



# **Teachers' Understandings and Perceptions about Applying Cooperative learning in English lessons at Al-Mandaq schools in Al-Baha**

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## Teachers' Understandings and Perceptions about Applying Cooperative learning in English lessons at Al-Mandaq schools in Al-Baha

### ABSTRACT:

The present study aims to investigate the extent to which cooperative learning strategy is used in the English classrooms, and to discover the attitudes of the teachers toward applying cooperative learning and their reasons behind using it. In addition, it tries to examine the teachers' views about the factors that lead to effective cooperative learning in English classrooms . Finally , this study tries to show the teachers opinions about the relationship between applying cooperative learning and students level of proficiency in mastering the language. The results showed the following : First, cooperative learning strategy is popular and common among English teachers in Al-Mandaq schools. Also cooperative learning is effective and applying this strategy does not reduce the opportunities of applying other strategies . Second, there are different reasons which make teachers apply cooperative learning such as ; cooperative learning enhances students' social skills , also it promotes friendship among students, and helps students to overcome their shyness .Third, appropriate classroom atmosphere, students' willingness to learn , and cooperative learning training are factors that lead to effective cooperative learning . Finally, the results showed that there is a strong relationship between applying cooperative learning and the students' level of proficiency. Cooperative learning helps students to be more confident , enhances students' self-esteem , and improves students' fluency.

### المستخلص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقق من مدى توجه المعلمين لتطبيق استراتيجيات التعلم التعاوني في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية ، والأسباب التي تدفعهم لتطبيق هذه الإستراتيجية . بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة العوامل التي تؤدي

إلى تعلم تعاوني فعال وناجح من وجهة نظر المعلمين . كما تعرض هذه الدراسة أخيراً على وجهة نظر المعلمين في العلاقة بين تطبيق استراتيجية التعلم التعاوني ومستوى الطلاب في إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية . أظهرت النتائج ما يلي : أولاً : يعد تطبيق استراتيجية التعلم التعاوني شائعاً ومنتشراً بين معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في مدارس المنطق . وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن التعلم التعاوني فعال وتطبيقه لا يقلل من فرص تطبيق استراتيجيات التعلم الأخرى . ثانياً : هناك أسباب مختلفة تجعل المعلمين يهتمون بتطبيق استراتيجية التعلم التعاوني، وأظهرت الدراسة النتائج التالية : التعلم التعاوني يعزز المهارات الاجتماعية لدى الطلاب كما أنه يعزز الصداقة بين الطلاب، ويساعد الطلاب على التغلب على الخجل . ثالثاً : أظهرت الدراسة أن العمل على تهيئة الجو المناسب في الفصول الدراسية ، ورغبة الطلاب للتعلم ، وتدريب المعلمين على استراتيجيات التعلم التعاوني من العوامل التي تؤدي إلى تعلم تعاوني فعال ومثمر . وأخيراً : أظهرت النتائج أن هناك علاقة قوية بين تطبيق التعلم التعاوني وكفاءة مستوى الطلاب . كما أن التعلم التعاوني يساعد الطلاب على أن يكونوا أكثر ثقة بأنفسهم ، ويساعد الطلاب على التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية بطلاقة .

## **Chapter One**

### **1.1 Introduction :**

Cooperative learning strategy is one of several strategies that are used in the educational field in order to achieve better outputs . Most researchers indicate that using cooperative learning strategy in classrooms is beneficial for the pupils , teachers , and the curriculum to be achieved at the end of the course appropriately and smoothly.

Cooperative learning is a method to teaching that makes enormous use of cooperative activities , tasks, and quizzes involving pairs and small groups of the learners in the classroom whether the teacher is involved or only as a tutor , controller, and facilitator . They all work together to help each other to reach the ultimate goal of learning process .

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others ( Olsen and Kagan

1992 ) . Cooperative learning has group goals that create what is known as positive interdependence. Positive interdependence is when students believe they can reach their learning goals only when other students in their cooperative group also reach their goals (Johnson and Johnson, 1987). The meaning of the positive interdependence is that each one of the group has the belief that he can be helpful for the team or group and for himself .

Group rewards as well as a schedule that has structure is essential to team learning (Slavin, 1978 ; Whicker, Nunnery and Bol, 1997). Group rewards encourages all the learners to participate and work together in order to help each other because individual learners are rewarded only if the whole group are successful .

In cooperative learning the students must know and learn important skills in order to work cooperatively in groups . According to Johnson ( 1987 ) it is essential that students learn skills that will enable them to work cooperatively in groups. Students can't be expected to know how to work collaboratively unless they have been taught these skills. Cooperative learning undertaken without explicit instruction to students regarding how to work with others collaboratively will not provide success (Johnson and Johnson, 1987).

Cooperative learning is not only the group work. A basic difference between cooperative learning and traditional group work is that in classical group work, students are asked to work in groups with no attention compensated to group functioning, whereas in cooperative learning, group work is carefully organized, planned, and examine (Jacobs, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Instructional models and structures have been designed, which teachers can adopt and adapt, to help the group work operate more successfully by creating an atmosphere for interactive learning (Abrami et al., 1995).

Cooperative learning changed the traditional methods and approaches views that focus on the roles of the teachers only whether cooperative approach is more concerned about the learner who becomes the centered of the learning process .

### **1. 2. The Statement of the Problem:**

There is an argument between teachers who are interested in and eager for applying the cooperative learning strategy in English lessons . On the other hand some teachers are against applying it because of their reasonable reasons from their point of view. Some EFL teachers in Al-Mandaq region focus on using cooperative learning in English lessons , and others stick on applying the traditional strategies . Therefore, there is a need to investigate this issue.

### **1. 3. Objectives of the Study:**

This study attempts to achieve the following objectives :

1. To investigate the teachers' attitudes towards applying cooperative learning in English lessons .
2. To investigate the reasons that make teachers enthusiastic for applying cooperative learning in the English classrooms.
3. To investigate the factors that lead to effective cooperative learning .
4. To investigate the relationship between applying cooperative learning and the students' level of English proficiency .

### **1. 4. Research Questions:**

This study seeks to answer the following questions :

1. What are the attitudes of teachers toward applying cooperative learning in the English classroom?
2. What are the teachers' reasons for applying cooperative learning in the English classroom?
3. What are the factors that lead to effective cooperative learning?
4. What is the relationship between applying cooperative learning and students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view ?

### **1. 5. Hypotheses:**

1. The attitudes of the teachers towards applying cooperative learning in English classroom are generally popular and common.

2. There are several reasons for teachers that make them applying cooperative learning strategies .

3. There are different factors that lead to effective cooperative learning.

4. There is a huge significant differences in applying cooperative learning in the EFL classroom due to the students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study:**

The study might help in solving the debate about applying or not applying cooperative learning in teaching English. Moreover, it might help the teachers realize the students' needs and make some better judgments concerning applying cooperative learning more appropriately to facilitate their learning.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study:**

This study is concerned with EFL teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards applying cooperative learning strategies in the English classrooms at governmental schools in Al-Mandaq intermediate schools. Therefore, the generalization of the results will be limited to this population and to the instruments used in this study.

### **1.8. Methodology:**

This section describes the research design and the methodologies employed for carrying out the study. It provides detailed information about the participants, the instruments used for collecting the data, and the procedures.

#### **1.8.1 Participants:**

The participant included 40 English teachers in Al-Mandaq educational zone . All those teachers have various degrees of experience and are BA holders.

### **1.8.2 Data Collection:**

A questionnaire was designed to investigate the attitude of teachers towards applying cooperative learning . Also, to achieve the aims of this study and test its hypotheses, data collection will be done through the questionnaire.

### **1.8.3 Procedure:**

The hypothesis which states that the English teachers in AL-Mandaq educational zone apply cooperative learning strategies in English classes can be tested by asking the English teachers to answer the questionnaire.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and Related Studies**

#### **2.1. Introduction .**

This chapter focuses on the previous studies that are meant to provide the background information on applying the cooperative learning strategy in the classroom . First, it presents the current status of English in Al-Baha. Then, it discusses the history of cooperative learning . Next, it gives an insight into the theoretical roots of cooperative learning .

After that ,this study shows some types of cooperative learning methods. It also discusses the basic principles and elements of cooperative learning , and shows some key Issues in implementing cooperative learning . Finally, it shows some related studies belonging to the field of cooperative learning.

#### **2.2. English in the Saudi context.**

The compulsory educational system in Saudi Arabia is divided into three stages: primary education which starts from 1st to 6th grade, and intermediate education which covers the 7th to 9th grades, and secondary education which covers the 10th to 12th grades and these three stages are applied in both governmental and private schools.

### 2.3. History of Cooperative Learning.

Cooperation has been an essential strategy for survival and development throughout human history in different fields of life . It is the equivalent of the old saying "Two hands are better than one" can be found in almost any language and any culture.

Social theorists established cooperative learning theory before World War II after some of them such as Allport ,Watson ,and Shaw found that "group work was more effective and efficient in quality and quantity and productivity comparing to working alone." ( Gilles, R.M., & Adrian, F. 2003) .

Cooperative learning theory which we practice today has been influenced by Philosophers' and Psychologists' ideas such as John Dewey and Kurt Lewin . Lewin's indicated that "cooperative learning is establishing a relationship between learners in order to achieve the learning goals." ( Sharan, Y. 2010).

In 1994 Johnson and Johnson published that "there are five important elements those are : positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, social skills, and processing that are essential for effective group learning, achievement, and higher-order social, personal and cognitive skills. " (e.g., problem solving, reasoning, decision-making, planning, organizing, and reflecting). ( Johnson, D., Johnson, R. 1994).

### 2.4. Theoretical Roots of Cooperative Learning.

Any effective instructional practice must have strongly solid theoretical foundations and scientific supports. There are mainly five theoretical perspectives underlying and guiding research on cooperative learning : social interdependence theory, motivational theory, behavioural learning theory and humanistic psychology. These four theoretical roots provide evidence to why students in cooperative groups learn more effectively , happily ,and smoothly than those who learn by

themselves individually and within the traditional way whereas the teacher is the center of learning process .

#### **2.4.1. Social Interdependence Theory.**

Social interdependence theory, developed by David Johnson and Roger Johnson in 1970s, asserts that the "way social interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact which, in turn, determines outcomes" (Johnson et al., 1998). There are three types of social interdependence relations: positive interdependence, negative interdependence and absence of interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1974; Johnson et al., 1998). Positive interdependence is related to cooperation and promotive interaction where individuals encourage, help, and facilitate each other's efforts for success. Negative interdependence is related to competition and oppositional interaction where individuals discourage and prevent each other's efforts to achieve and success. The absence of interdependence is related to individualistic efforts where individuals work independently by themselves without interaction with each other.

#### **2.4.2. Motivational Theory.**

Learning motivation theorists stated that in the cooperative learning classroom, students form a mutual internal source of positive reinforcement for one another because of their relationship of positive interdependence (Baloche, 1998; Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Dörnyei, 1997; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995, 2000).

Motivational perspectives on cooperative learning focus on three elements: goal structures, reward structures and group dynamics (Dörnyei, 1997; Johnson et al., 1998; Slavin, 1995, 2000). It is believed that "cooperative goal structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their own personal goals is if the group is successful" (Slavin, 1995 ). Thus group members strive to help one another, and more importantly they

encourage each other to make their maximum effort. The reward structure of cooperative learning is mostly related to group reward, which means students are assessed as a group based on group performance or the sum of individual performances. Although group rewards are typically considered accidental motivators, "building in external reasons for students to cooperate can lead to internal motivation to work in groups" (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998).

#### **2.4.3. Behavioural Learning Theory.**

The behavioural learning theorists stress the critical role of group external reinforcers and extrinsic rewards in stimulating desirable actions. It is assumed that actions followed by extrinsic rewards are very likely to be repeated and increased, and cooperative efforts tend to be powered by extrinsic motivation to achieve group rewards. A good number of studies have established the critical role of interpersonal reinforcers and punishers in affecting students' social behaviour and academic performance (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007).

The behavioural learning theory emphasizes the importance of group contingencies (Slavin, 1987, 2000), which means groups of students are rewarded on the basis of the behaviour of all of the group members or occasionally a single or certain members. Two elements are essential for group contingencies: group reward and individual accountability, which means "group members must be aware of the individual contributions if they are to be able to apply the interpersonal sanctions held to be central to the effectiveness of the group contingency" (Slavin, 1987).

#### **2.4.4. Humanistic Psychology.**

A central premise of humanism is that human beings behave out of intentness and values. Humanism theorists focus on human freedom, dignity, potential and independence, and thus

give priority to the study of human needs and interests. They value the pedagogical approach which provides a foundation for personal growth and development so that learning will continue throughout life in a self-directed manner (DeCarvalho, 1991). A primary purpose of humanism could be described as the development of self-actualized, self-governed people. In humanistic education, learning should be student-centred and personalized, and the tutor's role is that of a facilitator and controller .

Specifically speaking, humanistic learning theories espouse the following basic principles (DeCarvalho, 1991; Gage & Berliner, 1998; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). First, instructions should be learner-centered, based on the learners' needs, interests and academic levels. Students are most motivated and encouraged to learn what they want and need to know. Second, knowing how to learn is more important than acquiring a lot of knowledge. Third, students learn best in a non-threatening environment. Fourth, facilitative teaching, group work, and pair work are recommended .

## **2.5. Types of Cooperative Learning Methods.**

Generally there are five major cooperative learning methods: Learning Together created by David and Roger Johnson (1994a, 1994b), Student Team Learning by Robert Slavin (1994) and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, Structural Approach by Spencer Kagan (1994), Jigsaw by Elliot Aronson (1997) and his colleagues in Austin, Texas, and Complex Instruction by Elizabeth Cohen (1994) and her colleagues.

### **2.5.1. Learning Together.**

Learning Together provides a generic framework for applying cooperative learning in any subject area to learners of any age, which emphasizes the integrative use of three types of cooperative learning styles: informal, base group , and formal cooperative learning . Informal cooperative learning refers to

having students work together in temporary, ad-hoc groups and serves as a valuable aid for students to process their learning materials effectively during direct teaching . Base groups are long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership, aiming at providing constant support and motivation that group members need to achieve educational success instead of working together on a specific learning tasks or assignments. Base group members are like good friends, and comprise a supportive learning community with an obligation to help each other in the academic field (Jacobs, 2006).

Formal groups are often carefully formed according to certain principles, and aim at students achieving mutual learning goals through completing assigned tasks with group members cooperatively. It is assumed that any lesson or assignment may be reformulated to be cooperative. In Learning Together, teachers follow five major steps. First, they specify the objectives for the lesson either in terms of academic areas or cooperative skills. Second, they make a number of pre-instructional decisions on grouping students, assigning individual roles and tasks, and planning materials. Third, they specify the task and the positive interdependence, including explaining the learning task, structuring positive interrelations and individual responsibility among group members. Fourth, they monitor students' learning and intervene within the groups, providing assistance in terms of academic knowledge and cooperative skills. Five, they evaluate students' learning and help students assess how well their groups work together.

### **2.5.2. Student Team Learning.**

Student Team Learning methods stress the use of group goals and group success, which cannot be achieved until all group members have grasped the materials being taught. There are three central elements in Student Team Learning methods: team rewards, individual accountability, and equal opportunities for

success. Successful teams earn their team rewards when their team performances are above pre-set assessment criteria. The overall performance of each team depends on the individual performance of all teammates on the assessment (e.g. quizzes or academic games) that students take individually without help from others; in this way, each member has his/her individual accountability for team success. Team rewards and individual accountability effectively engage teammates not only in working hard to get themselves prepared for a quiz but also in helping each other to make sure every member can do well. "Equal opportunities for success means that students contribute to their teams by improving on their own past performance" (Slavin, 1995); in other words, the more improvement points teammates gain, the more likely their team will succeed. This element allows students of different academic levels to be equally challenged to make a contribution to their teams because they compete with themselves rather than with others. Research suggests that "if students are rewarded for doing better than they have in the past, they will be more motivated to achieve than if they are rewarded for doing better than others" (Slavin, 1995).

### **2.5.3. The Structural Approach.**

The Structural Approach focuses on the use of a variety of cooperative learning structures in processing learning materials. The basic premise of the Structural Approach is that "interactions in the classroom have a profound effect on the social, cognitive, and academic development of students", therefore "teachers should be provided with the means to direct the interaction of students in ways that will result in a range of learning outcomes" (Kagan & Kagan, 1994). Structures are defined as distinct ways of organizing the interaction of students in the classroom. Each structure involves well-prescribed and easy-to-follow steps, which are alternatively termed as "elements" by Kagan in the Structural Approach. Kagan (1994)

has provided about 100 structures aimed at six different functions: teambuilding, class-building, mastery, information exchange, communication skills, and thinking skills. Within each category of function, there are numerous structures which have different predictable outcomes in the academic, cognitive and social domains. A teacher with adequate knowledge of a variety of structures is capable of choosing the most effective structures for a desired educational goal. This can be illustrated by three structures under the category of mastery called Pairs Check, Flashcard Game and Numbered-Heads-Together .

#### **2.5.4. Jigsaw.**

Jigsaw was first designed in 1970s by Aronson and his colleagues, as an attempt to implement the desegregation of schools and build up good relations between children in multiracial situations. Its name derives from "the metaphor of putting together the pieces of a puzzle to create a whole picture" (Clarke, 1994). The use of Jigsaw in the classroom "curbs some of the undesirable aspects of excessive competition and increases the interest children have in cooperating with one another" (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997 ). The major vehicle of Jigsaw to make teammates positively interdependent is through task specialization within the team, which makes each member and his/her work valued by the others. Jigsaw fits best in the situations where learning is based on text-based materials "that can be divided equally among students" (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997) and each particular section of the text is distributed to only one particular member of the home team.

Jigsaw typically involves three steps: first, students are divided into different home groups, with each member assigned a particular section of the learning unit to study; second, students focusing on the same sections meet together in focus teams to explore the particular aspects; third, students return to their home groups to share with each other what they have learned in their

focus groups so that everyone gets a whole picture of the learning unit.

#### **2.5.5. Complex Instruction.**

Complex instruction (Cohen et al., 1994) is aimed at building respect for all the intellectual abilities students have, and is appropriate in linguistically and academically diverse learning settings, particularly in "bilingual education and heterogeneous classes containing language minority students" (Slavin, 1995 ). Its major focus is on addressing the issue of students' unequal influence on and participation in the group task due to status problems, that is, group work is usually dominated by high-status students while low-status students, who are expected to be inferior linguistically, academically or socially, are likely to be ignored.

#### **2.6. Basic Principles and Elements of Cooperative Learning.**

Different researchers (e.g. Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Brown & Thomson, 2000; Cohen et al., 1994; Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Johnson et al., 1994, 1998; Kagan, 1994; Sharan & Sharan, 1994; Slavin, 1995) reveals that positive interdependence and individual accountability are widely accepted as the two fundamental constructs of all cooperative learning methods. In addition, there are also some other principles which are considered indispensable to effective learning by many cooperative learning advocates. They include encouraging simultaneous interaction, equal participation, equal opportunities for success, social skills, and group processing.

"Positive interdependence is linking students together so one cannot succeed unless all group members succeed" (Johnson et al., 1998), and it enables students to reach a goal beyond individual ability and maximize their learning through the dual responsibility for both oneself and the other team members.

Individual accountability requires that every teammate is accountable for completing a particular task and no one can only

be benefited from the group without helping them to success together .

Promotive simultaneous interaction is a synthesis of promotive interaction (Gillies, 2007; Johnson et al., 1994, 1998; Sharan & Sharan, 1994) and the simultaneity principle (Kagan, 1994). Promotive interaction refers to students' effort to facilitate each other's success and is conducive to caring and committed relationships, psychological adjustment, social competence and low levels of anxiety and stress. The simultaneity principle means more interaction can be generated among peers simultaneously within smaller groups than larger ones.

Equal participation of group members is another distinctive characteristic of cooperative learning (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Baloché, 1998; Cohen et al., 1994; Kagan, 1994; Sharan & Sharan, 1994), and is considered a natural result of positive interdependence and individual accountability.

An equal opportunity for success is an element particularly highlighted in Student Team Learning methods (Slavin, 1994, 1995).

Social skills are also termed as interpersonal skills, small-group skills, cooperative skills or team skills in different cooperative learning literature (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Baloché, 1998; Brown & Thomson, 2000; Cohen et al., 1994; Dishon and O'Leary, 1998; Gillies, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994; Sharan & Sharan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). It is believed that the appropriate grasp and use of social skills is essential to complete group tasks and gain academic achievements. There is evidence that students in cooperative groups who are taught specific skills achieve better in school than do those who are not (Slavin, 2000).

Group processing involves students reflecting on their learning experience and discussing how well the group work is going and what actions should be maintained or changed in order

to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the cooperative groups.

## **2.7. Key Issues in Implementing Cooperative Learning.**

A successful use of cooperative learning in the classroom substantively relies on how well the key issues in implementing cooperative learning are understood and addressed. These issues include five aspects: how to group students, how to make groups function as cooperative teams, how to select cooperative learning methods and techniques, how to assess cooperative learning group work, and what roles teachers should play in the cooperative learning classroom.

### **2.7.1. Grouping Students.**

Using cooperative learning in English Language Teaching entails appropriately grouping students with differing levels of language proficiency, in a supportive environment where all group members benefit from the interactive experience. In other words, teams are the base and core of most cooperative learning activities. When forming groups, three factors must be taken into consideration: size, duration, and selection (Jacobs, 2006; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994).

#### **2.7.1.1. Group Size.**

At the initial stage when students are new to cooperative learning, pair work is ideal since it encourages greater participation and is easier to coordinate and manage (Jacobs, 2006; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994). When both the teacher and students have gained positive experience and become comfortable with working in a cooperative learning environment, larger groups can be used, which has advantages for processing more complex learning activities and developing a wider range of cooperative skills. "Larger groups also offer the possibility of differing opinions and perspectives in relation to experience. Additionally, larger groups make it easier for teachers to monitor

each of the groups in a classroom, there being fewer of them" (Jacobs, 2006 ).

#### 2.7.1.2. Group Duration.

A number of factors need to be taken into consideration when determining how long groups should stay together. First, it depends on the type of group being used. There are three types : informal group, formal group and base group (Johnson & Johnson, 1994a; 1994b). Informal cooperative learning groups are temporary groups, lasting as briefly as a few minutes or up to a class session. The duration of the formal group may vary from one class session to six weeks or even over ten weeks (Jacobs & Goh, 2007). Base groups are long-term group which last for at least a year and preferably for a few years until all members have graduated ( Johnson et al .,1998).

Second, group duration also depends on what cooperative learning techniques or group activities are used. Widely known that different methods involve different techniques, which can provide activities lasting either as short as a few minutes or as long as several weeks.

Third, group duration depends on the extent to which student are familiar with cooperative learning teamwork and able to work together cooperatively (Jacobs, 2006; Kagan, 1994). If students fail to cooperate adequately, teachers should focus on the team-building process for a supportive and cohesive team, rather than trying to fix things through changing groups around. It should be made clear to students that complaints about their present teammates cannot form a reason for changing groups, and they can change groups only when they have demonstrated good performance in their current groups (Brown & Thomson, 2000).

Generally speaking, there would never be fixed rules on the group duration, because most deciding factors lie in the specific teaching situations. Teachers need to be flexible in making

decisions to suit their current learning materials and teaching objectives, taking into account the type of groups, techniques and learning tasks being used.

#### **2.7.1.3. Group Selection and Composition.**

There are three major ways of selecting students to groups: random selection, student selection and teacher selection (Brown & Thomson, 2000; Jacobs, 2006; Johnson et al., 1998). Random selection may create a group of students who do not have the necessary skills for learning tasks and are unlikely to complete tasks. With student selection, similar groups may be created since birds of a feather flock together, and this is not conducive to the development of academic competence and a wider range of social skills. "Student-selected groups often have powerful social agendas that take up their time and attention and results in much off-task behavior" (Brown & Thomson ). Teacher selection is the most popular and commonly recommended method for assigning students to cooperative learning groups, because, with many factors (e.g. teaching objectives and content, students' academic level, gender, social class and personality) taken into consideration, teacher-selected groups are likely to achieve a maximum level of between-group homogeneity and within-group heterogeneity (Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995).

#### **2.7.2. Functioning as a Cooperative Learning Group.**

Once groups have been formed, the next factor to consider is what strategies can be employed to make groups work well together and enhance group functioning. Effective group functioning mainly lies in good relations (or positive interdependence) of group members and adequate cooperative skills. So it is advocated that efforts be engaged in fostering the group cohesiveness and developing students' cooperative skills.

First, most cooperative learning educators (e.g. Brown & Thomson, 2000; Gillies, 2007; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et

al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995) caution that special attention should be paid to design teambuilding activities at the initial stage of cooperative learning , aimed at getting group members acquainted with each other, building up team identity, and creating feelings of trust and togetherness among group members.

Second, some class time should be spent directly in teaching students cooperative skills which are indispensable to team success (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). This is believed to be a worthwhile time investment since it is followed by a "pay-off in smoother running of the classroom and more effective learning strategies for students" (Brown & Thomson, 2000 ). Actually, the best way of teaching cooperative skills is to integrate them into specific carefully-planned tasks and teach them in authentic learning contexts through hands-on practice under teachers' guidance (Gillies, 2007; Jacobs, 2006). A good design of a cooperative learning task makes students feel they are obliged to work together cooperatively in order to reach the intended learning objectives. Also, students may easily become positive about using cooperative skills when they benefit from them in practice.

Another important strategy that enhances the effectiveness of group functioning is group reflection, which is one of the essential principles of cooperative learning (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Gillies, 2007; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). Group reflection fundamentally involves three components: evaluating how well the group functioned (i.e. what went well or badly), analyzing why that happened and what they could have done to make it better, and finally setting new goals for a higher level of group functioning in the future.

### **2.7.3. Selecting Cooperative Learning Methods and Techniques.**

As elaborated in the section on types of cooperative learning methods, the five major cooperative learning methods include numerous techniques and structures. Selecting the appropriate methods and techniques or structures for a particular teaching context is always a critical issue for effective use of cooperative learning . Synthesizing the points of view on this issue from a variety of cooperative learning literature generates five general criteria the teacher should follow when making selections.

First of all, different methods and techniques may have different anticipated outcomes and expected educational objectives, so the teacher primarily makes selections according to their specific teaching value and aim ( Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Sharan, 2002).

Second, the selection is based on the length of time allocated to cooperative learning activities. Different methods and techniques may involve particular procedures of different lengths of time.

Third, the selection should be made according to students' age and social skills. Different methods and techniques may make different demands on the students' social skills. Students who are very young or weak in social skills should be exposed to highly-structured techniques or methods (e.g. Student Team Learning, and many structures in the Structural Approach), which specialize in organizing team tasks involving well-designed learning materials with clearly-defined procedures as well as the integration of extrinsic rewards (Brown & Brown, 2000; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Sharan, 2002; Slavin, 1995).

Fourth, teachers' familiarity with cooperative learning methods and techniques and their expertise in using them should also be taken into consideration when making selections. Kagan (1994) suggests that teachers should start from some simple

structures included in the Structural Approach, like Think-Pair-Share and Roundtable, which involve relatively rigid ways of structuring the classroom and can fit into any stage of a lesson design.

Fifth, the selection also depends on the existing curricular and subject areas. A number of cooperative learning methods are particularly designed for certain curriculum content or subject areas, so these methods can only be used in a limited way when certain requirements are met. For instance, Jigsaw is particularly suitable for learning which is based on the text-based materials (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997).

It is also very important to note that a cooperative learning lesson is often a combination of different cooperative learning methods which serves for varying teaching objectives (Holt, 1993; Kagan, 1994; Sharan, 2002).

#### **2.7.4. Assessing Cooperative Learning Group Work.**

Assessing group work is an integral part of the cooperative learning process because students reflecting on their performance in teamwork is universally considered to be one of essential elements of cooperative learning. Johnson et al. (1998 ) state that in cooperative learning groups, "students learn almost as much from assessing the quality of their own and their classmates' work as they do from participating in the instructional activities".

Generally speaking, assessment in education can be divided into two types: summative and formative (Boud et al., 2001; Harmer, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998), or sometimes alternatively termed static and dynamic (Falsgraf, 2009).

Assessment strategies used with cooperative groups are mostly a combination of formative assessment and summative assessment, with the former as the foundation of the latter (Abram et al., 2002; Gillies, 2007; Jacobs, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994; McCafferty et al., 2006). Assessment

procedures in cooperative learning often involve the following general steps: students are assigned in groups, working out a group product (e.g. presentation or composition on a topic), or preparing for a test together; and then students' performances are assessed either as a group or individually, which involves not only giving specific grades or scores but also integrating immediate clarification of weaknesses and further providing immediate suggestions for remediation (Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995).

Assessing students in terms of group outcomes or giving group grades is a very important strategy to maintain group members' positive interdependence because group members sink or swim together (Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Joritz-Nakagawa, 2006; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995).

There are two main ways of grading: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. By norm-referenced grading, the score of one student may affect the grades of others ( Jacobs & Goh, 2007). In contrast, criterion-referenced grading means that one student's score has no impact on the grades of others, because this grading system "would measure people along a continuum of achievement against specific criteria" (Bracey, 2006 ). Therefore, there is a universal agreement that criterion-referenced grading system is employed when assessing groups' performances and achievements in cooperative learning (Boud et al., 2001; Holt, 1993; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Jolliffe, 2007; Kagan, 1994; McCafferty et al., 2006; Slavin, 1995).

#### **2.7.5. Teachers' Roles in Cooperative Learning.**

Teachers play a very different role in the cooperative learning classroom in contrast to the traditional classroom where they are considered the transmitter of knowledge. The fundamental change cooperative learning teachers should make in their role

lies in their transfer to a facilitator of learning or "a guide on the side" (Johnson et al., 1998 ). Playing a facilitative role involves delegating authority to students and empowering learning so that students are able to make decisions and be responsible for their own learning. However, on the other hand, delegating authority does not mean that teachers are to be less active but actually to play more active and demanding role in the cooperative learning classroom (Cohen et al., 1994; Jacobs, 2006; Jacobs & Goh, 2007).

Cooperative learning leading researchers (e.g. Baloch, 1998; Gillies, 2007; Holt, 1993; Jacobs & Goh, 2007; Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994; Sharan, 1994; Slavin, 1995), suggests some basic roles that teachers, as facilitators, should play in the routine process of cooperative learning lessons, although not necessarily involving all the roles in a particular lesson.

First, they are controller and instructors. Delegating authority does not mean that teachers are asked to give up control of the class but to exercise control so that cooperative student groups can function well (Cohen et al., 1994; Jacobs, 2006), and "teachers are still active in the usual ways, some of the time-standing in front of the class to explain and demonstrate" (Jacobs & Goh, 2007 ).

Second, they are technique selectors, method modifiers and task designers. Teachers need to select suitable techniques or modify the existing methods so that the employed techniques or methods fit best in to their particular teaching settings. Along with technique or method selection and modification, another demanding job for the teacher is to design the cooperative learning task which "must be set in a way that it engages the entire group" (Brown & Thomson, 2000) and suit students' current academic level and personal interest (Jacobs & Goh, 2007).

Third, they are organizers, guides and encouragers. They plan and organize cooperative lessons by explaining learning objectives, team tasks, individual accountability, and criteria for group success and so on. They guide group work on the side as participants, advisors and encouragers.

Fourth, they are observers, monitors, and interveners. Observing and monitoring student groups serves as a means of knowing what students are doing about their work and how well groups are functioning. This is also an opportunity for teachers to intervene and give extra help when needed to improve task work and teamwork.

Last, they are assessor and reflectors. Teachers work with students to assess and evaluate student performance and achievement by giving constructive suggestions and feedback on how to improve their future team tasks and team cooperation. In the same vein as students processing their group work, teachers should also reflect on their work and performance in facilitating students' learning (Dishon & O'Leary, 1998; Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994).

## **2.8. Some related studies.**

In recent years, a small number of experimental studies have been conducted to compare the effectiveness of the cooperative learning approach with traditional whole-class instruction in teaching English as a Foreign language . A thorough database search has found several studies which were conducted in Lebanon, Turkey , and in different countries around the world. These studies all use pre-test-post-test control group experimental or quasi-experimental designs and explore the impact of cooperative learning on a wide range of aspects including listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, learning motivation, attitudes towards learning, academic self-esteem and a feeling of school alienation.

In Lebanon, Ghaith (2003) conducted a ten-week comparative study with 56 high-school learners, aiming at investigating the effects of the Learning Together Model on students' reading achievement, academic self-esteem and feelings of school alienation. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in favour of cooperative learning on the variable of reading achievement, whereas little difference was found between the two methods on the dependent variable of academic self-esteem and feelings of school alienation. Ghaith (2003) explained that "significant gains in academic self-esteem and school psychosocial adjustment are unlikely to be achieved in the course of short experiments and cooperative interventions".

Gömleksiz (2007) carried out a four-week study with 66 engineering students in a Turkish university, aimed at investigating the differences between the cooperative learning method of jigsaw II and whole instruction in improving students' vocabulary knowledge, use of active-passive voice and attitudes towards English learning. Results revealed statistically significant differences in favour of cooperative learning in all the three areas. That is, compared with the control group, the experimental cooperative learning group demonstrated significant improvements in vocabulary knowledge, accurate use of active-passive voice; meanwhile, cooperative learning exhibited a significant positive effect on students' attitudes towards learning English and promoted better interactions among students as well.

Kiran Akhtar and her colleagues in Pakistan (2012) found that the students were satisfied with the planning and monitoring process used in cooperative learning. They felt that it was adaptable for normal classroom teaching. Students believed that group tasks clear their concepts more than individual learning. It also makes learning interesting, it provides fun, done in

satisfactory situation and their socialization enhance. Students also expressed that during the assigned work, they felt responsibility of work, committed to success of each member and their group.

So it can be concluded from these studies that cooperative learning can produce positive outcomes in one way or the other in spite of the fact that the findings were quite different and inconsistent in certain aspects (e.g., reading, speaking, vocabulary and grammar). This inconsistency, to some extent, can be explained by the assumption that the efficacy of cooperative learning can be varied due to different educational contexts, host cultures, duration of the study and specific cooperative learning methods used. However, these studies generally used different cooperative learning methods in their interventions, and this makes it hard to do a further analysis based on specific methods.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Methodology**

##### **3.1. Introduction:**

This chapter describes the research design and the methodologies employed for carrying out the study. It provides detailed information about the participants, the instruments used for collecting the data, and the procedures.

##### **3.2. Participants:**

The fundamental premise of the researcher is on school teachers of Al-Mandaq both males and females , who have various years of experience. Al-mandaq is located in the south west of Saudi Arabia. All of the teachers are BA holders.

##### **3.3. Data Collection:**

To achieve the aims of this study and test its hypotheses, data collection was done. The researcher collected data through a questionnaire.

### 3.4. Procedure:

The hypothesis which states that the teachers in AL-Mandaq schools apply cooperative learning in English classes can be tested by asking teachers in all schools of Al-Mandaq to answer the questionnaire. The researcher can recognize the teachers' attitudes towards applying cooperative learning in English classrooms . Then , this study tries to show the reasons that stands for applying cooperative learning strategies from the teachers' perspectives . Also, what are the factors that lead to effective cooperative learning ? Finally, this study shows whether there is a relationship between applying cooperative learning and students level of proficiency .

### 3.5. Teachers' Questionnaire:

It consisted of two parts:

Part I included demographic information about years of English teaching experience.

Part II contains 27 items on a Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and was divided into the following sections:

- 1- Items (1-8) show teachers' attitudes towards applying cooperative learning in English classrooms .
- 2- Items (9-15) show teachers' reasons for applying cooperative learning in the English classrooms.
- 3- Items (16-21) show teachers' views about the reasons for applying cooperative learning in the English classrooms.
- 4- Items (22-27 ) show teachers' views about the relationship between applying cooperative learning and students level of proficiency .

### 3.6. Validity of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was reviewed by three professors in the Department of English Language at Al-Baha University. They agreed that it was suitable for the purpose of the study.

### 3.7. Summary:

This chapter outlined the methods used in this study: research design, sample selection, instrument development, and data collection. Moreover, it presented the validity of the questionnaire.

## Chapter Four

### Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Introduction:

This research shows the reliability of the questionnaire . Also it shows the statistical methods used to analyze the data and extract the results of the study.

#### 4.2. First Section

Reliability:

**Table ( 1 ) Shows Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient :**

| Parts | N of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Level     |
|-------|------------|------------------|-----------|
| Part1 | 8          | 0.794            | Good      |
| Part2 | 7          | 0.919            | Excellent |
| Part3 | 6          | 0.711            | Good      |
| Part4 | 6          | 0.907            | Excellent |
| All   | 27         | 0.944            | Excellent |

Table (1) above showed that reliability Coefficient was between 0.711 and 0.944 . This value showed excellent level of reliability Coefficient . For Part ( 1 ) was = 0.794 ( Good ) , part ( 2 ) was = 0.919 ( Excellent ) , part ( 3 ) was = 0.711 ( Good ) , and part ( 4 ) was = 0.907 ( Excellent ) . That means the scale has a good Reliability Coefficient .

#### **Table (2) Pearson Coefficient**

| Parts | Part1 | Part2  | Part3  | Part4  | All    |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Part1 | 1     | .783** | .596** | .729** | .899** |
| Part2 |       | 1      | .576** | .762** | .907** |
| Part3 |       |        | 1      | .662** | .783** |
| Part4 |       |        |        | 1      | .902** |
| All   |       |        |        |        | 1      |

\*\* Sig at  $\alpha = 0.01$

Pearson Coefficient between Part 1 & 2 was= 0.783  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 1 & 3 was= 0.596  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 1 & 4 was= 0.729  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 1 & all was= 0.899  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 2 & 3 was= 0.576  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 2 & 4 was= 0.762  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 2 & all was= 0.907  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 3 & 4 was= 0.662  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 3 & all was= 0.783  $\alpha < 0.01$ , Pearson Coefficient between Part 4 & all was= 0.902  $\alpha < 0.01$ .

From the previous results the highest correlation between the different parts and all was between part 2 and the rest of all of the parts .

#### 4.3. Second section : Statistics

First Question:

What are the attitudes of the teachers toward applying cooperative learning in English classroom ?

Criteria to Judge on Question (arbitrarily Judge )

Mean from ( 1,00 – 2.49 ) Low

( 2.5 – 3.49 ) Average

( 3.50 – 5.00) High

To answer the question above the mean and SD were calculated:

**table ( 3 ) shows the mean and SD for part (1) :**

| Items | Mean | SD    | Level   |
|-------|------|-------|---------|
| 1     | 4.10 | 0.928 | High    |
| 2     | 3.90 | 0.810 | High    |
| 3     | 3.78 | 1.050 | High    |
| 4     | 3.48 | 1.109 | Average |
| 5     | 3.98 | 0.800 | High    |
| 6     | 3.98 | 1.000 | High    |
| 7     | 3.65 | 1.122 | High    |
| 8     | 3.55 | 0.876 | High    |

The above results in table (3) showed that the most of the items have high level, that means the teachers' attitudes toward applying cooperative learning in English classroom are generally popular and common. The mean was between 3.48 and 4.10 and SD was between 0.810 and 1.122.

Table ( 4) shows ( T-test one sample ) to investigate the answers of the items in part ( 1) we put a criteria to judge on the items that is to use one sample t-test comparative degree is ( 3 ) .

**Table (4) t-test one sample**

| Items | t value | df | Sig   |
|-------|---------|----|-------|
| 1     | 7.495   | 39 | *.000 |
| 2     | 7.026   | 39 | *.000 |
| 3     | 4.669   | 39 | *.000 |
| 4     | 2.709   | 39 | *.010 |
| 5     | 7.706   | 39 | *.000 |
| 6     | 6.168   | 39 | *.000 |
| 7     | 3.664   | 39 | *.001 |
| 8     | 3.973   | 39 | *.000 |

\*sig at  $\alpha=0.05$

Table (4) above showed that all of the items in part (1)  $\alpha$  value was  $< 0.05$  for all the items and ( t ) value was between 2.709 and 7.495 , that means the attitudes of the teachers towards applying cooperative learning in English classroom are generally popular and common.

Second Question:

What are the teachers' reasons for applying cooperative learning in the English classroom ?

Criteria to Judge on Question

Mean from ( 1.00 – 2.49 ) Low

( 2.5 – 3.49 ) Average

( 3.50 – 5.00) High

To answer the question above the mean and SD were calculated:

**Table ( 5 ) shows the mean and SD for part (2) :**

| Items | Mean | SD    | Level |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 9     | 4.10 | 0.871 | High  |
| 10    | 3.60 | 0.871 | High  |
| 11    | 3.75 | 0.981 | High  |
| 12    | 4.18 | 0.903 | High  |
| 13    | 4.00 | 0.906 | High  |
| 14    | 4.10 | 0.841 | High  |
| 15    | 3.73 | 0.960 | High  |

The above results in table (5) showed that all of the items have high level that means that teacher's have different reasons for applying cooperative learning. One of them is to help students to overcome their shyness . The mean was between 3.60 and 4.18 and SD was between 0.841 and 0.981.

Table ( 6 ) shows ( T-test one sample ) to investigate the answers of the items in part ( 2 ) we put a criteria to judge on the items that is to use one sample t-test comparative degree is ( 3 ) .

**Table (6 ) t-test one sample**

| Items | t value | df | Sig   |
|-------|---------|----|-------|
| 9     | 7.986   | 39 | *.000 |
| 10    | 4.356   | 39 | *.000 |
| 11    | 4.837   | 39 | *.000 |
| 12    | 8.233   | 39 | *.000 |
| 13    | 6.982   | 39 | *.000 |
| 14    | 8.270   | 39 | *.000 |
| 15    | 4.774   | 39 | *.000 |

\*sig at  $\alpha=0.05$

Table (6) above showed that all of the items in part (2)  $\alpha$  value was  $< 0.05$  for all of the items and ( t ) value was between 4.356 and 8.233 , that means that teachers have many reasons for applying cooperative learning..

Third Question:

What are the factors that lead to effective cooperative learning ?

Criteria to Judge on Question

Mean from ( 1,00 – 2.49 ) Low  
( 2.5 – 3.49 ) Average  
( 3.50 – 5.00) High

To answer the question above mean and SD were calculated:

**Table ( 7 ) shows the mean and SD for part (3) :**

| Items | Mean | SD    | Level |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 16    | 4.15 | 0.770 | High  |
| 17    | 3.65 | 0.949 | High  |
| 18    | 3.50 | 1.013 | High  |
| 19    | 3.63 | 1.254 | High  |
| 20    | 4.35 | 0.834 | High  |
| 21    | 4.30 | 0.911 | High  |

The above results in table (7) showed that all of the items have high level that means there are different factors that lead to effective cooperative learning . The mean was between 3.50 and 4.35 and SD was between 0.770 and 1.254 .

Table ( 8) shows ( T-test one sample ) to investigate the answers of the items in part ( 3) we put a criteria to judge on the items that is to use one sample t-test comparative degree is ( 3 ) .

**Table (8) t-test one sample**

| Items | t value | df | Sig   |
|-------|---------|----|-------|
| 16    | 9.450   | 39 | *.000 |
| 17    | 4.333   | 39 | *.000 |
| 18    | 3.122   | 39 | *.003 |
| 19    | 3.151   | 39 | *.003 |
| 20    | 10.243  | 39 | *.000 |
| 21    | 9.021   | 39 | *.000 |

\*sig at  $\alpha=0.05$

Table ( 8 ) above showed that all of the items in part (3)  $\alpha$  value was  $< 0.05$  for all the items and ( t ) value was between 3.122 and 10.243 , that means there are different factors that lead to effective cooperative learning.

Forth Question:

What is the relationship between applying cooperative learning in the EFL classroom and the students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view ?

Criteria to Judge on Question

Mean from ( 1.00 – 2.49 ) Low

( 2.5 – 3.49 ) Average

( 3.50 – 5.00 ) High

To answer the question above the mean and SD were calculated:

**Table ( 9 ) shows mean and SD for part (4) :**

| Items | Mean | SD    | Level |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 22    | 3.98 | 1.000 | High  |
| 23    | 4.05 | .876  | High  |
| 24    | 3.85 | .949  | High  |
| 25    | 3.98 | .891  | High  |
| 26    | 3.85 | .893  | High  |
| 27    | 3.98 | 1.025 | High  |

The above results in table ( 9 ) showed that all of the items have high level, that means there are a huge significant differences in applying cooperative learning in the EFL classroom due to the students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view. The mean was between 3.85 and 4.05 , and SD was between 0.662 and 1.000.

Table ( 10 ) shows ( T-test one sample ) to investigate the answers of the items in part ( 4 ) we put a criteria to judge on the items that is to use one sample t-test comparative degree is ( 3 )

**Table (10 ) t-test one sample**

| Items | t value | df | Sig   |
|-------|---------|----|-------|
| 22    | 6.168   | 39 | *.000 |
| 23    | 7.584   | 39 | *.000 |
| 24    | 5.667   | 39 | *.000 |
| 25    | 6.919   | 39 | *.000 |
| 26    | 6.020   | 39 | *.000 |
| 27    | 6.016   | 39 | *.000 |

\*Sig at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Table ( 10 ) above showed that all of the items in part (4)  $\alpha$  value was  $< 0.05$  for all of the items and ( t ) value was between 5.667 and 7.584 , that means there are huge significant differences in applying cooperative learning in the EFL classroom due to the students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view.

What is the relationship between applying cooperative learning and the students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view ?

To answer the question above we used Pearson Correlation coefficient between part ( 1 ) & part ( 4 ) and table (11) showed that :

**Table (11) Pearson Coefficient**

| Relationship        | Pearson Correlation coefficient | Sig    |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Part( 1) – Part (4) | 0.729                           | 0.000* |

\*Sig at  $\alpha = 0.01$

Table ( 11 ) above showed that there is a strong positive relationship between applying cooperative learning and students' level of English proficiency from the teachers' point of view Pearson Coefficient = 0.729 and value  $\alpha < 0.01$

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1. Introduction:**

This study attempted to explore the positive and negative effects of applying cooperative learning at the English classrooms in line with the new Saudi syllabus. Specifically, it aimed to explore the teachers' attitudes toward applying cooperative learning . In addition , this study aimed to discover the teachers' reasons for applying cooperative learning . More over , it tried to indicate the several factors that lead to affective cooperative learning . Finally , it presented the relationship between applying cooperative learning and the level of students' proficiency from teachers' point of view . To achieve the

purpose of the study, one research instrument was used: a questionnaire.

## 5.2. Conclusions:

Based on the data obtained through the one instrument the following conclusions could be presented:

The study tried to explore and show the different sides of teachers' attitudes toward applying cooperative learning strategies.

It is obviously clear that the cooperative learning is generally common and popular among English teachers . The results showed the following :

First, the teachers should be allowed to apply cooperative learning as much as they can . Second, applying cooperative learning has a strong positive impact on teachers' performance . Third, applying cooperative learning does not hardly reduce the opportunities of applying other learning strategies . Fourth, From the responses the teachers agreed that applying cooperative learning facilitates both learning and teaching . Finally, most of the teachers' responses showed that a lot of them do understand cooperative learning very well, and they consider it as a very affective learning strategy .

The general results showed that there are several reasons that make teachers apply cooperative learning . First, cooperative learning really enhances students' social skills . Second, teachers' responses showed that cooperative learning is a valuable instructional approach . Third, cooperative learning empowers the friendly relations between the students. Fourth, applying cooperative learning enhances the learning of low-ability students. Finally, cooperative learning strongly helps students to overcome shyness .

To have effective learning , the results showed the following different factors : First, teachers agreed that cooperative learning training helps teachers to implement it

successfully. Second, the results showed the relationship between success in using cooperative learning and receiving supports from other colleague. Third, the results showed that the small number of students in the class makes the cooperative learning much more successful. Fourth, the appropriate classroom atmosphere leads to effective learning. Finally, the students' willingness to learn leads to more success in implementing cooperative learning.

There is a relationship between applying cooperative learning and the students level of proficiency. First, cooperative learning helps students to express themselves. Second, cooperative learning helps students to be more confident, also it enhances their self-esteem. Third, the results showed that cooperative learning improves students' fluency, and helps them to master the four skills. Finally, there was a strong relationship between applying cooperative learning and improvements of the students' competition.

### **5.3. Recommendations:**

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are offered:

First, teachers should be allowed and encouraged to apply cooperative learning in the English classrooms with both young and old students. Second, teachers must have well training about cooperative learning. Third, students should be informed about cooperative learning rules and characteristics before implementing process. Finally, the classroom atmosphere should be prepared appropriately to implement the cooperative learning successfully.

### **5.4. Suggestions for Future Research:**

There are several suggestions for further research on this topic.

Since cooperative learning is considered as a method of learning from different kinds of methods, and has its special characteristics and functions to implement it successfully, it can

be applied appropriately in English teaching and learning . A study should be conducted to investigate the influence of other methods for or against implementing the cooperative learning method .

Another suggestion , is to investigate the process of applying cooperative learning and the students' mastering of the main four skills.

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