

## **THE USE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.**

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The past decade has witnessed an immense interest among teachers of foreign languages in strategies that develop students' communicative skills. Although new approaches are still viewed with criticism and hesitation, there is no doubt that they have proven to deserve attention. Language teachers understand that the teacher-centered method which includes elements of Audio-Lingual and Grammar-translation Methods is no longer so effective as it seemed to be. Nowadays the process of language learning is not simply memorizing of facts and rules done to understand the morphology and syntax of the foreign language. The main aim of any teacher today is to teach his students to speak a foreign language. To achieve this aim, teachers use so called "active learning" methods, which usually include various listening comprehension exercises which help students to conceive what they hear, writing tasks in which students respond to the material they study, group drills when students practice the lexical and grammar material they have learnt in so called "real life" situations.

One of the forms of active learning is Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning refers to a systematic instructional method in which students work together in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals.[1, c.81] One of the most significant features of this method is the change of teachers' and students' roles in classroom. The process of teaching and learning is no longer seen as the sole responsibility of the teacher but is shared by groups of students. They also set goals and assess the results of their academic progress together. Unlike individual learning, which can be competitive in nature, students learning cooperatively capitalize on one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc.). [2] Everyone

succeeds when the group succeeds. Ross and Smyth (1995) describe successful cooperative learning tasks as intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended, and involve higher order thinking tasks.

Cooperative language learning has gained wide acceptance in language learning, mostly due to its contributions to improving productivity, giving more possibilities for communication and reduction of learner's stress. Scholars distinguish the following benefits of using it:

1. Creation of effective climate, which means that students work in the atmosphere where they are not feared or restricted. Moreover, another factor of favorable climate is the increase of students' motivation, which leads to greater language proficiency.
2. Fostering learner's responsibility, when responsibility for action and progress of the members of the group is equal. Positive role and goal interdependence help students become more autonomous and self-controlled and less dependent upon outside authority, and over time, they will gradually move from interdependence to independence. [1, c. 82]
3. Increasing a variety of language functions, i.e. creation of real-life social settings where students find themselves involved in requesting, clarifying, making suggestions, encouraging, disagreeing, exchanging conversation during group work [1, c. 83]

In comparison with traditional methods of teaching English as a second language, cooperative learning has a tendency to stimulate achievements and productivity, gives more opportunities for "real" communication. It is clear that the task of foreign language teacher is not only to teach students some grammatical rules and vocabularies, but also how to use the knowledge in practice to express thoughts. Cooperative language learning focuses on the communicative and effective factors in language learning. It also helps students learn not only how to evaluate information but to answer the question *why* they need to evaluate their sources and provides students with language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.

### **Literature:**

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