



# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP WORK AND PAIR WORK FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL IN HIGH SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

*The study investigated one of the teaching strategies of collaborative language teaching (CLT), namely group work and pair work. These difficulties include the use of group and pair work. This innovation demands a move in the direction of a more learner - centered approach to teaching.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Effectiveness, group work and pair work*

## INTRODUCTION

This study provided an opportunity to explore the possibility of the use of one of the techniques of collaborative language teaching (CLT), that is, pair work and group work. Group and pair work are techniques for collaborative teaching that provide a chance for social interaction. Group work and pair work is a class management strategy and the role the teacher has to play while teaching is of a facilitator. Teacher's role in group work is very difficult and at the same time it is very important role too. Groups that are focused are a temporary clustering of students within a single class session. These groups can be pairs of students or groups of three or four can be formed to solve a problem or pose a question. The teacher can organize these groups at any time in a class of any size to check on the students' understanding of the material, to give students an opportunity to apply what they are learning, or to provide a change of pace. In a traditional classroom, the teacher controls the class with authority, there is no active role of students during teaching- learning process. Contrary to this group work makes students autonomous learners who work collaboratively for their own learning. Language classroom is the place where teachers and learners come together for interaction and can learn in natural settings. Group work is a teaching strategy at all levels of education and researchers observed that group based assignments and discussions are a common feature of tertiary education .The

effective use of group work in language class can provide a valuable learning experience to students and give them the opportunity to practically experience the ideas presented and strengthen their learning. The purpose of this research was to find out the role of student participation in generating interest in class and obtaining valid information regarding the practical use of group work from different aspects, so as to bring innovation in class. The focus was on group and pair work in English language classes. The study was of great importance for the teachers teaching at undergraduate level and for development of new books for teaching of English at undergraduate level. The study was also important to find out the present status of group work and pair work in teaching of English at undergraduate level. It is expected that the results of this study will reveal important insights for the teachers and curriculum developers which can become an influencing factor in the subsequent development of new books for students at different levels and for modified teachers training facilities for college teachers. Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the last century. Group work and pair work started getting attention of educationist in the 70s. In 70s educationists were concerned about increasing teacher talking time in language classes. During the 1980s and 1990s the development of communicative language teaching brought an important change in the role of students Working together is worthwhile as "pair and group work immediately increase the amount of



students talking time Researchers are convinced that the students who take the initiative in learning learn more things and learn better than those who sit at the feet of teachers passively waiting to be taught. Researchers reported that it is a source of intrinsic motivation for students as working in groups is fun for them. It provides the students with the opportunity to communicate with each other to share “suggestions, insights, feedback about successes, and failures” Researchers also claim that a teacher’s dominance in class makes it dull and it kills the students’ interests Tiberius was of the opinion that group work can fail due to several reasons; he mentioned students being exam oriented, teachers’ authoritative role in class and their lack of interest due to incompetence to handle group work. In addition Weaver and Hybles believed that “all the students do not like discussions, some find them boring and time consuming” Group work provides them activities to interact in a fresh environment. It also provides them opportunities to express themselves and as a result they have an outlet for emotions and can socialize while studying in class. Majority of the students in the study were students of English medium at this level. This opens another door for discussion. Bruce stated that language facilitates as an intellectual resource. One who has command over the language can communicate the message easily and effectively. Group work is a class-management strategy and if presentation, process, ending and feed back all are well organized then it gives positive results. It is important that the methodology and expectations are thoroughly thought through and decided earlier. In fact the trained teacher can conduct group work better than the untrained teacher. The results of the teachers’ data showed that all the teachers were not trained in communicative methods and could not set clear objectives. They kept the objectives very broad which were not always attainable thus failed to get positive feedback.

Teachers complained that students were exam oriented but students responses prove that they are not. Therefore, it was a perception of teachers which is not according to the needs of the students It was proved that “Pair and group work can also be problematic in class rooms where there is a mismatch between the expectations of the teachers and those of the students” Language learners differ from one another and a learner centered-approach must inevitably acknowledge these differences and their implications in course design and teaching methodology The areas of effectiveness mentioned by some teachers were joint reading tasks. Teachers also mentioned oral skills practice but few Teachers stressed most on writing which is a complex skill therefore required an advanced level of knowledge. All the teachers and students agreed that group work maintains interest in class. However a teacher pointed out that it was not easy to successfully

conduct group work. She believed that it was important to be physically close to the students. Teachers can plan their lessons to include teachers-centered work; individual work and pair work as well as group work. Often the teachers need to encourage students to participate or give suggestions about how students may proceed in an activity especially when there is a silence or when they are confused about what to do next. The teacher might need to prompt the students with information they have forgotten. Students need to be trained to work in group settings. They need to recognize the importance of communication in class. At Intermediate level the text books do not support CLT, so the students are not trained in group and pair work. In a mixed ability class where the target language is the only common language of the group, the use of mother tongue is not generally a problem Several areas still need to be investigated in order to completely understand the effects of group and pair work at the undergraduate level in the public and private sector colleges. This project was simply a preliminary study that investigated the effectiveness of group and pair work at the undergraduate level. Most of the students in this study were from middle class families with a better social status and they had an English medium background. Another study should be conducted with students from a different socio-cultural background for more generalized results. Results are expected to be different if study is conducted at the post graduate level or in professional colleges.

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