
The Role of Cooperative Learning Strategies in Enhancing Speaking Skills and Learner Autonomy

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Annotation

Speaking is considered one of the most important skills in learning English as a foreign language; however, many students face difficulties in communicating effectively. Learners often struggle with fluency, lack confidence while speaking, and find it challenging to express their ideas clearly. This article investigates how cooperative learning strategies can support the development of speaking skills while also promoting learner autonomy in English language classrooms. Cooperative learning creates an environment where students actively interact with one another, exchange opinions, and support each other during the learning process. Activities such as think-pair-share, role plays, group discussions, and jigsaw tasks provide learners with more opportunities to use English in meaningful and realistic situations. Through these collaborative activities, students gradually become more confident speakers, improve their vocabulary and fluency, and develop stronger communication skills in a less stressful and more supportive atmosphere. Based on classroom observations and findings from previous studies, this article highlights that cooperative learning not only improves students' speaking ability but also encourages them to become more independent and responsible learners. By participating actively in group tasks and taking greater responsibility for their own learning, students develop autonomy, motivation, and confidence, which are essential for successful language learning and effective real-life communication.

Keywords

Cooperative learning, speaking skills, learner autonomy, communication, fluency, confidence, interaction, collaborative activities, English language learning, group work, communicative competence, student-centered learning

Kooperativ ta'lim strategiyalarining gapirish ko'nikmalari va o'quvchi mustaqilligini rivojlantirishdagi o'rni

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Annotatsiya

Gapirish chet til sifatida ingliz tilini o'rganishda eng muhim ko'nikmalardan biri hisoblanadi, biroq ko'plab talabalar samarali muloqot qilishda qiyinchiliklarga duch

keladilar. O'quvchilar ko'pincha ravon gapirishda qiynaladilar, gapirish jarayonida o'ziga ishonch yetishmaydi hamda fikrlarini aniq ifodalashda muammolarga duch kelishadi. Ushbu maqola kooperativ ta'lim strategiyalarining gapirish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish va shu bilan birga o'quvchilar mustaqilligini oshirishdagi ahamiyatini o'rganadi. Kooperativ ta'lim o'quvchilar bir-biri bilan faol muloqot qiladigan, fikr almashadigan va o'quv jarayonida bir-birini qo'llab-quvvatlaydigan muhit yaratadi. Think-pair-share, rolli o'yinlar, guruh muhokamalari va jigsaw kabi faoliyatlar o'quvchilarga ingliz tilidan mazmunli va real hayotga yaqin vaziyatlarda foydalanish imkoniyatini beradi. Ushbu hamkorlikka asoslangan faoliyatlar orqali talabalar asta-sekin o'ziga ishonchliroq gapiruvchilarga aylanadilar, lug'at boyligini va ravonligini oshiradilar hamda kamroq stressli va qo'llab-quvvatlovchi muhitda kuchliroq kommunikativ ko'nikmalarni rivojlantiradilar. Sinf kuzatuvlari va avvalgi tadqiqotlar natijalariga asoslanib, ushbu maqola kooperativ ta'lim nafaqat o'quvchilarning gapirish qobiliyatini yaxshilashini, balki ularni yanada mustaqil va mas'uliyatli o'quvchilarga aylantirishini ham ta'kidlaydi. Guruh vazifalarida faol ishtirok etish va o'z ta'lim jarayoni uchun ko'proq mas'uliyat olish orqali talabalar mustaqillik, motivatsiya va o'ziga ishonchni rivojlantiradilar. Bu esa muvaffaqiyatli til o'rganish va real hayotdagi samarali muloqot uchun muhim omillar hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar Kooperativ ta'lim, gapirish ko'nikmalari, o'quvchi mustaqilligi, kommunikatsiya, ravon nutq, o'ziga ishonch, o'zaro hamkorlik, hamkorlikdagi faoliyat, ingliz tilini o'rganish, guruh ishlari, kommunikativ kompetensiya, talaba markazli ta'lim

Роль стратегий кооперативного обучения в развитии навыков говорения и автономии учащихся

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Аннотация Говорение считается одним из важнейших навыков при изучении английского языка как иностранного, однако многие студенты сталкиваются с трудностями в процессе общения. Учащиеся нередко испытывают проблемы с беглостью речи, неуверенностью во время разговора и затрудняются ясно выразить свои мысли на английском языке. В данной статье рассматривается, каким образом стратегии кооперативного обучения могут способствовать развитию навыков говорения, а также формированию автономности учащихся в процессе изучения английского языка. Кооперативное обучение создает такую образовательную среду, в которой студенты активно взаимодействуют

друг с другом, обмениваются мнениями и поддерживают своих одноклассников в процессе обучения. Такие виды деятельности, как think-pair-share, ролевые игры, групповые обсуждения и задания типа jigsaw, предоставляют учащимся больше возможностей использовать английский язык в значимых и приближенных к реальной жизни ситуациях. Благодаря подобным совместным заданиям студенты постепенно становятся более уверенными в себе, расширяют словарный запас, улучшают беглость речи и развивают коммуникативные навыки в менее напряжённой и более благоприятной атмосфере. Основываясь на наблюдениях в классе и результатах предыдущих исследований, данная статья подчеркивает, что кооперативное обучение не только способствует улучшению навыков говорения, но и помогает студентам становиться более самостоятельными и ответственными учащимися. Активное участие в групповой работе и принятие большей ответственности за собственное обучение развивают автономию, мотивацию и уверенность в себе, которые являются важными факторами успешного овладения языком и эффективного общения в реальных жизненных ситуациях.

Ключевые слова

Кооперативное обучение, навыки говорения, автономность учащихся, коммуникация, беглость речи, уверенность, взаимодействие, совместная деятельность, изучение английского языка, групповая работа, коммуникативная компетенция, студентоориентированное обучение

Introduction

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most difficult aspects of learning a foreign language. Although many students may have a good understanding of grammar rules and vocabulary, they frequently struggle to communicate their thoughts clearly and confidently in spoken English. This issue is particularly noticeable in classrooms where greater attention is given to written exercises rather than meaningful oral communication (Harmer, 2007).

A large number of learners feel nervous when speaking, fear making mistakes, or lack confidence in their language abilities. Because of these feelings, they often hesitate to participate in conversations and lose important opportunities to practice speaking. Nevertheless, studies have shown that speaking proficiency develops mainly through regular language use and active interaction with other people (Ur, 1996).

In such situations, cooperative learning strategies can serve as an effective and practical approach to improving speaking skills. These strategies allow students to work collaboratively in small groups, creating a more comfortable environment for communication and mutual support. Furthermore, cooperative learning also promotes learner autonomy by encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation in the educational process (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore how cooperative learning strategies affect students' speaking skills and learner autonomy. In order to gain both theoretical and practical understanding, the research combined the analysis of relevant literature with classroom observations. The participants of the study were approximately twenty-five intermediate-level students

learning English as a foreign language. Although the students possessed a basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, many of them experienced difficulties in speaking activities. The most common challenges included hesitation while speaking, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and limited classroom participation.

The research was carried out over a three-week period and was organized into two major stages. During the first stage, traditional teacher-centered methods were used in the classroom. The teacher mainly explained the lesson content, directed the activities, and asked individual questions, while students were expected to respond independently. Classroom observations during this stage revealed that only a few students participated actively, whereas most learners remained passive or provided very brief answers. This situation reflects the idea that teacher-centered classrooms often reduce students' active involvement in communication (Ur, 1996).

In the second stage, several cooperative learning strategies were introduced in order to encourage greater interaction among students. Learners were divided into small groups consisting of four or five members and were assigned different speaking tasks designed to promote collaboration and communication. These activities included think-pair-share tasks, in which students first reflected individually, then discussed their ideas with a partner, and finally shared them with the whole group; role plays based on everyday situations such as ordering food or talking about daily routines; and jigsaw activities, where each student became responsible for one part of the topic and later explained it to other group members. In addition, students were sometimes given specific roles within their groups, such as leader, speaker, or note-taker, to ensure balanced participation and shared responsibility. During this stage, the teacher mainly acted as a facilitator by guiding discussions and providing support whenever necessary. Throughout both stages of the

study, particular attention was paid to students' willingness to speak, the frequency of their participation, the fluency and clarity of their speech, as well as their level of independence and responsibility. At the end of the research period, the findings from both stages were carefully compared in order to identify noticeable differences and improvements in students' speaking performance and learner autonomy.

Results

The findings of the study revealed that cooperative learning strategies had a highly positive effect on the development of both students' speaking skills and learner autonomy. One of the most noticeable changes was the increase in classroom participation. During the first stage of the research, many students were passive, hesitant, and unwilling to speak in front of others. In contrast, after cooperative learning activities were introduced, almost all learners became actively involved in discussions and group tasks. Working in small groups created a more relaxed and supportive atmosphere, which reduced students' anxiety and encouraged them to express their opinions more freely. These findings support the view that cooperative learning helps establish a comfortable learning environment where students feel safer and more motivated to participate in communication (Slavin, 2009).

Another significant improvement was observed in students' speaking fluency and overall communication ability. At the beginning of the study, many learners tended to provide very short, simple, and incomplete responses. However, after regularly participating in cooperative activities, students gradually became able to speak for longer periods, produce more meaningful sentences, and organize their ideas more effectively during conversations. Their speech became clearer and more natural due to the increased opportunities for interaction and continuous speaking practice provided by collaborative tasks. This development confirms the idea that speaking proficiency improves through active

communication and regular language use rather than passive learning (Harmer, 2007). Furthermore, students also demonstrated noticeable progress in vocabulary development. Through discussions with classmates, they were exposed to a variety of new words and expressions and began using them more confidently in their own speech. Peer learning played an important role in this process because students often found explanations from classmates easier to understand and less intimidating than teacher explanations alone.

The study also showed positive changes in students' pronunciation, confidence, autonomy, and motivation. As learners became more accustomed to speaking in groups, they showed less fear of making mistakes and became more willing to take risks while communicating in English. Increased confidence had a direct influence on their ability to communicate more effectively, which is considered an essential factor in successful language learning (Brown, 2004). In addition, students developed greater learner autonomy throughout the cooperative learning process. They depended less on the teacher and became more responsible for their own learning by asking questions, clarifying meanings, exchanging ideas, and supporting one another during activities. This demonstrates that cooperative learning not only improves communication skills but also encourages self-directed learning and responsibility among students (Little, 1991). Finally, students appeared more motivated and interested in classroom activities during the second stage of the study. Compared to the traditional lessons in the first stage, the classroom atmosphere became more energetic, interactive, and positive, which contributed to greater student engagement and enthusiasm for learning English.

Discussion

The findings of this study emphasize the significant role of cooperative learning strategies in enhancing students' speaking

skills as well as their learner autonomy. One of the primary reasons for these positive outcomes is the increase in meaningful interaction among students. When learners work collaboratively, they become involved in real communicative situations where they are required to express their thoughts, listen carefully to others, exchange opinions, and respond appropriately. Such interaction provides valuable speaking practice and plays an essential role in the development of communicative competence (Ur, 1996). Through continuous communication with peers, students become more engaged in the learning process and gain greater opportunities to use the target language actively and naturally.

Another important factor contributing to the effectiveness of cooperative learning is the reduction of speaking anxiety. Many students often feel nervous or uncomfortable when they are asked to speak in front of the entire class. Cooperative learning helps reduce this pressure by placing learners in smaller and more supportive groups where they feel safer and less afraid of making mistakes. As a result, students become more relaxed, self-confident, and willing to participate actively in classroom discussions and speaking tasks. This supportive atmosphere encourages learners to take risks in communication, which is considered an important part of language acquisition. In addition, cooperative learning shifts the focus of the lesson from the teacher to the students themselves. Instead of relying completely on the teacher for guidance and knowledge, students become active participants in their own learning process. They learn to make decisions, solve problems together, exchange feedback, and evaluate their own performance. This reflects the principles of autonomous learning, where learners gradually develop responsibility for their own progress and learning outcomes (Benson, 2011).

Furthermore, cooperative learning contributes not only to language development but also to the improvement of social and

interpersonal skills. Through group activities, students learn how to cooperate effectively, respect the opinions of others, communicate politely, and work together as a team. These abilities are valuable not only in the language classroom but also in students' personal and academic lives. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that cooperative learning may not always produce successful results without careful organization and planning. Teachers need to design appropriate tasks, provide clear instructions, and carefully monitor group activities to ensure equal participation among students. Without proper teacher guidance, some learners may dominate the discussion while others remain passive observers. Therefore, the teacher's role as a facilitator and organizer remains highly important throughout the learning process. Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with previous research, which confirms that cooperative learning has a

positive influence on both language development and learner independence (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Conclusion

In conclusion, cooperative learning strategies have a significant impact on the improvement of students' speaking skills and the development of learner autonomy. These strategies create more opportunities for learners to participate actively in communication, help reduce fear and anxiety while speaking, and establish a supportive and interactive classroom environment. In addition, cooperative learning encourages students to become more self-confident, responsible, and independent in their learning process. Therefore, incorporating cooperative learning activities into language classrooms can make lessons more engaging, effective, and beneficial for students' overall language development.

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