

## Communication anxiety and self-confidence among learners of English as a foreign language: The role of learning cooperatively

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### Abstract

The present study investigated the impact of learning a foreign language cooperatively on boosting self-confidence and alleviating communication anxiety among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). One hundred and thirty-five intermediate EFL male and female language learners, homogenized via a language proficiency test, were randomly assigned into two groups of 65 (the experimental group) and 70 (the control group). Participants were then administered two questionnaires to measure levels of oral communication apprehension and self-confidence before the study. On the final session of each class, the questionnaires were re-administered as post-tests and the participants were interviewed. The findings obtained from the statistical analyses as well as the qualitative analysis of the interviews demonstrated that incorporating the principles of learning cooperatively in EFL speaking classes can significantly affect the level of self-confidence and lower the communication apprehension levels. Findings are discussed and implications for EFL classrooms are elaborated upon.

**Keywords:** Anxiety; communication; English; foreign language; learning cooperatively; self-confidence.

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## **1. Introduction**

Feelings of anxiety and lack of self-confidence have been proved very serious obstacles in developing foreign language competence (Tridinanti, 2018). These two factors play a pivotal role in the process of learning a new language and can affect the learning outcome. In both anecdotal accounts and formal studies, foreign language anxiety and lack of self-confidence have been clearly shown to harm performance in the foreign language classroom and if learners don't cope with them successfully, it can slow down the learning process or even hinder it completely.

Debilitative anxiety in general and more specifically oral communication anxiety have clearly been shown to have a detrimental effect on performance in foreign language classrooms (Zare & Riasati, 2012; Horwitz, 2001). Likewise, low self-confidence is considered as one of the internal factors which are highly correlated with anxiety and can play the role of an obstacle in the learning process (Tridinanti, 2018).

It is interesting to notice that students suffering from high levels of anxiety are also usually short on self-confidence because these factors are internally correlated (Tridinanti, 2018). The learners encountering these issues cannot show their full potential in the classroom and subsequently have poor performance in language skills especially speaking. EFL learners facing these issues are in a dire need of a practical and efficient remedy to remove these psychological barriers and pave the learning process to experience a stress-free learning environment.

Gregersen (2003) believes that we cannot consider all introverted students as lazy or non-cooperative while they may be suffering from anxiety and lack of self-confidence. Instead, we must attempt to identify anxious learners and try to help them overcome foreign language anxiety. It is suggested that for improving L2 learners' oral performance more effectively, the teacher should try to remove a significant amount of anxiety in students and begin to build up confidence as they communicate more often in English (Park & Lee, 2005).

It is also proposed that teachers' methodology and techniques and strategies applied in the classroom play a central role in how confidently students use the second language in class; Small group discussions and topics that are familiar to students, for example, are suggested as techniques to enhance the level of comfort (Osboe, Fujimura, & Hirschel, 2007).

### **1.1. Review of the literature**

#### **1.1.1. Communication Apprehension**

Foreign language anxiety is believed to be among the group of "specific anxiety reactions" by Horwitz and Cope (1986). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) define language anxiety as the feeling of tension and fear in second language contexts especially during speaking, listening, and learning. In addition, the definition of social anxiety by Schwarzer (2013) seems to have similar characteristics with foreign language anxiety including the feeling of tension and discomfort, negative evaluation of one's self, and isolation from social contexts. Thus, foreign language anxiety can be considered a type of social anxiety because it involves a great deal of social interaction (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Research has indicated that anxiety has negative effects on student achievement and performance such as the course grades (Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kao & Craigie, 2010; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), listening performance (Bekleyen, 2009; Elkhafaifi, 2005), reading scores (Zhao, 2009), writing achievement (Chen & Lin, 2009), as well as speaking scores (Sellers, 2000). In reading, students with high anxiety in speaking are found to recall less content and get more often off the track than their less anxious counterparts (Sellers, 2000), while high anxiety students in speaking produce longer texts and smaller amounts of continuous speech, have more pauses, fewer repetitions, and make more false starts (Djigunović, 2006). These results indicate that foreign language anxiety does have negative effects on foreign language learning performance and achievement.

Students who exhibit communication apprehension do not feel comfortable communicating in the target language in front of others and this may not attribute only to their knowledge of the language. As a result, they are silent and withdrawn most of the time, and do not participate in language activities (Ely, 1986). Similarly, students who suffer from test anxiety always think of learning to speak as a medium to help them perform well in a test rather than an opportunity for communication and skills improvement.

### *1.1.2. Self-Confidence*

Confidence, an important affective factor, is generally assumed to have a significant role in successful learning. Self-confidence provides learners with the motivation and energy to become positive about their learning. It also creates the drive in them to develop speaking in the target language, enjoy the learning process, and experience real communication. Moreover, once students gain self-confidence, it expands exponentially together with experiencing success and self-satisfaction (Ebata, 2008). On the other hand, students who lack confidence are usually found to be extremely fearful and timid, unwilling to talk, and even unable to speak a meaningful sentence in class (Ni, 2012). Less confident learners feel uncomfortable when they are asked for speaking activities, they are not able to take oral tasks as challenges, and these are like threats to them. They lack faith in their capabilities and are more concerned about being criticized or rejected by others.

Previous research has shown that there is a direct relationship between students' confidence and their speaking performance in the second language. For example, Lai (1994) analysed EFL students' level of confidence in using English and the factors leading to different confidence levels in speaking classes. The findings showed that most of the participants "felt a lack of confidence in using English as a means of communication in the classroom" (Lai, 1994, p. 122). Other studies have also demonstrated that self-confidence significantly contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language (Cao, 2011; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998).

Due to its negative effects, some researchers in their studies attempted to propose solutions for students' lack of confidence in L2 classrooms. Burden (2004), for instance, suggested that teachers use cooperative as opposed to competitive goal structures as a means of creating interdependencies between learners to increase their self-confidence. In another study, it was found that incorporating extra speaking activities into the classroom had a positive impact on the students' confidence development by broadening their perceptions about speaking, helping them recognize

the value of peer collaboration, and encouraging them to participate in new collaborative speaking activities (Doqaruni, 2015). Most students in this study reported improvements in confidence which can confirm that extensive pair/group work speaking activities can lead to higher levels of confidence in speaking a second language.

### *1.1.3. Learning Cooperatively*

According to Oxford (1997), a cooperative learning environment usually involves groups of learners working together using a particular set of classroom techniques towards an objective. In this process, learners are interdependent within the process of social and cognitive development. The term collaborative learning involves a social dimension by which learners are encouraged to acculturate as their knowledge is being constructed within the social context of the classroom. Cooperative learning as used in the present study refers to a teaching methodology that allows students to interact widely with each other as well as the teacher and actively participate in the learning process.

Speaking tasks are ideal for group work. Topics are chosen to be as interesting as possible to be successful in a cooperative learning assignment. In addition, students are provided with a mix of learning styles that are found in a blended learning classroom. In that regard, cooperative learning is a great way to add some more diversity to teaching to ensure students can learn the ways that work best for them.

It should be noted that one basic premise in cooperative learning is that the social skill of collaboration must also be taught to the students so that they can work together more effectively. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), cooperative language learning is a way of promoting communicative interaction in the class and can be considered as a by-product of applying the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the classroom. The objective here is to develop communicative competence in language by collaborating in socially or pedagogically structured situations, developing critical thinking, and fostering cooperation.

Therefore, the task of the teacher in this approach is to create a well-organized learning environment in which students are assigned to separate groups, their tasks are well established, and materials and the allotted time for tasks are clarified. At other times, the teacher becomes a facilitator who moves around the groups to provide comments and feedback. At the end of the day, however, learners themselves are directors of their learning who must plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Learning activities usually involve cooperative projects, interactions, jigsaw, and peer-tutoring (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). However, not all situations warrant a cooperative learning approach and that is why the present study seeks to determine the possible impact of using the principles of cooperative learning on two of the most important psychological variables concerning the learning of a foreign language namely communication anxiety and self-confidence.

## **1.2. Purpose of study**

Some researchers believe that participating in group discussions and class activities can simultaneously enhance students' self-confidence and reduce their anxiety. In this study, we attempt to test integrating the principles of learning English as a community and see how it may

affect communication anxiety and confidence levels in an EFL context. The research questions formulated for the present study are the following:

RQ1: Does cooperative language learning have any statistically significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' anxiety levels?

RQ2: Does cooperative language learning have any statistically significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' level of self-confidence?

## **2. Materials and Method**

### **2.1. Participants**

This study follows a quasi-experimental design in which a total number of 146 students were involved. The participants' ages were in the range of 15 to 25 years old. Both male and female participants were included in order to nullify the effect of the gender factor on the study. In addition, the proficiency level of participants was measured through the Oxford placement test (OPT) prior to the study in order to have homogeneous participants in terms of language proficiency. In addition, the selected participants were interviewed by the researcher using a speaking task of IELTS to ensure they are homogeneous in terms of their speaking proficiency. Finally, a hundred and thirty-five homogeneous students were selected and randomly assigned to two classes, namely the experimental (n=65) and control (n=70) groups.

### **2.2. Data collection tools**

#### **2.2.1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)**

The level of participants' language proficiency in this study was measured using a validated quick placement test which consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions together with a speaking test of IELTS prior to the commencement of the investigation to confirm that the participants' level of language proficiency was intermediate, which was considered appropriate for the study. This test was complemented by an IELTS speaking task. In the first part, the participants were asked a few questions about themselves, for example about their family, their likes and dislikes, where they live. In the second part participants needed to speak for 1-2 minutes on the topic, they were given. They were given some time before the task to structure their talk.

#### **2.2.2. Pre-test and post-test**

The study required questionnaires to be used as both pre-test and post-test. It is, however, one limitation for the present study because these are the participants who would say if they were (not) anxious or confident, and self-reported data may be biased. The pre-test and post-test consisted of communication anxiety and self-confidence Likert-scale questionnaires.

To have an estimate of the students' classroom anxiety level, the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) was used in this study. This scale is developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). It includes 33 items which are scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (totally agree). In a study by Horwitz et al. (1986) a three-factor structure including comprehension

apprehension (It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language”), test anxiety (I am usually at ease during tests in my language class), and fear of negative evaluation (I don't worry about making mistakes in language class”) is considered for this instrument.

In addition, to have an estimate of foreign language self-confidence, twelve items from MacIntyre and Charos (1996) were used. These items assessed the percentage of time that respondents perceived themselves as being competent in communication through English (I think I will speak English perfectly someday) and get a good score (I think that I will get a good score in this class). The estimated values of Cronbach's Alpha for the anxiety questionnaire came to ( $\alpha = .853$ ), that for the self-confidence questionnaire amounted to ( $\alpha = .890$ ) which were considered good values according to the reliability standards suggested by Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott (1994).

### **2.3. Procedure and Analysis**

Instruction in the control group revolved around teacher-provided lectures based on the coursebook used and the tasks was done individually by students. This is the common practice that students are familiar with and they consider the process to be in line with classroom goals and objectives. On the other hand, the experimental group was introduced to the basic principles of cooperative language learning in early sessions and later they performed the speaking tasks in groups and worked together towards the task objective. One very frequent task was the interactive group discussions which were conducted almost every session. The teacher as the facilitator helped the class discussions run smoothly by using authentic materials related to the discussion topics. Another common task was for students to work in pairs and explain the new vocabulary items. A third task asked each group to race with others to find suitable phrases and collocations regarding the topic of speaking. Finally, asking and answering questions about the selected topics with a partner was done frequently.

The study included sixteen 90-minute sessions after which the post-test was administered to the participants. The collected data was, then, analyzed using the Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) to see whether working cooperatively had an impact on the participants' anxiety and self-confidence levels. Follow-up interviews were carried out later by the researcher visiting the participants in person. The interviews were carried out by the researcher using a voice recorder in a quiet room in order not to be disturbed. The completed questionnaires by the interviewees determined the topics to be covered and questions to be asked. The researcher took care to ensure the participants that their opinions were valued no matter how negative or positive they may look. Recordings from interviews were later transcribed and analyzed by the researcher to identify specific aspects of classroom group discussions that could help EFL learners overcome feelings of anxiety and lack of self-confidence and thereby improve their oral performance.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Descriptive statistics for the pre-test scores**

Communication anxiety and self-confidence questionnaires were administered to both groups to evaluate differences between the two groups concerning the level of anxiety and self-

confidence before the study (Table 1). The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the possible differences between the two independent groups on their levels of anxiety and self-confidence at the beginning of the study. In other words, it was run to determine if the control and experimental groups differed in terms of the levels of anxiety and self-confidence.

**Table 1**  
*Medians of the Groups for the Pre-Test of Anxiety and Self-confidence*

Groups			Self-confidence pre-test	Anxiety pre-test
Control (Regular teaching group )	N	Valid	70	70
		Missing	0	0
		Median	3.1667	3.1538
Experimental (Discussion group )	N	Valid	65	65
		Missing	0	0
		Median	3.2222	3.5385

Concerning the pre-test of self-confidence, the median for the control group was 3.16 and for the experimental group was 3.22. Similarly, with respect to the pre-test of anxiety, the median of the control group was 3.15 and the experimental group 3.58. Mann Whitney U Test examined if these differences in medians were statistically significant for the anxiety and self-confidence scores at the beginning of the study. The results are available in table 2 below.

**Table 2**  
*Mann-Whitney U Test for the Self-confidence and Anxiety in the Control and Experimental Groups (pre-test)*

	Self-confidence pre-test	Anxiety pre-test
Mann-Whitney U	131.000	101
Z	-.635	-1.640
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.525	.101
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.542 <sup>b</sup>	.107 <sup>b</sup>

**a. Grouping Variable: groups**

**b. Not corrected for ties**

The Z value and the significance level can be observed in the above output. In Table 2, for self-confidence, the Z value was  $-.635$  with a significance level of  $\text{sig}=.525$  two-tailed. The probability value (p) was greater than .05, so before the treatment, the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant in terms of self-confidence. In addition, for the anxiety, the Z value was  $-1.640$  with a significance level of  $\text{sig}=.101$  two-tailed. The value of P was greater than .05, so again we can conclude that at the beginning of the study, the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant in terms of anxiety, either. This means that the “control and experimental groups” are nearly the same in terms of their self-confidence and anxiety levels at the beginning of the study.

### **3.2. Descriptive statistics for the post-test scores**

At the end of the study, anxiety and self-confidence questionnaires were administered to both groups once more to inspect the possible changes in the measures of self-confidence and



anxiety levels. Moreover, they were administered to examine the possible differences between the two groups with respect to the extent of their anxiety and degree of self-confidence after implementing the specific treatment to the groups. The results of descriptive statistics for the post-tests of anxiety and self-confidence questionnaires are presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Medians of the Groups for the Post-Test of Anxiety and Self-confidence*

Groups		Self-confidence (post-test)	Anxiety (post-test)
Control (Regular teaching group)	N	70	70
	Valid	70	70
	Missing	0	0
	Median	3.1111	3.0000
Experimental (Discussion group)	N	65	65
	Valid	65	65
	Missing	0	0
	Median	3.7778	2.5900

When it comes to the post-test of self-confidence, the median for the control group was 3.11 and for the experimental group equalled 3.77. Moreover, with respect to the post-test of anxiety, the median of the participants in the control group was 3.00 and this amounted to 2.59 for the experimental group.

### **3.3. Cooperative learning and oral communication apprehension**

To determine whether classroom group discussions have any statistically significant impact on intermediate EFL learners' anxiety, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test was used. In other words, it was run to determine if the experimental group differed from the control group in terms of their anxiety after receiving the specific treatment on group discussions. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

*Mann-Whitney U Test for the Anxiety of the control and Experimental Groups (post-test)*

	Anxiety (post-test)
Mann-Whitney U	86.500
Z	-2.117
N	135
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.033 <sup>b</sup>

As it is observed, for the anxiety variable, the median of the experimental group (Md= 2.59) was smaller than that of the control group (Md= 3.00). This suggested that classroom group discussion helped lower the levels of anxiety in the experimental group in comparison with the regular teaching class. The Z value was -2.117 with a significance level of p=.034 two-tailed. With the probability value lower than .05 we can conclude that the result was statistically significant. In other words, there was a statistically meaningful difference in terms of the level of anxiety between the control and experimental groups after the treatment.



The value of Z reported in Table 4 was also used to calculate the approximate value of effect size or (r). The effect size was computed through the following procedure:

$$\text{(Effect size) } r = Z / \text{square root of } N \text{ where } N = \text{total number of cases}$$

Based on Table 4, Z is  $-2.117$ , and N equals 35; therefore the (r) value was .3578. This was considered medium effect size using Cohen's (1988) criteria of .1=small effect, .3=medium effect, .5=large effect. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed significant difference in the levels of anxiety for the experimental (Md = 2.59, n =65) and control (Md = 3.00, n = 70), Mann-Whitney U = 86.500, Z =  $-2.117$ , p = .034, r = .3578. Thus, we can conclude that classroom group discussion had a statistically significant impact on alleviating intermediate EFL learners' anxiety.

This finding is also supported when we analysed the students' responses to an interview question which asked about their feelings of worry and concern when they are supposed to share ideas in English in the classroom. Interviewees in the control group almost unanimously referred to the fear of being mocked by peers. As they reported:

*"I know exactly what I want to share with the classroom but I feel I am lost for words and if I stutter the whole class would begin to giggle."*

*"The guy sitting next to me misses no opportunity to poke fun at me as I plan to say something in English. I am so nervous that I would rather not talk."*

Interviewees in the experimental group, on the other hand, seem to have been able to overcome this fear of being laughed at:

*"Sitting in a round circle and seeing that even the weakest students are expressing ideas in English has given me the courage to ignore the teasing made by classmates when I am making mistakes."*

*"Everybody makes mistakes. No one speaks error-free. This is what I noticed as we discussed issues in a group. The teacher provided feedback and also the peers. I was no longer afraid of being laughed at. Great atmosphere."*

### 3.4. Cooperative learning and self-confidence

To examine if classroom group discussions have any statistically significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' self-confidence, once again the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test was used and reported in table 5 below.

**Table 5**

*Mann-Whitney U Test for the Anxiety of the Control and Experimental Groups (post-test)*

	Self-confidence (post-test)
Mann-Whitney U	74.500
Z	-2.525
N	135
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.011 <sup>b</sup>

For the self-confidence, the median of the experimental group (Md= 3.77) was greater than that of the control group (Md= 3.11). This suggested that classroom group discussion helped

increase the extent of self-confidence for the experimental group better than regular teaching class (See Table 5). The Z value was  $-2.525$  with a significance level of  $p=.012$  two-tailed. The probability value was lower than .05, so the result was statistically significant. Therefore, it can be suggested that there was a statistically meaningful difference in the degree of self-confidence between the control and experimental groups at the end of the study.

Following, the value of Z was used to calculate the approximate effect size or (r) for self-confidence. Based on Table 4.8,  $Z = (-2.525)$  and  $N = 135$ ; therefore the (r) value was (.4268). This was considered medium effect size using Cohen's (1988) criteria mentioned before. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed significant differences in the degree of self-confidence for the experimental ( $Md = 3.77$ ,  $n = 65$ ) and control ( $Md = 3.11$ ,  $n = 70$ ), Mann-Whitney  $U = 74.500$ ,  $Z = -2.525$ ,  $p = .012$ ,  $r = .4268$ . Thus, it can be implied that classroom group discussion had a statistically significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' self-confidence levels.

In the words of a student in the experimental group:

*"I am not alone while giving ideas on topics. Group mates support and clarify my points. This gives me energy and boosts my confidence"*

While students in the control group show clear signs of low self-confidence:

*"I am not good enough in making my points in English. The teacher constantly asks for clarifications and almost always I have to switch into my native language."*

*"I wish I could have the nerves to express my ideas in English. I feel I may not be able to come up to expectations. I rather say nothing."*

*"Speaking is a very difficult skill and I don't think I can learn to speak and express ideas so easily."*

#### **4. Discussion**

This study was an attempt to shed more light on the concepts of foreign language communication apprehension and self-confidence and how they can be managed when it comes to learning to speak a foreign language. The results of this study showed that many learners suffer from coping with anxiety and lack self-confidence and are seeking ways through which they can overcome these challenges. Preliminary results showed that participants were suffering from high levels of apprehension and low self-confidence in language classrooms which had a debilitating impact on their performance.

As the treatment in the experimental group evolved, it was seen that learners were eager to participate more and more in collaborative classroom tasks. Their interview comments made it clear that they were more motivated than before and showed fewer signs of communication apprehension and lack of self-confidence. This is in line with Clement (2005) who after finding the relationship among self-confidence, anxiety, and motivation, claimed that the absence of anxiety promotes self-confidence and success in language learning.

There seems to be a relationship between self-confidence and the willingness to talk and participate in classroom activities. Learners suffering from high levels of communication apprehension and lack of self-confidence were seen to be reluctant to get involved in classroom

activities. This is in line with several other studies which were conducted on the same topic and suggest that there is a negative relationship between willingness to communicate in a second language and anxiety (Cetinkaya, 2005). In other words, according to Ghonsooly and Khajavy (2012), “anxious students are reluctant to express themselves verbally in L2 conversations” (p.199). Similarly, previous research revealed that self-confidence significantly contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998).

Studies by Dailey (2009) and Doqaruni (2015) demonstrated that adding speaking tasks into the classroom was said to be beneficial and fruitful. They believed that speaking could lead to the improvement in self-confidence and subsequently to the decrease of anxiety. In this study, too, the cooperative speaking tasks were introduced to the treatment group as activities that could have a positive impact on the learners' apprehension and self-confidence adding proof to what has been suggested in previous research. Therefore, encouraging students to act and speak correctly, giving them feedback -especially positive feedback, instantly, and offering them class activities they enjoy, can improve their self-confidence. This has been done in the treatment group by choosing topics that students were interested in and being supportive by giving the learners positive feedback. Working collaboratively in this study could give the learners a sense of belonging to a social group. This is in line with Bandura (2006) who claims that there is a strong correlation between an individual's sense of self-confidence (and self-competence) and the social group.

Moreover, it seems that students suffering from high levels of communication apprehension and lack of self-confidence have difficulties expressing themselves and they choose to remain silent during the class. After some sessions of treatment class, when levels of anxiety began to drop and participants started to gain self-confidence, they were more willing to talk and participate in group tasks. This shows the correlation between apprehension, self-confidence, and oral performance. Following the same line of research and in their attempts to find out if any relationship exists between L2 learners' anxiety, self-confidence and oral performance among the Korean college students, Park and Lee (2005) found that the higher confident the students are, the higher oral performance they show.

## **5. Conclusion**

According to the results of this study, it can be concluded that integrating cooperative tasks into the language learning process can help learners reduce communication apprehension and increase their self-confidence. This positive impact requires teachers to allocate more time in their classes to do collaborative tasks. To make classroom cooperative tasks more beneficial, it is recommended to use appropriate materials which can also be supplemented by interactive games, tasks, and activities. These activities along with classroom group discussions result in a fruitful learning environment in which learners lower their defense against language learning and can subsequently develop competence.

In conclusion, EFL teachers should avoid book-oriented teaching sessions and turn to a more interactive approach that gets students involved in speaking tasks. As this study has revealed, engaging students in cooperation instead of competition through the appropriate use of materials

and tasks in an interactive and collaborative environment leads to a context that can decrease communication apprehension and boost self-confidence.

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