

Utilizing Numbered Heads Together Strategy to Enhance Prep School Students' EFL Oral Communication Skills

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Abstract

The current study investigates the effect of using Numbered Heads Together Strategy on developing English oral communication skills of second year preparatory school students. The research employs a quasi-experimental design. Participants involved in the present study were 60 students .They were assigned at random into two groups: experimental (n=30) and control (n=30). Both groups were taught by the same instructor. However, the experimental group was taught via Numbered Heads Together Strategy. Meanwhile, the control group received the regular type of instruction. Instruments used in this study included: (a) A questionnaire for determining the most important oral communication skills required by the

targeted students, and (b) an oral communication test that was used before and after implementing the suggested teaching strategy. T-test results revealed that experimental group students' oral communication skills were significantly developed more than the control's as a result of using Numbered Heads Together Strategy. It could be concluded that Numbered Heads Together Strategy is effective for enhancing English oral communication skills of preparatory school students.

Keywords: *Oral communication skills, preparatory school students, and Numbered Heads Together Strategy*

استخدام استراتيجية الرؤوس المرقمة معاً لتعزيز مهارات التواصل الشفوي باللغة
الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب المدارس الإعدادية

الملخص:

تتناول الدراسة الحالية تأثير استخدام استراتيجية الرؤوس المرقمة معاً على تنمية مهارات الاتصال الشفهي باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب الصف الثاني الإعدادي بمدرسة د. زكي إسماعيل الإعدادية المشتركة بالكرامة للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٤ - ٢٠٢٥. تتكون العينة من ٦٠ طالباً تم توزيعهم عشوائياً إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية (عدد ٣٠ طالباً) ومجموعة ضابطة (عدد ٣٠ طالباً). تم تدريس المجموعتين من قبل نفس المعلم، ولكن طبقت على المجموعة التجريبية استراتيجية الرؤوس المرقمة معاً، بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة الطريقة التقليدية في التدريس.

واشتملت أدوات الدراسة على (أ : أ) استبيان لتحديد أهم مهارات الاتصال الشفهي المطلوبة لدى الطلاب المستهدفين،

(ب) اختبار لقياس مهارات الاتصال الشفهي تم تطبيقه قبل وبعد تنفيذ الاستراتيجية المقترحة. وكشفت نتائج اختبار (T) عن وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية لصالح طلاب المجموعة التجريبية في تنمية مهارات الاتصال الشفهي، مما يدل على فعالية استراتيجية الرؤوس المرقمة معاً في تحسين مهارات الاتصال الشفهي باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الإعدادية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارات التواصل الشفهي ، استراتيجية الرؤوس المرقمة معاً

Introduction

Oral communication is the process of expressing ideas, thoughts, and information, and it is extremely important in the lives of students. Oral or verbal communication can take many forms, ranging from casual conversation that happens spontaneously with no plan to participation in meetings that happen in a structured environment with a set plan.

As human beings, we have our own means of communication: we can speak and express ourselves orally. We use many languages to communicate orally. We also have our own nonverbal language, which is very common among us, despite our differences. In this sense, human communication is known as “a special form of communication that occurs between people. The bond that is created between people through communication involves the use of spoken symbolic language – the words we speak – as well as nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice” (Redmond,2000: 6).

According to UNESCO (2020), progress in education has been slow and insufficient to meet the goals set long before the

COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, the closure of educational institutions, universities and businesses has had devastating consequences for education systems, as communication skills such as reading and learning have long struggled. The organization estimates that about 105 million students fell below the minimum literacy level in 2020, in grades one to six, due to the coronavirus. At this stage, institutions should consider the importance of communication skills.

Listening is as important as speaking in the oral communication process. Active listening promotes mutual understanding and enriches conversations. In EFL learning, feedback from teachers and peers helps learners improve their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Brookhart, 2008).

Oral communication involves the spoken transmission of ideas, thoughts, and emotions. It allows for direct interaction between speakers and listeners, often enhanced by non-verbal elements such as gestures and tone (Hybels & Weaver, 2012). It is a fundamental aspect of everyday life and essential for personal and professional success.

In educational contexts, oral communication facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, and academic growth. Teachers use it to instruct and engage students, while learners use it to express understanding and build critical thinking skills (Brown, 2001).

In education, the topic of teaching, guiding and helping primary school students with a strategy offers the opportunity to work on different aspects of communicative competence, including linguistic, grammatical, lexical, sociocultural,

pragmatic, sociolinguistic, textual and discursive (Revuelta, 2018). Because they are relevant, communication skills in educational contexts depend on students and teachers, to a large extent, on academic, intellectual and scholastic performance, as a fundamental resource for interaction between participants in a communication (Espinoza et al., 2019).

In Latin America, according to Unicef (2020), communication skills are essential in our lives, especially to achieve some important aspects of human development, such as learning, social inclusion and well-being. It is therefore important to emphasize that communication skills are essential for the knowledge society and are encouraged by interactive teaching and learning methods, promoting active participation in contexts of freedom of expression and respect for diversity. Although due to various circumstances, it is necessary to strengthen communication skills in the early stages of education, it is advisable to strengthen them in the developmental stage because there are cases when students do not show communication and control skills, which affects the development and development of children and learning.

Oral communication means using the language appropriately in social interactions. Diversity in interaction involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation (Shumin, 2002: 8). Also, Hismanoglu (2000) exemplified communication techniques, such as circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, or asking for repetition and explanation, all of which are techniques used by learners so as to keep a conversation going. The purpose of utilizing these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, oral communication is critical for developing fluency, accuracy, and confidence. It serves both as a learning objective and a method for language acquisition. Speaking tasks such as role-plays, interviews, and discussions promote interactive learning (Richards, 2006).

To improve oral skills, educators implement communicative activities like pair work, debates, and storytelling. Providing feedback, creating a low-anxiety environment, and incorporating technology are effective strategies that encourage students to practice speaking in meaningful contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Chen (2005) argued that in real-life communication, language is used to express what learners mean, however, language is more than a tool for communication, and it represents social and cultural backgrounds. Learning merely the target linguistic knowledge cannot successfully engage learners in real-life communications in the target culture, they also need to acquire the target pragmatic competence, the capacity to incorporate cultural knowledge into language use and choose appropriate language in different socio-cultural contexts. Teaching EFL oral communication includes many different aspects of the spoken language. For instance, students can read different types of dialogues aloud or they can present something that they have prepared.

Oral communication is mentioned in the literature as related to listening and speaking skills (Brown, 1980; Cazden, 1972; Lerner, 1985). According to Johnson and Myklebust (1967), the process of producing spoken language is called

"expressive language." Although a child with an expressive language disorder can understand speech and language, does not have a muscular paralysis that prevents speaking , and may even do well on nonverbal tasks , yet this child is poor in the skill of speaking. Sometimes the child needs to develop inner and receptive language before being able to express his /her thoughts and feelings (Brown, 1980; Brown et al . , 1971; Krashen, 1982 ; Ortiz & Bates , 1989) .

Cultural differences affect how oral messages are sent and received. EFL learners must understand and adapt to communication norms in English-speaking contexts to avoid misunderstandings and foster intercultural competence (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010).

Oral communication means using the language appropriately in social interactions. Diversity in interaction involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation (Shumin, 2002: 8).

Researches such as Griffith graduate project (2004, p. 1) and Riemer (2007, pp. 92-96) conclude that communication skills have two basic forms which are verbal and nonverbal communication. It can be formal such as official communication or informal such as friends' chats. On the other hand, nonverbal communication includes body language, visual forms, and emotional expressions of a sender and/or a receiver (Griffith Graduate Project, 2004, p. 1 & Riemer, 2007, pp. 92-96).

The importance of oral communication skills comes from helping humankind to use words to express emotions, thoughts,

needs, and opinions in a spoken language. For Darling and Dannels (2013, p. 4), oral communication skills help learners to: (a) improve their academic performance; (b) increase their employment opportunities; (c) enhance their subsequent professional competence; and (d) improve their own personal effectiveness.

In general, communication is quite crucial in our lives. As humans, we must express our own thoughts, emotions, and experiences to others. This makes communication a crucial part of our daily lives. In our daily existence, we communicate for a variety of reasons: Typically, we communicate to satisfy wants, get knowledge, manage relationships, derive pleasure and amusement, validate ourselves, coordinate and manage duties, and persuade and gain something from others (Redmond, 2000:8-10).

Furthermore, improving communication skills has become an essential necessity for many employment. This is very normal given that we live in the age of communication and technology. This theme is pushed by employment adverts in newspapers and on the Internet. These advertising request that the applicant have excellent communication abilities. Here are some communication-related terms that have lately featured in job advertisements in the Indianapolis Star and News, The Denver Post, and the Seattle Times:

‘Must have strong effective oral and written communication skills’ - ‘Outstanding communication skills’ – ‘Excellent written and verbal communication, organizational, and supervision skills’ (Redmond, 2000:3).

However, communication is viewed as a serious issue by many people who find it exceedingly difficult to express their own thoughts. Those people struggle with this difficulty because they need to learn the communication abilities that will allow them to thrive in their careers. Despite the rising importance of communication skills, many people continue to struggle with them, unable to properly communicate their thoughts and ideas, whether verbally or in writing. This weakness prevents people from competing effectively in the workplace and impedes job advancement (Fowler, 2004).

Some research on oral communication abilities in EFL includes Nazir (1989), who investigated the effect of adopting a suggested program to promote verbal communication of potential English instructors at the Faculty of Education, Assiut University. The study's goal was to improve verbal communication skills among potential English instructors. The findings showed that the training was both effective and successful. The study suggested that English teachers incorporate communicative activities and procedures into their syllabuses, rather than using them as time fillers. - Students must be given opportunities to participate in the language class through pair work, group work, teamwork, and classwork.

Sayed (2005) investigated the influence of a multiple intelligences-based training program on the oral communication abilities of English majors at Assuit University's Faculty of Education. The study sought to explore the impact of a multiple intelligences-based training program on the oral communication abilities of first-year English majors. The study's findings demonstrated that the program had a considerable impact on students' oral communication skills, with statistically significant variations between before and post-test administration. The

study provided a good theoretical framework for oral communication abilities and demonstrated that they could be developed through a well-constructed program.

Nowadays, it is common to identify the communication skills as the main factors that define whether a person is an effective or ineffective user of a language. To support this idea, Palmer (2016) argues: the number one language art is oral communication. We speak way more than we write. All of our important communication is verbal. A resume might get you in the door, but how you speak in the interview gets you the job. Teachers hand out all kinds of materials, but how they speak in the classroom controls the learning in the class. Oral communication is also way more important now than it was because of all the various technologies that are out there to facilitate oral communication. (As cited in Educational World, 2016, para, 5) Thus, the oral communication in the EFL class becomes an indispensable component that must be practiced, studied, and trained. It goes beyond than just making utterances in the classroom; it combines intellectual, psychological, and linguistic resources. Besides, speaking and listening, the skills worked in this study, are necessarily interrelated in order to convey meaning of whatever is said among learners and teachers (Harmer, 2017). Therefore, since oral communication is essential, it is necessary to know how to teach it in the EFL classroom.

One of the unique characteristics of classroom oral performance includes face-to-face interactions and it is necessary between the participants involved in the classroom to ensure that learning takes place. Hence, a learning climate that supports willingness to communicate has been considered an

important part of the language learning and communication process, playing a pivotal role in the development of language learners' communicative competence (Mahmoodi& Moazam, 2014).

Bastias et al., (2011) remarked that the ultimate goal of EFL Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is based on the idea of integrating language skills, including the productive skills and receptive skills to create a communicative classroom environment that engages students improve their language abilities. So, they are able to transfer knowledge learned inside the class to real life situations. Having learners' engagement in integrated communicative activities such various linguistic features as conversational expressions, vocabulary associated with daily interactions, and informal reading and writing skills enabled them to attain communicative competence.

Therefore, developing oral performance enables students to communicate effectively and appropriately in several contexts and help take the responsibility of their communication. Young (2013) posited that oral language takes the position that "abilities, actions, and activities" are not owned by a single individual participating in the process of communication, but are cooperatively constructed by everyone involved in the talk.

Faddal& Khalifa1(2017) point out that Paralanguage is considered as an effective factor in foreign learners' oral performance; it includes both verbal and non-verbal cues such as pitch, stress, intonation and body language elements, such as facial expression, eye contact, hand gestures, etc. paralanguage interact with the spoken language, and produce oral

communication. These two are combined to achieve “the conversational use of the spoken language.

Young (2013) posited that oral language takes the position that "abilities, actions, and activities" are not owned by a single individual participating in the process of communication, but are cooperatively constructed by everyone involved in the talk.

Huda (2015: 203) states Numbered Heads Together is a variant of group discussions. According to Slavin (1995), this method is suitable for ensuring individual accountability in group discussions. The aim of NHT is to give students the opportunity to share ideas and consider the most appropriate answers. In addition to increasing student cooperation, NHT can also be applied to all subjects and grade levels. Therefore, NHT can also be applied in subjects in the field of Accounting.

Priansa (2017: 333) argues that the Numbered Heads Together method is one of the cooperative learning models. NHT cooperative learning makes it easy for students to interact with each other. The purpose of the NHT learning model is to strengthen cooperation between students and ensure that all students are able to complete their tasks independently. NHT provides opportunities equal to learners so that various ideas are growing in the group.

According to Trianto (2013), the Numbered-Heads-Together learning strategy is the kind of cooperative learning that is designed to affect students' interaction pattern and as an alternative to the traditional classroom structure; there are four phases in Numbered-Heads-Together learning, which are

numbering, asking questions, thinking together, and answering. NHT is a form of peer-mediated instruction, which stemmed from Kagan's cooperative learning strategies (Haydon et al., 2010; Hunter & Haydon, 2013; Maheady et al., 1991; Maheady et al., 2002; Maheady et al., 2006; McMillen et al., 2016).

Numbered heads together is a technique in cooperative learning method which is developed by Kagan (2002 :88). This technique urge students to solve the given problems or questions in a group and sharing what they already know with others.

Moreover, Based on Olsen and Kagan in Richards and Rodgers (2001:196) that there are four key elements of NHT's group. The group consist of positive interdependence, group information, individual accountability and social skills.

Firstly the positive interdependence appear when each member of the group aware that helping one member will effect to all member in the group and dropping one member will effect to all members. Thus, they have to be helpful and supporting for their own good because the score of the group is the accumulation result of each member of the group.

Second is group formation. This factor is the most important among other elements to create positive interdependence in the group. Richards and Rodgers (2001:196) state that there are some factors involve in setting up group. They are:

1. Establishing the size of the group. one group is usually consist of three or four people.

2. However, the teacher also need to consider some factors in group formation such as the level of difficulty of the task, the age of group member, and the limitation time for the lesson.
3. Dividing students into some groups. the member of each group can be either teacher choice or students choice. it can be acceptable if the member of the group divided randomly. but, teacher selected is recommended to create a group which consist of heterogeneous in students' achievement, ethnicity and gender.
4. The role of the students in the group become one of the aspects that teacher need to pay her/his attention to.
5. The members of each group has their role in the group activities. a member can be a group's chairman or summarizer.

Furthermore, the third element is individual accountability. It is about individual performance. For example, the teacher calls students' number randomly to share ideas or answer the given question.

The last element is social skills. The social skills established the way how the students interact and share their ideas with each other as a teammates.

Maman(2016), state that Teaching process will be significant in case teachers can create learning atmosphere that can activate students to learn. There are many methods that can be employed to make students active in the teaching and learning process and one of them is Number Heads Together (NHT) method. NHT method can be interpreted as the attempt conducted by teachers to engage students in teaching and

learning process. Teaching and learning activity with the implementation of NHT method affecting the students' outcome in the teaching and learning process. The participation is manifested in the three stages of learning activities, namely program planning, implementation program, and evaluation program.

According to Cruikshank (2006:238) there are four characteristics which is found in all techniques of cooperative learning method including Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique.

The first characteristic is how the group team is made up. In dividing groups the teacher should consider that it should be contained of heterogeneous of gender and academic ability. It is purposed to make students easier to work as a team with the result that students can improve their speaking skill together. Moreover, heterogeneity in a group will develop their personality and social development. The second characteristic is in choosing the task to be discussed by the students. Choosing the task is highly influential to the effectiveness of cooperative learning. It must be suitable for a specific students' ability. While giving the task, all members of a group are asked to master the given material. If they found some problems while discussing the task, the students who have understood will explain the material. The next characteristic is groups' rule of behavior. It is about raising the individual responsibility which must be considered mostly. However, the objective of cooperative learning is not only focus to make students understand about the material but also building the personal

ability to organize the group and rising the individual accountability to trust the leader of the group.

The last characteristic is motivation and reward system. The students' motivation is appear because there is an opportunity to understand the material. Whereas reward system will grow to make students' motivation bigger and bigger. Through reward system students will be motivated to understand the material. In this case, reward is not only a gift but an approbation also known as reward.

According to Spencer Kagan (1992), all cooperative learning systems are based on three fundamental principles: SPI (Simultaneous interaction, Positive interdependence, Individual accountability).

A) Concurrent Engagement: The majority of people are simultaneously actively involved if the simultaneity principle is applied. For instance, if faculty members engage in pair interactions within the same hour, each person typically has a half-hour to contribute. The difference between feeling like you made a big contribution to a meeting and feeling like you might as well have skipped it is the difference between two minutes of active participation per hour and half an hour of active engagement. Active participation is essential because it fosters a sense of ownership over one's thoughts and participation in the decision-making process. Alienation is the alternative.

B). Interdependence is constructive: When one individual's success results in another's success (a positive correlation among outcomes) and when no one person can accomplish the goal without the assistance of others (interdependence), there is positive interdependence.

C). Personal responsibility: Every individual is held accountable when they are obliged to perform in public. Individuals who consistently abstain from participation depart with the impression that their attendance at the conference was insignificant.

A distinctive questioning approach for teachers, NHT is known for its improving effects on students' academic achievement scores and level of engagement (Maheady et al., 2006). Hunter, Dieker, and Whitney (2016) partially attribute the positive results associated with NHT to the increased rates of OTR, specifically unison responding, which is a central tenant of NHT. The elements of NHT include: positive interdependence, face to face interaction, individual group accountability, collaborative skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Kagan, 1989).

Statement of the problem

Based on the aforementioned discussion the problem of the current study is determined in the lack of oral communication skills of prep school students. Hence, the present study is an attempt to develop oral communication skills by using Numbered Heads Together Strategy.

Questions of the Study

The present study attempts to answer the following main question:

“What is the effect of using Numbered Heads Together Strategy on developing some EFL oral communication skills of prep school students?”

The main question branches out into the following sub-questions:

- 1) What are the dimensions of targeted oral communication skills of second year preparatory stage students?
- 2) To what extent do preparatory students successfully perform these skills?
- 3) What is the effect of using Numbered Heads Together Strategy on developing some EFL oral communication skills of first year preparatory stage students?

Purpose of the Study

The research aims at:

- 1) Developing oral communication skills for first year preparatory stage students by using Numbered Heads Strategy.
- 2) Reducing first year preparatory stage students' speaking anxiety by using Numbered Heads Together Strategy.

Significance of the Study

The present research would hopefully be beneficial to the following:

1. EFL Students:

- It may improve their oral communication skills.
- It may change students' roles from passive recipients to active learners through different tasks they will be asked to do them.

- It may reduce their speaking anxiety.

2. EFL Teachers:

- It may provide them with a list of EFL oral communication skills that is necessary for first year preparatory stage students taken into consideration while teaching the listening and speaking activities.
- It may provide them with guidelines for using Numbered Heads Together Strategy in teaching.

3. Curriculum designers:

They may consider the use of activities based on Numbered Heads Together Strategy on designing EFL Textbooks.

Review of literature

Some studies on oral communication skills in EFL include Nazir (1989) who tested the effect of using a suggested program to develop verbal communication of prospective teachers of English, Faculty of Education Assiut University. The purpose of the study was to develop verbal communication among prospective teachers of English, The results of the study indicated that the program was effective and successful. The researcher recommended that:

- The teacher of English has to use communicative activities and procedures that should become a part of the teaching syllabuses, and not just time filler.
- Students have to be provided with opportunities to participate in the language class through pair work, group work, team work, and class work.

Sayed (2005) examined the effect of using a multiple intelligences-based training program on developing English

majors' oral communication skills, at Faculty of Education, Assuit University. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of using a multiple intelligences-based training program on developing first year English majors' oral communication skills. The results of the study revealed that the program had a great effect on the students' oral communication skills and there are statistically significant differences between the pre and post administration of the test. The study presented a suitable theoretical background about oral communication skills, and indicated that oral communication skills could be developed through a suitable built program.

Another study that was concerned with the importance of oral communication skills was conducted by Törnqvist (2008), who used a questionnaire to interview 3 English teachers and 85 pupils in 9th grade in Sweden and to find out why oral communication was an important part of English teaching. That researcher used a qualitative method to find out how hard oral ability assessment was. Reasons behind that included that the learners were shy or unmotivated to participate orally, and the teachers did not concentrate on its assessment.

Sasli afandi (2011) conducted a research with a title "*The Effectiveness of Numbered Head Together (NHT) Toward Speaking Ability of the Student at the First Year of Senior High School Selatpanjang Kepulauan Meranti Regency*", found that teaching speaking use NHT (Numbered Heads Together) method in Emotion Expression Topic very helpful for increasing students' speaking ability the first year of Senior High School of Selat panjang Kepulauan Meranti Regency.

Maria Videlis (2011) under the title "*Implementing Numbered Head Together Strategy to Improve the Speaking*

Ability of the tenth Graders of Marketing Department in SMKN 1 Lumajang”, found that the numbered head together can help students to both students’ speaking ability and students’ speaking participation of the tenth graders of marketing department in SMKN 1 Lumajang.

Methodology

The researcher adopted the quasi experimental approach where two groups were assigned as the participants of the study: the experimental, and the control groups. The research includes two variables; the first variable is NHT Strategy, the second variable is oral communication skills. The experimental group was taught oral communication skills via NHT Strategy, meanwhile the control group was taught via the regular instruction. The experiment lasted for six weeks, and both groups were taught by the same teacher.

Participants of the study:

The participants of this study included First year preparatory stage students at Dr. Zaki Ismail Preparatory School, Karama, Aga, Dakahlia. They were assigned into two equal groups: experimental group (N=30) (taught using Numbered Heads Together Strategy), and control group (N=30) (received regular instruction).

Design of the study:

The study will employ the quasi experimental design through dividing the students into two groups: An experimental group (will be taught using Numbered Heads Together Strategy) and a control group (will be taught using regular instruction).

Instruments of the study:

- a) An EFL oral communication questionnaire as a prerequisite procedure for designing the checklist.
- b) An EFL oral communication checklist as a pre-requisite procedure for designing the test.
- c) An EFL oral communication test as the real instrument.
- d) An EFL oral communication rubric as a post-requisite procedure for scoring the test.

Hypotheses of the Study

The present study investigated the following hypotheses:

- 1) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control one in the post administration of the oral communication test, in favor of the experimental group.
- 2) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the post-administrations of the oral communication test, in favor of the post administration.
- 3) Numbered heads together strategy has a positive effect on developing preparatory school student's EFL oral communication skills.

Conclusion

- - The Numbered Heads Together (NHT) strategy proved to be highly effective in enhancing students' EFL oral communication skills across multiple sub-skills.
- - Students in the experimental group outperformed their peers in the control group, confirming the effectiveness of NHT.

- - The cooperative structure of NHT encouraged active participation, promoting confidence and language practice.
- - NHT significantly reduced students' speaking anxiety by providing a supportive and low-pressure environment.
- - Language learning was supported both socially and emotionally, not just cognitively.
- - Findings align with Vygotsky's theory and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis.
- - Students overcame psychological barriers like fear of mistakes and low self-confidence.
- - Cooperative learning strategies like NHT are effective in EFL instruction.
- - NHT is practical and applicable in real classroom contexts, especially preparatory levels.
- - The strategy is sustainable, low-cost, and engaging for EFL teachers to adopt.

Results & Discussions

To verify the validity of the study hypotheses, the data collected from the participants' responses were unpacked. These data were processed statistically to calculate the t-value using:

1. Independent Samples t-test to identify the differences between the mean scores of the participants' performance in both groups in both the pre and post oral communication test.
2. Paired Samples t-test to identify and test the differences between the means of scores of the experimental group students' performance on the pre-post oral communication test.

3. Eta Square Equation (η^2) to measure the effect size of the treatment on the experimental participants' level in oral communication skills.

The results revealed a remarkable improvement in the oral communication performance of the experimental group. This can be attributed to the collaborative and student-centered nature of the NHT strategy. These results are consistent with previous research which highlighted the positive impact of cooperative learning on speaking performance.

Verifying the first hypothesis:

“There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control one in the post administration of the oral communication test, in favor of the experimental group.”

To verify this hypothesis, the Independent sample t-test was used to compare the means of scores of the experimental group participants who used numbered heads together strategy to those of the control group ones who were taught through the regular instruction, in the post-test results. These results are presented in table (1)

Table (1): T-test results of the experimental and control groups on the post oral communication test

Main skills	Sub_ skills	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Skill 1	Skill_1	experimental	30	5.667	0.958	4.961	58	0.01
		control	30	3.833	1.782			
	Skill_2	experimental	30	5.433	1.794	4.774	58	0.01
		control	30	3.267	1.720			
Skill 2	Skill_3	experimental	30	6.333	1.093	8.880	58	0.01
		control	30	3.233	1.568			
	Skill_4	experimental	30	6.033	1.098	8.814	58	0.01
		control	30	3.333	1.268			
Skill 3	Skill_5	experimental	30	5.400	1.132	6.363	58	0.01
		control	30	3.200	1.517			
	Skill_6	experimental	30	4.233	1.313	3.613	58	0.01
		control	30	3.000	1.606			
Skill 4	Skill_7	experimental	30	4.200	1.306	2.822	58	0.01
		control	30	3.133	1.063			
	Skill_8	experimental	30	4.800	1.063	5.692	58	0.01
		control	30	3.067	1.284			
Total		experimental	30	42.067	2.899	16.443	58	0.01
		control	30	26.067	4.472			

It's clear from table (1) that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control group at (0.05) level in favor of experimental group. This means that numbered heads together strategy was effective in enhancing students' oral communication skills. Thus, the first

hypothesis can be confirmed. The researcher attributes these differences to the proposed strategy.

Verifying the second hypothesis:

“There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the post-administrations of the oral communication test, in favor of the post administration.”

Table (2) t-test results of the experimental group on the pre/post oral communication test

Main	Sub_skills	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Skill 1	Skill_1	pre	30	3.233	1.278	-13.244	29	0.01
		Post	30	5.667	0.958			
	Skill_2	pre	30	3.033	1.426	-8.163	29	0.01
		Post	30	5.433	1.794			
Skill 2	Skill_3	pre	30	2.933	1.412	-11.414	29	0.01
		Post	30	6.333	1.093			
	Skill_4	pre	30	2.967	1.496	-9.473	29	0.01
		Post	30	6.033	1.098			
Skill 3	Skill_5	Pre	30	2.767	1.546	-7.655	29	0.01
		Post	30	5.400	1.132			
	Skill_6	Pre	30	2.633	1.376	-4.997	29	0.01
		Post	30	4.233	1.313			
Skill 4	Skill_7	Pre	30	2.900	1.241	-3.525	29	0.01
		Post	30	4.200	1.306			

Main	Sub_skills	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
	Skill_8	Pre	30	2.933	1.229	-6.513	29	0.01
		Post	30	4.800	1.063			
Total		Pre	30	23.300	3.505	-21.891	29	0.01
		Post	30	42.067	2.899			

Table (2) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group the pre and the post administration of the oral communication test in favor of post administration. Therefore, the second hypothesis can be confirmed.

Verifying the third hypothesis:

“Numbered heads together strategy has a positive effect on developing preparatory school student’s EFL oral communication skills.”

To verify the fifth hypothesis the effect size ((η - value) of Numbered heads together strategy was estimated after estimating the T- value. This value was converted into its parallel levels of effect size (small, middle, high) also it represents the total variance in the dependent variable which can be attributed to the independent variable as illustrated in the following table. (Kiess, 1989:486- 488 Cited in Gohar, 2007: 147)

Table (3): Level of effect size

Level of effect size	Small	Middle	High
D	0.2	0.5	0.7

The table below indicates the effect size of the experimental group on developing the students' oral communication skills after the experimental treatment.

Table (4) Effect size of numbered heads together strategy in developing oral communication skills

Skills	η^2	Effect size
Skill_1	0.858	High
Skill_2	0.696	Middle
Skill_3	0.817	High
Skill_4	0.755	High
Skill_5	0.668	Middle
Skill_6	0.462	Small
Skill_7	0.299	Small
Skill_8	0.593	Middle
Total	0.942	High

Table (4) shows the effect size of the proposed program on the overall score for testing oral communication skills, where the

values of (η^2) in each skill and the total score of the test ranged between (0.229, and 0.942). Results also show that the effect sizes of the proposed program on the experimental group performance on oral communication skills as a whole is high.

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Appendix

The Oral communication skills rubric

<i>Oral communication skills</i>	<i>Above expectation (4)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (3)</i>	<i>Below expectation (2)</i>	<i>Unsatisfied (1)</i>
1. Listen for specific information.	The participants can Listen attentively and understands all key details easily.	The participants can understand most specific details but may miss a few.	The participants can pick up some details but needs repetition for full understanding.	The participants Struggle to grasp specific details.
2. Communicate in a conversation about a topic.	The participants can Speak fluently and confidently, expressing ideas clearly and logically.	The participants can Participate effectively but with some hesitation or repetition.	The participants can participate but with noticeable hesitation and difficulty.	The participants Struggle significantly to communicate about the topic.
3. Express opinions and attitudes.	The participants can clearly express opinions with relevant examples to support ideas.	The participants can express opinions but in a limited or less supported way.	The participants can share opinions but with unclear or disconnected expressions.	The participants struggle to express opinions clearly.
4. Pronounce all words clearly and accurately.	The participants can pronounce all words clearly and accurately with no errors.	The participants have clear pronunciation with minor mistakes that do not affect understanding.	The participants make some pronunciation errors that may affect understanding.	The participants have significant pronunciation errors that make understanding difficult.
5. Talk about likes and dislikes.	The participants can Speak fluently about likes and dislikes with clear examples.	The participants express preferences with some repetition or hesitation.	The participants can mention some preferences but with limited and unclear expressions.	The participants struggle to talk about likes and dislikes.

6. Use orally correct grammar.	The participants can Uses correct grammar consistently in spoken language.	The participants can Makes minor grammar mistakes that do not affect understanding.	The participants can Makes frequent grammar errors that sometimes affect clarity.	The participants can Makes many grammar mistakes that make understanding difficult.
7. Provide common antonyms and synonyms.	The participants can quickly and accurately provide a variety of antonyms and synonyms.	The participants provide some antonyms and synonyms with minor errors.	The participants provide a limited number of words with some hesitation.	The participants struggle to provide antonyms and synonyms.
8. Use more conjunction words.	The participants effectively use a variety of conjunctions to improve speech flow.	The participants can use some conjunctions but may repeat a few.	The participants can use a limited number of conjunctions, sometimes incorrectly.	The participants can Rarely use conjunctions, making speech choppy.

Speaking anxiety scale

<i>No</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>To some extent</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Dimension one: Physiological Anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My heart beats fast when I have to speak in front of others. • I feel tense and unable to relax before speaking. • I feel exhausted after speaking due to nervousness. • My hands or legs shake when I have to talk in public. • I experience shortness of breath while speaking. 				

- I feel sweaty or shaky when speaking in public.
2. Dimension two: Cognitive Anxiety
- I feel anxious when I don't know the right words to use.
 - I fear that people will laugh at me when I speak.
 - I worry that others will judge my speaking skills negatively.
 - I worry about forgetting what I want to say.
 - I doubt my ability to express myself clearly.
 - I overthink before I speak, which makes me nervous.
3. Dimension three: Behavioral Anxiety
- I avoid presentations or speaking in front of large groups.
 - I avoid eye contact while speaking because of nervousness.
 - I avoid presentations or speaking in front of large groups.
 - I prefer to stay quiet even when I have something to say.
 - I prepare what to say in advance to avoid mistakes.
 - I try to keep my answers short to avoid

speaking too much.

4. Dimension four: Communication Apprehension

- I get nervous when speaking in a group discussion.
- I feel uncomfortable speaking in a different language.
- I feel uncomfortable speaking with fluent speakers.
- I prefer to listen rather than participate in conversations.
- I avoid asking questions in class because I fear speaking.
- I feel nervous when speaking in formal situations, such as interviews.

5. Dimension five: Perceived Competence

- I feel confident when I express my ideas clearly.
- I feel comfortable speaking in front of strangers.
- I enjoy speaking in front of others.
- I think I am good at explaining my thoughts.
- I believe I can improve my speaking skills with practice.
- I am not afraid of making mistakes while speaking.

Appendix (E)

The EFL oral communication skills test

Time: 50 minutes

total score: 40 marks

Name: Class: School:

1. Listen for specific information (5 marks)

A. Listen and choose the correct answer:

1. where does the orchestra play?

a) Australia b) Germany c) China d) All of these

B. Listen and answer in a full sentence:

2. what kind of music does the orchestra play?

2. Communicate in a conversation (5 marks)

A. Role-play: Talk to your partner about your favorite hobby.
Ask and answer:

- What is your favorite hobby? Why?

B. Ask your partner:

- Do you prefer doing hobbies alone or with friends? Why?

3. Express opinions and attitudes (5 marks)

A. What do you think about school uniforms? Explain your opinion.

B. Do you think students should have homework every day?
Why or why not?

4. Pronounce words clearly and accurately (5 marks)

A. Read these two words aloud:

- Comfortable — Environment

B. Read this sentence aloud clearly:

- The government protects the environment.

5. Talk about Likes and Dislikes (5 marks)

A. What kind of food do you like? Why?

B. Is there a type of music or subject you dislike? Why?

6. Use correct grammar (5 marks)

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. He (go) _____ to school every day.
2. We (be) _____ tired yesterday.

B. Correct the grammatical mistakes:

1. She don't like bananas. _____
2. They was happy. _____

7. Provide Antonyms and Synonyms (5 marks)

A. Write a synonym and antonym for the word "Fast":

- Synonym: _____ Antonym: _____

B. Choose the correct synonym and antonym for “Easy”:

- Synonym: a) Hard b) Simple c) Difficult
- Antonym: a) Simple b) Complicated c) Difficult

8. Use More Conjunction Words (5 marks)

A. Complete the sentence using "and", "but", "so", or "because":

1. I was tired, _____ I went to bed early.

B. Join the two sentences with a suitable conjunction:

- She is smart. She is lazy. → _____

Oral communication skills questionnaire

Oral communication dimensions	Oral communication skills		
	Students at 2nd year preparatory stage, when orally communicate in EFL, should be able to	Very important	Important to some extent
Comprehension	1. Communicate in a conversation on a topic.		
	2. Detect sounds of the English language.		
	3. Summarize the main Points of a text.		
	4. Listen for specific information.		
Fluency	5. Identify the main idea of spoken text		
	6. Narrate a story based on personal experience.		
	7. Express opinions and attitudes.		
	8. Talk about likes and dislikes.		
Linguistic	9. Ask questions in class.		
	10. Participate in discussions.		
	11. Pronounce all words clearly and accurately.		
	12. Use a clear, understandable, correct pronunciation.		
Semantic	13. Pronounce English speech sounds correctly.		
	14. Use orally correct EFL grammar.		
	15. Use more conjunction words.		
	16. Provide common antonyms and synonyms.		
	17. Understand a variety of		

	word types. 18. Definite simply some known words.	
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