

Assessing problem of student's low participation in collaborative learning in English classroom the case of second year English major students at Hawassa University

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International Journal of Life Science Research Updates, 2022, 01(01), 033-040

Publication history: Received on 13 December 2021; revised on 09 January 2022; accepted on 11 January 2022

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53430/ijlsru.2022.1.1.0025>

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess problems of students collaborative learning in English classroom of second year English Major students at Hawassa University. The paper contains five (5) chapters. To conduct the study, the researcher took 18 students and 4 teachers with simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique respectively to get relevant or specific information. To find out the required information the researcher prepared interview, classroom observations, open ended and close ended questionnaire and distributed them for the desired sample. After collecting the data, the researcher organized it through quantitative and qualitative methods by using descriptive statements and table percentages respectively. Finally, according to findings, like lack of previous experience or background knowledge and low interest of the students in collaborative discussion was taken as a conclusion part, whereas providing or initiation for the learners on how the collaborative discussion benefits them, arranging tutorial programs for learners to involving as they try to speak English outside of the class and establishing English language clubs to improve the students' communication skill were recommended by the researcher.

Keywords: Collaborative; Low participation; Challenges; Performance; Interactive

1 Introduction

1.1 Back ground of the study

Collaborative learning is defined as class room learning techniques which require students to work to gather in groups or pairs in learning tasks, (Callback et al, 2000). No attempt is provided for individual deference and the teacher's controls the process of learning as collaborative process. This aim is to teach the language as a system (Paul k, 2006). This indicates that the relationship among the classmate is only because of being classmate. There is no interaction between students in the form of collaborative learning. (Paul knight, 2006).

When we come to the current approach or student's center method, it is collected on the basis of its likely contribution to develop learner's communicative skills. For example, interactive skills in speaking and listening, ability of reading and writing for purpose rather than correctness. Students are given opportunities to learn time developing communicative skills, leader ship skills and interpersonal skills (bean, 2001). Richard, j (2003) stated, learner is presented with tasks which require using the target language in order to be able to cope with the demands of activity.

Barada, m (2000), also illustrated, students learn best when they actively involved in the collaborative discussion. As Brumtit, knight (1924) reported, collaborative learning helps students to provide a great quantity and better quality of language than students in teacher- centered class room settings.

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In addition, Baarano, J stated that “in the whole class setting learners are expected to answer questions asked by teachers in linguistically accurate forms” (1987). This collaborative learning discussion appears to be potential more meaning full than traditional class room.

1.2 Statements of the problem

There is still lack of understanding for learned concerning the benefits of collaborative learning. The traditional step methods of teaching still make our learners to be passive participant in their education. Barnwell's (1994) in the traditional approaches teachers are considered as active and all knower; whereas students are seen as passive and receivers of simply what the teacher's order them. The course of study is also the researcher personal experience that adds under gone in higher institution where English language teachers had been teaching the language through lettering so that the students were found to passive learner of the language. Then the current researcher assess what problems make the students to be low participant in collaborative learning in English classroom at Hawassa University in second year English major students.

2 Review of related literature

2.1 Definition of collaborative learning

There is no clear air definition of collaborative learning. Deferent scholars have their own perspectives regarding the definition of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning refers to activities were to five or six students are assigned to work together. Calderon (1987) stated, collaborative learning is strategy that is used to increase motivation and help students develop positive image of self and others to solve problem and encourage collaborative social skill.

Forcarr so and wool key (2008), collaborative learning projects can help students develop loss of skills that are important in the professional world. They also state ‘more hands make for lighter work’. Two hands are better than one this implies that; collaborative learning or group work is more important than a lonely learning or individually preferable method.

According to Barbara, M (2000) stated, cooperative learning is an instructional in which students work together to accomplish a common goal. This statement implies, to see an accomplished goal, every individual in group should involve in the tasks while discussing in group. Some scholar's use active learning or student- centered methods instead of group work or collaborative learning. Concerning this there are also scholars who stated active learning or student-center method. According to Beatrice, S (1995, P. 226), students-centered or active learning in class room helps students become confident in their abilities and able to use them to constrict strong society. This scholar also states on page 209 of his book “verbal communication in the class room can be powerful form of positive re –enforcement” .as thisresearcher point of student while communicating together. (Beatrice, S /1995. P. 226).

For Boswell, C. (1991), active learning is “anything that involves students doing things and thinking about the things they are doing”, (Bonwell, C. (1991). This statement implies thatactivelearninginitiates or give motivation to students to do their tasks. not only doing but also involved students thinking and understanding what, how and why they are doing their task s. Felder, R (2009), also defines active learning method as anything course – related that all students in class session are called up on to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes. Some students like listening who leads the group's idea for example. But as fender stated active learning methods requires activity than dominating by those who do, / Fender, R (2009).

2.2 Types of active learning

In student –centered or active learning methods there are types like think pair share, jigsaw I, jigsaw II, and reverse jigsaw will be stated. Think pair share: think pair share originally developed by Frank T. Lyman (1981, p, 21) think pair share allows for students to contemplate a posed questions or problem silently. The student may write down through or simply just brain storm in his / her head when promoted, student pairs up with a pear and discusses his/her heads and then listens to the ideas of his / her partner. Following up pair dialogue, the teacher solicits responses from the whole group.

When teachers use this technique, they do not have to worry about student's net volunteering because each student will already have an idea in their heads, therefore, the teacher call on any one and increase discussion productivity.

JIGSAW I: students are member of two group; home group and expert group. In the 3 heterogeneous home groups, students are each assigned a different topic. Once topics has been identified, students leave the home group and whither the other students with their assigned topic. In the new group, students, the material to gather before returning to their home group. Once back in their home group, each student is accountable for teaching his / her assigned topic.

JIGSAW II: jigsaw group II is Robert slains (1980) variation of jigsaw in which members of the home group are assigned the same material, but focus on speared portions of the material. Each member must become in an expert on his/her assigned portion and teaching three order members of the home group.

REVERSE JIGSAW: this variation was created by Timothy Heeded (2003). in differs from the original jigsaw during the teaching portion of the original jigsaw during the teaching portion of the activity. In the reverse jigsaw technique, students in the expert group teach the whole class rather than return to their home group to teach the cone

2.3 Researchers finding on collaborative learning

Different researchers have different idea about the benefit that pupils or students can get from group or pair work. Through completing activates in group, students will obtain several benefit (Richard, 2006). These benefits are: They can get new knowledge from learning the language when they have group activities and, they will produce greater amount of language than world use in the teacher fronted activities, their motivational level is likely increased, they will have the chance to develop fluency and negative meanings, use communication strategies, avoid miss- understanding and work to avoid communication break down stairs.

2.3.1 Pedagogical advantage of collaborative learning

Although collaborative and team approaches to tacking have been around for many years, there is comparatively little literature on the subject. Most of the curriculum practice of some 800 teachers reported in Nunn 1988), teacher nominated team teaching as a highly favored option in their professional practice. There is sufficient evidence, both in the existing literature and in the studies in this volume to suggest that, as a pedagogical innovation, collaborative teaching can only hope to succeed if: teachers possess or are given skill appropriate to the innovation, teachers are given time implement the innovation, appropriateadministrativemanagerialarrangement and mechanism are developed in tandem with the pedagogical innovating.

2.3.2 Face to face primitive interaction

Face to face primitive interaction is the other basic element of cooperative learning, and it refers that learners need to do real work cooperatively in which they interact each other for mutual understanding in learning process.

According to Ames and Ames, 1985 Tanetal, (1999), face to face primitive interaction helps the students to achieve their mutual goals.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

During the study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to get enough data through interview, observation and questionnaires and the researcher selects these three approaches to analyze the data by using triangulation methods.

3.2 Data sources

The researcher used primary sources of data to conduct the study. The source of the study was second year English major students and English language teachers at Hawassa University.

3.3 Sampling technique

The researcher collected data from targeted group. The researcher used simple random sampling technique for students and purposive sampling technique for the teachers.

3.4 Sampling size

From all students of second year English major students, the researcher took eighteen students by using simple random sampling technique and from all English language teachers, the researcher took four students using purposive sampling technique. The sample size were second year English major students and English language teachers who were assigned to teach second year English major students at Hawassa University.

3.5 Data collecting instruments

To obtain reliable data, the researcher used three data gathering instruments. These are questionnaire, observation and interview.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was the main tool or instrument for data gathering in the study. The researcher prepared eight close ended questionnaire and four open-ended questionnaire and distributed for 18 students.

3.5.2 Observation

Classroom observation was conducted in order to check the data gathered through questionnaires. During observation, the researcher prepared classroom observation check list and observed three times during classroom delivery. This method helped the researcher to get additional data.

3.5.3 Interview

The researcher prepared four interview questions to conduct the study. The interview was semi-structured. The participant of the study were four English language teachers who were assigned to teach Second year English major students at Hawassa University. conduct the study.

3.5.4 Method of data analysis

In the study, the data that gathered through interview, open-ended questionnaire and classroom observation were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively by using descriptive statement. On the other hand, the data that gathered through close-ended questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted quantitatively through table percentage.

4 Data analysis and interpretation

4.1 Students Questionnaire Analysis

Table 1 Factors affecting student's participation in collaborative learning

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
1	Do you like collaborative learning while learning English?	Yes	5	27.77%
		No	13	72.22%
Total			18	100%

Table 1: as it is clearly stated in the above table 1: (72.22%) or (13) respondents dis-like collaborative learning English, which is 27.77%of (5) of them like work in collaborative learning. This indicates that majority of the students do not engaged in collaborative learning. This result has relation with teachers interview responses. That is most students do not engage in collaborative learning.

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
2	Is collaborative learning more important than individual work	Yes	12	66.66%
		No	6	33.33%
Total			18	100%

Table 2 As indicated in the above table 66.66% or 12 respondents replied that collaborative learning is more important than individual learning. However, 6 students or (33.33%) replied that collaborative learning is not important than individual learning. Thus, majority of the students responded that collaborative learning is more important than individual learning

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
3	Doesn't Your teacher supervise you while you work in collaborative?	Yes	11	61.11%
		No	7	38.88%
Total			18	100%

As it is stated in the above table, 11 (61.11%) of the respondents responded that their teachers do not supervise them during their collaborative work. However, 7 (38.88%) of the respondents said that their teachers supervise them during their collaborative work. As majority respondents result shows, most of the time teachers do not supervise their students during collaborative tasks.

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
4	Do students use his/her mother tongue in collaborative discussion?	Yes	13	72.22
		No	5	27.77
Total			18	100%

As it is showed in the above table, 13 (72.22%) of the respondents replied that they used their mother tongue in collaborative learning. While 5 (27.77%) of the respondents said they do not use their mother tongue in their collaborative work. Thus, majority of the students use their mother tongue in their collaborative activities except some students.

Table 2 Strategies of involving students in collaborative learning

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
1	Do you think that your teacher prepare at interactive activity for collaborative?	Yes	2	11.11
		No	16	88.88
Total			18	100%

As it is stated in the above table, 16 (88.88%) of the respondents said that teachers do not prepared themselves for collaborative learning rather they prepared themselves for only their way of expression. Where as, 2 (11.11%) of the respondents replied that teachers prepared themselves for collaborative learning . As most students responded that teachers do not prepare themselves for collaborative learning.

No.	Item	Alternatives	No of respondents	Response
2	Do you believe that collaborative learning helps to	Yes	3	16.66%
		No	15	83.33%

	share ideas and opinions?			
Total			18	100%

As it is indicated in the above table, 3 (16.66%) of the students replied that they believe collaborative learning helps to share ideas and opinions together. But, 15 (83.33%) of the respondents do not believe that collaborative learning helps them to share ideas and opinions each other. From this the researcher can conclude that most students do not believe that collaborative learning helps them to share ideas and opinions.

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondent	Response
3	Do you think that participate in collaborative learning improves your performance?	Yes	10	55.55%
		No	8	44.44%
Total			18	100%

As it is stated in the above table, 8 (44.44%) of the students said that participate in collaborative learning does not improve their academic performance. Whereas, 10 (55.55%) of the respondents responded that participate in collaborative learning improves their academic performance. This indicates that participate in collaborative learning improves majority students performance.

No	Item	Alternative	No of respondents	Response
4	Does Your teacher involving you during collaborative discussion?	Yes	7	38.88%
		No	11	61.11%
Total			18	100%

As indicated in the above table, 11 (61.11%) of the respondents replied that their teachers do not involving them during their collaborative discussion. On the other hand, 7 (38.88%) of the respondents said that their teachers involving them during their collaborative activities. This shows that most teachers do not control the students during their collaborative activities in the classroom.

4.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation gained from teachers interview

- Do you give equal opportunity for the students during collaborative learning?

Three teachers said that they always gave equal opportunity for the students to engage in collaborative learning. On the other hand, one teacher responded that he sometimes gave group discussion and he gave equal opportunity rarely.

- Do you think that discussing in collaborative improves students performance?

Two teachers responded that discussing in collaborative improves students performance and it helps students to be effective and confident. One teacher said that exactly it is essential for academic achievement and the other teacher responded that discussing in collaborative improves students speaking skill. From this the researcher can conclude that all teachers think that working in collaborative improves students academic performance.

- Do students are interested working in collaborative?

One teacher said that majority of the students are not interested to work in collaborative. Two teachers responded that except some students all of the students are not interested in collaborative learning. One teacher said that all students

don't have interest to engage in collaborative learning. One can conclude that most students are not interested to work in group or in collaborative.

- What suggestions do you have if certain factors affect the students to be low participant in collaborative learning?

One teacher said that students must have intrinsic motivation to work in collaborative learning. The other teacher responded that teachers shall create awareness for the students about the advantages of collaborative learning. The third teacher responded that teachers must encourage the students by providing equal opportunity during collaborative activities. The last respondent said that the students shall avoid their fright and better to have open participation.

4.3 Observation Analyses

The observation was aimed to assess problem of students collaborative learning performance in English classroom. The researchers tried to observe the students while they were working in collaborative discussion by using observation check lists.

The researcher observed different problems regarding with collaborative learning of second year English major students at Hawassa University during classroom delivery and come up with the following problems.

- Low motivation by the students: most students do not have intrinsic motivation to engage in collaborative learning in English classroom. In other words students do not have interest to work in collaboratively.
- Problem of language: when their teachers gave collaborative learning activities, students can not express their ideas and opinions via English rather they used their mother tongue to express their ideas and opinions.
- Teachers concentration: some teachers allow the students to speak with their mother tongue during English classroom. This affects the students become dependent on their mother tongue in collaborative learning.
- Lack of equal opportunity: some teachers do not give equal opportunity for all students in collaborative learning. Teachers are depending only on interested students.
- Lack of background knowledge: most students do not have awareness on the topic and they do not understand what the teachers say. From this, the researcher can conclude that there are different problems that makes the students to be low participant in collaborative learning. These problems arise both sides of the teachers and the students.

5 Conclusion

As shown in the summary part, the objective this study was to find response for the listed basic questions. Therefore, based on the above the results the following conclusion were given.

- Students did not participate actively and equally in collaborative learning. The respondents have put that they had frustration to speak English. This was resulted from higher experiences.
- Low motivation by the students, problem of language, teachers concentration on students participation and lack of background knowledge of the students are some problems of students low participation in collaborative learning during English classroom.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the researcher recommended the following recommendation in this study. Since, the problems arise from both sides, the researcher put the following recommendation.

- Teachers should create positive atmosphere for the students and shall provide equal opportunity for all students during collaborative learning activities.
- Teachers should not allow the students to speak other languages during in English collaborative learning tasks.
- Students should persuade themselves to engage in collaborative learning in English classroom.
- Students should develop their background knowledge on collaborative learning and improve their speak performance in English classroom.

- The University should give prior chance to English language students by constructing collaborative learning activities in English language improvement Center.

Generally, Both the students and the teachers have responsibilities to avoid problems of students low participation in collaborative learning in English classroom and the university should create speech community.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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