

Cooperative Learning: General and Theoretical Background

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a general theoretical background for cooperative learning which researchers in this area need to understand before carrying out researchers. The concentration is on both providing a general background and discussing the theories that are related to cooperative learning. The general background includes definitions of cooperative learning, history of cooperative learning, principles of cooperative learning, types of cooperative learning, advantages of cooperative learning, the role of teacher in cooperative learning, and the role of students in cooperative learning. The theoretical background includes Social Interdependence Theory, Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, Zone of Proximal Development, behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism.

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative learning in the 1960s was not in the attention of the scholars as the individualistic and competitive learning were the dominating teaching methods. Nowadays, cooperative learning is a crucial method in the educational field not only in the elementary and secondary schools but also in the universities (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

Traditional teaching methods make the classes teacher-centred which does not help the students to improve themselves (Yassin & Razak, 2017), and might cause anxiety because the students do not practice language with their peers (Razak, Yassin & Maasum, 2017). However, cooperative learning made the process of learning student-centred and this instructional strategy can be achieved by dividing the students into small groups (Machado & Coimbra, 2015). In cooperative learning each group is responsible for its own learning as well as the learning of all the members of the group in the sense that students can share knowledge with each other and every student can explain what s/he has gained to the other students. Thus, students in each group make discussions with each other in order to complete a task, solve a problem or achieve a specific goal given to them by the instructor.

Cooperative learning does not cancel the role of the teacher because the teacher should be available in order to design the activities, monitor the students and divide them into small groups. Leaving the students alone without guidance might not help them to achieve the desired goals of learning (Kagan 1989). The main goal of cooperative learning is to increase the

level of benefit among all the students through cooperation between the students as those whose level is better than the other students can help their classmates by guiding them to understand the lesson or fulfil the given task (Johnson et al. 1993).

Slavin (1996) argued that dividing the students into teams might not be helpful if there is no task or a goal to be achieved by each group. From his perspective there are two main elements for cooperative learning that cannot be separated from each other which are group team work and team goals.

The aim of teaching reading is to help the students understand the passage which they read and cooperative learning is an effective method in teaching reading skills because students will be able to discuss with the other students the difficulties which they encounter when reading any passage inside the classroom (Meng 2010).

HISTORY OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative Learning has a long history which might be dated back to the first century under the name of peer work. However, the real development appeared many centuries after that especially in the 18th century as schools were opened to teach the students depending on peer learning groups. One of these schools is opened by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell in England (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). This school later opened branches in different countries which considered as a landmark for the group work learning especially in the beginning of the 19th century in the United States.

One of the figures that have a great influence on group learning is Colonel Francis Parker. He was the superintendent of public schools in Massachusetts (1875-1880). He advocated the use of group learning and could attract thousands of visitors to observe the use of group learning in the public schools (Campbell 1965, as cited in Johnson et al. 1991).

Another figure that contributed to the development of peer learning is John Dewey (1963) as cited in (Johnson et al. 1991). He used a peer learning method in his project which gained its reputation in the American schools especially at the end of the century (Johnson et al. 1991).

The idea of peer learning entered a new phase in the field of research as some researchers started to compare individualistic, competitive and peer learning and their effect on the students. This effort is attributed to Turner in England and Triplett (1897) in the United States which was followed by similar efforts in the 20th century in Germany by the scholar Mayer and in France by the scholar Ringelmann (Johnson et al. 1998).

The first major study in peer learning and competitive learning was carried out by Miller (1929) and it is considered one of the first studies on cooperation which used a lab. This major work followed by the work of May and Doob's work which was a literature review on competition and peer learning from the beginning until 1937 (Johnson et al. 1998).

The interest in peer learning died out in the 1930s in the United States after its flourishing in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century because the focus was turned into the interpersonal competitive learning. In the 1960s the schools were integrated and there was a need for social integration inside the classroom between the majority and minority students. The only solution from the perspective of the educators at that time was the peer work to help the minority students improve their performance in schools (Olsen & Kagan 1992).

In the 1970s, the researchers started to work on cooperative learning method and improve cooperative learning techniques (Slavin 1991). The beginning was with Elliot Aronson and his associates in the University of Texas Austin, who developed the Jigsaw method. This effort is followed by David Johnson and Roger Johnson in the University of Minnesota who developed the technique Learning Together, and David DeVries, Keith Edwards and Robert Slavin at the University of Johns Hopkins who developed two cooperative learning techniques which are Teams-Games-Tournament and Student Teams-Achievement Division.

The use of cooperative learning before 1970 was limited to colleges and then secondary school teachers paid attention to this and later it was used even in the elementary schools. Only after 1990s the educators once again paid attention to the use of cooperative learning at the college level (Johnson et al. 1998).

COOPERATIVE LEARNING DEFINITIONS

There are many definitions for cooperative learning which are not that different from each other. According to Olesen and Kagan (1992), cooperative learning is a classroom activity in which the exchange of information is socially structured between learners and in which every learner is responsible for his/her understanding for the materials as well as the others' understanding for the materials at the same time. Vermette (1998) defined cooperative learning as a team activity which include students with heterogeneous levels working together to master a body of knowledge. The spirit of the team is positive interdependence as each student is responsible for his/her own understanding and the other students' understanding.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2002), cooperative learning is an instructional method which has some characteristics such as the responsibility of each learner for his understanding as well as the understanding of the whole team. Also, reward should be a part of cooperative learning process so that each learner should maximize his efforts to understand and motivates the other team members to increase their understanding for the success of the team.

The above definitions concentrate on group work giving the individual a dual task; the first one is to understand the materials and the second one is to make sure that the other group members understand the materials.

Other definitions shed light upon the shared goal which the students in cooperative learning should take into consideration and utilise cooperative learning to achieve these goals. Brown (1994) defines cooperative learning as a method in which heterogeneous students work together on materials presented by the teacher in order to achieve a specific task. Moreover, Bramlett (1994) argued that cooperative learning refers to the instructional use of small groups when the students work with one another in order to master academic content of a subject. Also, Smith et al. (2007) stated that learning can be cooperative when the students work together to accomplish specific tasks.

The view of Johnson and Johnson (2002) also focused on the social skills which is one of the principles of cooperative learning. They stated that it is important for the students to believe that every individual is important for the group in order to make the cooperative learning groups cooperative in nature. They added that the students in each group should use the appropriate social skills needed for cooperative learning. This point of view is supported by Johnson et al. (1998) who argued that in cooperative learning the students are divided into groups of four or five students in order to achieve academic content and social skills.

Other definitions focused on the interaction between the learners and the role of cooperative learning to make the process of learning student-centred rather than teacher-centred. Cooperative learning is a learning technique which depends on activities that enhance the student-student interaction (Arendale 2005; Heba & Nouby 2007). Any pair work is essential in cooperative learning as the students can not only encourage each other to maximize up the benefit but also practice the language orally through fruitful communication.

In addition, McCafferty et al. (2004) defined cooperative learning and highlighted the importance of equal opportunities in order to make the process of cooperative learning more effective. McCafferty et al. (2004) viewed cooperative learning as techniques that help the students to work together in an effective way. Cooperative learning is different from group work as students in cooperative learning should have equal opportunities to participate and talk to create the output while in group learning the tasks might be carried out by some students without distributing the tasks to the whole group.

To sum up, Cooperative learning is one of the most effective methods in the process of learning and it has gained its popularity in the field of education and research. Cooperative learning has its own principles as not all the group work can be considered cooperative learning. Cooperative learning aims to make the process of learning student-centred rather than teacher-centred. Positive interdependence is one of the principles of cooperative learning as each group member should be responsible for his own learning and the other group members learning. Moreover, cooperative learning should be goal-oriented as the students should work together to achieve a specific task. Equal opportunities of participation among the students is an essential element in the process of cooperative learning.

TYPES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

There are three types of cooperative learning groups as stated by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998). These three types are formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning, and cooperative base groups.

Formal Cooperative Learning

This type of cooperative learning extends from one period to several weeks in order to achieve shared goals and complete a specific task or assignment. The teacher can use this to teach any subject or course after setting the goals for the students and explaining the principles of cooperative learning in order to make the cooperative learning method fruitful.

In formal cooperative learning, the groups are formed from 3 to 5 students and they should be heterogeneous and the students can start studying according to the cooperative learning strategy assigned to them by the teacher who shall be there to supervise them (Almuslimi 2016).

Informal Cooperative Learning

This type of cooperative learning lasts from few minutes to a class. Teachers use this type to enhance direct instruction such as presentation, discussion and summarizing. The teacher can ask the students to discuss a question the teacher gives them or to summarize the main points of the lesson. So, it is temporary and does not last for an extended period (Almuslimi 2016).

Base Group Cooperative Learning

This type of cooperative learning might last for one year or more. The participants should show a kind of commitment and they should provide support and encouragement to the other students. This type is also helpful when the learner wants to master a course and complete it

successfully. Almuslimi (2016) argued that base group is helpful for socially isolated learners who are chosen carefully and then divided into groups. According to Almuslimi (2016), this type of cooperative learning is mainly used to improve social skills among the students.

ADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

The use of cooperative learning methods in the process of language teaching inside the classroom has many advantages to the students. These advantages include increasing motivation towards learning, lowering the level of anxiety and improving the language skills in addition to the improvement of the social skills and maximizing the level of benefit.

Lowering Anxiety

One of the important advantages is related to the psychological aspects of learning because using cooperative learning techniques inside the classroom helps the students to lower the level of anxiety. There is a difference between asking the student to answer a question from the side of the teacher without any practice and asking the students a question and let them discuss the answer with the other students. When the students work in groups, they will not be confused or anxious as they are going to discuss the answer with the other students to whom they feel attached and there are no barriers can be taken into consideration. The practice between the students will polish the students' skills and make them more self-confident and willing to participate in answering the questions of the teachers which reduces the communication apprehension (Dörnyei 1997; Crandall 1999).

Self-confidence

The interpersonal competition between the students inside the classroom is another source of anxiety. The traditional classes create a kind of competition between the students which raises the level of anxiety and causes communication apprehension among the students. Cooperative learning is considered a remedy for such anxiety because the competition in cooperative learning is intergroup and this makes the students have the sense of belonging to the other members of the group which in turn raises self-confidence among the students. Moreover, the level of anxiety in interpersonal competition followed in the traditional classes becomes high because the aim of each student is to win while in intergroup competition the focus is on success (Johnson & Johnson 1994).

Motivation

One of the principles of cooperative learning is assisting the other members of the group to understand the materials and achieve the shared goals. Every student in cooperative learning method is responsible not only for his/her understanding but also for the understanding of the other members of the group. The support of the students for one another help them to get rid of some demotivating aspects such as shyness and insecure, and the level of motivation increases (Crandall 1999; Dörnyei 1997).

Another point is that in some cooperative learning techniques such as STAD, there is a reward for the winning team. This is considered as an extrinsic motivation for the students to do their best to be the top team (Crandall 1999). Moreover, intrinsic motivation becomes high in cooperative learning especially when the cooperative learning is goal-oriented or focus on problem-solving activities. Also, cooperative learning makes the atmosphere of learning enjoyable which motivates the students to participate inside the classroom and this contributes to the motivation towards learning (Crandall 1999).

Equal Participation

The main goal of cooperative learning is to make each individual strong in the objectives being studied and this cannot be achieved without the participation of all the group members. When the students have a specific responsibility and at the same time the students have to make sure that the other group members have understood the material. This creates an atmosphere of engagement because all the group members have responsibilities which require them to engage and participate. The students in cooperative learning will not be passive participants as they have to benefit one another and share their skills and knowledge with the others which creates a chance for each student to participate and learn (Faryadi, 2007).

Improving Language Skills

When the level of anxiety is low, the self-confidence and motivation become high. Also, the low level of anxiety makes the level of participation inside the classroom high which helps the students to improve their language skills. Cooperative learning depends on interaction which gives the students more opportunities to listen, talk, discuss, and express their opinion which have a positive effect on the language skills (Crandall 1999; Richards & Rodgers 2014).

Cooperative learning improves the communication and speaking skills among the students and it has a positive effect on the academic achievement of the students (Bejarano 1987; Tsay & Brady 2012). Similarly, Jacob et al. (1996) stated that cooperative learning has a great influence on the improvement of the language skills as well as acquiring academic language since the students observe the pronunciation of the other group members and their usage for the language.

Cooperative learning is an effective method in teaching reading skills and it is better than the traditional teaching methods as those who study reading using cooperative learning techniques perform better than the other students who depend on traditional methods of learning (Pan & Wu 2013; Marzban & Alinejad 2014).

Souse (2014) argued that cooperative learning is a fruitful method in teaching reading since it facilitates the process of learning as the students work together and share their understandings which strengthen all the members of the group. What supports this point of view is that the students in the group are heterogeneous which makes the low achievement students interact with the high achievement students. The shared goals, hence, will be achieved by all the students which foster the process of learning among the students (Wang 2007).

In summary, cooperative learning has many advantages that foster the process of learning by improving the learner's reading skills. Thus, cooperative learning helps the students to lower the level of anxiety inside the classroom which has a positive effect on the learner's learning process. It also helps the students gain more confidence in their skills and motivates them to spend more time in reading. Reading skills are improved when cooperative learning is utilised inside the classroom in comparison with the traditional teaching methods.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

According to (Özsoy & Yildiz 2004) as cited in Almuslimi (2016), the role of the teacher in cooperative learning includes the following:

- a) To determine the objectives of the instruction.
- b) To decide on the group size.
- c) To divide the students into different groups taking into mind the level of the students.
- d) To make a proper arrangement for the class.

- e) To plan the materials used inside the classroom in order to make the process of learning interdependence.
- f) To give each student a role in order to make the process of learning interdependence.
- g) To explain the academic work to the students.
- h) To create positive objectives to make the process of learning interdependence.
- i) To provide evaluation to the students.
- j) To help the groups work cooperatively.
- k) To explain the process of study to the students.
- l) To determine the helpful behaviours for success.
- m) To guide the students in terms of behaviour.
- n) To help the work of the groups.
- o) To gather the students to teach cooperatively.
- p) To finish the session or the lesson.
- q) To evaluate the performance of the students and the groups.

ROLE OF THE STUDENT

The role of the learner in cooperative learning according to Almuslimi (2016) can be one of the following:

- a) Facilitator: he is the responsible for keeping the students on tasks.
- b) Recorder: he is the student who writes the decision of the group and their answers.
- c) Summarizer: he is the students who responsible for summarizing the answers of the students.
- d) Reporter: he is the student who provides the ideas of the group to the other groups.
- e) Time-keeper: he is the student who is responsible for keeping the time of the tasks.
- f) Questioner: he is the student who asks questions.
- g) Praiser: he is the student who is responsible for encouraging the students by using praising words.

THEORIES ABOUT COOPERATIVE LEARNING

There are different theories which researchers can use especially as a theoretical framework or conceptual framework in their researches. This section discusses some theories that are related to cooperative learning.

Social Interdependence Theory

Social interdependence theory is the base theory of cooperative learning. The essence of social interdependence theory is that the achievement of the individual's goal is affected by the others through their actions (Deutsch, 1949; Johnson, 1970). Moreover, social interdependence theory has two strands. The first one is positive which refers to the cooperation between different individuals in order to achieve a shared goal. However, the second one is the negative which refers to the competition as the success of one individual depends on the failure of the others.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2008), the studies showed that cooperative learning outperforms individualistic and competitive learning in hundreds of studies, and resulted in a better psychological health. They added that this because of the distinctive feature of cooperative learning as it is close to theory, research and practice.

The main basic premise of social interdependence theory is interaction which leads to better outcomes for cooperative learning because the others are important for the process of learning (Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). To achieve cooperative learning, there are five principles that emerge from social interdependence theory and which cooperative learning

exist. These five principles are (1) positive interdependence, (2) face-to-face promotive interaction, (3) individual accountability and personal responsibility, (4) interpersonal and small group skills, and (5) group processing.

The first principle according to Johnson and Johnson (1980) is positive interdependence who gave a good description for this principle. They said that it means that we have to swim together or sink together. This puts each member of the group in a dual task. The first task is to make sure that the learner him/herself understands the materials properly and the second one is that the learner should make sure that the other members of the group have understood the materials as well. If the learner does not take care of the other members of the group and concentrates on him/herself only, this makes the process of cooperative learning useless. Similarly, if the learner depends on the other members to achieve the goals then there is no benefit for cooperative learning. The term positive interdependence is a label for this dual duty which each member of the group should take into consideration. Moreover, the success of the group comes as a result from the efforts of the whole group who have the duty of sharing ideas with the others to make the success attribution to the whole group. In addition, each member should have the sense that the group will not be successful if any member of the group failed to understand the materials or achieve that task allotted to the group by the teacher.

The second element according to Johnson and Johnson (1989) is face-to-face promotive interaction. Actually, it is promotive interaction but it is preferred to be face to face since it is more effective than any other means of communication. This principle is linked to the first principle as the students' interdependence on one another requires a good communication. The goal of the communication is to exchange ideas, materials or sources with the other members of the groups, to discuss a problem or its solution, to provide materials to the other members of the group, and to give feedback to the others. This kind of interaction promotes the process of learning and makes every individual committed to the other members of the group and to the mutual goal of learning.

The third principle according to Johnson and Johnson (1989) is individual accountability as each person in the group is responsible for a share and he/she has to achieve it in order to contribute to the success of the group. If the students depend on one of the members of the group to do everything, there is no benefit to be achieved by the other members. An important point discussed by Johnson and Johnson (1989) is that the group members should realize who needs assistance, encouragement and support in order to help him/her do his/her share to the success of the group. The eventual aim of cooperative learning is to make every individual stronger and be able to achieve similar tasks alone. This cannot be achieved if the individual is not responsible to the success of the group. Also, students should have individual tasks to test their achievement and whether they have developed their skills or not and the individual scores are counted for the success of the group as it is used in the STAD technique.

The fourth principle of cooperative learning is interpersonal and small group skills. In order to achieve this goal, students should 1) get to know and trust each other, 2) communicate effectively, 3) accept and support each other, and 4) resolve conflict constructively (Johnson 1991; Johnson & F. Johnson 1991). Johnson and Johnson (1986) believe that cooperative learning is important when we want the students learn more effective social skills. The productivity of cooperative depends too much on social skills as communicative skills including requesting, apologizing, and asking for support. Johnson and F. Johnson (1991) highlighted the importance of teaching these skills and stimulating the students to use them as lacking such social skills leads to unproductivity of cooperative learning. In other words, the

success of cooperative learning depends too much on how each member of the group deals with the other members of the same group.

The fifth principle of cooperative learning is group processing which refers to the process in which the learners try to reflect on their work and to what extent they are achieving the goals (Johnson & F. Johnson 1991). Discussion between the members of the group is essential in cooperative learning in order to get feedback from each other and improve their performance. The discussion should lead to decision about what to do to improve the group work or what not to do to avoid mistakes and also to improve the work of the group. Group processing can be achieved in two ways. The first one is group processing between the members of the same group and the second one is whole class group processing through which each group share their experience with the other groups.

These are the five principles that make cooperative learning successful and any group work that lacks these elements might not be considered cooperative learning. The goal of these principles is to contribute to the success of the group and to strengthen the individual at the same time.

Comprehensible Input Hypothesis

According to Krashen's input hypothesis, the process of learning should take into consideration the level of the learners and be a little above the understanding of the students and from which the students can infer meaning Hedge (2000). Krashen gives symbols to illustrate this point and he said that if the level of the student is i , the comprehensible input level should be $i+1$ in which the student can understand the input even if he would not be able to produce the language at this level because it is above his/her level.

Learners always need to understand the materials given to them by the teachers as these materials are considered the basis for the students in order to achieve their goals in the process of language learning as well as in the academic field. Greenfield (2001) stated that students need interaction, simplification and elaboration in order to improve their level and achieve the comprehension required level.

When the students use cooperative learning even when the materials are taken from a website in the Internet, they will have the chance to communicate with each other in order to elaborate or simplify the knowledge and the messages which they receive. The eventual aim of this interaction is to help the students reach to the level of the required comprehension.

Behaviourism

Behaviourism theory started by Piaget in the field of psychology, and after that it is used in the field of education especially by B. F. Skinner. Behaviourism theory is based on three steps which are stimuli, response and reinforcement SRR. First there should be stimuli to the students in order to get responses from them and then reinforcement is provided. There is a series of stimuli and responses which are used to help the students understand and learn (Brown 2007). Roblyer et al. (1997) as cited in Mohaida (2006) argued that the teacher can start with lower level skills and then move to the high level skills gradually. The teacher can list all the skills needed and then start with the low level skills and move step by step to the high level skills.

The process of reading has changed with the passage of time as it has been "changed drastically from a means of communication with divinity and a means for moral development, to reading as behavioural skills, to reading as deep linguistic processing" (Luke 1995: 96). Thus, reading

nowadays is not used for knowledge and moral purposes only because it has become a part and parcel of the educational field especially in first, second and foreign language acquisition which are classified under the field of linguistics.

Giving drills and using cooperative strategies such as STAD to the students involves the students in a together discussion in order to provide the right response or answer which might maximize the benefit to the students since learners can get benefit from each other (Cooper 1995).

Cognitivism

Cognitivism is related to the mental process during the process of learning. The first scholar who supported this theory is (Piaget 1971). His view is that the learner receives information and retains them through learning which depends too much on the learner him/herself according to the needs of the learners. The needs of the learners, therefore, are the basis of acquiring and retaining knowledge. According to Piaget, the stages of learning are not separate from each other as the learners link the knowledge which they receive in different times. There is a build-up of knowledge which accumulates through the different stages of learning.

The cognitive theory focuses on the long-term memory and the short-term memory because the brain classifies knowledge and chooses what to store in the short-term memory and what to store in the long-term memory according to the needs of the learners. Cognitive theory considers learning as complex processing techniques of the skills which the learners need to overcome the limitations of the mind that might hinder the performance of the students. Understanding the cognitive process of learning will be of great asset to the educators to help learners improve their cognitive abilities and transfer knowledge from short-term memory to a complete and full knowledge and this is what the learners need in order to improve their skills (Jordan et al. 2008). They added that cognitive theory is not limited to memory only as there are many processes that happen in the black box in the mind and these processes are the main concern of cognitivism such as perception, attention, sensation, and encoding.

Cognitive view of learning is close to cooperative learning as cooperative learning gives a chance to the learners to revise and build up their knowledge. (Sharan, 1992; Davidson et al., 1992) as cited in (Cooper, 1995) stated that cooperative learning activities which permit the students to build up their discipline knowledge falls into the tenets of cognitivism because it helps the students to build knowledge which is the basis of both cognitivism and cooperative learning.

Constructivism

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) established constructivism theory which refers to the process of building up knowledge which can be achieved individually or by working together (Hein 1991). Hein added that learning is achieved through constructing meaning and meaning cannot be passed from one person to another as it is built upon and linked with the previous knowledge of the person through active interaction and involvement with others and with the environment (Bruner 1973). Socio-constructivism is given by Vygotsky, Piaget's student, who asserts the role of culture and collaborative learning through interaction with the other members of the society in order to generate the individual's own knowledge. Vygotsky's constructivism, known as socio-constructivism, highlights the role of the culture and the social context in the process of learning to form the body of knowledge of each person (Brown 2007).

One of the ways of effective learning is constructivism, and cooperative learning is a method of constructing meaning. Dividing the students into groups will help the students to interact with

each other and this interaction will be of great asset to the students to build a strong knowledge construction. Moreover, active learning is a basic element in language learning and using cooperative will give the students a chance to manipulate the materials and exchange experiences to learn through building meaningful concepts. Cooperative learning, therefore, is a method to help the students interact with each other in order to construct their knowledge.

Zone of Proximal Development

The term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was first introduced by Lev Vygotsky in the 1930s. The notion of ZPD refers to the gap between the actual level of the learner and the level which the learner can reach with the assistance of the others who can be peers or teachers. In ZPD there are lower end and upper end where lower end refers to the development of the learner when s/he depends on him/herself only and upper end refers to the potential development of the learner which can be achieved with the help of the teachers or peers is bounded with the upper level (Rezaee & Azizi 2012).

According to Doolittle (1995), Vygotsky (1978:86) defined ZPD as the difference between the actual development when the learner depends on him/herself and the potential development which happen due to the guidance of adults or “collaboration with more knowledgeable others” who can be peers or teachers. This supports the significance of cooperative learning which depends too much on the interaction between the learners as they provide each other with ideas and knowledge. Cooperative learning gives the students a chance to discover their mistakes and exceed the level of natural learning to the potential level of learning through interaction which can be achieved through using computer assisted cooperative learning. Doolittle (1995) stated that Vygotsky’s ideas about ZPD provide a strong support for the use of the strategies of cooperative learning.

CONCLUSION

Cooperative learning is a method of teaching that makes the process of language learning student-centered rather than teacher-centered. It helps the students to socialize with each other in order to gain experience from the other students. It goes a long with activity theory in the sense that the students become active inside the classroom. This helps the students to improve their language, get high motivation, lower the level of anxiety, and equally participate inside the classroom. Cooperative learning goes a long with a wide range of theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and comprehensible input. The main aim of cooperative learning is to achieve a specific goal by each group inside the classroom and make every individual strong in the skill or the lesson which they study.

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