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Cooperative Learning Techniques to Reduce Anxiety in Speaking
Case Study: Third Year LMD Students in the Department of
English, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

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*To my beloved family:
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my sisters karima, Saloua, Rebiha, and
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my brothers Hicham and Ghilas,
my best friend Rachid and his family,
my cousin Habib, Rachid Amari,
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Abstract

This dissertation attempts to investigate whether foreign language anxiety (FLA) exists among advanced learners and tests the effectiveness of cooperative learning technique to reduce that anxiety in speaking. It uses Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language anxiety Classroom, then, the structure of Pair and Group activities used by Nagahashi (2007) Techniques for Reducing Foreign Language Anxiety. To collect data, fifty questionnaires were administered to third year LMD students, and a semi-structured interview was conducted with five teachers in the Department of English, Mouloud MAMMERI University, Tizi Ouzou. In order to analyze and interpret the collected data we opted for the Mixed Methods Research which makes use of the combination between the quantitative and the qualitative methods. The quantitative method helps to obtain statistical data and the qualitative method to bring more information about the investigation. The findings show that Anxiety associated with communication apprehension exists among the students because they feel in tense when they are asked to speak in class and cooperation between them is an anxiety relieving technique. As a conclusion to the overall findings, foreign language anxiety is an important affective factor within language learning process and finding new strategies to lower it, is more than urgent.

List of Abbreviations

CA: Communication Apprehension

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

L2: Second Language

LMD: Licence, Master and Doctorate

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Statement of the Problem:

Learning a new language can be a stressful experience to many language learners. This feeling known as language learning anxiety is tension, apprehension, and worry to use a language in class. It impedes the learner's performance and creates an unpleasant atmosphere inside language classes. During the past three decades, research has been developed on foreign language anxiety (FLA). The first theory on foreign language anxiety was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) in which they claimed that learners may be good at learning other skills but when it comes to learning to speak another language, they claim to have a mental block against it. This theory was used in a quite number of studies. Nowadays, a variety of articles and journals appear reviewing the previous works and major investigations on second/foreign language anxiety. As will be detailed later, As will be detailed later, Many language researchers and language specialists strongly hold that anxiety is a major problem that language teachers and learners have to overcome in order to learn a language effectively.

The English language has become an essential language on communicational over the world and the necessity to learn and master the communicative skills is highly recommended. Yet, the learning of this language can be a stressful experience to many language students. Learners tend to have a mental block, and they freeze when they are invited to speak in class in front of their teachers and peers. This multidimensional phenomenon as Young calls it, doesn't exist only among low-grade students but can be also observed among University students. Cambel and Ortiz (1991) consider that language anxiety among University students is alarming and estimate that up to one half of all language students experience debilitating levels of anxiety (Cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 6). The awareness of the existence of anxiety

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among language learners is very beneficial because it helps instructors and teachers to find some strategies and techniques to create a low anxiety classroom atmosphere.

As this research deals with anxiety in speaking, the speaking skill bears a crucial for students' dimension in the department of English, at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Students in the department study the speaking module for three years and perform in English language. However, they find obstacles to master the speaking skill. One of these obstacles can be foreign language anxiety. To the present of our knowledge, the latter has never been studied in this department. In this research paper, we are going to deal with a crucial intrinsic factor that causes the failure of students to use a second/foreign language in class. This factor is foreign language anxiety associated with communication apprehension. As an attempt to reduce its stress we propose cooperative learning which is seen by many language teaching researchers as an anxiety-relieving which we deem able to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The overall aim of our investigation is to answer our research questions which focus on identifying the existence of foreign language anxiety associated with communication apprehension among third year LMD students of English in the Department of English, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou, and also to test the validity of our hypothesis. What motivates us to choose this subject is the experience we had as students of English as a foreign language at University. In addition to this, anxiety is a universal phenomenon which interferes in the learning process and renders it very stressful. Hence, this needs the attention of the educators and foreign language teachers to find adequate strategies and techniques such as the cooperative learning technique which is seen by many foreign language specialists as an anxiety- relieving techniques.

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Research Questions and Hypotheses

In our research paper, and in order to guide our investigation we ask these following questions,

1. Does Foreign Language Anxiety exist in advanced students at the Department of English, at Mouloud Mammeri University?
2. Does Cooperative learning decrease or increase anxiety in third year LMD students at the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University?
3. What do teachers do in order to create a favorable atmosphere in their speaking classes?

In order to answer these questions, we suggest the following hypothesis, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) exists among third year LMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University and cooperative learning techniques may be good techniques to reduce it.

Research Techniques and Methodology

In our work we choose the research methodology that fits the objectives of our research is the one labeled mixed methods. The quantitative method will help us to get statistical findings and the qualitative method will help us to collect and describe relevant information. Our procedures for collecting data are questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. The interviews will add more clarifications to the findings of the questionnaires. The participants are the third year LMD students of English in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University. Those students are not randomly selected; we wanted to find if foreign language anxiety exists among advanced students at University and also to test the effectiveness of the cooperative leaning techniques to reduce that anxiety associated with communication apprehension. Our study consists of fifty (50) students from

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different specialties, linguistics-Esp. and literature–civilization. The students have been studying the oral module for three years. Our study also includes five (05) teachers the oral module.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. Chapter 1 is called “*Literature review*”. It reviews the definitions and the theoretical basis for Foreign Language Anxiety and the description and the use of the cooperative learning techniques in foreign language classrooms to reduce stress and to foster communication and motivation. Chapter 2 is called “*Research Design and methodology*”. It starts with the presentation of the theoretical framework of Pair and group work activities to use in oral sessions to promote students’ oral production and reduce communication apprehension. The research tools and procedures of data collection are then described (questionnaires for students and a semi-structured interview for teachers of the oral module at the department of English, University of Tizi Ouzou). The chapter also includes the research methods which are both quantitative qualitative research methods. Chapter 3 is named “*Findings*”. It outlines the results of our study. Chapter 4 is named “*interpretation and Discussion*”. It presents the analysis of the findings and provides other pedagogical implications for both teachers and students to lessen foreign language anxiety.

Literature Review

Introduction:

Affect in language learning has been of major concern to many educators and researchers. Who claim that learning a new language is a difficult, complex, and a lengthy process. This process is affected by a number of cognitive and affective factors. One of the most influential affective factors is Anxiety. Anxiety is worry, apprehension, nervousness, and uneasiness, experienced by learners especially when learning to use a new language foreign or second. It impedes the learner's capacity to perform successfully in a foreign language class. This kind of anxiety is called foreign language anxiety (FLA). In order to lower the effects of anxiety and make learning a second or a foreign language an enjoyable experience, educators and teachers should provide adequate solutions and luxuriant techniques to permit the learners to practice the speaking skill in a relaxed atmosphere. In this work, we will investigate foreign language anxiety; and we rely on cooperative learning as techniques suggested by educators to reduce this phenomenon.

This chapter deals with the review of literature and it is divided into to two sections. The first section is devoted to previous works and theories on foreign language anxiety. The second section is devoted to the description of cooperative learning activities.

I.1. Foreign Language Anxiety

I.1.1 Definitions of Foreign Language Anxiety

Many definitions of foreign language anxiety are provided by many language researchers and important figures in language teaching. In their seminal article "*Foreign Language Anxiety*", Horwitz et al., define foreign language anxiety as, "*The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with the arousal of the autonomic nervous system*" (1986, p. 128). For Horwitz et al., the fact of learning a second/ foreign language can be a stressful experience. Foreign language anxiety is identified as the

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individual emotion and feeling of worry to perform in class using a second a foreign language.

In his book *Affect in Language Learning*, Jane Arnold, describes anxiety as “*quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively abstracts the learning process, it is associated with negative feelings such uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and tension*” (1999, p. 8). According to J. Arnold, anxiety is a frequent affective factor that harms the learner’s Performance in the language classroom. It impedes his learning and renders the learning experience more stressful. It is a kind of worry to talk and express one’s ideas or to respond to any question in a language in which s/he is not fluent due to self-doubt, negative perception of the self, and lack of self confidence.

Horwitz, et al., conceive foreign language anxiety as “*a distinct complex of self – perception, believe, feeling, and behaviors related to the classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process*” (1986, P. 128). For them, foreign language anxiety is special and specific. It is a form of anxiety connected to the context of language learning experience. They draw a distinction between foreign language anxiety and other anxieties. The learner has to perform in a language in which he will be evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards.

Furthermore, MC Intyre and Gardner, argue that, “*foreign language anxiety is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon referring to the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language (L2) contexts ,including speaking, listening and hearing*” (Cited in Meihua Liu and Jane Jackson, 2008, p. 72). They seem to consider foreign language anxiety as the fear and worry to perform in contexts related to second language classes in which a variety of features and complexity of anxiety can be considered.

Examination of the above definitions of foreign language anxiety shows that anxiety can be considered as an uncomfortable emotional state where learners feel nervous and

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worried. It occurs when learners face new situations where they have to use their second or foreign language to communicate. It differs from other anxieties as learners will be evaluated according to unknown linguistic standards. It is a negative experience because it makes learners unable to express their ideas and opinions and hinders their learning.

I.1.2 Components of Performance Anxiety

Relating foreign language anxiety to performance evaluation within academic and social context, Horwitz et al. draw three related Components performance anxieties, (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative evaluation.

a) Communication apprehension (CA)

The learner's speaking skill is affected by a component of anxiety called communication apprehension (CA). It is a kind of fear and worry experienced by the learner when s/he has to speak in the target language, in which s/he lacks fluency. For this s/he avoids the situation in fear of making mistakes. The learner who experiences communication anxiety is unable to understand others and unable to make herself/himself understood. Horwitz et al. define communication apprehension as, "*a type of shyness characterized by fear of anxiety about communicating with People*" (1986, P. 128). They also add that (CA) is "*Any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, and fear or even panic*" (1986, P. 128).

Another scholar, MC Crosskey (1977) defined (CA) as, "*an individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons*" (Cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 12).

b) Test Anxiety

This variety of anxiety concerns testing. To Horwitz et al., "*Students who are test-anxious in foreign language class probably experience difficulty since tests and quizzes are*

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frequent and even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors“(1986, p, 128). They explain that test anxiety is a fear and a worry of exams and quizzes, and other assignments to evaluate student’s performance. For this, the learner is anxious because of the students’ lack of preparation, poor time management, lack of self -talk, and lack of self esteem.

c) Fear of Negative Evaluation

The use of second language in class makes the learner anxious, by fear of being negatively evaluated by his peers or by his teacher. For this, the learner avoids the situation and remains passive. *“Fear of negative evaluation is defined as apprehension about others’ evaluation, avoidance of evaluative situation and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively”* (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128).

I.1.3 Levels of Anxiety

Psychologists make a distinction between three levels of anxiety. (a) State anxiety, (b) Trait anxiety, and (c) Situational-specific anxiety.

a) State Anxiety

This level of anxiety is a short-term language anxiety. It is also called situational anxiety which diminishes over time. *“Language anxiety can start as transitory episodes of fear in a situation in which the student has to perform in the language, at this time; anxiety is simply a passing state”*(Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 60). A learner with this level of anxiety is upset about what her/his peers and teacher are thinking about her/him. Hence, s/he tries to avoid the situation and remain passive. When state anxiety appears frequently and does not diminish over time, it becomes a trait anxiety.

b) Trait Anxiety

The repeated instances of state anxiety cause trait anxiety to appear. It can be experienced in any situation. To Gardner and Mc Intyre (1993), *“If repeated occurrences*

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cause students to associate anxiety with language performance, anxiety becomes a trait rather than a state” (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 60). i.e. trait anxiety is more a permanent personality character, and a learner with this type of anxiety is emotionally unstable. Trait anxiety is said to have pervasive effects on language learning and language performance (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 60).

c) Situational -Specific Anxiety

“This type of anxiety arises in specific situations. It falls in the middle of the continuum, representing the probability of becoming anxious in particular type of situation” (Cited in Zheng, 2008, p. 2) i.e. It shares similarities with trait anxiety as it is stable overtime, however in situational anxiety a learner can be anxious in a situation not in others.

Anxiety is delineated into three types, state anxiety (a short-term anxiety which diminishes over time), trait anxiety (a permanent personality trait), and situational-specific anxiety (a stable anxiety trait arises in specific contexts as in classroom participation).

I.1.4 Modes of Foreign Language Anxiety: “Harmful anxiety vs. Helpful anxiety”

Studies on anxiety in language area have let language teaching researchers to dive in a debate on whether foreign language anxiety is harmful or helpful for the learning process. Some of them claim that anxiety has a harmful mode; in which it creates a stressful atmosphere and impedes students’ performance to practice the speaking skill effectively. Whereas others claim that foreign language anxiety is beneficial for the learning process. It helps students to be more concentrated on the task.

a) Harmful Mode of Anxiety

This is the mode which can be also called debilitating anxiety. This mode has a negative influence or impact on the learning process, which can lead to work avoidance and reticence. Students try to avoid the teacher and feel blocked during the oral expressions. To Scovel (1991), *“then debilitating anxiety motivates the learner to flee the new learning task;*

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it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior” (Cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 10). To Scovel, the harmful mode of foreign language anxiety impedes the student’s performance.

b) Helpful Mode of Anxiety

Certain specialists in language claim that there is a helpful side to language anxiety. They claim that anxiety plays a luxuriant role in motivating the learner to challenge the situation. For Scovel (1991), *“helpful anxiety motivates the learner to fight the new learning task, it gears the learner emotionally for approach behavior” (Cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 10).* The existence of helpful anxiety creates disagreement between language specialists. Researchers like Horwitz (1990) state that anxiety is only helpful for very simple tasks but not with more complicated learning such as foreign language. In their response to an interview by Young (1992), language specialists like Rarding respond that a positive aspect of anxiety operates all the time. Conversely, Stephan Krashen’s maintains that there is no helpful aspect of anxiety in language acquisition (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 61).

It can then be affirmed that language teaching researchers and language specialists identified that there should be two modes of foreign language anxiety. They state that there are two modes of foreign language anxiety; negative mode of foreign language anxiety and positive mode of foreign language anxiety. The negative mode of foreign language anxiety is harmful; it impedes the learner’s performance in second/foreign language in many ways. However, the positive mode of foreign language anxiety which creates disagreements on its existence is a helpful mode which facilitates the situation to the learner and helps her/him to be more concentrated on the task in some ways.

I.1.5 Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

To Horwitz et al. (1986), *“one third of students learning a foreign language experience some types of foreign language anxiety” (Cited in Tallon, p .2).* Because anxiety is

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considered as a highly influential construct in language learning, language researchers and specialists have attempted to identify the causes and sources of foreign language anxiety. Sources of FLA appear to come from highly personal reasons such as self esteem to procedural such as classroom activities and methods (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 62). The sources are related to the learner characteristics such as, low-self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, competitiveness, communication apprehension, lack of language proficiency, and the learners' beliefs about language learning.

One important learner characteristic which contributes to foreign language anxiety is low-self esteem. It is a lack of control within one's own environment. So instead of having a self-judgment of worth and value, the learner perceives herself/himself as limited in the foreign language. To price (1991), "*Self-esteem is vulnerable when the learner perceives himself or herself as very competent in the native language and totally inadequate or limited in the target language*" (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 62). Accordingly, krashen asserts that an individual's self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety, "*People with low self-esteem worry about what peers think; they are concerned with pleasing others and that I think has to do a great degree with anxiety*" (Cited in Young, 1999, p. 62).

Tolerance of ambiguity can often raise foreign language anxiety, "*It is the acceptance of confusing situations*" (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p .62). It is often known that students can enter in confusions about the meaning of words and expressions, and also about the pronunciation of some other words. These stimulate an ambiguity which creates apprehension to speak and the students will avoid participating in class. Competitiveness can also contribute to foreign language anxiety. It increases when students try to compare themselves to their peers. Then, as they find that they are inferior to others, they can start blaming their capacities. Bailey (1983) attributed language anxiety to competitiveness (Cited in Talon, 2011, p. 3). In the world of education, the speaking skill is seen to be very important as

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concerns the learner's characteristics. However, this oral competence often leads to the rise of foreign language anxiety. Cambel and Ortiz (1991), found "*language anxiety among university students to be alarming and estimated that up to half of all language students experience debilitating levels of speaking anxiety*" (Cited in Suleimenova, 2012, p. 1). Speaking in class in front of peers and teachers mainly when the learner has low self-esteem and lack of language proficiency can provoke anxiety and make the learning experience more stressful and less enjoyable.

In addition to communication apprehension and lack of linguistic proficiency, learners believe that language learning correlates with foreign language anxiety. In Horwitz's study (1988), the result showed that students thought that they should be able to speak with great accuracy and an excellent accent (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p 65) .Some language learners believe that learning a foreign language is done only by memorizing grammar and studying vocabulary, however others believe that oral competence and to have a good accent is more important.

Foreign language anxiety can also appear out of the learners characteristics. It can also arise from extra factors such as teacher characteristics and classroom procedures. The role and the characteristics of the teacher can have a tight relationship with the learner's fear and action in language class, as the authority of the teacher can make the learner anxious. According to Palacios (1998), the following characteristics of the teacher are associated with anxiety. He mentioned the absence of teacher support, unsympathetic personalities, lack of time for personal attention, favoritism, a sense that the class does not provide students with tools necessary to much up with the teacher's expectations, and the sense of being judged by the teacher or wanting to impress the teacher (Cited in Tallon, 2011, p. 5).

Anxiety also correlates and associates with classroom methods, procedure. This is mainly manifested when those activities are centered on oral presentations. Koch and Terell

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(1991) found that more than half of their subjects reported oral presentations in front of class as most anxiety-provoking activities and, that oral quizzes and being called to respond orally were also anxiety producing (Cited in Young, 1991, p. 429).

Young (1990), mentions a list of classroom activities which are perceived by students as anxiety provoking: (1) spontaneous role play in front of class, (2) speaking in front of class,(3) oral presentation in front of class,(4) prepared dialogue in front of class, and writing work on the board (Cited in Tallon, 2011, p. 6).

I.1.6 Symptoms of Foreign Language Anxiety

Due to the effects that anxiety can have on both the learners' performance and on the learning process, it is very important to identify the anxious learners in foreign language classrooms. For this, many instruments were used and the well known is foreign language anxiety classroom scale (FLACS) used to detect the symptoms of anxious learners. Foreign language anxiety classroom scale was designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and integrates three related anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p 66). Two groups, fifteen students each one, where given a questionnaire which consists of 33 items to measure the level of foreign language anxiety. Those students said that they freeze in class they stand outside the door and they tried to summon up enough courage to enter. Other symptoms of anxiety were reported such as tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations and sleep disturbances (Cited in Horwitz et al. 1986, p. 128).

Symptoms of foreign language anxiety are behavioral and include; fidgeting, playing with hair, clothing...*“squirm in their seats, fidget, playing with their hair, clothes, or other manipulable objects, stutter and stammer as they talk, and generally appear jittery and nervous”* (Cited in Young, 1991, p. 429).

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Physical symptoms such as complaining about a headache, experiencing tight muscles, feeling unexpected pain or tension in any part of the body. Other signals of foreign language anxiety are: depression, uncontrollable laughing or crying and lack of eye contact (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 66). i.e. the teacher can remark a student's anxiety through the behaviour or the physical symptoms.

I.1.7 Speaking Anxiety and Foreign Language Classroom

Many researches conducted on foreign language anxiety have demonstrated that students have negative experience with the speaking skill and the speaking activities in classroom. This does not mean that the other skills do not relate to foreign language anxiety. However, in the learning process, speaking is seen as a luxuriant skill which demonstrates that the learner is competent in using a language. This does not manifest when students tend to be nervous, and have mental block when learning to speak a new language. I.e. speaking in the target language generates the greatest anxiety. The learner avoids facing his peers and teacher in oral practices. S/he fears to fail and to be judged by others, then this causes deconcentration and failure to learn the second/ foreign language. The effect of foreign language anxiety on the speaking skill makes the learner share avoidance behavior and hesitation and renders the learning experience unpleasant.

I.2 The Use of Cooperative Learning Technique in Classroom to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety

I.2.1 Definition of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is described by Kagan (1994) as “*a communal activity in which learning is carried out through the mutual exchange of information*” (Cited in Celik et al., 2012, p. 12). Group members are responsible for their own construction of knowledge, as well as for facilitating the look of group members. It is an activity where students work in pairs and in groups in order to accomplish shared goals and to help each other to understand the

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work they are carrying out. When learning in cooperation, it is believed that cooperative activities encourage and support most of the affective factors such as reducing foreign language anxiety, increasing motivation, facilitating the development towards language learning. According to Kagan (1994), “*If people are anxious, but allowed to affiliate their anxiety level is reduced*” (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 223). I.e. studying in team can lower the frequency of unpleasant stressful situations such as foreign language anxiety, and can foster motivation.

I.2.2 Elements of Cooperative Learning Activities

Learning in cooperation requires a good social interaction and negotiation of meaning between the members of a group. In a cooperative group all the members have something to contribute and also learn from each other. So, in order to make cooperative learning successful, there should be some elements or factors which make the learning process more interesting and motivating: a) Positive interdependence, b) Face to face group interaction, c) Individual accountability, d) Interpersonal and small group skills, and e) Group processing (Cited in Akdemir and Arslane, 2012, p. 213).

a) Positive Interdependence

The most important element of cooperative learning is positive interdependence. When learners work cooperatively, they have common goals, so each of them has an essential role to play. Hence, they feel that they are linked to each other and no one succeeds unless every one succeeds. When positive interdependence is absent, therefore cooperation is absent because working in cooperation requires the effort of all the individuals of the group (Cited in Nagahashi, 2007, p. 57).

b) Face to Face Group Interaction

A second essential component of cooperative learning is face to face group interaction. Cooperative pairs or groups are purposefully heterogeneous, when its members

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share resources, help, support, encourage, and prize each other's efforts to learn, They are increasing the degree of participation and promoting each other's learning. Learners can interact by explaining how to solve problems, discussing the new concepts, contributing with one's own knowledge to the classmates too, and this helps them develop their overall learning (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p .234).

c) Individual and Group Accountability

Another element of cooperative learning is individual accountability. In a group, each learner or member should be aware of her/his contribution to the group. Each one is responsible to complete a task and all learners should take responsibilities to contribute to the success of the group (Staht, 1994, cited in Akdemir and Arslane, 2012, p. 213).

d) Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

Interpersonal and small group skills are another element of cooperative learning. Learning through cooperation does not require learners to develop only linguistic skills; it also requires them to develop social skills. Group members should be taught about interpersonal relations and should be encouraged to use them. According to Johnson and Johnson, "*Unless students gain interpersonal skills, they cannot learn the subject to be taught in an expected level*" (cited in Akdemir and Arslane, 2012, p. 213).

f) Group Processing

Group processing is another component of cooperative learning. It provides students a chance to give and receive feed-back to enhance the skills of their peers. So, students can judge the activities of other members and give their feed-back.

The different components of cooperative learning activities increase the achievement and the success of learners. Those components require individuals to work together to reach both information, to reduce debilitating anxiety and increase motivation.

Literature Review

I.2.3 Advantages of Cooperative Learning in Second/Foreign Language Classes

Kagan points out, “*If people are anxious, but allowed to affiliate, their anxiety level is reduced*” (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 223). According to Kagan, learners feel that they appear foolish, maybe when teachers ask questions which only a few learners can answer, however, when they work in pairs and in groups they may feel less anxious. In addition to this, it is a motivating activity which contributes to the success of the students. In language classroom, motivated learners can lead to more use of language and ensures achievement. Unlike competition which leads learners to envy the success and wish failure to others, cooperation leads learners to realize that their peers want them to learn and succeed. Using cooperative learning technique makes students feel less intimidated when they work in small groups and partners (Cited in Nagahashi, 2006, p. 2). Cooperation then, helps teachers to deal with some problems that occur in class concerning different students’ levels of language skills and personality trait by allowing anxious and confident learners to cooperate and help each other and give value to the lecture. Then, it involves learners actively in the learning process and improves classroom results. Despite some of the disadvantages of cooperation such as personality differences and over-reliance on the first language, scholars emphasize its importance and its use in second/foreign language classes as it reduces anxiety and creates a favorite environment in classrooms.

I.2.4 How can Cooperative Learning Activities reduce Students’ Anxiety

Working in groups helps to create supportive environment and learners are relaxed and have reduced anxiety in language classroom. When learners are engaged in group studies, they help each other to learn since normally every classroom always contains gifted and less gifted students. The latter are often not confident about their mastery of the linguistic items; hence, cooperative learning activities or group works are believed to be a solution to such

Literature Review

problem. Cooperative learning can contribute to lower foreign language anxiety and produce a relaxed climate (Cited in Nagahashi, 2007, p. 6).

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the previous works and theories on foreign language anxiety. Many language specialists and researchers support that anxiety is a frequent factor deteriorating the students' language performances. Many researches and works have been conducted and continue to increase. However, language researchers should rely on techniques and strategies which can help student to lower foreign language anxiety and make the learning process a less stressful experience. Accordingly, this chapter has dealt with the use of cooperative language learning activities in second/foreign language classroom. Cooperative learning activities enable students to use the target language and create a more supportive classroom atmosphere.

Research Design

Introduction:

This chapter is devoted to the methodology used in our case study. It describes the techniques and the procedures of our data collection and data analysis used in our investigation to build an explanation and interpretation to the ways foreign language anxiety can impede the learning process and answer the research questions posed in the general introduction and which deal with cooperation as an attempt to reduce anxiety.

The research design is divided into two sections. The first section is named procedures of data collection. It deals with the description of our data tools and techniques used to analyze and interpret our findings. It first provides the description of the quantitative and the qualitative methods followed in the description of the participants who took part in our study and then with the instruments for data collection (used). The second section is named procedures of data analysis. It outlines an example of cooperative learning techniques to reduce anxiety in speaking and to foster communication in language class. It is based on working in pairs and in groups to achieve the desired goals. These techniques were used by Terri Lee NAGAHASHI at Akita University, Japan to reduce Communication Anxiety.

II.1 Procedure of Data Collection

II.1.1. Research Methods

In our research work, and in order to collect data related to our study, we have opted for the mixed method research; this consists in a combination of the quantitative method and the qualitative method in order to collect an important amount of data to deal with our research questions and hypothesis. The quantitative method has allowed us to collect data from a large number of people in a short period of time. The qualitative method has helped us to describe and gather the data directly from the informants. It helped the researcher to get descriptive information on variables not easily assessed using empirical research and can provide a way to view phenomena from the point view of the subject (Price, 1991; cited in

Research Design

Tanveer, 2007, p. 33). It means that the descriptive qualitative research method permits us to comment on the data gathered from quantitative research.

II.1.2 Participants

Our participants are third year LMD students from the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. There are three hundred eighty seven (387) students divided into (02) two sections. Each section contains (06) six groups, thirty (30) students in each one. We distributed our questionnaires to students of both linguistics and civilization options. It was difficult to deal with all the students, so we dealt with twenty percent (20%) that is fifty (50) students out of three hundred eighty seven (387). The students have been studying the oral module for three years. In this module they have opportunities to communicate and share their opinions in class. Besides that, the communicative skill is seen as one of the primary goals of learning a second or a foreign language. However, some students may suffer from debilitating levels of anxiety that makes oral sessions boring, and contributes to their failure to use language in class.

II.1.3. Data Collection Tools

In order to collect data related to our research project we used two research instruments. We designed questionnaires for third year LMD students in the department of English and we conducted interviews with some teachers of speaking in the same department.

a). Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is valuable technique which contains a series of questions. It is used for collecting data from a large number of respondents. It guarantees the anonymity of the respondents and saves time because participants can answer it in a short period of time. The choice of the questionnaire as a research tool to conduct this field of investigation emerges out of the advantages it offers to the field of ethnographic research in general and to education research in particular (Yassine, 2012, p. 279). Despite that, the questionnaire has some

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limitations as the uncertainty feed-back, as some students may refuse to collaborate. In our research paper, the questionnaire is made up of four (4) sections. It consists of seventeen (17) items or questions. The participants are provided with close questions, multiple choice questions, yes or no questions, scaled questions, and some open-ended questions to justify or explain their answers. In the second section, item five (5) is a statement taken from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), introduced by Horwitz et al. in (1986). The following table summarizes the four (4) sections of our questionnaire.

Section	Title of the section	Number of items	Aim of the questions
01	General questions	03	Evaluate students' feeling about learning English
02	Communication anxiety	06	Existence/non existence of anxiety among learners
03	Using pair/group work in class (Cooperative Activities)	06	Students' attitudes about cooperative learning activities
04	The use of other useful strategies	02	Other ways to cope with foreign language anxiety

Table (01) Questionnaire's Sections and Items used in our Research Methodology.

Before we administered the questionnaires to the participants and in order to be sure of the questions' clarity, we handed four (4) copies to students on May 14th, 2014. Then we administered eighty (80) copies of the final questionnaire to eighty (80) students on May 21th, 2014 but after 4 days, we collected only fifty (50) from eighty (80) administered. Then, in order to analyze and interpret our collected data, we relied on Microsoft office Excel

Research Design

programme to treat data and arrange it using tables and graphs. We calculate them by using fifty (50) students as one hundred percent (100%).

b) Teachers' Interview

The interview was conducted in the department of English University of Mouloud Mammeri, Tizi Ouzou, from 16th June to 19th June. We conducted semi-structured interviews which contain (08) eight direct questions. They are open-ended questions asked to five (05) teachers of oral sessions (speaking) who answered in approximately ten (10) minutes while we were taking notes. We conducted those interviews after we analyzed the questionnaires in order to get more details from teachers about the existence/or non-existence of foreign language learning anxiety and also the effectiveness of cooperation in foreign language classes.

II. 2 Procedure of Data Analysis

2.2.1 An Example of Cooperative Learning Techniques

The cooperative learning technique can be used to reduce foreign language anxiety associated with communication apprehension in oral sessions. The following is an example of Pair and Group activities used by Terri Lee NAGAHASHI and implemented in twelve classes in Akita University in Japan. Pair and Group works or activities were taught by the same author and were also used to increase opportunities to speak and share new ideas. Each of the twelve classes met for ninety minutes and students were free to choose their partners and group members. The two examples of pair and group activities show the intervention to test the efficiency of cooperative learning technique to lower anxiety in speaking (Nagahashi, 2006, p. 3).

a) Pair Work

Students are engaged in pair work activities during each class session. Pair work activities included comparing answers for homework assignments. Quizzing each other on

Research Design

new vocabulary, dictating model paragraphs, and essays from the text. Reading and commenting on each others' original paragraphs and essays, and reading aloud from the video transcript.

b) Group work

Small-group activities were designed to provide more opportunities for students to share their ideas and assist one another. Group activities included “reading circles,” where students took turns reading aloud from the text, comparing answers to reading comprehension exercises, making and presenting inferences about the reading, making and presenting summaries of the reading, brainstorming and presenting answers to questions posed by the teacher, and reading and responding to group members' original paragraphs and essays.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the research methodology used in our case study. At first, it has presented the tools of our data analysis in our investigation which mixes between two research methods; the quantitative and the qualitative methods. It has described our data instruments used to collect significant data from both third year students and teachers of the speaking skill. And then, it has introduced an example of cooperative learning technique as framework to improve the speaking skill and to reduce foreign language anxiety in students.

Findings

Introduction

This chapter is about the findings of our study. It presents the results obtained from the questionnaires we administered to students and the interviews we conducted with teachers. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the existence of anxiety and the strategies used to diminish it. The findings are presented by percentage and displayed in histograms. This part is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the questionnaires. The latter is also divided into four sections in which every section has its own title. The second section of this chapter is devoted to the result observed from teachers' interview. It presents the answers of the questions asked for teachers of speaking skill.

III.1. Presentation of the Findings

III.1.1. Students' Questionnaire

a) Section One: Information on Students' Profile

Question One: Is learning English your first and personal choice?

A. Yes

B. No

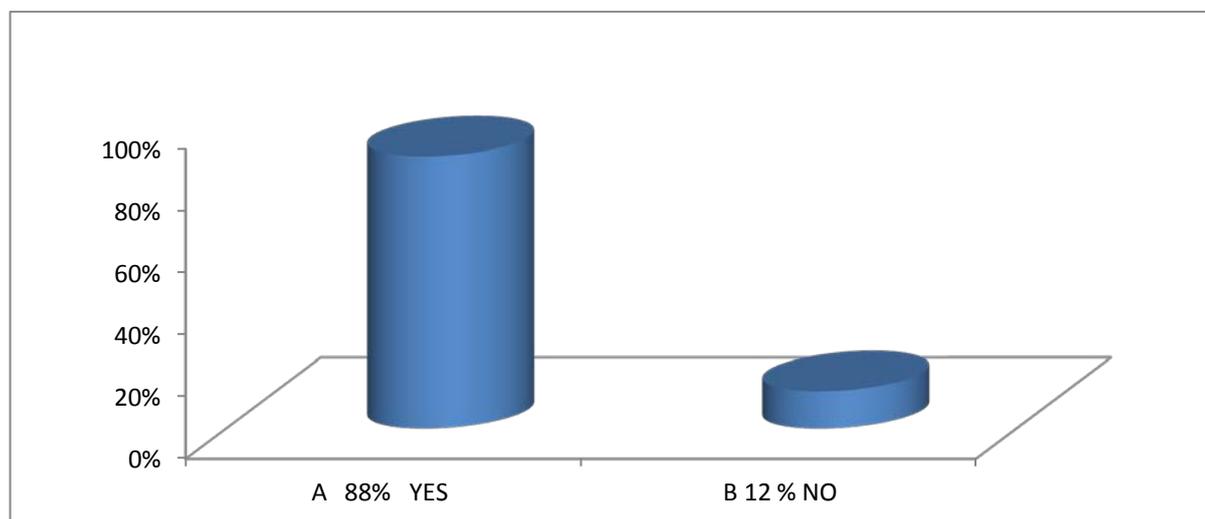


Diagram (1): English as a Personal Choice

The first question was about students' choice towards learning English at University. Forty four (44) students out of fifty (50) opted for "Yes". They like English and they are

Findings

motivated to learn it. Six students (06) answered “No”, their first choice was not learning English.

Question Two: How do you find studying English?

- A. Easy B. Quite difficult C. Difficult D. Very difficult

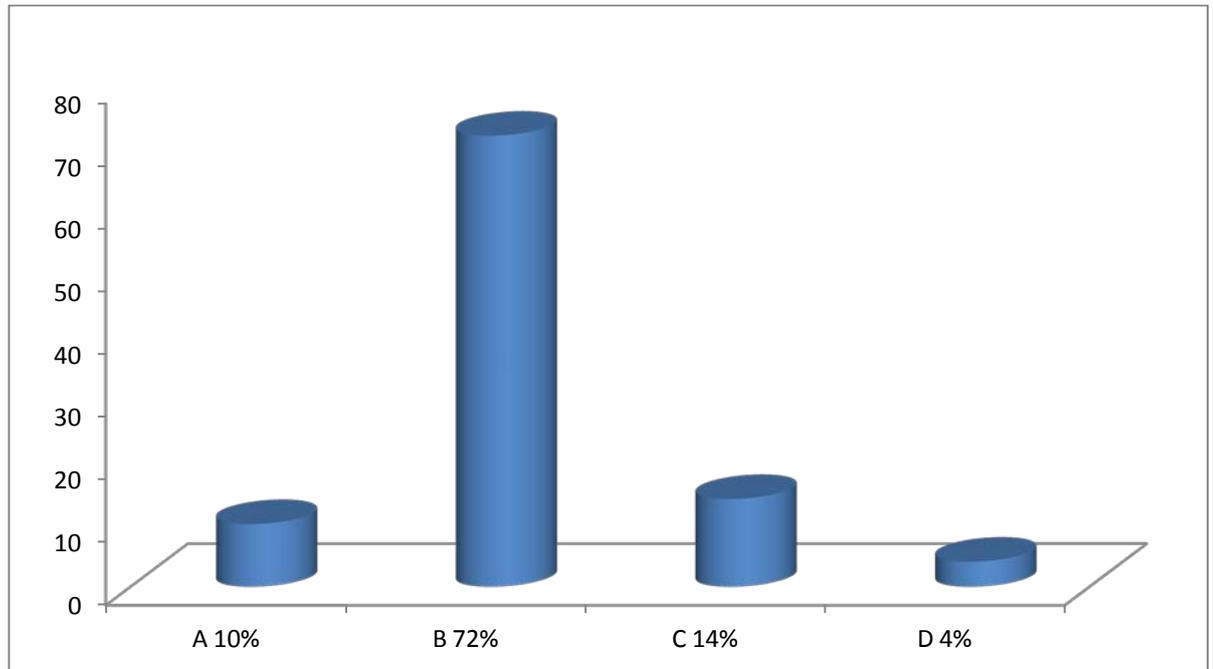


Diagram (02): Degree of Difficulty of Studying English

The majority, thirty six of all students (72%) said that they find learning English quite difficult. Seven (14%) find learning English difficult and then two students (4%) opted for (D) very difficult i.e. maybe the students who opted for (B), (C), and (d) may experience some foreign language anxiety. Other students opted for the first answer (A), They find it easy to study English and they do not experience foreign language anxiety.

Question Three: How much do you feel your English has improved since you have started your university course?

- A. A lot B. A bit C. Not at all

Findings

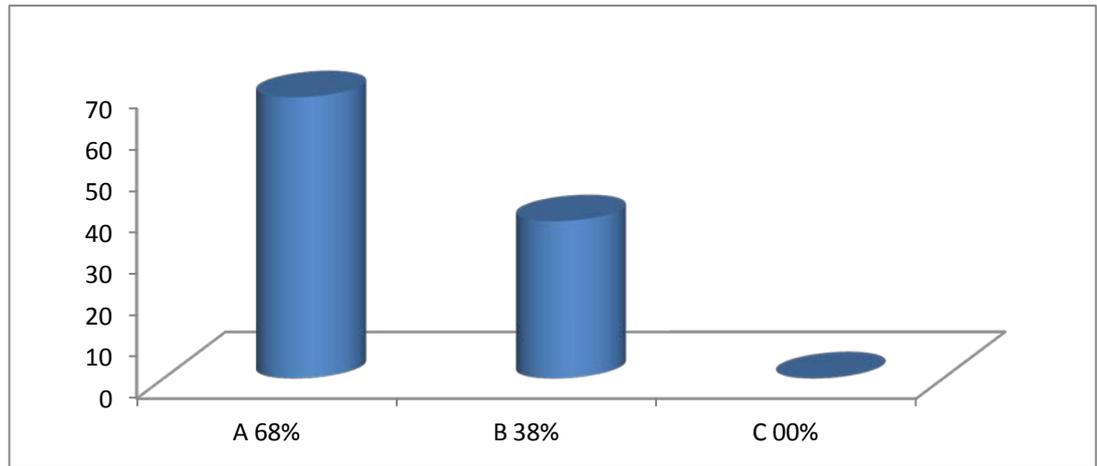


Diagram (3): Students' Improvement of Their English

The aim of this question was to know how students' English language has improved since their first year until now. The majority, thirty one students (68%) argued that they feel their English has improved a lot. However, nineteen (38%) of them answered (B), a bit. No one(0%) has opted for (C).

Section Two: Second/Foreign Language Communication Apprehension

Question Four: Do you like oral expression?

A. Yes

B. No

Why?

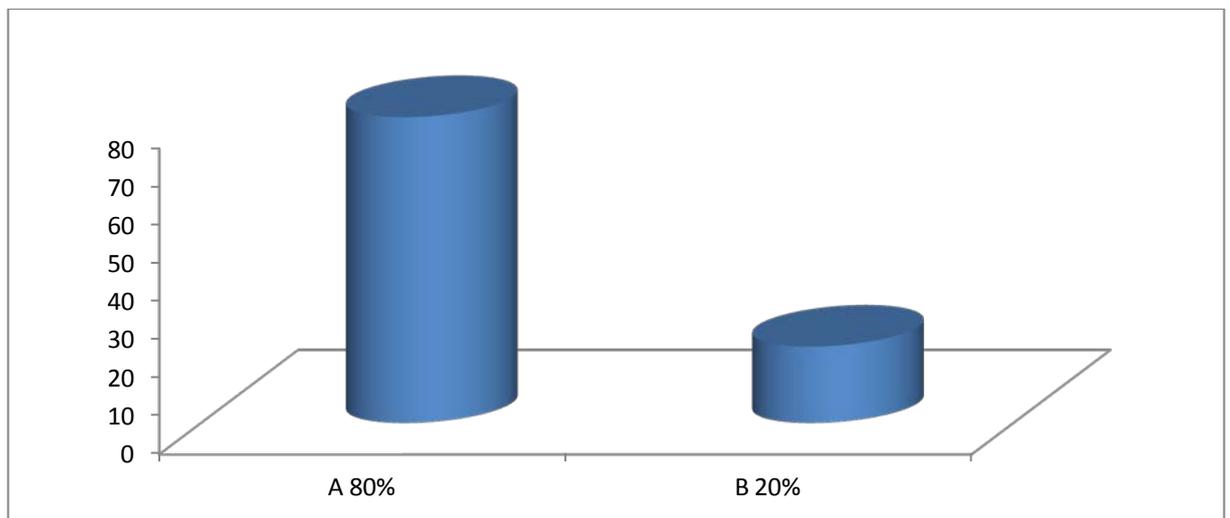


Diagram (04): Oral Performance

This question concerns whether students like oral performance in class or not. If they like expressing their thoughts in the oral sessions or they remain silent. The majority, fourteen

Findings

(80%) of students answers were (yes). However, ten students (20%) dislike oral sessions and they remain silent in class.

Questions Five: How much do you agree with the following statement?

“I usually feel at ease (relaxed) during my oral English sessions”

- A. Strongly agree C. Neither agree nor disagree E. Strongly disagree
B. Agree D. Disagree

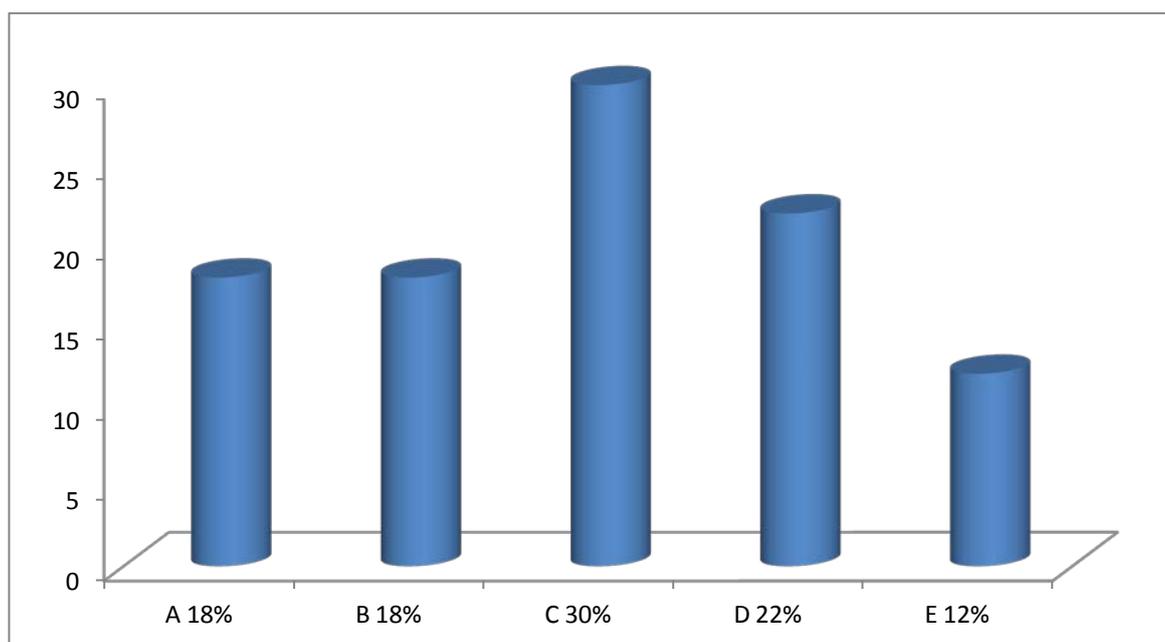


Diagram (05): Existence of Anxiety

Question five is an item taken from Horwitz et al.'s Foreign Language Anxiety scale (FLACS). The latter is used by Horwitz et al. in (1986) in their research to identify anxiety. According to our results, fifteen students (30%) opted for (C) and they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Some students are not anxious in their oral sessions, nine students (18%) opted for (A) strongly agree, and nine students (18%) opted for ((B). Eleven students (22%) for (D) and six students (12%) (E), are anxious, worried to participate and to take part in the learning process.

Question Six: How do you feel when you are required to speak in class?

- A. At ease, relaxed and confident B. Anxious, worried and blocked C. Others,

Findings

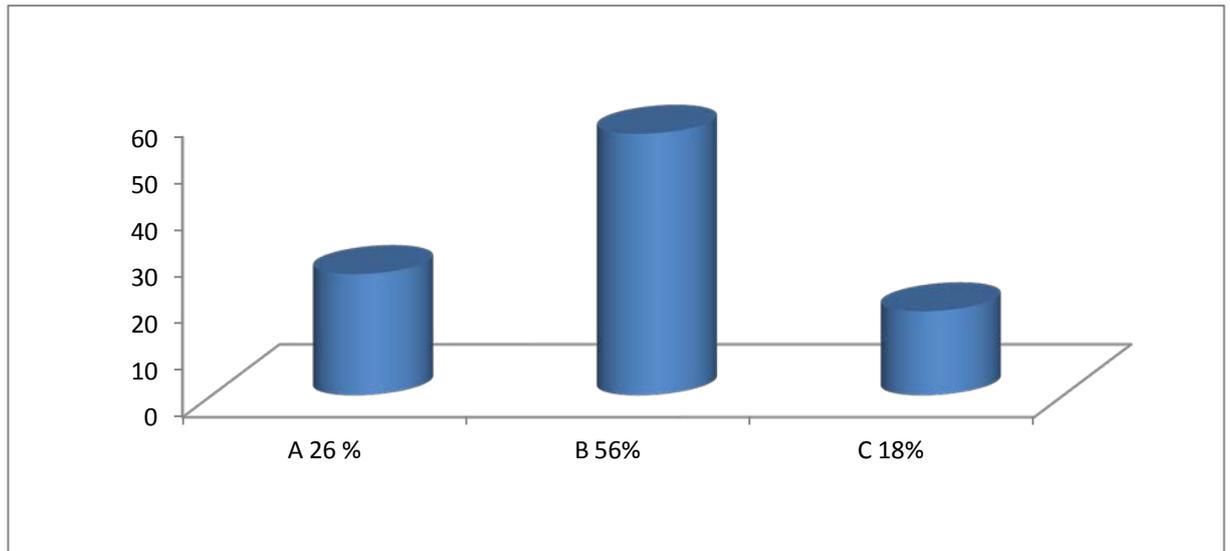


Diagram (06): Students' Feeling when Speaking in Oral Sessions

The aim of the sixth question was to know how students feel when speaking in the oral sessions. The results show that twenty eight students (56%) opted for the answer (C), which means that they are anxious and worried when they are asked to speak or to participate in oral sessions. Thirteen students (26%) opted for the answer (A). i.e. they fell at ease, relaxed, and confident, so they were not anxious. Nine students (18%) opted for (C).

Question Seven: When you are anxious/ worried,

A. You are uncertain and lose your words. B. You withdraw from the situation

C. You are confident and face the situation D. Others/ please specify

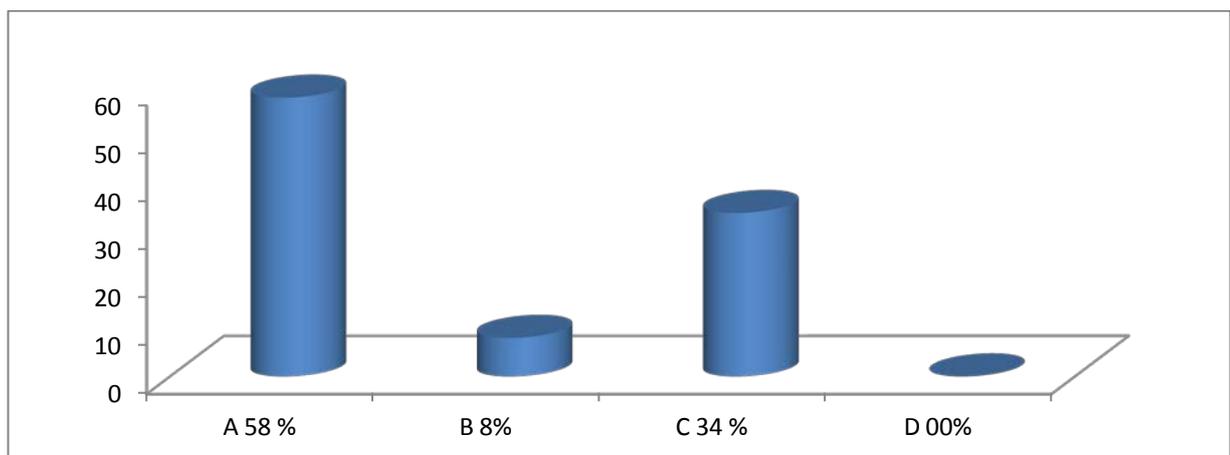


Diagram (07): the Students' Reaction to Anxiety

Findings

This question deals with the reaction of students when they are anxious/ worried. The majority of them, twenty nine (58%) of the students opted for the answer (A) that is they are uncertain and lose their words. Thirty four (34%) said that if they experience a low-level of anxiety; they can face the situation and try to build confidence on themselves. Then (04) students (8%) opted for the answer (B) in which they withdraw from the situation.

Question Eight: What are the causes of your anxiety/ worry during oral activities?

- A. Shyness B. Lack of words/ expressions C. Fear of making mistakes
D. Being criticized/ laughed at E. Others/ please specify

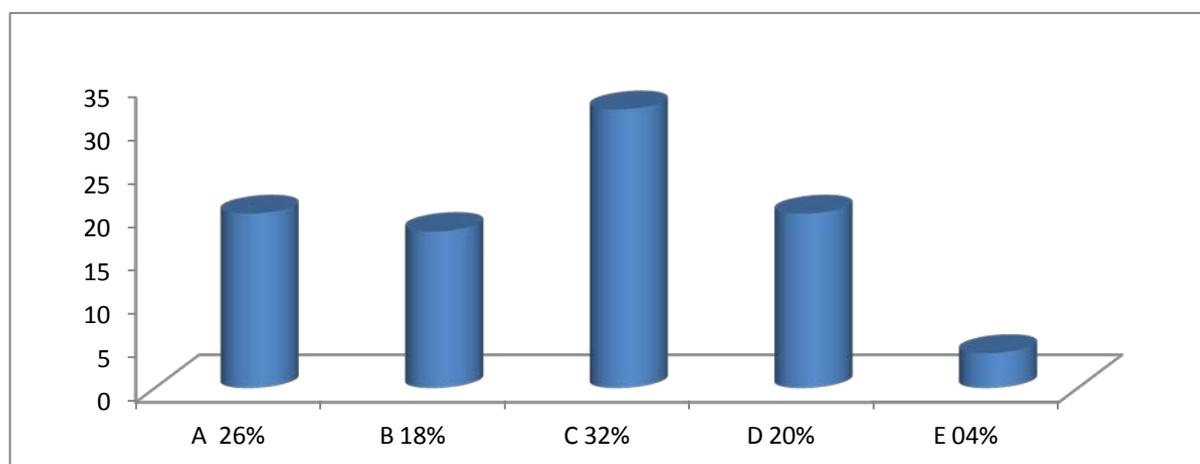


Diagram (8): Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety

The eighth question is given to students in order to find some of the causes of their anxiety. Sixty students (32%) from fifty opted for the (C), that when they practice their speaking skill they experience a great fear from making mistakes. Thirteen (26%) students said that their cause of anxiety is shyness. Ten students (20%) opted for the (D) that they feel tense of being criticized by their teachers or laughed at by their peers. Nine students (18%) opted for (B), which means that when they are nervous, they lose their vocabulary. However, two informants (04 %) opted for (E).

Question (09): What kind of activities make you less stressed in your oral session?

- A. Individual work B. Pair work C. Group work

Findings

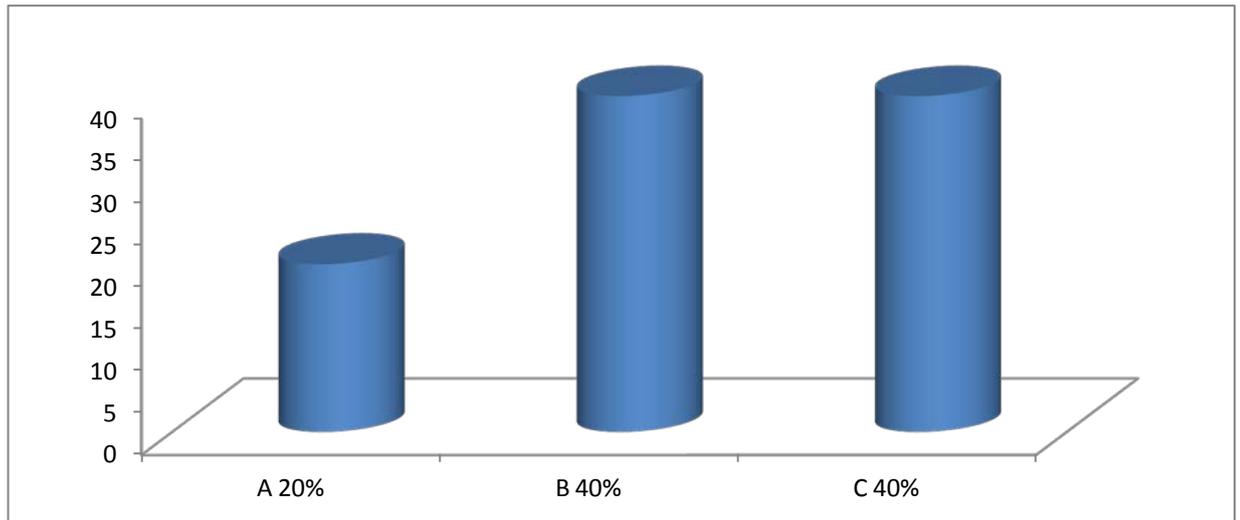


Diagram (9): Less Stressful Activities

This question is very central; it allowed us to find which from the three types of activities our informants feel less stressful. The result shows that both pair and group work activities are favored by the students. Twenty students (40%) opted for pair work, and twenty (40%) opted for group work. However, only ten students (20%) opted for individual work.

Section three: Using Pair/ Group Activities in the Class

Question Ten: Do you like pair/ group work activities?

A. Yes B. No Why?

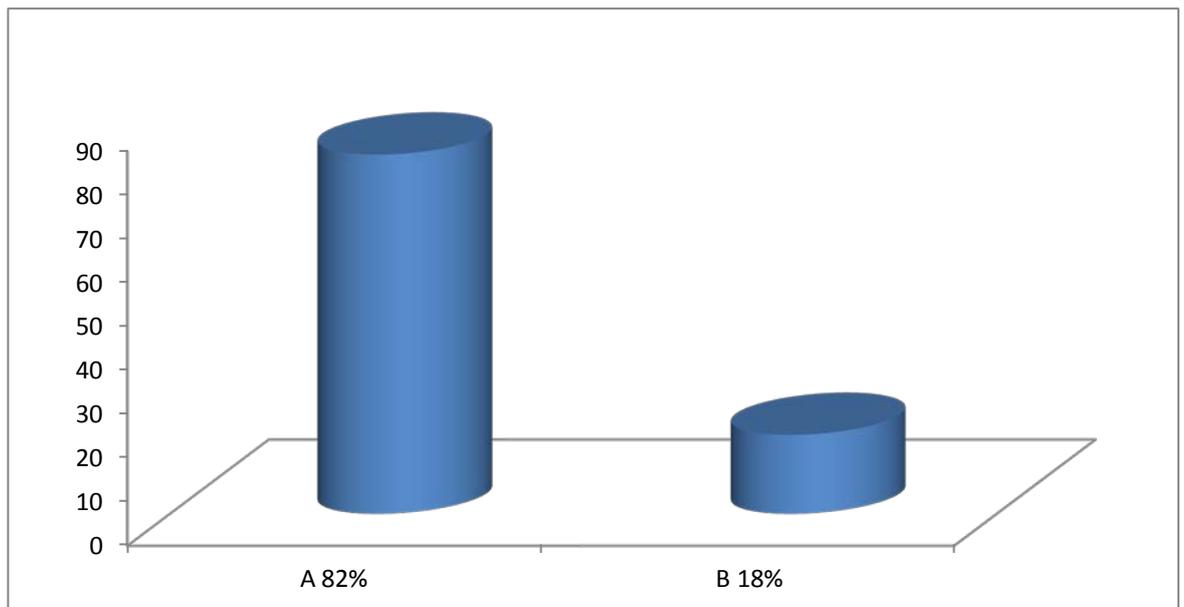


Diagram (10): Students' Attitudes towards Cooperation

Findings

Question ten is about whether our informants like or dislike cooperation in classroom. The findings show that students strongly like cooperation. Forty one students (82%) from fifty opted for the answer (A), for “yes”. Nine students from fifty (18%) opted for “No”, and they dislike cooperation.

Question Eleven: How do you find these pair/group activities: Role plays, Dialogues, and Games?

A. Interesting, motivating, and beneficial B. Threatening and embarrassing

C. Others

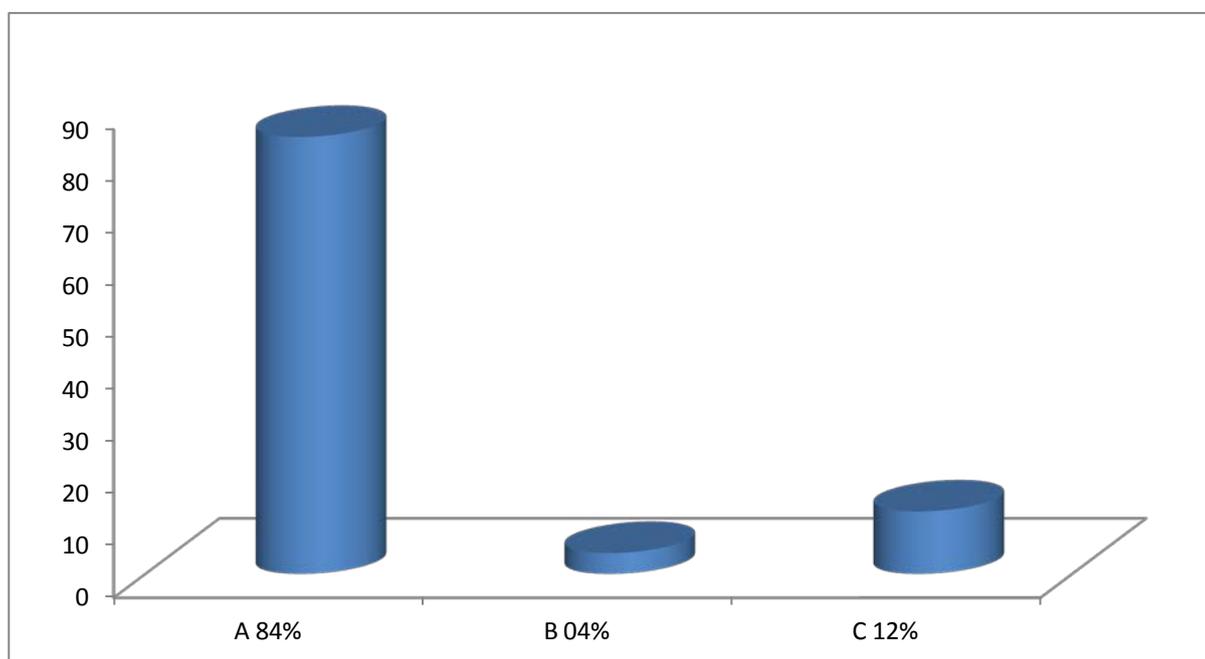


Diagram (11): Students' Attitudes towards of Role plays, Dialogues, and Games

In this question we wanted to know how our informants find some cooperative learning activities performed in pair or in group. The result shows that more than half of our informants, forty two (84%) students opted for the answer (A). Two students (04%) opted for (B) that is they find cooperative learning activities threatening and embracing. Six students (12%) opted for (C).

Question Twelve: How often do you perform pair/group work in class?

A. Always

B. Sometime

C. Rarely

D. Never

Findings

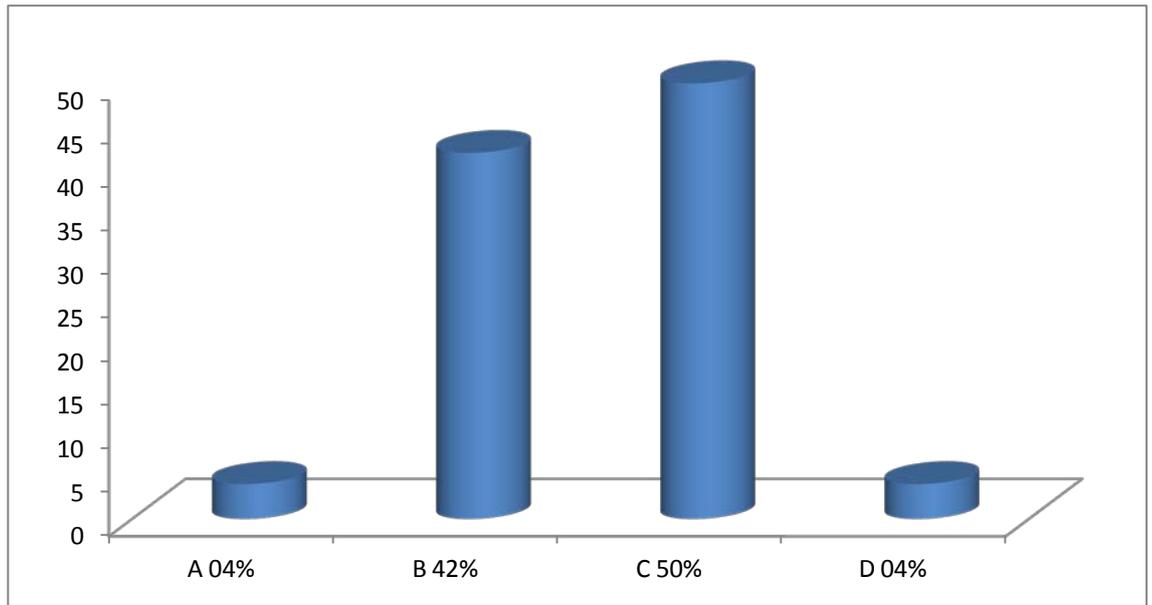


Diagram (12): Frequency of Working in Cooperation in Speaking Classes

When it comes to the frequency of cooperative learning activities, the result shows that the majority of informants twenty five (50%) like cooperation. Twenty one of them (42%) opted for (B) which is rarely. Then four students opted for both (A) and (D), two for each one. (04%) always perform them and (04%) never perform them.

Question Thirteen: How do you feel when performing pair/ group activities in oral sessions?

A. Anxious and nervous

B. Confident and relaxed

C. Others

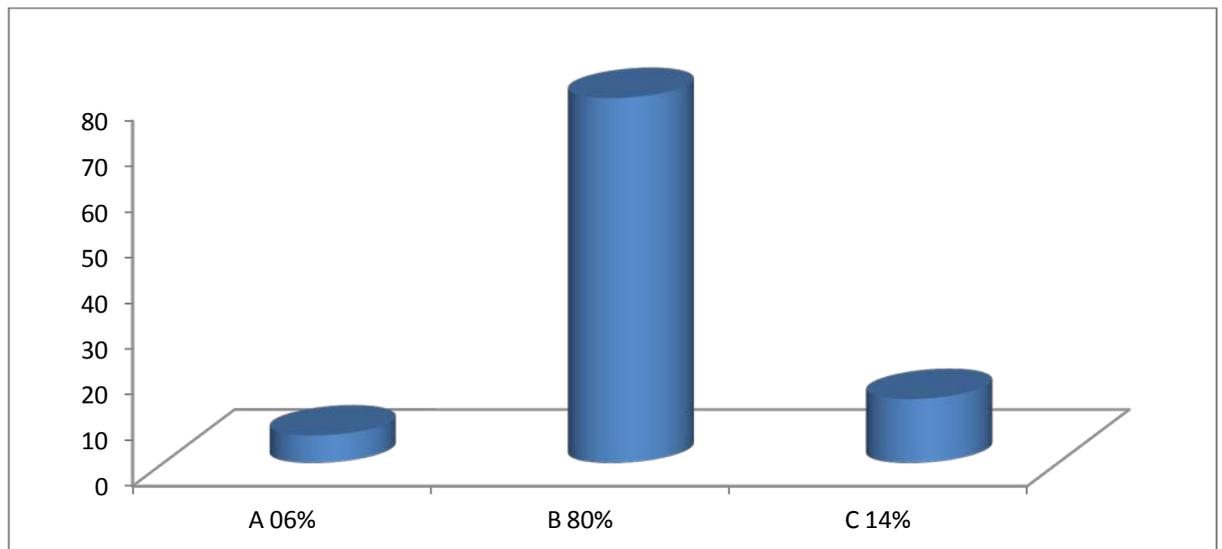


Diagram (13): Students' Feelings during Cooperation

Findings

Our informants' answers to this question were in majority forty students (80%) for the choice (B), they feel very confident and relaxed during cooperation. However, three students (06%) do not like cooperation. Seven students (14%) opted for (C).

Question Fourteen: When you work with your friends in pairs or in groups,

A. You share your ideas and benefit from one other

B. You do not interact with them and remain silent

C. Others/ please specify

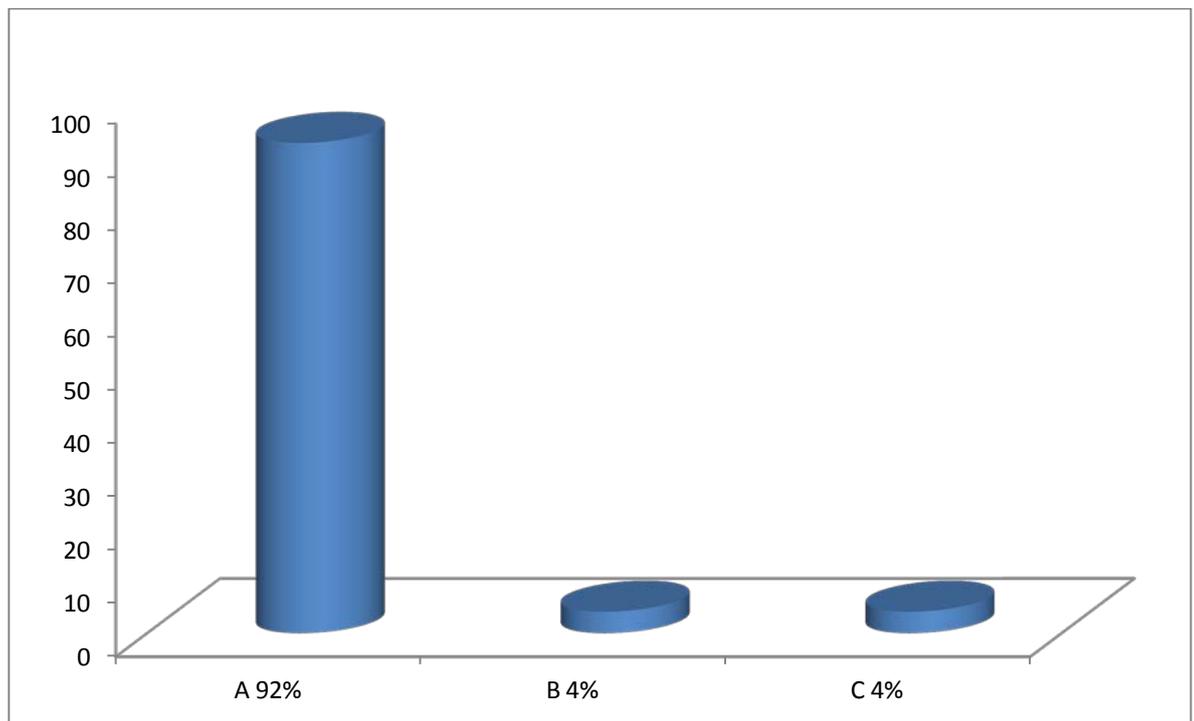


Diagram (14): Students' Exchange of knowledge in Cooperation

This question was asked for our informants to identify if they share their ideas when they cooperate. Forty one (92%) students opted for (A) which means that they strongly share their knowledge with their mates. Two students (04%) opted for (B), they do not interact and remain silent. Then, two students (04%) opted for (C), they do not share their ideas.

Question Fifteen: Does the support of your teammates assist your learning and lower your anxiety.

A. Yes

B. No

Explain

Findings

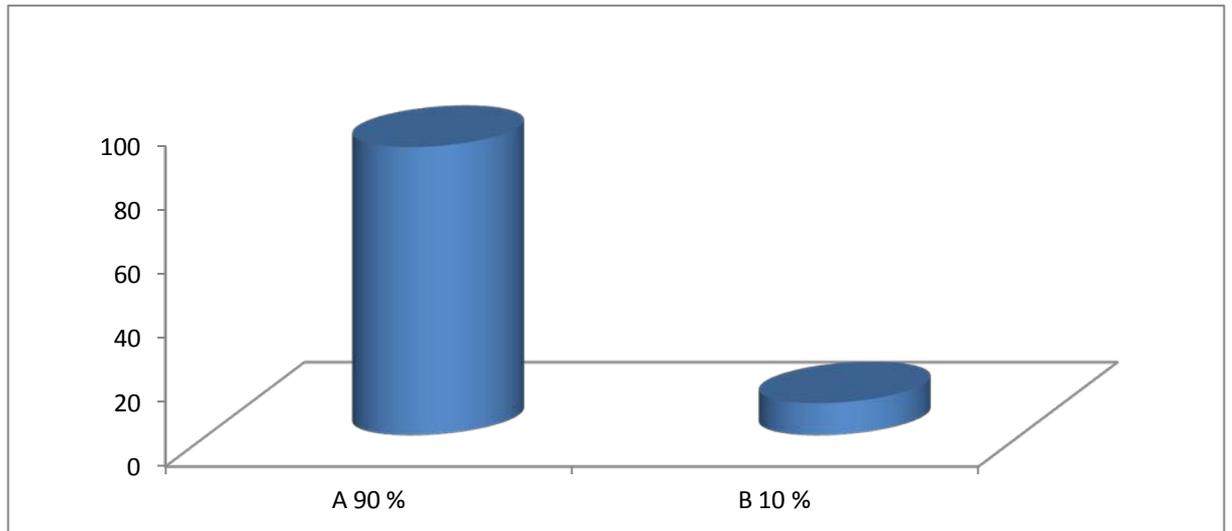


Diagram (15): Students' Positive Interdependence

Question fifteen is about students' positive interdependence. Through the findings, the majority of our informants (90%) opted for (A), that they support their peers when they are working in cooperation. Five students (10%) opted for (B) that they do not feel the support of their teammates.

Section four: The use of Other Useful Strategies

Question Sixteen: What do you do in order to cope with your anxiety/ worry when you are asked to speak?

- A. Self talk B. Encourage yourself C. Take a deep breathe D. Others

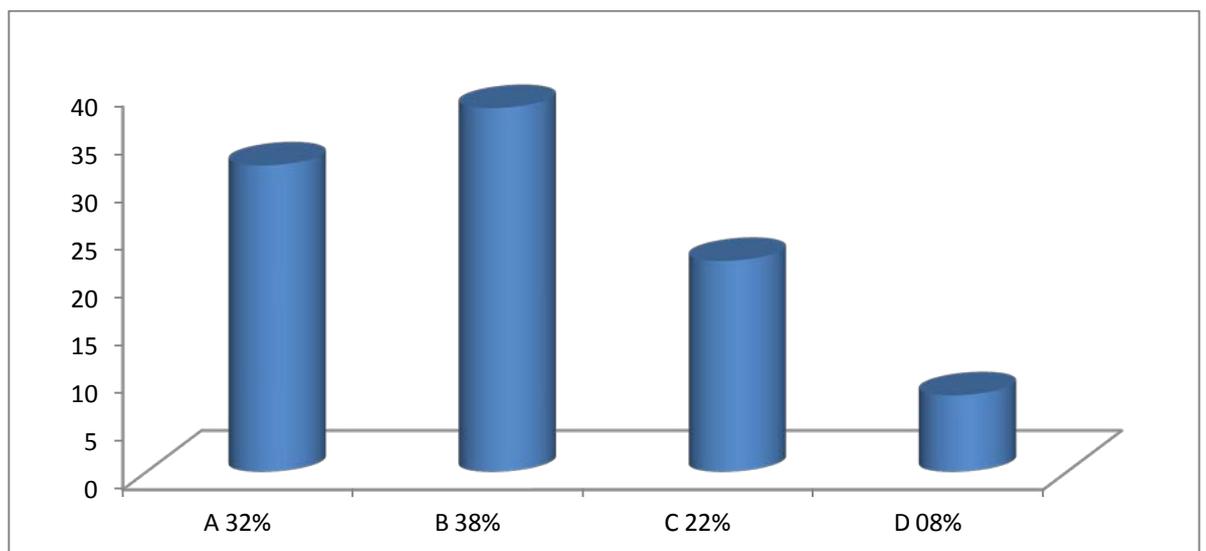


Diagram (16): Other Useful Strategies

Findings

Concerning the useful strategies or activities that learners use other than cooperative learning activities, we asked the question number sixteen to find out how students cope with their anxiety. The result shows that nineteen students (38%) answered (B), when they are in tense they encourage themselves. Sixteen students (32%) rely on self talk. Eleven students (22%) rely on taking a deep breath to surmount anxiety and speak freely. Then four students (08%) opted for other strategies.

Question Seventeen: What do you think the teacher can do to make you feel at ease during oral activities?

This question is an open-ended question in which we provided the opportunity for informants to speak about their opinions on how their teachers can make them at ease in oral sessions.

Remark: not all the informants answered this question.

The data gathered from this question show that students suggest their teachers of oral sessions to lower their anxiety by asking all students without exception to perform the speaking skill. They said that teachers should provide them with real life topics for discussion. Our informants added that their teachers should introduce cooperative activities such as; group conversations, role plays, and dialogues. .

The first data tool we used is the questionnaire, which we analyzed and interpreted in four sections. Those sections contain items or questions we asked to our informants to obtain answers related to our research questions and to our hypothesis. The results of the questionnaire addressed to (50) fifty advanced students who have been studying the oral module for three years are very significant. Students' answers to our questions strongly confirm that Foreign Language Anxiety exists among third year LMD students, and working in pairs and in groups can reduce it in oral sessions. The first section of the questionnaire contains three items addressed consequently to evaluate students' feeling about learning

Findings

English. The majority of students claimed that they like the English language but they find many difficulties when studying it. Those difficulties may be caused by the classroom procedures and the activities used by teachers in class. Students' answers to the second section entitled Communication Apprehension composed of six items confirm that they suffer from Foreign Language anxiety in general and Communication apprehension in particular. Section three includes six items which seek to explore students' attitudes towards the use of cooperative learning activities in reducing their anxiety in oral sessions. The majority of them argued that those activities motivate them and are anxiety relieving activities. The fourth section is the last one and consists of two items that invite students to add some comments and suggestions to help our investigation. Evidently, they provided us with many suggestions and with a variety of strategies to cope with their anxiety.

III. 1.2. Teachers 'Interview

The second data collection tool we used in our research is the interview which we conducted with teachers of speaking. The interview helped us much to bring more details answer to our research hypothesis and our research questions. The following are the detailed results of the interview.

Question One: How long have you been teaching the oral module?

This question was asked to know how many years the five teachers have been teaching the oral module. All of them said that they have been teaching the oral module for three years except one for one year.

Question Two: Do you ever notice anxiety in your students?

This question aims at confirming that anxiety exists among students. All the teachers said that they very often notice anxiety in their students.

Question Three: Could you tell us about the anxiety symptoms have you noticed in your learners according your experience as a teacher of oral sessions.

Findings

This question seeks at identifying the symptoms and signs that teachers notice in their students in oral sessions. Teachers said that they noticed anxiety at the level of the face, body, behavior, and especially at the linguistic level. Students avoid the teacher and they feel that s/he will point at them. Teachers added that anxious students avoid coming to board, they hesitate to give direct answers, and we find redundancy in their styles.

Question Four: What are the factors that can cause anxiety in your learners?

According to teachers, anxiety may arise from a variety of factors. The fact of being in front of an audience can raise their fear. Other students fear making mistakes at the level of pronunciation and sentence structure since they are obliged to speak and use the foreign language. Teachers added that shyness, lack of language confidence, attitudes toward teachers, and not having the habit to speak in front of others may provoke a high level of communication apprehension that renders using the target language in class stressful for students.

Question Five: Do you encourage learners to work in pairs or in groups? How?

We asked the fifth question to know if the teachers use cooperative activities in class or they do not use them. The findings show that all of them introduce cooperative activities in their class. They explained that most of the time they invite them to work in pairs and in groups. That ensures positive interdependence when they tolerate students to move from one group to the other and discuss relevant topics such as news channels, sports, and war events.

Question Six: According to you, can cooperative learning activities be useful to cope with language anxiety. Why?

All the interviewee agreed that cooperative learning activities can reduce students' anxiety in oral sessions. They explained that cooperative activities help them tolerate, and makes them feel not alone, they feel linguistic security; they become more motivated, and brings great improvements at the level of pronunciation, structure of ideas, and behaviour.

Findings

Question Seven: What kind of activities do you ask your students to perform in class?

According to the findings, teachers use dialogues in free topics, listening activities, fill in the gaps, activities on the functions of language, and discussing in pairs or in groups topics such as; Racism, Child labor, Human Rights, Media, Music, newspapers,...etc.

Question Eight: Do you often expect them to work individually, in pairs, or in groups? Why?

All of the participants said that their use of cooperation and individual work depends on the topics and on the situations. They argued that when they notice anxiety in their learners they incite them to perform the work in groups in order to lower their anxiety. And when they want to evaluate their mastery of the language, students are invited to work individually.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results obtained from questionnaires answered by fifty third year LMD students in the department of English, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou, and semi-structured interviews conducted with five teachers of the speaking module at the same department. According to the results, we deduce that these students suffer from foreign language anxiety in general and from communication apprehension in particular. And then cooperation can be an anxiety-relieving technique. These findings are going to be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction:

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings of our case study which were obtained after administering questionnaires to students and conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers of speaking.

IV.1 Students' Questionnaire

IV.1.1 Information on Students' Profile

The results of the first section revealed important facts. The fact of learning English as second language or as a foreign language may impede learners' performances. As stated previously, Giora argues that language learning itself is a "*profoundly unsettling psychological proposition*" (cited in Horwitz et al., 1986, p 125). In other words, when the study of English as a new language, is imposed on the learners by the administration may make them seem anxious, hesitant, and even in tense. The profile of our informants as shown in the findings part of the work, shows that about 20% of them didn't chose studying English as a first and deliberate choice at the University. English was imposed by the administration. The others, who study English as a deliberate choice, feel no anxiety and are motivated. The results reported that the majority of our informants find studying English at University quite difficult. This result can go with what language specialists such as Tallon. M, who questioned why in the field of second or foreign language acquisition, some learners successfully learn a new language while others do not. They mean that different reasons can contribute to the success or the failure of learners. However, these reasons may include cognitive factors and affective factors. The study also reported that less than half of our informants felt that their English has improved a bit since their first year at University. In fact, the results of this first section show that students are motivated but find studying English quite difficult. Findings give evidence to what many second/foreign language researchers and specialists such as Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, claim that learning a new language can be a difficult experience

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and students may be limited in their exposure to English. These may mean that the difficulties can be possibly due to specific problems with language learning or specific reactions to a language learning concept. We can say that the result of this first section of the questionnaire confirms that our informants have difficulties in studying English.

IV.1.2 Language Anxiety: Communication Apprehension

In this section, the discussion will point to Communication apprehension. As stated previously, Horwitz et al. (1986), draw three related components of performance anxieties. Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. They claim that many students have a mental block against learning a new language. This makes them anxious, stressed, and hesitant to use a second/foreign language in class, a language they want to master. Communication apprehension is defined by Horwitz et al. as, “*a type of shyness characterized by fear of anxiety about communicating with people*” (1986, p. 128). In other words, communication apprehension is a fear or a worry experienced by students when they are invited to speak in front of their peers or in front of their teachers.

The findings obtained from the analysis of our corpus confirm Horwitz et al.’s (1986) statement that anxiety exists among advanced University students. The study revealed that the majority of the students like oral expression (80%), yet ten students (20%) out of fifty (100%) students don’t like oral performance. We can say that they remain silent in class, and they experience a level of anxiety. Such results can demonstrate that oral communication apprehension manifests in oral sessions and obviously plays a large role in foreign language class. Those students claim that oral sessions are very stressful for them. **One student** said, “*I have a complex to speak in front of many people, I don’t feel at ease during oral sessions*”. **Another one** claimed, “*I always feel anxious and nervous during oral performance*”. **Another student** added, “*I feel calm in other sessions, but I just freeze in speaking*”.

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Our study also revealed that half of our participants did not agree much with the item (5), *“I usually feel at ease during my oral English sessions”*. The latter is taken from Horwitz et al.’s (1986) in their research to identify the existence of foreign language anxiety among their participants. In our study, eleven students (22%) opted for “strongly disagree” and six students (12%) opted for “disagree”. These results reinforce the idea that students get nervous and confused when they are speaking in their language class and (30%) did not assert their agreement with the statement which means that they might experience anxiety.

Psychologists and language specialists as stated before, make a distinction between three types of language anxiety. They include state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situational-specific anxiety. Our study revealed that the three types of language anxiety exist among our participants. Their answers to question six (06) which we posed to know how they feel when invited to use English in class, show that more than half of them feel worried, anxious, and blocked. However, their anxiety varies between the three types of anxiety. These three examples show respectively the three types of anxiety. **One Student** said, *“I get stressed at first but after the first sentence I say, I feel at ease”*. **Another declared**, *“I always feel anxious and tense in my class”*. **Another Student** asserted, *“My anxiety rises in speaking situations”*.

Besides the fact that our participants suffer from foreign language anxiety, we also identified some sources and some causes of their anxiety. This shows that they are anxious due to some causes. This is consistent with Arnold’s (1999) writing that the sources of foreign language anxiety are related to both the learner’s characteristics and classroom procedures. The learner’s characteristics may be:

In our study, the results reported a variety of the correlates of anxiety. On the part of the learner, self-esteem plays a great role in producing anxiety. In other words, our informants claimed that it is hard to be once self when using English in class. As shown in the following

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examples; one **student** claims, *“I do not feel certain of myself when I speak in my language class”*. And **another one** said, *“I always lose myself every time the teacher asks me to perform the speaking skill”*. This can be consistent with the statement of Guiora et al. (1972), *“feeling of uncertainty and threats to the ego due to the unknown elements of the second language”* (Cited in Tallon, no date, p. 3). This can mean that the learner loses control of herself/ himself because s/he perceives herself/ himself as incompetent in the target language.

It is clearly reported in our study that competitiveness plays a major role in raising students' anxiety. Our informants claimed that they become nervous when they compare themselves to their peers who are more proficient. **One student** even confessed, *“I feel worried and intense when I compare myself to my friend”*. This result goes with the finding of Bailey (1983), when he analyzed the diaries of eleven learners and found that competitiveness raises students' anxiety.

As regards anxiety that can arise from reduced risk-taking ability, our informants said that they avoid taking moderate risks. **One of the participants** says, *“Despite the fact that I know the answer to the question, I cannot do it”*. **Another one** says, *“I cannot do it”*.

The result of our study reported that foreign language anxiety can arise when students have a lack of language proficiency. Our informants felt that using English in class requires them a complete master of it. This can mirror the findings of Palacios (1998), that feeling of mastering a language is an overwhelming task. It may cause students to have unrealistic expectations about the learning process. **One Student** says, *“I get the idea to speak but sometimes I cannot find adequate words and expressions to participate in class”*.

Findings of our study revealed that anxiety can appear from the learner's belief about language learning. According to Horwitz (1988), students think that when they use the target language in class they should speak with a good accuracy and also with an excellent accent. Our study reported that some of our informants believe that when studying English at

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University, they must speak it as native speakers. They give more importance to the pronunciation of words. However, these can lead to a greater anxiety and render the speaking experience more stressful. **One student** states, *“I always feel stressed about the number of rules I should memorize to speak correctly”*. Another student stated, *“I think that to speak English, I should have a good accent”*. These results are in conformity with the evidence presented by Horwitz (1988) that students’ belief about learning a new language contributes to the degree of anxiety. Moreover, the study also reported our informants’ shyness as creator of anxiety in language class.

In addition to learner’s belief about language learning, our study also revealed that anxiety can appear from shyness, from tests, and from fear of negative evaluation. **One student** says, *“I am not usually volunteer to speak in class because I am shy”*. **Another Student** says, *“I usually get anxious during tests”*. **And another one** adds, *“Sometimes my anxiety rises when I think that my friends will laugh at me when I speak in English”*. These results are in conformity with the findings of Horwitz (1988).

Apart from student’s characteristics, anxiety can also appear in the classroom environment such as teacher support, favoritism, and oral presentation (Cited in Young, 1999, p. 62). Our findings show accordance to that. In other words, absence of teacher’s support for students can make them less motivated and more stressed. **One participant** says, *“I become upset when the teacher does not assist me and when there is absence of feedback”*. Favoritism contributes also to stress in class. It means when the teacher favors’ a student from another one, s/he creates a stressful atmosphere. **Another participant** claims, *“What makes me nervous is when the teacher makes exception in choosing who speaks in class”*. Our study also revealed that oral presentation raises classroom anxiety. As mentioned previously, Kotch and Terrell (1991) found that more than half of their participants said that oral presentations in

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front of the class produce more anxiety. Similar result to our findings; **one participant** said, *“even if I prepare well the task before, I feel anxious during oral presentations”*.

IV.1.3. Using Cooperative Learning Technique in Class to Reduce Anxiety

Cooperative learning technique is perceived by many language specialists like Kagan (1994) as, *“a communal activity in which learning is carried out through the mutual exchange of information”*. In other words, learning through cooperation promotes learners to be active constructors of knowledge. When students work in pairs or in groups, they have more opportunities to share ideas. Moreover, many studies reported that cooperative learning technique can reduce anxiety, foster communication, and provide more opportunities for learners to produce language.

In his study, Nagahashi (2006) found that pair and group work activities are effective for reducing foreign language anxiety among students enrolled in Akita University. Our study reported that our participants preferred pair and group works rather than individual work. A closer look at our informants' answers to question nine (09) reveals that forty students (80%) like pair and group work activities. Those students claimed that they feel certain anxiety. However, when they cooperate with their peers they feel less stressed. Some of these informants said; **one student** said, *“Cooperation allows us to help each other and the focus is not only on one student”*. **Another Student** said, *“When I feel blocked, my mates will help me”*.

The result of the study revealed that cooperative learning technique is interesting, motivating, and beneficial. The majority of our informants like cooperation. **One Student** said, *“Cooperative learning technique is very motivating and interesting since it helps us to be more active and engaged in class”*. **Another Student** said, *“Cooperation is very helpful for me because it improved my speaking skill in English”*. **And another one** claimed, *“Cooperative learning technique is a good way to acquire new vocabulary in new*

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situations". We can say that cooperative learning technique helps students to practice the speaking skill in less stressful contexts.

As far as the frequency of the use of cooperative learning technique in classrooms is concerned, the result reported by our study shows that twenty five students, that is, (50%) said that they sometimes practice cooperation in class. This can mean that they like cooperative learning technique, but they have not the opportunity to work in pairs or groups all the time. Certain students (42%) like pair and group activities but they rarely perform them. A small portion of our participants opted for never.

As concerns our students' feelings during pair and group work activities in class, the result reported that the large majority of them are at ease, relaxed and confident during cooperation. This can mean that pair and group activities create a warm atmosphere when students perform the speaking skill, and also because cooperation can evoke funny situations. Students are provided with help to get rid of their anxiety. For other students those activities are threatening and embracing. Then a small portion of students claimed that they get stressed during pair and group performance.

Cooperative learning technique is built on the constructivist theory. Vygotsky's social constructivist theory says that the best learning occurs when the learners are actively engaged in the learning process and working in collaboration with other learners. This means when learners study in pairs and in groups, they share ideas and they also create new ones. In response to the question fourteen which was devoted to know if our informants exchange information with their peers when they work in pairs or in groups, the majority of the students responded positively. It means that our informants share their ideas and benefit from each other. Some of their justifications are; **one student** said, "I like pair and group activities because it is an opportunity for me to share my knowledge and help my classmates". **Another student** said, "*Cooperation helps me to speak freely in class and to share information with*

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the teacher and classmates". **And another one** said, *"I am always encouraged to speak, to participate in class, and to learn from my classmates during group works"*. These results confirm how our participants discuss information together and their answers in pairs and in groups. These can prove how the constructivist theory influences cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is built on the positive interdependence theory. The latter means that all the students during cooperation have a common goal and also the contribution of each member is primordial for their success, and reduces their anxiety. Our study reported that the majority of students responded positively to question fifteen that concerned students' positive interdependence. The result agrees with the findings of other studies, in which figures such as Johnson, D, W, Johnson, R,T, and others pointed that cooperation is built on the constructivist theory and the positive interdependence theory which enhances the learner's performance and renders the learning process more enjoyable.

IV.1.4. Other Useful Strategies to Cope with Language Anxiety

As concerns the other useful strategies that students can use to cope with their anxiety, our informants responded to the question sixteen by the majority (38%) of the students believe that when they feel anxious, they encourage themselves, they can relax and calm down their muscles. The second option is self-talk with (32%). This technique is very useful and effective in lowering language anxiety. Our participants also use deep breathing (32%). It means that before answering to questions asked by the teacher, students can take pauses to think, to relax in order to speak without stress. When it comes to what informants suggest to what the teacher can do for them in order to reduce their anxiety, they provided as with the following suggestions: Students feel less anxious when the teacher works as a motivator. It means that he encourages the students to speak even if they make mistakes. **One student** said, *"I feel less anxious when my teacher pushes me to speak although I make a lot mistakes"*. **Another Student** said, *"The teacher should invite students to express themselves*

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and help them to find the missing words”. And other one says, “I feel relaxed and at ease when my teacher works as a prompter and a source of words”.

Other students feel at ease when the teacher doesn't correct all the mistakes they make when they perform the speaking skill. They feel nervous when the teacher interrupts them. **One student** says, *“Teachers of speaking should not correct the mistakes of students every time they make them”.*

Some students prefer their teacher to be a tutor to create a pleasing atmosphere. They want their teacher to call them by their first names. **One Student** said, *“I feel at ease when the teacher is friendly and not authoritative”.* Other students wished the classroom subjects to be related to their interests and their life experiences. **One Student** said, *“I prefer that the subject of speaking skill be related to my own life interest”.*

At the end of the questionnaire we provided our participants with a space to give their further suggestions, some of them are as follows:

- > Teachers should provide us with cooperative learning activities in order to be active in class and during speaking performances.
- > The topics that teachers provide us are a bit boring, they should ask their students about topics they want to discuss.
- > The difficulties we meet to practice the speaking skill, are due to the lack of opportunities.
- > Teachers should create new opportunities for us to practice the speaking skill.
- > We want to have more time devoted to the speaking skill to help us improve our oral efficiency.
- > Our teachers should be aware about their students' anxiety in order to find the adequate strategies to diminish their anxiety.

Discussion of the Findings

IV.2 The Teachers' Interview

The second data gathering tool we used in our research is the interview which we conducted with teachers of oral sessions. The interview has really helped us much to bring more detail and answer to our research hypothesis and our research questions. The answers of the five interviewees were very significant and gave evidence of the existence of anxiety in third year LMD students in the department of English, University of Tizi Ouzou. Then, those teachers use cooperative activities in their class in order to lower it, to motivate students, and also to help them to interact more in class. According to their experience as teachers of the oral module, they said that anxiety is very frequent in their classes; they noticed many symptoms of it. Therefore, to lower it they provided us with many strategies centered on the use of cooperative learning activities such as role plays, dialogues in pairs and groups, and other related cooperative activities. They indicated that they tolerate their learners to move from one group to another because it helps them to build positive interdependence and makes them have fun, in as much as it lowers their anxiety.

Since the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety exists and has a negative influence on the learners' performances, and cooperative learning does not work with all students because they are different and they have the same perceptions.

Conclusion

On the whole, we have formulated a hypothesis that says that foreign language anxiety exists among advanced learners in the department of English, University of Tizi Ouzou, and cooperative learning activities may be useful to lower that anxiety in oral sessions. Through the analysis of the results of both students' questionnaire and teachers' interview, we find that foreign language anxiety exists among third year LMD students. The results clearly confirm that cooperative activities can lower anxiety. According to Kagan (1994), if people are anxious, but allowed to affiliate, their anxiety level is reduced. And also, Oxford and Ehrman

Discussion of the Findings

(1993) include cooperative learning a classroom procedure which can lower anxiety in the language classroom. (Cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 223). T. Nagahashi (2007), Examined the effectiveness of cooperative learning activities in reducing anxiety among Akita University students, Japan. The findings of his study suggest that cooperative learning activities may be effective in reducing anxiety and creating a non threatening environment. In sum, the study demonstrated that language anxiety associated with communication apprehension is harmful for students and cooperative learning techniques can lower anxiety.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Foreign Language Anxiety is an important subject of research that has fascinated many researchers as psychologists, applied linguists and even teachers because it is a real problem in language classes. Many articles that state how anxiety affects language learning process have been published. All these research studies have contributed to our understanding of this concept by giving information about its types, sources and its effects on the learning process.

This study was carried using students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews. The participants of this study consisted of fifty third year EFL students and three EFL teachers of Oral sessions. The research adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data with the purpose of addressing the research questions that we have already asked in the general introduction of the dissertation.

The whole research process took place within six months, from January 2014 to June 2014, but we faced many difficulties and limitations. The great limitation of our study was the students' exams. The questionnaires were not administered until the end of May. Certain participants refused to cooperate because it was the period of exams. Certain questionnaires were not given back. It was also difficult to interview teachers due to their overwork between the correction of exam papers and also their lectures. We have not conducted an experimental study because of lack of time.

The fact of reducing students' anxiety can render the language learning process an enjoyable experience, enhance motivation and improve achievements. The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning in lowering students' anxiety in English oral classes. The results of this study have shown that foreign language anxiety exists and that the majority of the participants suffer from communication anxiety. The results of this study have also indicated that Pair and group works inside English classes may help learners to lower their communication anxiety. This study has demonstrated that cooperation

General Conclusion

can be used by teachers to lessen anxiety in their learners and provide them with opportunities to practice the speaking skill in many different situations. Foreign language classroom is an anxiety-provoking place for EFL learners because of the constant evaluation by both the teacher and classmates. It was found that learners' anxiety is mainly due to their shyness and lack of language proficiency.

Concerning anxiety alleviating strategies, many research studies have shown that there is no specific remedy for anxiety. All the strategies suggested in this study could "*certainly work as prescription for anxiety but it might as easily be advice on 'what good teachers' should routinely do*" (Oxford, 1999: cited in Tanveer, 2007, p. 62). All such advice is excellent but also applicable to students who do not show signs of anxiety; therefore, the advice cannot be other than general (2007, p. 63).

In the present study, we have dealt only with one technique that reduces the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety. Future research studies on language anxiety should attempt to explore other techniques that reduce this anxiety. Much work is needed in this area. Further studies can also examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning to develop students' fluency.

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Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire

Dear learners,

We would greatly appreciate if you can give some of your time to answer this questionnaire which is designed to gather information about the existence of **Foreign Language Anxiety** "FLA" among students (FLA is *worry to use second/ foreign language in class*), and the use of **Cooperative Learning/ Group work Activities** to reduce it "FLA" during speaking/ oral practice. Your answers will be precious for the completion of this work and will be treated with great confidence. Please, cross (×) in the appropriate answer or give full answer if necessary.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section 1: General Questions

1. Is learning English your first and personal choice?

A. Yes

B. No

2. How do you find studying English?

A. Easy

B. Quite difficult

C. Difficult

D. Very difficult

3. How much do you feel your English has improved since you have started your university courses?

A. A lot

B. A bit

C. Not at all

Appendix 1

Section 2: Second /Foreign language Communication Anxiety

4. Do you like oral performance?

A. Yes

B. No

Why?

.....

.....

5. How much do you agree with the following statement?

“I usually feel at ease (relaxed) during my oral English classes”

A. Strongly agree C. Neither agree nor disagree E. Strongly disagree

B. Agree D. Disagree

6. How do you feel when you are required to speak in classroom?

A. At ease, relaxed and confident

B. Anxious, worried and blocked

C. Others, please specify.....

7. When you are anxious/ worried ,

A. You are uncertain and lose your words

B. You withdraw from the situation

C. You are confident and face the situation

Appendix 1

D. Others/ Please specify.....

8. What are the causes of your anxiety/worry during oral activities?

A. Shyness

B. Lack of words/ expressions

C. Fear of making mistakes

D. Being criticized/ laughed at

E. Other /please specify.....

9. What kind of activities make you less stressed in oral sessions?

A. Individual work

B. Pair work

C. Group work

Why?.....

Section 3: Using pair / group work activities in the Class

10. Do you like pair/ group work activities?

A. Yes

B. No

Why?

.....

11. How do find these pair/group activities: Role plays, dialogues, and games?

A. Interesting, motivating and beneficial

B. Threatening and embarrassing

Appendix 1

C. Others

12. How often do you perform pair/ group work in the class?

A. Always

B. Sometimes

C. Rarely

D. Never

13. How do you feel when performing pair/group work activities in oral sessions?

A. Anxious and nervous

B. Confident and relaxed

C. Other

.....

14. When you work with your friends in pairs or in groups,

A. You share your ideas and benefit from one another

B. You don't interact with them and remain silent

C. Others, please specify.....

15. Does the support of your teammates assist your learning and lower your anxiety?

A. Yes

B. No

Explain.....

.....

Appendix 1

Section 4: The Use of other Useful Strategies

16. What do you do in order to cope with your anxiety/ worry when you are asked to speak in class?

A. Self talk C. Encourage yourself D. Take a deep breath

e. Other.....
.....

17. What do you think the teacher can do to make you at ease during oral activities?

.....
.....
.....

This space is devoted for further comments and suggestions

.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for answering!

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for EFL Teachers

Question 01: How long have you been teaching the oral module?

Question 02: Do you ever notice anxiety in your students?

Question 03: Please tell us about the signs or the anxiety symptoms have you noticed in anxious learners during your experience as a teacher of oral sessions?

Question 04: What are the factors that may cause students' anxiety during oral practice?

Question 05: Do you tolerate learners working in pairs or in groups? How?

Question 06: According to you, may cooperative learning activities be useful to cope with language anxiety, and why?

Question 07: What kind of activities do you ask your students to perform in class?

Question 08: Do you expect them often to work individually, in pairs, or in groups? Why?

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Chapter 2 : Research Design

Chapter 3: Presentation of the Findings

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