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**THE EFFECTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ON SECOND  
YEAR LMD STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH  
TENSES**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Magister  
degree in Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching option "Language Teaching  
and Methodology"**

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## *Dedication*

### *I dedicate this work to:*

- ❖ The memory of my father.
- ❖ The memory of my sister, Radja.
- ❖ My mother for her unconditioned love and affection.
- ❖ My brother, my sisters and my nephew Ramy for their encouragement.
- ❖ My fiancé for his endless love, patience and support.
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## **Abstract**

The present dissertation aims at investigating the effects of cooperative learning, used as a teaching technique, on second year LMD students' performance while using English tenses.

To achieve this aim, an experimental design was opted for. A pre-test and post-test were administered to 64 students who were randomly assigned to one Experimental Group and one Control Group. After completing the pre-test, the Experimental Group received instruction according to cooperative learning principles, and the Control Group was taught the same content but following a different method where students had to work individually all the time. After six weeks of instruction, a post-test was given to both groups and the findings were compared and analysed.

The results of the tests showed that the subjects in the Experimental Group performed significantly better than those in the Control Group. They also reveal that cooperative learning is more effective and that it influences positively students' performance in tense use. Thus, the research hypothesis was confirmed.

Based upon the conclusions drawn from the results, some guidelines were proposed, at the end of the dissertation, for grammar teachers to help their students understand better and use correctly the complex temporal system of the English language through cooperation among students. Some pedagogical suggestions for future research were also recommended.

## List of Abbreviations and Symbols

**CIRC:** Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition

**CL:** Cooperative Learning

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FC:** Future Continuous

**FPerf.C:** Future Perfect Continuous

**FPerf.S:** Future Perfect Simple

**FS:** Future Simple

**GI:** Group Investigation

**LMD:** Licence-Master-Doctorate

**MD** = Mean Difference ( $X_e - X_c = MD$ )

**PC:** Past Continuous

**PPerf.C:** Past Perfect Continuous

**PPerf.S:** Past Perfect Simple

**Pr.C:** Present Continuous

**Pr.Perf.C:** Present Perfect Continuous

**Pr.Perf.S:** Present Perfect Simple

**Pr.S:** Present Simple

**PS:** Past Simple

**STAD:** Students-Teams-Achievement Divisions

**TBLT:** Task-Based Language Teaching

**TGT:** Teams-Games-Tournaments

**V:** Verb

**X<sub>c</sub>** = Control Group's Mean

**X<sub>e</sub>** = Experimental Group's Mean

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# **Introduction**

- 1. Statement of the Problem**
- 2. Aim of the Study**
- 3. Research Question/Hypothesis**
- 4. Means of Research**
- 5. Structure of the Dissertation**

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

In recent history, grammar teaching has consisted in giving learners opportunities to produce specific grammatical structures through interaction. Such an approach, the implicit grammar teaching, may prove ineffective for it creates fluent but inaccurate communicators. A number of studies in foreign/second language acquisition point out that the traditional approach to grammar teaching – explicit teaching – is more fruitful. However, one may notice that this cannot be sufficient on its own, too; i.e., adopting implicit teaching or explicit teaching of grammar, each separately, will not satisfy both teachers and learners' needs and goals.

Cooperative learning could be a more appropriate teaching technique. According to many theorists, language forms can be acquired best by social interaction and negotiation of meaning. Evidence from several studies concludes that cooperative learning decreases tension in the classroom, helps shy students to display their skills and abilities, encourages group members to come prepared to the class, maintains a friendly relationship between students so that they can work in a relaxed enjoyable atmosphere, and therefore promotes their academic achievement. Such a learner-centred approach offers students the chance to use the language through small group interaction and discussion, ameliorate their performance while speaking and writing, and, hence, be able to acquire the foreign language system.

All events in the world are related to time; they can take place while the speaker is producing the utterance, prior or posterior to it. Thus, s/he needs a number of combinations of verb forms to express his/her thoughts and ideas. This is what linguists refer to as tenses. The temporal system of English represents a problematic area to Algerian learners of English. On the whole, learners do not know how to form a given verb form to indicate the tense intended to be referred to and do not know when to use it to express their ideas. This

is mainly due to the complex nature of the tense system, the different combinations that one may choose to denote a particular reference to time, and the misunderstanding of the differences of meaning of each tense form.

Basing myself on my own experience as a student and then as a teacher of grammar in the Department of Languages (English), Mentouri University of Constantine; and through discussions with colleagues teaching the same or other modules and with Second Year students, it was discovered that learners seem to have problems when using tenses even in content-based modules like Civilization and Literature. This difficulty appears to be related to their inability to transfer their grammatical knowledge to those areas or because they are not exposed to enough instruction and lack sufficient practice of the rules presented to them.

## **2. Aim of the Study**

As teachers, we try to improve teaching methods to obtain satisfactory learning results, especially in the field of grammar, since it is believed that acquiring the grammar of a given language contributes to the mastery of that language. In addition, we want our learners to be as proficient and accurate as possible when expressing themselves, either in writing or in speaking, using the different tenses without difficulties. Moreover, we aim at facilitating the acquisition of the English temporal system and reducing as much as possible learners' errors when using a given tense in a given situation.

The purpose of the present experimental study is to examine the effects of cooperative learning instruction on the students' performance in English tenses. It investigates whether students' engagement in interactive activities would have a positive impact on their tense use performance and, thus, would improve their academic achievement.

### **3. Research Question/Hypothesis**

In attempting to find out whether or not cooperative learning influences positively the learners' performance while using English tenses, it is necessary to answer this question:

- Does cooperative learning have a positive impact on Algerian students' performance in English tense use?

Thus, our hypothesis can be formulated as follows; if we implement cooperative learning instruction in grammar classes while teaching English tenses, learners' performance is likely to improve. In other words, if, in a grammar course, learners are taught English tenses by implementing principles of cooperative learning and giving them enough opportunities to interact with one another, they are likely to understand, use and apply English tenses accurately.

### **4. Means of Research**

In order to find out the effects of cooperative learning techniques on learners' performance while using English tenses and to confirm or disconfirm our hypothesis, we followed an experimental path in our current study in which we have relied on three means of research:

1- The pre-test: A pre-test composed of a text about tenses has been given to two groups; one Control Group and one Experimental Group; to determine how proficient students are in using tenses before any instruction.

2- The instruction: We have exposed the Experimental Group to the new teaching technique (cooperative learning) where they have been presented with three lessons, but have been given the opportunity to work only in pairs to facilitate learning and to give them the chance to apply what they have learnt while interacting with each other and helping one another. On the other hand, the Control Group has been taught the same

lessons, but the students have not been allowed to cooperate; the lesson was presented and the learners had to work individually.

3- The post-test: At the end, after one month and a half of instruction (6 weeks), both groups were given the same test to check whether cooperative learning brings about some change in the learners' performance in English tenses.

The analysis of the collected data of the pre-test and post-test aims at determining whether or not cooperative learning affects positively the learners' performance.

## **5. Structure of the Dissertation**

This research work is presented in five chapters. The first three ones represent the literature survey. Chapter one reviews the meaning and the place of grammar in the most influential language teaching methods and approaches together with an explanation of how grammar could be taught (implicitly/explicitly).

Chapter two covers the meaning of cooperative learning as well as its elements and different models that are used during the implementation phase. The chapter also discusses the roles of both the teacher and the learner in cooperative learning classes, and ends with a list of advantages and disadvantages of this teaching pedagogy.

Chapter three deals with tense/aspect differentiation with focus on the different forms and uses of the English tenses. It closes with a section explaining the way to teach tenses using cooperative learning.

Chapter four is the practical part of the research. It explains the methodology followed during the experimentation. It is also concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the findings based on the learners' pre-test and post-test administered to two groups.

The dissertation ends with some suggestions for teachers and recommendations about how to make learners improve their performance while using English tenses effectively, through cooperation.

# **Chapter One**

## **Teaching Grammar**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Definition**

#### **1.2 Grammar in the Most Influential Language Teaching**

##### **Methods/Approaches**

##### **1.2.1 The Grammar Translation Method**

##### **1.2.2 The Direct Method**

##### **1.2.3 The Audio-lingual Method**

##### **1.2.4 The Natural Approach**

##### **1.2.5 Communicative Language Teaching**

##### **1.2.6 Task-Based Language Learning/Teaching**

#### **1.3 Approaches to Grammar Instruction**

##### **1.3.1 Explicit Grammar Instruction**

##### **1.3.2 Implicit Grammar Instruction**

### **Conclusion**

# Chapter One

## Teaching Grammar

### Introduction

It is believed that mastering a foreign language results from mastering its four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) together with vocabulary and grammar. The latter seems to be of a paramount importance in terms of the role it plays in both teaching and learning, if it is used as a means and a facilitator in both processes rather than as an aim in itself.

For ages, grammar has attracted the attention of language researchers and has puzzled both foreign language teachers and learners due to its complex nature and great importance. It is considered as the key to achieve proficiency, and, hence, necessary in language classes. Grammar as a separate component of the English language has been the main concern of researchers looking for the most suitable foreign language teaching/learning method that could work best for speakers of other languages.

### 1.1 Definition

Grammar plays a central role in foreign language teaching, and because of its complexity, it is regarded as one of the most difficult and complicated aspect to teach effectively. For that reason, we, in this section, try to explain the different, yet general, meanings that were attributed to the word grammar.

Grammar can be simply defined as "a set of discrete formal rules" (Lock, 1996: 269) or "[t]he body of rules which underlie a language" (Cross, 1999: 26); i.e., it is a set of rules that help organise a given language in a way which enables us to analyse and describe our own use of the language as well as enables us to understand and comprehend other people's use. For that reason, Young (2003: 11) says that grammar is

An attempt to describe the system of communication which every normal member of the community 'possesses' and which is shared by the community at large. It has both a psychological existence within the individual and a social existence within the community.

Said another way, grammar is what every person has in his/her mind (the knowledge about language) and which dictates how to form words and combine them to come up with meaningful sentences; those sentences obey the social rules which every member of the society shares and agrees on (i.e., finds it acceptable and appropriate). Pachler (1999: 94), on his part, considers that "without grammar, language would be chaotic". This means that it is a linguistic tool which helps us to form words and order them for the sake of producing accurate sentences. Accordingly, Close (1982: 13; quoted in Dickins and Woods, 1988: 627) supports this definition, maintaining that "English grammar is chiefly a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences". In addition to that, Larsen-Freeman (1997; cited in Hinkel and Fotos, 2002: 118) uses the word to refer to "a flexible, incredibly rich, system that enables proficient speakers to express meaning in a way appropriate to the context, to how they wish to present themselves, and to the particular perspective they wish to contribute".

Grammar, as it is commonly known, involves morphology and syntax. That is, it concerns the changes that occur in the form of the word (plural, verb tense, suffixes, etc.) as well as the order and possible combinations of words to make sentences (Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1989; Thornbury, 1999). In this sense, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define grammar as the way words and phrases are arranged to produce sentences, taking into account the meanings they convey and the functions they play in the language. They go on explaining that "[i]t may or may not include the description of the sounds of a

language"(2002: 230-1). However, Larsen-Freeman (1997) argues that syntax and morphology are complemented by phonetics, phonology, semantics and pragmatics in order to describe grammar. In this respect, Brown (2001: 362) says that "**Grammar** is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence", specifying that it operates at the sentence level. However, he asserts that grammar is a multidimensional component because it embodies form, meaning and use. He reports that Larsen-Freeman (1991) argues that grammar is related to a great extent to semantics and pragmatics. For that, Brown (2001: 362) holds that: "Grammar gives us the form or the structure of language, but those forms are literally meaningless without a second dimension, that of **semantics** (meaning), and a third dimension, **pragmatics**". Furthermore, Pachler (1999: 94) explains that grammar is not a static system but rather a dynamic and changing one since language itself changes; it allows us to generate an infinite number of sentences from a limited set of resources, exchange information with interlocutors and "behave socio-culturally appropriately in a variety of different situations".

The term grammar has also been defined in accordance to what was believed in by each linguistic school (theory), giving birth to what has become known as Traditional Grammar, Structural Grammar, Transformational Generative Grammar, and Functional Grammar.

In Traditional Grammar, grammar is considered as being "a collection of normative rules, definitions and explanations"(Moumene, 2004: 52). Grammarians were greatly influenced by the grammars of Latin and Greek, as stated by Richards and Schmidt (2002); therefore, they established eight parts of speech according to their meanings and functions. Moreover, traditional grammarians follow a prescriptive approach, i.e., they tend to prescribe the rules of how people ought to speak or write the foreign language (Al-Mutawa

and Kailani, 1989). However, the definition of speech parts, that were provided, was not of great usefulness to the foreign language learner.

Structural Grammar sees grammar as descriptive in nature as Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989: 70) state:

This type of grammar is descriptive. It postulates that language has a set of grammatical patterns in which words are arranged to convey meaning which is determined by word form, function words, word order and intonation patterns such as stress, pitch and juncture.

In other words, structural grammarians regard grammar as a set of structures and patterns that could be broken down into constituent parts which in their turn are arranged to form sentences that convey meaning. They also classify the parts of speech on the basis of form and function, which was not possible all the time.

Transformational Generative Grammar assumes that grammar is a system of rules enabling speakers of a given language to generate and understand an infinite number of meaningful, new sentences by means of transformations (Lyons, 1984; Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1989; Hudson, 1998; Moumene, 2004). That is, speakers have a device (rules) which enables them to create and perceive new grammatical sentences of the language that have never been heard of before.

Functional Grammar sees grammar as a social communicative system made up of functions and notions that need to be used first in order to be learnt (Downing and Locke, 2006). This type of grammar emphasises the meanings that a given grammatical form underlies when a particular communicative act is intended to be carried out and describes the ways in which meanings and functions are realised in language (Richards and Schmidt, 2002).

Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989: 69) summarise all this saying:

According to the traditionalists it is a collection of rules and principles; while to the structuralists, it is the study of how sentences are arranged and formed. The transformationalists consider it as the rules that generate infinite sentences and allow speakers to understand utterances they have never heard of; whereas to some exponents of the communicative approach, it is the functions and notions of language.

## **1.2 Grammar in the Most Influential Language Teaching Methods/Approaches**

Throughout history, language teaching methods/approaches have always been subject to continuous changing because of the multiple changes in the nature of language teaching/learning theories as well as in the learners' needs. They, as Richards and Rodgers (1986) explain, have been influenced by some linguistic theories, and, thus, grammar has been influenced, too. Hence, each linguistic theory has its own beliefs and considers language in general and grammar in particular from different perspectives. As a result, approaches and methods to language teaching regard the teaching of grammar from different viewpoints.

### **1.2.1 The Grammar-Translation Method**

The Grammar Translation Method, also known as "The Traditional Method", or "The Classical Method" or "The Indirect Method", is the most ancient method that appeared in the field of foreign language teaching. This teaching pedagogy, as Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989) hold, was basically used to teach Latin and Greek in the past, but later on, it began to be applied to teach modern languages such as French and English, and as Brown mentions (2004: 15), it was "the chief means for teaching foreign languages".

As its name suggests, this method relies mainly on teaching grammar and practising translation as the sole teaching and learning activities (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). In this method, mastering reading and writing through mastering grammar was the main concern, for the belief at that time was that knowing about the language or knowing the grammar of a language leads consequently to knowing the language and being able to use it (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Hence, students were encouraged to develop grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary and translation skills. In this sense, Thornbury (1999) says that language classes adopted grammar syllabi where grammar was presented explicitly and thoroughly. Moreover, Moumene (2004: 57) reports that

As far as the teaching of grammar is concerned, the Grammar-Translation Approach looks at the target language as a system of morpho-syntactic rules to be inculcated into the learners' heads and to be compared with the first language grammatical system. It generally follows an explicit deductive method based upon a traditional prescriptive view of language.

That is, in a grammar translation typical lesson, the teacher selects a particular grammatical structure, presents it and explains thoroughly the rule of its use, usually in the students' mother tongue, and then gives illustrations. After that, the grammar rule is practised and memorised along with a list of vocabulary, and, finally, a written text is assigned in order to be translated in and from the target language. As Richards and Rodgers (1986: 3) note: "Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language."

However, because accuracy and written language were strongly stressed, this led to the rejection of such a method.

### **1.2.2 The Direct Method**

Because of the failure of the Grammar-Translation Method to create communicative competence in learners of a foreign language, new assumptions began to spread. The belief was that "learning a foreign language is very much like learning one's mother tongue"(Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1989: 16). That is, students learn a foreign language in a natural way, focusing on the speaking skill and oral proficiency to fulfil communicative tasks. That was the basis of the Direct Method which appeared in the late nineteenth century and which can be defined as:

*A method consisting of bombarding the student with samples of the target language, spoken by a native speaker, and encouraging him to imitate, respond and gradually participate as a speaker. It made the assumption that older students should learn in the same way as a child learns his mother tongue (Hubbard et al., 1883: 327; in Moumene, 2004: 60).*

Richards and Schmidt (2002) assert that meanings should be communicated directly by associating speech forms with demonstrations, actions, objects, gestures, and situations. So, the basic premise of the direct method is to enable students to communicate in the target language by learning how to think in that language, experiencing it, and being exposed to a great deal of it, without resorting to the use of the native language.

As far as grammar teaching is concerned, an implicit inductive model is followed. According to Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989: 16), "Grammatical rules are not taught. They are acquired unconsciously through practical use (i.e., intensive listening and imitation). That is to say rule generalization comes after experience." In other words, grammar is not

completely neglected, but is not presented directly. It is explained through situations and concrete demonstrations.

This teaching pedagogy has also failed to prepare learners for real world communication; it is considered as time-consuming and requires highly competent teachers who are native-like speakers.

### **1.2.3 The Audio-lingual Method**

The Audio-lingual Method, also called the Aural-Oral Method draws its origins from behaviourist psychology that regards language as being behaviour; thus, learning a foreign language can be achieved through habit formation (Thornbury, 1999). This teaching methodology which views grammar as the central component of language was developed to produce learners with a high conversational proficiency in the target language (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Consequently, as Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989) mention, it aims at developing listening and speaking to create communicative competence in learners; thus, the reading and writing skills were given less emphasis.

The Audio-lingual Method provides its learners with textbooks containing dialogues that are meant to be imitated, repeated and memorised until they become automatic and natural. On the other hand, grammar is neither regarded as a focal point in teaching the foreign language nor as a fundamental goal to be realised in learning; "it is rather viewed as an integral part of achieving oral proficiency"(Moumene, 2004: 70). Furthermore, Celce-Murcia (1992: 6, quoted in Moumene, 2004: 70) maintains that "[g]rammatical structures are sequenced and rules are taught inductively". Accordingly, Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989: 20) go on to say that "[t]here is little or no grammatical explanation. Rules of grammar are taught by inductive analogy rather than by deductive explanation". Teachers in an audio-lingual class extract structural patterns from dialogues to be practised repeatedly (drills) until the learners themselves induce the correct form and

become able to use it automatically. Learners practise the structure through various pattern drills such as inflection, expansion and substitution. Yet, due to content (meaning) neglect and heavy stress on manipulating language and learning to produce correct responses, learners were led to remain passive and not creative. As a result, the Audio-lingual Method has lost its popularity and has been replaced by other methods.

#### **1.2.4 The Natural Approach**

The Natural Approach is considered as an example of the Communicative Approach which "sees communication as the primary function of language"(Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 129). This approach draws its origins from Krashen's acquisition/learning theory which suggests that foreign language learners acquire the grammatical system of the target language in a way that is similar to their first language acquisition (Thornbury, 1999). Thornbury has gone further to say that grammar is irrelevant in the teaching/learning process and that formal instruction is unnecessary, because normally all human beings are equipped with a device that helps them acquire different grammatical items of the foreign language in a naturally ordered way regardless of the sequencing in which they are presented to them. Therefore, learners are expected to acquire grammar indirectly through being exposed to a great amount of comprehensible input provided by the teacher.

#### **1.2.5 Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s when the focus in language teaching/learning classes shifted towards creating communicative competence in foreign language learners rather than instructing them in order to master grammatical items – i.e., develop only grammatical competence – because it is believed that "[c]ommunicative competence involves knowing how to use the grammar and vocabulary of the language to achieve communicative goals, and knowing how to do this in a socially

appropriate way"(Thornbury, 1999: 18). That is, CLT gives importance to both functional and structural aspects of the language.

Advocates of CLT have realised the need to get rid of the belief that language is a system of rules and structures that has to be learnt before being used and to adopt the newly born view, at that time, which regards language as a social communicative system which, in their perspective, should be used first in order to be mastered. This means that language is no longer a system of forms but rather a system of functions. With the spread of this belief, grammar has lost the place it has enjoyed before because of the view which says that although learners master the rules of a language, they cannot communicate effectively (Moumene, 2004).

Wilkins (1972) asserts that learning a foreign language is having the ability to master the usage and use of that language; that is, mastering grammatical forms to be used as a language means, rather than a language goal, to complete meaningful communicative tasks. Although grammar in CLT has been assigned a secondary position, it is acknowledged as being important. It is approached through meaning, i.e., learners must acquire the grammatical form and the meaning it underlies. For that reason, Moumene (2004) writes that it is believed that correct grammatical knowledge might influence positively and improve the development of language proficiency and, thus, a deductive explanation of grammar is preferred. So, grammar should be seen as a complementary element to communication since the two, if taken separately and overemphasised, will bring about unsatisfactory results. Teachers should bear in mind that both are relevant in language learning; Nunan (1988) contends that neither grammar nor communication should be excluded in future teaching.

However, a distinction between two versions of CLT may be worth noting. Thornbury (1999) reports that CLT has two facets: the "shallow-end approach" and the

"deep-end approach" which Richards and Rodgers (1986) call, respectively, the "weak" version of CLT and the "strong" version. In the shallow-end approach, language is learnt for the sake of being used; i.e., for communicative purposes. Accordingly, grammar teaching is not completely ignored; that is, learners should "learn the rules and then apply them in life-like communication"(Thornbury, 1999: 18). Consequently, grammar instruction is organised in terms of functions to fulfil a communicative goal. In the deep-end approach, language is used in order to be learnt. This version regards grammar teaching as merely a waste of time; the reason for which "both grammar-based syllabuses and grammar instruction" were rejected (Thornbury, 1999: 22). Proponents of the deep-end approach believe that if learners take part in activities that involve them in real-life communication, they are likely to acquire the grammatical rules of the foreign language unconsciously. But, because of the strict nature of the strong version, Moumene (2004: 108) reports: "Nowadays, the consensus among language specialists is that it is the weak version of CLT which has dominated the realm of [foreign language] teaching"; i.e., in CLT classes where the shallow-end approach is followed, learners are trained to use the language forms appropriately in various contexts to fulfil various communicative purposes. They focus on both meaning and form, bearing in mind that fluency and accuracy are equally important to interact with one another.

### **1.2.6 Task-Based Language Learning/Teaching**

Prabhu, based on his Bangalore Project and favouring the strong version of CLT, suggested a syllabus of tasks from which was the birth of the Task-based Language Learning/Teaching. Thornbury (1999) explains the project saying that students were instructed to work through a task or complete a task without explicit grammar teaching. At the beginning, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) was in Thornbury's terms "hostile to explicit grammar teaching", but this did not last for a long time (1999: 23).

TBLT is said to be related to pair work and group work because this kind of teaching practice is believed to develop learners' oral proficiency, increase language practice opportunities, enhance motivation, and promote psychological health. Ellis (2003) goes as long as to say that group work or students' interaction while performing a given task together leads to an increase in the quantity of learner speech and the variety of speech acts, a reduction of anxiety, an increase in motivation, in independence and in social integration, and more importantly in learning.

Due to the numerous advantages of group work which is tightly linked to the task-based approach, it was widely called for application in foreign language classes. The approach appeals for learning through completing real-world tasks because they enable learners to negotiate meaning and show them the way they are required to behave accordingly outside the classroom. Nevertheless, putting learners in groups to communicate and interact with each other does not mean that the language output is of a good or high quality if they do not receive any grammatical instruction. Therefore, Thornbury states that "without some attention to **form**, learners run the risk of **fossilisation**"(1999: 24). In this respect, Moumene (2004: 247) adds that "learners ought to be focused on form and meaning while performing grammar tasks."

TBLT recognises now the importance of a focus on form. This could be applied through correcting mistakes and making learners aware of the grammatical system – consciousness raising. That is, teachers draw learners' attention to notice the grammatical item present in the input and, then, give them the chance to understand its underlying meaning (Ellis, 1995). Following this procedure, foreign language learners will probably produce the target language accurately and appropriately. Consequently, teachers should use activities that promote awareness of grammar and techniques to draw learners' attention to form, i.e., grammar consciousness-raising tasks which are utilized as a means

or a facilitator to develop grammatical competence and which are based on teaching/learning grammar through cooperation.

### **1.3 Approaches to Grammar Instruction**

Grammar has occupied a central position in foreign language teaching and has always been considered as the first principle around which most language teaching methods/approaches are elaborated. Although linguists and language practitioners do not deny the importance and the value of grammar in learning a given language, they have been arguing about the way to tackle grammatical items from two different perspectives: explicit teaching and implicit teaching. In other words, should grammatical structures be taught explicitly or implicitly?

#### **1.3.1 Explicit Grammar Instruction**

This kind of methodology is also known as rule-driven learning where learners deliberately study a particular grammar rule. It involves teachers giving learners the grammatical structure directly or drawing their attention towards it in a text, providing them with some kind of explanation about how it works, together with appropriate examples for illustration and more clarification (Thornbury, 1999). After that, learners are assigned tasks or activities for practising the studied item.

In an explicit grammar teaching class, Fotos (Hinkel and Fotos, 2002: 139) suggests a model lesson which she calls "The Three-Part Grammar Lesson", and which is said to increase the awareness and raise the consciousness of the target structures as well as provide opportunities to notice how a particular grammatical form can be used in different meaning-focused contexts. According to her, a grammar lesson consists of:

- a. an explicit statement of the grammatical item intended to be learnt, at the beginning of the lesson;

- b. communicative activities to illustrate the different usages of the grammatical item;  
and
- c. summary activities to focus the learners' attention on the grammatical point they have been exposed to before the practice and they have been applying during the exercises.

Nevertheless, sometimes, students are not given directly the grammatical rule at the beginning of the lesson, in an explicit grammar class. They are, first, confronted with multiple sentence samples or texts containing a given form aimed to be mastered (Decco, 1996; cited in Bouras, 2006). Then, students are made aware of being directed by the teacher in order to discover the rule, usually through questions and cues. Finally, learners are helped through leading questions to formulate the rule.

Many researchers like Krashen, Reber and Dekeyzer (1995) hold a common point of view by pointing out that explicit teaching is limited to simple clearly-formed grammatical rules. Others maintain the opposite and claim that "the rules that should be taught explicitly are the complex rules, those with a large scope and high reliability, and those for the teaching of which we cannot rely on simple item memorisation and analogy"(Bouras, 2006: 50). However, in Robinson's (1995) perspective, both simple and complex structures are appropriately taught in an explicit way.

Schmidt (1995) reports that the effect of explicit grammar teaching may not be visible immediately in the learners' writing and speech. He asserts that this teaching practice facilitates the comprehension of input whether it is written or spoken, helps learners to organise input, and fosters the acquisition of the rules.

Gewehr (1998), in his turn, argues that explicit teaching of grammar is essential and helpful because learners need explanation instead of spending too much time trying to infer rules and because they do not have as much time as a baby to learn a language, and

most of them do not have time to go and live in a foreign country to be exposed to the foreign language in order to learn it. Yet, teachers should bear in mind that explicit grammar instruction is not sufficient on its own and is not the only option to achieve mastery of the language because explicit presentation of grammatical structures should be accompanied by meaningful use activities to practise the foreign language effectively and enough exposure to input is essential, too (Pachler, 1999).

### **1.3.2 Implicit Grammar Instruction**

Implicit Grammar Instruction is also known as rule-discovery learning where learners acquire grammatical structures unconsciously. In a language class where grammar is instructed implicitly, it is believed that learners internalize an implicit knowledge of the system of rules that govern the foreign language through communication (Ellis, 1995). This could be achieved through inductive/rule-discovery learning that is similar to the way one acquires his/her first language (Thornbury, 1999; Hinkel, 2005); that is, through an extensive exposure to a great deal of input and interaction. Some teachers tend not to teach grammar at all, expecting learners to acquire the foreign language rules without overt grammar instruction. They assume that students will absorb the rules while hearing, reading, and using the language in communication activities.

Inside the classroom, teachers induce the learners to realise grammar rules without resorting to previous explanation of the form intended to be learnt. Lock supports this view, stating that "learners work out the generalizations for themselves from data available in the input"(1996: 272). According to Gewehr (1998) and Cross (1999), learners are able to understand and acquire the complex grammatical structures of the target language if they are exposed to an extensive amount of samples illustrating those structures and if they have access to a wide range of different types of exercises. What takes place in a language class is that the teacher presents the rule through different examples, without mentioning it

directly. Learners, then, have to study these examples carefully in order to derive the meaning of the grammatical rule and understand it; thus, they develop an automatization and internalization of the language system without being able to describe it (implicit knowledge about the language). Thornbury (1999) reports that teachers use a wide range of means (actions, objects, situations) to convey the meaning of the rule and to encourage learners to find out the rule by themselves; therefore, be fixed in their mind. This type of teaching is used to teach "unclear" grammatical structures; for instance, when there is a given rule with unlimited cases of exceptions, it needs to be presented through examples rather than direct statement of the formula (e.g., articles). It is also believed that indirect grammar instruction makes learners active participants, attentive and motivated as long as they take part in their own learning process (Thornbury, 1999; Gewehr, 1998). It helps them to become autonomous and independent as well as provides them with numerous opportunities to practise the target language. However, implicit grammar teaching has some disadvantages that can be summed up according to Thornbury (1999) as follows:

- a. It is time and energy consuming.
- b. It may lead to deduction of wrong grammatical rules if there is no explicit statement; hence, fossilization of certain grammatical inaccuracies.
- c. It requires competent teachers for the preparation and planning of the suitable input.

Grammar has been neglected for a considerable period of time under some communicative methods, but in recent years, there has been a revival of grammar teaching due to its ample benefits. Although many teachers resist this idea because of the complexity and irregularities in the language system; no one can deny the fact that knowledge of the rules governing the foreign language is needed to learn it and that accuracy and fluency should not be taught separately. For that reason, an awareness of the

language system has to be developed if the aim is to develop linguistic competence. Consequently, learners should be taught grammar explicitly; yet, they should also be given the chance to apply their knowledge and practise the grammatical rules in communicative and authentic tasks. So, a combination of form and meaning can be the best foreign language teaching method to create fluent and accurate speakers/writers of English.

### **Conclusion**

Grammar teaching has witnessed ups and downs in the history of foreign language teaching. It has been acknowledged as being important in the English language courses because of the numerous advantages of knowing about it and which contribute to a great extent in the acquisition of the foreign language. Additionally, we need to inform learners and teachers that grammar deserves careful attention, remembering that communication is the ultimate goal of learning a language and that accuracy and grammaticality are in fact quite necessary, too.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Cooperative Learning**

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# **Chapter Two**

## **Cooperative Learning**

### **Introduction**

Researchers of foreign language teaching believe that successful learning is influenced by appropriate methods of teaching. A considerable number of studies on foreign language teaching/learning has demonstrated that negotiation of meaning among students leads to better language development and that interaction and engagement in conversation between peers can raise their learning gains as well as ameliorate their academic achievement. So, in recent years, there has been a significant shift from a focus on typical teacher-centred classrooms to learner-centred ones and from lecturing and transmitting knowledge to constructing and exploring information. For that reason, we suggest to both teachers and learners a teaching/learning technique that has proved to be effective and which provides the necessary opportunities to improve not only the acquisition of the foreign language, but students' performance, too; cooperative language learning.

### **2.1 Definition of Cooperative Learning**

Recent studies focus on teaching a foreign language through applying communicative language teaching methods; among which we have cooperative learning (CL). This term has been defined differently by various researchers and theorists.

For example, Vygotsky (1978, cited in Cohen, 1994; and in Moore, 2000) basing himself on the belief that people learn better if they are together rather than individually, views CL as part of a process that leads to the social building of knowledge. He "believed that there was a difference between what an individual could achieve by themselves and what they could do with help from a more skilled individual" (Bentham, 2002: 10). Moreover, scholars like Millis (1986; cited in Roberts, 2004), Hartley (1997) and Crandall

(cited in Arnold, 1999) define CL as a strategy to help students improve their intellectual and social skills, whereas Richards and Rodgers (2001: 193) regard CL as “an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching.” That is, CL emphasises the social nature of language learning and is considered as a means that offers opportunities for communication and language practice to take place in the classroom. However, despite these slight differences, most language reseachers agree on:

a) Gillies, Ashman and Terwel’s definition of CL as being “a pedagogical practice that promotes learning, higher level thinking, and prosocial behaviour in students from preschool to college” (2008: 1);

b) Hijzen and colleagues’ reference to CL as “a set of teaching principles that describe *how* students might learn from and with each other while, through working together, accomplish academic tasks”(2007: 674); and

c) Hilke’s definition:

Cooperative learning is an organizational structure in which a group of students pursues academic goals through collaborative efforts. Students work together in small groups, draw on each other’s strengths and assist each other in completing a task. (1990: 8)

In other words, students join their intellectual abilities and work together in pairs or in small groups to make sure that all members understand the material, reconstruct knowledge and, thus, perform the task successfully. So, each member has some knowledge to give to and to take from his/her group-mate (Arnold, 1999). The aim of these joint efforts, according to Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008), is to maximize their own as well as their mates’ learning through cooperation.

CL has been given many labels: group work teaching, team instruction, peer-assisted/mediated learning, and sometimes collaborative learning. However, Cohen (1994) points out to the need to make a difference between group work used in classes to support or practise intensively a given rule in pairs or in small groups and CL in which students work alone to perform a task without “direct and immediate supervision of the teacher” (Cohen, 1994: 3). Dillenbourg et al. (1995; cited in Roberts, 2004) distinguish between cooperation and collaboration saying that the former is based on the division of tasks between members of the group and the assignment of roles for each, whereas the latter focuses on the mutual engagement of group participants to come up with a joint product. In spite of these attempts to give each term a specific definition, Johnson and Johnson (2001; cited in Roberts, 2004), and Hiltz (1998; cited in Roberts, 2004) believe that there is no point in trying to tease out differences between the terms because even in collaborative learning, students split up the work among them; and that it is preferable to use them interchangeably and assume that CL is the collaboration of students to achieve a common goal – as it is the case in our current research. In other words, CL instruction applied in this study may be defined as “two or more people who interact for more than a few minutes” (Jaques, 2000; cited in Roberts, 2005: 149) or the “approach...in which classrooms are organized so that students work together in small co-operative teams”(Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 124). In addition to that, it necessitates to some extent the presence and the control of the teacher in terms of task selection, group organisation, and class management.

Early research on CL focused on the study of cooperation among students in comparison to the traditional teaching methods and in terms of effectiveness. Now, that the positive impact of CL has become evident for researchers, recent studies have altered their attention to look for the suitable conditions that could promote this pedagogical

instruction; thus, present it as the best positive model that could be used in teaching/learning a foreign language.

## **2.2 Elements of Cooperative Learning**

Built upon the Johnsons findings, Sclater and Bolander (cited in Goodyear et al., 2004: 176) assert that “it is not enough to place students together in groups and expect them to work together.” Consequently, advocates of CL believe that this set of teaching principles can actually take place and be best effective only if certain conditions are afforded. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994:26) suggest five elements, which they call “the essential components of cooperation”, that should be present to consider a teaching instruction as being CL; positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. These elements should be structured altogether in order to obtain satisfactory positive results.

### **2.2.1 Positive Interdependence**

Positive interdependence is regarded as the first and most important element to structure CL where students work toward a common goal together and rely on each other to succeed, each performing an individual focal role for the end product to be positive. That is, the efforts of all members are needed for the group success (Arnold, 1999). Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008:21) argue that positive interdependence occurs when “individuals realize that their efforts are required in order for the group to succeed so that it is not possible to get a free-ride . . . and they have a unique contribution to make the group’s efforts” (Gillies et al., 2008: 21).

In other words, this component underlies students’ perception of the fact that they are related to one another in some way in which the participant in a group cannot succeed unless his/her team-mates succeed –the benefit is a two-way process. Group members are

positively interdependent and have a specific contribution to the success of the whole group due to the shared resources, common goals, mutual support, and the celebration of the joint reward.

Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008) add a number of ways of establishing positive interdependence in a cooperative work:

- a. Positive Goal Interdependence: if learners assume that they can fulfil their objectives unless their team-mates attain theirs, they will highly achieve and produce positive outcomes.
- b. Positive Reward Interdependence: group members are rewarded equally when their goals are reached. Individuals achieve higher accomplishment when they work to obtain a reward or to avoid losing it.
- c. Positive Resource Interdependence: team participants are given one part of the resource, so that they have to combine them to reach their shared group aims.
- d. Positive Role Interdependence: learners in a group are assigned complementary roles needed to complete a task.
- e. Positive Task Interdependence: this involves the division of labour among group members so that each individual completes his/her responsibility to lend the floor for the next member to complete his/her responsibility.
- f. Positive Identity Interdependence: this occurs when individuals define themselves with a group name.

### **2.2.2 Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction**

Positive interdependence creates promotive interaction. The latter takes place when “individuals encourage and facilitate each other’s efforts to accomplish the group’s goals” (Gillies et al., 2008: 23-4).

In cooperative classes, teachers form heterogeneous groups to afford maximum opportunities for students to interact with each other most of the time, contribute to the group's prosperity, help and learn from one another (Arnold, 1999). This component promotes the group participants' productivity of the foreign language and achievement when each of them

- a. gives and receives effective help, assistance and feedback;
- b. exchanges explanations; and
- c. challenges each other's way of thinking through acting trustfully, being motivated for mutual benefit, influencing efforts to achieve common goals and encouraging one another – all to improve performance and ameliorate the quality of reasoning and achievement.

### **2.2.3 Individual Accountability**

Though participants in a cooperative group join their abilities and work together for the benefit of all the members, “each student needs to be made accountable for his/her own contribution to the completion of the task” (Ellis, 2003: 271). Members are responsible for completing their part of the task and for assisting their partners complete their share of the work. If learners perceive that their performance will affect the group's outcomes, they will produce more efforts to realise their objectives. Thus, the performance or the quality and the quantity of each member's contributions are assessed and evaluated separately, and the result is reported to the individual and the group to determine who is in need of more assistance, support and encouragement.

Since individual accountability has proved to increase students' academic achievement and to improve their performance when they feel that their efforts are taken into consideration, teachers have to structure ways which help them assess each participant individually. According to Johnson et al. (1994), teachers need to:

- a. keep the group's size small,
- b. test each student individually,
- c. examine randomly students by asking any of the group members to present the group's work orally,
- d. note the frequency of member's contributions to the group's work,
- e. assign one participant in each group the role of checker who asks his/her group-mates explain their way of considering the task in hand, and
- f. have students teach what is learnt to their team-mates.

#### **2.2.4 Interpersonal and Small Group Skills**

This is a basic element which promotes higher achievement and, more importantly, builds positive relationships among students; both on a personal and professional level (Gillies et al., 2008).

Crandall (cited in Arnold, 1999) believes that, in order for a group of students who cooperate together striving towards attaining a shared goal successfully, "individual members need to develop not only linguistic but also social skills which facilitate teamwork, create trust and enhance communication, leadership, problem solving and decision-making in group interaction" (Arnold, 1999: 228). Moreover, Slavin (2006: 255) adds that "[t]hey [students] are usually taught specific skills that will help them work well together, such as active listening, giving good explanation, avoiding putdowns, and including the people". So, individuals must have or be taught the social and cooperative skills necessary to interact effectively with peers and, hence, produce more. They are trained how to get to know and trust each other, how to negotiate viewpoints and respect diverse opinions, how to resolve disagreements and differences positively, and how to encourage and help each other (Gillies et al., 2008).

The result of the use of interpersonal and small group skills in combination with the reception of reward against the practice of these skills lead to a high quality of academic and social outcomes.

### **2.2.5 Group Processing**

Ngeow (2000; cited in Roberts, 2004) asserts that groups need time to evaluate their goals and discuss how well the group participants are progressing and maintaining effective working relationships. On the other hand, Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008: 25) contend that teachers should devote some time at the end of each session to give learners the chance to: “(a) describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful and (b) make decisions about what actions to continue or change.” In other words, they reflect upon their experience as a cooperative group to determine what was positive in their way of handling the task and to modify and ameliorate what was less helpful as behaviour in their joint work.

The major concern of group processing as was identified by Johnson et al. (1994) is that it:

- a. permits students to focus on good working relationships,
- b. facilitates learning and the development of social skills,
- c. ensures that members receive feedback, and
- d. affords opportunities for language interaction to occur.

### **2.3 Cooperative Learning Models**

In the past few years, many books have elaborated and researched different cooperative methods that could be applicable to language classes. The result was hundreds of cooperative activities which proved to have a positive impact on students’ social behaviour and academic success (Cohen, 1994). Slavin (1983, 2006) has identified seven effective and commonly used models: Students Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD),

Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT), Group Investigation (GI), Jigsaw, Learning Together, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), and Cooperative Scripting; that teachers would choose to adopt in their classes, taking into account their teaching philosophy, the nature of the content to be taught, the objectives of the course and learners, and the students' learning styles.

### **2.3.1 Student Teams-Achievement Divisions**

STAD was developed by Slavin in 1978. It is an effective method consisting of three steps: teaching, cooperative study, individual assessment. According to Slavin (1983, 2006), the teacher, first, divides the class into four-member groups of mixed ability, sex, and racial origin. Then, s/he presents the material intended to be mastered. After that, students work together within their teams in order to learn the presented material. The group study will continue until all members master the piece; this could happen only if they explain to each other ambiguities, discuss possible solutions, and help one another. Finally, students go back to their places (seats) and take quizzes. They are assessed individually on what they have studied together. No one is allowed to help his/her group-mate. Following this, the teacher computes team scores on the basis of the degree to which each student exceeds his/her own past averages. In other words, the group is evaluated on the basis of the average of its members' scores obtained from the individual testing. Then, the team scores which excel are recognised and rewarded.

### **2.3.2 Teams-Games-Tournaments**

TGT is a model which was first tackled by DeVries and Slavin in 1978. Slavin (1983) reports that this kind of cooperative learning activity is similar to the one discussed previously in terms of the two first stages, i.e., the teaching and the group study procedures take place in the same way that happen in STAD. He, also, mentions that in TGT, students are not evaluated on the basis of individual quizzes, but they rather compete in a

tournament against participants who performed similarly in the past. Students engage in playing games with participants of the same level – to ensure equal opportunities to succeed – for the sake of winning extra points that will be added to their team scores.

According to Slavin (1983), the teacher, first, presents the material to the entire class. Following this, s/he breaks the class into heterogeneous groups of four students to study cooperatively the material through explaining to each other, discussing and helping one another. After that, these groups are split up for some time and students are placed into homogeneous ability groups of three or four members (for example, having the three strongest students together) to compete against each other via playing games dealing with the material being learnt before. The teacher prepares for each group a game sheet which contains a list of numbered questions, numbered cards having the same numbers as the questions, and a numbered answer sheet. As soon as students at each table randomly pick up a number card corresponding to the number of the question to be answered, the game begins. The one who draws the highest number starts first and reads the question. S/he, then, gives an answer which, if not correct, can be challenged by his/her team-mates. The winner keeps the point for each card won and takes it back to his/her original team (the heterogeneous one). Teams' scores are totalled and the teacher reports the averages to be celebrated.

TGT was found to facilitate the learning process and to increase academic achievement, positive relationships and self-esteem.

### **2.3.3 Group Investigation**

GI, which was developed by Sharan and Sharan in 1976, involves students in small groups using a variety of skills to handle subtopics which they have selected from a unit presented to the whole class (Slavin, 1983). After choosing their themes, students plan, research and discuss cooperatively the subject, then divide it into subtasks to be carried out

and investigated individually in order to prepare group reports (Arnold, 1999). After that, the findings are presented to the entire class. Finally, the assessment of students is made on the basis of the quality of their group presentation.

GI is an effective CL model because it fosters learners' interest and commitment to learning, and enhances their sense of responsibility toward the group and themselves.

#### **2.3.4 Jigsaw**

In 1978, Aronson and his colleagues developed what has become now the most widely known CL model, the Jigsaw (Arnold, 1999). In Slavin's view (1983), it is a learning activity which involves students joining together in groups of six members to work on a given material that has been divided into a number of parts corresponding to the number of students in each team; so that each member has his/her own portion of the material which the others need to complete the task or write the report. First, each participant reads his/her section. Next, the members who have been given the same portion of the material from each group get together in "expert groups" (Arnold, 1999: 230) to discuss and research their common topic until they master it. After that, expert group members return to their "home group" (Arnold, 1999: 230) to share and explain the information they have been studying previously to their team-mates. This procedure will motivate students to listen to and show interest in each other. The whole class takes a test for individual marks.

Few years later, Slavin brought a modification to this cooperative model and called it Jigsaw II. In Jigsaw II, students are grouped together in four – or five – member teams like in STAD. Students read the material which can be a story, a chapter, or a biography. Then, each of them receives a topic on which to become an expert. Following this, those students who have the same topic meet in expert teams for discussion and return to their groups to teach, taking turns, what they have learnt to their friends. At the end of the group

study, participants are assessed through quizzes which include all the topics; and the scores are calculated to obtain the group's mark and the student's mark, as in STAD.

### **2.3.5 Learning Together**

This model was developed by Johnson and Johnson in 1999 (Slavin, 2006). The class is split up into mixed ability and sex groups of four or five. Students join their efforts to work and complete assignments and when they finish, they are rewarded and praised according to what they produce as a final outcome. This kind of structure builds self-esteem in students and positive relationships since they feel that their efforts are considered and their behaviours are appreciated by others.

### **2.3.6 Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition**

CIRC is a model used especially to teach reading and writing in the upper elementary classes (Slavin, 2006). When students form groups of four, they carry out activities which require them to read for each other, summarise stories to one another, write responses and practise spelling and vocabulary together. This helps them to improve their comprehension skills. Participants also write reports, revise and draft their mates' work – this enhances social and interpersonal relationships.

### **2.3.7 Cooperative Scripting**

This type of cooperative activity was investigated and elaborated by Dansereau and his colleagues, in 1985, after they had noticed that students benefit from discussing a material together (Slavin, 2006). It has also been found that it fosters learning and retention as well as social support.

In Cooperative Scripting, students get involved in pairs in an attempt to help each other through summarising sections of a given material for one another, taking turns. What happens actually in this model is that when one member summarises a text, his/her partner pays complete attention and listens carefully to him/her and makes some corrections if

there is any mistake or omission. After that, both participants exchange their roles. The cooperative pairs keep on completing the assigned task until the whole material is totally summed up.

All these models are beneficial activities for language learners. They promote language skills and communication, and help increase higher order thinking. Moreover, they result in higher academic success because students give the best of their contributions for that individual accountability and positive interdependence are greatly emphasised.

## **2.4 Teachers' Role in the Major Types of Cooperative Learning**

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 199) summarise what teachers should do when adopting group work instruction, saying that:

The teacher has to create a highly structured and well-organized learning environment in the classroom, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks, establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles, and selecting materials and time.

Because teachers in CL classes perform considerably different roles from those they are used to play in traditional settings, Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008) made a classification of three major types of CL in an attempt to clarify the teacher's roles in each of them. Those types are: Formal Cooperative Learning, Informal Cooperative Learning, and Cooperative Base Groups.

### **2.4.1 Formal Cooperative Learning**

It is the type of CL where students join together in order to perform a specific task such as writing a report or carrying out a project. The learners' teams are formed to last from one class session to several weeks; they work on the task until it is finished and their cooperative outcome is assessed.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008), in a formal CL class, the teacher has to perform several tasks.

- a. S/he has to make decisions before structuring this activity through setting academic and social skills objectives, determining how many students are required to create a group, deciding on the way to choose students (randomly or according to some criteria), assigning roles to group members, and arranging the room and the material.
- b. His/her duty is also to explain the task and the way to complete it successfully. S/he establishes positive interdependence and individual accountability as well as clarifies what social skills and behaviours are to be used. In addition, there is an extensive focus on intergroup cooperation to avoid any kind of competition among group members.
- c. His/her other role is to monitor students' performance and intervene when difficulty and disagreement appear in a group. During the task, the teacher moves around the class and observes the groups to collect data on students' promotive interaction and their use of effective interpersonal and small group skills; thus, s/he creates individual accountability and encourages students to be constructive. While monitoring, Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that teachers ought to speak less and redirect students by asking them questions to challenge their consideration of the problem as well as give them feedback.
- d. His/her other responsibility is to evaluate students' learning and contribution, and serve as a guide and a director while group members discuss how well they functioned. This takes place when the teacher decides to end the lesson. Furthermore, s/he encourages students to adopt a plan for effective changes in group procedures and to celebrate their efforts.

## **2.4.2 Informal Cooperative Learning**

It is a type of CL where students work cooperatively to fulfil a common goal on a precise task explicitly instructed and which requires a specific product (for example, a written answer). The groups are formed temporarily, i.e., they last from a few minutes to a single class session. Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008) believe that the aim of structuring this type of team learning is to make students focus more on the material to be learnt, help them expect what the lesson will be about, guarantee material cognitive processing and rehearsal, summarise previous knowledge to facilitate the next session, and finally provide closure to an instructional session.

Informal CL is regarded as a practical method because the groups can be organised at any time in a class of any size in order to check the students' understanding and to afford opportunities for practice.

Researchers (like Johnson and Johnson, 1999) state that the major role of the teacher in implementing Informal CL is to keep students as much as possible actively involved in the process of learning. That is, students engage in pre- and post-lesson discussions as well as in pair discussions throughout the lesson. In order to obtain satisfactory results from this type of instruction, teachers should follow this procedure:

- a. They divide the class into groups of two or three members and ask students to react to questions that require four to five minutes reflection to reach an agreed answer. The discussion that occurs between students helps them build knowledge and have an idea about the lesson content. Teachers choose to work with pairs or triads to ensure individual accountability.

- b. They arrange the time of the session by segmenting it into 10-15 minutes parts. After each segment, the pairs engage in cooperative work to answer a specific question that requires about three minutes discussion. During these three minutes, each student answers

the question, shares it with his/her partner, and integrates it with his/her group-mate's to come up with a consensus answer. After that, the teacher may ask students to reveal their findings to the whole class to ensure individual accountability. Then, s/he may structure group processing and reward learners for their efforts.

c. At the end of the lesson, they assign tasks of four or five minutes in which students summarise what has been studied, or prepare for homework.

### **2.4.3 Cooperative Base Groups**

Cooperative Base Groups are “long-term, heterogeneous CL groups with stable membership” (Johnson and Johnson, 1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008: 31). The groups are created to last from one semester to a whole year in which students are required to help each other achieve academic goals.

In this type of CL, teachers present and teach the needed social skills. They form heterogeneous groups of three or four, plan regular meetings, assign the groups tasks and requirements to be accomplished in each meeting and ensure the implementation of CL elements. On the other hand, students have to ensure that all members complete the task, provide assistance to build interpersonal bounds and check understanding.

Researchers (Cross, 2003; Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1999) admit that the teacher, in any CL type, should explain to the students the objectives of the group task and the way they will be graded. S/he should act as a facilitator and guide to give feedback and assistance when necessary. Although students are responsible for carrying out tasks and managing their learning, the teacher still controls the class and has the power to give an end to the cooperative activity if necessary. Another important task for the teacher to perform is designing groups. Ellis (2003) points out that groups of four are highly recommended because they can be split up into pairs, and that heterogeneous teams result in better academic achievement. In order to create heterogeneous groups, some teachers prefer to

choose students randomly, mixing males with females, verbal with quiet students, high-achieving with low-achieving learners. Others give students freedom to select their partner (but this may end up with homogeneous groups (Cohen, 1994)). Others prefer to take into consideration students' prior achievement (for example, from a pre-test), ethnicity and gender. Teachers also should structure tasks so that each participant in a group has the opportunity to contribute with something to complete it successfully.

## **2.5 Learners' Role in Cooperative Learning**

Unlike what happens in a teacher-fronted class, group work instruction gives students an active role. It alters their roles from passive recipients of knowledge to active seekers and analysers of information. Instead of sitting quiet and listening to the teacher lecturing, in a CL environment, students are responsible for completing the task on their own and ensuring their group-mates' understanding of the assigned material as well as participating, talking and interacting effectively with each other.

When groups are formed, Richards and Rodgers (2001: 199) explain that:

The primary role of the learner is as a member of a group must work collaboratively on tasks with other group members. Learners have to learn teamwork skills. Learners are also directors of their own learning. They are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills. Thus, learning is something that requires students' direct and active involvement and participation.

In other words, students are expected to use interpersonal and small group skills. They, first, should perceive that group work is part of the course and should consider the task as challenging and interesting to get involved in the process of learning it. Second, while

discussing and explaining concepts to each other, group members have to motivate, encourage and support their friends' efforts. Besides, they are required to listen carefully to the other team participants, share information or resources among them, respect others' opinions, resolve disagreements peacefully and offer feedback to each other in order to ameliorate their results. Furthermore, during the group task, learners plan their work, direct their own strategies of learning and assess their cooperative product. Additionally, students need to follow the classroom discipline and the teacher's rules; that is, equality reigns in the room and no student is given the power to dominate the talking or the direction of the group work – they should obey the teacher's instruction to proceed effectively.

## **2.6 Advantages of Cooperative Learning**

CL is becoming one of the greatest and most widely educational practices in almost every school, college, and university because research has shown that it is a pedagogical instruction with numerous positive effects on students' academic and social achievement as well as on their psychological well-being (Kagan, 1994). For instance, Long and Porter (1985; cited in Paulston and Britanik, 1995: 79) admit that group work results in: “(1) increasing the quantity of language practice opportunity; (2) improving the quality of student talk; (3) creating a positive affective climate in the classroom; (4) individualising instruction; and (5) increasing student motivation.” Almost all educational theorists (Johnson et al., 1994; Arnold, 1999; Slavin, 1983, 2006; Gillies and Ashman, 2003; Gillies et al., 2008; Roberts, 2004, 2005) who have carried out experiences on group work instruction summed up the most important benefits of CL, if implemented appropriately, in the following nine points: reducing anxiety, fostering higher order and critical thinking skills, increasing students' retention, promoting interaction, developing communication skills, elaborating social interaction skills, increasing motivation, building

student self-esteem and self-confidence, and promoting higher academic achievement, class attendance, and positive attitudes.

### **2.6.1 Reducing Anxiety**

Students may feel anxious, stressful, and even embarrassed in a traditional classroom when asked to answer a question and all the class attention is focused on them. On the contrary, in cooperative environments, the possibility of generating a correct or an acceptable answer increases due to the joint efforts of group members and the enough time and opportunities provided to reflect on the question and to discuss its different issues (Arnold, 1999). Consequently, anxiety reduces, fear of failure decreases, need for participation increases, and the rate of production rises.

### **2.6.2 Fostering Higher Order and Critical Thinking Skills**

According to Panitz (1996; cited in Roberts, 2005), students in pairs or small groups interacting with each other, formulating and discussing viewpoints, and receiving immediate peer feedback develop problem solving skills. On the other hand, Crandall (cited in Arnold, 1999) and Cohen (1994) note that group participants gain more elaborate order thinking skills as well as cognitive and metacognitive strategies when they plan and organise the assigned task, make decisions, and settle conflicts. In addition to that, CL helps promoting the development of intellectual understanding by clarifying concepts and key ideas because research has proved that students grasp meanings better when they are explained by peers, using comprehensive language ( easy wording) ( Exley & Dennick, 2004). Moreover, Johnson and Johnson (1999; cited in Gillies et al., 2008) report that it leads to the production of new ideas and solutions and to the transfer of knowledge from one situation to another. All this leads students to perform highly in tests.

### **2.6.3 Increasing Students' Retention**

Because cooperative models afford the chance for learners to take part in their own learning process and to discover themselves what possible solutions are for a given problem, they help them retain information better than in teacher-centred classes (Cooper, 1984; Roberts, 2005). Furthermore, it is believed that students have the tendency to remember material that has been taught by group-mates for one another.

### **2.6.4 Promoting Interaction**

Cooperative activities create situations where students are obliged to interact with each other. This happens when positive interdependence is structured correctly. That is, students exchange information, formulate ideas, defend opinions, and criticise thinking positively; thus, performing multiple facets of interaction which provide the opportunity for natural language acquisition (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Additionally, teachers also interact with students through verbal directions and guiding questions. Moreover, learners' interaction provides an affective suitable climate for language learning to take place and enables them to view situations from others' perspectives as well as teaches them a sense of responsibility for their own and their group-mates' learning (Webb, 1982).

### **2.6.5 Developing Communication Skills**

Richards and Rodgers (2001) assert that CL is a way of promoting communicative interaction. This can be realised through discussing, explaining, listening, providing constructive criticism and defending opinions. Unlike in whole-class instruction, learners listen to and produce a great deal of the foreign language while the teacher remains silent (Arnold, 1999). Learners, in cooperative settings, are offered equal opportunities to participate and share ideas so that high-achieving students can transmit their knowledge to their group-mates and shy and low-achieving students can feel at ease when expressing themselves (Gillies and Ashman, 2003).

### **2.6.6 Elaborating Social Interaction Skills**

CL affords an environment in which students are taught and can practise building good interpersonal and small group skills necessary to complete the assigned task and, later, to function accurately in society and the work world (Galton & Williamson, 1992). As a result, appropriate behaviours continue to exist in settings other than the classroom. When students acquire appropriate attitudes and spend a lot of time interacting and supporting each other, they are likely to develop positive race relationships with their classmates due to group heterogeneity (Slavin, 2006). Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) believe that these skills reduce competitiveness, prevent discrimination, facilitate integration, enhance friendship and eliminate hostility.

### **2.6.7 Increasing Motivation**

Teamwork instruction elicits learners' intrinsic interest and motivation to attend class and to learn a great amount of the foreign language. This may result in extensive use of the target language and the development of greater language proficiency (Arnold, 1999). Moreover, the mutual support that students receive and give to one another motivates shy and low-ability students to improve their level. Slavin (1983), Johnson et al. (1994), Cohen (1994), Crandall (cited in Arnold, 1999), and Hijzen (2006; cited in Hijzen et al., 2007) agree that group members are motivated to participate because of the system of rewards adopted by teachers in return to students' efforts when they cooperate and use appropriate social behaviours.

### **2.6.8 Building Student Self-esteem and Self-confidence**

When participating in classroom discussions and receiving peer assistance, foreign language learners become confident when they speak publicly. It is believed that if learners feel safe and have a strong belief in their intellectual capacities, they are likely to make greater efforts and show willingness to take risks to perform better (Hijzen et al., 2007).

### **2.6.9 Promoting Higher Academic Achievement, Class Attendance, and Positive Attitudes**

CL activities bring innovative ways in teaching and classroom techniques to break the routine. Exley et al. (2004) report that students through interaction and direct feedback from teachers and peers enable them to become more aware of the different models of thinking and the multiple accepted behaviours that should be used in any setting. Consequently, they develop personal and professional relations with classmates and teachers, thus will achieve better results. When students feel that the teacher believes in their abilities and shows interest in them through assistance and appraisal, they will develop positive attitudes toward learning, school and classmates. This leads to high class attendance and low dropout rates (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

### **2.7 Problems Encountering the Use of Cooperative Learning**

Though CL has proved to be greatly effective and evidence has shown an overwhelming number of benefits resulting from its instruction in language classes, it is still not widely applied in all educational settings. Paulston and Britanik (1995) argue that group work is simply a matter of chaos, time consuming, confusing understanding, and only some students do actually the whole work. According to Crandall (cited in Arnold, 1999: 240), one of the biggest impediments to CL is the “[c]ultural expectations of appropriate roles of teachers and learners.” That is, teachers’ reluctance to implement group work techniques is due to the educational systems that focus mainly on the central role of the teacher, i.e., they find difficulties to delegate authority and responsibility to learners and that if they do so, the class becomes chaotic and learners will not cover all the information meant to be learnt. Teachers fear the loss of control in the classroom in terms of content and discipline (Panitz 1996; cited in Gillies et al., 2008). In addition to that, teachers refuse to adopt team work activities because they have been trained to be good

managers of classrooms and they have been exposed only to the lecture competitive and individualistic approach, during their learning experience. Furthermore, Jolliffe (2007) believes that many teachers lack self-confidence to try new teaching methods that may expose them to unexpected tough situations and unanticipated questions. Another problem that teachers may face is the lack of appropriate materials (like textbooks) that require students working cooperatively in groups; so, they are left alone to create their own worksheets and projects (Arnold, 1999).

Students also have a great role in making CL impossible to function correctly. One reason, Crandall (cited in Arnold, 1999) states, is that students think that team work is a waste of time and efforts, and that the teacher is not doing his/her job; thus, they will not cover the entire content. Moreover, because of the current system which encourages competition and individualization, learners are not ready to share information and opportunity to succeed or even help peers.

## **Conclusion**

Recent foreign language teaching/learning researches have shifted their focus towards innovative methods which encourage learners' autonomy and responsibility for their own learning process. In this sense, CL has been developed to assist learners to change their statutes to be active participants instead of passive members and to get involved in what they are doing to achieve successfully their objectives. This teaching technique tries to help teachers, to adopt the new roles they are supposed to perform in order to obtain satisfactory results. They are expected to supervise, advise and cooperate with learners, taking into consideration their needs, their intellectual abilities and their learning styles to fulfil the set goals.

Although cooperative techniques demand more efforts from both teachers and learners, they are believed to be of great effectiveness on learners' acquisition of the

foreign language as compared to the whole-class instructional approaches and, therefore, are called to be applied in language classes to enhance and increase the use of the target language since group work emphasises communication, interaction and assistance among team members.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Tenses**

### **Introduction**

### **3.1 Definitions**

#### **3.1.1 Definition of Tense**

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### **3.2 Tense/Aspect in English**

#### **3.2.1 Simple Forms**

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#### **3.2.3 Perfective Forms**

#### **3.2.4 Perfect Progressive Forms**

### **3.3 Teaching Tenses Through Cooperative Learning**

### **Conclusion**

# Chapter Three

## Tenses

### Introduction

Because grammar is a very vast area and consists of a number of elements, we have chosen to focus on and to limit our current research to tenses because students, as Larsen-Freeman (1997) said, do not have many problems as far as the form is concerned or the meaning of a given English tense, but they are rather confused when it comes to when and why they have chosen to use a particular tense and not the other.

Tenses are considered to be of a colossal importance because each time we generate a sentence, we need to select the appropriate tense which conveys accordingly our ideas and thoughts. This tense is subject to certain rules and conditions that should be first understood then applied in an effective way. This language feature which represents a challenging difficult area in foreign language teaching is affected mainly by the way it is presented to learners and the role that teachers play in the attempt of facilitating their acquisition/learning.

Basically, tenses vary from one language to another either in number or in the way they reflect time, and cannot always be translated from one language to another. That is, they are not necessarily straight-forwardly related to what time the event presented by the verb takes place; for instance, in the English language, the present tense, in addition to referring to an action in the present, can be used to talk about historic events in literary texts or to report programmed actions in the future.

### 3.1 Definitions

#### 3.1.1 Definition of Tense

Tense is one of the central issues of linguistics and has been the focus of much attention in recent years. Declerck (1997: 58) explains that "[t]ense can be defined as the

grammatical category whose function it is to express the temporal relationship which holds between the time of the situation that is being described and the temporal zero-point (which is usually the time of speech)." Moreover, Doughty and Williams (1999) report that tense is the form of a verb that shows us a relationship between the time the action in a verb occurs and the time the verb is uttered; i.e., it is a temporal linguistic quality expressing the time at, during, or over which a state or action denoted by a verb occurs. Furthermore, Richards and Schmidt (2002), and Jespersen (2006) provide a general definition for the term tense, saying that it is a linguistic change in form that occurs at the level of the verb and which expresses time relations. Put differently, it is a grammatical distinction of form used to relate the time of an action or state described in a sentence to the moment of speaking. In this respect, Downing and Locke (2006: 352-3) write that the word tense means "the grammatical expression of the location of events in time. It anchors (or 'grounds') an event to the speaker's experience of the world by relating the **event time** to a point of reference [speech time]."

Tense is also said to have a deictic function. As Lavery (2001: 1) asserts, "[t]ense is a deictic category which places events in time, dealing with the chronological order of events." That is, it is a tool that points out to time now or time then; in short, it refers to the 'here' and 'now' of the speaker. Santos (2004: 39) supports this view maintaining that tense is "information having to do with order, position in a time line (or structure). Deictic tense is based on the concept of 'now' (the present moment) and defines past and future as prior to or following 'now'." Furthermore, Strang (1974: 134; quoted in Bouras, 2006: 55) argues that "[t]ense is anyone of the verb forms in the conjugation of the verb which serve to indicate the different times at which the action is viewed as happening or existing." So, tense views an event as a point preceding or following a central, unmarked point that is generally taken to be the moment of speaking or the present time.

Wilkins (1976), Nelson (2001), Lavery (2001), Richards and Schmidt (2002), and Downing and Locke (2006) hold that in the time line perspective, there is past, present and future time; however, based on the fact that tense is indicated by a morphological inflection/marking, English has just two tenses: the present and the preterit (or the past), while there is no verbal inflection or apparent change in the verb form to indicate a future tense, even though there are many different combinations and expressions to refer to future time (as will be explained later). For pedagogical reasons and to ease the process of learning/acquiring a language, foreign language teachers prefer to talk about three basic tenses in English: present, past and future. They show whether a simple action or state occurred, occurs or will occur in the past, present or future. Booth (2007) clarifies that each of them has a perfect form to indicate a completed action, a progressive form to express an ongoing action, and a perfect progressive form to refer to a continuous action or state that will be completed at some definite time (aspect).

### **3.1.2 Definition of Aspect**

Lavery (2001: 1) defines the notion of aspect as:

The category which distinguishes between complete/incomplete events, single/repeated events, between utterances that refer to either the beginning, the middle or the end of a situation, informing whether the event can be presented as a single whole or whether the situation can be divided into various phases.

More importantly, she adds that aspect is non deictic and describes the temporal quality or condition of an event with respect to itself, in terms of things like repetition, completion, duration, etc. Nelson (2001), in his turn, says that aspect refers to how an event can be viewed with respect to time, as having limits or not, as being continuous or completed. In

addition to that, Carlson (1981: 32; quoted in Santos, 2004: 39) defines aspect as being "concerned with the temporal shape of an event or situation, how it distributes in time" or "properties of sets of periods which essentially involve the concept of (initial, internal, final) subperiod."

Aspect is expressed through constructions involving the auxiliaries 'be' and 'have'. There are two grammatically marked aspects in English: progressive and perfective. The progressive aspect is formed with the auxiliary 'be' (in the past or present) plus a present participle (-ing form) of the main verb; and describes an action in the process of happening with focus on its middle phase (which is dynamic). While the perfective aspect is formed with the auxiliary 'have' (in the past or present) plus a past participle of the main verb; it is used to indicate a complete situation viewing it as a single whole regardless to its internal phases.

Aspect can be expressed by means of two different ways, grammatically and lexically. Firstly, grammatical aspect is determined by inflectional morphology, aspect markers, or adverbs and other syntactic constructions (Penston, 2005). For example,

- I have finished my homework.
- The child was playing in the garden for one hour.
- Yesterday, the teacher explained the lesson in ten minutes.

Bouras (2006: 67) also explains that grammatical aspect:

refers to presentation of events through grammaticalized viewpoints: the perfective viewpoints, the imperfective viewpoints and the neutral one. The perfective viewpoints focus on the situation as a whole, with special importance given to start and end points. The imperfective ones, on the other hand, focus on part of the situation with no stress on

initial or final points. The neutral is flexible and includes the starting point and at least one in stage (when it is possible).

In this respect, the situation may be represented as fixed or changing, it may be treated as lasting for only a moment or having duration, and it can be viewed as complete or as ongoing.

On the other hand, lexical aspect is an inherent feature of verbs and is determined by the nature of the event that the verb describes, i.e., the lexical meaning of the verb may convey aspectual meaning. For instance, dynamic verbs – which include punctual verbs that express acts such as to jump, or to hit; and durative verbs that refer to activities and processes such as to run or to grow – can be used in the continuous aspect to mean ongoing activities and with the perfective aspect to indicate a completed action. However, stative verbs – which include cognition verbs like to believe or to know; and relation verbs like to be or to have – are not used with progressive forms; otherwise they will indicate a temporary state. As for the perfective aspect, when used with stative verbs, it signifies already existing states, which may continue (Lyons, 1984; Nelson, 2001; Hudson, 1998).

### **3.2 Tense/Aspect in English**

Tense/aspect system in English, which most of the time is referred to as English tenses in foreign language classes, represents a focal part of the English grammar and its mastery/acquisition is the primary concern of learners to achieve communication.

English tenses have been taught the same way as any other grammatical point under the different teaching methods discussed in Chapter One. They are regarded as obligatory features of the language in the sense that whenever we express an event orally or in writing, we need to choose a specific tense and a specific aspect.

In order to express time and to fulfil a successful communicative purpose, tense and aspect combinations result in a number of different verb forms with different meanings, yet

appropriate to a particular situation. These forms can be sorted out into four categories: the simple forms, the progressive forms, the perfective forms, and the perfect progressive forms with reference to the present, the past and the future.

### 3.2.1 Simple Forms

- **Present Simple**

In general, the present tense (simple) expresses an unchanging, repeated, or recurring action or situation that exists at the present time 'now' as it can represent a widespread truth. Nelson (2001: 354) defines the present simple as

[T]he unmarked tense. Cognitively, it expresses situations which have immediate reality; that is, what is currently observed. Morphologically, it is marked only on the third person singular [with some exceptions be/have]. Semantically, it covers a wide range of temporal references than the past tense, including reference to future time.

The present simple in regular verbs is identical with the base form of the verb (stem), except for the third-person singular subject where this tense is indicated by the –s end form of the verb.

Downing and Locke (2006: 355) have given a more general meaning to the present simple which they refer to as present tense saying that it is simply used to "locate a situation holding at the present moment." They also explain that this verb form does not include reference to continuity in the future or that it happened in the past, too; the meaning is derived from our knowledge of the world and the situation encoded in the sentence. Aitken (1992: 18), in her book entitled *Teaching Tenses*, defines the present simple as "a timeless tense for actions which are always, repeatedly or generally true; or actions encapsulated in a single instant (with no reference to past or future)."

In an attempt to clarify the different uses/functions of the present tense, the following points have been summed up from Aitken (1992), and Downing and Locke's (2006) classification.

a. Truths:

- Habitual: E.g.: I wake up everyday at 6 a.m.
- Eternal: E.g.: Jesus lives.
- Recurrent: E.g.: The sun sets in the west.
- Permanent human: E.g.: I hate lazy people.
- General: E.g.: Hindus do not eat beef.
- Scientific: E.g.: Water boils at 100°C.
- Internal: E.g.: I know the answer to this question.

b. Demonstrations, directions, or instructions.

- Demonstrations: E.g.: I place the fruits in the blender.
- Directions: E.g.: You turn left.
- Instructions: E.g.: You beat the eggs.

a. Narrative device: to dramatize situations, to report commentaries (about activities like in sports), and in headlines.

- To dramatize situations: E.g.: This man comes up to me and says....
- To report commentaries: E.g.: The footballer passes the ball and scores.
- In headlines: E.g.: The people vote for the best.

b. Description of sudden feelings/senses.

- Sudden feelings: E.g.: I feel sick.
- Sudden senses: E.g.: I hear noises.

c. Future events, schedules, or timetables.

- Future events: E.g.: The president speaks tomorrow.

- Schedules or timetables: E.g.: The train leaves at seven.

- **Past Simple**

The past simple (also called the preterit) expresses an action or a situation that started and ended in the past or merely to locate a definite event or state in the past. A complete definition of the meaning and use of the past simple has been given by Downing and Locke (2006: 35); they write:

The **Past tense** in English is the marked form. Cognitively, the situations conceptualized by the speaker as past have the status of known, but not immediate, reality; they are not currently observed. Morphologically, the vast majority of verbs in English have a distinctive past form, (played, saw) and, semantically, the past tense basically refers to a situation that is prior to the present, as in *Yesterday was fine*.

According to Aitken (1992), the past simple is used to indicate:

- a. Past action:
  - With a time marker to express historical events: E.g.: I went to the dentist last week.
  - Narration: E.g.: My father died of a heart attack.
- b. Polite requests and enquiries: E.g.: I wondered whether you needed anything.
- c. 'If' clauses (conditional) to report hypothetical facts: E.g.: If I had enough time, I would finish earlier.

- **Future Simple**

Nelson (2001) reports that the future simple expresses an action or situation that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using the modal auxiliaries will/shall with the base of the verb.

Aitken (1992) specifies that the future tense is used:

- To signify predictions: E.g.: I will travel next Friday.
- Unplanned instant decisions: E.g.: I shall see my friend next week.

She explains that future events can be expressed by a number of combinations, such as:

- a. Semi-auxiliary 'be going to' which, in Aitken's terms, is used to indicate:
  - General plans or intentions: E.g.: I am going to buy that car.
  - Prediction of events on the basis of concrete evidence: E.g.: It is going to rain.
- b. Progressive auxiliary 'be' (in present) plus "-ing" verb form. This combination (present continuous) is used to express pre-arranged plans that are going to take place in the immediate future.

E.g.: I am having a bath in an hour.

- c. Present simple with a time marker to refer to "scheduled or regular timetabled events" and which are seen as certain (Aitken, 1992: 63).

E.g.: The plane takes off at three.

### 3.2.2 Progressive forms

- **Present Progressive**

Booth (2007) holds that the present progressive or the present continuous – formed by combining the auxiliary 'be' in the present simple with the verb form ending in "-ing" – is used to denote an ongoing action that is taking place at the same time the utterance is made.

Aitken (1992), on her side, provides a list of different uses of the present progressive:

- a. Temporary action: the action started before speech time, continues during speech time and is not yet complete.

E.g.: I am living in London.

- b. Temporary habit: though it expresses a continuous action, it does not imply that it is happening now.

E.g.<sub>1</sub>: I am watering his plants during his absence.

E.g.<sub>2</sub>: I am taking care of his dog while he is away.

- c. Future action: to denote already set arrangements and plans.

E.g.: I am leaving the office at six.

- d. With the verb 'hope': to formulate a more polite form in letters.

E.g.: I am hoping to see you soon.

- **Past progressive**

The past progressive – formed with 'be' in the past + Ving – is used to describe a continuous past action that was occurring while another past action took place or in relation to a point of time in the past (Penston, 2005).

Aitken (1992) explains that the past progressive may refer to:

- a. an action that started before a point of time, was in process at the point of time yet was not complete:

E.g.: I was reading last night at nine o'clock.

- b. an action began before another action in the past which interrupted the progressive action:

E.g.: I was watching TV while the door bell rang.

- c. an action with a specified period of duration:

E.g.: I was sleeping from 9 p.m. until 6 a.m.

- **Future Progressive**

The future progressive is used to describe an ongoing action that will happen in the future and is formed by using 'will be' or 'shall be' with the verb form ending in "-ing".

Aitken (1992) also mentions that this tense refers to:

a. an action that crosses a point of time in the future or has duration in the future:

E.g.: I will be explaining the lesson from 9 to 10.

b. an action defined by another one, usually in the present simple:

E.g.: I will be working when you arrive.

### 3.2.3 Perfective Forms

- **Present Perfect**

This tense – formed by putting the auxiliary 'have' in the present tense (has/have) with the past participle of the verb – is said to refer to an action that took place at an indefinite time in the past or that started in the past and carries on in the present.

Aitken summarises the definition of the present perfect saying that it "shows the present situation in relation to past action; that is, how the past is relevant to now"(1992: 23).

She identifies the use of the present perfect as:

a. an uncompleted action when the time marker refers to the past yet the results remain valid in the present.

E.g.: I have taught English since 2006.

b. a repeated or habitual action or truth.

E.g.: Women have voted since 1921.

c. an action which started in a specific period that is not finished.

E.g.: I have met my sister this evening.

d. an action which occurred in the past but has a relation with the present time.

E.g.: I have studied French.

e. with some time markers (already, just, yet, still, ever, and never).

E.g.1: I have already read the book.

E.g.2: She has just left the room.

E.g.<sub>3</sub>: I have never been to Italy.

- **Past Perfect**

Nelson (2001), and Downing and Locke (2006) hold that the past perfect is a tense which describes an event that happened in the past before another past event and which is formed by using the auxiliary 'have' in the past tense with the past participle of the main verb.

Aitken (1992) reports that it can be used:

a. to denote an action in the past that took place before a point of time also in the past usually following 'by'.

E.g.<sub>1</sub>: By the time the troops arrived, the war had ended.

E.g.<sub>2</sub>: By one o'clock, he had cooked lunch.

b. to order past actions (mainly one in the past simple and the other in the past perfect) using 'before', 'after' and 'when'; bearing in mind that the past perfect action is prior to the past simple action.

E.g.<sub>1</sub>: The taxi had arrived before he got dressed.

E.g.<sub>2</sub>: After she had done the washing, she drank a cup of tea.

E.g.<sub>3</sub>: I arrived when the train had left.

- **Future Perfect**

Santos (2004) argues that the future perfect – a kind of a past in the future – is used to refer to an action that will take place before some other action in the future; a kind of prediction that an action will be completed before some time in the future.

Aitken (1992: 87) says that this type of perfective form is used to indicate deductions of actions that they "have already taken place, which have a direct result upon a

present situation." However, in this case, there is no need to add a time marker; instead, the use of 'by now' or 'by this time' are required.

E.g.1: He will have finished writing the letter by now.

E.g.2: I will have left by this time.

### **3.2.4 Perfect Progressive Forms**

- **Present Perfect Progressive**

As it can be inferred from the name of the tense, it is basically used to express an action that began in the past, continues in the present, and may carry on into the future. As far as the form of this tense is concerned, the rule dictates that we should combine 'has/have been' with the present participle of the verb, i.e., the verb form ending in "-ing".

Aitken (1992: 29) reports that it " focuses on continuous or repeated activity, engaged in before the present, but relevant to it, and on the continuous duration of that activity." The action expressed via this type of tense is temporary and used to draw attention mainly to:

a. the repeated nature of an action:

E.g.: I have been learning English for ten years.

b. the continuous nature of an action:

E.g.: I have been living here since 1983.

- **Past Perfect Progressive**

The past perfect progressive is used for an action that happened in the past, but has the characteristic of being continuous; yet, it is completed before some other action that took place also in the past (Nelson, 2001).

Aitken (1992) explains that this tense describes a past action in relation to other past time, as well as emphasises its ongoing nature.

The past perfect progressive is formed by using the auxiliary 'have' in the past (had) plus the past participle of the auxiliary 'be' (been) followed by the present participle of the main verb (V-ing).

E.g.: He had been cleaning the car for over an hour before he realised it was the wrong one.

- **Future Perfect Progressive**

The future perfect progressive is used to indicate a future continuous action that is expected to occur prior to a specified future time (either a definite point of time or another action in the future). According to Aitken (1992: 91), the future perfect continuous is chosen in a sentence in order to denote the "predicted duration of an event, viewed from a future time"; that is, a point of time is specified or determined in the future from which a prior action is perceived, i.e., started before it, and is developing towards that point and may cross it while the duration is emphasised usually explicitly.

It is formed through a combination of the expression 'will have been' and the present participle of the verb (-ing).

E.g.: By the time you get here, I will have been working for an hour.

### **3.3 Teaching Tenses Through Cooperative Learning**

Foreign language learning/teaching has shifted towards encouraging learners' responsibility for their own learning process and creating self-independence in them through equipping teachers with tools and methods to change their attitudes and to perform slightly new roles which cooperative learning techniques suggest. Because the ultimate goal of teaching/learning a language other than the mother tongue is to enable learners to use it in situations and contexts other than classrooms (i.e., for communication purposes), a recent view has emerged to suggest that a mastery of the grammatical system of a language is paramount and necessary for the sake of becoming fluent language users. For that

reason, a combination of a form-focused and meaning-focused instruction would result in teaching English grammar in general and English tenses in particular according to CL or group work principles which are part of and rely mainly on the Task-based Approach. We need our learners to become able to learn explicitly grammar rules as well as have a chance to practise this knowledge through tasks which require them to support and help each other.

Field (2000) reports that implicit or explicit teaching of any grammatical point; in this case English tenses; cannot be seen to be effective unless learners are given sufficient exposure and ample opportunities to produce the target language. This could be realised if the teacher assigns his/her students to pairs or small groups to work out together a particular grammatical problem. In this sense, according to Willis (1996), learners are assigned a task which consists of three basic stages.

First, an introduction to the topic and the task takes place. In this phase, the objectives and instructions to be followed are made clear so that each student knows to which group s/he belongs, the role s/he has to complete, the outcome to be achieved, and the time set for the whole group work. The teacher makes sure that positive interdependence and face-to-face promotive interaction are adequately established. Learners have to understand from the beginning that their joint efforts lead to the group's success and goals' achievement. They need to realise that without the mutual help of each other, they cannot find out the form and the different uses of the tense that is meant to be studied. For instance, if one learner misses the clues that lead and facilitate the identification of a given tense form, his/her group-mates draw his/her attention by helping and clearing ambiguities for him/her. Every team-member has to achieve the common goal, especially if there is a reward. In this stage, learners can be assigned a specific role; one can identify the forms, one can determine the use, another can jot down the findings,

and the other can report the group's work. Once all this is set, in the next stage, students are likely to interact, communicate and talk to each other.

In the second phase, students are asked to carry out the task in hand in pairs or small groups depending on the degree of difficulty and complexity of the activity, with the help and guidance of the teacher. They can be given a text or sentences illustrating a given tense to draw their attention to that pattern, and are, then, asked as a group to find it and to formulate its rule. Group members may divide the work among them and then share their findings or help one another to figure out what the answers are. While working together, they should be given the chance to discover new information and explain for each other ambiguities – unless they fail to, the teacher intervenes – so that the knowledge obtained by themselves is probably easy to remember. Doing this ensures face-to-face interaction which is the building rock of CL. In other words, learners interact with each other, discuss the tense intended to be studied (i.e., talk about grammar), express the meaning in each example and try to find out the rule governing this tense (the form, where and when to use it). When learners agree on a final version of the answer, they share their findings with the whole class for correction and feedback. It is during this stage that learners within their groups apply and use the interpersonal and social skills where they have to respect each other's view, negotiate information in a friendly way and solve disagreements peacefully for the good of the whole group.

In the last phase, students are provided the opportunity of being exposed to explicit language acquisition, i.e., they are given direct explanations of the rule to avoid any kind of confusion later. Following this, learners in the same groups start applying their newly acquired knowledge on the activities in which they have to analyse, identify and figure out the different uses of the previously studied tense. The activities may be of the kind of filling in the blanks of a text or multiple choice answers for isolated meaningful sentences.

Moreover, students can be given communication or interactive activities (dialogue, interview) where they have to talk or write to each other using the tense explained formerly under the teacher's supervision. These activities would be better if they are related to topics in which they are interested or already know about; so they will gain the ability and the skill of recognising and using this tense when encountered in other contexts. Willis (1996) explains that the type of activities that learners are assigned in order to work in a group are explicitly-focused on language form and use. She goes on further to say that giving learners different examples of a particular tense offers new insight into its meanings and uses. This phase can help them cover the different cases and exceptions a tense can have. During group work, the teacher goes around the groups, guides and helps learners if necessary but should "[l]et them think for themselves. They need to test their own hypotheses and make their own discoveries" (Willis, 1996: 103). While doing this, s/he observes the members that are active in each group and the individuals that are making more efforts than others, checks their understanding and asks students individually to report the group work in order to ensure individual accountability. By the end of the session, the teacher devotes some time to group processing in which group members discuss their efforts and see how well they have achieved the set objectives.

It is important for teachers to know that a good presentation of a new grammatical structure (tense) should include both oral and written forms as well as meaning. It is also necessary for learners to have the opportunity to study plenty of contextualized examples of that tense in order to understand. Furthermore, teachers should cover a great deal of possible instances that learners may encounter without forgetting to draw their attention to the exceptions that are available, yet, instructors may avoid going into much detail that may lead to confusion.

The teacher himself/herself decides on whether the tense should be presented explicitly or implicitly. This depends on the class situation and the nature of the tense. If the learners can perceive and deduce the rule themselves easily and quickly, the teacher, then, should let them free in discovering and building their knowledge. But, if they face problems in working alone and waste valuable class time, it is preferable to give the rule directly.

### **Conclusion**

It is believed that learning verb tenses is one of the most important tasks in any language learning. Therefore, a good presentation of this feature is required; a clear explanation of both form and use of each tense is needed, and enough practice is essential. Teachers need to afford opportunities for their students to talk about tenses, discuss the various uses of each, discover new information alone, help their group-mates understand the task in hand, and, thus, participate to the benefit of the whole and the individual.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Teaching English Tenses Through Cooperative Learning**

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## **Chapter Four**

### **Teaching English Tenses Through Cooperative Learning**

#### **Introduction**

Most foreign language learners, in the Department of English at Mentouri University of Constantine, seem to have serious problems with the English tense system. They are most of the time confused by the number of tenses used to express time in English as well as the different forms and uses of each; consequently, they perform poorly whether in writing or in speaking.

In an attempt to find remedial strategies and to ameliorate their academic achievement, this experimental study has been carried out to examine the effects of CL as discussed in Chapter Two on the students' performance while using English tenses. In other words, this study investigates the effectiveness of a teaching technique suggested to one group during tense use learning, while the other group is taught the same content but required to work individually all the time. Through this new technique, we shall try to answer the following questions: Does CL have a positive impact on students' performance when using English tenses or not? Is working in pairs or groups more effective than working individually?

#### **4.1 The Sample**

The selection of participants included the selection of one teacher (in this case the researcher herself with an experience of 4 years of teaching grammar at the department of English at Mentouri University, Constantine), and two groups out of twenty of EFL Second Year LMD students taught by the researcher.

The size of the sample could have been enlarged in order to be more representative and to be able to generalise conclusions; however, because of time constraints and feasibility of research, it was limited to the two groups the researcher was in charge of.

The subjects form one class standing as the Experimental Group and one class representing the Control Group of equal size. The total number in each is 32 students; with 11 boys and 21 girls in the Experimental Group, and 8 boys and 24 girls in the Control Group. The participants come from different regions of Algeria with an average of 6 to 7 years of English studies during the Middle and Secondary schools and one year at the university. Their age range varies between 18 and 25. The main reason for the choice of Second Year students was based on the fact that they have already been introduced to English grammar and English tenses in the first year of their three years' LMD curriculum.

#### 4.2 The Test

The test which was given to the students consists of the following activity:

Put the verbs between brackets in the right tense.

John has always travelled a lot. In fact, he was only two years old when he first flew to London. His mother is Italian and his father is American. John was born in France, but his parents had met in Germany after they ..... (to live) there for five years. They met one day while John's father ..... (to read) a book in the library and his mother was sitting down beside him.

As a matter of fact, John ..... (to visit) his parents in France at the moment. He lives in London now, but has been visiting his parents for the past few weeks. He really... .. (to love) coming to visit them at least once a year.

This year he ..... (to fly) over 50 times for his job. He ..... (to work) for the same company for almost two years now. He is sure that he ..... (to work) for them next year as well. His job requires a lot of travel. In fact, by the end of this year, he ..... (to travel) over 120 times. His next journey ..... (to be) to Australia.

John was talking with his parents earlier this morning when his wife from London ..... (to telephone) to let him know that the company he is working with ..... (to decide) to merge with another one in Australia after two months of negotiations. Of course, this means that John will have to catch the next plane back to London. He will be meeting with his team at this time tomorrow.

Adapted from English Tenses Review for Advanced Level English ESL EFL TESL TOEFL Classes. *About.com* [http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blgr\\_tenses.htm](http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blgr_tenses.htm)  
June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**List of deleted words:**

1. had been living (PPerf.C)
2. was reading (PC)
3. is visiting (Pr.C)
4. loves (Pr.S)
5. has flown (Pr.Pref.S)
6. has been working (Pr.Perf.C)
7. will be working (FC)
8. will have travelled (Fperf.S)
9. will be (FS)
10. telephoned (PS)
11. had decided (PPerf.S)

The instrument used in the current study is a pre-test and a post-test meant to determine the learners' performance and improvement in using English tenses. This instrument was designed, first, to discover how students are efficient in trying to find out the appropriate verb form that matches the appropriate tense in a given context, to determine whether they know the correct form of all tenses (before and after the treatment), and, finally, to see if the use of the new technique of teaching has brought about some satisfactory results after a specific period of time.

The pre-test and post-test are identical and consist of a cloze procedure activity where both groups have been required to give the correct form of the verbs put in the infinitive between parentheses in a set of interrelated sentences. A text was chosen and adapted from an online source, with 11 blanks including all the English tenses, except for the future perfect continuous (FPerf.C) which is regarded as a very rare tense used by native speakers, and no other possible modification could be opted for to add this

tense to the text. The text of the test was opted for because it reflected the main uses of the twelve chosen tenses to be studied during the 6 weeks, except the FPerf.C.

The pre-test was administered before any instruction about English tenses was given, and the participants were not informed about the research. They were told that the activity is meant to evaluate their awareness about the use and the form of the English tenses; i.e., to see how well they achieve in tense use. They were also given the instruction that each tense should be used only one time. The pre-test was administered in one session of the usual grammar classes and lasted 45 minutes.

The post-test was given after six weeks of CL instruction (2 sessions per week of one hour and a half each) for the Experimental Group. It consisted of the same text to evaluate the students' progress and to see whether the selected new technique – cooperative learning – has resulted in some positive effects or not.

### **4.3 Instruction**

The instructional design of CL for the Experimental Group was integrated within the students' regular lessons about the English tenses. The teaching instructions and activities presented to the Experimental Group required cooperation of group members and mutual help to achieve common goals (e.g., writing a dialogue), whereas those applied in the Control Group necessitate individual work and effort. The treatment lasted one month and a half. The teaching procedures involved three lessons entitled: **The Present Simple (Pr.S)/ The Present Continuous (Pr.C); The Past Simple (PS)/ The Past Continuous (PC)/ The Past Perfect Simple (PPerf.S)/ The Past Perfect Continuous (PPerf.C)/ The Present Perfect Simple (Pr.Perf.S)/ The Present Perfect Continuous (Pr.Perf.C); The Future Simple (FS)/ The Future Continuous (FC)/ The Future Perfect Simple (FPerf.S)/ The Future Perfect Continuous (FPerf.C)**. This structure was based on the time line division; however, the

Pr.Pref.S/Pr.Perf.C were grouped with the past section in order to be compared to and distinguished from the past tenses.

#### **4.3.1 The Experimental Group**

The objectives of teaching tenses through CL to the Experimental Group are to help them perform better in exams and in everyday use and to make them aware of the advantages of assisting a classmate and being assisted. The Experimental Group was subject to CL instruction where the teacher/researcher presented the three lessons which on their turn consisted of three parts named examples, instruction, and practice (see Appendix).

##### **– Lesson one: The Present Simple/ The Present Continuous (Pr.S/Pr.C)**

The first lesson lasted four teaching sessions. It dealt with two tenses; the Pr.S and the Pr.C.

At the beginning, we informed the students about what the lesson was about and how they were going to proceed to achieve a given goal – to be able to know the different uses and form of the two tenses and to use them correctly. We dictated the first part of the lesson; the examples which covered the most known uses of each tense.

The first part consisted of pair work activity. In order to turn the traditional classroom into a CL context, we divided the students into pairs based on their way of sitting. We asked the pairs to study the examples carefully, name the tense used in each sentence, and then give its form and its use according to the context. We emphasised the importance of each student's opinion, encouraged them to ask for help from their mates and respect each other. All this was said before they started working together. After that, the students decided on what roles to perform (recorder, reporter), discussed the task in hand, and helped each other while we moved around the class for help and to check that everyone was doing his/her job. After ten minutes, the findings were

revealed to us and to the entire class for discussion and correction. Stress was put on both form and use, and attention was drawn to take into account the words and expressions utilised in each sentence that revealed which tense and what it was used for.

The second part of the lesson, the instruction, provided more explanation about the different uses studied previously in the examples. It gave the students a clear description of the form and the different major uses of, first, the Pr.S and, second, the Pr.C, together with the few uses that are rarely used and are not familiar to students.

The third part of the lesson dealt with the practice where students were given the opportunity to verify together their understanding of the lesson. This part consisted of three exercises. The first one required the students to cooperate again with each other to generate one example illustrating each case studied in the second part of the lesson. The second one was a text with deleted verbs which each pair had to find their corresponding form taking into consideration their use in that particular context. As far as the last exercise was concerned, each pair is expected to write a common paragraph or two in which they described an ordinary day or week in their life trying to use both tenses of lesson one.

**– Lesson two: The Past Simple/ The Past Continuous/ The Past Perfect Simple/ The Past Perfect Continuous/ The Present Perfect Simple/ The Present Perfect Continuous (PS/PC/PPerf.S/PPerf.C/ Pr.Perf.S/Pr.Perf.C)**

This lesson is characterised by being the longest one as compared to the first and third lessons because it deals with a larger number of tenses, mainly the past. It lasted five sessions. The two first parts of the lesson are similar to the two first parts of lesson one making sure that the questions are answered through pair discussion. The third part contains three exercises, too. In exercise one, students in pairs were asked to give

examples for the previously studied situations (forms and uses) of each tense. The second exercise contained two short conversations and a small passage where pairs needed to fill in the gaps with a conjugated verb in one of the tenses dealt with in this lesson, and where they had to keep in mind that they needed each other to complete the exercise. In the last exercise, the pairs were asked to narrate an event that has happened to them or to an acquaintance using the tenses studied in this lesson.

**– Lesson three: The Future Simple/ The Future Continuous/ The Future Perfect Simple/ The Future Perfect Continuous (FS/FC/ FPerf.S/FPerf.C)**

The last lesson, which took three sessions, represents the future time. It is similar to the preceding lessons in terms of the first and second parts. As for the practice, the first exercise is identical to the one in practice of lessons one and two, whereas the second one consists of short passages to be completed in pairs with verbs conjugated in their appropriate form that matches the right use. In the last exercise, the pairs were asked to produce an interview asking one another about their future life and plans in order to give them the chance to use such tenses.

**4.3.2 The Control Group**

The Control Group was subject to the usual training where the teacher/researcher presents the lessons and plays the major role in the learning classroom; i.e., being responsible for the students' learning process. Furthermore, it has received the same instruction (content) as the Experimental Group, except where it comes to the way followed to find out the answers to the questions of part one and part three of each lesson (exercises). Here, the students have been asked to work individually, and there was no room for cooperation.

#### 4.4 Analysis of the Results of the Pre-test

##### 4.4.1 The Experimental Group

The analysis of the results of the Experimental Group in the pre-test show that all the students were unable to find the right tense for blank 1 (had been living). The other tenses scored varying degrees of percentages, as is shown in Table 1.

Deleted Word	Right Answer		Wrong Answer	
	N	%	N	%
<b>1.Had been living (PPerf.C)</b>			32	<b>100</b>
<b>2.Was reading (PC)</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>3.Is visiting (Pr.C)</b>	13	<b>40.62</b>	19	<b>59.38</b>
<b>4.Loves (Pr.S)</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>5.Has flown (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>
<b>6.Has been working (Pr.Perf.C)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>7.Will be working (FC)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>8.Will have travelled (FPerf.S)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>
<b>9.Will be (FS)</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>10.Telephoned (PS)</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>
<b>11.Had decided (PPerf.S)</b>	08	<b>25</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 1: Overall Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test**

According to Table 1, there were 81.25% of the students who have answered correctly using the Pr.S in its right place. In addition, nearly half of the students (40.62%) have conjugated the verb 'to visit' in its right tense (Pr.S). Only a minority has been able to write the Pr.Perf.S (04 students) and the Pr.Perf.C (02 students) in their corresponding blanks.

Table 1 also shows that very high percentages of correct answers have been obtained in the PC (90.62%) and the PS (87.50%). A quarter of the students have been capable of finding the PPerf.S and writing it in its correct place.

Moreover, the results in this table show that almost all the students (30) have found the FS, whereas only a few (02) have written the FC in its corresponding blank and one student has given the FPerf.S.

The following represents the analysis of the results per blank; however, we shall focus only on the most significant and interesting wrong answers of the students.

– **Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

Thirty two students have provided a diversity of wrong answers instead of the PPerf.C with varying percentages, as is shown in Table 2.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Had lived (PPerf.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Lived (PS)</b>	20	<b>62.50</b>
<b>Have lived (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Live (Pr.S)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>Total</b>	32	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

According to the results of Table 2, the majority of the students (62.50%) have opted for the PS. This suggests that although the students have identified the time of the action (the past), they have been unable to order two past actions on the axis of time. We believe that this answer was given because the students have been able to recognise that the paragraph is a narrative one, and, thus, the PS is the most suitable tense to be used in this case.

In addition, 21.88% of the students have provided different forms of verbs that are not considered to be part of the English language (such as had been left, had be live), because they did not know how to form the PPerf.C.

It is worth noting that two students have filled in the blank with the PPerf.S which appears to be a logical answer and which could be accepted in this context; however, this answer is not considered right because students were given the instruction, before taking the test, that each tense fits only one blank or that no tense should be used twice. In most cases where the PPerf.S was given as an answer, it was used another time.

– **Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

Only three students out of 32 have not been able to provide the PC in its right place as Table 3 shows.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Read (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Total</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>

**Table 3: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

Table 3 shows that two respondents have given the PS as an option because they have not been able to recognise that it refers to an action which was taking place at the same time while another one was occurring.

– **Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

Table 4 presents the students' wrong answers to blank 3 with different degrees of percentages.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Visits (Pr.S)</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>Visited (PS)</b>	09	<b>28.13</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Total</b>	19	<b>53.38</b>

**Table 4: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

According to Table 4, we notice that a considerable number of students (28.13%) have given the PS instead of the Pr.C. This may be due to the fact that the students do not pay attention to 'clue words' or 'time markers', such as 'at the moment'. Moreover, 21.88% of the students have opted for the Pr.S, believing that it is a completed action; while it is not.

– **Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

Not all the students have been able to find the Pr.S, as it appears in Table 5.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Loved (PS)</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>

**Table 5: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

Here, 18.75% reflects the percentage of the students who have answered using the PS instead of the Pr.S. This may refer to the fact that students do not pay attention to the context of the sentence. In other words, the students have not taken into consideration the expression 'once a year' which refers to a habitual action.

– **Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

Almost all the students have not been able to give the correct answer and have written a variety of wrong answers instead of the Pr.Perf.S, with different percentages, as Table 6 shows.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Flows (Pr.S)</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Is flowing (Pr.C)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Flew (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>Total</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>

**Table 6: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

In Table 6, we notice that half the students (50%) have given a completely unacceptable verb form. This may suggest that the Pr.Perf.S represents an area of difficulty for a large number of students and that most of them have not been able to give the right form of the past participle of the verb "to flow".

It also reveals that a quarter of the students (25%) have opted for the Pr.S as an answer most probably because of the time marker "this year".

– **Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

The results presented in Table 7 reveal that the students do not know how to form the Pr.Perf.C as well as do not know when to use it.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Has worked(Pr.Perf.S)</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>Works (Pr.S)</b>	11	<b>34.38</b>
<b>Is working (Pr.C)</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>
<b>Worked (PS)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>

**Table 7: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

According to Table 7, the majority of the students (34.38% and 31.25%) have answered either using the Pr.S or the Pr.C for the same reason, we presume, as in the previous blank; i.e., because of the time marker "now". This means that students, most of the time, do not take into account the context of the sentence and do not relate it to the whole paragraph in which it appears.

– **Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

Table 8 reveals that the majority of the students have given a wrong answer.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will work (FS)</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>
<b>Works (Pr.S)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>

**Table 8: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

As it can be seen in Table 8, 87.50% of the group have opted for the FS instead of the FC. We believe the causes of these results are the same as for the previous blanks; i.e., because of the time marker "next year".

– **Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

As Table 9 shows, almost all the students have given a wrong answer because they are not familiar with the FPerf.S.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will travel (FS)</b>	09	<b>28.12</b>
<b>Will be travelling(FC)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Travelled (PS)</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>

**Table 9: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

According to Table 9, 28.12% of the students have used the FS. We presume that those students have been able to relate the meaning of the first sentence of the third

paragraph (of the text) to the sentence which should be completed with the FPerf.S, i.e., they have discovered that it is about the future. In other words, the students have realised that 'John' has flown 50 times this year and that before the end of the same year, he will have flown 120 times; however, they have not figured out that in order to express this action, they need to use the FPerf.S.

Table 9 also shows that 10 students have thought of the PS to be an option though there is no indicator of time which refers to the past.

– **Blank 9: will be (FS)**

The results shown in Table 10 do not seem unusual and are not surprising because almost all students have provided the right answer, the FS.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>

**Table 10: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 9: will be (FS)**

Two students have given a meaningless form. This can only be because they do not know the right form of the FS.

– **Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

No explanation is provided for blank 10 because there is no significant answer worth mentioning, as it appears in Table 11.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>

**Table 11: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

The table shows that only 04 students were not able to realise that the tense to be used in this part of the text refers to a past action interrupting another one of a continuous nature in the past.

– **Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

The results of Table 12 show that a large number of students have provided various wrong answers.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Decided (PS)</b>	19	<b>59.38</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>Total</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 12: Results of the Experimental Group in the Pre-test for Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

It appears from Table 12 that more than half of the students (59.38%) have suggested the PS as a wrong answer; probably, because the students have forgotten to order the actions of the sentence and have thought that the writer is only narrating a series of past events.

**4.4.2 The Control Group**

Considering the results of the Control Group obtained in the pre-test, we notice that all the students have failed to give the PPerf.C and the FPerf.S. The other tenses were provided with varying degrees of percentages, as it appears in Table 13.

Deleted Word	Right Answer		Wrong Answer	
	N	%	N	%
<b>1.Had been living</b> (PPerf.C)			32	<b>100</b>
<b>2.Was reading(PC)</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>
<b>3.Is visiting(Pr.C)</b>	12	<b>37.50</b>	20	<b>62.50</b>
<b>4.Loves(Pr.S)</b>	25	<b>78.12</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>5.Has flown (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>
<b>6.Has been working</b> (Pr.Perf.C)	02	<b>06.25</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>7.Will be working (FC)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>8.Will have travelled(F</b> <b>Perf.S)</b>			32	<b>100</b>
<b>9.Will be(FS)</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>10.Telephoned(PS)</b>	27	<b>84.38</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>11.Had decided</b> (PPerf.S)	08	<b>25</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 13. Overall Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test**

According to Table 13, 78.12% of the students have found the Pr.S while only 37.50% have answered correctly by writing the Pr.C in its right place. However, a very small number of students have been able to give the Pr.Perf.S (09.37%) and the Pr.Perf.C (06.25%).

Table 13 also shows that a great number of students have been able to write the PC (87.50%) and the PS (84.38%) in their corresponding blank. Only a quarter of the students have found the PPerf.S.

In addition, almost all the students (30) have provided the FS while only 02 students have used the FC in its right place.

– **Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

Table 14 presents a diversity of wrong answers with varying percentages, which have been provided instead of the PPerf.C.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Had lived (PPerf.S)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Lived (PS)</b>	22	<b>68.75</b>
<b>Were living (PC)</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>Have lived (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	32	<b>100</b>

**Table 14: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

Table 14 reveals that the majority of the students (68.75%) have opted for the PS, believing that the writer is only narrating events. Only one student has suggested a possible answer but unacceptable because of the activity's instruction, i.e., the PPerf.S is a correct answer, but should be used elsewhere.

– **Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

As for blank 2, there is no explanation for the students' wrong answers because, in this case, 04 students have written meaningless forms such as 'red' and 'reading' (Table 15).

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>

**Table 15: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

– **Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

The results shown in Table 16 reveal that the students probably do not pay attention to time markers.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Visits (Pr.S)</b>	09	<b>28.13</b>
<b>Visited (PS)</b>	09	<b>28.13</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	20	<b>62.50</b>

**Table 16: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

From Table 16, we note that a considerable number of students (28.13%) have opted for the PS – though there is an indicator of time that refers to an action happening at the present time and that it is still ongoing – and the same number of students have opted for the Pr.S, considering the action as being complete.

– **Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

21.88% of the students have not identified the right answer (Pr.S) and have written the PS instead, as it appears in Table 17.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Loved (PS)</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>

**Table 17: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

The students have not been able to notice that the whole paragraph is about the present time and that the verb of the sentence expresses some kind of personal and habitual truth.

– **Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

The majority of the students have missed the right answer because the use of the Pr.Perf.S is a bit confusing for most of them. They have suggested numerous wrong answers, as presented in Table 18.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Flows (Pr.S)</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Is flowing (Pr.C)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	20	<b>62.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>

**Table 18: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

As it is shown in Table 18, a quarter of the group has suggested the Pr.S as an answer and one student has opted for the Pr.C, most probably, because of the presence of the time marker "this year". Additionally, more than half of the students (62.50%)

have written meaningless forms because the students have demonstrated that they do not know the past participle of the irregular verb "to fly".

– **Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

The Pr.Perf.C was somehow a little bit difficult to find for almost all the students.

This is why they have suggested a variety of wrong answers as Table 19 shows.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Works (Pr.S)</b>	14	<b>43.75</b>
<b>Is working (Pr.C)</b>	11	<b>34.38</b>
<b>Worked (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>

**Table 19: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

It appears from Table 19 that 43.75% and 34.38% of the students have been mistaken by the time marker "now"; this is why they have used the Pr.S and the Pr.C, respectively, instead of the Pr.Perf.C. The 03 students who have given meaningless forms did not know how to form the PPerf.C.

– **Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

The following table shows that the majority of the students tend to opt for the simple verb forms than the continuous or the perfective ones.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will work (FS)</b>	27	<b>84.37</b>
<b>Works (Pr.S)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>

**Table 20: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

84.37% of the students have believed that the FS could be a possible answer to blank 7, because we presume that the students believe that whenever they find the time marker "next year", they use the FS. They have not thought about the nature of the action or whether there has been a focus on the continuity of the action or not.

**– Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

No explanation is worth mentioning for blank 8 because all the students have not been able to find the FPerf.S. Most of them have not known how to form this tense and when to use it; because we believe that they are not familiar with it. The students' wrong answers varied between the FS and the PS while a considerable number has given insignificant forms, as is shown in Table 21.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will travel (FS)</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>Travelled (PS)</b>	12	<b>37.50</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	13	<b>40.62</b>
<b>Total</b>	32	<b>100</b>

**Table 21: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

– **Blank 9: will be (FS)**

The number of correct answers to blank 9 was not very surprising because of the clear context and the simplicity of the sentence; thus, only a very small number of students has not filled in the blank with the right tense as it is shown in Table 22.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>

**Table 22: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 9: will be (FS)**

A tiny percentage (06.25%) reflects the number of the students who have provided insignificant verb forms because they, simply, did not know how to form the FS. One student has written 'will to be' and the other has given 'will has'.

– **Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

Table 23 shows that only 04 students have used the PC because they have thought that the verb expresses an action happening at the same time while the other one was taking place.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Was telephoning (PC)</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Total</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>

**Table 23: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

– **Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

Three fourths of the group have answered incorrectly and have not been able to find the PPerf.S, as the table below shows.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Decided (PS)</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 24: Results of the Control Group in the Pre-test for Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

It appears from Table 24 that half the students (50%) have suggested the PS as a possible answer; we presume that the students have considered the action as being part of narrating a series of events, forgetting to order the actions happening in the same sentence. In addition, a quarter of the group (25%) has completed the sentence with meaningless forms, because, in most cases, the students have been unable to form correctly the PPerf.S.

#### **4.5 Analysis of the Results of the Post-test**

##### **4.5.1 The Experimental Group**

Table 25 gives a general idea about the performance of the students of the Experimental Group after six weeks of CL instruction. The results reveal that almost, in all cases, more than half of the students have answered correctly to the blanks of the text, as it appears in Table 25.

Deleted Word	Right Answer		Wrong Answer	
	N	%	N	%
<b>1.Had been living (PPerf.C)</b>	19	<b>59.38</b>	13	<b>40.62</b>
<b>2.Was reading(PC)</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>3.Is visiting(Pr.C)</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>4.Loves(Pr.S)</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>5.Has flown (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	15	<b>46.87</b>	17	<b>53.13</b>
<b>6.Has been working (Pr.Perf.C)</b>	24	<b>75</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>7.Will be working (FC)</b>	16	<b>50</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>8.Will have travelled (FPerf.S)</b>	17	<b>53.13</b>	15	<b>46.87</b>
<b>9.Will be (FS)</b>	32	<b>100</b>		
<b>10.Telephoned(PS)</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>11.Had decided (PPerf.S)</b>	24	<b>75</b>	08	<b>25</b>

**Table 25: Overall Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test**

The results in Table 25 reveal that almost all the students (30) have put the Pr.S and the Pr.C in their right place, whereas 24 students have found the Pr.Perf.C and 15 students have written the Pr.Perf.S in its corresponding blank.

Table 25 also shows that 96.87% of the students have been able to answer correctly using the PC and the PS. Moreover, 75% of the students have found the PPerf.S while only 59.87% have provided the PPerf.C.

In addition, it appears from the table that all the members of the group have written the FS in its right place. Half the students have answered correctly using the FC and 53.13% have found the FPerf.S.

– **Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

The wrong answers of the students provided instead of the PPerf.C vary in percentages, as is shown in Table 26.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Lived (PS)</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>
<b>Were living (PC)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	07	<b>21.87</b>
<b>Total</b>	13	<b>40.62</b>

**Table 26: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

According to this table, 12.50% of the students have answered using the PS, thinking that the past simple action could be placed before the past perfect action on the axis of time.

– **Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

Concerning Table 27, we see that in the post-test only one student has not been able to find the correct answer and has given an insignificant verb form, because s/he has not formed the PC accurately.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>

**Table 27: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

– **Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

Table 28 shows that only 06.25% of the students have filled in blank 3 with the Pr.S, because, most probably, they still think that the verb refers to a complete action happening at the present time.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Visits (Pr.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>

**Table 28: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

– **Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

Concerning blank 4, as Table 29 shows, a minority (06.25%) has suggested the PS instead of the Pr.S, for no reason.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Loved (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>

**Table 29: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

– **Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

The Pr.Perf.S still seems to be problematic for more than half of the students; they have suggested various wrong answers differing in percentages, as is shown in Table 30.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Flows (Pr.S)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Flew (PS)</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	09	<b>28.13</b>
<b>Total</b>	17	<b>53.13</b>

**Table 30: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

Three students still think that the Pr.S is the correct answer, most probably, because of the time marker "this year". In addition, 05 others have believed that the blank could be filled in with the PS; we presume that the students have used this tense because they have been aware of the fact that the action is complete, yet, they have unintentionally forgotten that the period of time "this year" extends up to the present time and is not yet finished. In addition, 28.13% of the students have given a meaningless form of the Pr.Perf.S, because it has been observed that students during the period of the research seem to have serious problems with the past form of irregular verbs.

**– Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

No explanation is provided for blank 6 because the students, who have given wrong answers (Table 31), have suggested a variety of insignificant forms that do not exist in the English language.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
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<b>Worked (PS)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>Total</b>	08	<b>25</b>

**Table 31: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

– **Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

Half of the students have not been able to find the FC, as it appears in Table 32.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will work (FS)</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	16	<b>50</b>

**Table 32: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

As it is shown in the table, 25% of the students have written the FS instead of the FC, because the students have not been aware of the fact that the action will be taking place at this time next year. They have not thought about the continuity of the action at that time.

– **Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

Almost half of the students have missed the right tense (FPerf.S) because of their unfamiliarity with its form and use, i.e., they rarely use it.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Travelled (PS)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>

<b>Meaningless form</b>	12	<b>37.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	15	<b>46.87</b>

**Table 33: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

Considering Table 33, 37.50% have not been able to form the tense in a correct way. Most of the students who have given a wrong answer have identified that the verb expresses a perfective action in the future; however, they have failed to give the right form of the FPerf.S.

– **Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

No explanation is provided for blank 10 because only one student out of 32 (as it appears in Table 34) has suggested a meaningless form.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>

**Table 34: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

– **Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

No significant wrong answer has been obtained and seems to be worth explaining.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Decided (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>

<b>Meaningless form</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>Total</b>	08	<b>25</b>

**Table 35: Results of the Experimental Group in the Post-test for Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

Table 35 shows that 18.75% of the students have provided insignificant answers such as "deciding".

#### **4.5.2 The Control Group**

The results of the Control Group obtained in the post-test reveal that 31 students have put the PC in its right place, whereas the other tenses have been used with different degrees of percentages, as is presented in Table 36.

<b>Deleted Word</b>	<b>Right Answer</b>		<b>Wrong Answer</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>

<b>1.Had been living (PPerf.C)</b>	08	<b>25</b>	24	<b>75</b>
<b>2.Was reading (PC)</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>3.Is visiting (Pr.C)</b>	16	<b>50</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>4.Loves (Pr.S)</b>	22	<b>68.75</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>
<b>5.Has flown (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>
<b>6.Has been working (Pr.Perf.C)</b>	16	<b>50</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>7.Will be working (FC)</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>	22	<b>68.75</b>
<b>8..Will have travelled (FPerf.S)</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>
<b>9.Will be (FS)</b>	25	<b>78.12</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>
<b>10.Telephoned (PS)</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>11.Had decided (PPerf.S)</b>	08	<b>25</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 36: Overall Results of the Control Group in the Post-test**

Table 36 reveals that the majority of the students have been able to answer successfully using the Pr.S (68.75%), the Pr.C (50%), and the Pr.Perf.C (50%). However, only a small number of the students (09.37%) have found the Pr.Perf.S.

It also shows that a great number of students (81.25%) have written the PS in its corresponding blank, whereas only a quarter of the subjects has been capable of providing the PPerf.S and the PPerf.C (25% each).

In addition, 78.12% of the students have used the FS in its right place, and only a few members have found the FC (31.25%) and the FPerf.S (18.75%).

– **Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

The students, who have answered wrongly to blank 1, have suggested numerous answers with varying degrees of percentages, as presented in Table 37.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Had lived (PPerf.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Were living (PC)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Have lived (Pr.Perf.S)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Lives (Pr.S)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	15	<b>46.88</b>
<b>Total</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 37: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 1: had been living (PPerf.C)**

Table 37 shows that 46.88% of the students have written insignificant verb forms, most probably, because they did not know how to form the PPerf.C, though they have been taught this during the period of the experimentation.

– **Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

No explanation is provided for blank 2 because only one student in the whole group has opted for the PS instead of the PC, as is shown in Table 38.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Read (PS)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>

**Table 38: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 2: was reading (PC)**

– **Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

Table 39 reflects the number of students who have not answered correctly to blank 3.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Visits (Pr.S)</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Visited (PS)</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	12	<b>37.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	16	<b>50</b>

**Table 39: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 3: is visiting (Pr.C)**

Among the 50% of the students who have provided a wrong answer, 09.37% have thought that the Pr.S fits the gap correctly, forgetting that the action is in process and that its period of time is not yet over. In addition, 37.50% of the students have used a meaningless form, not knowing how to combine the auxiliary 'be' in present with the present participle of the verb "to visit".

– **Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

A considerable number of students has not been able to place the Pr.S in blank 4, suggesting several wrong answers, as is presented in Table 40.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Loved (PS)</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Total</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>

**Table 40: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 4: loves (Pr.S)**

A quarter of the students has written the PS instead of the Pr.S because, we presume, they have considered the action as being no longer true at the present moment and they, most probably, have not paid attention to the expression "once a year".

– **Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

After six weeks of instruction about tenses, the Pr.Perf.S still represents a difficulty for almost all the students of the Control Group, as the results in Table 41 show.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Flows (Pr.S)</b>	14	<b>43.75</b>
<b>Flew (PS)</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>Total</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>

**Table 41: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 5: has flown (Pr.Perf.S)**

Almost half the students (14) still believe that the blank could be filled in with the Pr.S, because of the time marker "this year".

The PS has been found as an option for 31.25% of the students. This may suggest that the students have not noticed the presence of the time marker, too.

– **Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

Half the students have missed the Pr.Perf.C, and, instead, they have used other unacceptable answers, as it appears in Table 42.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Is working (Pr.C)</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>Worked (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	16	<b>50</b>

**Table 42: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 6: has been working (Pr.Perf.C)**

25% of the students have given a non-sense answer because they have been unable to form the tense correctly. In addition, 18.75% have conjugated the verb in the Pr.C as if the action did not start in the past, is continuing at the present time, and will probably carry on in the future.

– **Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

Twenty two students have completed the sentence containing the FC incorrectly and have opted for other choices, as presented in Table 43.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will work (FS)</b>	19	<b>59.38</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>
<b>Total</b>	22	<b>68.75</b>

**Table 43: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 7: will be working (FC)**

More than half of the group (19 students) has opted for the FS as an answer because students whenever they find the time marker "next year", they automatically think of the FS, without considering the action if it is ongoing or not.

– **Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

A great majority has answered wrongly to blank 8. The students have suggested various answers instead of the FPerf.S, as is shown in Table 44.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Will travel (FS)</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>
<b>Will be travelling(FC)</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>
<b>Travelled (PS)</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	14	<b>43.75</b>
<b>Total</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>

**Table 44: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 8: will have travelled (FPerf.S)**

43.75% of the students have written meaningless forms because they did not know how to form the tense.

– **Blank 9: will be (FS)**

No explanation is suggested to explain the insignificant answers provided for blank 9.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	07	<b>21.88</b>

**Table 45: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 9: will be (FS)**

– **Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

A very small number of students have not conjugated the verb "to telephone" in its right tense, and have provided different forms, as it can be seen in Table 46.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Was telephoning (PC)</b>	05	<b>15.62</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	01	<b>03.12</b>
<b>Total</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>

**Table 46: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 10: telephoned (PS)**

As it appears in Table 46, 15.62% of the students have opted for the PC instead of the PS because, most probably, they have considered the action to be paralleled with the preceding one.

– **Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

Table 47 shows the students' wrong answers provided instead of the PPerf.S.

<b>Wrong answer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Decided (PS)</b>	08	<b>25</b>
<b>Meaningless form</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>Total</b>	24	<b>75</b>

**Table 47: Results of the Control Group in the Post-test for Blank 11: had decided (PPerf.S)**

A quarter of the Control Group (25%) has not been able to find out that the PPerf.S is the right answer, and has opted for the PS because they have not thought about ordering the actions which are used in the sentence and have believed that it is just a matter of narrating a series of events. In the meantime, half the students (50%) has written meaningless forms.

#### 4.6 Interpretation and Summary of the Results

The results of the pre-test and the post-test of both the Experimental Group and the Control Group were grouped in Table 48. They were compared and analysed in order to draw conclusions.

Answers	Pre-test				Post-test			
	Control Group		Experimental Group		Control Group		Experimental Group	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>PPerf.C</b>	/	/	/	/	08	<b>25</b>	19	<b>59.38</b>
<b>PC</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>	29	<b>90.62</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>
<b>Pr.C</b>	12	<b>37.50</b>	13	<b>40.62</b>	16	<b>50</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>Pr.S</b>	25	<b>78.12</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>	22	<b>68.75</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>
<b>Pr.Perf.S</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>	04	<b>12.50</b>	03	<b>09.37</b>	15	<b>46.88</b>
<b>Pr.Perf.C</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	16	<b>50</b>	24	<b>75</b>
<b>FC</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	02	<b>06.25</b>	10	<b>31.25</b>	16	<b>50</b>
<b>FPerf.S</b>	/	/	01	<b>03.12</b>	06	<b>18.75</b>	17	<b>53.13</b>
<b>FS</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	30	<b>93.75</b>	25	<b>78.12</b>	32	<b>100</b>
<b>PS</b>	27	<b>84.38</b>	28	<b>87.50</b>	26	<b>81.25</b>	31	<b>96.87</b>
<b>PPerf.S</b>	08	<b>25</b>	08	<b>25</b>	08	<b>25</b>	24	<b>75</b>
<b>Means</b>	<b>04.28</b>		<b>04.47</b>		<b>05.34</b>		<b>08.41</b>	
<b>MD</b>	<b>0.19</b>				<b>03.06</b>			

**Table 48: Summary of the Results**

From Table 48, we can deduce that the students' performance in the Experimental Group and the Control Group, before any former teaching, leads us to say that the subjects are approximately of the same level in terms of achievement while answering a test and attempting to complete it with the right verb form. The number of correct answers obtained in the pre-test and the means of the two groups before the

experimentation ( $X_c = 4.28$  and  $X_e = 4.47$ ) reveal that the sample of the present study is almost homogeneous, with a mean difference of 0.19.

The scores of both groups in the pre-test also reveal that the students seem to have serious problems as far as the perfective forms are concerned (whether they are simple or continuous). In fact, there were 00% of correct answers in both groups to the first blank of the text, the PPerf.C. This may be due to the fact that the PPerf.C is not very common, and, thus, many students avoid using it and substitute it with the PS. As for the form of this tense, students in most cases confused it with the passive voice, because of the combination of the auxiliary "have" and the past participle of the verb "to be"; therefore, they ended up with forms similar to "had been lived". In addition, the Control Group has failed to provide the FPerf.S while the Experimental Group has attained a tiny percentage of correct answers (03.12%). The students have not been able to find this tense because they are not familiar with either its form or its use. As for the form, the presence of the modal "will" leads the students to think of the action as necessarily a simple future action, and, hence, replace the FPerf.S by the FS. On the other hand, concerning its use, they have found difficulties to perceive that the FPerf.S refers to a future action which should be completed before another future action or a point in future time. We presume that they have not yet developed the ability to perceive that actions in the future can be placed posterior or anterior to another action or a point of time in the future.

Moreover, the students in the two groups have performed poorly as far as the Pr.Perf.S and the Pr.Perf.C are concerned. This may suggest that they have failed to understand the concept of these tenses. That is, most students have difficulties in trying to relate one complete action to the time of speaking and, thus, substitute the PS; or in

trying to express an incomplete action that has started in the past but is still valid in the present and, hence, use the Pr.C instead.

Furthermore, almost all the participants in both groups have not been able to find the FC. The students avoid using this tense and opt for the simple form (FS) which may seem correct in some contexts but implies a different sequence. They tend to consider the action as a whole (complete) rather than to give emphasis on one of its different phases (beginning, middle, end).

Table 48 also shows that the students in both groups (almost in all cases) have progressed in the post-test, yet those in the Experimental Group have achieved better and have increased their scores after being exposed to CL principles for six weeks. Their performance has improved with varying percentages in using the tenses that have been taught to them (100% for FS, 96.88% for PC and PS, 93.75% for Pr.C and Pr.S, 75% for Pr.Perf.C and PPerf.S, 59.37% for PPerf.C, 53.13% for FPerf.S, 50% for FC, and 46.88% for Pr.Perf.S). In this sense, we can conclude that the majority of students have become able to solve some of their problems and to strengthen their weaknesses due to the mutual help they have given and received from each other and due to their joint efforts during the lessons. Accordingly, we can say that the cooperative learning technique suggested to the Experimental Group has contributed to the development of the students' comprehension of tenses and, therefore, is effective. However, it was noticed that the students in the Control Group still have some difficulty in the perfective aspect even though they have been exposed to some explicit teaching about that.

More importantly after comparing the two means of the post-test scores between the Experimental Group and the Control Group, we have found that the mean of the Experimental Group is significantly larger than the mean of the Control Group

( $X_e = 8.41 > X_c = 5.34$ ) with a considerable difference in mean which equals to 3.06. Consequently, the Experimental Group has performed better and has progressed due to the treatment. This conclusion is confirmed by the extremely low value of the  $t$ -test obtained. The value of the  $t$  test is:  $t = 4.2 \times 10^{-14} \ll 0.01$ ; it is practically equal to zero, i.e., the probability that the two means for the Experimental Group and the Control Group are statistically equal is practically impossible. Therefore, the satisfactory results of the Experimental Group obtained in the post-test are not due to chance, but are the consequence of the treatment that the group has been subject to during six weeks. Accordingly, we can conclude that working in pairs while learning English tenses is more effective than working individually.

#### **4.7 General Observations**

On the basis of the teacher/researcher informal observation of the students in the two groups during the experiment, we have noticed that the learners in the Control Group who have been working individually on all tasks have seemed to be very tense and competitive. They have been most of the time passive and reluctant to share their answers; which has led to the fact that the teaching/learning responsibility was only the role of the teacher in almost all activities. We have had to resort each time to appoint someone to answer the questions. We believe that the learners in this group felt more anxious about making mistakes in front of the whole class. On the other hand, the students in the Experimental Group were observed to be highly motivated in the task in hand and to be active through participating in group discussions and whole class discussions. During the first session of implementing CL, the pairs were a bit worried and anxious about talking and sharing their findings in front of everybody, but afterwards, starting from the second session onward, the students seemed to be more relaxed and comfortable with each other and with the teacher. Their participation in

class has increased and has become spontaneous and organised, and, thus, there has been a significant difference identified in terms of motivation toward the subject matter (tenses). Furthermore, the learners working under CL conditions have shown attention in class, engagement in the task, willingness to share, and there have been moments when students tried to rescue their partners who forgot the answer. They were also eager to defend, convince and discuss others' opinions as well as were observed to become more autonomous and self-confident. The cooperative learning technique has made students in the Experimental Group feel free all the time to ask questions, as well as has made the grammar sessions more enjoyable. Here, it is worth mentioning that no discipline problems have been encountered throughout the experiment.

The last observation which we can make is that the Experimental Group's grades and amount of use of the English language in a grammar lesson have increased and have been positively influenced by CL, because the students were endowed with more opportunities to actually practice the language through face-to-face interaction and more importantly because peer correction has contributed to encourage students to discuss issues with each other and with the teacher. Through the activities, most, if not all, of the students in the Experimental Group were forced to speak, listen, read and write some English (or discuss grammar points) that might hardly be possible otherwise in the usual grammar classroom.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the present investigation, which has been carried out to answer the research question on the effects of CL on the improvement of students' performance in terms of tense use, reveal that the group whose members have been working in pairs on all tasks have significantly improved in terms of academic achievement and motivation, and in terms of interpersonal relationships. In other words, the

Experimental Group participants have scored better than the Control Group, have been highly motivated to finish the task in hand, and have learnt how to cooperate with others by developing some social skills that are vital to successful CL (asking permission, respecting opinion divergence, responding politely, etc.).

On the whole, in this study, it has been found that pair work (CL) is more effective than whole-class instruction and individual work, and the results of the inter- and intra-group comparisons of the tests indicate that CL as a teaching technique has affected positively the performance of the Experimental Group as far as tense use is concerned and, therefore, our hypothesis has been confirmed.

# **Chapter Five**

## **Pedagogical Implications**

### **Introduction**

### **5.1 Guidelines for Implementing Cooperative Learning**

#### **5.1.1 Lesson Planning**

#### **5.1.2 Teambuilding**

#### **5.1.3 Assessing Students' Efforts**

#### **5.1.4 Teaching the Necessary Skills**

### **5.2 Suggestions**

### **Conclusion**

# **Chapter Five**

## **Pedagogical Implications**

### **Introduction**

Being able to express oneself, in writing or speaking, using English tenses in a good way is the primary focus of grammar teachers. However, students find this goal hard to achieve. Certainly, teachers are aware of that and find it difficult, too, to help students master English tenses. Accordingly, based on the findings of the present research that show that CL is an effective technique, we think that this grammatical feature should be taught in a way that encourages learners to be responsible for their own learning and engages them in meaningful interactions in a supportive atmosphere. Therefore, we believe that this could be realised through applying CL principles.

In this chapter, we would like to provide some suggestions as guidelines to help teachers of grammar or other disciplines obtain satisfactory outcomes and implement successfully CL in their language classes.

### **5.1 Guidelines for Implementing Cooperative Learning**

The application of CL techniques to grammar classes at the university level is not an easy task. Thus, based on our own experience throughout this research work, some features of CL were thought to be given special emphasis and, hence, specific guidelines are proposed for teachers interested in innovating their current teaching methods or those who would like to inject CL from time to time to maximise the learning outcomes.

#### **5.1.1 Lesson Planning**

As it is the duty of every teacher, a grammar teacher also needs to carefully plan his/her lesson before any teaching could take place. A good preparation of the material leads to a good and smooth presentation of that and helps the teacher to be ready for

any question from the part of the student. Before that, the teacher may carry out a needs analysis to determine the level of the students as a whole group or as individuals, students' needs and areas of weaknesses on which the material is going to be chosen (the content and activities of the lesson should be engaging students in interactions and involving them in the learning process). In this case, a test similar to the one that was suggested to our sample could be helpful or an activity consisting of separate meaningful sentences could be used, too. Then, the teacher needs to set out the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson by informing his/her learners about the overall content of the lesson to draw their attention and maintain their awareness because students need to feel involved in what is taking place in class and need to interact with each other and the teacher. Here, the teacher expresses what behaviour is expected from them at the end of the lesson, what are the skills needed to meet these expectations, and how they will be graded. For instance, in CL context, a teacher may tell his/her students that s/he needs them to work together and negotiate meaning using the target language in order to help one another solve a given problem or answer a question. After that, the teacher either presents the new material explicitly and then has the students practice in pairs or groups, or gives them, for example, a set of examples illustrating a particular tense and let them cooperate in order to complete the task. In this step, the teacher needs to specify the time allocated for group work and whole class discussion as well as decides about the number of students working together. Then, students are given the chance to discuss their group findings in front of the whole class while the teacher intervenes to provide feedback and corrects misconceptions. Afterwards, the teacher may ask questions to assess the students' understanding and give them the opportunity to practice the new material and the

language as a whole. At the end of each lesson, it is preferable to assign homework to practice more and, thus, to retain longer the new information.

### **5.1.2 Teambuilding**

Teachers should know that simply putting students together does not guarantee positive results. For that reason, a number of features need to be taken into consideration.

- Deciding on group size: Usually, Algerian classes are crowded and heterogeneous. In order to take advantage of this, teachers are encouraged to have students do the work in pairs, triads or larger groups depending on the nature of the task. Teachers are advised to balance the abilities of each group, i.e., the groups are recommended to be of mixed abilities and gender. For that, a test at the beginning of the school year could be administered. However, as troubles or conflict can result from such combinations, the teacher may, from time to time, change group members by leaving them free to choose their partners or asking them to cooperate with the classmate sitting next to him/her. Once this problem is solved, each group member is assigned a given role to avoid having free riders or dominating students inside the subgroup.
- Deciding about the time of group work and whole class discussion: The teacher specifies the time needed to complete any activity and the time allowed for whole class discussion as well as the time used by the teacher to present and explain the lesson (10-15 minutes).

### **5.1.3 Assessing Students' Efforts**

One major problem facing teachers is the evaluation of group work and individual efforts. As for group assessment, it is something clear; the joint efforts and the final report or findings are appreciated and given a mark. On the other hand, individual

accountability of each student is a bit problematic and more demanding on the part of the teacher, especially in large classes and large groups. To help teachers know whether each group member is participating in the task, sudden quizzes or random oral questioning of students, individually, are possible solutions. Moreover, distinctive assignments of roles for each group member are a way to assess the improvement and contributions of each. In addition to that, circulating among the teams verifying they are on task and everyone is participating is a very important role played in CL classrooms. So, classroom observation is a necessary tool to achieve individual fair assessment. Another important task that teachers should perform in order to push students produce more and develop their skills successfully is giving feedback, comments and corrections on group or individual performances. They need to indicate for students ways of how to improve and how well they have done. They should encourage their students to focus on their continued improvement, self-evaluate their efforts to determine their areas of weaknesses and strengths as well as evaluate their team-mates. Once students know that the teacher is taking into account their individual contributions to their group and to the whole class, they are more likely to become active participants in grammar lessons because passivity hinders learning. So, again stress is put on classroom activities that require student-student interaction and participation in class.

#### **5.1.4 Teaching the Necessary Skills**

If time allows, teachers are required to teach the necessary social and interpersonal skills to ensure successful CL before engaging students in this teaching practice. However, if this is not possible, they may teach them during the application of CL. In order to avoid hostility and teacher's authority and interference during group work, teachers are required to explicitly teach students how to communicate, ask and respond

to questions politely (e.g., I am sorry. Would you please explain...), react to disagreements positively, respect others' opinions, apply turn-taking, assess one's and others' work efficiently, listen to others attentively, participate to make the grammar session more lively, share information and be responsible for individual and group work.

In addition, teachers need to prepare their learners for CL by talking about the advantages and the positive effects that this teaching technique can bring about to their academic achievement, social and psychological development.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

The suggestions and the pedagogical implications of the pre-test and post-test results call for the use of CL principles in grammar classrooms to teach tenses because it gives the learners the chance to discover by themselves the different forms and uses of each English tense as well as provides opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions and speak English at least discussing language structures.

Despite the positive findings of classroom observation about autonomy and self-confidence, we are unable to generalise the effectiveness of CL as a teaching practice because of the limited short time (six weeks) of the present study. Therefore, we suggest a more longitudinal study on a more representative sample in order to determine the long-term efficacy of CL and, thus, to generalise the findings to the whole population.

The present study also shows the different tenses that seem to some extent problematic and difficult for learners, such as the perfective tenses. The latter needs to be considered seriously in future research for the sake of looking for remedial solutions.

Moreover, because of time constraints and lack of sufficient experience and training in teaching through CL techniques, we would like to recommend teaching English tenses under a specific model of CL, such as the Learning Together model. In other words, a research to examine the efficacy of a given model on the students' use of tenses would be of a particular interest.

Another major pedagogical implication arising from this study is the importance of guiding learners to focus on linguistic forms within a student-centred context (teaching tenses communicatively).

### **Conclusion**

Learning English and understanding its complex temporal system are not an easy task, neither for teachers nor for students. The former –whether new or experienced – is required to be more aware of all the changes happening in the fields of education, language teaching/learning, and linguistics. Because CL has become a popular teaching technique and because of the positive findings of the present empirical study, teachers are advised to implement its principles in their grammar classes, especially while teaching tenses.

## CONCLUSION

The present research attempted to investigate the impact of cooperative learning on students' use of the English tenses and compared between cooperative learning class and teacher-fronted class where the subjects have to work individually. It was carried out by means of a pre-test and post-test administered to two groups of Second Year LMD students of English at Mentouri University of Constantine, during the academic year 2009-2010.

The results obtained from the analysis of the data collected from the tests have confirmed that if we teach tenses through cooperative learning principles (in pairs), students' performance while using this language feature is likely to improve; thus, the research hypothesis has been validated. It was found that working in pairs while studying English tenses is more effective than making students work individually. The students under the treatment have improved in terms of tense use, academic achievement, class participation, language use, self-confidence, and motivation. The results of the tests also reveal that cooperative learning is a successful teaching practice because it provides ample opportunities for students to learn about the language, talk about the language, and practise the language. In this investigation, it was observed that students changed their attitudes towards learning grammar in general. Cooperative learning has made the grammar lesson more enjoyable and interesting. This technique has also given the learners the chance to improve their communicative skills and, more importantly, to develop some social skills that are vital for later active life; for example, friendship and tolerance for differences.

The suggestions presented at the end of the current research work are meant to help grammar teachers and encourage them to use cooperative learning either on a daily basis or occasionally since it was found that it influences positively the learners'

performance. Cooperative learning has proved to be an effective strategy in teaching tenses. Therefore, teachers are invited to use it as an alternative technique to overcome the existing problems in classes such as the lack of practice, crowded classes, low achievement, and the impossibility of assisting each student individually.

## **Appendix : Instrucion**

**– Lesson One**

**– Lesson Two**

**– Lesson Three**

## Lesson One

### Pr. S / Pr. C

#### Part one

##### A. Examples

1. The train arrives at 4 p.m.
2. Every Monday, Jane drives her children to football practice.
3. John is currently writing a book about his adventures in Africa.
4. Muslims do not drink alcohol.
5. I love walking around late at night during the summer.
6. He is studying Computing this month.
7. The earth goes around the sun.
8. She is teaching at six.
9. Oil floats on water.
10. Infant death is declining all over the world.

##### B. Instruction

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Find out the rule to form both tenses.
- Find out the different uses of both.

#### Part two

##### A. Pr. S

Form: Base form of the verb or infinitive without 'to' except for the third person singular, we add –s at the end of the verb.

Use: The Pr. S is used in the following situations;

1. Truths: there are seven types of truths where the Pr. S is used:

a. Habitual truths; i.e., regular habits or daily routines/actions that are completed at regular intervals.

e.g.: Tim works in an insurance company.

Sarah goes to school by bus.

b. Eternal truths that last forever and never change (unvarying truth).

e.g.: Jesus lives.

The Koran says...

c. Recurrent truths that occur regularly.

e.g.: Many trees lose their leaves in autumn.

The sun rises in the east.

d. Permanent human truths; i.e., long-lasting situations.

e.g.: I like chocolate.

She hates flying.

I live in London.

e. General truths.

e.g.: English people drink a lot of tea.

Hindus do not eat beef.

f. Scientific truths; i.e., discoveries, inventions, mathematical operations....

e.g.: Water boils at 100 C.

One plus one equals two.

g. Internal truths with verbs expressing mental states: know, think, wish, wish...

e.g.: I think she is right.

I know the answer to that question.

2. Demonstrations, directions, instructions.

e.g.: I close the box and then I press gently the button.

You walk straightforward and then you turn left.

Fill in the gaps with the appropriate word.

3. With adverbs of frequency (always, usually, often, sometimes,...).

e.g.: He often arrives late at work.

I usually get up at six.

4. Future events/schedules/timetables.

e.g.: When I finish writing the letter, I will leave.

Courses begin this month.

The plane lands at 4 p.m.

5. Physical description: The girl is tall. She has long brown hair.

6. Description of sudden feelings and senses: I feel sick. / I hear noises.

7. Narrative device

a. Dramatizing situations: He was only an average athlete, and then suddenly he wins two Olympic medals.

b. Reporting commentaries: John passes and Peter kicks the ball into the net.

c. Headlines: Demonstrators clash with armed police as violence increases.

## **B. Pr. C**

Form: Auxiliary to be in the present tense (is/are) + V-ing.

Use: The Pr. C is used in the following cases:

1. Actions happening at the time of speaking.

e.g.: Jack is working on the report at the moment/now.

2. Actions happening around the present moment or changes happening around the world now.

e.g.: I am reading the book this week. (It does not mean that right now I am reading, but I have started reading it but the action is still incomplete. I have not finished it yet. I am in the middle of reading it).

The population of the world is increasing very fast.

Oil supplies of the world are running out.

3. With action verbs that take a progressive form.

e.g.: My English is getting better.

I am growing older.

4. With expressions like today, this week, this month, currently, at the moment, now....

e.g.: I am working hard today.

The company I work for is not doing so well this year.

5. Planned future events (near future) or already set arrangements.

e.g.: I am meeting Peter tomorrow morning.

I am leaving at six.

6. Temporary situations.

e.g.: I am living with my friend until I find a place of my own.

I am watering his plants during his absence. (Temporary habit: does not imply that it is happening now).

### **Part three**

#### **Practice (pair work)**

**Exercise one:** Give an example for each case discussed previously.

**Exercise two:**

- Fill in the gaps with either Pr. S or Pr. C in the following text.

- Notice the use.

#### **A Trekking Journal.**

November 12, 1997.

Today .....(to be) the second day of my trek around Mount Annapurna. I am exhausted and my legs .....(to shake); I just hope I am able to complete the trek. My feet .....(to kill, really)me and my toes .....(to bleed), but I .....(to want, still) to continue.

Nepal is a fascinating country, but I have a great deal to learn. Everything .....(to be) so different, and I .....(to try) to adapt to the new way of life here. I .....(to learn) a little bit of the language to make communication easier, unfortunately, I .....(to learn, not) foreign languages quickly. Although I .....(to understand, not) much yet, I believe that I .....(improve, gradually).

I .....(to travel, currently) with John, a student from Leeds University in England. He .....(to be) a nice guy, but impatient. He .....(to walk, always) ahead of me and .....(to complain) that I am too slow. I .....(to do) my best to keep up with him, but he is younger and stronger than I am. Maybe, I am just feeling sorry for myself because I .....(to get) older.

Right now, John.....(to sit) with the owner of the inn. They .....(to discuss) the differences between life in England and life in Nepal. I .....(to know, not) the real name of the owner, but everybody .....(to call, just) him Tam. Tam .....(to speak) English very well and he .....(to try) to teach John some words in Nepali. Every time Tam .....(to say) a new word, John .....(to try) to repeat it. Unfortunately, John .....(to seem, also) to have difficulty learning foreign languages. I just hope we do not get lost and have to ask for directions.

**Exercise three:** Describe together an ordinary day/week in your life.

## Lesson two

### PS / PC / Pr. Perf. S / Pr.Perf.C / P Perf.S / P Perf.C

#### Part one

##### A. Examples:

1. Last week, we were driving towards Algiers when suddenly a car drove past us out of control. The car crashed into a tree. We immediately stopped and ran to the car. We were trying to get the passengers out when the ambulance arrived and drove the wounded to hospital.
2. In 1962, Algeria became a free independent country.
3. I graduated two years ago.
4. Last night, from 6 to 7, I was watching a football match while my wife was washing the dishes.
5. I haven't cut my hair since 1999.
6. I have never traveled by train.
7. Look at his face! He has been eating chocolate.
8. She has been cooking for almost four hours.
9. I had finished writing the first letter by the time my father came into my room.
10. We had been playing tennis for about half an hour when it started to rain heavily.

##### B. Instruction

- Work in pairs.
- Find out the different tenses used in the above sentences.
- Find out the rule to form each of them.
- Find out the different uses of each.

#### Part two

##### A. PS

Form: For regular verbs, the PS ends in –ed, like loved and enjoyed.

For irregular verbs, the PS takes a different form that needs to be learnt, like taught and burnt.

Use: The PS is used in the following situations:

1. Past actions that express historical events; usually with time markers: In 2004, the American troops took over some Iraqi villages.
2. Narration: Mozart was a musician and composer. He lived from 1756 to 1791. He started composing at the age of five and wrote more than 600 pieces of music.
3. Finished past actions which occurred at a specific/definite moment in the past. The action is completely separate from the present: She visited Iran last month.
4. With time markers such as last week/month, ago, in + year/month, yesterday: They had lunch at home last week/many years ago/yesterday/in May/when they lived next door.
5. 'If' clauses to report hypothetical facts: If I were you, I would change my job.
6. Polite requests: I wondered if you can give me some help.

## B. PC

Form: The auxiliary 'be' in the past (was/were) + V-ing.

Use: The PC is used in the following situations:

1. The point of time in the past is mentioned; the action started before it, was in process at that point and then crossed it: I was reading last night at nine.
2. With the past simple to talk about an action that was interrupted by another one (in the PS).

e.g.: Mrs. Dale and her daughter were going to the National Park when the Tsunami hit.

I was walking down the street when suddenly I met my colleague.

3. To talk about two past actions that were happening at the same time: While my mother was preparing dinner, I was doing my homework.
4. Past action with a specified period of duration: I was sleeping most of the afternoon/from 2 to 4.

### **C. Pr. Perf. S**

Form: The auxiliary 'have' in present (has/have) + PP.

Use: The Pr. Perf. S is used in the following situations:

1. Incomplete action with a time marker referring to the past, yet the results are valid in the present.

e.g.: Jane has lived in Paris since 1982.

Women have voted since 1921.

2. Repeated or habitual action:

e.g.: I have always worked at this department.

My mother has always played volley-ball.

3. Action which happened in a specific period of time that is not yet over: I have read a book this morning (we are still in the morning).

4. Action which occurred in the past but still relates to the present: I have studied French. (I remember some).

5. With some time markers such as just, yet, still, always, ever, never, lately, recently, already, in the last few years, for ages....

e.g.: I have never gone to London.

I have already finished writing.

### **D. Pr. Perf. C**

Form: The auxiliary 'have' in the present (has/have) + been + V-ing.

Use: The Pr. Perf. C is used in the following situations.

1. To draw attention to the repeated action: She has been going to therapy since she was two.
2. To give emphasis on the continuous nature of the action (duration): I have been driving for three hours.
3. To give explanation for the present situation or appearance: I am wet. I have been cleaning the windows.

### **E. P Perf. S**

Form: The auxiliary 'have' in the past (had) + PP.

Use: The P Perf. S is used in the following situations.

1. An action was completed in the past before a point of time in the past: By 8 o'clock, he had waken up.
2. An action was completed in the past before another action (the latter in the PS)  
e.g.: By the time his parents entered the room, he had finished writing the letter.

There was a big traffic jam because the police had blocked all the streets to catch the lion.

### **F. P Perf. C**

Form: The auxiliary 'have' in the past (had) + been + V-ing.

Use: The P Perf. C is used to describe an ongoing action that began in the past, continued, and was completed before a point in time in the past or before another past action.

e.g.: We had been walking the streets of Paris for hours before lunch time.

We had been waiting for an hour before the bus came.

## **Part three**

### **Practice (pair work)**

**Exercise one:** Give an example for each of the previously explained situations of each tense.

**Exercise two:** Write the verbs between parentheses in the right tense.

1. By the time I (to get)..... to the office yesterday, the meeting (to begin, already) .....without me. My boss (to be) .....furious with me and I (to be)..... fired.

2. **Sarah:** I think the waiter (to forget) .....us. We (to wait) ..... here for over half an hour and nobody (to take) ..... our order yet.

**Jane:** I think you are right. He (to walk) ..... by us twenty time. He probably thinks we (to order, already)..... He must realize we haven't ordered yet! We (to sit)..... here for over half an hour staring at him.

3. My English is really getting better. I (to try).....to learn the language since 1985, but only recently have I been able to make some real progress. By the time I started high school in 1988, I (to study) .....the language for almost three years; however, I was only able to introduce myself and to utter a few memorized sentences. For a couple more years, I (to struggle) ..... through grammar and vocabulary lessons, which made absolutely no difference. Nothing worked so I decided to study abroad.

I found an exchange program in England that sounded like the perfect answer. I (to stay)..... with a host family for one month. It was a huge disappointment! I (to sit) ..... there the whole time staring at the host mother and father hoping that there would be some ..... breakthrough. .... Nothing.

When I returned, I mentioned to a friend that I (to have) ..... problems with the language for years. He recommended that I spend a year in an English speaking country. I decided to go abroad again. I (to research)..... exchange programs for a couple of weeks and finally decided on a school in the United States.

Well, it worked. I (to live)..... and (to study)..... in the U.S. for more than two years. I (to stay)..... here for at least another year before I return home. By then, I should be completely fluent.

**Exercise three:** Narrate an event that has happened to you or to someone you know.

## Lesson three

### FS / FC / F Perf. S / F Perf. C

#### Part one

##### A. Examples:

1. I think we will eat out tomorrow evening.
2. We are going to visit our friend Rebecca tomorrow morning.
3. They are playing football tonight.
4. Our dinner starts at 8 p.m. tomorrow, so be there on time.
5. Tomorrow at 12 o'clock, I will be giving a lecture at the university, so I will not be answering any calls.
6. When you finish your work, I will be driving home.
7. By 14.00, the cake will have been baking for 90 minutes, so do not forget to take it out of the oven.
8. By next July, my parents will have been married for 45 years.
9. The boy will have learnt to ride a bicycle by the end of the week.
10. He will be tired when he goes back home. He will have been playing football all day.

##### B. Instruction

- Work in pairs.
- Find out the different names and the rule to form each tense in the above examples.
- Find out the different uses of each.

#### Part two

##### A. FS

Form: It can be expressed through a number of combinations:

- a. The modal auxiliaries will/shall + base form of the verb: to express predictions and unplanned instant decisions.

e.g.: He will go to Italy next summer.

I shall visit my uncle.

b. Semi-auxiliary 'be going to' for general plans/intentions, and predictions based on concrete evidence.

e.g.: Tomorrow I am going to look for a place to stay.

It is going to be dark soon.

It is going to rain.

c. Present progressive for pre-arranged plans that are going to take place in the near future.

e.g.: I am leaving in few minutes.

I am having a bath in an hour.

I am meeting my friend tomorrow.

d. Present simple with a time marker for scheduled or regular timetabled events.

e.g.: I start my new job on Monday.

The film begins today at 8 p.m.

## **B. FC**

Form: Will be + V-ing.

Use: The FC is used in the following situations:

1. Action that crosses a point of time in the future or has duration: Tomorrow morning, I will be teaching from 9 to 10.
2. Action defined by another one usually in the Pr. S.

e.g.: I will be writing a letter when you arrive.

I will be watching the film when you come back home.

## **C. F Perf. S**

Form: Will have + PP.

Use: The F Perf. S is used to describe an action that will take place or be completed before some other action in the future or a point of time.

e.g.: Everybody will have gone home after three hours from now.

The film will have already started by the time we get to the cinema.

#### D. F Perf. C

Form: Will + have been + V-ing.

Use: The F Perf. C is used to:

1. Express the predicted duration of an event, viewed from a future time; i.e., a point in future time is specified and the action starts in the future before that point and continues up to it. Usually the duration is specified with 'for + a month/a year/an hour....

e.g.: When John arrives, I will have been working for an hour.

By this time tomorrow, my brother will have been traveling to Canada for seven hours.

2. Express the predicted duration of an event, viewed from a future time; a point in the future is specified and the action started before the time of speaking (in the past) and will continue to that point.

e.g.: By the New Year's Eve, they will have been working for this company for 20 years.

#### Part three

##### Practice: pair work

**Exercise one:** Produce examples to illustrate each of the previous tenses.

**Exercise two:** Write the verbs between brackets in the right tense.

1. **Jane:** Can you see my future in the crystal ball? What (to happen).....next year?

**Fortune teller:** You (to meet).....a man from the East Coast, perhaps New York or maybe Boston. You (to marry) ..... that mystery man.

**Jane:** Forget the man! I want to know if I (to get) .....a new job.

2. I just have two more courses before I graduate from university. By this time next year, I (to graduate)....., and I will already be looking for a job. I am also going to do an internship so that when I leave school, I (to complete, not only) .....over 13 business courses, but I ( to work, also) .....in the real world.

3. **Sarah:** Where is Tim going to meet us?

**John:** He (to wait)..... for us when our train arrives. I am sure he (to stand) ..... on the platform when we pull into the station.

**Sarah:** And the what?

**John:** We (to pick) .....Jane up at work and go out to dinner.

4. Sarah has been in the kitchen all day long. She (to cook) ..... for over seven hours by the time everyone arrives for dinner this afternoon. Hopefully, she (to finish) ..... everything by then.

**Exercise three:** Write a dialogue or an interview with your partner in which you talk about your future plans/life.

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## Résumé

La présente recherche a pour objectif d'examiner l'impact de l'apprentissage coopératif, appliqué comme technique d'enseignement, sur la performance des étudiants de 2<sup>e</sup> année universitaire lors de l'utilisation des temps de conjugaison en Anglais.

A fin de réaliser ce but, un modèle expérimental a été choisi. 64 étudiants, scindés en deux groupes, l'un expérimental et l'autre de contrôle, ont tous subi un pré-test et un post-test. Après avoir complété le pré-test, le groupe expérimental a reçu une instruction selon les principes de l'apprentissage coopératif alors que le groupe de contrôle a reçu la même instruction suivant une méthode différente où les sujets avaient à travailler individuellement tout le temps. Après six semaines d'instruction, les deux groupes ont subi un post-test et les résultats ont été comparés et analysés.

Les résultats des deux tests ont montré que les sujets dans le groupe expérimental ont réalisé une meilleure performance que celle obtenue dans le groupe de contrôle. Ils ont aussi révélé que l'apprentissage coopératif est plus efficace et qu'il influence positivement la performance des étudiants quand ils utilisent les temps de conjugaison en Anglais. Par conséquent, l'hypothèse de cette recherche a été confirmée.

Basées sur les conclusions tirées des résultats, quelques recommandations ont été proposées, pour les enseignants de grammaire afin d'aider les étudiants à mieux comprendre et utiliser correctement le système des temps de conjugaison de la langue anglaise à travers la coopération entre les étudiants. Quelques suggestions pédagogiques ont, également, été faites pour de futures recherches.

## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى النظر في تأثير التعلم التعاوني المستعمل كممارسة تربوية على أداء طلاب السنة الثانية جامعي عند استعمال نظام صرف الأزمنة للغة الانجليزية.

لتحقيق هذا الهدف اتبعنا نظاما تجريبيا قدمنا من خلاله اختبارا قبل التجربة و آخر بعدها إلى 64 طالبا وطالبة تم توزيعهم إلى قسم تجريبي و قسم شاهد. بعد اخذ الاختبار الأول خضع القسم التجريبي إلى تدريس نظام صرف الأزمنة الانجليزي وفق أسس التعلم التعاوني. بينما درس القسم الشاهد نفس المضمون و لكن تبعا لطريقة تدريس مختلفة حيث يقوم الطلبة بانجاز كل التطبيقات فرادى. بعد مرور 6 أسابيع من التجربة خضع طلبة القسمين إلى اختبار ثان ثم قورنت النتائج المتحصل عليها و حللت.

أظهرت نتائج البحث أن أداء طلاب القسم التجريبي أحسن منه لدى طلاب القسم الشاهد. كما بينت أيضا هذه النتائج أن طريقة التعلم التعاوني أكثر فعالية و لها جوانب ايجابية متعددة على أداء الطلاب أثناء استعمالهم لنظام صرف الأزمنة للغة الانجليزية. و بالتالي تم إثبات فرضية البحث.

استثمرا لهذه النتائج قدمنا نصائح لأساتذة قواعد اللغة الانجليزية لمساعدة الطلاب على فهم و استعمال نظام صرف الأزمنة للغة الانجليزية بطريقة صحيحة عن طريق التعاون فيما بين الطلبة. كما تم تقديم بعض الاقتراحات البيداغوجية من اجل القيام بأبحاث أخرى في المستقبل.