Implementing Cooperative Learning Activities in EFL Speaking Lessons: AnAppraisal of Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs and Classroom Practices

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Abstract:*One of many factors that cause difficulty in developing primary school students' speaking skill is their low or uneven participation. Indeed, young learners need both to participate in communication and to build up knowledge and skills for speaking performance. Accordingly, Cooperative Learning activities have been proved to be an effective teaching strategy to the primary students. By the nature of an exploratory study, this current study aimed at investigating the primary English teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of implementing these activities to develop the fifth graders' English oral productions. The study was conducted at the eight public primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with the sample of 35 teachers. Data were collected through the two instruments of a 29-item questionnaire, a 9-question semi-structured interview. The findings of the study indicated that although the participants believed in the effects of Cooperative Learning activities in the development of their students' EFL oral skills in terms of learning psychology and language performance, they were reluctant to implement these activities, which was ultimately found by the extent, the principles and the types of Cooperative Learning activities employed in reality.*
Keywords:*Cooperative Learning activities; Speaking; Pedagogical beliefs; Classroom practices*

I. Introduction

Rationale to the study

Speaking in a foreign language, involving a complicated process of constructing meaning, has been deemed to be the most challenging of four language skills (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000), covering almost all of language components (Ning, 2011). Accordingly, purpose of teaching speaking is to orient both the teachers and students to utilize the target language as a means of communication in teaching-learning process even in their daily life. Alternatively saying, speaking involves producing language rather than receiving it; that is to say, this productive skill comprises producing words to ask and answer questions, ask for information and repetition, self-correction, turn-taking in a conversation, greet people, or tell stories (Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams, 2011).

Marcela and Rodrigo (2014) posit that driving students to use the target language orally at an early stage remains one of the biggest issues that English teachers confront. In other words, oral production can be extremely difficult for young learners like primary students. It is generally accepted that knowing a language and being able to speak it are not homogeneous because speaking is a productive skill which must be acquired, developed and practiced both inside and outside the language classroom. Unfortunately, the majority of young learners have many difficulties to speak it whether inside or outside the classroom and this weak production may be a result of many causes but the most important one is due to the lack of language practice (Alimi, 2015). Furthermore, while teachers mostly talk and act as the only source of knowledge to students, their young students become passive receivers of language inputs in their learning process at the primary school context (Ning, 2011). In fact, young learners should be provided with a supportive environment in order to sharpen and bring to the limelight their oral skills (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Young learners need both to participate in communication and to build up knowledge and skills for participation in order to learn speaking skill (Cameron, 2001). Literally, language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Given the alarming situation above, EFL teachers have been in a constant search of what may help their learners increase their language proficiency level because using the language in class frequently should be through active participation techniques and procedures, by exerting the appropriate method to enhance the learners' language fluency (Atma, 2010). In response to their quest, Cooperative Learning activities, which

differ from activities under traditional learning methods (Johnson & Johnson, 2008), have been proved to be an effective teaching strategy to the language learners (e.g. Liang, 2000; Zhang, 2010; Soraya, 2010; Pattanpichet, 2011; Attamimi, 2014; Marcela & Rodrigo, 2014; Alimi, 2015). In academia, through pair work and group work, young learners can achieve better oral skillsand more self-confidence if they interact and speak together frequently than those who always remain their silence and passivity in their classrooms.

Problem statement

Oral language acquisition is a natural process for young learners. The ability to speak grows with age, but it does not entail that such development will automatically lead to perfection due to several decisive factors (Ur, 2012; Hosni, 2014). Thus, to be able to communicate in the target language in an acceptable manner becomes the prominent objective of learning process. Based on the Circular No. 22 of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training issued in 2016, the assessment of fifth-grade students focuses on four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) in which speaking skill is much paid attention, corresponding the scrolling wheel of global communication. In reality, however, primary school students have not focused on practicing English speaking skill in its so-called classes yet (Luu, 2018). The majority of them in the Vietnamese context have many difficulties when they communicate language outside classrooms such as the lack of practice of the language, and their low or uneven participation, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and so forth. In addition, Luu (2018) unveils that the dearth of genuine oral and interactional activities in textbooks is a rudimental cause for primary school students' difficulties in speaking.Sherecommends some oral activities in the mode of songs, rhymes, simple stories, and especially more conversational language activities should be infused to enable students to have more fun and enjoy learning, and to improve their speaking competence. Correspondingly, effective activities are also capable of being implemented through Cooperative Learning, helping students interact with others and construct knowledge in speaking lessons.

Research questions

The study sought to answer the subsequent questions as follows:
1. What pedagogical beliefs do the primary school teachers hold regarding merits and pitfalls of implementing Cooperative Learning activities in the fifth-grade English speaking lessons?
2. How do these teachers actually implement Cooperative Learning activities in the fifth-grade English speaking lessons?

II. Literature Review

Principles of teaching speaking skill

Speaking is the process of using verbal and non-verbal forms to share knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions or ideas with other interlocutors (Kayi, 2006). It is implied that the primary goal of teaching speaking skill is to achieve communicative efficiency. According to Nunan (2003), speaking classrooms provide learners with authentic practices that prepare students for such real-life cases; and, teachers help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically and lexically correct and logic sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to use comprehensible pronunciation. Based on the Nunan' consideration, the researcher of this paper draws out some guidelines for a successful speaking lesson as following:

First, teachers should provide students with both accuracy and fluency practices since speaking performance is assessed from both accuracy and fluency levels. The former is the correctness of an utterance, while the latter is the ability to speak the language confidently, with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false starts.

Secondly, teachers provide opportunities for students to talk and limit teacher-talk-time. It is important for language teachers to be aware of how much they are talking in class so that students could take in a more sufficient time. Pair work and group work can be wonderful ways to increase student-talk-time during lessons; simultaneously, these cooperative configurations build up students' confidence and speed up interactional density among them. To recap, teachers need to maximize students' participation level in speaking in pair and group work.

Thirdly, in speaking classrooms,it is important to focus on the learners' affective states such as motivation and self-confidence.Raising students' motivation and making them interested in learning speaking English is uneasy and teachers must have a good teaching technique by giving students activities which generate a hybrid of playing and learning. Furthermore, students are not able to speak out any words without confidence due to being afraid of making mistakes and losing their face in front of other students. Therefore, teachers should help students get enough language competence and develop their confidence is the best way to arouse their speaking skill.

Background of Cooperative Learning
A. Definition

Gomleksiz (2007) postulates that Cooperative Learning is a learning approach that creates small mixed groups of students in the classroom driving to a shared purpose. It means that students work in small groups to help one another in learning academic content (Slavin, 1995) and in achieving certain goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2008) through different interactional patterns of explaining, discussing ideas, asking questions, and receiving different answers for their questions.

B. Typical activity types

Table 1. Six most typical Cooperative Learning activities

Names	Description
Discussion	The teacher chooses a topic, asks students to start discussing it. Practicing discussion on a speaking topic may cause a mass classroom; thus, the teacher should manage the class carefully in order to gain the maximum of benefits like distributing group size, presenting language prompts, eliciting ideas (Hedge, 2000). To make discussions easier for students to concentrate on, the teacher can utilize visual materials such as pictures, magazines on the topic.
Role-play	In role-play, students play different roles that allow them to speak; for instances, the teacher asks students to choose a job then try to perform it as they are working it in reality as doctors, nurses, teachers, pilots, taxi drivers or architectures (Ladousse, 1987). In role-play, students are provided with information in role cards that develop personalities (Hedge, 2000).
Storytelling	Storytelling builds up creative thinking in students and assists them to express their ideas in front of others (Dujmovic, 2006). In fact, the teacher divides students into groups, asks them to collect various words to tell an imaginary story. This activity enhance students' fluency (McDargh, 2006).
Jigsaw	In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of the "puzzle", and the partners must work out together to arrange all these pieces into a whole picture (Adams, 2013). The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story, or one sentence from a narrative. Jigsaw is appropriate for students from 3rd to 12th grade (Adams, 2013).
Three Steps Interview	Three steps interview is an appropriate activity to stimulate students' interaction with the other class members (Kagan, 1992). In the first step, students interview their partners by asking clarification questions. In the second step, the partners exchange the roles. In the final step, members share their partner's responses with the team. This activity helps students to improve their speaking skill by paraphrasing their pair's opinion when they are sharing it with the team's member.
Think Pair Share	Think pair share is useful to encourage the students' time on task and listening to each other. In the first step, the teacher arouses student's thinking with a question, while students should think about this question in a few minutes. In the second step, these students make a discussion with their partners to find out the best answer. In the last step, students sharing their opinions with the whole class (Vitasari, 2017).

C. Maxims of implementing Cooperative Learning activities

It does not totally mean that Cooperative Learning occurs when students are simply asked to sit next to each other at the same table and do their own task (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). Therefore, Cooperative Learning has been enacted with its underlying maxims (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 2008), including a) positive interdependence, b) individual accountability, c) group formation, d) simultaneous interaction, and e) appropriate use of social skills.

Table 2. Maxims of implementing Cooperative Learning activities

Maxims	Description
Positive Interdependence	This maxim occurs when gains of individuals or teams are positively related, created by the structure of Cooperative Learning tasks and by building a spirit of mutual support within the group (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Students are imperative to work collaboratively to gain common learning objectives, connected to each other for support and guidance.
Individual Accountability	This maxim is satisfied when all students in a group are held accountable for doing a share of the work and for mastery of the materials. In other words, each team member should be responsible for equal share to the group's accomplishment. It is important that the group knows who needs more assistance and encouragement in completing the task (Kagan, 1992).
Group Formation	For this maxim, the initial step is the teacher' decision on the group size such as pairs, triads, which relies on the tasks, the learners' age and the time limit for the lesson. Then, the teacher has to assign students' roles in their groups such as timer, summarizer, presenter, monitors, etc. It gives all group members experience and gets them out of tediousness.
Simultaneous Interaction	This maxim transpires when class time is precisely designed to allow many student interactions during the period. The teacher is encouraged to set up time points very precisely so that the speaking lesson is run smoothly and on time.
Use of Social Skills	The maxim clearly identifies how students interact with each other as groups (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Interpersonal and small group skills shape the individuals' necessary connection (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

D. Merits and pitfalls of implementing Cooperative Learning activities

To the merits, Cooperative Learning is the most preferably instructional method adopted at all levels of education, from primary schools to universities, because it can benefit both psychology and language achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). In Cooperative Learning classrooms, learning environment is more pleasant (Dörnyei & Murphy, 2003) and motivating (Dörnyei, 2001). Ling (2015) compares Cooperative

Learning with traditional methods and discovers that students show more confidence, greater active interaction, enthusiasm, motivation in Cooperative Learning classroom. As for students' academic achievement, it is accepted that Cooperative Learning can provide the chances for students to use language input and produce language output (Zhang, 2010). In addition, it increases frequency and variety of language practice through different types of interaction (McGroarty, 1989).

To the pitfalls, firstly, a team has some members who do not want to work with others and keep silent; or in some cases, a few students would like to control their group mates and talk all the time (Kagan, 1995). Therefore, if learners are put into groups without sufficient instructions on what and how to work in groups, they cannot perform effectively. Secondly, unavailability of time to deliver materials and control class is another big challenge (Zhou, 2011). A successful Cooperative Learning lesson requires much time for teachers to prepare the materials and manage classroom rather than traditional approach (Phan, 2014). Thirdly, class size is another problem that the teachers have to surmount to successfully implement Cooperative Learning (Pham, 2011). Normally, each Vietnamese primary school class consists of 35-50 students, which makes it difficult for the teachers to observe, monitor or support to ensure that they are working smoothly. Fourthly, inequality of workload division among group members is the possible obstacle to success of implementing Cooperative Learning (Pham, 2011).

Characteristics of young learners

It is generally accepted that young learners are usually attributed to be students between six and eleven years old, sharing the same age range of Vietnamese primary students. This age group is represented from the first to the fifth grades in the Vietnamese primary schooling system. Academically, young learners are holistically different from adults; teaching behaviors, consequently, are distinct to each learner group, and teachers need to know who they are so that they can seek appropriate class activities. Some features of this age group are universally agreed among the scholars. First, according to Harmer (2001), young learners' attention span and concentration on something is very short if learning activities are not extremely engaging them. He further explains that the children easily get bored, losing their interest after ten minutes due to unattractive activities. Secondly, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) conclude that young learners prefer playing during their learning, seeking pleasure in whatever they do in their classrooms. Thirdly, another noticeable feature of this age group is inborn curiosity. As a result, it requires primary language teachers to exploit that curiosity so that their attention and concentration is accordingly maintained. In the boundary of classroom, students are generally addressed in four different types of learners including visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic learners (Kinsella, 1995). Primary-aged students are commonly described as kinesthetic learners since they can learn effectively through doing experience, moving, touching and playing. Put simply, it is effective when they participate various activities and work collaboratively.

Notion of teachers' pedagogical beliefs

If learners' beliefs about language learning are considered critical, the pedagogical beliefs of their teachers should also be considered as equally critical (Zheng, 2009; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Understanding pedagogical beliefs is important as they relate to teachers as they provide some indication of how teachers behave in their classroom practice. In academia, teachers' pedagogical beliefs have also become a key issue in education since "what they believe as well as what they do not believe have powerful influence on their classroom behaviors" (Le, 2011, p. 64). This may originate from the view that "teachers' beliefs influence their goals, procedures, materials, classroom interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the schools they work in" (Kuzborska, 2011, p. 122).To put it different, exploration of teachers' pedagogical beliefs is at the heart of our understanding of their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practices. In definition, Pajares (1992) concludes that "belief is based on evaluations and judgments" (p. 313) and "interpretation of what people say, intend, and do" (p. 314).Alternatively saying, teachers' pedagogical beliefs are vital for understanding and improving educational process. They closely guide language teachers to adopt their teaching strategies for coping with their daily language teaching challenges, shape language learners' learning environment, their motivation and language achievement (Li, 2012).

III.   Methodology

Subjects

The study recruited the participation of 35 in-service English teachers from eight selected public primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam thanks to convenience sampling technique*(see details in Table 3 below)*. Most of them were female with 85.7% while male teachers only contributed 14.3% to the sample. In term of age, nearly half of the teachers (45.7%) were below 30 years old in age, whereas only one-fifth of the teachers studied were above 40 years old. Many teachers were low-experienced (51.4%), while the high-

experienced teachers were of 11.5%. Apropos of educational background, almost teachers only held their bachelor's degree, with 97.1%.

Table 3. Demographic information of the participants with research sites

Primary School Name	Gender (N= 35)		Age (Years old)			Teaching Experience (Years)			Qualifications (N= 35)	
	Female	Male	< 30	30 – 40	> 40	< 5	5 – 10	> 10	Bachelor	Master
Dinh Tien Hoang	4	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	4	1
Le Ngoc Han	3	1	3		1	3	1		4	
Tran Hung Dao	5		3	1	1	3	1	1	5	
Tran Quang Khai	3	1		2	1		3		4	
Nguyen Thai Hoc	4	1	2	3		3	2		5	
Phan Van Tri	4		3	1	1	1	2	1	4	
Nguyen Binh Khiem	4		1	2	1	2	2		4	
Hoa Binh	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	
Frequency (n)	**30**	5	**16**	12	7	**18**	13	4	**34**	1
Percentage (%)	**85.7**	14.3	**45.7**	34.3	20.0	**51.4**	37.1	11.5	**97.1**	2.9

Research design

To garner data for the study, the researchers utilized mixed methods design. It is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative (i.e. questionnaire) and qualitative method (i.e. interview) in a single study to understand a research problem in depth (Creswell & Clark, 2011) than either method by itself (Creswell, 2012).

Research instruments

Questionnaire: The researchers decided to employ a questionnaire which is known to be one of the easiest methods to manage, even with large numbers of subjects (Dörnyei, 2007) and one of the most useful tools to exploit the subjects' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions (Koshy, 2005). The 29-item questionnaire consisted of four distinct sections. The first section was associated with the participants' pedagogical beliefs in speaking instruction for young learners (Items 1-5), followed by the second section which addressed the sample's pedagogical beliefs in the effects of Cooperative Learning on students' learning psychology (Items 6-10), and on students' oral performance (Items 11-15). The third section was about the participants' pedagogical beliefs in possible challenges/ pitfalls happening in Cooperative Learning speaking classrooms (Items 16-22). The last section was conducive to seeking the sample's actual implementation of Cooperative Learning in fifth-grade speaking lessons (Items 23-29). These items excluding Item 23 and Item 24 which were merely percentagewise interpreted were rated on a five-point Likert-scale.

Semi-structured Interview: Purposely, the researchers decided to employ a semi-structured interview as a subordinate tool, which could make it possible to investigate the target phenomenon in greater depth and breadth (O'Hanlon, 2003). In consonant with the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview included nine questions in total, which mentioned the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of implementing Cooperative Learning activities in fifth-grade speaking lessons, respectively.

Data collection and analysis

On the chosen dates, the questionnaires inthe Vietnamese version were delivered to 35 participants. On the receipt of questionnaires from the respondents, the researcher found that all 35 copies were valid and accepted. Finally, the researchers employed Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 to release the descriptive statistics of the collected questionnaires in terms of frequency (F, n), percentage (P, %), mean (M) and standard deviation (S.D.). After the questionnaire treatment, the researchers recruited five members from the target sample (>10%) to participate in the interviews. The interviewees were confidentially labeled from S1 to S5. The interviews were conducted in the Vietnamese language using a set of semi-structured questions to ask and a tape recorder to record the interviewees' answers. Then, the researcher transcribed and translated the interview transcripts for analysis purpose. Eventually, the researchers organized the coded data into the pre-fixed themes.

IV. Results and Discussion

Research question 1: Pedagogical beliefs

A. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in speaking instruction for young learners

Table 4. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in speaking instruction for young learners

Item	Statement		SD*	D*	UN*	A*	SA*	M	S.D.
1	The teacher should help students develop their speaking skill with focus on linguistic accuracy.	**F(n)**	3	3	15	10	4	**3.26**	**1.07**
		P(%)	8.6	8.6	42.9	28.6	11.4		
2	The teacher should help students develop their speaking skill with focus on fluency.	**F(n)**	2	3	10	15	5	**3.51**	**1.04**
		P(%)	5.7	8.6	28.6	42.9	14.3		
3	The teacher should give students a chance to practice both fluency and accuracy aspects of speaking.	**F(n)**	1	1	4	20	9	**4.00**	**.87**
		P(%)	2.9	2.9	11.4	57.1	25.7		
4	The teacher should provide opportunities for students to talk, limit teacher-talk-time.	**F(n)**	2	4	17	9	3	**3.20**	**.96**
		P(%)	5.7	11.4	48.6	25.7	8.6		
5	The teacher should reduce students' anxiety during their oral productions.	**F(n)**	0	2	2	6	25	**4.54**	**.85**
		P(%)	0.0	5.7	5.7	15.1	71.4		

(*) **SD:** Strongly Disagree, **D**: Disagree, **UN**: Uncertain, **A**: Agree, **SA**: Strongly Agree

As can be seen from Table 4, an overwhelming majority of the teachers espoused that the primary school teachers needed to improve both fluency and accuracy aspects of speaking skill for the fifth graders (Item 3, M = 4.00, S.D. = .87, 57.1% agree, 21.7% strongly agree). Nevertheless, in respect of each separate aspect, many teachers focused on oral fluency aspect, i.e., smooth stream of ideas (Item 2, M = 3.51, S.D. = 1.04, 42.9% agree, 14.3% strongly agree) rather than linguistic accuracy one (Item 1, M = 3.26, S.D. = 1.07, 28.6% agree, 11.4% strongly agree).Besides, almost all the teachers applauded that their core task in the act of teaching speaking for young learners was to relieve their students' language anxiety during oral productions (Item 5, M= 4.54, S.D. = .85, 15.1% agree, 71.4% strongly agree). However, nearly a half of the teachers were quite resistant to surpass student-talk-time over teacher-talk-time (Item 4, M= 3.20, S.D. = .96, 48.6% uncertain). Consistently, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews also demonstrated the similar vein as follows:

- **A focus on both accuracy and fluency aspects**

Of the five interviewed teachers, three teachers including S1, S2, and S5 asserted the equality of accuracy (linguistic correctness) and fluency (smoothness without hesitation) aspects in English oral productions. Therewith, these interviewees highlighted that both speaking elements should be focused in their speaking classes.

- **An excessive emphasis on oral fluency**

Nevertheless, two other interviewing participants (S3, S4) tallied that despite both speaking aspects being of equal significance, oral fluency should be put in an excessive emphasis.

- **Necessity of oral anxiety reliefs**

All the five interviewees espoused that oral language anxiety should be relieved to reinforce the young learners' speaking performance. Each of them mentioned a varied norm of language anxiety; for example, apprehension (S1), embarrassment (S2), nervousness (S3), and worry (S4), low confidence (S5). As a result of this negative affective state, young learners' speaking performance could be hampered, agreed by all the interviewees. To elaborate, S2 reckoned that it could decrease these students' readiness to utter English sentences, while S4 explained that linguistic scarcity was the main causal factor of this negative feeling.

To the first point to be discussed, amajority of the primary school teachers approved of both fluency and accuracy aspects of speaking performance in the fifth-grade speaking class. Nonetheless, there was an excessive emphasis on the correctness of vocabulary and grammar (i.e. accuracy) beyond the natural speech with little or no hesitation (i.e. fluency) among the teacher informants. According to Nunan (2003), speakers need to be both accurate and fluent in the way they speak. Secondly, almost all of the teachers applauded that their core task in speaking instruction for young learners was to alleviate their young students' language anxiety during their oral productions. Put it simply, the primary school teachers need to ameliorate their young learners' self-efficacy and self-confidence in their EFL speaking learning. In particular, students are not able to speak out any words without confidence because of being afraid of making mistakes. For that reason, English teachers should help their students develop their confidence in their vocalization. Thirdly, roughly a half of the teachers, however, were quite resistant to equalize student-talk-time and teacher-talk-time in the fifth-grade speaking classes. Theoretically, regardless of any schooling system, teachers are imperative to provide opportunities for students to talk and limit teacher-talk-time so that students could be talking in a more sufficient time (Nunan, 2003). In reality, the majority of EFL primary school students in the Vietnamese context have many difficulties when they communicate in the English language outside classrooms due to the dearth of practice of the spoken language, and their low or uneven participation (Alimi, 2015). On this account, the primary school teachers need to maximize students' participation in speaking activities within various interactions.

B. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in merits of Cooperative Learning activities on learning psychology

Table 5. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in merits of Cooperative Learning activities on learning psychology

Item	Statement		SD*	D*	UN*	A*	SA*	M	S.D.
6	Cooperative Learning activities offer a relaxed climate in the classroom for students to learn.	**F(n)**	0	0	8	15	12	**4.11**	**.76**
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	22.9	42.9	34.3		
7	Cooperative Learning activities build up students' confidence in learning speaking skills.	**F(n)**	0	3	6	9	17	**4.14**	**1.00**
		P(%)	0.0	8.6	17.1	25.7	48.6		
8	Cooperative Learning activities increase students' active participation in speaking learning with enthusiasm.	**F(n)**	0	0	5	6	24	**4.54**	**.74**
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	8.6	17.1	68.6		
9	Cooperative Learning activities encourages shy students to participate in oral production.	**F(n)**	0	2	3	10	20	**4.37**	**.88**
		P(%)	0.0	5.7	8.6	28.6	57.1		
10	Cooperative Learning activities help students become more autonomous and less dependent on outside authority.	**F(n)**	1	3	20	7	4	**3.29**	**.89**
		P(%)	2.9	8.6	57.1	20.0	11.4		

(*) **SD:** Strongly Disagree, **D**: Disagree, **UN**: Uncertain, **A**: Agree, **SA**: Strongly Agree

From Table 5, by the highest mean score, almost all the teachers perceived that activities based on Cooperative Learning approach could intensify the primary students' level of participation and engagement into speaking classes (Item 8, M = 4.54, S.D. = .74, 17.1% agree, 68.6% strongly agree). Likewise, more than three quarters of the participants surmised that such collaborative activities could provide a restful environment in the speaking classroom (Item 6, M = 4.11, S.D. = .76, 42.9% agree, 34.3% strongly agree). In a similar vein, a huge majority of the surveyed teachers espoused that Cooperative Learning activities might spur on their young learners' confidence level in EFL oral productions regardless of extent (Item 7, M = 4.11, S.D. = 1.00, 25.7% agree, 48.6% strongly agree). Furthermore, based on most of the teachers' divulgence, Cooperative Learning activities became a useful tool to encourage young learners, especially to shy ones, to participate actively in their oral productions (Item 9, M = 4.37, S.D. = .88, 28.6% agree, 57.1% strongly agree). However, more than half of the teachers were doubt whether Cooperative Learning activities could help their fifth graders "become more autonomous and less dependent upon outside authority" (Item 10, M = 3.29, S.D. = .89, 57.1% uncertain). Consonantly, the interview data source also divulged this positive correlation perceived by the teacher interviewees as following:

▪ **Positive relationship between Cooperative Learning activities and confidence, engagement and participation level**

The results from the interviews elucidated that all the five interviewees highly appreciated the positive correlation between speaking activities underlying Cooperative Learning and the primary students' confidence, engagement and participation levels. For example, S1 acknowledged that such activities were overwhelmingly exciting and joyful to draw students' engagement and confidence.Also, S3 emphasized that there was an increase of self-confidence level among young learners in a comfortable environment from Cooperative Learning activities.

Psychological indication is always the focal point of speaking instruction in an EFL context. In the current study, almost all the teachers perceived that Cooperative Learning activities could speed up the primary students' level of participation and engagement into speaking classes. The surveyed teachers' thoughts are consistentwith what Dörnyei and Murphy (2003) predicate that in effective Cooperative Learning classrooms, learning environment can be more pleasant through which students may be more motivated and engaged (Dörnyei, 2001). In respect of young learners' characteristics, primary students are curious, active and interested in exploration from concrete to abstract things, loving to move, play and join in exciting and funny activities like Cooperative Learning activities (Pinter, 2006). Additionally, grounded from Vygotsky's (1978) proposition, children learn through social interaction with their friends productively and joyfully, especially in speaking classrooms. It is clear that Cooperative Learning activities can manage the fifth graders' affective conditions positively in EFL speaking acquisition. By the same token, both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study indicated that there was an increase of self-confidence level among young learners in an equilibrium learning environment sprung from Cooperative Learning activities, revealed by most the questionnaire respondents and all the interviewees. As per Ur (1996), "*Inhibition*" labels as the most severe barrier to young learners' utterances since they are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. Interestingly, many teachers admitted that Cooperative Learning activities, if effectively implemented, become a good tool to encourage young learners to participate more confidently in their oral speech.

On the whole, a big proportion of the primary school teachers approved of the positive correlation between Cooperative Learning activities and fifth-grade students' language psychological states. The findings of the current study on this domain are consistent with the previous studies such as Liang (2000), Soraya (2010),

and Alimi (2015). Some key results were eventually found among these studies including "*motivation*", "*oral participation*", "*self-confidence*" and "*reduce their classroom anxiety and inhibition*". By virtue of this, the primary teachers need to infuse Cooperative Learning activities into EFL speaking classrooms at their primary schools more frequently.

C.   Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in merits of Cooperative Learning activities on oral performance
Table 6. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in merits of Cooperative Learning activities on oral performance

Item	Statement		SD*	D*	UN*	A*	SA*	M	S.D.
11	Cooperative Learning activities allow learners more chances to produce language functionally *(e.g. requesting, clarifying, making suggestions).*	**F(n)**	0	0	3	7	25	**4.63**	**.65**
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	8.6	20.0	71.4		
12	Cooperative Learning activities help students develop their topical knowledge.	**F(n)**	3	2	17	9	4	**3.29**	**1.02**
		P(%)	8.5	5.7	48.6	25.7	11.4		
13	Cooperative Learning activities help students retain language items (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) for longer period.	**F(n)**	1	3	5	8	18	**4.11**	**1.13**
		P(%)	2.9	8.6	14.3	22.9	51.4		
14	Cooperative Learning activities help primary students practice speaking more fluently.	**F(n)**	2	1	4	8	20	**4.23**	**1.14**
		P(%)	5.7	2.9	11.4	22.9	57.1		
15	Cooperative Learning activities help primary students fulfill the academic tasks easier than individual work.	**F(n)**	0	0	6	9	20	**4.40**	**.78**
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	17.1	25.7	57.1		

(*) **SD:** Strongly Disagree, **D**: Disagree, **UN**: Uncertain, **A**: Agree, **SA**: Strongly Agree

Table 6 demonstrates that almost all of the respondents (32/35) highly applauded that Cooperative Learning activities could enhance the functional aspect of students' English utterances such as requesting, clarifying, making suggestions (Item 11, M = 4.63; S.D. = .65, 20.0% agree, 71.4% strongly agree). In a similar vein, the majority of the participants highly believed that an existing cooperation among students for a speaking task might get them to finish it with ease (Item 15, M = 4.40, S.D. = .78, 25.7% agree, 57.1% strongly agree). Besides, such collaborative activities were considered by a big proportion of the teachers to expand their young learners' memory capacity of the newly-learnt lexical and grammatical items (Item 13, M = 4.11, S.D. = 1.13, 22.9% agree, 51.3% strongly agree). Coupled with this effect, a considerable improvement on fluency aspect of speaking skill was favorably united by four-fifths of the teachers (Item 14, M = 4.23, S.D. = 1.14, 22.9% agree, 57.1% strongly agree). However, nearly a half of the participants showed their skepticism on the positive correlation between Cooperative Learning activities and primary school students' topical knowledge enhancement (Item 12, M = 3.29, S.D. = 1.02. 48.6% uncertain). The qualitative data, congruously, verified this positive correlation, as follows:
▪   **Ameliorated accuracy and fluency of oral language**
All the five interviewees approved that thanks to Cooperative Learning activities, the fifth graders could heighten their speaking quality in terms of accuracy and fluency. S1 described Cooperative Learning could assist their practice of different functions. Alike, S2, S3 and S5 over-stressed that fluency and accuracy of their utterances could be strengthened asthrough Cooperative Learning activities, they got exposed to several chances to practice language forms and experience in a plenty of interactions. Especially, S4 utilized a simile for emphasizing the ample benefits of Cooperative Learning activities in this concern – *"hundreds of times of hearing is not as good as one time of seeing; hundreds of times of seeing is not as good as one time of doing".*
▪   **Effortlessly accomplished academic speaking tasks**
Three out of the five teachers excluding S2 and S4 positively considered that academic speaking tasks assigned by the primary teachers could be successfully accomplished in a given time. As an illustration, S3 clarified each part of the speaking tasks was proportionately divided and the good students could help their weaker group mates. On the contrary, S2 and S4 expressed that it was uncertain to make a conclusion on it as some student members were unwilling to their group tasks, and the teachers were unable to control all of them.
Coupled with the merits of Cooperative Learning activities on the fifth graders' affective states, satisfactory oral performance is also attributed to their positive effect. Almost all of the teachers validated that these activities could enhance the functional aspect of students' utterances such as requesting, clarifying, making suggestions. The fact has shown that primary teachers usually much talk and act as the only source of knowledge to students, while students are mannered as passive recipients in their learning process (Ning, 2011). To elaborate, young learners must learn speaking by experiencing themselves in problems and seeking their solutions by themselves, and such oral functions as exemplars. In academic, Zhang (2010) opines that thanks to Cooperative Learning activities, the students are bulkily exposed to use language input and produce language output through different types of interaction, allowing them more frequency of experimenting language units in a target functional manner. Also, a big segment of the respondents believed that Cooperative Learning activities

are beneficial to expand their young learners' memory of the new lexical and grammatical items. The more frequently the students manipulate, practice and recycle language structures, the longer they commit to their memory (McGroarty, 1989).

Besides, both quantitative and qualitative results indicated that fluency development among the fifth graders by Cooperative Learning activities was acknowledged by a greater part of the teachers. Theoretically, the traditional perspective is to maximize teacher's talking time. In contrast, Cooperative Learning vindicates the opposite; that is, to decrease teacher's talking time and increase students' talking time. In other words, it is generally embraced that the furtherance of the students' oral fluency level occurs as a results of continuous oral practices among learners who enjoy working collectively and are actively encompassed in learning process. To summarize, under the primary teachers' perceptions, Cooperative Learning activities could strengthen their fifth graders' both language accuracy and oral fluency concurrently. Consistently, this study yielded a similar finding as some foregoing studies like Liang (2000), Soraya (2010), Maldonado, Banoy, and Quinche (2011), Attamimi (2014).

However, there existed a suspicion among many participants on the concrete correlation between Cooperative Learning activities and the young learners' topical knowledge, proven by both questionnaire and interview results. Yet, young learners are developing as thinkers; understand the differences between the real and the imaginary (Slattery & Willis, 2001).Thus, Cooperative Learning activities can be exploited for thematic knowledge expansion at their surface level. Through cooperating with their classmates, the fifth graders can grasp new pieces of topical information and use them to produce English oral speech.

What is more, an overwhelming majority of the participants believed that an existing cooperation among students for a speaking task may get them to finish it with ease. In theory, Jolliffe (2007) supposes that academic tasks can be accomplished earlier and more effectively if the group work is equally shared among students. To be more specific, this can occur when the fifth graders understand that they can procure their goals if the other individuals with whom they cooperatively work also reach their goals and, thus, promote each other's endeavors to achieve the speaking goals. There should be noted that if the primary school teachers obey principles of Cooperative Learning adjustably in their speaking classrooms, academic speaking activities can be finished effectively.

D. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in pitfalls of implementing Cooperative Learning activities in speaking lessons

From Table 7 below, a greater part of the teachers worried that unless keep track well, some weak students would not work with others and remain silent and rely heavily on other good students (Item 16, M = 4.40, SD. = .96, 22.9% agree, 62.9% strongly agree). As a result of this dilemma, it was intricate to evaluate students equitably when they participate in Cooperative Learning activities, reported by a vast majority of the questionnaire respondents (Item 17, M = 4.26; SD. = 1.08, 31.4% agree, 51.3% strongly agree). To be more specific, both insufficient preparing-time availability (Item 18, M = 4.54, S.D. = .65, 28.6% agree, 57.1% strong agree) and big class size (Item 19, M = 4.03, S.D. = 1.13, 28.6% agree, 45.7% strongly agree) were commonly faced obstacles when prosecuting Cooperative Learning activities to train speaking skill for fifth graders. Also, some other challenges negatively impacting the implementation of Cooperative Learning activities at the primary school context were ultimately found, including classroom management (Item 21, M = 4.29, S.D. = 1.02, 31.4% agree, 54.3% strongly agree) and fixed physical set-up of the classrooms (Item 22, M = 4.29, S.D. = .71, 42.9% agree, 42.9% strongly agree). In common, it is these aforementioned challenges (e.g. unfair assessment, insufficient time of preparation, big class size, fixed physical setting, or even problematic classroom management) that drew almost all the participating teachers to make a great deal of efforts to maximize the outcomes of Cooperative Learning activities in their fifth-grade speaking classes (Item 20, M = 4.57, S.D. = .60, 31.4% agree, 62.9% strongly agree).

Table 7. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in pitfalls of implementing Cooperative Learning activities in speaking lessons

Item	Statement		SD*	D*	UN*	A*	SA*	M	S.D.
16	If I do not notice well, some weak students rely on others during Cooperative Learning activities.	F(n)	1	1	3	8	22	4.40	.96
		P(%)	2.9	2.9	8.6	22.9	62.9		
17	It is hard to evaluate students fairly when using Cooperative Learning activities.	F(n)	2	1	2	11	19	4.26	1.08
		P(%)	5.7	2.9	5.7	31.4	51.3		
18	There is too little time available to prepare Cooperative Learning activities effectively.	F(n)	0	0	5	10	20	4.54	.65
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	14.3	28.6	57.1		
19	There are too many students in class to implement Cooperative Learning activities effectively.	F(n)	1	4	4	10	16	4.03	1.13
		P(%)	2.9	11.4	11.4	28.6	45.7		
20	Implementing Cooperative Learning	F(n)	0	0	2	11	22	4.57	.60

			SD	D	UN	A	SA	Mean	SD
	activities requires a great deal of effort from teachers.	P(%)	0.0	0.0	5.7	31.4	62.9		
21	If I do not know how to implement Cooperative Learning activities, my classroom gets too noisy.	F(n)	1	2	2	11	19	4.40	.96
		P(%)	2.9	5.7	5.7	31.4	54.3		

(*) SD: Strongly Disagree, **D**: Disagree, **UN**: Uncertain, **A**: Agree, **SA**: Strongly Agree

Harmoniously, the results of the sixth interview question also cast light on these pitfalls in connection to three factor sources from teacher, students, and schooling as follows:

▪ **Student factor: Shortly attentive, noisy, and linguistically immature**

The qualitative results denoted that the primary school students were viewed as the main causal factor hampering the fruitful implementation of Cooperative Learning activities, unearthed by three participants (S1, S4, and S5). S1 unraveled almost all the primary students normally tended to be reticent, dominant and inattentive, which harmed the equality in assessment and scoring. Additionally, S2 avowed that this distinguished trait of the young learners could cause the teachers difficult to manage the class. Noticeably, S5 supplemented that these students were linguistically immature, which possibly lowered the values of Cooperative Learning activities in speaking class.

▪ **Teacher factor: Insufficient preparation time**

Along with the main causal factor of students, the teachers' lack of preparation time partly abated good achievements that Cooperative Learning activities yield (S4).

▪ **Schooling factor: Big class size, fixed physical classroom setting, inadequate class time, rigid ELT curriculum**

As emanated from the interview, S2, S3 and S5 advocated that schooling contributed to the success of Cooperative Learning activities. The challenges regarding schooling were named, including a) a large number of the students per class, b) limited class time allocation, c) narrow classroom space, and d) prescribed ELT materials.

In common, there were three main difficulty sources ascertained in this study, including teacher, student and schooling factors. To begin with, a greater part of the teachers worried that unless record aptly, some weak students may not work with others and remain reticent and rely on good students. In response to this quandary, an equitable evaluation among students participating in Cooperative Learning activities seemed strenuous. Normally, a team has some members who do not want to work with others and keep silent; or in some cases, a few students would like to control their group mates and talk all the time (Kagan, 1992). Therefore, if learners are put into groups without sufficient instructions on what and how to work in groups, they cannot perform effectively.

In addition, both the quantitative and qualitative findings delineated that the dearth of preparing-time availability and big class size were customarily defied obstacles in implementing Cooperative Learning activities. Zhou (2011) pinpoints that unavailability of time to teach materials and control class is a big challenge in this enactment. A successful Cooperative Learning lesson takes teachers much time to prepare the materials and manage classroom rather than traditional one. Thus, teachers can be interested initially but it is much difficult for them to keep their maintenance for a longer time (Phan, 2014). Meanwhile, class size is another problem that the teachers have to surmount to successfully implement Cooperative Learning, sought by Pham (2011). Normally, Vietnamese primary classes normally consist of 40-50 students. In such big class size, there are approximately 13-14 groups working concurrently, making it impossible for the teachers to observe, monitor or support to ensure that they are working smoothly. In a similar vein, workload division among group members is the possible barrier to success of enacting Cooperative Learning approach. This challenge is also mentioned as a diffusion of responsibility by Slavin (1995), in which learners have low individual accountability and their teacher does not instruct them well. Thus, it is imperative for the primary school teachers to elicit the Cooperative Learning task instructions clearly.

As far as the strains were concerned, classroom management and fixed physical set-up of the classrooms were also named. As a matter, classroom can get chaotic and noisy in case that the teachers do not know how to implement Cooperative Learning activities effectively. Literally, young learners' attention span and concentration level is very short, and they are very active and naughty, they cannot sit in one place for long time and can easily feel bored after 5-10 minutes. If the primary school teachers note this arduousness and seek the ways to manage their class in hands, Cooperative Learning activities may be efficiently practiced. Alternatively speaking, good classroom management can contribute to the success of Cooperative Learning enactment in the fifth grade speaking classrooms. Besides, the actual implementation of Cooperative Learning may be hampered due to the fixed physical set-up of their classrooms like chairs, tables, space. The important thing is that the teachers must plan Cooperative Learning speaking lessons carefully beforehand so that these lessons can be implemented satisfactorily in reality.

In overall, the negative aspects impeding the successful extent of Cooperative Learning implementation sought in this study (e.g. unfair assessment, insufficient time of preparation, big class size, fixed physical setting, or even problematic classroom management) were comparatively consistent with whatever wassought in some foregoing studies such as Pattanpichet (2011), Phan (2014), Pham (2011). It is these pitfalls that urge almost all the participating teachers to make a great deal of efforts to maximize the outcomes of social-constructivism-based activities in their fifth-grade speaking classes in their hands.

Research question 2: Classroom practices
A.   Frequency rate of actually implementing Cooperative Learning activities

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Frequency	1	3	19	10	2
Percentage	2.9%	8.6%	54.3%	28.6%	5.7%
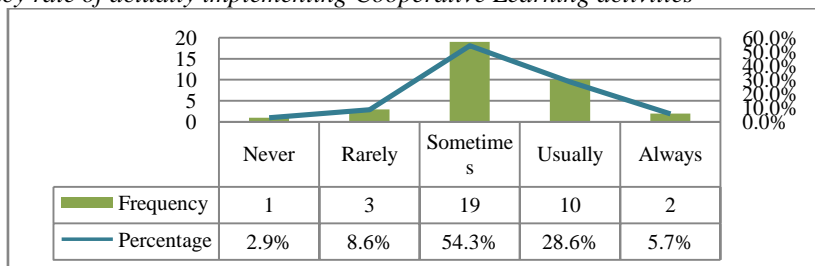
Chart 1: Frequency rate of implementing Cooperative Learning activities

As evidenced in Chart 1 for Item 23, slightly more than a half of the respondents only "sometimes" implemented the Cooperative Learning activities in their fifth-grade speaking class (19 out of 35 participants, equivalent to 54.3%). Nevertheless, there were still 28.6% of the total informants (10/35 participants) revealing that they "usually" favored such these activities in their speaking instructions. Overall, the English primary school teachers exploited the Cooperative Learning activities at a medium rate. This degree was consistently found in the interview.

▪ **Frequency rate: Sometimes (Occasionally)**

The qualitative results revealed that all the five interviewed teachers infrequently designed and manipulated Cooperative Learning activities in the fifth grade speaking classes. In particular, two of them advocated that selecting Cooperative Learning activities related to the textbook content and reference source availability (S2 and S5). In addition, S3 revealed that she mainly relied on the tasks available in the textbook prescribed by the VietnameseMinistry of Education and Training (Q7).

As mentioned earlier, Cooperative Learning, by its nature, embraces salient advantages in developing the young learners' speaking performance and comforting their language psychology, regardless of unexpected hindrances. Henceforth, the primary teachers should take advantage of Cooperative Learning activities to improve the quality of the fifth-grade speaking classes at their primary schools. To summarize, if Cooperative Learning activities are frequently enacted in teaching practice, there exists a considerably positive change in speaking class atmosphere and quality in the target context.

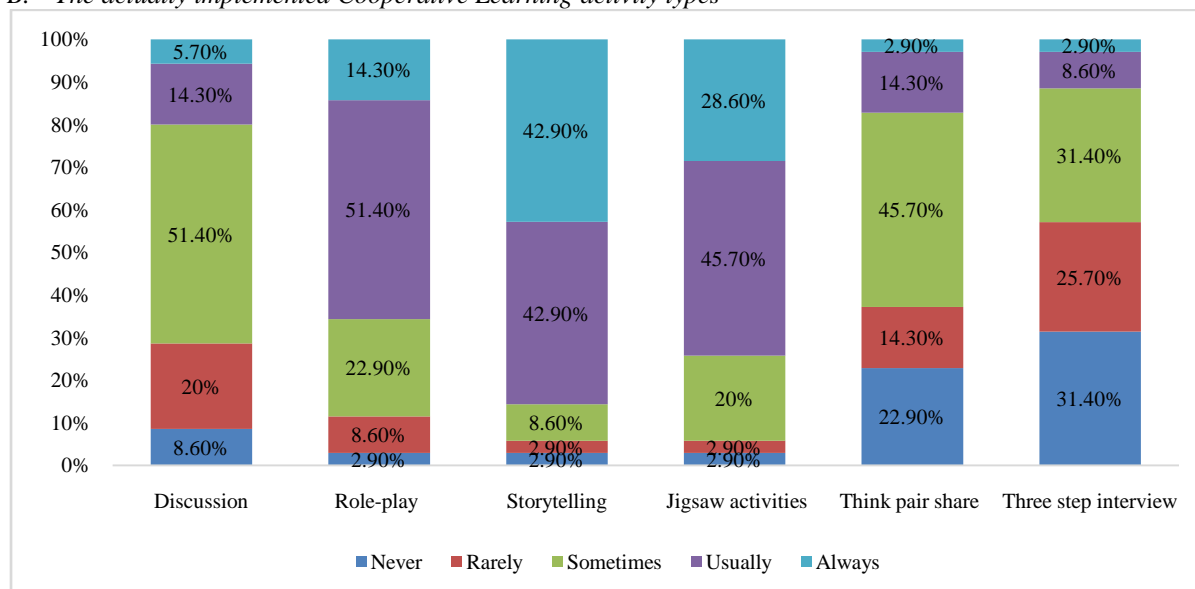*B.   The actually implemented Cooperative Learning activity types*

Chart 2. The actually implemented Cooperative Learning activity types

As can be seen from Chart 2 for Item 24, storytelling was the most frequently practiced activity by the primary school teachers (42.9% usually and 42.9% always). Nearly three quarters of the sample also was in favor of jigsaw, proven by 45.7% usually and 28.6% always. Similarly, approximately two-thirds of the participants focused on role-play activities in their speaking lessons (51.4% usually and 14.3% always). Contrary to the three aforementioned types (e.g. storytelling, jigsaw, role-play), the three other Cooperative Learning activity types were not preferred by most of the surveyed teachers such as discussion (20.0% rarely and 51.4% sometimes), think pair share (22.9% never and 45.7% sometimes) and three steps interview (31.4% never and 25.7% rarely). Qualitatively, the interview results also produced the same trend.

▪ **More frequently used activity types: Storytelling, jigsaw, and role-play**

As raised from the interview results, storytelling, jigsaw and role-play were the most favorably implemented Cooperative Learning techniques in the fifth grade speaking class. The rationale for exerting these types was due to that they were prepared and enacted less effortlessly (S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5), relevant to the young learners' existing language proficiency and cognition level (S2) and applicable according to the textbook content and pedagogical objectives (S4 and S5).

▪ **Less favorably used activity types: Discussion, think pair share, and three step interview**

In addition, the qualitative data also pointed out that all the five interviewed participants were not in favor of the other three types including discussion, think pair share, and three step interview. Based on the interviewees' revelation, these activities were perceived burdensome to the young learners' language use and topic knowledge recollection (S1, S2, S3, and S5), time-consuming (S1), and less effective in delivering speaking lessons (S4), or even unfamiliar to primary school teachers themselves (S3).

To discuss, the results showed that storytelling was most frequently implemented among the surveyed participants, followed by jigsaw and role-play respectively. Theoretically, Dujmovic (2006) concede that storytelling can build up creative thinking in students and assist them to express their ideas in front of others. Acceptably, this activity type can train primary students' language fluency (McDargh, 2006). Thus, it seems to be a salient indicator that storytelling was practically favored by many teacher participants. Regarding jigsaw activities, they are acknowledged as a collaborative technique appropriate for students from 3rd to 12th grade (Adams, 2013). By virtue of this, the primary school teachers should be contented that such a Cooperative Learning activity is absolutely appropriate to the young learners in common and fifth graders in particular. Alike, role-play was also another type preferred by a big portion of the primary school teachers. In this activity, students play different roles that allow them to speak; for instances, the teacher asks students to choose a job then try to perform it as they are working it in reality as doctors, nurses, teachers, pilots, taxi drivers and architectures (Ladousse, 1987). From the interview results, the rationale for exerting these types stemmed from the fact that they are prepared and enacted effortlessly, relevant to the young learners' proficiency and cognition, and applicable regarding the textbook content and pedagogical objectives.

Contrary to the three aforementioned types, the three other Cooperative Learning activity groups were not favored by most of the teachers; that is, discussion, think pair share, and three steps interview. Consistently, the qualitative findings gleaned from the interview also yielded a similar tendency. Based on the interviewees' divulgence, these activities were perceived burdensome to the young learners' language use and topic knowledge recollection, time-consuming, and less valuable in delivering speaking lessons, or even unfamiliar to the primary teachers themselves. However, similar to the more frequent used classes mentioned above, these less frequently employed types should be also implemented in the fifth grade speaking classes to vary the teachers' instructional behaviors and then better speaking performance among their young students can be actually produced. To begin with, through discussion activities, students develop cooperative attitudes such as share their ideas, make questions, persuade, clarify their understanding and evaluate (Hedge, 2000). Besides, three steps interview is an appropriate activity to stimulate students' interaction with the other class members (Kagan, 1992). Ultimately, think pair share is useful to encourage the students' time on task and listening to each other, and to create the optimal participation among all class members and raise their confidence in speaking out their ideas (Sampsel, 2013). It is obvious that discussion, think pair share and three steps interview can upgrade the students' fluency and confidence Thus, the teachers need to extend their use of these activities to make speaking classrooms more comfortable and productive.

C. The deployed maxims for implementing Cooperative Learning activities

Table 8. Teachers' deployment of maxims for implementing Cooperative Learning activities in speaking lessons

Item	Statement		N*	R*	S*	U*	A*	M	S.D.
25	I design Cooperative Learning activities carefully and flexibly prior to the occurred speaking classes.	F(n)	0	0	7	13	15	4.23	.77
		P(%)	0.0	0.0	20.0	37.1	42.9		
26	I inform clear objectives and instructions of the activities for my students to achieve in hand.	F(n)	1	1	5	16	12	4.06	.94
		P(%)	2.9	2.9	14.3	45.7	34.3		

27	I diagnose my students' English level to form them into suitable groups.	**F(n)**	3	7	22	2	1	**2.74**	**.82**
		P(%)	8.6	20.0	62.9	5.7	2.9		
28	I observe to assure each member's equal participation in each group.	**F(n)**	1	0	8	19	7	**3.89**	**.83**
		P(%)	2.9	0.9	22.9	54.3	20.0		
29	I rotate my students to participate in various configurations (e.g. pairs, triads).	**F(n)**	0	2	8	19	6	**3.83**	**.79**
		P(%)	0.0	5.7	22.9	54.3	17.1		

(*) **N:** Never, **R:** Rarely, **S:** Sometimes, **U:** Usually, **A:** Always

From Table 8, a great number of the teachers unveiled that they frequently designed Cooperative Learning activities flexibly and scrupulously before the speaking lessons were implemented in the classrooms (Item 25, M = 4.23, S.D. = .77, 37.1% usually, 42.9% always). It literally means that the teachers took *"Simultaneous interaction"* principle into consideration, in which class time had to be precisely designed to allow many student interactions during the period. Besides, four-fifths of the surveyed teachers pinpointed that in the pre-speaking phase, they frequently informed the target objectives and made clear-cut instructions for their primary school students to accomplish the Cooperative Learning activities effectively (Item 26, M = 4.06, S.D. = .94, 45.7% usually, 34.3% always). It is obvious that the primary school teachers abode by *"Positive interdependence"* and *"Individual accountability"* principles when deploying Cooperative Learning activities in actuality. However, a big portion of the primary teachers were not in favor of diagnosing their 27, M = 2.74, S.D. = .72, 62.9% sometimes). During Cooperative Learning activities, a large number of the teachers observed to monitor equal participation of each member in the group at medium frequency rate (Item 28, M = 3.89, S.D. = .83, 54.3% usually, 20.0% always). In a similar vein, during such these speaking classes, rotating the fifth graders' working arrangements like pairs, triads, was practiced by a big part of the teachers (Item 29, M = 3.83, S.D. = .79, 54.3% usually, 17.1% always). *"Individual accountability"* principle was practically reflected by many primary school teachers in the domain of infusing Cooperative Learning activities in fifth-grade EFL speaking class. The qualitative data, congruously, also attested these maxims within three phases:

▪ **Before the Cooperative Learning speaking lessons: Heedfully planning, precisely instructing**

For this phase, all the five interviewees planned the Cooperative Learning activities carefully before infusing them into the EFL speaking class. They espoused that this preparation was necessary due to some reasons. The first challenge derived from the restricted class time (S1, S3). The second reason was labeled to immature linguistic and topical knowledge among the young learners (S4). Another chief causal factor was pertinent to the prescription of unit topic and learning objectives (S3). In overall, S2 emphasized the necessity of making precise lesson plans for Cooperative Learning classes:

▪ **During the Cooperative Learning speaking lessons: Alertly observing, scaffolding**

For this phase, all the interviewed teachers revealed that they frequently moved around the speaking class and comforted their primary students where necessary. Apart from their facilitation, they also observed to check the equality among their students in collectively working.

▪ **After the Cooperative Learning speaking lessons: Positively giving comments, praise**

For this phase, two of them (S1 and S2) made their assessment and scoring on the whole group rather than individuals, while three other interviewees (S3, S4 and S5) depicted their teaching behaviors after finishing the Cooperative Learning tasks that they only gave positive comments on their students' accomplishments.

Both the quantitative and qualitative results showed that they frequently designed Cooperative Learning activities flexibly and thoughtfully before the speaking lessons were implemented in the classrooms. It insinuates that the primary teachers took *Simultaneous Interaction* principle into account, in which class time allocation must be meticulously calculated to allow many student interactional patterns during the period. In other words, the teachers should be encouraged to set up time points in a very detailed way so that the speaking class is governed punctually. In another point, most of them informed the target objectives and made clear-cut instructions for their primary students to accomplish the Cooperative Learning activities effectively. It means that these primary school teachers heeded *Positive Interdependence* and *Individual Accountability* principles when deploying Cooperative Learning activities in actuality. *Individual Accountability* is an indispensable proposition of Cooperative Learning, occurring when all students in a group are held accountable for doing a share of the work and for mastery of the materials to be learned. In other words, each team member should be responsible for his/her equal share to the group's accomplishment. It is important that the group knows who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the task. There are some suggested ways to maintain this trait by Kagan (1992). In brief, the teachers should give clear instructions of what and how the group should do to accomplish the shared task.

However, a big portion of the primary school teachers were ignorant of diagnosing their students' proficiency levels to form them in suitable groups in a Cooperative Learning speaking class. In lieu of that, they usually grouped their students peculiar to their current seat positions. Discernibly, *Group Formation* maxim was disregarded in the genuine practice. To ensure *Positive Interdependence* and *Individual Accountability* of

Cooperative Learning prosecution, it requires the teachers to comply with *Group Formation* doctrine. The first step is teachers' decision on the group size such as pairs, triads and so on. It is generally reckoned that this decision heavily relies on the tasks, the learners' age and the time limit for the lesson that the teachers decide how many students will be formed a group. Following that, teachers have to assign students' roles in their groups such as timer, summarizer, presenter, and monitors. In fact, these teachers should remind the importance of each individual in the group and alternate these roles regularly to give all group members experience and get them out of tediousness. In short, teachers have to reflect their important role in which they always keep track of their students' behaviors and justify where necessary.

A conscious behavior during the Cooperative Learning activities being enacted was that a large number of the teacher participants observed to monitor equal participation of each member. The qualitative results of the interview indicated that during these activities, the primary school teachers also moved around the class and facilitated their young students if necessary. In a similar vein, during such these speaking classes, rotating the fifth graders' working arrangements like pairs, triads, was also practiced by a big part of the primary school teachers. Patently, *Individual Accountability* maxim was practically manifested by many participating primary school teachers in infusing Cooperative Learning activities into the fifth-grade EFL speaking classes.

To terminate the speaking classes within Cooperative Learning activities, the teachers customarily assessed the given task accomplishment for the whole groups in preference to individuals. At the same time, praise or positive feedback also became the useful means to motivate the students and to comfort the classroom atmosphere. Eventually, there should be noted that the primary school teachers need to make their young learners feel confident and homely when participating in Cooperative Learning activities. Until these students become sufficiently congenial, they can improve their speaking performance regardless of any rate.

V. Conclusion

Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs

Firstly, a great portion of the teachers espoused that the primary teachers need to ameliorate both fluency and accuracy aspects of oral performance for these students, yet correctness of vocabulary and grammar was still prominent in focus, need to relieve their young students' negative affections (e.g. anxiety, shyness, low-efficacy) during oral productions. Secondly, a great number of the teachers perceived that such activities could increase the fifth graders' degree of participation and engagement in speaking classes, and accelerate these learners' confidence level in verbal expressions in a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Thirdly, almost all of the teachers opined that Cooperative Learning activities could enhance the functional aspect of students' English utterances, expand young learners' memory capacity of the newly-learnt linguistic items, help them finish their academic tasks without a hitch. Fourthly, many teachers worried that some students' reticence or silence, along with the dearth of time availability, large class size, problematic classroom management and restricted physical set-up of the classrooms. In overall, almost all of the teachers needed to make a great deal of efforts to widen the advantages of Cooperative Learning activities in teaching speaking for fifth graders in the Vietnamese context.

Teachers' Classroom Practices

Pertaining to the extent, many teachers infrequently deployed Cooperative Learning activities in reality. Several factors hampered their willingness to capitalize on these Cooperative Learning activities; for example, big class size, scarce time fund, uneven participation among students, inconvenient physical classroom setting, or rigorously fixed lesson content. In association with activity types, storytelling was the most frequently implemented type, followed by jigsaw and role-play, respectively; however, a great part of the participants neglected their utilization of discussion, think pair share and three steps interview due to some causal factors from teacher, students, and schooling. With reference to implementation maxims, a great majority of the teachers frequently framed Cooperative Learning speaking activities adaptably and scrupulously before the lessons being practiced. In this pre-activities phase, these teachers customarily informed the target objectives and clear instructions for their primary school students to perform these Cooperative Learning activities well. During the activities, some of the teachers observed and moved around the class to assure equal participation of each member in the groups, and some of them also frequently deliberately alternate the student interactional patterns. Praises and positive comments usually occurred at the end of the speaking classes under Cooperative Learning approach.

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