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Laboratoire de Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherche en Yoruba (LASODYLA-REYO)

Université d'Abomey-Calavi.

**laboratoiresociolinguistique@yahoo.fr**

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PSYCHOLOGIE, SCIENCES DE  
L'EDUCATION & DIDACTIQUE

## Enhancing Advanced EFL Students' Oral Communicative Skills Through Group Work Technique in a Private University of Benin

Ulrich O. Sèna Hindémè

Université d'Abomey – Calavi (Benin)

richdeme11@gmail.com

### Abstract

*The study highlights the making use of group work and some grouping teaching techniques as a means to foster advanced students' oral proficiency and to get them used the language appropriately in English as a Foreign Language classes. To achieve such a purpose, data were gathered through questionnaires administered to fifty (50) EFL students and four (04) EFL teachers who taught English at Institut Cerco, a Beninese private university located at Cotonou during the academic year (2016-2017). The results have shown that group work is one of the effective and appropriate techniques for developing and improving students' language use and encourage their oral participation in classroom which in turn affects their communicative competence. On the basis of these results, students need to be provided with an appropriate technique like pair or group work and related strategies to enhance oral production and to create suitable situations where they can use the language without hesitation. The discussion of the results has shown that the group work language technique when it is well-structured has the potential to motivate, to increase and to improve English students' oral proficiency at Institut Cerco in Benin.*

*Owing to the value of communicative interactions of the language, some suggestions have proved the necessity to guide the teachers so that they provide a more engaging and enjoyable environment for learning process to reach the set objectives and a better language learning situation.*

**Keywords:** *group work, motivation, oral proficiency, language learning*

### Résumé

*Une langue avant tout est un moyen de communication entre les membres d'un même groupe. Le présent article met un accent particulier sur la valeur du travail en groupe et son importance en tant que moteur efficace pour accroître et améliorer la production orale des apprenants de niveau supérieur de l'anglais, langue étrangère dans une université privée du Bénin afin de les amener progressivement à une meilleure utilisation de la langue en situation de classe. Les données collectées ont révélé que le travail en groupe lorsqu'il est bien organisé et bien structuré offre beaucoup de possibilités aux apprenants d'interagir en utilisant la langue. Dans un tel groupe, chaque apprenant se sent d'abord en sécurité parce qu'il n'est pas*

*menacé par la présence du professeur et du coup il est motivé et exprime ses joies et ses craintes au moyen de la langue. Cette recherche suggère que les enseignants de langue travaillent à s'approprier les principes, les conditions et les techniques de formation d'un*

*groupe de travail ce qui va leur permettre de savoir quel type d'activités correspond à un type de groupe de travail donné.*

**Mots-clés :** *travail en groupe, motivation, compétence orale, apprentissage de la langue*

## **Introduction**

The teaching of foreign languages is an interactive process which involves the participation of both the teacher and the learners. Many researchers have investigated classroom communication that involves interaction: they showed the importance of interaction in building knowledge and improving skills. For many years, English teachers have been using a variety of techniques to encourage interaction and participation among their learners. It is through the interaction in the class as social group that the language is used and learned, and the group is given a social identity and a social reality. It is important to keep learners active in the classroom, which means reducing teacher talking time in the classroom and increasing the learners' talking time, naturally, they will talk to each other through groups where each learner gets his time to talk.

Group Work also known as Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) has emerged over the past ten years as one of the effective methods of language teaching and no one can deny that learners like to work in groups, and if they do a good job, the benefits are many. This article intends to explore the use of group work in EFL teaching and to find out the impact of group work on advanced students' speaking oral communication skills as well as their communicative abilities. The main objective of learning a foreign language is to be able to use it for oral communication purposes. But unfortunately after many years of EFL learning in school, advanced learners in Benin are not able to use the target language appropriately in their daily communication. The problem we are confronted with here is when the students exhibit a lack of interaction-which can be presented through their poor production, lack of participation in the classroom and poor student teacher relationship-learning a foreign language and its components (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar for instance) becomes extremely difficult to develop their oral proficiency. Thus, teachers have to provide learners with a method of increasing language practice opportunities. Organizing the class into groups is one of the most successful paths to provide learners with extensive oral practice. The problem investigated has not been clearly explained.

The present study aims at investigating the impact of group work technique on the development of advanced students' speaking proficiency. It draws EFL teachers' attention to the relevance of adopting group work strategy as a relevant technique in their classes to fully improve their learners' speaking skills. Furthermore, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is the effect of group work technique on the development of students' speaking ability?

- Does group work technique lead to a better achievement in communicative competence?  
The research objectives and questions should be reviewed thoroughly and aligned

## I. Literature Review

Researchers are almost unanimous on the fact that collaborative learning technique has positive effects on learners' speaking skills. Jack C. Richards and his contributors (McCafferty, Jacobs, da Silva...) in his book "*Cooperative learning and second language teaching*" which provides a useful introduction to the field of cooperative learning for teachers wishing to better understand how its group-based learning principles can be successfully used in second and foreign language teaching, stated that *the approach known as cooperative learning has long been of interest to practitioners of communicative language teaching since it offers a body of widely tested classroom procedures for implementing group-based activities in the language classroom.* Before proceeding further, I provide some clarifications on the concept of group work.

### I.I Considerations about Group Work

Group work, according to Brown (2001, p.177), is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. It implies small group work, that is, students in groups of perhaps six or fewer.

Three important aspects should be highlighted in this definition. The first one is collaboration, in other words, cooperation. Students have to work together for the completion of the task. All the members of the group are like the pieces of a machine, if one does not work well, a malfunction may occur. Obviously, for lazy or irresponsible students, this is not a problem because the other members will take over and will make the machine work somehow. But real cooperation in group work occurs when everyone is aware of his/her responsibility and role and commits himself /herself to accomplish it in the best way possible. Kagan (1994, p. 10) asserts:

division of labor is often established by assigning task roles (Student One is to research the historical character's early life; Student Two, his inventions,; Student Three, his married family life; Student Four, his major inventions) or maintenance roles (Student One, you are the Materials Monitor; Student Two, you are the Quiet Captain; Student Three, you are the Task Master; Student Four, you are the Recorder).

Of course, all the members work together, discuss, come up with new ideas, change certain things, but if one does not play his/her role, the task cannot be completed. Also, roles are changed within the group every time a new task is assigned; in this way, everybody will have a different responsibility each time a new group work is

assigned. This is what Kagan (1994, p. 7) calls interdependency “the success of every team member depends on the success of each member (if one fails, all do), then a very strong form of positive interdependence is created and team members are very motivated to make sure each student does well”.

At first, roles can be assigned by the teacher, but later on, as students get more familiar with the process of group work, they can be responsible for assigning roles themselves.

The second and third aspects in Brown’s definition are much related. Self-initiated language refers to students using what they know and have learned in class to communicate with others in the classroom. In order to do this, the groups have to be small, as Brown previously suggests six students or fewer. In very big groups, shy or passive students tend to fall in silence and let the most talkative ones do the talking. Nunan (1999, p. 157) also points out that one of the classroom variables that have had a marked effect on student participation in oral activities is group size. Students who remain silent in groups of ten or more will contribute actively to discussions when the size of the group is reduced to five or three.

Group work is considered as one of the most important factors to improve learners' communication. Different individuals have developed many approaches to group work over the last time Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991:15) have defined group work as follows: "group work, in language class, is a co-operative activity, during which students share aims and responsibilities to complete a task assigned by the teacher in groups or in pairs".

According to Nunan and Lamb (1996, p.142), group work is conceived as any classroom activity in which learners perform collaborative tasks with one or more speakers. It has been considered as one of the main changes to the dynamics of classroom interaction wrought by students-centered teaching. In conclusion, group work is the best way to have success in learner-centered approach. This kind of speaking activities has had more and more emphasis in language classroom and it is used in encouraging learners' oral practice.

## **1.2 The Principles of Group Work**

For a smooth implementation of group work, several factors need to be in place. Those factors include: (1) the learning goals of group work, (2) the task, (3) the way the information is distributed, (4) the seating arrangement of the members of the group, and (5) the social relationships between the members of the group. Let us look first at the learning goals of group work before seeing how the factors work together.

## **1.3 Group Formation Strategy**

To understand the reasons behind the effect of group work, whether good or bad, it is essential to understand how groups are formed. Friendship is one of the factors that can be taken into consideration when forming groups. In such groups, students have excellent relationships. They respect one another, accept criticism from one another and listen to one another (Hendry et al., 2005). Friends work together; they work

cooperatively instead of competitively. Groups can also be formed based on ability where strong students are mixed with weak ones.

The objective is to allow the weak students to watch and learn from high achievers, which will eventually improve their performance (Nihalani et al., 2010). Furthermore, Hassanien (2007) proposes three types of group formation strategies: randomly, where the teacher assigns students to groups; self-selection, where students choose their own groups members, or a mixture of both. He further adds that a group of four or five is more convenient as students have the chance to participate equally in group activities. Other group formation strategies were proposed by Badache (2011) who suggested that groups can be formed alphabetically, by gender, or by birth. He even proposed to form groups by mixing shy and talkative students.

A more comprehensive description of group formation procedure is presented by Ramirez (2005). He recommended interesting techniques that teachers can use to group students such as giving students numbers and then grouping them according to the numbers. Another technique is to take a picture and cut it into pieces to form a puzzle. The number of pieces matches the number of students in a group. A student picks a piece and has to look for the rest of the pieces to form a group. Another technique is to bring some pictures that form different categories and give them to students; then, ask students to look for other students who have the same picture category. However, the techniques to use depend on the age of the students.

#### **1.4 Goals of Using Group Work**

The following description of the goals of group work focuses on the spoken use of the language. There are several reasons for this focus. First, group work is commonly used to get learners to talk to each other. Secondly, much research on group work in language learning has focused on spoken activity, partly because this is the most easily observed and recorded. Thirdly, most teachers use speaking activities in unprincipled ways.

#### **1.5 Benefits of Using Group Work in EFL Classes**

There are many advantages attached to the use of the group work strategy in EFL classes. First of all, students' responsibility and autonomy are promoted through group work activities. All students work together, share their thoughts, and always want to reach the goal in group activities. In addition, one of their main tasks is being in charge of their group activities each learner is in charge of his own speaking performance, so there is a friendly help and a high level of interdependence among them. For Doff (1988), "Group work and pair work encourage students to share knowledge. In a reading activity, students can help each other to explore the meaning of a text, in a discussion activity; students can give each other new ideas". Secondly, learners' participation, talking time and oral fluency are improved through group.

Finally, students' motivation is improved through group work activities. Group-work activity can allow participants to use the language. Moreover, it is one of the most effective ways to motivate participants to become more involved. Richards and Lockhart (1994) point out that, students not only play more active roles in the learning process but also get the benefits of sharing ideas with their team members through taking part in groups. Doff (1988, p.141) states that "students feel less anxiety when they are.... privately than when they are on ...shown in front of the whole class. Pair work and group-work can help shy students, who would never say anything in a whole class activity". By dividing the class into groups, a new social context is created whereby learners get the opportunity to share individual cognitions with their group mates and decide on a conclusion based on the sum of these cognitions.

### **I.6 Activities Used to Teach Speaking in Group Work Context**

Oral communication activities are conducted with group work to stimulate learners' interest and to defeat their feeling of shyness and fear, as they are helpful in giving each learner, especially for overcrowded classes, the chance to participate within the group. They are conducted by dividing the students into groups, with a leader for each group and then give them the task. After a limited period of time, all learners meet again and debate what they found as results.

The teacher organizes his learners in the classroom according to two shapes, the first one is that learners sit roundly to see each other and to ease their contributions; and the second one is that learners are put into a group of two learners, and ask them to converse between each other one asks and the other one replies. As he can help students with vocabulary and expressions necessary for the exercises as well as offering students the chance to contribute orally through paying the students' attention to ask questions that need long answers, as he must correct just students' errors that cause misunderstanding among them.

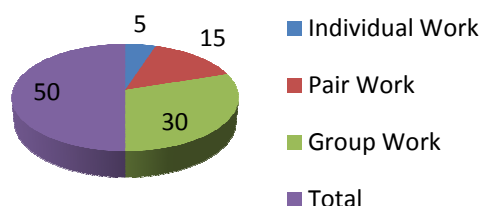
Thornbury (2008) suggested three different stages that learners go through when they are learning to speak. The first stage is awareness. Awareness means that students need to be aware of the characteristics of the language under study. Appropriation makes up the second stage. Appropriation is the "integration" of the language characteristics into the students' existing knowledge. The last stage has to do with autonomy (usually referred to as automaticity). When students are able to use the new language on their own, they are said to be autonomous.

According to Thornbury (2008), Theorists have designed several activities for all the stages mentioned above in order for an effective teaching to take place. All these activities urge the students to participate since they bring interest into the classroom and, thus endeavour motivation.

When implemented well, group work technique encourages achievement, student discussion, active learning, student confidence, and motivation. The skills students develop while collaborating with others are different from the skills they develop while working independently. As more businesses organize employees into teams and task forces, the skills necessary to be a "team player" (e.g., verbalizing and justifying ideas,



**Q2. Which Strategy do you prefer during speaking activities?**

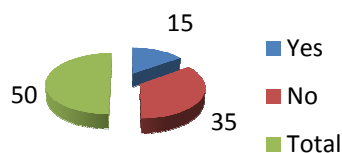


**Figure 2: Students' Preference of Strategy in Oral Class**

Students were asked to express their preference for the following teaching strategies when they engaged in speaking activities: individual work, pair work or group work. Most of the participants (60%) indicated that they prefer group work to individual or pair work. (15) Respondents (30%) prefer to work in pairs and only five, I mean 10% of the participants prefer to work individually. The results show that the participants are aware of the importance of the group work strategy for the following reasons.

The data analysis revealed that the major reasons which explain students' preference of GWLLT are its appropriateness to improve students' interaction skills and its potential to encourage students' intrinsic motivation and creates a collaborative learning environment and promote students' academic progress.

**Q3. Do you find it difficult to work with your classmates in groups?**



**Figure 3: Difficulties Encountered by Students when Working in Group**

As it can be seen in figure3, it is relevant to point out that the respondents differed in their perception about their difficulties when working in group. While the majority of respondents (70%) answered "negatively" indicating that they do not have any problems or difficulties when working within the groups and with their classmates. This indicates that those participants like working collaboratively for communication purposes.30% of them have found it difficult to work in group and they do not benefit anything from others.

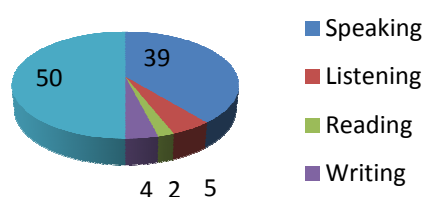
**Q4. Do you think that Group Work Technique helps to improve your Oral communication skills?**

**Table 01: Students' Thought of Group Work strategy**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	35	70%
No	15	30%
Total	50	100%

The questionnaire data revealed that a big proportion of students (35) representing a numerical majority (70%) responded “yes”, which means that group work learning technique with its benefits can strongly improve their speaking ability and enhance their English proficiency. In contrast, 15 students (30%), indicated that group work does not have any impact on their oral communication skills. Therefore, it was noted that a high portion of the participants recognized the importance of group work in enhancing Students’ interaction skills as well as their communicative skill.

**Q5. The Most Important Skill that Students Need to Improve Most in the Process of English Learning**

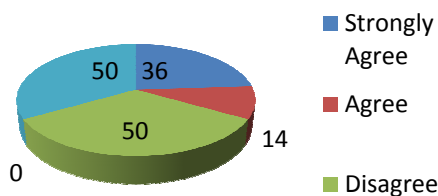


**Figure 4: Focus on the Most Important Skill in Language Learning**

In this second section the important question was to ask participants to rank language skills in terms of importance and preference. Most of the respondents (78%) picked the speaking skill first while (05) students (10%) selected the listening skill, then it is followed by the writing skill (08%) and reading (4%).

First of all, I notice that the speaking skill came first in the students’ choices, as we have seen in the above table. According to those participants, speaking skill is considered more difficult than the other language skills. Also they need to develop this proficiency and need to communicate using the language to become fluent speakers and those subjects are aware about the preference of this skill to succeed in learning. Through their responses they prefer to develop the communicative competence first.

**Q6. Do you agree that Oral Skill is Very Important in the Process of Language Learning?**



**Figure 5: Importance of Oral Skill in the Learning of a Language.**

The survey data demonstrated that low English proficiency was the principal obstacle to language day- to- day practice. Several studies revealed that in order to better learn a language one has to practise or to speak it. The questionnaire data indicated that a large proportion of respondents (72%) strongly agree that anyone who wants to learn a

language must speak it fluently. This expressed that learners are aware of the importance of communicative ability. It was noteworthy that 14or (28%) of the sampled EFL students, labelled that they agree while the remaining options (disagree and strongly disagree) are left.

**Q7. Which Activity does your Teacher Use Most?**

**Table 02: the Type of Activities that Teacher Used Most in EFL Classes**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Discussion	40	80%
Role- Play	10	20%
Language Games	00	00%
Others	00	00%
Total	50	100%

The variation in the participants’ responses include different types of activities, 40 participants (80%) out of 50have opted for “discussion” which testifies that the majority of EFL teachers use the same activity in their classes10 of the respondents (20%) chose “role-play” activity. So teachers should use different activities to increase students’ intrinsic motivation.

**Q8. How do you find English Communicative Ability?**

**Table 3: Students’ Perception about English Communicative Difficulty**

Option	Participants	Percentage
Very Easy	03	06%
Easy	18	36%
Difficult	27	54%
Very Difficult	02	04%
Total	50	100%

It can be seen in table 3, that he majority of respondents (54%) believe that speaking English is difficult. This means that those students have low language problems when they participate in the classroom activities, they are afraid of making mistakes and are likewise shy.18 students out of fifty, I mean (36%) of the EFL students find it easy, while only about(03) students (6%) found it very easy, two (02) subjects (4%) of them considered it very difficult.

Most of the sampled students find that communicative ability is very difficult to be acquired in English. This does not necessarily mean that they don't have good command in English but those who face fluency problems should implement some techniques like GW so as to enhance their communicative proficiency.

**Q 9. Why do you Feel Afraid to speak during the English classes?**

**Table 4: Causes for the Students' Inability to Speak during English classes**

Options	Number of participants	Percentages
For fear of making grammatical mistakes	08	16%
For fear of making pronunciation mistakes	09	18%
Lack of vocabulary	06	12%
Lack of self – confidence	02	04%
All of the Above	25	50%
Total	50	100%

Table 4 has discussed the issue of students' fear to take the floor during English classes. Half of the participants (50%) chose "All of the above", which indicates that students are unable to participate because of many weaknesses at different levels: (accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary...etc.) and they are also affected by some psychological problems like the lack of self confidence...etc. still the remaining parties being related to the total number (09) they kept sticking to one problem.

Furthermore, eight (08) of the participants supported that not only have they feared of making grammatical mistakes but they also have feared of making pronunciation mistakes. It is noteworthy that this situation may affect students' communicative competence as well as their language learning. Besides, according to the questionnaire data, six (06) participants attributed their deficiency in vocabulary to the lack of practice and added that they do not use the language enough in the classroom and only two (02) students based their response on the psychological problem which explains their lack of self-confidence. As a consequence, the language teachers' role is to create an anxiety free oral relaxed atmosphere that motivates the learners to use the language and speak it appropriately.

### 3.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Results Related to Teachers' Questionnaire

Following is the analyses of some precise items of teachers' questionnaire's results.

#### Q1. Have you ever Used Group Work Language Learning Technique in your Classes?

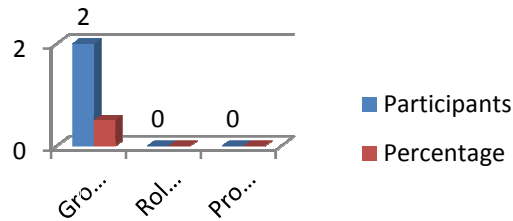


Figure 6: Teachers' use of group work strategy in their EFL classes

In response to the question whether or not EFL teachers practise GWLL technique in their class, the results indicate that all four respondents confessed that they use GWLL technique in their classes. This testifies that all the EFL teachers are aware of the potential as well as the various benefits of group work. Besides, they believed they are able to use it. One teacher stated that most of his class activities depend on group work learning technique.

#### Q2. Which of the Following Techniques do you Use most in your Classrooms?

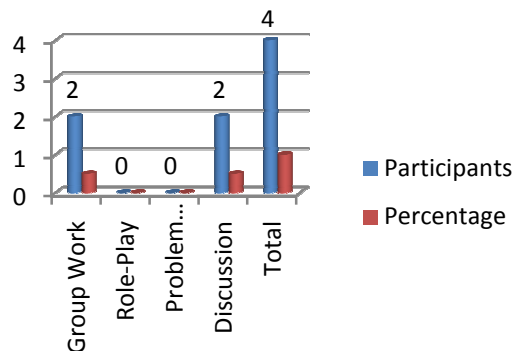


Figure 7: Information about the Teachers' Use of Teaching Techniques

The teaching of oral communication competence is based on several techniques and ways. Four options have been suggested to teachers. Two teachers out of four respondents use discussion. In other words, they focus less on grammar mistakes and insist on the communication of ideas. On the other hand, two (02) respondents stated that they use group work and they may have their reasons insofar as communication is a social act in which two or more people are involved to exchange of information, and students feel less motivated and less confident to speak or use the language for interaction.

**Q3. How often do you use group work when teaching in your EFL classes?**

**Table 05: The Frequency of the Teachers' Use of Group Work When Teaching in EFL Classes**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Always	00	00%
Often	04	100%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%
Total	04	100%

In response to the frequency of teachers' use of group work strategy, while all the 4 EFL teachers stated that group work has several benefits and a great impact on teaching oral communication and on learning in general, the other options were left. This implies that as an effective and interactional teaching method, GWLLTT is currently preferred for its potentials in language teaching settings, and its motivational aspects in high school settings as well.

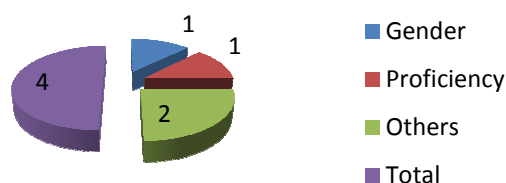
**Q4. How Many Students do you often put in Each Group?**

**Table 6: The Number of Students Teachers Use to form a Group**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Pairs	00	00%
03 - 04	03	75%
05 - 06	01	15%
More than 06	00	00%
Total	04	100%

Only one teacher use groups of 5-6 students among those who use group work, and the highest percentage( 75%) use small groups of 3-4 students, and no one uses pair work as well as more than groups of six students together, depending on the learning situation. As reported by the respondents, the reason for using small groups of 3-4 students would be that both types of groups are manageable and can be controlled in terms of students' participation and oral exchange among the members; and at the same time, they help in negotiating ideas and information. Students are arranged in the groups on the basis of their sitting as well as their choices from time to time. This way of grouping students would be profitable in terms of time management and avoidance of noise making.

**Q5. On which Basis do you set up the Groups in your Classes?**

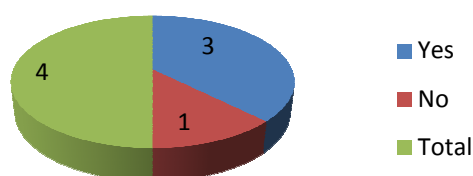


**Figure 8: Group formation strategies**

According to figure 8, only one teacher revealed that he takes into account students' gender in group formation. As such, some students, girls and boys as well may hate working together in so far as they would feel shy to share their ideas because of gender consideration.

Following proficiency basis implies that more proficient students work together and less proficient ones also together. The belief of the respondents as for the factor of proficiency in group formation can be that setting up groups of excellent students apart from the ones' of weak students can lead to a kind of embarrassment and frustration. Most of teachers advocated that their students are free to choose their group and no restriction was imposed on them. The objective of teachers in forming groups is to establish an anxiety free or a relaxed atmosphere so that members or mates would feel free and comfortable, thus, more ready to learn together. Moreover, this freedom of choice can empower students. Half of the selected teachers declared that they set their groups randomly during classroom activities. Furthermore, they stated that they do not consider sex and proficiency factors while setting up groups.

**Q6. Do you think that Group Work Technique Improves Learners' Oral Proficiency?**



**Figure 9: Teachers' Perception about the Significance of Group Work on the Improvement of Students' Oral Proficiency**

The examination of the question to know whether or not group work improves students' communicative performance, has revealed that while 03 respondents out of 04 stated that group work improves students' oral proficiency. Only one teacher responded negatively.

**Q7. What do you find difficult in the teaching of the speaking skill?**

**Table 07: the Most Difficult Elements Needed in the Teaching of Speaking Ability**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Grammar	01	25%
Pronunciation	01	25%
Vocabulary	01	25%
Sentence Structures	01	25%
Total	04	100%

The results in this table indicate that out of the four participants, two claimed that their students' needs in oral competence are expressed in terms of grammar and pronunciation competences (25% for each category of item). As for sentence structures and vocabulary competences, they appeared in the last position as the least needed item

in teaching oral expression. To begin with, grammar helps in mastering and using the language correctly. In addition, the more learners practice, the better pronunciation they will get.

#### **Q8: How do you motivate your Students to Communicate Orally in Language Class?**

Students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence was also referred to as a significant constraint for the effective use of English in groups. Some teachers claimed that students' motivation is raised through different types of learning activities. Some participants considered this fact as a major challenge and argued that they motivate students' practice of the target language by dealing with topics of interest to them, by sharing their problems and trying to overcome their anxiety as well as their shyness in order to increase their self-confidence. Motivation is what keeps teachers teaching and students learning. That is using authentic materials like videos, listening audio tapes as effective techniques for motivating students to speak well in the classroom context.

#### **4. Discussion of the Findings**

Language creates situations where students interact with each other and express their ideas using the target Language is speaking first that is why the majority of the students express their will in terms of mastering speaking skill and other language skills (writing, reading and listening) will come later. Learning the communicative skills first will reinforce the learning of the other language skills. Although some EFL Learners are motivated to learn English, they feel afraid of speaking because of their lack of self-confidence and fear of making mistakes. Teachers need to encourage and motivate their students to practice the language inside the classroom so as to be good English speakers. Teachers must promote group work and motivational activities. Most of the participants agree that group work has the potentials to help learners to improve their speaking skill. Through group work activities, learners have the opportunity to speak and use the language appropriately and assist each other in the case of misunderstanding of the topics.

Some of the teachers pointed out that group work is an effective strategy which enhances students' oral communication skills. In fact, they supported that group work gives students the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions, to get rid of shyness, to develop social skills, it helps them to accept ideas, to learn from each other, to be open-minded, to learn how to evaluate each other, thus encouraging the shy or the less proficient ones to get out of their shells.

In group, good students may support and motivate their peers to speak, they learn decision making and critical thinking, they appreciate the value of learning in teams as being the social aspect of learning, they break the routine of individual learning and create enjoyable learning atmosphere and they learn new vocabulary, expressions and structures from the interaction with others also they learn from each other to improve

their negotiation skills hence, improve their own communicative competence so students feel to speak when they are allowed to work together. Most respondents hold Doctorate degrees in TEFL, which means that the teaching of communicative competence or speaking skill is of more importance. The results are interesting too insofar as the majority of EFL teachers have a long experience in teaching so their responses were of great importance in comparison with the others of short experience in language teaching. So, I notice that the majority of the selected teachers recognised the benefits of using this technique in developing students' communicative performance through the interaction that takes place in the classroom between them. All the positive results revealed in this study concerning the potentials of using group work in improving students' communicative skills are relevant. This means that there is strong relationship between learners' interacting in group work and the development of their oral proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

The present study has dealt with the relationship that exists between group work and its effect on the development of students' oral production. Its main focus was to investigate about whether the practice of group work technique in language learning classes can encourage or motivate EFL students to perform well in language classroom context. The implementation of group work's strategies and techniques on the field of language learning is very important and useful for the promotion of students' participation in the EFL class for it creating a situation where students are expected to assist peers, to discuss and exchange ideas with each other.

The analysis of results showed that the majority of the students express their willingness to interact with peers so as to develop their communicative skill. Teachers, as for them, agreed upon the idea that group work is a very motivating technique that helps the learners develop their communicative performance. Also, the obtained data confirmed that there is a close correlation between group work technique and the development of students' speaking ability. It was also revealed that learners must be forced to interact with peers in order to master the art of talking fluently which seems to be difficult in the process of EFL learning, since learners who keep always silent in the classroom will feel lack of words when they find themselves in situations that require talking for interaction.

Group work helps students and teachers to bridge the gap between input and output. In other words, students show what they have learned by playing and using language with their peers. They also have the chance to have a small piece of reality in their classes by negotiating, turn-taking, suggesting, and getting to a final result. This is what human beings do every day.

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