



Enhancing Tertiary-Level Students' Speaking Skills: A Survey on the Role of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) in Language Acquisition

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DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.13.1.143](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.13.1.143)



Article info

Article Received: 24/01/2025
Article Accepted: 10/03/2025
Published online: 17/03/2025

Abstract

The primary objective of teaching and learning English as a second language context is to enhance learners' communicative competence in English; especially in the present digital era, it is essential to speak English with good fluency. To accomplish the aforementioned statement, many language teaching pedagogies and curricula have been designed and implemented in the Indian context for several decades. As one of the most active approaches in English language teaching, Cooperative Language Learning was popularised by academic experts, namely John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Kagan, and Roger Johnson. It gained momentum in the 1970s in the United States as a highly influential approach to building up learners' linguistic, social, and interpersonal skills. At this juncture, the need for nurturing speaking skills in English is realized as something essential for tertiary-level students to be confident and flourish in their careers. This proposed article aims to identify the challenges encountered by the tertiary level students in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India, and also to record the necessary measures to be taken to enhance their speaking skills in English through Cooperative Language Learning techniques.

Keywords: Cooperative Language Learning, tertiary level students, pedagogies, communication skills.

I. Introduction

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) made a notable transformation in the process of teaching and learning as one of the viable approaches of teaching English in the middle of the twentieth century. It was promoted by behaviourists, philosophers, and educators, namely, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, Spencer Kagan and so on.

The Cooperative language Learning firmly endorses Helen Keller's observation on team learning, i.e., "Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do much." It is that cooperative mindset should be cultivated among the student community as they learn English as a second or foreign language in countries where English is not spoken as a mother tongue. Notably, cooperative learning environment promotes friendship and cooperation in a heterogeneous classroom. The Cooperative Language Learning classroom incorporates the following advantages as illustrated by Johnson and Johnson, and Holubec (1994):

- i. Positive interdependence
- ii. Individual and group accountability
- iii. Small Group and Interpersonal Skills
- iv. Promotive Face-to-Face Interaction
- v. Group Processing

II. The Benefits of Cooperative Language Learning

Cooperative Language Learning is highly influential and promising when it is implemented in a classroom by the teacher of English in general, particularly in the ESL (English as a Second Language) scenario. When the students are imparted English through the Cooperative Learning techniques, they can harvest the following benefits as P. K. Roy (2024) claims:

- i. Enhanced understanding and critical thinking
- ii. Increased enjoyment and attendance
- iii. Preparation for professional life
- iv. Assessment preparedness

III. Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges that affect speaking skills of the tertiary-level students.
2. To analyze the correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges in developing listening skills of the tertiary-level students.
3. To investigate the impact of the medium of school education on mastering communication skills in English.
4. To explore the association between family background and mastering communication skills in English.

IV. Research Questions

1. How does the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) impact the challenges faced in developing speaking skills of the tertiary-level students?
2. What is the relationship between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges in acquiring listening skills of the tertiary-level students?
3. To what extent does the medium of school education influence the mastery of communication skills in English?
4. How does family background contribute to the mastery of communication skills in English?

V. Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges that impact speaking skills of the tertiary-level students.

H2: There is a significant positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges of listening skills of the tertiary-level students.

H3: There is a significant effect of the medium of school education on mastering of communication skills in English.

H4: There is an association between family background and mastering of communication skills in English.

VI. Methodology

Methodology of research plays a vital role in constructing the entire research process, which comprises the pilot study, sampling, data collection, and data interpretations. A total of 650 tertiary level students, i.e, undergraduate students, in Nadar Mahajana Sangam S. Vellaichamy Nadar College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India were selected as the population of the proposed research. The investigators employed Clustered Sampling Technique in order to collect data from the subjects.

VII. Pilot Study

Pilot study helps a researcher carry out the research efficiently. The investigators carried out pilot study in Nadar Mahajana Sangam S.Vellaichamy Nadar College, Madurai in December 2024. The pilot study was done based on a survey which was conducted using a structured research questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on a five-point Likert scale, i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. The researchers collected data from the undergraduate students of various disciplines from both arts and science streams. The sample size chosen for the study was 347.

VIII. Techniques Used for Data Analysis

On the basis of research objectives and hypotheses of the present research the following research tools have been applied in this study in order to validate accuracy of the data collected and to arrive at genuine results. The tools applied for the analysis of data are as follows: ANOVA, Regression, and SPSS.

IX. Results

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges that impact speaking skills of the tertiary-level students.

Table 1

Regression Statistics					
Statistic	Value				
Multiple R	0.64396				
R Square	0.41469				
Adjusted R Square	0.41302				
Standard Error	2.45299				
Observations	347				
ANOVA					
Source	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1492.0795	1492.079	247.9714	0.00016
Residual	348	2106.0001	6.0171		
Total	347	3598.0795			

Regression Coefficients

Variable	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	7.8624	0.82558	9.52347	(Missing)	6.23868	9.48613
X Variable 1	0.28445	0.01806	15.74711	0.00016	0.24892	0.31997

Table 1 indicates that p-value is 0.0001 which is statistically significant. As a result, it is learnt that there is a high positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges that impact speaking skills of the tertiary-level students. Hence, the hypothesis, "There is a significant positive correlation between the use of

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges that impact speaking skills of the tertiary-level students" is accepted.

H2: There is a significant positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges of listening skills of the tertiary-level students.

Table 2

Regression Statistics	
Statistic	Value
Multiple R	0.20952
R Square	0.0439
Adjusted R Square	0.04114
Standard Error	4.57582
Observations	347

ANOVA

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	332.6374	332.6374	15.88668	0.000052
Residual	346	7244.5925	20.9381		
Total	347	7577.2299			

Regression Coefficients

Variable	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	35.10804	2.08247	16.85887	5.64E-47	31.01215	39.20393
X Variable 1	0.18057	0.0453	3.98581	0.000052	0.09147	0.26968

Table 2 displays that the p-value is .0001 which is statistically significant. It is inferred that there is a significant positive correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges of listening skills of the tertiary-level students. Hence, the hypothesis, "There is a significant positive

correlation between the use of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) and the challenges of listening skills of the tertiary-level students" is accepted.

H3: There is a significant effect on the medium of school education and mastering of communication skills in English.

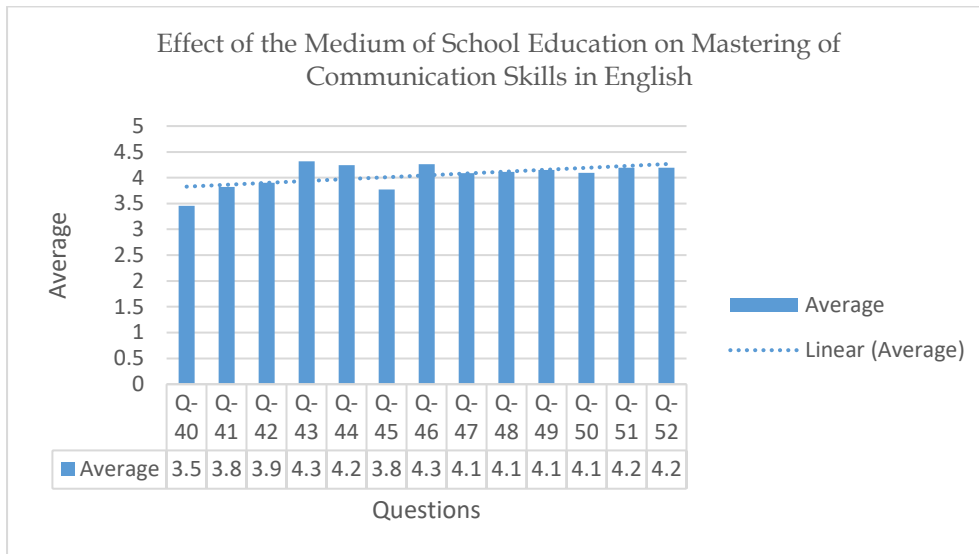
Table 3: ANOVA – Single Factor

Summary Statistics				
School Education and Its Impact on Mastering Communication Skills in English	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Q-40	347	1198	3.45245	1.48545
Q-41	347	1325	3.81844	0.91781
Q-42	347	1354	3.90202	1.158
Q-43	347	1498	4.317	0.55818
Q-44	347	1472	4.24208	0.91811
Q-45	347	1308	3.76945	1.26461
Q-46	347	1478	4.25937	0.75334
Q-47	347	1419	4.08934	0.72321
Q-48	347	1427	4.11239	0.71277
Q-49	347	1439	4.14697	0.79048
Q-50	347	1420	4.09222	0.78338
Q-51	347	1455	4.19308	0.9366
Q-52	347	1455	4.19308	0.6418

ANOVA Results						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	250.04	12	20.84	23.26	0.04242	1.75
Within Groups	4028.73	4498	0.9			
Total	4278.77	4510				

From Table 3 it is inferred that the calculated p-value 0.04 is statistically significant by indicating that there is high positive effect of the medium of school education on mastering of communication skills in English.

Hence, the hypothesis, “**There is a significant effect of the medium of school education on mastering of communication skills in English**” is accepted.



4. There is an association between family background and mastering of communication skills in English.

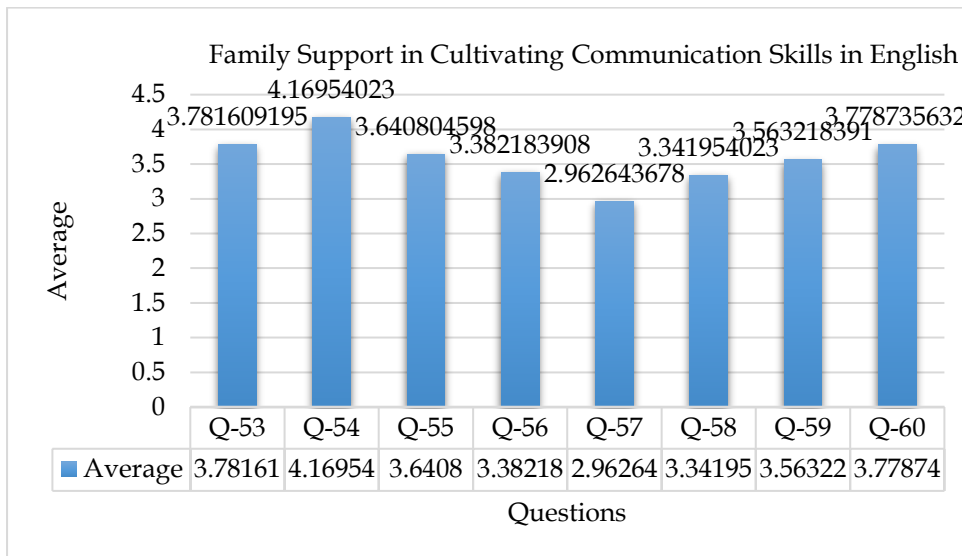


Chart 1

From Chart 1 it is recorded that the p-value is 0.0277 which is statistically significant by highlighting that there is a strong association between family background and mastering of communication skills in English. Hence, the

hypothesis, “There is an association between family background and mastering of communication skills in English” is accepted.

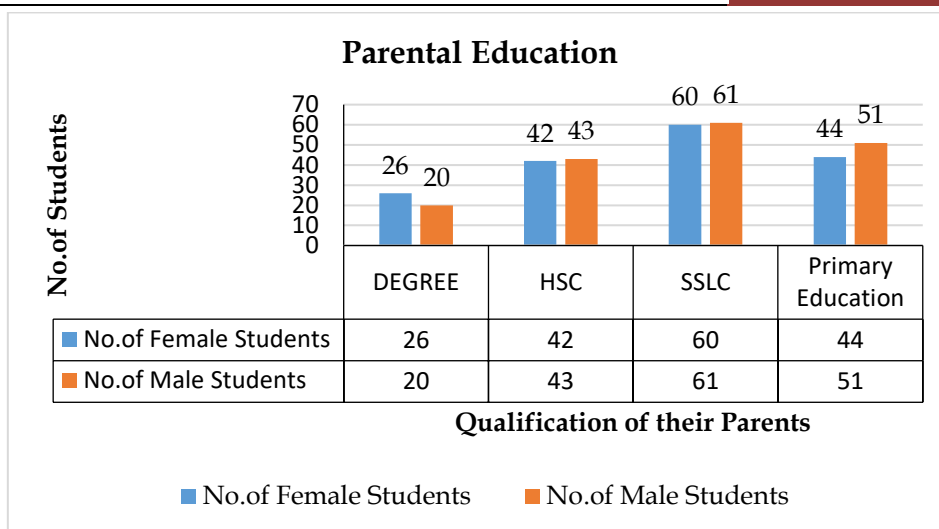


Chart 2

Chart 2 indicates that most of the parents of the undergraduate students completed their education up to Secondary School Leaving Certificate (Standard X). On the other hand, only less number of parents got graduate level education.

X. Findings

The findings of the study are briefed below:

1. Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) was recorded to be helpful in enhancing speaking skills of the tertiary-level students by minimising their barriers in speaking.
2. With the application of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) tertiary-level students' barriers in listening were minimised.
3. The medium of school education plays a vital role in mastering of communication skills in English.
4. Family background of the students plays an influential role in mastering of communication skills in English.

XI. Conclusion

Johnson and Johnson (1989) observe that when students learn subjects as a team all of them in the team reap more benefits. One can do better things as a team rather than doing

tasks individually. The Cooperative Language Learning has been proved to be an effective method of teaching English. The results derived from the study emphasise that innovative pedagogies and cooperative learning scenario encourages the students of all categories to excel in their academics. Significantly, Cooperative Language Learning techniques are promising in enhancing students' speaking skills, decision making, leadership, and conflict resolution (Johnson,2001). At this juncture, application of Cooperative Language Learning techniques is quite essential to overcome their linguistic barriers.

XII. Acknowledgement

1. Hearty gratitude to the Management of Nadar Mahajana Sangam S. Vellaichamy Nadar College (Autonomous), Nagamalai, Madurai - 625019 for having approved Seed Money Project. F.No: NMSSVNC/R&D Cell_Seed Money Project/2024-25/14

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Appendix

Questionnaire

I. School Education and its Impact on Mastering of Communication Skills in English

S.No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The students who study in English medium are good at communication skills in English.					
41.	Private schools provide better infrastructure to learn English.					
42.	Government schools should provide good infrastructure to learn English.					
43.	The English medium of education should be promoted in all government and govt.-aided schools.					
44.	The government should take additional care to enhance students' English communication skills in the govt. schools in rural areas.					
45.	The schools which are capable of enhancing students' fluency in English are considered highly reputed by the society.					
46.	Learning of good English should be started from primary education itself.					
47.	Teaching methods, infrastructure, and learning environment play important role in building one's English communication skills.					
48.	Teaching methods, infrastructure, and learning environment differ from school to school.					
49.	The government should take serious efforts to give special coaching and opportunities to students in govt. schools to improve their English irrespective of the locality.					

50.	Matriculation, CBSE, and ICSE schools provide students with good exposure to master English.					
51.	The standard of curriculum in English should be common in all types of board of education, i.e., State Board, CBSE, and ICSE.					
52.	Literary competitions in English such as elocution, storytelling, debate, essay writing, news reading etc. should be conducted at all govt. and govt.-aided schools to enhance students' English.					