

## **Cooperative Learning in Second Language Learning**

---

**Asmaa Yazidi Alaoui**, Ph D student, UMohamed V University. Educational Science College.  
Rabat, Morocco

---

Article Received: 6/8/2022,

Article Accepted: 15/09/2022,

Published online: 16/09/2022,

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.9.09

---

### **Introduction:**

Social interaction entails how people act toward and react to others. Vygotsky (1978) claims that humans are very friendly, so their cognitive abilities increase when they are in groups. Social interaction helps people to act and react with each other and share different viewpoints and ways of thinking. From a language learning perspective, it is a chance to practice the language and share knowledge. For these reasons and many more, this annotated bibliography will focus on the advantages of cooperative learning with second language acquisition.

Learning any language requires using that language and interacting with people. Teachers who encourage students to work in groups maximize their learning abilities. By doing this, the teacher uses cooperative learning strategies. According to Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991), getting students with different levels of knowledge and skills together in small groups enhances their own and others' learning. In this case, students exchange their expertise with the other group members and work together to achieve a task.

Vygotsky (1986) emphasizes the importance of social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) notes that humans are social, so their cognitive skills develop in a group setting. That is to say, the environment here is the classroom or the learning setting, and peers are students with different proficiency levels within one group. This aligns with Johnson (2001), who points out that cooperative learning is a rewarding teaching strategy in which small groups of students with different levels use different learning activities to enhance their understanding of a subject.

Furthermore, getting students together opens a dialogic environment for students to co-construct and negotiate knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) argues that higher mental processes are mediated by tools and signs such as language, numeral system, etc. Dialogue in a learning setting promotes meaningful face-to-face conversation (words, gestures...). All this offers a new way of exchanging skills.

In addition, Vygotsky (1978) proposed that learning occurs in a zone of proximal development (ZPD) where learners exceed their current understanding by working with more competent peers. According to that theory, group work increases social skills. More advanced

students help average students, and both support the weak students in the group. This learning together process increases each individual's skills.

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000), cooperative learning is getting together to work on a common learning goal. Students seek beneficial results within suitable learning activities as individuals or group members. Therefore, collaborative learning is an instructional use of small groups so that students can work together to maximize their learning and the learning of other group members. Numerous suitable learning methods are used due to the different environments and objectives of learning.

### **Previous Studies**

#### **Cooperative learning and L2 acquisition**

Vakilifard et al. (2020) explored the effect of the cooperative learning approach and semantic mapping strategy on the acquisition of L2 Persian vocabulary. The study included intermediate students learning Persian as a second language. Two different types of instruments were used to gather data. The first was a reading test that had three level-appropriate tests. The second was a vocabulary test of the learners' knowledge of 30 target words before and after the treatment. Results showed significant improvements in the learners' understanding of the target words in all the experimental groups.

Ghaith and Yaghi (1998) conducted an experimental study on the effects of cooperative learning on the acquisition of English as a second language (ESL). The participants were fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students enrolled in 12 ESL classes. Pre-tests and post-tests were specially designed for this study. The results generally support using the cooperative learning method Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) in the second language classroom, significantly enhancing the linguistic gains of low-achieving ESL students.

In a study by Salem et al. (2017), the researcher investigated the effect of STAD, which is one of the essential cooperative learning strategies, on vocabulary learning of EFL adult learners. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design at Unaizah Community College, Saudi Arabia. The experimental and control groups were tested on a 2000-word vocabulary test prepared by the researchers. After two weeks of treatment, both groups retook the same test. Results showed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental one, which means that using cooperative learning strategies, was beneficial to teaching.

#### **Cooperative learning and vocabulary**

Bilen and Müg (2015) conducted a research study investigating the effects of cooperative learning strategies on vocabulary skills and students' attitudes toward using this strategy. Forty-eight participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Quantitative data was collected from a pre-test and a post-test, which were not the same. Qualitative data was collected from lesson diaries and an interview with the teacher who implemented cooperative learning strategies (Kagan Structures) in the classroom with the experimental group.

The study lasted five weeks. Findings confirmed students' positive attitudes towards implementing cooperative learning strategies in teaching.

Khavaran and Shafiee (2017) studied the effects of cooperative learning techniques (CLT) on vocabulary achievement of reflective/impulsive Iranian EFL Learners. Participants were in an intermediate level of proficiency at Fajr Institute in Dehdasht City, Kohgiluyeh, and Boyer Ahmad Province, Iran.

The participants were divided into three groups: two groups of reflective, impulsive learners who were considered the experimental group and the other group as the control group. The treatment lasted twenty weeks. The data clearly show that cooperative learning enhanced students' vocabulary performance for both impulsive and reflective learners.

The studies mentioned above show the importance of dialogues and how they might work about the zone of proximal development among learners.

### **Cooperative learning in writing**

Yusuf et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine using cooperative learning strategies to improve the writing skills of ninth-grade students in a middle school in Kuala Lumpur, Indonesia. The study used a quantitative research method. Data were collected from 30 intermediate and low proficiency learners. The study lasted 12 weeks, and students were exposed to Jigsaw and STAD.

Students of this study have revealed that students had better results in the post-test than in a pre-test of narrative essay writing. Not only this, but they showed good progress in the five components of the paper: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. These results reflect the successful implementation of cooperative learning strategies encouraging these students to work harder to refine their writing skills. Furthermore, they suggest the positive effects of CL in improving students' writing skills at school. The study asserts that using cooperative learning strategies activates the cognitive ability of students not only to produce dialogue but to develop writing skills, which is one of the last skills that any language learners learn.

Munawar (2019) identified the effect of cooperative learning on the 7th class students' writing ability in English. The samples of 68 students enrolled at the elementary level (7th grade) in Government Girls High School Burj Attari, Sheikhupura, were randomly chosen. Pre-test, post-test, and control group design was used. The results showed that there is significant writing skills development as well as reading comprehension abilities.

### **Cooperative learning and students' academic achievement:**

Gull and Shehzad (2015) conducted a study to examine the effect of cooperative learning methods on students' achievement in the subject of education. A quasi-experimental design was used to compare collaborative learning as the instruction model for the treatment group and traditional lecture as the method in a control group. In the treatment group were 32 students, and in the control group were 33 students; all students were girls because it is a female college. The age range was 16-19 years old. As no standardized test is available for the

subject of education at the intermediate level, the researcher designed one and validated it with the assistance of expert teachers and examiners in education.

Both groups were taught two units using the same content in the syllabus. However, the students in the experimental group were taught using cooperative learning, STAD, and jigsaw strategies. In contrast, the students in the control group were introduced through a traditional method for eight weeks. The results indicate that cooperative learning as an instructional strategy positively affected these students' academic achievement.

### **Cooperative learning strategies and oral production**

Castillo (2007) study adopted Cohen & Manion's (1985) model, which is a spiral way to solve problems. Fifty-three students participated in the study, whose ages ranged from 14 to 17 years old and who had similar socio-economic status (middle-high). The researcher adopted Hopkins' concepts (1993) to collect data. He used many methods, including field notes, surveys, and audiotape recording. As a result, all students at the end of the implementation showed a different attitude toward group work and speaking skills.

Namaziandos (2020) investigated the impact of using two cooperative learning strategies on developing oral English language fluency among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Seventy-two English learners participated in this study. Over eight weeks, both experimental groups engaged in different cooperative learning approaches, such as numbered heads or think-pair-share, while the control group was involved in conventional teacher-centered learning activities. The results showed that collaborative teaching techniques effectively improved the students' performance in speaking fluency. This indicates the effectiveness of implementing Think-pair share and Numbered heads approaches in teaching speaking fluency.

These studies reflect Vygotsky's theory of interaction. After engaging in group work, participants could develop their cognitive skills, produce more language, and use the target language more effectively.

### **Cooperative strategy and reading**

Haradacht and Ahour (2014) conducted a quasi-experiment to compare the effect of competitive versus cooperative learning on the reading comprehension of introverted and extroverted EFL learners. One hundred twenty male English learners aged 16–35 participated in this study at Marefat English Language Institute in Tehran, Iran. The participants took the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) to know their personality types. The results showed that cooperative learning led to better results in reading comprehension. Without including the personality factor, this study would not prove categorically that collaborative learning is more advantageous. That is to say, implementing cooperative strategies in teaching helps all students despite their personality types. It is very useful in the teaching process.

### **Conclusion**

Cooperative learning is putting students together despite their level of proficiency to work on a shared task and accomplish a goal. Studies show that this approach seems to help

students to engage in dialogues to exchange knowledge by activating each individual's cognitive abilities and helping them go beyond their actual zone of proximate development. All the studies mentioned above suggest that using any/many cooperative learning strategies increases learning/using the second language. Furthermore, collaborative learning appears to work regardless of any second language learners or teacher's target skill.

As an Arabic Language instructor, from my own teaching experience, implementing cooperative learning strategies has always been an effective way to engage students to participate in classroom activities, use Arabic, and do well in class.

### **References**

- Ahour, D., Haradachat, P. (2014). The Comparative Effect of Using Competitive and Cooperative Learning on the Reading Comprehension of Introverts and Extrovert EFL Learners. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* ISSN: 2203-4714 Vol. 5 No. 4; Doi:10.7575/aac.all.v.5n.4p.206
- Bilen, D., & Müg, Z.(2015). The Effects of Cooperative Learning Strategies on Vocabulary Skills of 4th Grade Students. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(6). ISSN 2324-805X E-ISSN 2324-8068. doi:10.11114/jets.v3i6.1062 . URL:<http://jets.redfame.com>
- Ghaith, G.M., Yaghi, H.M. (1998). Effect of cooperative learning on the acquisition of second language rules and mechanics. *Pergamon System* (26) 223 234
- Gull F., Shehzad S. (2015). Effects of Cooperative Learning on Students' Academic Achievement. *Journal of Education and Learning*. Vol. 9(3) pp. 246-255.
- Ishtiaq, M., Ali, Z., & Salem, M. (2017). An Experimental Study of the Effect of Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) on Vocabulary Learning of EFL Adult Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (3). DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no3.23>
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (1991). *Active learning: cooperation in the college classroom*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Namaziandost Ehsen. (2020). The impact of cooperative learning approach on the development of EFL learners' speaking fluency, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7:1, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2020.1780811
- Munawar, S., Chaudhary, A. H. (2019). Effect of Cooperative Learning on the Writing Skill at Elementary Level in the Subject of English. *Bulletin of Education and Research*. Vol. 41, No. 3 pp. 35-44
- Prieto Castillo. (2007). Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative Learning Strategies. *Profile* 8, 2007. ISSN 1657-0790. Bogotá, Colombia. Pages 75-90

- Raziyeh, S., Sajad Shafiee. K .( 2017). Effects of Cooperative Learning on Vocabulary Achievement of Reflective/Impulsive Iranian EFL Learners. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching & Research – Volume 5, Issue 17*. Retrieved from [http://jfl.iaun.ac.ir/article\\_588022.html](http://jfl.iaun.ac.ir/article_588022.html)
- Swain, M., 1985. Communicative competence: some role of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In: Gass, S., Madden C. (Eds.). *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Newbury House, Rowley, MA, pp. 235-253.
- Vakilifard.A., Bahramlou, K., and Mousavian, M.(2020) The effect of cooperative learning approach and semantic mapping strategy on the acquisition of L2 Persian vocabulary, *Cogent Education*, 7. ISSN 1762287.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Yan Mei, F.S., & Saipolbarin, B. R. (2015). Applying Gagne's Nine Approaches to Teaching the Arabic Language for Non-Native Speakers: Experimental study at Sultan Idris Education University Malaysia (UPSI). *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 1( 3). ISSN 2411-9598 (Print) /ISSN 2411-4103 (Online).
- Yusuf, Q., Jusoh, Z., & Yusuf, Y. Q. (2019). Cooperative Learning Strategies to Enhance Writing Skills among Second Language Learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(1), 1399- 1412. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12189>