

Enhancing oral communication skills in virtual classrooms through cooperative learning

L. Raguram✉

Department of ELT, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

✉ luxika@univ.jfn.ac.lk; +94776621837

Cooperative learning, although not a modern approach, provides opportunities for the ESL learners to practise the language that enables them to become more confident in using and producing English when working in groups. Focusing on promoting the oral communication skills of the ESL learners, this study attempts to shed light on the importance of employing cooperative learning strategy in virtual classrooms. The present study was carried out with fifty (50) first year undergraduates from the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna for one semester. Pre-test, post-test, classroom observation, learners' feedback report and informal discussions were used as data collecting instruments. The samples were divided into control and experimental groups and taught by regular method and through cooperative learning method respectively for one semester via virtual platforms. Mixed methodology was adopted to analyse the data. At the end of the research, it came to light that engagement and performance of the experimental group drastically improved and they remarkably developed their communication skills after the implementation of cooperative learning than the control group members. In the post-test marks also, the experimental group scored higher than the control group. Thus, the method found to be constructive to our context and it is recommended that cooperative learning can be adopted by ELT practitioners to enhance the oral communication skills of the tertiary level learners.

Keywords: Communication; Cooperative learning; ESL classroom; Speaking skill; Tertiary level