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Comparing the Impact of Cooperative and Competitive Flipped Learning on EFL Learners' Speaking

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Abstract

Ever since its introduction, the flipped learning approach has demonstrated promising results in English language teaching. To this end, the goal of the present study was to compare the effectiveness of flipped learning on speaking in two different cooperative and competitive EFL learning settings. To conduct the study, the researchers selected 60 learners through nonrandom convenience sampling and subsequently randomly assigned them into two experimental groups of 30 learners, namely the flipped learning cooperative and the flipped learning competitive groups. Both groups underwent the same flipped learning treatment; the point of departure, however, was the fact that in one group the learners exercised cooperative learning while the other group experienced competitive learning. Prior to the treatment, all 60 learners took a speaking pretest (a sample Preliminary English Test or PET) and after the treatment, a posttest (another sample PET) was administered to them. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run on the two groups' scores on the pre- and posttest. The result of the study indicated that the learners sitting in the flipped cooperative group outperformed those in the flipped competitive group. The implications of the findings of this study are elaborated in the paper.

Key Words: Competitive Learning, Cooperative Learning, Flipped Learning, EFL Speaking

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1. Introduction

Developing the speaking skill is a fundamental premise of second/foreign language learning. The importance of speaking which allows people to express their minds through a language has indeed risen in significance in modern times with the advent of information and communication technology (Ratnasari, 2020). To this end, English enjoys an unrivaled stance as *the* international language of the world; this drives people from different demographic backgrounds to learn this language and thus be able to communicate with one another regardless of their L1. Accordingly, there seems to be a general consensus that speaking is indeed at the heart of second language learning (Dewi et al., 2016).

The process of developing the speaking skill can be really challenging for many language learners, as it is difficult for them to express their opinions through speaking (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Perhaps, one issue which contributes to this hardship, as Indrianty (2016) states, is that while the other skills can be practiced alone, learners cannot really speak on their own. The ELT literature is of course overtly replete with studies aimed at investigating how the learning and teaching of speaking could be enhanced through different methods (e.g., Alonso, 2018; Basturkmen, 2002; Goh & Burns, 2012; Marashi & Khosh-Harf, 2019; Salehi et al., 2015; Souzandehfar, 2024; Tuan & Mai, 2015).

One such method of teaching that has been very much in practice is cooperative learning (Marashi & Gholami, 2020). Cooperative learning "is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that result from working on a high-performance team" (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 36). In other words, as asserted by Slavin and Cooper (2002), cooperative learning entails a relatively small group of learners with different levels of academic achievement levels adopting an array of learning activities than can lead to major academic success for each individual learner within the group.

Accordingly, in a cooperative classroom, students work with their peers in order to do a motivational and instructional task in the class and thus feel more incentivized which can enhance their positive attitudes in school (Stevens, 2008). In the words of Shaaban and Ghaith (2005), within a cooperative learning environment, "Learners may learn together in a classroom climate of academic and personal support in order to read and comprehend a certain text, write an essay, and/or prepare a group project or presentation about certain aspects of the target culture" (p. 17).

Contrary to cooperative learning in which learners are members of a group and work together to achieve the goals, competitive learning is another learning method where students

work alone (Johnson et al., 2014). Competitive learning is defined by students "working against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of A that only one or a few students can attain" (Johnson & Johnson, 2010, p. 204). Both cooperative and competitive learning have been and continue to be studied in the ELT literature (e.g., Cecchini et al., 2021; Farzaneh & Nejadansari, 2014; Gillies, 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Marashi & Hosseini, 2019; Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021).

In addition to the traditional choices of language teaching methods, e.g., cooperative/competitive learning, modern information and communication technology has changed the way learners learn language skills. There is of course a myriad of techniques and procedures in this regard with one such technology-based method which has emerged in the last decade being flipped learning. This approach was first popularized by two American chemistry teachers Bergman and Sams (2014). "Flipped learning is a relatively new instructional method which emphasizes effective use of class time by changing the traditional tasks of teachers and students inside and outside the classroom" (Ekmekci, 2017, p. 152).

As noted by Hsieh et al. (2016), in conventional teaching, learners gain new knowledge inside the classroom through lecture and then practice it at home through homework, whereas in flipped learning, students learn new content or lessons at home via watching video clips and then practice it inside the class so that the teacher can monitor them and give them feedback. In other words, "This new learner-centered model foregoes unneeded teacher-talk time during class by scaffolding the learning from the pre-class assignment, and expanding or deepening the learning in class" (Mehring, 2016, p. 1). With its significant application in ELT, numerous studies on flipped learning have been reported in the literature (e.g., Abdullah et al., 2019; Alten et al., 2020; Amini et al., 2022; Bauer-Ramazani et al., 2016; Chen & Hwang, 2020; Khosravani et al., 2020; Lee & Wallace, 2018; Marashi & Eghtedar, 2021; Wang, 2024).

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Speaking

The process of speaking can be defined as producing systematic speech to convey one's massage and "expressing or exchanging thoughts through using language" (Mart, 2012, p. 91). As a communication skill, speaking is a must in second language learning and is basically the process of producing words eligibly for the listeners (Bygate, 1998; Richards, 2008).

Speaking is indeed a highly multifactorial human behavior comprising various linguistic

and nonlinguistic parameters (Bailey, 2003; Menggo, 2018). According to Fasold and Connor-Linton (2014), “General linguistics includes the sounds of language, words and their parts, the structure of sentences, meaning, language change, writing, dialect variation and discourse” (p. 12). And regarding nonlinguistic factors, for instance, in some cases the focus is on facial expression (Burleson & Greence, 2003). However, in other cases, not only the face but also the voice and body gestures can be included (Nowicka & Wilczyn´ska, 2011; Richards & Renandaya, 2002). In effect, “Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (Chaney, 1998, as cited in Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014, p. 9).

Speaking ability is arguably the most essential verbal skill since it is highly needed to perform a conversation (Larasati, 2018; Nation & Newton, 2009). Accordingly, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) assert that, “Humans are programmed to speak before they learn to read and write. In any given, human beings spend much more time interacting orally with language rather than using it in its written form” (p. 35). Hedge (2008) maintains that speaking as a two-way process contains expressing ideas and sharing information and feelings where speaking is considered as the collaboration between two or more persons through which they share the time and context.

2.2. Competitive/Cooperative Learning

Perhaps deeply rooted in the implications of social Darwinism emphasizing the pivotal role of competitiveness in the survival of the fittest, competitive learning is where “individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves but detrimental to all other group members” (Johnson & Johnson, 2010, p. 202). Prevailing as the dominant mode of instruction at least in the developed world throughout the major bulk of the 20th century, competitive learning is thrusted through participation in a rivalry be it between individuals or groups (Tjosvold et al., 2003).

In effect, within an average competitive classroom, “students are concerned with their individual grades and where they fit into the grade curve” (Kolawole, 2008, p. 4) where the emphasis is placed on outperforming everyone else. According to Johnson et al. (2013), competitive learning is all about the students having to work against one another aimed at gaining a high grade; to this end, one student should achieve the goal while another is bound to fail. Generally, there are two modalities of competition: constructive and destructive (Roseth et al., 2008). In the constructive mode, the person who has won tries to help the person who has lost by giving them suggestions. In the destructive model, however, the loser is not helped by the learners who won the activity (Deutsch et al., 2006, as cited in El-Hallim & Abdalla, 2019).

As of the late 1960s when teachers took up training course about the effective use of small-group techniques in classes (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), competitive learning came under challenge by rising social scientists (e.g., Hartup, 1977; Johnson, 1970; Lewis & Rosenblum, 1975). Gradually, cooperative learning or small-group learning which was perhaps common practice in primordial times grew in prominence and the notion of social interdependence became widely spread (Drakeford, 2012; Nisa & Sulisworo, 2019). Cooperative learning offers learners "an opportunity to be grouped not only heterogeneously by academic performance, but also by race, gender, and language proficiency" (Slavin & Cooper, 2002, p. 649). In a sense, the goal of cooperative learning is to enhance learners' academic intake by allowing them to deliberate, learn from one another, and encourage each other to achieve more (Lucena & San Jose, 2016; Ning, 2011; Tran, 2014).

The pioneers of cooperative learning have demonstrated the usefulness of this mode of learning extensively (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1983; Johnson et al., 1990; Kagan, 1995; Slavin, 1992). Following this trend, cooperative learning has been investigated extensively in different contexts. For instance, Er and Aksu Ataç (2014) found that most learners held a positive perspective towards cooperation in the ELT class while Altamimi and Attamimi (2014) and Altun and Sabah (2020) reported that cooperative learning improves learners' speaking skill. According to Darmuki et al. (2017), learners were less anxious and more willing to speak in class through cooperative learning. Johnson and Johnson (2010) stated that through providing a democratic and nonthreatening atmosphere, cooperative learning fosters learners' communication.

In the context of Iran too, cooperative learning has attracted major attention. An early study by Marashi and Baygzadeh (2010) proved the advantageousness of cooperative learning for the overall achievement of EFL learners. Memari Hanjani and Li (2017) reported how cooperative learning boosts reading comprehension. Azizinezhadet al. (2013) and Tabatabaei et al. (2015) also presented such positive results for learners' achievement and motivation while Marashi and Khatami (2017) showed that this mode of learning improves creativity as well. Ahangari and Samadian (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative learning on learners' writing and more specifically on comparing cooperative and competitive learning, Marashi and Sanatipoor (2015) concluded that content-based instruction is more beneficial in a cooperative setting for learners' reading and writing.

2.3. Flipped Learning

The term flipped learning – introduced by two Chemistry teachers, Bergmann and Sams, 2014 – is derived from the acronym ***FLIP***: a ***F***lexible environment; a ***L***earning culture where

teachers pay attention to learners' input and abilities and classroom amenities during the pedagogy; ***I***ntentional content through which the teacher intentionally selects the teaching content; and ***P***rofessional educator who knows the teaching material and their students prior to developing a plan (Bauer-Ramazani et al., 2016).

Pudin (2017) noted that the main aim of flipped learning is to change a passive classroom to an active environment in which students collaborate with each other. To this end, Mehring (2016) further added that in an EFL classroom in which flipped learning is used to teach language, learners will have more chances to employ the target language in the context of learning that develops and increases use of the language with quick and effective feedback which is provided by the teacher. In addition, Rahman et al. (2020) stated that by freeing up the class time from instruction, learners have more chances to engage, solve problems, and receive quick feedback.

A significant volume of studies has proven the usefulness of flipped learning. To begin with, Shyr and Chen (2017) asserted that flipped learning methodology can be helpful for students who have low vocabulary acquisition. Chen and Hwang (2020) concluded that flipped methodology can improve learners' learning outcomes. Moreover, Yeşilçınar (2019) noted that "The integration of FCM (Flipped Classroom Model) enhanced adult learners' oral proficiency and changed their opinions towards speaking in a positive manner" (p. 227) while Abdullah et al. (2019) discussed that flipped learning can positively affect learners' speaking skill. Regarding students' engagement, Lee and Wallace (2018) noted that learners who attended flipped classes were more engaged and showed more willingness to ask questions.

In Iran, Mohammadi et al. (2019) showed the effectiveness of flipped learning on EFL learners' English achievement and their willingness to communicate while Khosravani et al. (2020) concluded that flipped learning can significantly affect learners' achievement and autonomy. Yousefzadeh and Salimi (2015) noted that the flipped classroom assists learners to correct misunderstandings and use this new knowledge while they have the opportunity to get feedback from the instructor and classmates. Haghighi et al. (2018) also demonstrated that flipped learning can enhance pragmatic competence and provide plenty of opportunities for learners to communicate and cooperate with their classmates while Marashi and Eghtedar (2021) concluded that learners' motivation and willingness to communicate are boosted through flipped learning.

3. Purpose of the Study

In the currently globalized world, communication plays an important role in each person's

life; in order to have effective communication, speaking is arguably the most significant skill among other language skills (Rao, 2018). Accordingly, seeking more optimal ways to boost learners' speaking is a pivotal and never-ending endeavor in the ELT arena.

As discussed earlier, flipped learning has commonly culminated in positive results while there have been some concerns raised regarding the *one-size-fits-all* approach to teaching which is promoted in this model (Bergmann & Sams, 2016) and also the issue of digital equity where flipped learning may not be available for all socioeconomic cohorts (Sargent & Casey, 2020). Likewise, cooperative learning has shown considerably positive results while there have been certain mixed findings as well. For instance, Marashi and Dibah (2013) concluded that extrovert learners perform better in speaking in cooperative settings while introverts outperform extroverts in competitive settings. Furthermore, Marashi and Gholami (2020) asserted that impulsive learners benefit more from cooperative offline planning contrary to reflective ones who gained more in competitive offline planning settings. Hence, with the occasionally different results in favor of competitive learning, there seems to exist adequate grounds for investigating the impact of flipped learning in a cooperative learning and competitive learning setting to see whether there would be a difference between the effect of this modality of learning in the aforesaid two contexts. In line with the purpose of this study stated above, the following research question was formulated:

≠ *Is there any significant difference between the effect of using flipped learning in cooperative and competitive learning settings on EFL learners' speaking skill?*

4. Method

4.1. Participants

In order to undertake this research, 60 female intermediate EFL students studying in a language school in Tehran were selected through nonrandom convenience sampling in intact classes. The level of these participants' language proficiency was intermediate as attested by their scores on the placement / achievement tests of the language school they were studying at. Subsequently, these participants were randomly assigned into two experimental groups of 30 learners, namely the flipped learning cooperative and competitive groups. As there was an average of six students in each class, the researchers needed five classes in each group (thus a total of 10 classes) to conduct the research.

4.2. Instrumentation and Materials

The tests and materials used in this study are described below.

4.2.1. Speaking Pretest and Posttest

A sample Preliminary English Test (PET) speaking paper consisting of four parts was used as the pretest of the study at the outset. The scoring was done through four analytical criteria: grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication. Once the treatment was over and for the posttest, another sample PET speaking paper was administered for both groups. Both the pretest and posttest were scored by two raters (one of the researchers in this study and a colleague of hers); the inter-rater reliability is presented in the results section below.

4.2.2. Teaching Materials

The main course book used for this study was *Touchstone 3* by McCarthy et al. (2013) which is a four-level series for adults and young adults with the main objective of integrating speaking, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, reading, and writing. *Touchstone 3* is designed to develop conversation strategies, present natural language in authentic contexts, and expose learners to the English which is used in the real world.

As materials can vary in flipped learning, the researchers used different kinds of materials such as pictures, recorded voices, and videos. These materials were prepared based on the activities and parts of the course book that was used inside the classroom. The videos were extracted from online networking sites. These materials were shared with both experimental groups in the WhatsApp groups created for this study.

4.3. Procedure

Once the two experimental groups were set up, the teacher (one of the researchers) started the course by informing the students about the procedure: she explained about the flipped classroom and what they were going to do during the instruction. The teacher taught both groups herself using the same materials during 16 sessions of 90 minutes – two of which were allocated to the pretest and posttest – and prepared some materials such as videos or pictures based on the content of the course and she subsequently sent the materials to the WhatsApp groups that had been set up for each class within each of the two groups. She further asked the students to watch, listen to, or read the materials before attending the class. Each unit of the course book

contained four lessons (A, B, C, and D) and a total of two units were taught in each of the two groups throughout the treatment meaning that about one and a half pages were covered each session.

In both experimental groups, the students were familiar with the content of the lesson as they would have access through the WhatsApp group in line with the flipped learning approach. The basic procedure of a flipped classroom is represented in Figure 1 below:

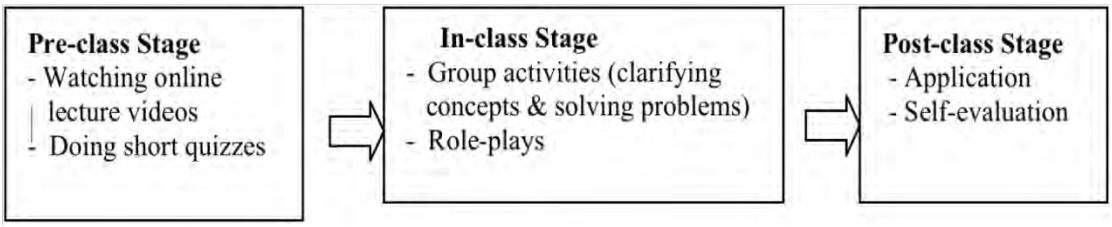

Figure 1.

*Procedure of a flipped classroom (**Estes** et al., 2014)*

In both experimental groups, the teacher/researcher observed the above flipped classroom procedure. In doing so, she reviewed the lesson or, in some cases, taught some parts and asked the students to share their ideas and discuss the issues. Finally, she would ask the students to produce the language they had learned. The point of departure in this study was the duality of the learning settings (i.e., cooperative and competitive learning) and the procedure in each group is discussed in more details in the following parts.

4.3.1. Cooperative Learning Group

On the very first session and seeking to establish a vibrant atmosphere, the teacher and the learners introduced themselves. In this learning setting and depending on the number of the students, the learners were clustered in groups of three. The grouping would change throughout the treatment period so that the learners could experience working with all classmates within small groups. Competitiveness was deemphasized in each group while group work was encouraged.

At the beginning of each session, the teacher engaged the students to build a context and, secondly, in the study stage, they opened their books to do the activities in groups and in the activation part (activating the language), the students did the extra tasks designed by the teacher. Each session, she gave the students linguistic feedback and used various types of error correction methods such as on-the-spot, recasts, and delayed error correction.

As stated earlier, each unit of the book contained four lessons. Lesson A included a

grammar lesson. In the engagement part based on the subject of the lesson, the students discussed a topic in groups (with the students being members of different groups during the term). Since the students were initially introduced to new topics outside the classroom (through the WhatsApp group), they talked about the topic in greater depth. Following the engagement stage, they all opened their books, listened to a conversation, and then practiced it. Subsequently, they listened to a conversation, role played it, did the course book exercises in groups, and checked them.

Next, the teacher taught the grammar box without being the only person to disseminate the information while the students cooperated in doing the exercises and discussing their problems and questions in groups. If there were any problems and questions that had not been solved in the groups, the teacher helped them with their problems. For the activation part, the teacher provided them some extra practices which were supposed to be done in groups and monitored them. The first group to complete the task successfully was the winner.

Lesson B included a grammar section and vocabulary lesson. The class started with the engagement part and the students again discussed a topic in their groups. In this part, the teacher did not apply any error correction methods in order to understand what the main problems were. Next, they did the grammar and vocabulary activities of the course book and checked them in groups. Accordingly, they read their answers first through turn-taking. There was no force on them from the teacher's side.

The teacher revised the vocabularies one more time and then gave them time to look at the definitions. She changed the group and chose two students by chance to come to the board and the other group members had to define the vocabulary and they had to guess. The teacher had written the vocabularies of the lesson on some cards and put them in a box; each group picked up some cards and the teacher asked the students to look the words up in their dictionaries and find some correct examples. The group with the most correct examples in a given time was the winner of that game. The lesson ended with the students doing the designed task in their groups in this part and the teacher monitored them and wrote the mistakes on the board and asked the groups to correct them.

For Lesson C, the students did the exercises of the course book, checked their answers in their groups, and shared any unsolved problems to be solved. The lesson ended with writing a conversation based on the content and the teacher changed the groups. She did not restrict the students to a particular subject in writing the conversation but used the learned structure in their writings. The groups exchanged their writings and they were supposed to correct any mistakes

(the teacher helped them). At the end, when the mistakes were corrected, each group role played the conversation.

Lesson D contained a reading, listening, and speaking section. For the reading part, the teacher used a jigsaw activity where she divided the students into groups of three and chose them randomly. They read a part and summarized it into a short paragraph. Then the teacher asked each group to talk about their paragraph while the other groups listened to retell it. Next, the teacher applied a close reading activity in the groups.

Ultimately, this part normally ended with producing a piece of writing about the content and the group with the least mistakes was the winner. For the listening and speaking part, the teacher changed the groups and asked the students' opinions about the listening topic. The teacher used this opportunity to scaffold and pre-teach the new words. The listening was played twice. During the first time, they took some notes to answer a general question. The second time, they listened to answer the comprehension questions and then checked their answers in the groups; consequently, they talked about the listening content in groups. For the speaking skill, they answered the questions in their books which were related to the topic of the listening. Finally, the teacher asked the students to do the speaking tasks she had designed in advance.

4.3.2. Competitive Learning Group

During the first session, the teacher introduced herself and then asked the learners to introduce themselves one by one. Unlike the cooperative classes, an individualistic learning method was applied in this setting where the whole activities were done individually and not in groups. The teacher applied different error correction techniques in this context as well.

For lesson A, the teacher started the class with the engagement part. She gave them time to think while the students were not allowed to share and talk about the questions with each other. In the study stage, they opened their course books and did the exercises alone and in the activation part, the teacher provided some extra practices as the students were supposed to do the tasks individually and cooperation was nonexistent.

To start Lesson B, the teacher asked the students to discuss a topic in order to engage them. Since they were familiar with the content of the lesson to a certain degree, they were able to use the new content. Each individual had a chance to speak up and express her thoughts. In the study part (after discussing the new content), the students did the course book exercises alone. Then, the teacher designed a game to revise the vocabulary; she called two students to come to the board in this learning setting and they had to compete against each other (whereas

in cooperative learning, the students worked together to find examples for each vocabulary from the box). In this group, each student was supposed to do it alone and the student who could find a correct example for words was the winner. At the end of this lesson, the students did the solo tasks in the form of a worksheet, doing a research, or writing designed by teacher. After doing the tasks, the teacher wrote the mistakes on the board to correct them.

For lesson C, contrary to the cooperative class in which the students were supposed to work in groups, each student did the course book activities alone. They were supposed to write a conversation with some missing parts, they did the task alone, and while they were doing the activity, the teacher monitored and helped them with their questions. Next, the teacher changed their papers and asked another student to fill in the blanks based on the knowledge they had learned throughout the lesson.

Next, they memorized the conversation (the teacher defined the roles and gave them time to role play it and they did not cooperate or practice together before performing in the class). To act out the roles, they stood up and recited the part. The student who got more positive comments from others and managed to perform better than others was the winner.

Lesson D included a reading, listening, and speaking part. For the reading section, the teacher asked each student to read the text and summarize it. The teacher chose two students randomly and asked them to come to the board. The students could write some keywords on the board from their notes to help them with the whole summary and then one by one told the gist of the story. Ultimately a student who could retell the story in a more accurate way was the winner.

For the listening part, the students first listened to take some notes and told the gist of the text while the second time, they listened to answer the comprehension questions (again, there was no cooperation). The speaking part task was done individually and it was mainly in the form of a class discussion in which each student had an equal chance to speak and be active in the class participation. While the students were talking, the teacher was listening to each individual and writing down the mistakes to correct them once the students finished talking.

It is worth noting that in comparison to the speaking questions in the course book, the teacher's tasks were more expanded and required more knowledge to be accomplished; indeed, the students had to use not only the knowledge they had just learned but also their background knowledge. Immediately after the treatment was over in both competitive and cooperative groups, the 60 learners sat for the same posttest.

5. Results

5.1. Pretest

Once the two experimental groups were randomly assigned, a sample PET speaking was administered as the pretest. Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics for the pretest. The mean and the standard deviation of the flipped cooperative group were 23.78 and 2.39, respectively, while those of the flipped competitive group stood at 23.95 and 1.81, respectively. In addition, both groups' skewness ratios were inside the acceptable range of ±1.96 (0.107 / 0.427 = 0.25 and 0.389 / 0.427 = 0.91).

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Speaking Pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Coop group	30	20.0	28.0	23.783	2.3914	.107	.427
Comp group	30	21.0	28.0	23.950	1.8116	.389	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30						

Since two raters scored the speaking pretest, the inter-rater reliability of the two was assessed. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores they gave the speaking papers of 19 learners selected randomly from among the 60 participants. The mean and the standard deviation of the scores given by rater 1 were 23.16 and 2.14, respectively, while those of rater 2 were 22.79 and 2.14, respectively. As Table 2 reveals, the skewness ratio of both sets of scores (0.14 and 1.22) fell within the acceptable range.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Given by the Two Raters to the Speaking Papers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Rater 1	19	20	26	23.16	2.141	.075	.524
Rater 2	19	20	28	22.79	2.149	.642	.524
Valid N (listwise)	19						

Consequently, the Pearson Product Moment was run. According to Table 3, the two sets of scores manifested a significant correlation (r = 0.563, p = 0.004 < 0.05).

Table 3.

Inter-Rater Reliability between the Two Raters Scoring the Speaking Papers

		Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1			
	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.563**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
	N	19	19
Rater 2			
	Pearson Correlation	.563**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
	N	19	19

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

5.2. Posttest

Following the termination of the treatment, the speaking posttest was administered to both groups. Table 4 below shows the descriptive statistics for the posttest. The mean and the standard deviation of the flipped cooperative group were 24.67 and 2.07, respectively, while those of the flipped competitive group stood at 23.12 and 1.96, respectively. Also, both groups' skewness ratios were acceptable (0.49 and 0.07).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Two Groups on the Posttest

	N	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Skewness**	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Coop group	30	21.0	28.0	24.667	2.0734	.209	.427
Comp group	30	20.0	27.0	23.117	1.9594	.030	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30						

5.3. Testing the Null Hypothesis

In order to test the null hypothesis, i.e., *there is no significant difference between the effect of using flipped learning in cooperative and competitive learning settings on EFL learners'*

speaking, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run on both groups' scores on the pre- and posttest. First, the prerequisites for running this parametric test are discussed. To begin with, all sets of scores of course enjoyed normality as demonstrated earlier (Tables 1 and 4). Next, the Levene's test showed no significant difference in the variances ($F_{(1,58)} = 1.509$, $p = 0.224 > 0.05$). Since one covariate was investigated (speaking pretest), the assumption of correlation among covariates was irrelevant. The fourth assumption is linearity; as can be seen in Figure 2 below, the general distribution of the scores is almost linear.

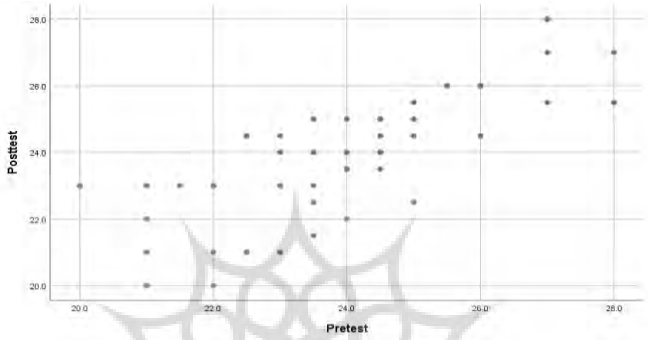

Figure 2.

Histogram of the Linearity of the Scores of the Two Groups on the Pretest and Posttest

As for the fifth assumption, i.e., homogeneity of regression slopes, Table 5 indicates an interaction (i.e. Group * Pretest) of 1.76 which is greater than 0.05; the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes is thus met.

Table 5.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	227.224[a]	3	75.741	94.631	.000	227.224[a]
Intercept	3.863	1	3.863	4.827	.032	3.863
Group	3.138	1	3.138	3.921	.053	3.138
Pretest	184.697	1	184.697	230.759	.000	184.697
Group * Pretest	1.505	1	1.505	1.881	.176	1.505
Error	44.822	56	.800			44.822
Total	34520.750	60				34520.750
Corrected Total	272.046	59				272.046

[a] R Squared = 0.835 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.826)

Table 6 demonstrates that the speaking pretest scores (the covariate in the model) were significant ($F = 233.380$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). Hence, there was a significant difference prior to the

treatment between the two groups' speaking. A significant relationship also existed between the covariate (the pretest) and the dependent variable (the posttest) while the independent variable was controlled ($F = 52.757$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$).

Table 6.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	225.719[a]	2	112.859	138.860	.000	.830
Intercept	5.719	1	5.719	7.036	.010	.110
Pretest	189.681	1	189.681	233.380	.000	.804
Group	42.878	1	42.878	52.757	.000	.481
Error	46.327	57	.813			
Total	34520.750	60				
Corrected Total	272.046	59				

[a]. R Squared = .830 (Adjusted R Squared = .824)

Hence, the null hypothesis, i.e., there is no significant difference between the impact of flipped cooperative and flipped competitive tasks on learners' speaking was rejected. Those in the flipped cooperative group who achieved a higher mean (Table 4) bore a significantly higher degree of improvement in their speaking than those in the flipped competitive group. Also, the effect size was 0.48; this is a strong effect size (Larson-Hall, 2010).

6. Discussion

The result of this research demonstrating the effectiveness of cooperative learning as compared to competitive learning is in line with the finding of a multitude of studies including *inter alia* those reported by Ghaith (2002), Gillies (2019), Howe (2014), Jacobs and Renandya (2019), and Tamimy et al. (2023), all of which report the more significantly positive impact of cooperative learning on EFL learners' language skills compared to competitive learning. Accordingly, others such as Altamimi and Attamimi (2014) concluded that in a learner-centered atmosphere, learners show more positive attitudes towards speaking. Accordingly, as found by Larasati (2018), learner-centered classes boost learners' speaking skill as this approach provides an action-oriented context in which learners understand the task, take actions towards doing it, and pay attention to their needs and characteristics.

The outcome of this study was also corroborated by Tran (2014) who found that learners having been taught by learning together were able to retain information better. Farzaneh and

Nejadansari (2014) showed that both learners and teachers generally support the application of cooperative learning in reading comprehension classes. Mendo-Lázaro et al. (2022) proved the effectiveness of cooperative learning as a means to encourage students to engage in classroom tasks and develop academic goals. In their study in a university setting, Gul and Shehzad (2015) established the impact of cooperative learning on students' improvement while Nguyen et al. (2021) conducted their study among teachers and found that they too had positive perceptions of implementing cooperative learning. Specifically, the teachers noted that using the cooperative learning procedure in class helped them in "clearly assigning roles for students, setting the stage for learning, and closely monitoring the groups" (p. 246).

In line with the result of this study showing that flipped learning in a cooperative learning setting bore a significantly positive impact on learners' speaking, Abdullah et al. (2019) proved that because of the well-designed tasks in and out of class in flipped learning and the fact that learners have this opportunity to practice, they would be more willing to collaborate and participate in speaking activities. Furthermore, a study by Mohammadi et al. (2019) concluded that employing the flipped learning method provides the opportunity for learners to interact and communicate more with each other. Ekmekci (2017) too found that a flipped classroom "supports and encourages independent and collaborative learning which provides a more flexible learning environment, anytime or anywhere learning, for learners' needs" (p. 163). In addition, Mehring (2016) showed that problem solving, having more time to discuss the problems, and getting feedback from classmates and the teacher are some of the advantages of a flipped model through which a learner-centered procedure is provided where learners are able to use the target language in a more authentic way.

Accordingly, the finding of this study is perhaps of no surprise as it is the very nature of the cooperative learning method that learners have this opportunity to communicate and share their ideas where "since matters are assessed and discussed with reasons and each person defends his/her opinion, a positive and synergistic atmosphere exists and people defend each other and complement each other's thoughts" (Mohammadjani & Tonkaboni, 2015, p. 111). Moreover, since anxiety can negatively affect learners' oral performance, group work can be a solution as, "Cooperative learning is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that result from working on a high-performance team" (Felder & Brent, 2007, p. 37).

Another possible justification for the findings of the present study in this respect, as stated by Baker and Clark (2010), is that in a cooperative learning setting, learners feel more encouraged

to do the speaking tasks since they are not afraid of making mistakes in front of other students. Furthermore, as rightly discussed by Namaziandost et al. (2019), implementing cooperative learning can positively affect learners' speaking skill through enhancing their motivation. Contrary to competitive learning settings that are mainly focused on teacher-fronted teaching and learners compete against each other and try to outperform one another individually, cooperative learning encourages learners to be an active participant in the class and have this opportunity to communicate and share their ideas.

The results of the abovementioned studies alongside those of the present study perhaps delineate the point that in terms of the speaking skill, collaboration and learners' togetherness play essential roles and are catalysts for the improvement be it in flipped classrooms or not. The above manifestation is probably indicative of the very nature of cooperative learning in which learners work together, share their ideas, and solve the emerging problems together and there is thus a pretext to gain more through doing the assigned tasks.

7. Conclusion

As highlighted in the previous sections, the results of this study yet again provide further evidence for the significant advantageousness of cooperative learning in the realm of ELT. In simple terms, an increasing number of studies not just in ELT but also in a diversity of educational and vocational fields such as physics (Akinbobola, 2009), management (Anderson, 2006), physical education (Goudas & Magotsiou, 2009), literacy instruction (Stevens, 2003), mathematics (Kolawole, 2008), and chemistry (Nisa & Sulisworo, 2019), only to name a few domains, are factualizing the necessity of incorporating the cooperative learning approach in pedagogy.

It is perhaps a remarkable irony that while there is phenomenal emphasis on cooperation and teamwork in various leading doctrines of management around the globe from total quality management or TQM (Prajogo & Brown, 2004) to the 'no-blame culture' in enterprise leadership and management (Gorini et al., 2012), cooperative learning has yet to become a widespread practice in educational establishments (Slavin, 2015). The perhaps robustly institutionalized theme of competitive learning in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and the 20th century, in particular, seems not be easily challengeable despite the plethora of research findings.

The status quo thus requires an active advocacy for a paradigm shift from competitive to cooperative learning in various educational entities with ELT being no exception in this regard.

While teachers stand at the forefront of education inside classrooms and in direct interaction with learners, a multi-stakeholder perspective is called for to facilitate the aforesaid transition smoothly. To this end, policymakers, managers, supervisors, and teachers need to undergo training on cooperative learning in order to be aligned with one another in the entire ecology of an educational institution as it is all too evident that the success of cooperative learning in a classroom necessitates a culture of cooperative work among all those involved (Marashi & Gholami, 2020). Amidst this advocacy for a paradigm shift, one must of course not overlook the pivotal role of the learners themselves and, in the case of young learners, their parents and/or caretakers as they need to be adequately informed on why the well-established practice of individualistic and competitive learning is being substituted with cooperative learning, i.e., a practice which they are most probably not familiar with and hence appears unacceptably unorthodox at first sight and would not receive the support and participation required on their side.

Furthermore, another group of stakeholders in this context is the community of syllabus designers and textbook writers who bear a prominent role. They may decide to add more authentic tasks to course books since in a flipped cooperative classroom, learners have more time to engage in freer practice both before the classroom and within the small learning groups inside the class. Such a procedure would facilitate learning in comparison with conventional course books as they mainly contain controlled or semi-controlled exercises. These tasks and activities appearing in a textbook could be designed and arranged in a way that enables asking learners to cooperate, share, and solve real-life problems while they are completing the task. Needless to say, teachers need to be allowed and encouraged to come on board alongside syllabus designers in the process, thus providing their practical experience and feedback throughout the designing stage.

In conclusion, the researchers must note that they faced a number of limitations in the process of conducting this study which are elaborated here. As noted in the participants section, the learners in this study were all females. It is thus suggested to interested researchers to replicate this research among male learners to identify if gender would bring about differing results. Secondly, the same study could also be conducted in coed classes to see whether the sitting together of male and female learners in cooperative settings would culminate different results or not. Yet another variable that could be involved as an intervening variable thus impacting the finding is age; the same study could be conducted within different age cohorts to check the uniformity of the outcome. Lastly, this study was conducted on the effect of flipped learning in cooperative and competitive learning setting on the speaking skill as a dependent

variable; similar researches could focus on other language skills such as writing to see whether different results would be produced or not.

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