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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS GROUP WORK IN LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH: GRADE NINE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF HAWASSA CITY ADMINISTRATION IN FOCUS

***Elias Woemego Bushisso**

Assistant Professor of TEFL, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hawassa University, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this descriptive study was to find out grade nine students' and teachers' attitude towards learning and teaching English in group work modality and related factors to their attitudinal problems with reference to some selected secondary schools of Hawassa City Administration in Ethiopia; the secondary schools selected were Addis Ketema and Alamura and these schools were selected purposefully. To that end, from the total population of seven-hundred twenty (720) students and twelve teachers, ninety-four (94) students and six teachers were selected by employing simple random sampling. Data gathering tools like attitude questionnaire and, interview were employed. After the data were gathered, the quantitative data were analyzed by employing the techniques of comparing means, frequency counts and percentile counts, while the qualitative data were thematically analyzed; the findings showed that the students and teachers have positive attitude towards learning and teaching English in group modality, though students have low level of language ability and lack of practice in group work. The result obtained through the questionnaire and the interview confirmed this reality; Based on the result, the researcher recommends that the use of group mode of learning English should be encouraged from early grades, for it develops students' independent learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study: Traditionally, learning has been conceived as a transmission process of knowledge, facts or rules, taking the teacher as the center of everything; however, these days, new modes of learning like group work are being advocated for better learning of English (Byrne, 1987; Byrne, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1982). The education and training policy of Ethiopia promotes the use of active learning and problem solving approaches to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional modes of teaching-learning English. One of the strategies of active learning in schools is promoting learning through group work (TGE, 1994; Harmer, 2004). Harmer (2004) and Stern (1983) forward the view that group work has the benefits of promoting students' learning and academic achievement, and increasing their retention power. Research findings point out these positive aspects of group work in students' academic achievements and towards their social skills development though there are few studies conducted at secondary school level under this study area regarding the attitude teachers and students possess; it is their attitude that

affects the effectiveness of group work and its implementation (Brown, 1999; Harmer, 2004; Atkins, Hailom & Nuru, 1996). It is commonly known that student independent learning potential increases when teachers' and students' attitude towards group work is positive. The research into the connection between positive attitude and successful learning of a second language supports this simple observation, although it is important to understand that many variables are involved in dealing with complex social and psychological aspects of human behavior like attitude (Brown, 1999; Ellis, 1994; Atkins, Hailom & Nuru, 1996). For example, students' ability to learn English can be influenced by their attitude towards the language, the language speakers and their culture, the social value of learning the language, and also the students' attitude towards themselves as members of their own culture. In addition, the English language teachers should recognize that all students possess positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees towards group work, and that the negative ones can be changed by thoughtful instructional methods, such as group activities that help students achieve an understanding and appreciation of the foreign language culture. Thus, the factors that mold the students' and teachers' attitude towards group work are closely linked with cognitive, affective and social issues they encounter in the teaching-learning process of the

***Corresponding author: Elias Woemego Bushisso**

Assistant Professor of TEFL, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hawassa University, Ethiopia

English Language in the classroom in particular and in the social context of language teaching in general.

Statement of the Problem: It is believed that exposing students to a variety of classroom organizational frameworks like group work provides various learning opportunities. Learners could get stimulated by hearing the ideas and opinions of others, and by having the opportunity to react to them in group work activities. However, the attitude that teachers and learners possess towards learning English in group work appears to be negative as a result of which most of the learners at secondary school level are not able to exercise all the opportunities to be obtained from group work learning modality (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Noursi, 2013). As the experience and the observation of the present researcher shows, many teachers and learners seem to be unhappy about the practice of organizing the English language learning class room in a group mode. Students are much interested to learn the English language from the traditional mode of teacher presentation and practice, followed by some production. There could be a number of factors that might be associated with the teachers' and learners' unwillingness to employ group work, among which, the problem associated with the teachers' and students' attitude could be more serious of all others. To the best knowledge of the present researcher, the local research done in the area of teachers' and students' attitude with respect to learning English through group work at secondary school level is very scanty; thus, he is more interested in conducting a research that focuses on finding out grade nine teachers' and students' attitude towards learning English in group work mode of class room organization.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective of the Study: The general objective of this study was to find out the attitude students and teachers have towards group work and the factors associated with their attitude;

Specific Objective: The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Identify students' attitude towards group work in learning English;
- Find out teachers' attitude towards group work in teaching English;
- Point out factors associated with the students' and teachers' attitude.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were set:

- What is students' attitude towards learning English through group work?
- What is teachers' attitude towards teaching English through group work?
- What do students and teachers attribute their group work attitude with?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of Study Area and Sampling Technique: The target population of this study was Grade Nine English language teachers and students from two government schools

in Hawassa City Administration, namely, Addis Ketema and Alamura High Schools. Hawassa City Administration was purposefully selected since the researcher is familiar with the principals and some teachers of schools in the city administration and that immediacy would make him easily access the needed information. The two schools were randomly selected from the four secondary high schools found in the city administration. The total number of students and teachers in the two schools for Grade Nine was 720 (seven-hundred twenty) and 12 (8 males and 4 females) respectively. For this study, fifteen percent of the student's population, that is, 94 (ninety-four) students to fill in a close-ended questionnaire and six teachers (4 males and 2 females) to take part in the interview were selected by employing simple random sampling technique. Thus, all the target population students and teachers were viable to the random selection to get equal chance of participation; As Cohen et al. (2007) argue, random sampling enables researchers to fairly choose their sample from a large number of populations with equal probability of selection.

Research Design: In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a descriptive design was employed. *The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In social science and business research, we quite often use the term Ex post facto research for descriptive research studies. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most ex post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher seeks to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. Ex post facto studies also include attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables.* (Kothari, 2004, p. 2-3). Their attitude towards group work could easily be identified in the classroom through the quantitative data of questionnaire and qualitative data of semi-structured interview as suggested by (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Thus, this research employed a mixed-methods approach.

Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaire: Close-ended questionnaire items that consist of five scales for attitudinal choice were designed by the researcher based on the literature suggested by scholars in the area like (Gardner & Lambert, 1972); on top of that, an open-ended format items were included in the questionnaire to allow the subjects to express their views freely. As some scholars in the area state, it is important for the validity and reliability of the research if the researcher uses different questionnaire item formats; thus, the questionnaire was anonymous that could give the students a secure atmosphere to respond to various formats of items frankly. The first part of the questionnaire asks about the students' attitude in a direct way. The second part of the questionnaire investigates the subjects' positive attitude towards group work inside and outside the classroom. The third section of the questionnaire focuses on the negative attitude of the students regarding group work. The fourth part was devoted to open-ended items that ask the students to mention the factors they attribute to their attitude. This section was included in the questionnaire to add much validity to the results gained from other data (Creswell, 2009). Cronbach's alpha was computed to check the reliability of the items of the questionnaire, and to achieve its validity, the researcher's most senior colleagues were requested to comment on the questionnaire.

Table 1. Students Desire/Interest to Learn in Group

No.	Items	Attitude Scale									
		SA		A		UD		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	I like to learn English in group work.	53	56%	25	27%	8	9%	4	4.2%	4	4.2%
2	Group work gives me a better chance to use English.	43	46%	30	32%	10	11%	4	4.2%	7	7.4%
3	Group work enhances my confidence.	45	48%	22	23%	11	11.7%	9	9.6%	7	7.4%
4	Use of group work is waste of time for me.	30	32%	16	17%	13	14%	14	15%	21	22%
5	Group work is difficult to manage what I learn.	44	47%	21	22%	10	11%	7	7.4%	12	13%
6	In group work, males perform better than females.	21	22%	22	23%	22	23%	11	12%	18	19%

Interview: In this study, semi-structured interview was conducted with six randomly selected teachers who were picked up by casting a lot from the two secondary school teachers of the research sites. The interview was intended to enable the researcher to follow a scheduled list of structured interview questions as suggested by Cohen et al. (2007). They argue that such interview questions increase the comparability of the answers from the respondents and help the researcher to gain a complete picture; it also increases the ability of the researcher to organize and analyze his/her data. A semi-structured form is chosen for some reasons. Firstly, it has the characteristics of both structured and unstructured interview, each with its strengths. Secondly, data obtained by this form of interview are not difficult to categorize and interpret thematically. Thirdly, it enables each participant to elaborate the open questions that are posed (Freeboby, 2003). To achieve validity, the researcher's most senior colleagues were requested to give comments on the interview items.

Procedures of Data Collection: The researcher obtained ethical clearance and letter of cooperation from his university and presented it to school principals to get permission and cooperation. Then, one teacher was selected at each school on the principal's recommendations to coordinate the data collection; a discussion was held with the selected teachers on how to coordinate the data collection, and then they were requested to distribute the questionnaire to the selected students. Following that, the researcher held an interview with 6 teachers randomly selected (by drawing lots). Careful attempts were made to find conducive environment to fill in the questionnaire and to make the non-returnable rate of the questionnaire zero, and to hold the interview. The researcher took care of his pronunciation and pace while conducting the interview. Furthermore, the interview sessions were interactive and tape-recorded.

Methods of Data Analysis: In this study, the quantitative data gathered through questionnaire was analyzed using statistical figures of percentiles, frequency counts and measures of central tendencies, while the qualitative data was thematically organized and presented in relation to the quantitative data of the questionnaire to be discussed in a triangulated way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the discussion of results obtained through student questionnaire and teacher interview. Results obtained through student questionnaire are categorized into three themes and discussed accordingly: desire/interest to use group work, the importance of group work and the challenges the students face in trying to learn English through group work.

Results of Students' Questionnaire: As can be seen from Table 1, the overall attitude learners have about the basic

essence of group work is positive in that in most of the items that deal with their desire to learn English in group work, they showed their agreement in more than half percent in most of the cases. If we begin the detail analysis of their attitude with the response they gave to the first item that says, 'I like to learn English in group work', seventy-eight students out of the total ninety-four, that is eighty-three percent (83%), showed strong agreement and agreement for the premise. The number of students who could not decide whether or not they like to learn English through group work was only 8 (9%). This is insignificant number to consider that the students are unable to decide whether they like or do not like learning English through group work. Those students who showed disagreement or strong disagreement to this item were only seven or (8%) out of the total; in general, group work as mode of learning English is liked by the majority of the students (83%) as verified by the responses given for the first item. Thus, it could be deduced from this information that most of the students do not have attitudinal problem towards group work as a mode of classroom organization for learning English. When we move to the second item under the first thematic category of students' desire towards group work in learning English, that is stated as 'Group work gives me a better chance to use English,' seventy-three students, that is seventy-eight percent (78%), showed their strong agreement and agreement towards this premise. This implies that almost two-third of the students were interested in group work that it enables them to make better use of the language for communication. The numbers of students who had doubt or disagreed with this premise were only 21 students (23%) out of the total ninety-four students. Thus, group work as a mode of classroom organization for learning English could be considered as it is liked by the majority of the students (78%).

The third item closely linked with the students' interest of the essence of using group work in learning English is stated as 'Group work enhances my confidence.' The reaction of the students towards this premise is that sixty-seven (71%) students out of the total ninety-four students showed agreement and strong agreement. This could be good evidence that they are interested in employing group work so that they can develop their self-confidence; on the other hand, those students who opposed this issue were only twenty-seven students or (29%). This implies that the majority of the students (71%) did not have attitudinal problem. For the item that was presented in such a way that considers group work as 'Use of group work is waste of time', forty-eight students out of the total ninety-four, that is around fifty-two percent (52%), either disagreed or could not decide on the premise. Though the number of students who opposed this view was greater than the ones who supported it, the number of students who do not have a clear concept about the importance of time spent on group work is considerable; that might need some sort of awareness raising from instructors to convince the learners to make wise use of their time on group work.

Table 2. Challenges Students Attribute with Group work

No.	Items	Attitude Scales									
		SA		A		UD		DA		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
8	Class size causes me problem to use group work.	32	34%	17	18%	25	27%	13	14%	17	18%
9	Language ability causes me problem to use group work.	21	22%	16	17%	24	26%	13	14%	20	21%
10	My interest causes me problem to use group work.	23	25%	20	21%	21	22%	13	14%	17	18%
11	Lack of resources causes me problem to use group work.	25	27%	22	23%	20	21%	15	16%	12	13%
12	Shortage of time causes me problem to use group work.	27	29%	22	23%	20	21%	14	15%	11	12%
13	My lack of awareness causes me problem to use group work.	30	32%	22	23%	18	19%	12	13%	12	13%
14	My reluctance causes me problem to use group work.	38	41%	20	21%	19	20%	10	11%	7	8%

Table 3. Importance Students Associate with Group work

No.	Items	Attitude Scale									
		SA		A		UD		DA		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
15	Group work gives me freedom to express my ideas.	37	39%	26	28%	14	15%	10	11%	7	8%
16	Group work encourages me to learn from my friends.	41	44%	23	25%	12	13%	10	11%	8	9%
17	Group work enhances me to exercise social skills.	33	35%	25	27%	19	20%	9	10%	8	9%
18	Group work brings me long lasting learning.	19	20%	25	27%	19	20%	15	16%	16	17%
19	Group work encourages me to learn better.	26	28%	24	26%	18	19%	14	15%	12	13%
20	Group work provides me better opportunity and interest for learning from others.	38	40%	23	25%	18	19%	13	14%	12	13%

In terms of their views regarding the manageability of the lessons they learnt through group work as stated in item number five as, 'Group work is difficult to manage what I learn', nearly half of the total students agreed and strongly agreed. This might imply what the learners are supposed to learn in groups has to be communicated with group mates clearly ahead of time. Those students who do not agree with this view were also quite great number, which was almost equal to the ones who agreed. Hence, a matter of making the lessons learnt through group work manageable depends on the nature of the instructions and guidance given to the learners. As could be inferred from the findings of the students' attitude through the questionnaire data, the present finding is to some extent consistent with the findings of the study by Abebaw (2011) who studied grade 12 students' attitude towards group work in Belay Zeleke Preparatory School in Addis Ababa. Abebaw (2011) in his study found out that students had favorable attitude towards group work in teaching-learning English through group work at high school level. Although the level of the schools and the context of the study are different, similar finding was stated by Arani (2004) and this scholar studied Kashan University, Iran, Medical students' attitude towards group work in learning English. The findings revealed that most of the subjects of the study, i.e., students had positive attitude towards learning English. More or less, the findings of this study, particularly, for specific questions 1 and 2, are similar with the study's findings in that the majority of students were interested in using group work for teaching-learning English (for details look at Tables 1).

The overall data stated in Table 2 was mainly concerned with identifying challenges that could affect the nature of attitude students could possess. These are some of the inevitable problems learners come across in due process of learning English through group work. So, it is on the basis of the reaction they gave to these challenges that their attitude towards learning English could be predicted. With that respect, if we look at the responses they gave to item number 8, stated as, 'Class size causes me problem to use group work' nearly forty-eight students out of the total ninety –four, responded agree and strongly agree; this shows that almost half of the students had the view that a large number of students in

classroom causes them to have negative attitude; however, the other half felt that class size could not be a real problem for employing group work in learning English. So, the impact of class size as a determinant factor for the nature of attitude students possess could be linked with individual preferences of learning and attitude formation; anyway, it is better to critically consider the matter of class size, though its impact on student's attitude development was not clearly visible from data obtained through this item. The other determining factor that could affect the nature of attitude students could have towards learning English through group work is stated as 'My language ability level causes me problem to use group work'. Almost two-third of the subjects, that is, fifty-seven students did not agree; that is, in order to like learning through group work, they do not necessarily be proficient in the language; rather, it is their interest that matters a lot, as quite a large number of students, nearly forty-seven students, that is (49%) of the students responded that their low English ability level does not affect their attitude towards learning through group work. When we come to the other determinant problem that could affect their attitude formation, it the interest they possess towards group work in learning English as stated, 'my interest causes me problem to use group work' that matters a lot. The responses the students gave in light of this item were that nearly fifty students (53%) did not agree; that is, they do not have the problem of interest to participate in group work activities. Thus, though there are quite a large number of students who felt that their interest negatively influences them to participate in group work activities, those who felt that they did not have the problem of interest to get involved in group work activities were greater. Hence, the attitude of students towards group work in terms of their interest could be taken as positive that does not hinder them from participating in group work activities. Lack of resources is another factor that is supposed to influence the students' attitude towards their group work practice as stated in the questionnaire item 11, 'lack of resources causes me problem to use group work'. The students' response to this item was that half of them, forty-seven students (50%), reacted that lack of resources for group work facility affects them negatively so that they would not have positive attitude, where as the other half (50%) claimed that lack of resources has nothing to do with the kind of

attitude they develop towards learning English through group work; that is, almost half of them had positive attitude even if conducive atmosphere of resources is not there for group work practice. Over all, the availability or unavailability of the necessary resources was considered equally important for the kind of attitude the students claim to possess. Shortage of time is also commonly considered as one of the most important factors that affect students' attitude to be either positive or negative as stated in the students' questionnaire item as, 'shortage of time causes me problem to use group work'. With respect to the response they gave to this item, forty-nine students (53%) out of the total ninety-four, agreed and strongly agreed. A significant number of students also disagreed and strongly disagreed with this view that even though there is shortage time, they felt that they try to adjust the time constraint and make effective use of group work. Anyway, as the percentage of students who agreed and strongly disagreed with the premise outweighed, it is better to critically consider the time constraint in light of the attitudinal imposition it brings on students. Lack of appropriate awareness about the advantages and disadvantages of group work is still another issue that could have its own role in determining the nature of students' attitude to be either positive or negative. With that respect, fifty-two students out of the total ninety-four, that is (56%), showed up their agreement and strong agreement towards the given premise. This implies that quite a large number of students had the view that their attitude towards group work practice in learning English is negatively influenced by their lack of the right awareness about group work; this implies that some measures in terms of raising the awareness of the students towards group work needs to be sought. This finding is similar with the literature suggested by Brown (2000) in that students' lack of awareness about cognitive, affective and social variables negatively affects their attitude towards the attitudinal object.

The issues organized thematically under Table 3 focuses on the role of the importance of group work in enabling the students in terms of developing either positive or negative attitude towards learning English through group work. Thus, under these views, the first item that looks at the students' attitude with respect to the importance of group work is stated as, 'Group work gives me freedom to express my ideas'. Sixty-three students, out of the total of ninety-four, expressed their agreement and strong agreement. It can be said from these views that majority of the students did have positive attitude. The number of students who did not agree with this premise was thirty-one (33%) of the total students. This number is not negligible, but those students who like group work because of its benefit for self-freedom outnumbered the ones that do not like it. The view that group work encourages students to learn from each other is supported by sixty-three students or sixty-nine (69%); the response given by majority of the students to this premise shows that almost two-third of the students like group work because of the opportunity it gives them to learn different things from their friends; those students who disagreed or strongly disagreed were thirty-one percent (31%). The other view forwarded to find out the students' view in relation to the important role that group work plays in their attitude formation is stated as, 'Group work enhances me to exercise my social skills'. In this respect, majority of the students, that is fifty-eight out of the ninety-four, which is equal to (62%) expressed their agreement and strong agreement; it could be deduced from this that most of the students like group work or they had positive attitude towards

group work because of the merit that it gives them to improve their social skills. With respect to the long lasting behavioral change that comes by as a result of the use of group work in learning English, almost half of the respondents, nearly forty-five students showed their agreement and strong agreement; thus, it can be generalized from this result that quite a large number of students need some guidance to be aware of the importance of group work for bringing long lasting learning on students. Still the other issue closely related with the importance of group work for securing positive attitude in students for getting involved in group work practice is stated as, 'Group work encourages me to learn better'. In connection to this, more than half of the total students, that is, fifty students (53%) showed their total agreement and strong agreement. This implies that quite a large number of students possess a positive attitude. This is the predominant view, though a number of students did not seem to comply with it. The last issue that capitalizes on the importance of group work for maintaining either positive or negative attitude towards group work in learning English is stated as, 'Group work provides me better opportunity and interest for learning from others'. Around sixty-one students, that is (65%) of the total, agreed and strongly agreed. It is only forty-nine (49%) that did not agree. It can be generalized from this result that majority of the students had positive attitude for group work in learning English. To come to the conclusion of the first section that dealt with identifying the attitude of students towards learning English as provided through the thematic issues of various questionnaire items, in almost all the three thematic issues of identifying the nature of the students' attitude, nearly sixty percent of the student-respondents showed up that they possess positive attitude towards learning English, no matter how there could be so many challenges and lack of awareness of the importance and role of group work for learning English in a better way.

Results of Teacher Interview: In this section, six teachers who were randomly selected from the two schools of the study setting were interviewed by the researcher to gather data that substantiates the data obtained through students' questionnaire; accordingly, the interview questions focused on the teachers' attitude towards group work in teaching-learning English, particularly focusing on its importance and challenges they face when they try to put it into practice. In this regard, the interviewee-teachers tried to present their views as follows as stated in their own words and explained further by the researcher:

Interviewee 1: As to this interviewee, group work is good, for it helps students improve their result, though it is usually dominated by only some bright student. All students do not equally collaborate in group work. Thus, according to this interviewee, what usually makes group work ineffective is students' lack of inner motivation considering group work as something that is imposed on them, especially when it is in the form of one to five (1 to 5) formal or constant group formation. Besides this, their poor language ability level by itself has got its own negative impact in their effective practice and use of group work as a means of learning English. Thus, it is only one bright student in a group who does most of the activities including assignments and home take group work activities. As to this interviewee, as a result of these and some other constraints not cited here from the side of the learners, most of the students tend to have negative attitude towards group work. The same interviewee presented the issue from the instructors'

point of view stating as, "Moving around different forms of groups and talking and explaining everything to all group members from such a large number of students is boring and tiresome". So many teachers prefer not to use group work most of the time. Besides, the inputs in most of the language classrooms are not relevant and comfortable for appropriate use of group work. The students do not have something to see, read, and listen like newspaper, short films, radio dramas, and pictorial descriptions that initiate them to various group experiences sharing when they come to group work. Let alone all these facilities, they do not have even sufficient text books. So the prevalence of these problems in relation to lack of family support, for most of them comes from country side to lead on independent life in towns, aggravates the problem of their lack of interest in group related activities. Their living alone in the absence of their family coming from remote areas of the rural area makes their behavior difficult to manage, for there is no one to follow them up nearby and shape them in the right ways of learning. This interviewee believes that group work has brought a dynamic change on the students in that those students who are heading to higher education these days have become inquisitive and challenging even for teachers. The experience they gain in group work by asking and answering each other and with the instructor has enabled many students to acquire various language and life skills. As a result, many students come to this level of getting rid of unnecessary shyness or timidity. So, this enhances the academic, social and life skills of the students. In this respect, as to this interviewee, government schools have a better experience of employing group work than the private schools, for private schools mainly focus on academic matters; hence, this interviewee felt that he has a positive attitude and the students can have positive attitude towards learning English in group work if teachers make wise use of group work without worrying about its challenges in a situation where all the necessary resources are provided by concerned bodies and the instructor follows the success of each group member closely assisting in every respect.

Interviewee 2: As to this interviewee, the formal group work setting arrangement leads to unnecessary talks or rumors by the students and even to some form of opposite sex harassment. The nature of desk top by itself is not convenient for group work arrangement. So, they do not have an eye contact with their teachers unless they turn around. These are some of the challenges from the teachers' point of view to practice group work in learning English. From the students' point of view, "most of the students do not want to participate in group activities assuming that their friends laugh at their bad English and mistake that comes as a result of their first language influence or fear". Hence, most of the group role is left to one or two bright students and the rest become ignorant who are ashamed of their poor English and gender to participate in group work; in fact, most of the teachers are also interested to cover the portion as a result of which they prefer to employ lecture method rather than group discussion; as to this respondent, "there is acute shortage of resources that facilitate group work practice. So, to make effective use of group work in the future, we need to balance student-class size ratio, teachers' awareness about group practice need to rise and the teachers need to design their lesson in real learner-centered approach in which group work can be really implemented."

Interviewee 3: According to this interviewee, group work is a good way of enabling the students to learn from each other

even in the absence of their teachers. They can learn from each other through their leader in their free time by discussing and debating. So, this encourages student's competition that is not active in activities done outside the group work mode of learning. Some of the obstacles for group work are cultural influences that hinder them not to participate actively in group work. The issue of gender also affects many students from sitting together and debating with opposite sexes on different topics. Sometimes, the bright students also do not welcome the lazy ones in their groups. These are some of the common challenges that negatively influence the practice of group work. In terms of resources too, there is an acute shortage of films, visual aids, pictures, and drawings. A large number of students who are usually more than eighty in one class are another major challenge for effective use of group work; overall, there is a change in the way group work is implemented and the attitude teachers and students have about it. For better implementation of group work in the future, such measures as reducing the number of students in a class, creating competitive atmosphere among students, and providing all the necessary resources must be taken into account by concerned bodies so as to make the attitude of students and teachers positive towards group work; otherwise, in its present state, the practice of group work seems to have a lot of challenges which lead the teachers and students to have more of negative attitude towards practicing group work in learning English.

Interviewee 4: This interviewee sees the practice of group work in light of the class size. She likes it with small class size and she hates it with large class size. She feels that students' attitude towards group work is low or negative, especially, for the bright ones who do not like group discussion; as to her, "they get fade up of it; they do not want to be group leaders, for all the responsibility is laid on them. The students' language impact is also high in group work as a result of which there are a number of students who cannot listen or speak English at all". On top of that she stated "As the students do not have the information and the language ability, they cannot discuss in group". As to this interviewee, to get the most out of group work, the student-class ratio should be small; the teacher should be interested in it, and self-initiated; if that is so, the students get initiated to discuss with their peers than with their teachers; if the sitting arrangements are made comfortable in such a way that they face in some way the instructor too, not only facing to each other.

Interview 5: As to this interviewee, "group work is not a good means of teaching in comparison with the traditional methods". That is, he does not like the idea of using only group work of one to five, ignoring all other modes of classroom organization. He believes that every method should be coordinated in order to get the best out of every method so as to provide for the students standardized lesson. As to this instructor, "there are students who are unhappy about it; especially the bright ones do not want it because it makes them carry out all the burden of lazy students". Gender wise also, there are students who do not want to work in group with opposite sexes, for there are adult females who are timid to work with adult males at this age. The class size is also another barrier for group work practice. Anyhow, under all these obstacles, group work seems to have brought about a better self-confidence on students as a result of which they have started to use English in front of their friends and instructors. So, still in order to get the best out of the group work practice

such measures as: 'forming the groups properly, making the topic of group discussion clear, giving clear instruction of discussion and following up and evaluating their group work, must be taken by instructors and other concerned bodies; however, still many teachers do not have positive attitude towards group work.

Interviewee 6: This interviewee feels that group work is effective as a result of which he likes it because it helps teachers to implement the actual learner-centered approach in classroom properly; furthermore, he states, "Group work enables students to improve the four language skills in an integrated manner, especially, it enables them to improve the oral skills of speaking and listening". The problem with its practice arises from both teachers' and students' side. From teachers' side, most of the teachers believe that group work is a kind of top-down motivated issue, not academic issue. In relation to that, most of the time, many bright students develop a sense of superiority complex, and they do not respect the lazy students' ideas. As a result, the poor ones are not confident enough to participate with the bright ones who are not willing to waste any of their time in helping the poor students. So, this interviewee suggests that students of different backgrounds need to be identified and organized according to their interest, motivation and willingness to assist with each other; in addition, as to him "we have to change the attitude of teachers and students by refreshment training and by motivating the role model teachers who frequently employ group work in their classroom by assisting their practice and telling the main objectives of group work for those teachers".

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of this study:

- The vast majority of students had positive attitude towards group work because of its importance for better and improved learning of all the language skills; most of them believe that group work enables them to use the language and express their ideas freely as a result of which they develop their confidence and positive attitude.
- Almost all the teachers also have positive attitude towards group work in teaching English, for they believe that group work gives for students better opportunities to use the language for independent learning;
- The major challenge that students face in using group work is their low level of language ability and lack of practice in group work.

Based on the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The class size must be ideal for effective group work implementation;
- Students should be behaviorally, cognitively and emotionally ready to use English in group work mode of learning;
- Teachers should use effective language teaching strategies since these help them to change their students' attitude in group work mode of learning;

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