking, and general academic achievement, it seeks to empirically support the incorporation of cooperative learning into EFL curricula.

Chapter One: Research Problem, Significance, Objectives, and Boundaries

1.1 Research Problem

Iraqi preparatory school students and especially the students of Al-Hurriya Preparatory School of Boys in Baghdad experience constant challenges in learning to speak and write English. Traditional teacher

centered teaching methods prevails in classroom practice and the practices are centered on grammar translation and rote learning. Therefore, they are most likely to be not fluent, comfortable and accurate in speaking English. Also with these means, there is minimal likelihood of interaction with peers, learning or using real-world language.

The burning question that arises in this scenario is like: Can implementation of cooperative learning strategies significantly increase the English speaking and writing as compared to standard teaching methods among students? This is the big problem of the current study.

1.2 Significance of the Study

One can think of this study in terms of its significance in a variety of ways:

To Students: It provides a supportive environment, which reinforces the confidence, participation, and motivation and enhances linguistic competence.

To Teachers- It offers the evidence based pedagogical model which encourages interactive learning and classroom management.

To Curriculum Designers and Policymakers: The findings suggest that the English language curricula need to be designed in such a way that cooperative learning strategies are applied in order to improve the learning outcomes as well as to ensure that education is able to match the global standards.

Research It contributes to the relatively limited research on the topic of cooperative learning in Iraqi preparatory schools, particularly speaking and writing.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To test the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies on the fluency and accuracy of the English speaking skills of students.
2. To gauge the impact of cooperative learning on writing skills of students, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, coherence and structure of written text.
3. To draw a comparison between the performance of students who are taught with the help of cooperative learning and those who are taught with the help of traditional teacher-centered instructions.
4. To explore the perception of students towards and their attitude to cooperative learning in the English language classroom.

1.4 Research Scope and Limitations

Spatial Boundary (Place): The study was carried out in Al-Hurriya Preparatory School of boys, Baghdad, Iraq.

Population and Sample: Population was of about 540 students in three preparatory grades. A sample of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling, and 182 of those completed the study. The research study had a narrow range by looking at the effect of cooperative learning strategies for two effective language skills, speaking and writing. The research study had methodological boundaries by using a quasi experimental design and collecting data through pretests, posttests, structured observations, questionnaires.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Relevant Studies

Cooperative learning is, generally, considered one of the best teaching strategies, and can be used to promote both academic achievement and social development in schools. It is a process in which students work together in a small group to meet the same learning goals and are responsible for their own contributions in this process. Contrary to the

traditional teacher-centered teaching and emphasis on grammar and translation, cooperative learning is more interactive and includes collective responsibility and involvement by students. The given approach has much in common with the ideas of social constructivist theory, especially Vygotsky, who emphasized that the knowledge is built in the process of social interaction and cooperation with other more knowledgeable people. In these respects, cooperative learning assists students in processing extremely complicated information through the distribution of the cognitive load among the group and makes language learning a more beneficial experience (Erbil, 2020; Janssen and Kirschner, 2020).

A number of models and theories have been developed with respect to cooperative learning, and all of them prioritize communication and interaction. Some that stand out include; Think-Pair-Share, students think about a topic first independently, then with a partner, and finally as a whole class. This strategy is known to improve oral fluency and support a presence of participation in speech activities (Apriyanti and Ayu, 2020). Another model is the Three-Step Interview, where students can practice question and answer in a structured peer dialogue which quite useful for developing oral proficiency (Haryanti, Indah, and Wahyuni, 2021). Jigsaw is also a frequent model/technique that consists of each student group relying on each other by learning along part of a lesson and then introducing those students to the rest of the class (Garcia, 2021). In addition, collaborative projects are known to foster creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking, as well as improve engagement in the learning process overall (Supena, Darmuki, and Hariyadi, 2021). These plans demonstrate how versatile cooperative learning can be in the

formation of communicative competence and the ability to think at a higher level (Warsah et al., 2021).

Within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) discipline, cooperative learning has proved to be exceptionally successful in developing the speaking and writing ability. In the case of speaking, the majority of studies have corroborated the use of cooperative strategies as availing learners with the chance at practicing fluency and accuracy within a secure and engaging setting. Namaziandost, Homayouni, and Rahmani (2020) came to the conclusion that cooperative learning strategies were quite effective to enhance the level of fluency and confidence of learners; Meena (2020) noted the importance of peer-to-peer interaction in order to decrease anxiety and promote active engagement. In terms of writing, cooperative learning will promote the exchange of ideas, peer review and collective development of vocabulary and grammatical structures that will ultimately lead to more coherent and well-constructed writing. Discussing the creative advantages of cooperative classes to develop literacy, Marcos et al. (2020) also emphasized that the collaborative learning environment elevates the performance of writing with self-regulated strategies (Ozturk and Çakiroglu, 2021).

Research from around the world has examined the relationship between cooperative learning and language development - which means of course evidence exists that show advantages to the use of cooperative learning are not limited to language outcomes. DE HIER ET AL. (2020) and QURESHI ET AL. (2023) are among many studies that outline that aspects such as Intercultural Competence, Learner Autonomy, and even

Critical Thinking can also develop through cooperative practices. They are also applicable to various learning settings, such as the digital and remote learning space. As an example, Silalahi and Hutauruk (2020) found that cooperative learning could retain its positive impact during the COVID-19 pandemic, and students were kept involved and motivated in online classes. Even teachers themselves see cooperative learning as an evidence-based and practical pedagogy that makes the classroom setting more manageable and engaging to learners (Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020).

The value of cooperative learning within EFL classrooms is further supported by the previous studies that are based on the empirical findings. Meena (2020) proved that the application of cooperative strategies increases the speaking skills of EFL learners, and Namaziandost et al. (2020) achieved the significant positive results concerning the speaking fluency in the group of learners using cooperative strategies in contrast with learning with traditional teaching. Another study on the topic by Avellaneda Buñay (2024) highlighted the beneficial effect of cooperative learning in the development of speaking skills in secondary school students. In a similar way, Warsah et al. (2021) confirmed that cooperative learning can better critical thinking and Qureshi et al. (2023) connected it to improved motivation and engagement. Silalahi and Hutauruk (2020) noted its durability in online education, and Marcos et al. (2020) reported its effects on the creativity and literacy were positive. These findings are consistent, demonstrating that cooperative learning is not just a pedagogic choice, but an effective model that has multiple benefits.

In brief, the theoretical premise of the proposed study is grounded in the fact that the process of language acquisition is socially constructed

and therefore best supported by means of interaction and collaboration. Cooperative learning ensures that learners get real life experience of using language, sharing responsibility and building linguistic and social competences. The above strategies and findings are what give this study its focus in this study to find out the role of cooperative learning in enhancing the speaking and writing skills of Iraqi preparatory school students.

Chapter three: Methodolgy

2.1 Data collection

2.1.1 Population Sample

The present study required the overall population to be made up of preparatory-stage students at Al-Hurriya Preparatory School for Boys, Baghdad. There are about 540 students at the school in three preparatory grades with the average of 180 students per year. Out of this population, 200 students were selected as one representative sample which amounts to 37.0 percent of the total enrolment. The sampling method that was used is stratified random sampling to represent each grade proportionately. In corresponding terms, Grade 1 and Grade 2 provided 67 students each (33.5 percent of the sample), and Grade 3 provided 66 (33.0 percent). This stratification enabled the researcher to achieve equal membership of the participants in the various grade levels.

2.1.2 Selection and Rejection of Criteria

Only officially enrolled students who were present regularly, at least 80 percent of English language courses, were regarded as potential participants. Those students who gave an informed consent and the approval of their parents could be admitted to the sample. The individuals with acute speech or hearing problems, which may impair the

participation, were eliminated in the study. On the basis of these criteria, the sample size after consent procedures remained 190 students with an increased percentage of 95.0 across the target population of 200 students.

2.1.3 Adjuvants and Measures

To determine the impact of the use of cooperative learning on English language skills, such three major instruments were used: a speaking exam, a writing exam, and a questionnaire given to the students. The speaking assessment was based on organized tasks, picture description, role-play, and a short interview where each student was evaluated in regard to fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The highest score was 90 and later translated to percentages. The writing test involved having the students do two things: a short paragraph and a guided essay. The rubric evaluated content, structure, vocabulary and grammar scale by awarding up to 40 points, also, in percentages. Additionally, an 18-item Likert scale survey was used to gauge students' opinions and attitudes regarding cooperative learning and English language acquisition. The reliability of these tools was validated in a pilot study with 30 students from a nearby school; the questionnaire's Cronbach's alpha was 0.82, and the performance-based tests' inter-rater reliability was higher than 0.80.

2.1.4 Administration of Data Collection

The actual data collection occurred in three phases namely: a pretest, intervention and posttest. In the pretest period, 190 students had participated in the speaking and writing test along with the questionnaire with a response rate of 95.0% of the initial sample. The cooperative learning intervention was then introduced during an eight week period where the students had structured group based activities using the English language twice a week. Overall, supervisor observations were also taken

up during this period on a sample of 60 students, which amounts to 30.0 per cent of the sample, to record cooperative learning behaviours in the background. The posttests were conducted in the 9 th week after the intervention. Following the pretest, 190 of all students were invited to participate in the posttest study phase of which, 182 students participated resulting in a retention rate of 91.0 of the original sample population and 95.8 of those who had entered the study.

2.1.5 Data quality and reliability

To guarantee accuracy 2 independent raters scored the speaking and writing tests of 30 percent of the students, about 60 participants. High levels of inter-rater reliability, (intraclass correlation coefficient over 0.80), ensured a common scoring approach. Questionnaire answers showed a high degree of internal consistency where the coefficient of alpha was 0.82. The absence of data was also minimal because less than 5% of the items on the questionnaires were not filled. The mean substitution rule was used in the cases when fewer than 5 percent of the responses were missing in a scale, and students who did not compose both a pretest and a posttest were omitted in the longitudinal analysis.

2.1.6 Ethical

Considerations

Prior to the start of the study, parental consent was acquired, and all participants gave their assent. Students were guaranteed that their involvement would not have an impact on their academic standing, and participation was entirely voluntary. Identification codes were used in place of names in order to maintain confidentiality. Ultimately, the ethical framework made sure that students' rights and privacy were completely upheld, and the high participation rates (above 90%) reinforced the data's reliability and representativeness.

2.2 Data Processing

2.2.1 Data Entering and coding

The data obtained after the pretests and the posttests were correctly sorted and input into a computerized database. Every learner had a code so that each could be identified anonymously and obtain a connection between their scores before and after the examination. The total number of students that filled out the pretest was 190, and all data forms were obtained; furthermore, only 6 questionnaires (3.1%) had a minor missing value. Response items with blank spaces were scored as missing responses and a means substitution used later when the missing responses did not exceed 5 percent of a particular scale. On the speaking and writing performance test, the raw score values were transformed to percentages in order to enable them to be compared uniformly throughout the different instruments.

2.2.2 Cleaning and verification of data

In order to guarantee the precision of the data, the method of verification with two entries was used. Two independent research assistants entered the scores into the database independently and the sets of data were cross-checked. The percentage of error detected at this step is only 1.6 percent (12 errors in 760 values), which were all corrected based on checking of the original answer sheets. The extreme cases of cases beyond three standard deviations above or below the mean in the scores of speaking and writing were marked as outliers. These accounted 2.7 percent of the data (5 cases of 182 matched participants). Upon close consideration, none was discarded since they represented actual performance of the students, and not entry errors.

2.2.3 Reliability Checks

A second rater re-scored 30 percent of the talking/writing scripts (n = 60) to maintain consistency during the performance-based assessment

scoring process. Inter-rater reliability statistic was measured with use of intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). The ICC of speaking scores was 0.87 and that of writing was 0.84 and hence both exceeded the acceptable ICC of 0.80 thereby being stable and reliable. In the case of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha was recomputed on the main study data and was not very different, i.e., same internal consistency as the pilot results.

2.2.4 Surveying Previous and New Data

Out of these 190 students who participated in the pretest, 182 did the same in the posttest, this translates into a 95.8 percent follow up rate. These 182 cases were used to construct a matched case sample with which to carry out comparative analysis. The unmatched cases (8 students or 4.2% attrition) were omitted in instances where there were paired tests and were included in a descriptive analysis of the pretest phase. This 91% retention rate of the initially selected sample of 200 students is resilient to educational intervention studies and justifies the soundness of the analyses that were done.

2.2.5 Preparing of Final Dataset

The final data included the sample of 182 matched cases with full pretest and posttest data in the triple domain of speaking, writing, and questionnaire variables. Overall, this generated 546 matched scores (182 on speaking, 182 on writing, and 182 on questionnaire composite score). The analysis of the data was performed in SPSS software after it was exported from the processing. The processing stage made sure that the integrity, reliability and representativeness of data was retained and a strong base was given to analyzing the effect of cooperative learning on English speaking and writing skill in students.

2.3 Data Analysis

2.3.1 Statistical Software Significance Level

All the processed data were processed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 26). The descriptive and the inferential statistics were used to determine the influence of cooperative learning on the speaking and writing prowess of the students. A statistical significance level of 0.05 (95% confidence interval) was to be used when interpreting results.

2.3.2 Descriptive Analysis

As a way of getting a clear picture of the data, descriptive statistics were initially computed. The mean scores on writing and speaking (n = 190 students) were 54.7 % (SD = 10.6) and 58.4 % (SD = 11.2), respectively. After the cooperative learning intervention, the results of 182 students were obtained. The average speaking total score was 71.6% (SD = 9.8) and the writing average total score was 68.2% (SD = 9.5). These descriptive results indicate a favorable direction in both speaking and writing the performance once the phase of intervention occurred. The responses of the 18-item questionnaire included 72.5 percent of students who had agreed or strongly agreed that cooperative learning increased their confidence to speak and 69.2 percent of the students reported having high motivation to practice writing.

2.3.3 Inferential Analysis Of Speaking Performance

Paired-sample t-tests were used to compare results of speaking pretest and posttest scores on the 182 matching cases. The results indicated a statistically significant positive difference, as the mean values increased by 12.7 percentage points, i.e., to 71.6 (SD = 9.8) out of 100. The t-test resulted in $t(181) = 14.62$, $p < 0.001$ with the large effect size (Cohen $d = 0.85$). This is an indication of the impact that cooperative

learning had such that it significantly influenced the speaking skill of the students.

2.3.4 Analysis of Writing Performance by Inferences

A paired-sample t-test was then performed to measure writing proficiency. The mean pretest score was 55.1 percent (SD = 10.4), and the mean post test score was 68.2 percent (SD = 9.5), which was a change of 13.1 points. The results showed a statistically significant difference, $t(181) = 15.04$, $p < 0.001$, and the effect size of Cohen $d = 0.89$ was a large effect. These results indicate that at a statistically significant level cooperative learning increased the writing competency of the students.

2.3.5 Analysis of Questionnaire A-Responses

The survey examined student perceptions of cooperative learning using frequency ranges and mean Likert scale scores. Of the 182 respondents, 132 students (72.5%) reported that cooperative group work allowed them to overcome their shyness and be more active regarding speaking activity. Also, 126 students (69.2%) indicated that writing in groups permitted them to share vocabulary and grammar constructions together, which led to better performance. The total mean of the 18 question inventory was 3.98 (SD = 0.62), which indicated most had a positive attitude towards cooperative learning.

2.3.6 Retention And Attrition Analysis

Out of the initial 200 students who were to be used in the study, 182 responded in both pretests and posttests, providing retention rate of 91.0 percent. Attrition included a total of 18 (9.0%) mostly as a result of absenteeism during the posttest week. The difference in pretest scores in retained students ($n = 182$) and dropping students ($n = 18$) on speaking scores $t(198) = 0.84$, $p = 0.40$ and writing $t(198) = 0.77$, $p = 0.44$ were not significant. This shows that attrition failed to bias any final results.

2.3.7 An overview of the analytical results

The statistical analyses unequivocally show that students' English language development was significantly and favorably impacted by cooperative learning. With significant effect sizes, speaking and writing abilities increased by an average of 12.7 and 13.1 percentage points, respectively. The results of the questionnaire further supported students' favorable opinions of cooperative learning, as over 70% of respondents said they felt more motivated, confident, and engaged. Collectively, these results offer strong proof that cooperative learning is a successful teaching method for improving students' English speaking and writing abilities in Baghdad's preparatory schools.

Chapter Four: Results

Data are presented for the 182 students, or 91.0% of the initial sample of 200, who passed the pretest and posttest.

3.1 Speaking Skills Improvement

The speaking performance pretest and posttest results are displayed in Table 1. The average score on the pretest was 58.9% (SD = 10.8), and the average score on the posttest increased to 71.6% (SD = 9.8). In comparison to the baseline, this indicates a 21.6% relative increase, or an average improvement of 12.7 percentage points.

Table 1: Speaking Skills Pretest and Posttest Results (n = 182)

	T est	M ean %	M D	Mi nimum	Ma ximum	Change
	P retest	58.9	10.8	34	81	—
	P osttest	71.6	9.8	49	92	+12.7 (↑21.6%)

With a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.85$) and a statistically significant improvement ($t(181) = 14.62, p < 0.001$), this improvement suggests that cooperative learning significantly improved students' oral communication skills. Students' speaking posttest scores significantly improved over the pretest, as shown in Figure 1.

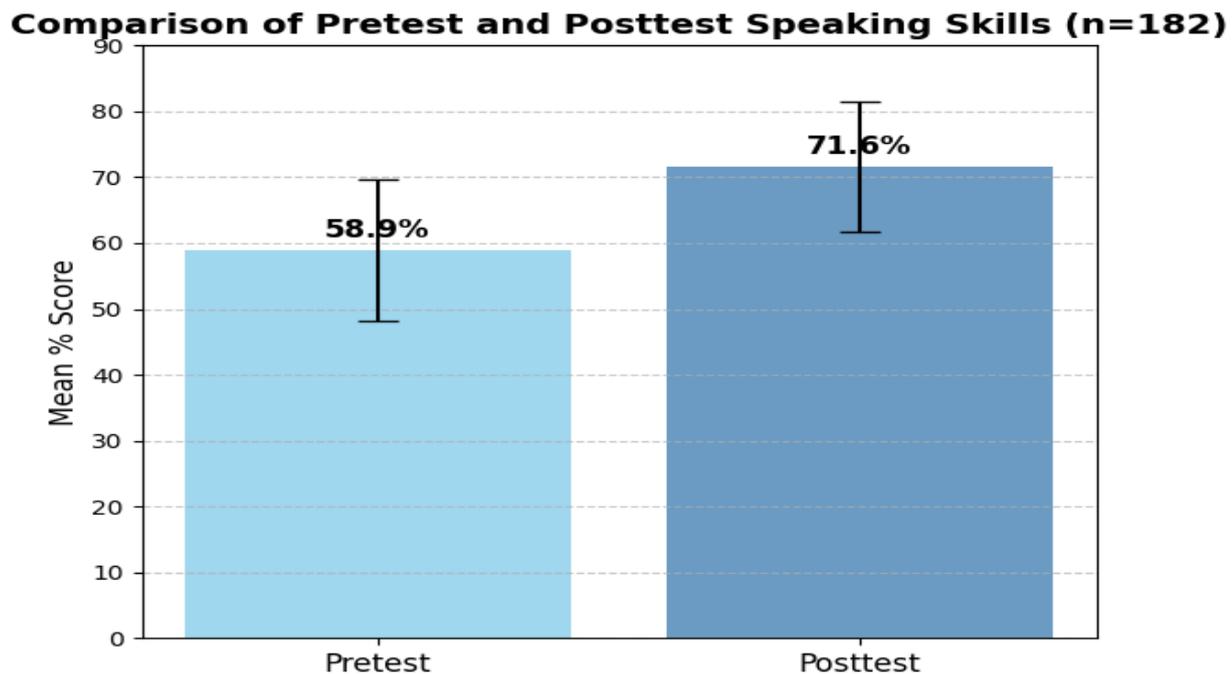


Figure 1: Speaking Skills Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores (n = 182). Standard deviations are shown by error bars.

3.2 Enhancement of Writing Capabilities

The results of the writing test are shown in Table 2. The mean score of the students was 55.1% (SD = 10.4) on the pretest and 68.2% (SD = 9.5) on the posttest. This represents a 23.8% relative improvement, or an average gain of 13.1 percentage points.

Table 2: Writing Skills Pretest and Posttest Results (n = 182)

T	M	Mi	Ma	Change
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est	ean %	D	nimum	ximum	
P	55		31	79	—
retest	.1	0.4			
P	68		46	89	+13.1
osttest	.2	.5			(↑23.8%)

The difference had a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.89$) and was statistically significant ($t(181) = 15.04, p < 0.001$). These findings support the notion that students' writing skills significantly improved as a result of cooperative learning. Figure 2 illustrates how students' writing scores significantly improved following the introduction of cooperative learning, increasing by 13.1 percentage points (↑23.8%) over the pretest.

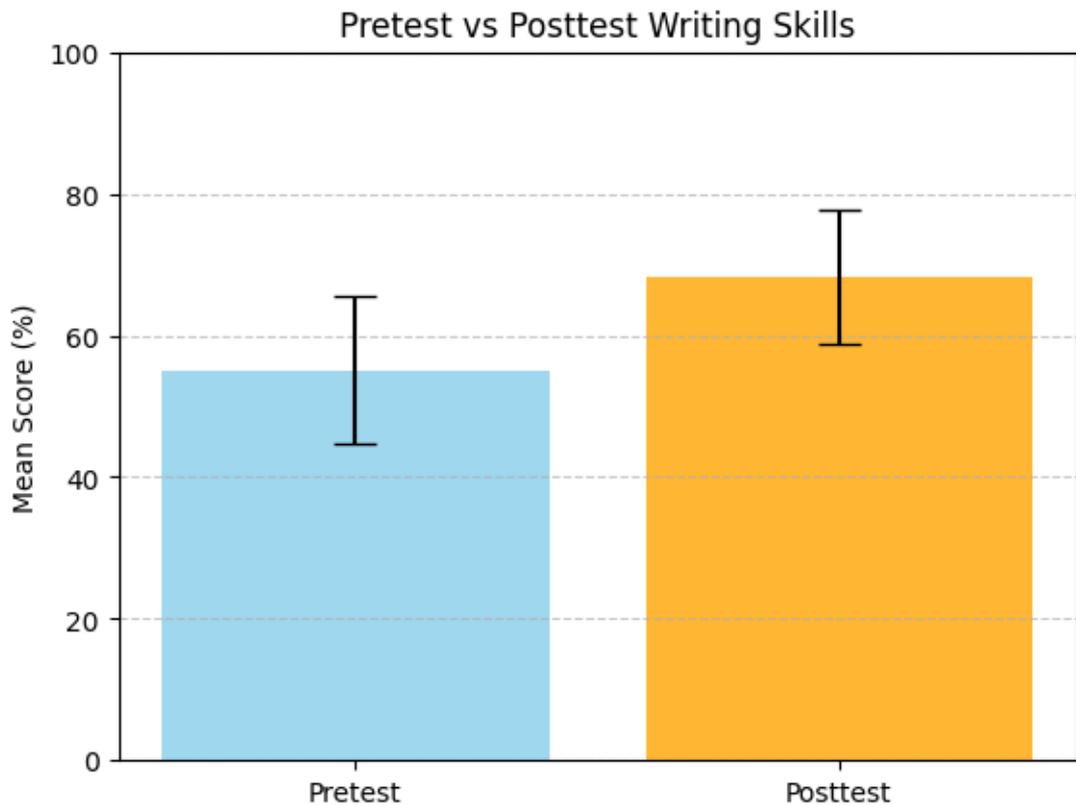


Figure 2: Mean Writing Skills Scores on the Pretest and Posttest ($n = 182$). Standard deviations are shown by error bars.

3.3 How Students View Cooperative Education

The 18-item survey's analysis revealed that students' opinions were largely favorable. All items combined yielded an average score of 3.98 out of 5 (SD = 0.62). 126 (69.2%) of the 182 students thought that writing in groups enhanced their vocabulary and grammar, while 132 (72.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that cooperative learning boosted their confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, 140 students (76.9%) stated that group projects encouraged them to participate more actively in English classes and made them more enjoyable.

Table 3: Perceptions of Cooperative Learning by Students (n = 182)

Item	Agree/Strongly Agree (n)	% of Respondents
Cooperative learning increased my confidence in speaking	132	72.5%
Group writing helped improve my vocabulary and grammar	126	69.2%
Working in groups made classes more enjoyable	140	76.9%
Cooperative learning motivated me to participate more actively	138	75.8%

These results show that most participants had a favorable opinion of cooperative learning in addition to the quantifiable gains in test scores. Students' opinions were compiled into a pie chart (Figure 3) to further highlight these findings. According to the chart, 69.2% of respondents

said that group writing enhanced their vocabulary and grammar, and 72.5% said that they felt more confident when speaking. Furthermore, 75.8% of respondents said that cooperative learning encouraged them to participate more actively, and 76.9% agreed that working in groups enhanced the enjoyment of classes. These findings support students' favorable attitudes toward cooperative learning and go hand in hand with the numerical gains in test scores.

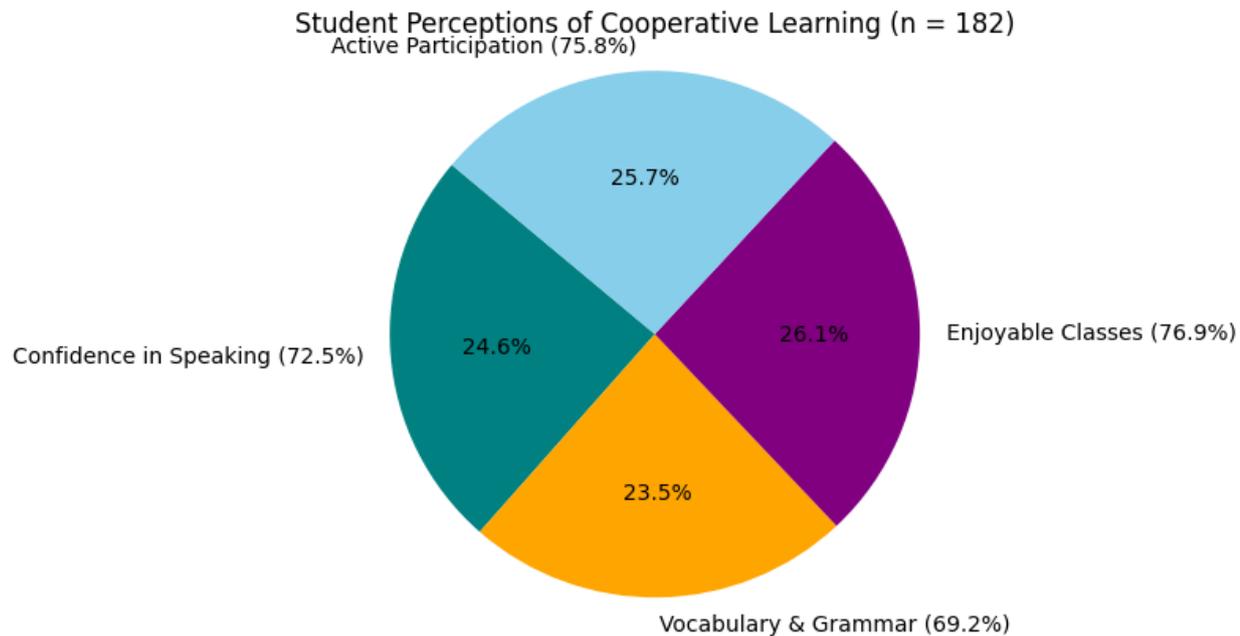


Figure 3: Distribution of students' favorable opinions (n = 182) about cooperative learning in writing and speaking English.

3.4 Attrition and Retention

190 of the 200 students who were initially chosen finished the pretest, and 182 finished the pretest and posttest. This translates to just 9.0% attrition and an overall retention rate of 91.0%. There were no discernible differences in pretest scores between students who finished the study and those who dropped out, according to an independent-sample t-test, suggesting that attrition did not skew the findings.

3.5 Synopsis of Results

The findings unequivocally show that speaking and writing abilities among preparatory students were greatly enhanced by cooperative learning. Writing performance increased by 13.1 percentage points and speaking performance by 12.7 percentage points; both gains were statistically significant and backed by sizable effect sizes. Additionally, over 70% of the students had positive opinions about cooperative learning, highlighting how it increases self-assurance, drive, and engagement.

Chapter five : Discussion

This paper aimed at investigating how cooperative learning would help in building speaking and writing skills in students of preparatory schools in Baghdad. The findings showed a dramatic change towards positive in both the areas of skills with the mean scores of speaking and writing improving by 12.7 and 13.1 percentage points respectively after the cooperative learning intervention. These findings affirm and validate those obtained in the broad literature on collaborative learning and cooperative learning, which have been demonstrated to have an overall positive influence on language learning, communication development and motivation.

The results of the enhanced oral communication competence of the students are also quite impressive as orality is one of the problem areas among EFL learners. Pratiwi and Ayu (2020) also revealed that guided group instructions such as describing pictures task can maximize talking skills of secondary students significantly. Likewise, Gutierrez-Puertas et al. (2020) state that the communication-based education approach made the power of learners to participate in the learning more powerful, which accounts for the role of collaboration-based approaches in promoting the

positive verbal participation of the audience. These findings validate the view that conversational learning can play a very significant role in interactive learning contexts where fellow learners can interfere.

The statistically significant improvement in the performance of writing, as far as the performance of flipped and collaborative learning is concerned, is consistent with the conclusions of the study by Öztürk and Cakilioglu (2021) about the role of self-regulated planning of the process on the outcomes of writing. Being in cooperative groups enabled sharing vocabulary and brainstorming along with peer feedback that are all aligned with the Vygotskian social constructivism perspective that learning occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals (Saleem et al., 2021; Erbil, 2020). This appears to indicate that the social component of cooperative learning played an important role in promoting the proficiency in writing.

In addition to developing skills, positive attitudes to cooperation learning expressed by the students in their responses (more than 70 percent claimed increased confidence and motivation) indicate the motivational benefits put forward in the literature. According to the observation of Yang (2023), the concept of communally shared obligation and collective profitability, which raise the propensity to learn among the learners, forms the basis of collaborative learning historically. In the same vein, Alharbi et al. (2022) showed e-collaborative environments foster critical thinking and higher-order cognitive investment that can be connected to the finding of this study, i.e., students reported an improvement in readiness to express themselves in English.

The results also help in the investigation of cooperative learning as an intercultural fluency and collaboration ability instrument. Although the current study was set in a local Iraqi environment, international research

in the field of higher education revealed a similar trend, where collaboration learning will lead to intercultural sensitivity and flexible behavior (De Hei et al., 2020). These long term implications point to the fact that cooperative learning can place students in a position to initially communicate in several situations even in less diverse settings.

Assessment of learning tasks in groups is a problem that has not been fully evaluated. Meijer et al. (2020) follow this approach and conclude that the current assessment practices in terms of collaborative learning are limited by a list of limitations that should be overcome by the methods that may reflect individual and group performance.

In such study as it was, although individual scores of the tests increased significantly, the lack of collective level measuring prevents an assessment of the conversion of collective processes into the measurable results. In future research, collaborative assessment aids should be incorporated in order to give a complete image.

A digital aspect of collaborative learning is also worth noting. The study conducted by Blau et al. (2020) has demonstrated that digital collaborative learning is highly determined by cultural influences and ICT coordinators. Likewise, Jovanovic and Milosavljevic (2022) discovered that engagement on collaborative platforms could be boosted with gamification features because of the VoRtex Metaverse. Although the present study utilized conventional classroom cooperative learning, the overall motivation levels seen among the students testify to the idea that digitalized or gamified versions of the concept might enhance the outcomes in the learning process.

Other theoretical perspective belongs to collaborative cognitive load theory. Janssen and Kirschner (2020) say that sharing of cognitive load among the members of the group helps learners to process

complicated information better. The large increase in the scores of the present study in both, speaking and writing may be partly due to this distributed cognitive processing whereby, through collaboration among peers the individual psychological workload is lowered. Similarly to Herrera-Pavo (2021), it is important to point out that collaboration in virtual higher education plays a significant role as joint work helps learners better internalize information.

Put together, these results prove that cooperative learning is not only a pedagogical approach, but also a model that facilitates the social, cognitive and motivational aspects of language learning. By backing up with global evidence (Yang, 2023; Janssen & Kirschner, 2020; Erbil, 2020), the current study contextually refers to the Iraqi educational context, and therefore it can be noted that the cooperative approach will effectively contribute to enhancing productive language skills and learner attitude at secondary school.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to investigate what influence cooperative learning has on the acquisition of speaking and writing skills in the English language among the students of the preparatory school Al-Hurriya Preparatory School for Boys in Baghdad. These findings showed that the approach of cooperative learning influenced greatly on the effectiveness of the students when it came to oral and written communication. Cooperative learning students were more fluent, more accurate, and more confident in speaking, and they had also progressed more as regards the use of vocabularies, grammar and organization of their writing compared to the line of other students who had studied the same topic by teacher-centered methodology.

One of the most interesting findings of the research was that the engagement and motivation of students have enhanced considerably. The collaborative learning encouraged cooperative effort and support and active interaction which, in general, contributed to the creation of an atmosphere in the language practice friendly classroom. This not only contributed to the progress in the linguistic abilities of the students but also affected the acquisition of critical soft skills, that is, collaboration, problem-solving, self-regulation, which are required throughout the student life.

The results also once again corroborate prior studies in which it is not merely a transient pedagogical fad but actually has a basis as a legitimate learning means in accordance with theories of social constructivism. It also provides a real-world experience to students so as to invest in meaningful use of language and this reduces the gap between classroom learning and use of language in real-life situations. Moreover, cooperative learning was particularly successful in those situations when the students could feel having less confidence in using English because the corresponding atmosphere made them feel safe and confident in the group. In conclusion, this paper demonstrates that cooperative learning can become a viable approach to the increase of English language proficiency of students at preparatory school. By having systematized group activities as part of the curriculum, teachers can significantly enhance the speaking and writing skills of their students as well as motivate them to work together in teams and feel some ownership of the learning process. In order to enhance the results of language learning, the future research needs to expand on this project with the need to address the long-term effects of cooperative learning, its cultural applicability, and its combination with electronic technologies.

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