

The Effect of Cooperative Learning Strategy in the Reduction of the Oral Communication Apprehension

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Introduction

Classroom participation has been found to be directly related to education success (Jaasma, 1977). Given this, it is important to reduce communication apprehension in the classroom in order to increase participation. Early intervention is necessary because communication apprehension seems to have its strongest impact during the first two years of college (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield & Payne, 1989). Research and anecdotal evidence overwhelmingly support the claim that students learn best when they engage with course material and actively participate in their learning (Philips, et. al., 2004).

Cooperative Learning

Cooperation is the process of working together towards the same end. Cooperative Learning is a teaching strategy in which small groups (4-6), each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their own and each other's learning, while the teacher coaches the process (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1993). Panitz (1996) pointed out that cooperative learning contradicts the concept that teachers are repositories of subject knowledge whose role is simply to pour in the open, empty willing minds of students, their vast reservoir of knowledge. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn (Davis & Murrill, 1994). Research has show that cooperative learning techniques: (Davis & Murrill, 1994; Philips, et. al., 2004)

- Promote student learning, and academic achievement.
- Increase student retention.
- Help students develop skills in oral communication.
- Help students develop higher order thinking skills.
- Create greater intrinsic motivation to learn, and
- Provide equal participation and simultaneous interaction.

Learning may be competitive, individualistic, or cooperative. Competitive goals encourage students to work against one another (I swim, you sink; I sink you swim), individualistic goals encourage students to disregard their classmates, and students look after their self interests or personal mastery (we are each in this alone), cooperative learning emphasizes collaboration and shared understanding on any task (we sink or swim together). It is hard to improve the oral communication in the traditional education system. We need to encourage that a healthy portion of instruction is cooperative (William, 1971). Cooperative learning is misused if assignments given to groups are not well structured, and students do not have enough time to practice independently the skills and processes that they must master (stahl & VanSickle, 1992). In research, there is a wealth of evidence that peer teaching is extremely effective for a wide range of goals, content, and students of different levels and personalities (colbeck & Campell, 2000).

Basic elements of cooperative learning: (Slavin, 1995; Johnson et. al., 1993; kagan, 1992; wang, 2002).

1-Positive interdependence

Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught, but also for helping teammates learn. Each group member has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort. These collective efforts are required and indispensable for group success. Each team benefit when all community perform well.

2-Face-to-face promotive interaction

Group community teach one's knowledge to others and promote each other's success. Group community meet face to face to work together to complete assignments and promote each other's success.

3- Individual and group accountability

Each student is accountable for a specific task or topic as well as topics assigned to other group community.

By taking responsibility for a specific portion of the material, and being graded for that, each student becomes Individually accountable.

4- Interpersonal and small group skills

Appropriate use of interpersonal skills. Examples of these skills: communication, leadership, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Students have to engage in task work and teamwork simultaneously to coordinate efforts that will achieve mutual goals.

5-Group processing

Reflecting on how well the team is functioning and how to function even better. Reflecting on a group session to describe what community actions were helpful and unhelpful and to make decisions on what actions to continue or change. Teachers and students should regularly reflect on group progress and make adjustments to improve outcome.

Cooperative Learning Activities

There are a variety of cooperative learning activities that can be used in the classroom, such as Jigsaw-Groups, Think-Pair-Share, Three-Step Interview, Numbered Heads, Team Pair Solo, and Circle the Sage (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Slavin, 1991; Slavin, 1997). I will explain only two of these activities that I used with the experimental group.

Jigsaw

Each group is assigned with some unique material to learn. As they learn the materials, they decide what is important and how to teach it. Later, each member of the group goes to another group and teach materials that they have learnt in their original group.

Think-Pair-Share

This can be viewed as a family of 3-step cooperative structure. During the first step individuals think silently about a question posed by the instructor. Individuals pair up during the second step and exchange thoughts. In the third step, the pairs share their responses with other pairs, other teams, or the entire class. Students share what they have learned with group community. In this strategy, students individually consider an issue or problems and then discuss their ideas with a partner.

Communication Apprehension (CA)

The term "Communication apprehension" was coined by James McCroskey and is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1997). This definition represents the way a person feels about communication. The apprehension can be produced by merely thinking about or anticipating having to communicate. Therefore, the thought of the communication alone can cause anxiety and fear (Horwitz, 2001)

People who do not have appropriate communication skills are normal people who are simply afraid to communicate. General personality traits such as quietness, shyness, and reticence frequently precipitate communication apprehension. According to (Friedman, 1980), when the ability and desire to participate in discussion are present, but the process of verbalizing is inhibited, shyness or reticence is occurring. According to (Brown, et.al., 1997) anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, apprehension and worry. Anxiety is produced when no appropriate expectations can be formed. Fear is produced when expectations lead to negative outcomes that are difficult or impossible to avoid. (Beatty & Andriate, 1985)

A certain degree of communication apprehension is inevitable although it varies from person to person (McCroskey et. al., 1985). Oral communication is a communication by word of mouth. It is the effective interpretation, composition, and presentation of information, ideas and values to a specific audience. It refers to all human instruction where the spoken word and language skills are used (Richmond, 1984) Oral skills are at the very foundation of Literacy. Classroom talk helps students to learn and to reflect on what they are learning. Students need authentic opportunities to learn how to listen and speak effectively. Speech anxiety is one of the most common obstructions to clear and effective communication. Fear of negative evaluation permeates self – perceptions and external orientation (Burnett, 1998). There are a variety of elements in communication situations that can cause our communication apprehension to increase. Generally, the more conspicuous a person feels, or the more unfamiliar the situation, the more communication apprehension is likely to be experienced (Holbrook, 2008).

When individuals are ignored or stared at, the level of communication apprehension often rises. It also, can result when a person is in a dependent position because the person with the higher status defines the boundaries of acceptable behavior (McCroskey & Booth-Butterfield, 1989). The level of fear and anxiety rises where a prior history of failure increases the likelihood of failure again. According to (Brown, et.al.,1997) anxiety is related to competitiveness. It raises when the learner perceives himself as lacking the quality of competitiveness (Byrnes, 1984).Probably nothing can increase communication apprehension more than being conspicuous in one's environment. The more comfortable an individual becomes within a social environment, the less anxiety he or she will feel. Usually communication apprehensive people may not appear apprehensive unless they are exposed to a communication in unfamiliar surroundings and people. A person may be communication apprehensive in one situation but not in another.

Some of the techniques that can be used by the teacher in creating easy- going and warm climate are: helping students to get to know one another at the beginning of the school years, using drama and role-playing situations, having students speak to class in group rather than individually, and allowing students to work with classmates with whom they feel most comfortable. (Jaasma, 1997; Bueh, 2001). No teacher is likely to ever face a class that contains no communication apprehensive students. Teachers usually complain about the level of students participation and their interaction in the classroom. They expect their students to take part in class discussions, speak audibly, ask and answer questions. Students who experience a high level of communication apprehension will withdraw from and seek to avoid communication when possible (opti & Ioffredo, 2000). Students in general are silent unless they are called upon to participate (opti & Ioffredo, 2000). It is a fact that the majority of students experience various degrees of communication apprehension when asked to express their views in front of other students or people in general.

Anxiety in and of itself is not a bad thing since a certain amount of anxiety can drive a student in the quest to learn. While communication apprehension is clearly a severe personal problem, the major concern here is with its negative impact in the learning environment. Apprehensive students need encouragement and explicit instruction to build their strengths and address their needs. They must be given an equal opportunity for success. The school environment can play a vital role in the prevention of communication apprehension. Oral communication skills are a set of abilities enabling individuals to become confident and competent speakers. They equip students to effectively comprehend, critique, and analyze information, communicate clearly and express ideas. In order to communicate effectively through speaking, students must exhibit Fluency, clarity, and awareness of audience. The key to encouraging speaking skills in the classroom is creating the proper environment conducive to language use. The teacher creates the positive climate and the motivational activity and the students do the rest.

The one thing that all people share when they are anxious about communicating is an internally experienced feeling of discomfort. Another two obvious effects of communication apprehension are avoidance and withdrawal from communication situations (Richmond & McCroskey, 1997). People can decide either to confront the situation and make the best of it or to avoid it and thus avoid the discomfort

Oral communication apprehension as a fear of speaking, comes in two different forms: trait – like communication apprehension is where you tend to feel anxious about communicating with others in most situations (Richmond & McCroskey, 1997), and state apprehension that influences only certain situations. State apprehension is where you feel particularly anxious about communicating with a particular person or group of people.

All people have some level of communication apprehension. It can occur in virtually any communication overall (Osman, et. al., 2010). General personality traits such as quietness and reticence frequently precipitate communication comprehension (Ayers, et. al., 2009). Which is caused either by the environment or genetic factors, or most likely a combination of the two. In other words, we can either be born with certain innate circumstances or we can acquire them through learning. Garrison & Garrison (1979) indicated that oral communication apprehension exists from first to twelfth grades with consistent reliability of measurement. Price (1991) suggested that teachers could reduce students anxiety by encouraging them to speak in class. Burrill (1985) argued that the students reasons for speaking in a fading or low volume voice may be linguistic, cultural or personal. Rivers (1981) argued that students who find their teacher unsympathetic and their classmates uncongenial may well feel that what they would like to say may be of little interest. Ericson&Gardner (1992) found that high communication apprehension had negative impact on both academic achievement and retention.

Glasser (1981) in his Negative Cognitive Appraisal Model assumed that since the quiet child was criticized for his or her early language performance, he or she would avoid negative reactions by keeping quiet. Rote memorization or the regurgitation of facts does not exemplify learning or understanding (Pines & West, 1986). Students should be active seekers and processors of information, not passive recipients (Davis & Murrell, 1994). The constructivist approach to teaching puts the students in the driver's seat (Perkins, 1992), and stresses the importance of active students' engagement. Aitken & Neer (1992) indicated that there is a strong negative correlation between communication apprehension and learning outcomes in the traditional classroom at all grade levels. Few models were proposed to account for etiology, maintenance, and treatment of communication apprehension, such as Conditioned Anxiety, Systematic Desensitization, Negative Cognitive Appraisal, Skills Deficit, and Skills Training, Cognitive Restructuring (CR), and Assertiveness Training (AT). (McCroskey, 1982).

The most commonly used Systematic Desensitization (SD) is based on the principle of reciprocal inhibition. The basic principle of this technique is based on the fact that our muscles cannot be both tensed and relaxed at the same time. If we teach a person to be connectively aware of muscle tension and learn how to relax muscles accordingly in the presence of anxiety-producing stimuli, the state of anxiety will be reduced and subsequent performance will be enhanced. The goal of the treatment is to allow the individual to experience situations which would normally result in anxiety, fear, and stress without tension.

Review of Literature

The review of literature in the area of cooperative learning and communication apprehension focuses on:

- 1-The advantages of using cooperative learning for students to improve oral communication competency.
- 2-The levels of communication apprehension among students.
- 3-Causes and consequences of communication apprehension.

Sarriff & Gillani (2011) aimed to determine levels of communication apprehension among undergraduate pharmacy students. They used the Personal Report Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) questionnaire among first-year undergraduate pharmacy students of University Sains in Malaysia. Findings indicate that communication apprehension exists among the students. One-fourth of the respondents had high communication apprehension. Osman, et. al. (2010) examined the usage of cooperative learning on second language learners' spoken skills, and whether it reduces learners' communication apprehension. The results of the study showed that there was an improvement in the experimental group's spoken skills and a considerable reduction in the participant's level of communication apprehension after the treatment.

Philips, et. al. (2004) explored the relationship of self-esteem, communication apprehension, and classroom participation. They found that self-esteem was not a significant predictor of classroom participation. However, communication apprehension was a significant predictor of classroom participation. Thaher (2005) investigated at An-Najah National University, the factors which lead to communication apprehension in English as a Foreign Language Course. The findings of the study revealed that most students had either fear, or uneasiness about their learning experience which has hindered the language learning process. Thaher classified the factors that lead to communication apprehension into 3 categories: psychological, instructional, and sociocultural. Buck (1997) investigated the effectiveness of random oral questioning during class lectures and discussions to promote consistent preparation, active participation and higher course achievement among undergraduate students. He concluded that the higher engagement in oral questioning was accompanied by higher course achievement.

Kim, et. al. (2004) examined whether communication apprehension can be reduced through cooperative learning sessions among college students. They concluded that because of its non-coercive nature, cooperative learning would reduce communication apprehension levels effectively, but only after enough number of cooperative learning sessions. Also, students with an initially high level of communication apprehension would show greater amount of communication apprehension reduction. McCroskey & Anderson (1976) examined the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement among college students. They indicated that high communication apprehensives have lower academic achievement, and high communication apprehensives prefer mass lecture classes over small classes. According to Iqbal, (2004) cooperative learning is more effective as a teaching technique for mathematics as compared to traditional teaching method. He stated that students in cooperative groups outscored the students working in traditional learning situation. Dobos (1996) examined the effects of students' communication expectations and communication apprehension on the development of student motivation in cooperative learning group activities.

Measures of pre-session expectancies and channel-specific apprehension were combined to classify students into four categories of optimal challenge predispositions. Post-session measures of emergent motivation or intrinsic rewards included: (a) expectancy fulfillment, (b) state anxiety, (c) communicative activity, and (d) satisfaction with the CL interaction. Results showed distinctive patterns of emergent motivation for students in each of the four optimal challenge categories for each of the cooperative learning modalities.

Purpose of the study

The researcher has observed through teaching social studies at Petra University that students remain silent and most of them rarely take part in classroom discussion. The cause of this-according to the researcher's experience - may be the students' fears of expressing their opinions during the classroom discussions, and the fact that the teaching methods adopted in the university , do not help in encouraging students to actively share in classroom discussions.

Consequently, the researcher decided to conduct the present study in order to know the importance of using the cooperative learning in the reduction of the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students at Petra University in Amman / Jordan by comparing the cooperative learning with the traditional teaching method, and, also, examining the effect of gender when using the cooperative learning in reducing the oral communication among the experimental group.

The study specifically attempted to answer the following two questions:

1. Is there an effect of using the cooperative learning in the reduction of the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students?
2. Is there an effect of using the cooperative learning in the reduction of the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students due to the gender variable?

The two study questions resulted in the following two hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in reducing the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students which can be due to using the cooperative learning .
2. There is no statistically significant difference in the effect of the cooperative learning strategy in reducing the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students due to the gender.

Importance of the Study

The importance of the study springs out of the fact that cooperative learning plays a major role in increasing the social interaction among students. Consequently leading to increasing the communication skills among them and reducing the oral communication apprehension. The importance of results of the present study results is represented in the following:

- Teachers of the university social studies and other courses will benefit from the study through using up-to-date strategies such as cooperative learning, which increases the classroom interaction and the students' participation in classroom discussions.
- This study, to the researcher's knowledge, is one of the first studies which dealt with cooperative learning and its effect in reducing the university students' oral communication apprehension. Researchers have not yet dealt with this subject in Jordan.

This study is considered an indicator to similar other studies which tackle the oral communication apprehension in the remaining study levels and courses in the Arab world.

Key words

- Cooperative learning: a teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities under the supervision of the teacher, to achieve a common goal.
- Traditional method of teaching: the procedures that followed by the teacher in teaching social studies for the 2nd year students at Petra University, which depend mainly on rote memorization through the lectures and discussions.
- Oral Communication: All human interaction where the spoken word and language skills are used to communicate ideas to another individual or group.
- Communication apprehension: One's anxious feelings about communication. It is a pattern of anxiety which can affect the student's oral communication. Communication apprehension is scaled in the present study by the grade which the student obtains on the Personal Report Communication Apprehension scale (PRCA-24).

- **Social studies:** the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The primary purpose of this discipline is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens in a democratic society. Types of social sciences: Anthropology, history, geography, national education, political science, and economics.
- **Social studies Course:** the 406304 course which is established in the study plan for the second year students at Petra University, in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Limitations of the study

The study results are limited by the following:

- **Venue limitation:** The study has dealt with Petra University.
- **Human limitation:** The study sample is the second year students who are studying the social studies course for the (2010-2011) academic year.
- **Time limitation:** The study was carried out during the second semester of the 2010-2011 academic year .
- **Objective Limitation:** The study was restricted to examine the effect of cooperative learning in reducing the oral communication apprehension in the course of social studies course only. Therefore care should be exerted upon generalizing on the remaining courses.

Method and Procedures

Study sample

The number of study sample amounted to (68) male and female students distributed into two sections studying the social studies at Petra University who were chosen in an intentional manner. The researcher used the random allocation where used to allocate the experimental and control groups: an experimental section was subjected to cooperative learning and a control section was taught by using the traditional method. Table (1) shows the distribution of the study sample according to the group and gender.

Table (1) Distribution of study sample according to group and gender

Group \ Sex	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Control	14	18	32
Experimental	16	20	36
Total	30	38	68

Study Tool

In order to measure communication apprehension of the two groups the (PRCA-24) scale was translated to Arabic and used to measure communication apprehension before and after the experiment. Completing the scale allows to know where he or she falls within the normative range of scores. This instrument is composed of twenty-four statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people. The PRCA-24 contains 24 Likert-type statements "strongly agree (1), agree (2), undecided (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5)" concerning feelings about communication with others in four overalls: group, meeting, dyadic and public.

McCroskey et. al. (1985) report that PRCA-24 is high in internal consistency, with Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates ranging from 0.93 to 0.95, SCORING: Compute subscores for four communication overalls—group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking— and an overall communication apprehension score.

Sub scores scoring formula:

- Group discussion: 18+scores for items 2, 4, and 6 – scores for items 1, 3, and 5
- Meetings: 18+scores for items 8, 9, and 12 – scores for items 7, 10, and 11
- Interpersonal conversations: 18+scores for items 14, 16, and 17 – scores for items 13, 15, and 18
- Public speaking: 18+scores for items 19, 21, and 23 – scores for items 20, 22, and 24
- Scores on the four overalls (groups, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking) can range from a low of 6 to a high of 30. Any score above 18 indicates some degree of apprehension.
- Scores between above 80 and 120 indicate a high level of communication apprehension.

- Scores between above 50 and 80 indicate a moderate level of communication apprehension.
- Scores less than 50 indicate a low level of communication apprehension.

Validity of the tool

For the purpose of this study, the researcher administered the scale of oral communication apprehension after translating it into Arabic to referees of professors at Jordanian universities to ensure the validity of content and transition. The opinions of all referees indicated the accuracy of the translation into Arabic and its suitability for application.

Reliability of the Tool

For the purposes of the present study the researcher applied the oral communication apprehension scale on a pilot sample of (24) students, then the scale reliability was calculated by using the internal consistency method according to (Cronbach Alpha) coefficient. The reliability factors in this method amounted as shown in table No.(2).

Table (2): Reliability Coefficients in measuring Oral communication apprehension

OVERALL (CA)	Reliability coefficient
Group discussion	0.832
Meetings	0.845
Dyadic interpersonal conversation	0.821
Public speaking	0.806
overall CA	0.864

Study procedures

To achieve the prospective objectives from the study, the researcher carried out the following:

1. Prepared the study material for the social studies course in a suitable method for the cooperative learning.
2. Verified the validity and reliability of the oral communication apprehension scale (PRCA-24), by the suitable methods .
3. Allocated the two sections randomly into two groups: an (experimental) group which taught by the cooperative learning method, and a (control) group which taught by the traditional method.
4. The oral communication apprehension scale was applied in both experimental and control groups at the beginning of the second academic semester prior to the beginning of teaching (pretest). The researcher reminded the students to be as objective as possible, since there is no one correct answer.
5. The experimental group was exposed to the treatment of cooperative learning activities for 30 minutes in each session, making up a total of 90 minutes every week for 3 consecutive months, while the control group was provided with traditional or routine method of instruction. The subject of social studies was taught to the control group through dictation of notes, textbook readings, audiovisual materials, and straight lecturing. Cooperative learning means to work and learning groups and obtain the results on the basis of group performance while the teacher coaches the whole process. Both groups were taught by the researcher himself. The duration of the experiment was 3 months.
6. At the end of the second academic semester and after finishing all the knowledge content for the two groups: control "traditional method" and experimental "cooperative learning", the oral communication apprehension scale was applied in both groups (posttest).
7. The data were collected and transferred to tables, then the data were put into the computer and processed statistically by using "the Statistical Package of Social Sciences"(SPSS) .
8. The data were then analyzed, results were, discussed and then the suitable recommendations were presented.

Study Methodology

Whereas the study examined the effect of the cooperative learning in reducing the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students, the adopted methodology was the quasi experimental methodology for the two groups (control and experimental) through the prior application of the oral communication apprehension scale, then teaching was carried on by using the cooperative learning for the experimental group and the traditional method for the control group. At the end of the semester, the oral communication apprehension scale was re-applied on the two groups (posttest).

Design of the Study

The quasi experimental design was used in this study for two the groups (experimental and control) as follows:

Experimental Group 01 X 02

Control Group 01 02

Whereas (01) = pretest of the oral communication apprehension scale.

(X) = the experimental processing (teaching by using the cooperative learning)

(02) = the posttest of the oral communication apprehension scale .

Study Variables

First: Independent Variables :

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1- Teaching method | |
| A- Cooperative learning | B- Traditional method |
| 2- Gender | |
| A- Male | B- Female |

Second: Dependent Variable

Oral communication apprehension among social studies students at Petra University.

Statistical Process

Descriptive statistics were used (means and standard deviations), the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used too to test the significance of the differences on the posttest of oral communication apprehension scale between the group (control and experimental) and gender variables after adjusting for the pretest differences between the two groups.

Discussion of the results

First: Results related to the First Hypothesis:

"There are no significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the reduction of the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students due to using the cooperative learning".

For the purpose of testing the first hypothesis, the means and standard deviations of grades of social studies students' were calculated in both groups : The experimental (which was subjected to the use of cooperative learning) and the control (which was subjected to the use of the traditional method) according to the communication apprehension scale in the pretest and posttest of the scale. The results were as shown in table (3)

Table (3) Means and standard deviations for the grades of students of social studies course in both the experimental and control groups on the communication apprehension scale, (pretest and posttest).

OVERALL (CA)	Group	N	Pretest		Posttest	
			Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Group	Experimental	36	18.28	4.44	16.03	4.52
	Control	32	19.56	4.31	18.88	4.20
Meeting	Experimental	36	20.11	4.55	17.58	4.01
	Control	32	19.66	4.37	19.84	4.74
Dyadic	Experimental	36	17.39	4.76	15.19	4.86
	Control	32	18.28	5.21	17.75	5.13
Public	Experimental	36	22.14	4.72	20.69	4.92
	Control	32	21.53	5.55	21.25	5.59
overall CA	Experimental	36	77.92	13.46	69.50	13.12
	Control	32	79.03	13.73	77.72	12.98

Table (3) shows that there is a difference between the means of grades of the social studies course students in both experimental and control groups on the communication apprehension pretest.

The results indicate that the means for the experimental group grades at the group domain was (16.03), but the means for the control group grades was (18.88). The difference between the two groups was (2.85), but the (Meeting) domain for the means of the experimental group amounted to (17.58) while the means for the control group amounted to (19.84) i.e. a difference between the two groups of (2.26). As to the (Dyadic) domain, the means for the experimental group was (15.19) while the means of the control group was (17.75), i.e. a difference between the two groups of (2.56). However, the (Public) domain, the means for the experimental group was (20.69) while the means for the control group amounted to (21.25), i.e. a difference between the two groups of (0.56). The average grades of the two groups on the overall communication apprehension scale, the means of the experimental group amounted to (69.50) while the means of the control group amounted to (77.72), i.e. a difference between the groups of (8.22).

The oral communication apprehension among the students who were taught by cooperative learning was less compared to those taught by traditional methods of teaching. The foregoing shows that the experimental group which taught by cooperative learning has obtained less grades than the control group which taught by using the traditional method on the contact fears scale in posttest in the four domains and the overall scale. To know if the differences in the means of grades of the two experimental and control groups in posttest of the communication apprehension scale are of statistical significance at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the purpose of isolating the difference between the two groups in the pretest statistically, (ANCOVA) test was used and the results were as in table (4)

Table (4) Grades of the two experimental and control groups at (ANCOVA) Communication apprehension scale, results of the contact test in posttest

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group discussion	Pretest	873.371	1	873.371	145.898	0.000
	Group	52.554	1	52.554	8.779	0.004*
	Error	389.102	65	5.986		
	Corrected Total	1399.809	67			
Meeting	Pretest	615.323	1	615.323	62.140	0.000
	Group	115.119	1	115.119	11.626	0.001*
	Error	643.645	65	9.902		
	Corrected Total	1345.529	67			
Dyadic	Pretest	906.468	1	906.468	79.928	0.000
	Group	57.213	1	57.213	5.045	0.028*
	Error	737.171	65	11.341		
	Corrected Total	1754.279	67			
Public speaking	Pretest	1398.162	1	1398.162	217.690	0.000
	Group	20.479	1	20.479	3.189	0.079
	Error	417.477	65	6.423		
	Corrected Total	1820.868	67			
overall CA	Pretest	8564.249	1	8564.249	235.758	0.000
	Group	857.397	1	857.397	23.603	0.000*
	Error	2361.219	65	36.326		
	Corrected Total	12069.809	67			

* Statistically Significant

The results in table (4) shows the existence of differences with statistical significance at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the means of grades of the two control and experimental groups with respect to the communication apprehension in posttest on domains (Group), (Meeting), and (Dyadic) and on the overall communication apprehension scale, while the differences had no statistical significance on the (Public) domain.

This result means that there are significant differences in the oral communication apprehension of (Group), (Meeting), and (Dyadic) and the communication apprehension in general (overall CA) with social studies course students which are due to the used teaching method.

In order to specify the value of the differences in the means for the students of the two control and experimental groups of domains of (Group), (Meeting), and (Dyadic) and on the overall contact fears scale (overall CA) in the posttest, the amended estimated marginal means were extracted which came from isolating the student performance impact in the pretest communication apprehension scale on their performance in the posttest communication apprehension scale and the results were as in table (5).

Table (5) Adjusted means of students' grades in both the experimental and control groups after isolating the overall CA and the overall communication apprehension scale of (Dyadic),(Meeting) and performance impact in the pretest scale .

OVERALL (CA)	Group	Mean	S. Error
Group	Experimental	16.53	0.41
	Control	18.31	0.44
Meeting	Experimental	17.42	0.52
	Control	20.03	0.56
Dyadic	Experimental	15.53	0.56
	Control	17.37	0.60
overall CA	Experimental	70.02	1.01
	Control	77.14	1.07

The adjusted means results of the student grades in both the experimental and control groups on the posttest communication apprehension scale indicate - after isolating the performance impact in the pretest scale - that the differences in oral communication apprehension in (Group), (Meeting), (Dyadic) and the oral communication apprehension (overall CA) were in favor of the students in the control group (which was subjected to the traditional teaching method) as it obtained an adjusted means higher from the adjusted means for the experimental group (which were subjected to teaching by using the cooperative learning ; i.e. control group students had high contact fears compared with the experimental group students on the domains of (Group), (Meeting) and (Dyadic) as well as on the overall communication apprehension scale. Consequently, the first hypothesis related to the domains of (Group), (Meeting), (Dyadic) will be rejected and on the overall communication apprehension scale (overall CA) , i.e. there are statistically significant difference at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level in reducing the oral communication apprehension (Group), (Meeting), (Dyadic) and the overall communication apprehension scale (overall CA) among social studies students' which are due to the use of cooperative learning through comparing them with the traditional teaching method .

The Researcher believes that this result is due to the fact that the advantages of cooperative learning and length of the period of its use which lasted three months helped in increasing the growth of social relations among the males and females experimental group students, led to increase the sense of trust among them, made them more proud of themselves , gave them freedom to express themselves, and consolidated their independence and sense of responsibility .(Kagan,1992) said that the use of the cooperative learning would lead to providing the cooperation opportunities among students and teach them the skills of expression and conversation through the group's sharing in the discussion and dialogue, and consequently reduces the oral communication apprehension among them. In addition, the cooperative learning strives to self respect and appreciation and reduces isolation , shyness, unsociability, worry, tension and aggressiveness .(Johnson,1995) found that the cooperative learning leads to the development of the skill of listening to the opinions of others and their point of views , sharing in mental discussions and explaining what was learnt by other group community. This can be accomplished through the oral communication skills .

This result is in harmony with the study result of Osman, et. al ,(2010) .

As to none existence of a statistically significant difference in reducing the oral communication apprehension in the (public) field, the researcher believes that the cause is related to delivering a speech in front of an audience requires special skills such as selecting the subject which suits the characteristics or type of the listening audience in so far as the age and level of education in addition to the importance of gathering information , organizing the speech content and presenting it to the audience in a convincing manner and catch the attention of the listener. These matters need special training on the speech delivery technique which may not be available through the cooperative learning strategy in the classroom.

In brief, it was noticed that there was an improvement in experimental group's spoken skills and a considerable reduction in participant's level of communication apprehension after using cooperative learning

Second : Results Related to Testing the Second Hypothesis :

"There are no significant differences at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in reducing the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students who taught by using the cooperative learning which are due to the "gender variable " .

To test this hypothesis ,the means and standard deviations of the grades of the social studies students in the experimental group which was subjected to learning by using the cooperative learning were extracted depending on the gender variable (male ,female),and the results were as in table (6) .

Table (6) Means and standard deviations of grades of students of the experimental group on the (pretest and posttest) communication apprehension scale depending on the gender variable.

OVERALL (CA)	Sex	N	Pretest		Posttest	
			Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Group	Male	16	17.69	4.41	15.63	4.49
	Female	20	18.75	4.53	16.35	4.64
Meeting	Male	16	19.44	4.73	17.31	4.03
	Female	20	20.65	4.08	17.80	4.09
Dyadic	Male	16	17.00	4.39	14.81	4.75
	Female	20	17.70	4.09	15.50	5.05
Public	Male	16	21.94	4.65	20.31	4.51
	Female	20	22.30	4.88	21.00	5.31
overall CA	Male	16	76.06	11.12	68.06	11.60
	Female	20	79.40	12.96	70.65	14.41

Table (6) shows that there are differences between the means of the grades of experimental group students which used the cooperative learning depending on the gender variable (male, female). These differences were controlled statistically by using the (ANCOVA) test. The table shows also that there is a difference between the means of grades of the experimental group students in posttest of the communication apprehension scale depending on gender variable (male, female), as the results indicate that the means of the males' grades in posttest at the (Group) analysis was (15.63), but the means of females' grades was (16.35), that is a difference of (0.72) between the two genders.

The (Meeting) domain, the males means amounted to (17.31) while the females means amounted to (17.80), that is a difference of (0.49) between the two genders. As to (Dyadic) domain, the males means amounted to (14.81) while the females means amounted to (15.50), or a difference of (0.69) between the two genders. As to the (Public) domain, the males means amounted to (20.31) while the females means amounted to (21.00) or a difference of (0.69) between the two genders.

As to the average grade of both genders on the overall scale (overall CA) the males means amounted to (68.06) while the females means amounted to (70.65) , a difference of (2.59) between the two genders. The grades of the experimental group students taught by cooperative learning show that females got slightly higher grades than males according to the communication apprehension scale in the (posttest) in the four domains and the overall scale .

In order to know if the differences in the means of student grades in the pretest of communication apprehension scale have a statistical significance at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and with the objective of isolating the difference between the two genders in the statistical pretest application, ANCOVA test was used and the results were as shown in table (7) .

Table (7)Result of ANCOVA test of grade of the experimental group on the communication apprehension scale in posttest pursuant to the gender variable

OVERALL (CA)	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group	Pretest	426.294	1	426.294	49.533	0.000
	Sex	0.117	1	0.117	0.014	0.908
	Error	284.006	33	8.606		
	Corrected Total	714.972	35			
Meeting	Pretest	138.276	1	138.276	10.804	0.002
	Sex	0.349	1	0.349	0.027	0.870
	Error	422.361	33	12.799		
	Corrected Total	562.750	35			
Dyadic	Pretest	303.949	1	303.949	19.308	0.000
	Sex	0.164	1	0.164	0.010	0.919
	Error	519.488	33	15.742		
	Corrected Total	827.639	35			
Public	Pretest	651.063	1	651.063	112.857	0.000
	Sex	1.123	1	1.123	0.195	0.662
	Error	190.374	33	5.769		
	Corrected Total	845.639	35			
overall CA	Pretest	4304.310	1	4304.310	85.610	0.000
	Sex	8.622	1	8.622	0.171	0.681
	Error	1659.178	33	50.278		
	Corrected Total	6023.000	35			

The results in Tables (7) show that there were no statistically significant differences at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean of grades of the experimental group students on the communication apprehension scale which are due to gender. Consequently, the second hypothesis is accepted, i.e. there are no differences which have statistical significance at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) to reduce the oral communication apprehension among the social studies students who taught by cooperative learning due to the gender variable. This mean indicated that the use of the cooperative learning method in the experimental group has equal effect in reducing the oral communication apprehension among males and females on the four domains and the fears in general.

This means that the use of the cooperative learning leads to reducing the communication apprehension among males and females in an equal manner. The cause may be due to what the researcher has noticed while carrying out the study from the participation and enthusiasm of male and female students, as the participation of both genders was active thereby leading to making use of the cooperative learning in reducing their oral communication apprehension as males and females live in one university environment and are of a close living and cultural level, thus leading to reducing their oral communication apprehension to a close extent.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for further research:

- Teachers should attend workshops or seminars to know how to handle the causes and consequences of communication apprehensive students.
- Teachers should help students develop a positive image of themselves and others.
- Teachers should create a warm atmosphere to motivate the students to speak in class.
- Teachers should change strategy of learning from rote and traditional teaching to a strategy based on classroom activities such as cooperative learning.
- Teachers should not insist on perfect pronunciation, complete sentences, near native grammar.
- Teachers should acquire appropriate communication skills before they begin practicing.
- Teachers should be trained to recognize the presence of communication apprehension in a student.
- students with slow language development or deficient speech skills should receive help as early as possible.
- Further studies are needed to investigate the reasons behind communication apprehension among students.

- The use of cooperative learning in teaching the social studies courses due to its impact in reducing the oral communication apprehension among male and female students.
- Teachers have to pay attention to the diversification of the teaching styles and methods in lectures particularly those which depend on the interaction and participation of the student.

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