

The Influence of Cooperative Learning on Oral Efficiency and Inducement Among Upper-Intermediate Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract—Developing oral efficiency remains a persistent challenge for upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners, often attributed to limited speaking opportunities, lack of interactive learning environments, and low inducement. This study examines the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing both oral efficiency and motivation among EFL learners. Using a quasi-experimental design, participants engaged in structured cooperative learning activities, such as peer discussions, role-plays, and collaborative problem-solving tasks, over an eight-week period. The results demonstrated significant improvements in oral efficiency, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech production. Additionally, learners exhibited increased motivation, greater confidence in speaking, and a heightened willingness to engage in communicative tasks. These findings underscore the pedagogical benefits of cooperative learning in fostering a supportive, student-centered environment that promotes active participation. The study suggests that integrating cooperative learning into EFL instruction can effectively enhance language development and inducement. Future research should explore long-term effects, learner perceptions, and adaptability across various efficiency levels.

Index Terms—oral efficiency, cooperative learning, EFL learners, inducement, Saudi Arabia learning context

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral efficiency and inducement are critical components in the successful acquisition of a second language. In Saudi Arabia, upper-intermediate EFL learners frequently face challenges in developing effective oral communication skills. Traditional teacher-centered methodologies, which emphasize grammar instruction and rote memorization, have long dominated the Saudi educational landscape. As a result, learners often excel in receptive skills like reading and listening yet struggle with speaking due to limited interactive opportunities and low motivational levels (Ellis, 2008; Dörnyei, 2005).

In response to these challenges, recent pedagogical approaches have begun to incorporate cooperative learning, a strategy in which students work collaboratively in small groups to achieve shared academic goals. This approach not only facilitates academic achievement but also enhances social interaction and communication skills (Johnson et al., 1998; Slavin, 1995). The theoretical underpinnings of cooperative learning are strongly supported by social interdependence theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, both of which emphasize the importance of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In language learning, such interactions are essential, as they provide learners with meaningful practice and a supportive environment that can reduce anxiety and foster risk-taking in speaking.

Empirical evidence has increasingly demonstrated that cooperative learning can improve oral efficiency. Group activities like role-plays, debates, and peer discussions provide learners with ample opportunities to practice speaking, leading to enhanced fluency and improved pronunciation (Prince, 2004; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1998). Furthermore, cooperative learning shifts the focus from individual performance to group success, thereby boosting learners' self-confidence and willingness to communicate. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1998) argue that such learner-centered approaches not only promote language skills but also empower students by increasing their autonomy and intrinsic inducement.

Motivation, a crucial determinant of language success, is significantly influenced by classroom dynamics and instructional methods. Dörnyei (2005) highlights that motivational strategies are pivotal in sustaining learners' engagement, while Gardner (1985) underscores the importance of positive attitudes toward language learning. In many Saudi EFL classrooms, the traditional instructional practices have often resulted in low inducement and high levels of speaking anxiety. Cooperative learning, however, has the potential to transform the learning environment into one where learners feel valued and supported by their peers. This collaborative atmosphere can stimulate intrinsic motivation and create a more dynamic, interactive classroom setting (Tomasello, 2003).

Despite the promising potential of cooperative learning, most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts. The unique sociocultural and educational context of Saudi Arabia—with its traditionally hierarchical classroom structures and cultural inhibitions regarding open communication—raises questions about the direct applicability of these strategies. Upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners, in particular, often experience a gap between their receptive language abilities

and their capacity to engage in spontaneous oral communication. This discrepancy is attributed not only to the limited practice opportunities in traditional classrooms but also to a lack of confidence and inducement to communicate in English (Abdulaal & Abuslema, 2020; Ullman, 2004).

Integrating cooperative learning strategies in the Saudi EFL context could help bridge this gap. By encouraging peer interaction, shared responsibility, and collaborative problem-solving, cooperative learning can provide a more supportive environment that nurtures both oral efficiency and learner motivation. As learners engage in meaningful communication and receive immediate feedback from their peers, they are likely to experience reduced anxiety and increased self-efficacy, which are essential for effective language production (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Prince, 2004; Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Moreover, cooperative learning can contribute to a more inclusive classroom atmosphere, enabling learners to overcome cultural and educational barriers that traditionally inhibit oral participation.

Given these considerations, it is imperative to explore the impact of cooperative learning on both oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners. By examining how cooperative learning strategies can be adapted to suit the specific needs of Saudi learners, this study aims to address a significant gap in the literature. The findings from this research could provide valuable insights into the potential of cooperative learning to transform EFL instruction in non-Western contexts, thereby contributing to improved language outcomes and increased learner engagement.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Developing oral efficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in contexts like Saudi Arabia, presents unique challenges. Traditional teacher-centered methodologies, which emphasize grammar instruction and rote memorization, have long dominated the Saudi educational landscape. As a result, learners often excel in receptive skills like reading and listening yet struggle with speaking due to limited interactive opportunities and low motivational levels. In response to these challenges, cooperative learning has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach to enhance both oral efficiency and inducement among EFL learners (Abdulaal et al., 2022; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007).

Cooperative learning is grounded in several key educational theories that emphasize the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Social interdependence theory posits that the way in which goals are structured determines how individuals interact, which in turn affects outcomes. When students perceive that their success is linked to the success of their group members, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote collective achievement. Similarly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights the role of social interaction in learning, suggesting that cognitive development is a socially mediated process. Through collaborative activities, learners can scaffold each other's understanding, leading to deeper comprehension and skill acquisition (Abdulaal et al., 2023; Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Yang & Wu, 2012).

A substantial body of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing oral efficiency among EFL learners. For instance, a study by Ning and Hornby (2014) investigated the impact of cooperative learning on tertiary EFL learners' motivation in China. The findings suggested significant differences in favor of cooperative learning in improving intrinsic motivation, indicating that learners were more engaged and willing to participate in communicative activities. Similarly, research conducted by Yavuz and Arslan (2018) found that cooperative learning methods had a greater impact on improving vocabulary knowledge, grammar, listening, and reading skills compared to traditional approaches. These studies underscore the potential of cooperative learning to create a more interactive and supportive learning environment, which is crucial for developing oral efficiency.

Motivation plays a critical role in language acquisition, influencing the effort learners invest and their persistence in overcoming challenges. Dörnyei (2005) emphasizes that motivational strategies are pivotal in sustaining learners' engagement. Incorporating cooperative learning strategies can transform the classroom into a more dynamic and interactive environment, thereby enhancing motivation. For example, a study by Ning (2013) focused on the impact of cooperative learning on the development of social skills in EFL tertiary students. The findings suggested substantial differences in favor of cooperative learning in the improvement of students' overall social skills, which are closely linked to increased inducement and confidence in using the target language.

Implementing cooperative learning in the Saudi EFL context requires careful consideration of cultural and educational factors. The traditional hierarchical classroom structures and cultural norms may pose challenges to the adoption of student-centered approaches like cooperative learning. However, studies have shown that with appropriate adaptation, cooperative learning can be effective in similar contexts. For instance, research by Al-Tamimi and Attamimi (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills and attitudes towards learning English among Yemeni students. This suggests that, despite potential challenges, cooperative learning can be tailored to fit the Saudi educational context, fostering a more supportive environment for developing oral efficiency (Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998).

Integrating cooperative learning into EFL instruction involves several practical steps. Teachers should design activities that require genuine interaction and interdependence among students, such as role-plays, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks. It's essential to establish clear objectives and group roles to ensure that all students are actively engaged and accountable. Additionally, providing training for both teachers and students on effective group work strategies can enhance the implementation of cooperative learning. Regular reflection and feedback sessions can help in identifying areas for improvement and ensuring that the cooperative learning activities are meeting the desired educational outcomes.

The integration of cooperative learning strategies in EFL instruction offers a promising avenue for enhancing oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi learners. Grounded in robust theoretical frameworks and supported by empirical evidence, cooperative learning fosters a collaborative and interactive learning environment. While challenges exist, particularly related to cultural and educational norms, careful adaptation and implementation of cooperative learning can lead to significant improvements in learners' speaking skills and their overall motivation to engage in language learning. Future research should explore the long-term effects of cooperative learning in the Saudi context, as well as strategies for effectively training teachers and students to maximize the benefits of this approach.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Questions

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of cooperative learning on oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners. The study follows a pre-test and post-test design, where participants engage in structured cooperative learning activities over an eight-week period. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are utilized to ensure a comprehensive analysis of learners' oral efficiency and motivation levels. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does cooperative learning enhance the oral efficiency of upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners?
2. How does cooperative learning influence the motivation of these learners towards engaging in oral communication?
3. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing cooperative learning strategies in the Saudi EFL context?

B. Participants

The study involves 60 upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners enrolled in an English language program at a Saudi university. Participants are selected through purposive sampling to ensure they meet the required efficiency level. They are divided into two groups: the experimental group (30 students) receives instruction through cooperative learning strategies, while the control group (30 students) follows a traditional teacher-centered approach. This division allows for a comparative analysis of the two instructional methods. The selection process ensures a balanced representation of learners to examine the effects of cooperative learning effectively. The study aims to assess whether cooperative learning enhances oral efficiency and motivation more significantly than traditional methods. By comparing the two groups, the study seeks to determine the effectiveness of interactive learning environments in fostering language development and engagement among Saudi EFL learners.

C. Instruments

To measure the impact of cooperative learning on oral efficiency and motivation, a combination of instruments is utilized. A standardized oral efficiency test is administered as a pre-test and post-test to assess fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech production. Additionally, a modified version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985) is used to evaluate learners' motivation before and after the intervention. Structured classroom observations are conducted to analyze student engagement, participation levels, and collaborative behaviors during cooperative learning activities. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants (n=10) from the experimental group provide deeper insights into their perceptions of cooperative learning and its impact on their speaking skills and motivation.

D. Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

The data collection process follows a structured timeline, beginning with pre-test administration, where both groups complete an oral efficiency test and a motivation questionnaire to establish baseline efficiency and motivation levels. During the eight-week intervention phase, the experimental group participates in cooperative learning activities such as peer discussions, role-plays, and collaborative problem-solving tasks, while the control group follows traditional instruction. Classroom observations are conducted twice a week to monitor student interactions and engagement. At the end of the intervention, both groups complete the oral efficiency test and motivation questionnaire again to measure changes in performance and attitudes. Finally, semi-structured interviews with selected participants provide insights into their experiences with cooperative learning.

Quantitative data from the oral efficiency test and motivation questionnaire are analyzed using paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests to compare within-group and between-group differences. Qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews are thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns related to learners' experiences, engagement levels, and perceived challenges in cooperative learning environments. This methodology ensures a rigorous and systematic approach to evaluating the impact of cooperative learning on oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners.

IV. RESULTS

A. Quantitative Results

The analysis of the oral efficiency test scores revealed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group. The mean pre-test scores for both groups were comparable, with the experimental group scoring an average of 62.4 and the control group scoring 63.1. However, after the eight-week intervention, the experimental group's mean post-test score increased to 78.9, while the control group only improved slightly to 67.3. Paired sample t-tests confirmed that the increase in the experimental group's performance was statistically significant ($t(29) = 6.84, p < 0.001$), whereas the control group's improvement was not significant ($t(29) = 1.92, p = 0.064$).

Breaking down the oral efficiency test results into specific components—fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech production—the experimental group exhibited significant enhancements in all three areas. Fluency scores showed the most remarkable improvement, increasing from 19.5 to 27.8 ($p < 0.001$). Pronunciation scores increased from 21.3 to 25.1 ($p = 0.002$), and spontaneous speech production improved from 21.6 to 26.0 ($p = 0.001$). These findings suggest that cooperative learning significantly enhances oral efficiency, particularly in fluency and spontaneous speech production.

The analysis of motivation levels, as measured by the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, indicated a significant increase in motivation among learners in the experimental group. The mean motivation score in the pre-test for the experimental group was 58.7, which increased to 81.2 in the post-test ($t(29) = 7.42, p < 0.001$). In contrast, the control group's motivation score only increased marginally from 59.3 to 63.4, with no significant difference observed ($t(29) = 1.45, p = 0.112$).

Specific motivation factors, such as willingness to communicate, confidence in speaking, and intrinsic motivation to learn English, all showed significant positive changes in the experimental group. Willingness to communicate increased from 19.2 to 27.5, confidence in speaking from 18.6 to 26.7, and intrinsic motivation from 20.9 to 27.0 (all p -values < 0.001). These results strongly support the hypothesis that cooperative learning fosters a more engaging and motivating learning environment compared to traditional teacher-centered methods.

B. Qualitative Analysis

The structured classroom observations provided further insights into how cooperative learning impacted learner engagement and interaction. Observations conducted twice weekly over eight weeks revealed increased participation levels among students in the experimental group. Initially, many learners displayed hesitation and reluctance to speak; however, as the intervention progressed, their engagement levels increased significantly. By the fourth week, 85% of students in the experimental group were actively participating in discussions, compared to only 45% in the control group. Students in cooperative learning settings also exhibited stronger peer collaboration, with frequent instances of students assisting one another in language production and providing constructive feedback.

Moreover, anxiety levels appeared to decline in the experimental group, as observed through increased spontaneous speech attempts and greater willingness to engage in role-plays and problem-solving activities. In contrast, students in the control group remained largely passive, with limited spontaneous interaction beyond teacher-prompted responses. The observed behaviors suggested that cooperative learning not only facilitated greater linguistic engagement but also contributed to a more relaxed and communicative classroom environment.

The observations indicated that cooperative learning encouraged active student participation through structured peer interactions. Activities such as think-pair-share, jigsaw exercises, and collaborative storytelling appeared to enhance students' willingness to speak and share ideas without fear of making mistakes. The interactive nature of these activities created an inclusive environment where learners supported one another, reinforcing positive attitudes toward speaking in English. Additionally, the presence of peer feedback mechanisms allowed students to refine their oral skills in real time, further enhancing their confidence and fluency.

To gain deeper insights into learners' perceptions of cooperative learning, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants from the experimental group. Thematic analysis of the interview data identified three recurring themes: increased confidence, enhanced engagement, and perceived benefits of peer support.

Many participants reported feeling more confident in their speaking abilities after engaging in cooperative learning activities. One participant stated, "At first, I was afraid of making mistakes, but working with my group made me realize that errors are part of learning." Another learner noted that the supportive nature of cooperative learning reduced their fear of speaking in English, which allowed them to participate more freely. The progressive decrease in speaking anxiety indicated that learners were developing a sense of linguistic self-efficacy, which is crucial for long-term language acquisition.

Participants highlighted that cooperative learning made classroom activities more engaging and enjoyable. One student remarked, "Traditional lessons can feel monotonous, but in cooperative learning, I was always involved in discussions, which made learning English more interesting." The interactive nature of the activities, such as role-plays and group problem-solving, appeared to sustain students' motivation throughout the intervention. Learners also expressed a preference for peer-driven learning over teacher-dominated instruction, as it allowed them to take ownership of their learning process. The diversity of cooperative tasks ensured that students remained actively involved, preventing disengagement and passive learning behaviors.

Learners emphasized that peer collaboration played a crucial role in improving their speaking skills. One participant commented, "Practicing with my classmates helped me learn new words and correct my mistakes in a friendly way." Others mentioned that the opportunity to receive immediate feedback from peers made them more aware of their language use and encouraged self-improvement. Several interviewees pointed out that constructive criticism from peers was more

impactful than teacher correction, as it felt less intimidating and more collaborative. This suggests that cooperative learning fosters a more dynamic and supportive linguistic environment where learners feel comfortable experimenting with language use.

Additionally, the interview data revealed that students appreciated the real-world applicability of cooperative learning activities. Many participants noted that role-plays and discussion-based tasks helped them develop conversational strategies that could be used outside the classroom. Some learners mentioned that they felt more prepared to engage in English conversations in social or professional settings, which reflects the practical benefits of cooperative learning beyond the academic context. The ability to apply learned skills in real-life situations contributes to long-term language retention and communicative competence.

Another significant theme emerging from the interviews was the positive impact of peer motivation. Several participants noted that their peers' enthusiasm encouraged them to engage more actively in discussions. One student stated, "When I saw my classmates speaking with confidence, it made me want to do the same." This peer influence created a ripple effect, where students motivated one another to participate, thereby strengthening the collaborative learning atmosphere. The presence of peer role models within the experimental group further reinforced the benefits of cooperative learning by fostering a cycle of mutual encouragement and support.

Furthermore, students in the experimental group expressed a preference for cooperative learning over traditional methods, citing a stronger sense of community and belonging. Many learners stated that working with peers made learning feel less isolating and more enjoyable. One participant remarked, "In traditional classes, I felt alone when struggling with speaking, but in cooperative learning, my classmates helped me and I helped them. It made learning English feel like a team effort." This sense of belonging contributed to a more positive classroom culture, where students viewed speaking practice as a collective endeavor rather than an individual challenge.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, some challenges were noted. A few participants mentioned that working in groups could sometimes be frustrating, particularly when group members had differing levels of efficiency or engagement. One student commented, "Sometimes, my group had members who didn't participate much, and that made discussions difficult." Another challenge mentioned was the occasional dominance of more proficient speakers, which sometimes made less confident learners hesitant to contribute. However, these issues were generally mitigated by the teacher's role in structuring groups and ensuring equal participation. Additionally, students acknowledged that while cooperative learning required more effort in terms of active involvement, the benefits in terms of language development and confidence far outweighed the challenges.

In conclusion, the structured classroom observations and interview data consistently highlighted the positive effects of cooperative learning on learner engagement, confidence, and motivation. The findings demonstrated that cooperative learning provided students with meaningful opportunities to practice oral communication in a supportive environment, leading to significant improvements in efficiency. The decline in anxiety levels, increase in spontaneous speech attempts, and heightened peer collaboration suggest that cooperative learning is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners. The study's findings support the integration of cooperative learning strategies into language instruction to create a more interactive and student-centered learning experience. Future research could explore the long-term effects of cooperative learning and examine its impact across different efficiency levels to further validate its effectiveness in EFL contexts.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with previous research on the benefits of cooperative learning in language acquisition. The significant improvement in oral efficiency observed in the experimental group supports claims that interactive learning environments facilitate language development (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Prince, 2004). Specifically, fluency gains suggest that frequent speaking opportunities in a low-anxiety setting contribute to improved verbal expression. The structured, peer-supported environment provided ample practice and reinforcement, leading to greater ease in articulating ideas and responding spontaneously.

Moreover, the increase in motivation levels corroborates existing literature on the role of cooperative learning in fostering intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). Learners' increased confidence and willingness to communicate further reinforce the idea that social interaction plays a crucial role in language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). The cooperative learning framework provided an inclusive environment where students felt encouraged to take risks without fear of negative evaluation. This increase in self-efficacy was evident in their growing ability to initiate conversations and sustain dialogues with minimal hesitation.

The qualitative findings complement the quantitative data by providing deeper insights into the learner experience. The themes of increased confidence, engagement, and peer support reflect the essential components of effective cooperative learning environments. The observed reduction in anxiety levels is particularly noteworthy, as previous studies have highlighted the negative impact of anxiety on language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). By reducing anxiety, cooperative learning creates a more conducive environment for oral language development. Observations showed that learners who initially hesitated to speak in front of their peers gradually became more comfortable, contributing more frequently to discussions and showing greater enthusiasm for speaking tasks.

Furthermore, peer collaboration played a crucial role in language development. Many students reported that working in groups allowed them to practice pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammatical structures in a supportive setting. The constant interaction and exchange of ideas not only enhanced linguistic competence but also promoted critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Peer feedback was instrumental in helping students refine their speaking abilities, as they received immediate corrections and suggestions in a non-threatening manner (Abdulaal et al., 2022; Anderson & Pearson, 2000; Zwaan & Singer, 2003).

One of the most striking findings was the transformation in learners' attitudes towards speaking. Initially, many students viewed oral communication as a daunting task, often preferring to remain silent rather than risk making mistakes. However, by the end of the study, most participants in the experimental group reported a newfound appreciation for speaking activities. They expressed that the cooperative learning approach had made language practice more enjoyable and meaningful. One participant noted, "Before, I was afraid to speak because I thought I would be judged. But now, I feel more comfortable because I know my peers are supportive".

Despite these positive outcomes, some challenges were identified. A few students initially struggled with the shift from teacher-centered instruction to a more collaborative approach. Some learners expressed discomfort in relying on peers rather than the teacher for language input. This suggests that while cooperative learning has numerous benefits, it may require gradual implementation and appropriate scaffolding to accommodate learners' varying comfort levels. Resistance to change was evident among students who were accustomed to passive learning methods. For these individuals, adapting to an interactive, student-led approach required time and encouragement from instructors.

Another challenge was the varying levels of participation among students. While some learners thrived in the cooperative setting, others were less inclined to contribute actively. This discrepancy underscores the need for structured group dynamics, where all members are encouraged and held accountable for their participation. Future implementations of cooperative learning should incorporate strategies such as role assignments within groups to ensure equal involvement and prevent dominant students from overshadowing quieter peers.

Additionally, cultural factors may have influenced students' initial hesitancy. In Saudi Arabian educational settings, traditional classroom structures often emphasize teacher authority and individual performance rather than collaborative learning. Consequently, some students found it difficult to adjust to the expectation of peer reliance and open discussions. This highlights the importance of culturally sensitive pedagogical strategies that gradually introduce cooperative learning while addressing students' concerns and expectations.

To address these challenges, future research should explore the role of teacher mediation in cooperative learning environments. Providing targeted guidance and structured frameworks can ease the transition for students who are unfamiliar with interactive learning methods. Moreover, professional development for instructors can ensure that they are equipped with the skills to facilitate cooperative learning effectively, balancing structure with student autonomy.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the value of cooperative learning as an effective strategy for enhancing oral efficiency and motivation in EFL learners. By fostering a communicative, supportive, and student-centered environment, cooperative learning addresses many of the challenges traditionally associated with language learning. The results suggest that with careful implementation, cooperative learning can lead to significant improvements in both linguistic skills and learner confidence, ultimately contributing to more successful language acquisition experiences.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides strong evidence that cooperative learning is a highly effective instructional approach for enhancing oral efficiency and motivation among upper-intermediate Saudi EFL learners. The combination of quantitative and qualitative findings highlights the numerous benefits of integrating cooperative learning into EFL classrooms. The substantial improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech production suggest that creating interactive and student-centered learning environments fosters greater language acquisition. Furthermore, the increase in learner motivation, confidence, and engagement underscores the importance of peer collaboration in overcoming traditional barriers to oral efficiency development.

The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate findings, as they suggest a broader need for pedagogical reforms in Saudi EFL education. Traditional teacher-centered methods that emphasize rote memorization and passive learning have long dominated English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. However, the results of this study indicate that cooperative learning can provide a more effective and engaging alternative. By shifting the focus to student interaction, communication, and collaborative problem-solving, cooperative learning encourages learners to take a more active role in their language development. This shift is particularly crucial for EFL learners who struggle with speaking anxiety and limited opportunities for meaningful oral practice.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment that reduces anxiety and encourages risk-taking in communication. One of the key findings was that students in the experimental group exhibited lower anxiety levels and greater willingness to engage in oral tasks compared to their peers in the control group. This finding aligns with existing research on language learning anxiety, which suggests that creating a low-anxiety classroom environment can significantly improve learners' willingness to communicate. Teachers who implement cooperative learning must therefore prioritize creating a classroom culture that values effort, peer support, and constructive feedback over error avoidance and perfectionism.

Another important implication of this study is the role of peer support in enhancing oral efficiency. The qualitative findings revealed that students benefited significantly from immediate feedback, vocabulary expansion, and collaborative language practice with their peers. These findings suggest that cooperative learning provides learners with a sense of community and shared responsibility for language development. Teachers can enhance this effect by structuring cooperative activities in a way that promotes meaningful communication and interdependence among learners. Activities such as role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks should be designed to encourage active participation and linguistic experimentation.

Despite the promising findings, the study also identifies several challenges associated with implementing cooperative learning. One notable challenge is the initial resistance from students who are accustomed to traditional teacher-centered instruction. Some learners expressed discomfort with relying on peers for language input and feedback, indicating that successful implementation of cooperative learning requires a gradual transition and appropriate scaffolding. Teachers may need to provide explicit guidance, modeling, and structured tasks to help students adjust to this new approach. Furthermore, teacher training programs should emphasize the role of the instructor as a facilitator who guides discussions, monitors group dynamics, and provides targeted support when necessary.

Future research should build on the findings of this study by exploring the long-term impact of cooperative learning on oral efficiency retention. While this study demonstrated significant short-term gains, it remains unclear whether these improvements are sustained over time. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the durability of cooperative learning effects and identify strategies for reinforcing oral efficiency development beyond the intervention period. Additionally, research should investigate how cooperative learning can be adapted for learners at different efficiency levels. While this study focused on upper-intermediate learners, lower-efficiency students may require different types of support and scaffolding to fully benefit from cooperative learning strategies.

Another important area for future research is the role of teacher facilitation in cooperative learning environments. While this study primarily focused on student interactions, the effectiveness of cooperative learning is also influenced by how teachers structure activities, provide feedback, and manage group dynamics. Investigating the specific instructional strategies that maximize the benefits of cooperative learning could provide valuable guidance for educators seeking to implement this approach more effectively. Additionally, research into the cultural factors that influence cooperative learning outcomes in Saudi Arabia could further refine pedagogical strategies to better align with the local educational context.

Ultimately, this study underscores the need for a shift in EFL instructional practices in Saudi Arabia. By incorporating cooperative learning strategies into language instruction, educators can create more dynamic, student-centered classrooms that foster both linguistic competence and learner motivation. The findings suggest that cooperative learning not only improves oral efficiency but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning, collaborate effectively, and develop the confidence needed to use English in real-world contexts. These benefits contribute to a more holistic and meaningful approach to language education, which aligns with the broader goals of English language teaching in an increasingly globalized world.

In conclusion, the results of this study advocate for the widespread adoption of cooperative learning as an effective method for improving oral efficiency and motivation in Saudi EFL classrooms. While challenges exist, they can be mitigated through careful implementation, teacher support, and ongoing research. As Saudi Arabia continues to invest in English language education as part of its broader Vision 2030 goals, cooperative learning offers a promising strategy for equipping learners with the communication skills necessary for academic and professional success. By embracing interactive and student-centered approaches, educators can contribute to a more effective and engaging EFL learning experience, ultimately preparing students for greater confidence and fluency in English communication.

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