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An Investigation into some Libyan EFL University Instructors' and Students'
Attitudes towards Using Group Work

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics

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# Abstract

This study investigates the attitudes of hundred Libyan EFL university students and five instructors towards using group work in the EFL classroom. A mixed research approach was employed for data collection. The quantitative data of this study was collected through a close-ended questionnaire. Hundred students participated in the study who were selected randomly from the Department of English, Sabratha University. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with five English instructors from the same department. The results of the study showed that most of the participants hold positive attitudes towards using group work for developing communication skills, enhancing understanding and performance and motivating students to use English language for interaction. However, there are some challenges which hindered the implementation of group work effectively such as using native language, controlling time and noise, dominating students and not receiving corrective feedback. Therefore, group work should be considered as a valuable and useful teaching technique for improving EFL students' speaking and communication skills.

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mother. Without her love and encouragement none of this would have been possible.

## Acknowledgement

All the praise is due to God alone, who guide, help and give me the capacity for doing this work. I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Salama Embark for his careful guidance and constructive feedback which assisted me in writing this thesis. I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents, for their understanding, encouragement, assistance and patience while I was completing this work.

**Declaration**


I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis entitled

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and that no part has been plagiarized. I also declare that all the material submitted in
this work which is not my own work has been identified with proper citations and
referencing, and that no material is included which has been submitted for any other
assignment of other subjects or courses.




Signature                                                                        Date

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## List of Abbreviations

**CLT**…………………Communicative Language Teaching

**CL**…………………..Cooperative Learning

**EFL**…………………English as a Foreign Language

**L1**………………….. First Language

**L2**………………….. Second Language

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTON

## 1.0.Introduction

This chapter includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study and the research question. It explains the scope and the significance of the study. Moreover, a brief methodology of the study and the organization of the dissertation are introduced in this chapter.

## 1.1.Background of the Study

Through observing the current situation in Libyan universities, one may notice that many students have undeveloped communication skills. This could be attributed to the ineffective teaching techniques used by instructors. Therefore, instructors need to use additional communication techniques including group work to avoid such problems. Group work is one of the teaching techniques which has received much attention in recent years due to its effective benefits. Gomleksize (2007) defines group work as students working in small groups to achieve certain goals and objectives. Furthermore, Group work is considered to be one of the efficient teaching strategies for both teachers and learners, since it encourages learning to take place and allows communication skills to foster among students (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006).

When students work in groups, their communication skills can be developed. Students could see an improvement in their performance, because they actively participate in their own learning experience. In this study, the researcher investigates

the attitudes of some Libyan EFL university instructors and students towards using group work in English classrooms.

**1.2.Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that Libyan EFL university instructors do not focus on using group work in teaching speaking. This can be one of the reasons for why students often finish their university study with undeveloped English communication skills.

**1.3.Aims of the Study**

The study aims to:

1- Investigate instructors' and students' attitudes towards using group work to enhance and develop students' communication skills.

2- Increase instructors' and students' awareness about the importance of using group work as a teaching and learning technique.

3- Identify the major challenges encountered by Libyan EFL university instructors in implementing group work in language classrooms.

**1.4 Research Questions**

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What attitudes do Libyan EFL university instructors and students have towards using group work in language classrooms?

- What are the major challenges that face Libyan EFL university instructors in implementing group work in their classrooms?

**1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study was carried out to investigate the attitudes of 5 Libyan EFL university instructors and 100 students towards using group work in English classrooms. This study began in May 2018 at Sabratha Faculty of Arts, Sabratha University.

**1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study highlights the importance of identifying Libyan EFL university instructors' and students' attitudes towards using group work in language teaching and learning to improve students' communication skills. In addition, the findings of the study provide EFL instructors with useful insights for including group work in training programs. It also helps to find out what are the challenges that may encounter instructors and students when they apply group work and accordingly give some suggestions to help them overcome these challenges.

**1.7 Methodology**

Mixed-methods were used as an approach of investigation for the study. A close-ended questionnaire was used to identify students' attitudes towards using group work. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 5 instructors to obtain in-depth information about the instructors' attitudes towards using group work activities. The sample of the study consisted of 100 EFL undergraduate students in the English Department at Sabratha university. They were selected randomly in order to gain sufficient data about the issue. In addition, 5 instructors who were teaching English at Sabratha university were interviewed .

The gained data from the questionnaire were analysed by using Microsoft Office Excel. The responses of the participants were organized and presented in tables

according to a specific classification (see 4.1). The qualitative obtained data from the interview were transcribed and analysed according to their thematic view (see 4.2). Moreover, the content of the participants' responses were described and identified in order to classify them into key points in the light of the literature review.

## 1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of five chapters presented as follows:

- Chapter one introduces the idea of the study and explains the aims of the study and the research question. It also describes the scope and the significance of the study.

- Chapter two provides a clear review of cooperative learning and group work through the literature review. It explains the advantages and disadvantages of group work. It also offers some previous studies that has dealt with this issue.

- Chapter three describes the context of the research, the sample of the study, and the instruments used in collecting the data. It also explains the process of piloting the tools of data collection and the stages of data collection.

- Chapter four presents the analyzed data of the study in details.

- Chapter five discusses the main findings of the study. It outlines the conclusions drawn from this research. It also points out the limitations of the study and offers some recommendations and suggestions for further research.

# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview about attitudes, communicative language teaching and oral communication skills. Some definitions of cooperative learning and group work that have been introduced by some educators and how groups are formed are discussed. The roles of the teacher and the learner, and the advantages and disadvantages of using group work are presented. In addition, challenges of using group work and some previous studies that have examined this topic from different aspects are also dealt with in this chapter.

## 2.1. Attitudes

Investigating attitudes towards learning has been considered as an interest in research. Hashemi (2005) defined attitudes towards the subject as the extent to which students accept the subject as well as their opinions towards it. "An attitude is a disposition to respect favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event" (Ajzen, 2005,p.3). It has been stated by Ibnian (2012) that teachers should recognize that all students possess positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees. As attitudes could affect on how individuals manage many situations in life, one of these is foreign language learning. He claims that students with positive attitudes achieve quick progression in EFL learning. He adds that attitudes and beliefs are closely related as both of them are based upon experience. Therefore, to encourage students to be

positive towards the EFL learning process, teachers should use effective teaching strategies and thoughtful instructional methods (Brown, 2000).

Rani (2000) illustrates that students' attitudes towards learning might be developed through using projects which give students experience in problem solving. According to Anwar (2010) using the student-centered approach can help to improve learners' communicative competence. It has been noted that this approach has been used by some language teachers, and taking into consideration that this approach entails adopting communicative techniques and strategies so as to help learners get involved in the teaching- learning process.

Attitudes can positively or negatively affect a person's behavior. A person with positive attitudes towards something can positively influence those around him/her and improve their mood. In the same way, a person who displays negative attitudes may affect those around them and behave in a manner that reduces efficiency and effectiveness (Boundless Resources, 2019) . In this regard, McLeish (2009) conducted a study to determine the attitude of students towards cooperative learning at college. The results revealed that due to students fear, apprehension and past experiences many prefer to work on their own rather than in a group. However, the findings indicated that students believed that cooperative learning facilitates good working relationships and enhances socialization and creativity. In addition, Bushisso (2019) investigated the attitudes of grade nine students and teachers towards learning and teaching English in group modality and related factors to their attitudinal problems in some selected secondary schools of Hawassa City Administration in Ethiopia. The findings showed that the students and teachers have positive attitude towards learning and teaching English in group modality. Accordingly, group mode

should be encouraged from early grades since it develops students' independent learning.

## 2.2. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching (CLT) or communicative approach turned to be the goal for learning English language in EFL classroom. It has been defined by Cook (2003,p.126) as " an approach to language teaching which views the ability to communicate successfully as both the means and the end of language learning". The focus of CLT is primarily and necessarily social; it is with the goal of successful and real communication (Ibid.). Following the emergence of CLT in English-speaking nations, CLT has become the most influential language teaching methodology in the world. Due to the needs of international communication in the early 1990s, the CLT approach was introduced in many countries where English is learnt and spoken as a foreign language in EFL classrooms (Ying, 2010).

Communicative competence is the general goal of CLT approach with the teaching of the four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) (Richards, 2006). CLT highlights the need for teaching to be around real life and meaningful uses of language that are related to the learner's communicative needs. Moreover, it emphasizes the development of fluent, accurate and appropriate language use through the use of a communicative curriculum which is built around functional and interactional uses of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Therefore, learners learn the language through  the process of communicating.

The main change that CLT has made is to shift away from traditional lesson formats where the focus is on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as accurate repetition and memorization of dialogs

and drills toward the use of pair work, role plays, group work and project work activities that require learners to negotiate meaning (Richards, 2006). In other words, grammar is no longer the starting point in planning language courses within the communicative approach. CLT also implies new roles in classrooms for both teachers and learners. The teacher has the role of facilitator and monitor and the learner has to participate in cooperative rather than individualistic activities (Ibid.).

### 2.3. Oral Communication Skills

Oral communication tasks are important in learning a language. As speaking is the verbal use of language and a medium through which human beings communicate with each other (Fulcher, 2003). In the communicative approach, speaking skill is given more importance since oral communication involves speech when learners interact verbally with each other (Ibtissem, 2013 ). Communication is exchanging ideas between people either in speaking or in writing (Alam, 2013). It has been stated that "oral communication is more than a message being transmitted from a speaker to a listener; the speaker is at the same time both subject and object of his own message"(Richard & Rodgers, 1986, p.91). Thus, the goal of this skill is to have the ability to understand the spoken language, and to provide a meaningful reply in the target language. It is favorable that EFL teachers should train students to develop their oral communication (Al-Tamimi, 2014). In addition, oral communication is taken in the sense of having three components; fluency, accuracy and pronunciation (Ibtissem, 2013). Fluency refers to the ability to speak spontaneously without hesitation. Accuracy refers to the use of grammatically and phonologically correct language (Alam,2013). Pronunciation refers to the production and perception of language sounds, stressed and unstressed syllables and intonation patterns. If speakers mispronounce sounds, this may hinder understanding for listeners (Carter & Nunan,

2004). In conclusion, these three components are seen as complementary in the development of students' speaking skill.

Some researchers investigated the effectiveness of using cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills. For instance, Ibtissem (2013) explored the significance of using cooperative group work technique on improving learners' speaking skill and communicative skills in EFL classes. The results showed that the majority of the students showed a great deal of interaction, motivation and willingness to participate in oral expression lectures for the sake of enhancing and developing their speaking skill. All teachers of oral expression module also agreed upon the idea that cooperative group work is a very motivating technique that helps the learners develop their speaking skill.

In addition, Pattanpiche (2011) investigated the effects of using collaborative learning to enhance students' speaking achievement. The findings revealed an improvement of the students' speaking performance and positive feedback from the students on the use of collaborative learning activities. Moreover, Jayanth and Soundiraraj (2016) conducted a study on exploring group work activities to develop speaking skills of the ESL learners. The findings demonstrated that good group work activities help in reducing anxiety and provide learners with a learner-friendly ambience for practicing speaking.

## 2.4. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning (CL) has been defined to be an effective teaching strategy for both teachers and learners. It encourages learning to take place and allows communication skills to foster among learners (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006). Wang and Burton (2010, p. 2) define CL as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning". For

Ravitch (2007, p .60), Cooperative learning is a teaching method in which students of differing abilities work together in groups on an assignment and receive a common grade and each student has a specific responsibility within the group. Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.193) believe that CL provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communicative strategies. Considerable research shows, that cooperative learning results in higher achievement and more positive relationships among students (Wichadee, 2007).

Furthermore, Johnson, Johnson and Smith (2006, p.7) state that the most successful cooperative learning strategies share five essential factors: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability (personal responsibility), social skills and group processing. The first one is positive interdependence. It refers to the idea that students are required to work together in order to achieve common learning objectives. In this case, students should believe that they are linked and that one cannot succeed if others do not succeed. Students need each other for support, explanations, and guidance. Without the help of one member, the group will not be able to achieve the desired objective (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith 2006).

The second one is Face-to-face promotive interaction which refers to the interaction of students in order to help each other accomplish the task and the group's shared goals. Students are required to interact verbally with one another on learning tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). They are also expected to explain things to each other, teach others, and provide each other with help, support, and encouragement.

The third factor is Individual accountability. It focuses on the individual group member's performance, which means each student is individually responsible for his

or her own and other group member's learning and every member is in charge of the achievement of the group's goal (Johnson & Johnson, 2012).

The fourth factor is Social Skills which refers to interpersonal and small group skills which are needed to cooperate successfully. It refers to the skills such as giving constructive feedback, reaching to group agreement, communicating accurately and unambiguously and involving every member in the learning process. However, not all students know these skills. They must be taught and practiced such skills before the groups tackle a learning task. Therefore, teachers should carefully and explicitly teach their students the required skills (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith 2006).

Finally, group processing is an important aspect of CL. It requires group members to assess their functions and contribution to the success of all tasks. The purpose of group processing is to improve the effectiveness of the group work by analyzing the collaborative information of group members' performances in order to fulfil the final outcome (Johnson & Johnson, 2012).

**2.4.1 Group Work**

Group work is an important component of the communicative approach, and it is a form of cooperative learning. It has been considered to be one of the most important classroom techniques for developing students' communicative ability, and has gradually been applied to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Ibnian, 2012). Group work is defined as "any classroom activity in which the whole class is divided into pairs or larger groups" (Ibid, p.2).

A more comprehensible definition of group work is an instructional method where learners of different levels form small groups work together towards a specific objective (Badach, 2011). According to Cohen (1994, p.1) "the fact that the different members of a group bring different knowledge to the gathering, indicates that the

more members that there are in a group, the more knowledge they have available". In addition, students learn to listen to different thoughts, opinions, learn to discuss and to negotiate in group work. They take part in the tasks equally and sometimes they feel comfortable to experiment and speak the language. Gross (1993) added students working in groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. Every member is in charge of each others' group activities and has more opportunities for independence and they can have some learning decisions (Ibtissem, 2013). Therefore, group work fosters exchange of knowledge and experience and entails greater responsibility for all group members.

**2.4.1.1 Group Work Composition**

To understand the reasons behind the importance of group work, it is better to understand how groups are formed. The size of the group is an important factor when implementing group work technique in EFL classrooms (Al-Yaseen, 2014). The optimal size of the group varies from four to five members. (Jacob,2006; Al-Yaseen,2014). According to Williams (2002), there are two factors for effective group size: the type of the assignment that students are required to do and the students' level. Therefore, if the circumstances change, the size of the group will change as well. Furthermore, the age of the students and their experience in working in groups play a significant role in group size (Glanze, 2004). The students' level, their age and the required task play an essential role in groups composition.

Group work could be categorized into two forms: heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping. Ibnian (2012) indicates that the former means gathering students who have mixed ability levels whereas the latter means gathering students who have similar levels. However, Huss (2006) points out that cooperative learning

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teams should be a composition of one low-ability student, two medium-ability students, and one high-achieving student. Hassanien (2007) clarifies that group formation is of three types: randomly, where the teacher puts students into groups. Self-selection, where students themselves choose their own group members or a mix of both. Self- selected groups has some disadvantages as students tend to choose friends. This can result in the students self segregating and spending more time socializing than working (Burke, 2011).

Other techniques were proposed by Badache (2011) who suggests that students can be grouped alphabetically, by their birth or gender. He also suggests forming groups according to students' personalities and have a mixed group of quiet, shy and talkative students. In addition, Ramirez (2005) proposes other types of grouping students according to given numbers or letters so those who get number one will sit together and number two together, and so on. Another way can be done by the teacher giving the students different pictures or cards and ask them to look for other students who have the same pictures or cards to form a group together.

Moreover, one of the essential factors for effective group work is friendship between group members. When students have excellent relationships with each other, they respect each other, listen to each other and accept criticism from one another (Hendry & Davy, 2005). Therefore, if the group members have a good relationship, their performance will be higher and stronger. Chung (2015) argued that motivation and coordination process can be improved when friends work together. Nihalani et al. (2010) added that groups can be formed based on students' abilities; where clever students are grouped with weak ones. This allows the weak students to learn from good students and eventually improve their levels.

**2.4.1.2 Role of the Instructor**

The language instructors' role is an indispensable factor that affects learning. Instructor roles in cooperative learning classrooms are quite different from those of traditional classrooms. In a cooperative class, instructors are facilitators who should guide and help students on how best to achieve the educational objectives (Zhang, 2010). The instructor should be a resource and a promoter for the students when they are involved in communicative tasks (Harmer, 2001). Instructors must encourage and motivate students while working in groups by giving them feedback to enhance their learning (Richard and Rodgers, 2014 ). The instructor is seen to play the role of an observer and also as a participant in order to scaffold students and gives individual feedback in different stages of  learning (Harmer,2001).

According to Burke (2011, p.90), there are several ways that instructors  can help in group work. First, the instructor needs to be certain that students understand the assignment, the purpose of the task, the learning objectives and the skills need to be developed through group work. Second, the instructor needs to reinforce students' listening skills and the proper methods to give and receive constructive criticism. Third, instructor plays a role in helping students managing conflicts and disagreements. This could be done by keeping the group small in order to make it easy for instructors and students when dividing members' roles.

In addition, Granström (2007) points out two important roles for instructors. Leadership which requires instructor's knowledge about classroom interaction and group process.  Teachership which requires instructor's  knowledge of subjects and ability to convey knowledge. The two roles complement each other and a professional instructor need to comprise both leadership and teachership.

**2.4.1.3 Role of the Learner**

Learners are active participators and autonomous learners in cooperative tasks (Zhang, 2010). CL enables students to learn from each other through their contribution to the group (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Jacob (2006) students perform five roles during a cooperative learning activity. The learner can play the role of a facilitator who coordinates the work of the group. A recorder who is responsible for recording and writing the achievements of the group. A reporter is the one who tells others about the group's work and he/she should be confident student who likes to speak in class. Additionally, the learner can play the role of the timekeeper who helps the group to be aware of the time constraints, keeps the group on tasks and fills the place of missing group members. The learner can also be an observer who checks if the group members are using collaborative skills. Consequently, students themselves take charge of their learning process and check that all the group members are on the task.

Garfield (1993) added that students may be assigned to specific roles which help them to get started and prevent one person from doing all the work. Some of these roles may include a moderator/organizer who is in charge of assigning tasks and moderating group discussions. A summarizer who summarizes discussions or group solutions to problems. A mistake manager who ask what went wrong and what can be learned from mistakes. Finally, an encourager who gives positive reinforcement to group members. The researcher believes that dividing students' roles in this way helps in making an effective group work activity.

Furthermore, it is useful to establish some rules for students when introducing a group work activity. They need to be informed that they are responsible for their work and must help each other. They also need to listen carefully to each other and

share the leadership, making sure that everyone in the group is participating and no one is dominating. It is also important that all members of the group establish respect to each other and considerate the different ways of learning between them (Garfield, 1993).

## 2.4. 1.4 Advantages of Using Group Work

Many researchers and scholars provide benefits of using group work as a teaching and learning technique. According to Beebe and Masterson (2003); Horder (2010) more information is provided when working in a group because of the variety of backgrounds and experiences. What is more, students can achieve higher order thinking skills, learn and remember knowledge better than individualistic learning. They can solve problems faster when they are in groups. They also feel satisfied with their participation when they are engaged in group problem solving than those who are not involved. Group work allows L2 learners to interact directly with the target language (Taylor, 1987, cited in Xue, 2013). For example, in an English classroom students are required to use English to communicate in role plays , debates or group presentations. In addition, Hendry and Davy (2005) note that when students are involved in study groups, they can understand difficult concepts and correct their misunderstandings. Jiang (2009) stated that group work provides a more comfortable and relaxing learning atmosphere, so students can build greater learner confidence and self-esteem. He also declares that students' social interaction is promoted by using group work. Since they are in a process of cooperation with peers, they are discussing issues, and questioning the  problems. Moreover, Totten et al., (1991)  working in groups makes learners become more responsible for their learning and develop critical thinking skills. It also created a stress-free environment where learners feel at ease. Added to that, shy students are more comfortable working in groups, they gain more

confidence in their ability to learn Badache (2011). Group work can benefit teachers as well. Teachers as well can manage their time efficiently. As they can help weak learners, give further explanations when needed and figure out students' strengthens and weaknesses (Jiang, 2009).

### 2.4.1.5 Disadvantages of Using Group Work

Although students get benefit when working in groups, there are also times when problems arise. Beebe and Masterson (2003) shed the light on some shortcomings of group work. For example, working in a group forces students to conform to the majority opinion to avoid conflict with other members of the group. It also takes more time when working in groups, most of the time is spent on socializing and solving problems. Moreover, some students may depend on others in doing the whole work without giving help. Therefore, some students get praise for doing very little work while others do most of the work (Jiang, 2009). Another important disadvantage was added by Ibtissem (2013) who noted that some students tend to control the group, as this may reflect the performance of the group and make other members feel uncomfortable. Finally, students might prefer using their native language, since it is easier for communication (Jiang, 2009). Furthermore, Martin (2006) reported in her research paper that instructors may feel like they are losing control of the class. Instructors may find it difficult at first to keep an eye on several groups at once. Thus, instructors' role is to monitor the students and offer assistance when necessary. She added that students during group work will speak in their L1. This may be due to difficult or boring activities. She suggested a solution for this problem by letting the participants choose activities that are relevant to their interest and by giving clear instructions to the students.

**2.4.1.6 Challenges of Using Group Work**

Alaro (2017, p.28) addressed three major challenges that affect the implementation of group work in English classes at Gesuba Secondary School.

1. Challenges related to classroom situation and sitting arrangement. Thus, large number of students, inappropriate classroom arrangements, lack of spaces between desks and tables and immovability of furniture can hinder the effective implementation of group work and challenges teachers and students.

2. Challenges related to students. For instance, students' lack of interest towards group work, lack of motivation among the students and students' poor command of the language to communicate freely with each other.

3. Instructors' challenges that hinder group performance are instructors' reluctance to organize, guide and supervise the students in groups, shortage of time and instructors' lack of awareness to identify and accommodate all students when group work is in progress.

Frost (2019) anticipated some challenges that can interfere with productive group work. First of all, coordinating schedules is one of the problems. Since group work requires members to meet outside to complete the work, finding the time is often difficult with different group members' schedules. The next challenge is distributing the workload equally among group members. There are two kinds of students, one who wants to let everyone else do the work and a member who wants to control the group. Therefore, dividing up the work among them is often a challenge. Furthermore, arising conflicts between group members can affect the group dynamic and wastes time. Students are in charge of their learning during group work with limited input from the teacher. This might also put them in a struggle of

understanding. Thus, the members won't likely gain much value unless they truly understand the ideas.

Some common problems identified by individuals working in groups. Firstly, inability to focus on tasks and completing them by deadline. Secondly, members are not contributing and having difficulty to get started. Thirdly, ideas are not thoroughly discussed as a team. Fourthly, group conflicts and domineering personalities. Lastly, ineffective communication among group members (The University of Queensland, 2019).

Kasim (2015) reported in his article 'Implementation of group work in the classroom' that group work may have problems such as using of mother tongue among students, the reinforcement of students' errors, difficulty to monitor all groups and the problem of controlling students. Baines, Blatchford and Webster (2015) conducted a study on group work challenges in primary school. The findings indicated that teachers need to develop group work skills and children with special educational needs must receive support to work in groups. Furthermore, Tal (2018) encountered difficulties in implementing group work in early childhood education. These difficulties included a lack of coordinated staff work and the absence of routines and planning of space and time. Ferdous amd Karim (2019) added that undergraduate students face challenges when they work in groups outside classroom. The most frequent challenges are finding convenient time, maintaining communication between members, assigning and explaining tasks to group members, grouping and monitoring the students and dealing with troublesome members.

Gender can affect on group work when composing groups, since mixing male and female can be a challenge for instructors. Nevertheless, Takeda and Homberg

(2014) and Zhan et al., (2015) investigated the effects of gender on group work process and students' performance and achievement. The findings of the two studies revealed that gender-balanced groups work best with less social loafing behaviors. However, all male groups displayed lower performance.

Despite the fact that working in groups have some difficulties. Some researchers suggested some strategies for overcoming these obstacles. For instance, Burke (2011, p.89) addressed four stages of group work. Firstly, instructors should think of when incorporating group work into the class. Secondly, teaching the students how to work in groups. This involves assigning groups, structuring time and delegating tasks. Thirdly, monitoring and motivating group members. The last stage is the assessment of the group. Instructors must develop concrete rubrics for grading the students. Brown and Thomas (2017) added some strategies used by the instructors to mitigate group work challenges. Instructors can use participatory technology by sharing online documents which can help instructors to identify contributions in group work. Formative assessment strategies such as self and peer assessment. The final strategy is how instructors provide class time for group work on assignments that give students access to instructor expertise.

To summarize what is mentioned above, the researcher found that implementing an effective group work is a challenge for both instructors and students. These challenges can be related to classroom situation, instructors' way of teaching and their developmental skills, type of tasks being applied and finally challenges related to students' performance and behavior. However, instructors can overcome these challenges by creating, monitoring and evaluating groups in a comprehensive process.

## 2.5. Previous Studies

Many researchers have conducted studies to find out the effect of group work on students' performance in the classroom and on students' attitudes towards learning. For example, Esawe (2005) conducted a study concerned with using pair and group work technique in teaching English in Libyan secondary schools in Zentan. An experimental design was used with two fourth year Basic Science classes. One class was taught by means of pair and group work (experimental group) while the other class was taught traditionally (controlled group). A diagnostic test was held for both classes followed by nine achievement tests for five months. The results obtained from the nine achievement tests were compared with the diagnostic test to see the rate of the students' achievements. A questionnaire was also given for teachers to find out to what extent this technique is used. The results showed the experimental group outperformed the controlled group, and all the students in the experimental group enthusiastically participated in the discussion.

Brown (2008) conducted a study which surveyed students' perceptions of collaborative learning. The study aimed at providing depth and detail on students' perceptions of what they have gained from the process and possibly indicate what areas might need to be improved or changed. A questionnaire and an interview were used as methods of data collection on first year ESL students at the university of Botswana. The findings revealed that most of the students claim to have derived academic benefits such as better comprehension and improved performance, and acquired generic skills such as enhancing communication and problem solving skills. About half of them believed they gained social skills; they found collaborative learning enjoyable and made new friends. They agreed that CL practices should be encouraged and continued.

Bambol (2008) conducted a study to investigate teachers' point of view in implementing group work in mixed ability ESL classrooms. The sample comprised 36 ESL teachers from 5 secondary schools in Serian District, Malaysia. A semi-structured interview was used for collecting the data. The study found out that group work build cooperation and collaboration skills and increase the amount of the students converse in the target language and for peer teaching and learning.

More evidence was reported by Ibnian (2012) who investigated the effect of group work on developing the attitudes of non-English major students towards EFL learning. A questionnaire was given about the attitudes of 64 university students aged 20 years old and they were studying at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University (WISE) of Jordan. The survey revealed that group work technique was useful in developing the students' attitudes towards learning English by allowing them to express their opinions, ideas, and reactions freely in the class.

Furthermore, Rahaman (2014) conducted an action research study which approaches the use of classroom group work activity in a relation with reading comprehension. An experimental approach was used with $8^{th}$ grade students of a secondary school in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A pre-test and a post-test have been conducted for gathering the results. The findings showed that group work has a good impact to develop reading ability. The learners feel more comfort and enthusiastic by doing group work activities. It also facilitates learners to be more interactive and socialized in classroom.

Othman and Murad (2015) investigated the attitudes of Kurdish students towards group work in the EFL classroom in Kurdistan region in Iraq. A mixed approach was employed for data collection. A questionnaire was given to 100 kurdish university students. Then, 20 students from the same sample were interviewed. The

results revealed some positive attitudes such as friends in group work help and clarify things for each other and they finish tasks in a short time. Meanwhile the negative attitudes of the students were that some members do not prefer to share ideas and take group work as their relax time. It is also a waste of time because of discussing unrelated topics between students.

Albaqshi (2016) carried out a study to measure three factors affecting group work efficiency foe EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. The factors are time allotted, the number of group members and the types of duties given to groups. A questionnaire was submitted to 38 teachers in Alahsa college to explore their perceptions on the three variables. The results showed that teachers prefer traditional group work formation. They give enough time for groups and extend time to complete long tasks. They also prefer to form larger groups of 4 or 5 students.

Mohammed (2016) carried out a study investigating EFL teachers' attitudes towards cooperative learning in North Shaa Zone preparatory schools. A questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion were used for collecting the data. forty English language teachers of eight preparatory schools were participated in the study. The results concluded that most teachers had positive attitudes towards cooperative learning as it enhances their students' interdependence and accountability. However, there are some major factors which affected their positive feelings such as time consuming, created idleness of some students and demanding high control.

Saborit et al., (2016) conducted a study which aimed to assess the influence of a training program on teachers' attitudes and perceptions related to the implementation of CL in educational contexts. Teachers' knowledge area, educational stage, age, gender and years of teaching experience were considered in this assessment. 990

teachers participated in the study from 60 schools located in 25 different Provinces in Spain. Results indicated a positive attitude from the teachers, regardless of their subject area or educational stage. Training has proved to be a powerful predicator of success for the implementation of CL in educational settings.

Alfares (2017) carried out a study to investigate learners' perceptions of the benefits and the difficulties of group work in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect the data. Questionnaires were collected from 188 students in five private language institutes to examine students views. 20 students of the sample were interviewed in more detail in follow-up telephone interviews. The findings revealed that Saudi learners regard group work as an effective technique in learning, but that some students' negative behaviors may prevent them from obtaining the benefits of group work.

From the previous review, it can be seen that there have been a number of studies that have investigated the effectiveness of using group work as a teaching and learning technique. However, there seems to be very little research specifically aimed to identify the attitudes of Libyan EFL instructors and students towards using group work. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate these attitudes.

## 2.6. Summary

This chapter explained an important technique of cooperative learning which is group work through presenting its definitions and characteristics. How instructors and students play their roles in the group was discussed. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages and the challenges that might encounter instructors and students were mentioned. Some previous research studies which was relevant to the research topic were also presented.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.0. Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology used in this study. It describes the context of the research, the participants of the study, and the used methods in collecting the data. The ethical considerations and the pilot study are also provided to ensure validity and reliability. In addition, the procedures used in administrating the research instruments are dealt with in this chapter.

## 3.1. Research Design

A mixed research approach was employed as this study was conducted to investigate some Libyan EFL university instructors' and students' attitudes towards using group work. Also, using both quantitative and qualitative methods is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (Dornyei, 2007). The researcher used a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as methods of data collection.

## 3.2. Context of the Study

This study was undertaken at the Department of English ,Sabratha Faculty of Arts, Sabratha University, because the researcher was one of the students of the English department. Therefore, the good connection between the researcher and the teaching staff members eases the process of contacting with the participants. In

addition, the huge number of students and instructors at Sabratha University encourages the researcher to choose the suitable sample for the study.

**3.3. Sample of the Study**

The sample has been defined by Dornyei (2007, p.96) as "group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation". The participants of this study consisted of a hundred Libyan EFL undergraduate university students from the English Department of Sabratha University during the academic year (2017-2018). They were randomly sampled from each of the four years: first, second, third and fourth year whose major is English. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.110) illustrated that random sample " draws randomly from wider population and it is useful if the researcher wishes to be able to make generalization ,because it seeks representativeness of wider population". Therefore, the sample was selected randomly due to the representativeness of a sample obtained by random sampling. It is also reasonable to make generalizations from the results of the sample back to the population. In addition, the researcher interviewed five instructors who were teaching English at the same Department from those who have experience in teaching speaking in order to investigate their attitudes about the issue. They were selected by using purposive sampling. "A purposive sample avoids representing the wider population it seeks only to represent a particular group such as a group of students who are taking a particular examination or a group of teachers" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.110).

**3.4. Research Instruments**

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data collection. A questionnaire was used to examine the students' attitudes about using group work. The researcher also used a semi-structured interview with English instructors to

investigate their attitudes towards using group work in their classrooms. It also aims at investigating the challenges that instructors face in implementing group work.

### 3.4.1. Questionnaire

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data about students' attitudes. Johnson and Christensen (2012, p.170) defined closed-ended questionnaire as "questionnaires which are focused on getting participants responses to standardized items for the purpose of confirmatory research in which specific variables are measured and hypotheses are tested". The questionnaire is a very effective quantitative technique since it enables large-scale numerical data to be obtained over a short period of time (McLeish, 2009).

The students' questionnaire was designed to find out whether the 100 EFL learners give importance to cooperation and interaction that happen inside classrooms through practicing the language with group members. It also attempted to identify their attitudes towards using group work by their instructors. The questionnaire was adopted from Brown's (2008) questionnaire about *Collaborative Learning*. It consisted of 20 clear and easy statements. It indicated the students' opinions about using group work based on their perceived experiences while studying English at Sabratha University. All the items in the questionnaire were designed for a likert-scale response using a five rating scale ranging from *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree* (see appendix 1). The quantitative obtained data from the questionnaire will be analyzed by using Microsoft Office Excel and presented in tables.

### 3.4.2. Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was used in order to collect data about instructors' attitudes . A semi-structured interview consisted of a set of pre-prepared questions with an open ended format to encourage the interviewees to give more details on the issues under investigation (Dornyei, 2007). The purpose of using semi-structured interview in the study is to obtain in-depth information about the instructors' thoughts and beliefs about using group work activities and the challenges they might encounter during their classes. The interview consisted mainly of 8 open-ended questions in order to investigate the effectiveness of using group work from different perspectives.(see appendix 2). The gained data from the semi-structured interview will be transcribed and analyzed into themes.

### 3.5. Ethical Considerations

Prior to issuing questionnaires and conducting the interviews, participants were not asked to write their names in respect of their privacy and anonymity. The researcher told the participants that their participation is highly appreciated and significant for the integrity of the study. Therefore, their answers are kept confidential and are used only for the purpose of the study. In addition, the issue under investigation is not sensitive and the questionnaire statements and interview questions did not cause any physical or mental harm for the participants. This was stated by Dornyei (2007,p.67) "The primary principle of research ethics is that no mental or physical harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the investigation".

### 3.6. Pilot Study

Prior to conducting the main study, the researcher took steps to test the data collection tools. Pilot testing was used to identify if there were any misunderstanding,

ambiguities, unclear and useless questions. Kumar (2011) indicated that pre-testing the research instruments is important before the actual data collection since it is used to identify if there are problems in understanding and meaning of each question by the respondents. The researcher randomly selected 10 students to fill the questionnaire to see if the items are clear and easy to follow before it is actually used. 10 copies of the questionnaire were distributed for piloting the study and were analyzed (see appendix 3). Moreover, the researcher tried out the interview schedule by giving it to three university instructors in order to assess its quality and to see if this instrument is useful for collecting the data about the issue. No major issues were discovered and no changes were made to the research instruments.

### 3.7. Data Collection

Data collection refers to the process the instrument is used with the members of the population and the conditions under which measurements are taken such as, format, time, place and personnel who collected the data (Panter & Sterba, 2011). The first step that was taken by the researcher before collecting the main data was meeting the head of the English department to ask for their permission for conducting the study at Sabratha College of Arts and explained the purpose of the study. The process of data collection lasted for five days (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 9th,and 10th of May 2018).

### 3.7.1. Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was administrated to four groups ; a group from the first year, one from the second year, one from the third year and one from the fourth year gathered together, making up 100 students. The researcher asked some teaching staff members to give time at the end of their lectures to distribute the questionnaire. They welcomed the idea and that made it easier for the researcher in collecting the data. The administration of the questionnaire took nearly three days (1st,

$2^{nd}$, and $3^{rd}$ of May 2018). Before the distribution of the questionnaire, students were given identical instructions and background about the research study. They were told that their participation was really appreciated, and the answers they provided would remain completely confidential. The researcher was in touch with the students while completing the questionnaire in order to respond to any enquiries about the questionnaire items. Some students (first year students) were familiar with the topic and the items but they asked for more explanation in order to be sure of their understanding. Each group took nearly twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. All of the copies were completed and returned within the same day.  With what mentioned above, it can be said that, the questionnaire was administered in a friendly and a relaxed environment and in good conditions due to the help provided by the instructors.

### 3.7.2. Conducting the Instructors' Interviews

The interview was conducted with five English instructors in the Department of English at Sabratha University. The first step in conducting the interviews was contacting all the interviewees to arrange for the time that suits them. It was difficult to fit in the times that suit all the interviewees because they were busy with classes and preparing for final exams. Therefore, the interviews were held  in two days. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself to the interviewees in a friendly manner. Then, the interviewees were reminded with the topic and the aims of the study and were reassured that the data they would provide would be anonymous and would be dealt with confidentially. The interviewees were asked about their permission to record the interviews. All of them gave their consent to record the interviews. Each interview lasted from 8 to 10 minutes. All the interviewees were asked the same questions and some of them were encouraged to

provide more details and examples that reflect their actual experience of using group work.  At  the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the instructors for their participation , cooperation and valuable time.(see appendix 4)

**CHAPTER IV**

**RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

**4.0. Introduction**

This chapter aims at organizing, describing and analyzing the data to address the research questions (see 1.4). The data presented in this section was gathered through a survey questionnaire completed by a hundred Libyan EFL university students  studying at the Department of English, Sabratha University, and through semi-structured interviews conducted with five English instructors from department of English. The obtained data through the questionnaire were organized and presented in tables according to specific classification. Microsoft Excel was also used for analyzing the quantitative data. In addition, the presentation of the interview data was based on themes with reference to the interview questions.

**4.1. Students' Responses to the Questionnaire Statements**

**Table1: Questionnaire Items**

| No. | Working in pairs and groups | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Helps understanding/comprehension | 32% | 48% | 18% | 0% | 2% |
| 2 | Fosters exchange of knowledge, information and experience | 18% | 54% | 23% | 0% | 5% |
| 3 | Makes problem-solving easier | 16% | 39% | 32% | 7% | 6% |
| 4 | Stimulates critical thinking | 14% | 42% | 36% | 1% | 7% |
| 5 | Provides  more relaxed atmosphere | 21% | 43% | 25% | 3% | 8% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Receives useful/helpful feedback | 29% | 41% | 19% | 3% | 8% |
| 7 | Gets fresh insights | 23% | 40% | 34% | 0% | 3% |
| 8 | Focuses on collective efforts rather than individual effort | 25% | 42% | 23% | 4% | 6% |
| 9 | Entails greater responsibility – for myself and the group | 16% | 49% | 29% | 4% | 2% |
| 10 | Enables learners to help weaker learners in the group | 32% | 40% | 18% | 6% | 4% |
| 11 | Enhances communication skills | 33% | 36% | 20% | 5% | 6% |
| 12 | Improves performance | 28% | 37% | 27% | 3% | 5% |
| 13 | Causes learners to actively participate in the teaching/learning process | 24% | 46% | 24% | 2% | 4% |
| 14 | Is fun | 36% | 39% | 16% | 2% | 7% |
| 15 | Makes new friends | 29% | 47% | 21% | 3% | 0% |
| 16 | Fosters team spirit | 15% | 40% | 39% | 3% | 3% |
| 17 | Is a waste of time regarding explaining things to others | 12% | 20% | 22% | 20% | 26% |
| 18 | Is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks | 13% | 28% | 26% | 14% | 19% |
| 19 | (Pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued | 27% | 42% | 19% | 7% | 5% |
| 20 | Works best when maximum group size was four | 25% | 40% | 26% | 5% | 4% |

The above twenty items were analyzed as shown in (Table 1). Also, the responses were merged into three: 'strongly agree' and 'agree' for agree responses, and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' for disagree responses, and 'neutral' refers to the participants' uncertainty about the statement.

**Table2: Combined Students' Responses**

| No. | Working in pairs and groups | Agree responses | Neutral responses | Disagree responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Helps understanding/comprehension | 80% | 18% | 2% |
| 2 | Fosters exchange of knowledge, information and experience | 72% | 23% | 5% |
| 3 | Makes problem-solving easier | 55% | 32% | 13% |
| 4 | Stimulates critical thinking | 56% | 36% | 8% |
| 5 | Provides more relaxed atmosphere | 64% | 25% | 11% |
| 6 | Receives useful/helpful feedback | 70% | 19% | 11% |
| 7 | Gets fresh insights | 63% | 34% | 3% |
| 8 | Focuses on collective efforts rather than individual effort | 67% | 23% | 10% |
| 9 | Entails greater responsibility- for myself and the group | 65% | 29% | 6% |
| 10 | Enables learners to help weaker learners in the group | 72% | 18% | 10% |
| 11 | Enhances communication skills | 69% | 20% | 11% |
| 12 | Improves performance | 65% | 27% | 8% |
| 13 | Causes learners to actively participate in the teaching/learning process | 70% | 24% | 6% |
| 14 | Is fun | 75% | 16% | 9% |
| 15 | Makes new friends | 76% | 21% | 3% |
| 16 | Fosters team spirit | 55% | 39% | 6% |
| 17 | Is a waste of time regarding explaining thing to others | 32% | 22% | 46% |
| 18 | Is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks | 41% | 26% | 33% |

| 19 | (pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued | 69% | 19% | 12% |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 20 | Works best when maximum group size was four | 65% | 26% | 9% |

The results shown in table 1 and 2 revealed that most of the participants (80%) agreed that group work helps in understanding and comprehension, 18% were not certain about this idea. Only 2% did not agree about this statement.72% of the students agreed that group work fosters exchange of knowledge, information and experience, whereas 23% were not sure about this issue and 5% disagreed about this issue. 55% of the respondents believed that group work makes problem-solving easier, while 32% were not sure and 13% disagreed about this notion. In addition, 56% of the participants thought that working in groups stimulates critical thinking. However, 36% of them were not sure and 8% did not agree about this issue. 64% of the respondents agreed that group work provides more relaxed atmosphere, whereas 25% were not certain and 11% disagreed about this statement. 70% of the students believed that group work provides them with useful and helpful feedback, while 19% were not sure about this idea. Only 11% did not agree on this issue. 63% of the respondents were positive about getting fresh insights when working in groups, but 34% were neutral and 3% did not believe so. 67% of them thought that group work focuses on collective efforts rather than individual efforts, whereas 23% of them were not sure and 10% were not positive about this notion. Similarly, 65% of the participants agreed that working in groups entail greater responsibility for all of the group members, while 29% were not certain. Only 6% did not agree about this idea. Moreover, 72% of students believed that group work enables learners to help weaker ones in the group, whereas 18% of them were not sure and 10% did not believe so.

The data showed that 69% of the students thought that working in groups enhances communication skills. In the contrary, 20% of them were not certain and 11% disagreed about this statement. 65% of students were positive about improving their performance when working in groups, but 27% were not sure about this issue. Only 8% of them did not agree about this idea.70% of the respondents thought that group work causes learners to actively participate in the teaching and learning process, whereas 24% of them were not certain about this notion. Only 6% of them believed the opposite. Furthermore, 75% of the participants agreed that working in groups is fun, whereas 16% of them were not sure and 9% did not believe so. Similarly, 76% of the students were positive about making new friends when working in groups, while 21% of them were not certain about this issue. Only 3% of them disagreed about this statement. 55% of the students thought that group work fosters team spirit, whereas 39% of them were not sure about this notion and 6% did not believe so. The data showed that 32% of the respondents agreed that working in groups is a waste of time regarding explaining things to others, but 22% of them were not sure and 46% of them were not positive about this issue. 41% of the participants agreed that group work is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks, while 26% of them were not sure and 33% were not positive about this idea. 69% of the students believed that (pair/group work) should be encouraged, whereas 19% of them were not certain and 12% disagreed about this statement. 65% of the respondents agreed that they worked best when maximum group number was four, but 26% were not sure about this notion. Only 9% were not positive about this idea.

To clarity, Brown (2008) categorized the items of the questionnaire into four groups: academic benefits those that focus on students' performance and their understanding, social benefits focus on students' behaviors and relationships with each

other, generic learning skills which focus on students' thinking and communication while working in groups ,and negative aspects regarding time management and students' participation in collaborative learning.

Items number.  1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 are academic benefits .Items number. 5, 14, 15 are social benefits .3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 16 are generic skills . 17, 18 are negative aspects ,19, 20 are not included in this classification.
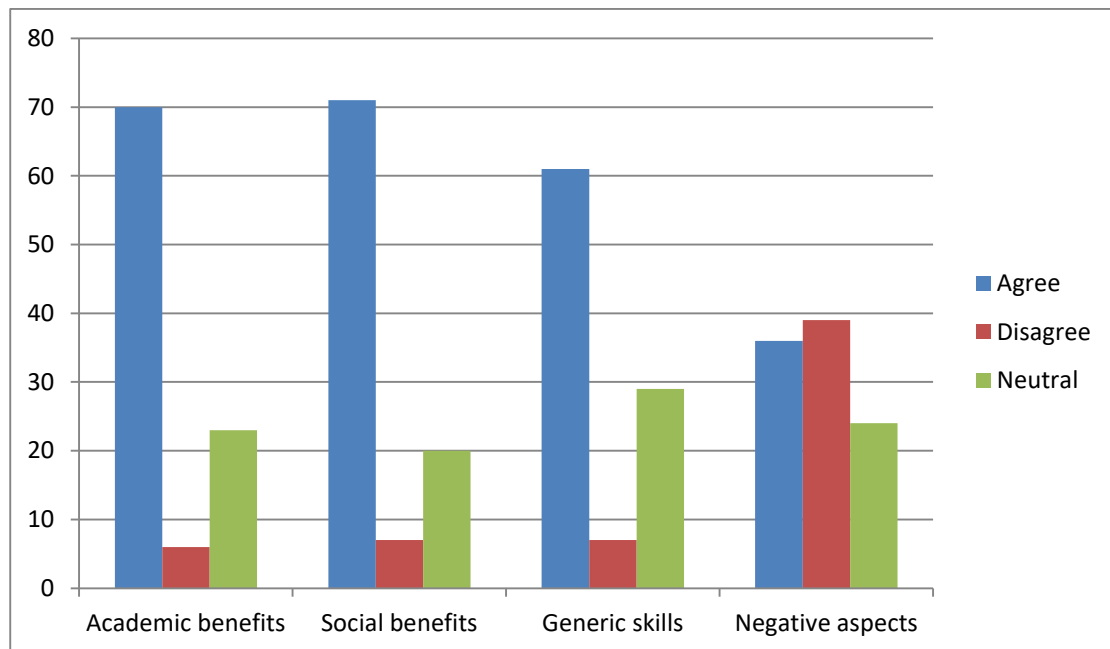


**Figure.1: Responses' Percentage Categories**

From the analysis of the obtained data from the questionnaire, it can be seen that most students (70%) agreed that group work has academic benefits. Similarly, (72%) of the respondents believed that group work has social benefits. Moreover, 61% of the participants agreed that group work enables students acquire generic skills. 36% of the students agreed regarding the negative aspects of group work, but 39% of them were not positive about this issue.

**4.2. Instructors' Interview**

The presentation of the data in the following section based on themes generated from interviewees' responses to the interview questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis is flexible, useful for summarizing key features and highlights the similarities and differences across the obtained data. The researcher developed the conceptions of using group work by the participants in the language classroom by bringing quotations in relation to each category. Furthermore, the instructors' transcriptions were labeled as (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5). Therefore, the following subsections present and explain the themes emerged from analyzing the instructors' interviews.

**4.2.1. Improving Students' Speaking Proficiency**

Four instructors indicated that group work improves students' speaking proficiency. They believe that students are more comfortable and confident when speaking to their colleagues as this could help them to improve their language. For example, T4 explained that *" it is always good to use group work in speaking classroom in a way that students get chance to compare their ideas , share their information and listen to their classmates speaking to them and speaking to their classmates"*. T2 stated "*group work can play an important role in doing this,, for example weak students when they participate with good students they can make use of their vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation and body use in their speaking*". The teachers believed that the major advantage of this technique was motivating students to develop their speaking, listening, vocabulary and pronunciation at the same time.

In contrast, T3 stated "*working in groups improves students speaking proficiency to some extent, because it does not give a good chance for shy students to participate and speak as it is only for good students ,, those who have the ability to*

*speak and express themselves freely most of the time*". Therefore, shy students should be taken into consideration when designing group work activities.

### 4.2.2. Enhancing Relationships among Students

All the participants agreed that group work enhances the relationships among students in English classroom. For instance, T3 stated that

> *Working in groups is very perfect in improving students relationships because they are working in mixed groups and they learn each other names , and know about each other interests. So it breaks the ice at first and then it strength the relationship between them,,, it makes them deal with each other as one family*

T4 added " *students will be developing a kind of friendship in relation to their classmates. If it is a game or competition they will start developing their relationship of being one team, supporting and scaffolding weak students*". Therefore, having a kind of friendship among group members can lead to a higher and stronger performance.

T1 said *" I agree that group work enhances students relationships as long as there is no personal conflicts or disagreements between the students*" T1 explained that there are some female students who disagree to work with other male students which due to some society issues or with other female students because they do not get on with each other.

### 4.2.3. Motivating Shy Students

Four instructors agreed that group work motivates shy students to speak and participate. T2 explained that "*some students may feel shy to speak in front of the teacher, so when they work in group they might get that confident and start speaking freely*". T3 indicated that "*when shy students work individually they are not motivated to speak and express themselves in class*". T4 added "*when students work in small*

*groups and the teacher is away from them, you can listen to those shy students say their opinions freely, so it develops their communication skills*".

They thought that group work can shed the light on those introverted students. Since the situation is no longer teacher-centered, students can help, cooperate and motivate each other.

### 4.2.4. Group Composition

Three instructors indicated that dividing groups plays an important role in using group work technique. T1 said "*if the teacher divides the groups and chooses a very good student to be the leader this might help the group to speak English, but if the choice is with students, probably weak students will choose each other and start chatting in Arabic*". T1 believed that teachers have to form groups rather than letting the chance for students. T2 stated "*changing the group members of each group after two or three lectures will enhance the relationship between class members*". T3 added

> *Dividing students into groups depends on two different strategies. Dividing them according to same ability students; A together, B together and C together. As this might have a negative aspect towards students. The solution for this is letting group A and helping B and motivating group C and giving them some ideas. The other way is mixed ability groups. It also has a problem which is within the group members as weak students might feel that they are behind the back of the A students. So the teacher needs to move around and pay attention to those passive students.*

It can be seen that most of the instructors believe that it is their job to divide groups depending on different strategies.

**4.2.5. Group Work Negative Effects on Students' Learning**

Four instructors illustrated that group work has some negative effects on students' learning in spite of its effectiveness. T2 said that "*I strongly recommend using group work not only in speaking classes but in any subject, because if the teacher do it perfectly this might not have a negative aspect*". In the contrary, T4 explained that "*in some groups, there will be a student who dominates the group and wants to control the discussion.*" T4 added " *in some cases, when it is a game more able students do not really pay attention to weak students, they just want to win*". T5 stated that "*not all students will be able to receive corrective feedback*". T1said that "*if you say let's do this activity and you have to work in groups, at least one or two groups will start chatting in Arabic in a way that you cannot hear them and when you come near them they start pretending that they are speaking in English. So you might lose time thinking that you are doing good but you are not*". Having one student dominating the group and not paying attention to weak students, chatting in Arabic and not receiving corrective feedback can affect negatively on students while working in groups.

**4.2.6. Cooperative Speaking Activities**

All of the instructors stated that they use some cooperative activities in their speaking classes depending on the outcomes of the lesson plan. Three of them said that the main activity that they use is role-play**.** Two instructors explained that they use mingling activity when students stand up and move around the class and speak to each other. The other activities that the instructors had mentioned that they use in their classes are repetition of certain phrases, acting , vocabulary games, debates, group presentations, jigsaw activity and talking circles or lines where students stand in circles or lines and start asking questions for each other. For instance, T4 explained

"*games and lots and lots of games for example vocabulary games where students learn through fun, sometimes students do debates , presentations and role playing: those kind of activities where they need to create things*"

### 4.2.7. Challenges faced instructors in Using Group Work

All the instructors agreed that they faced some challenges when using group work. T3 stated that "*there is no challenge if the students are familiar with group work , but teaching students for the first time who are not aware of the instructions might face some problems*". T2 said that "*weak students might refuse to speak, especially when they work with very good students, that make them feel that he/she can not cooperate with them*". T5 explained that "*the teacher can not monitor all groups at once. It is difficult to control the time and the noise and make sure that students are working on the task not something else*". T4 added " *one major challenge is where should I stand when students work in groups, because sometimes you need to go to the groups and try to divide the roles between students and give some balance of speaking*". Dividing students' roles in groups, controlling time and noise, encouraging students and monitoring their performance are challenges that instructors might face when using group work.

### 4.3. Summary of Results

- Both instructors and students agreed that group work helps students to share their information and compare their ideas.
- Both instructors and students indicated that working in groups develops the relationship of being one team among students by supporting each other and help weak students and might help them to make new friends.

- Both instructors and students had positive views about enhancing communication skills when working in groups, because students have the opportunity to communicate and share their opinions with other members.

- Students had positive views that working in groups entail greater responsibility for every member of the group as it focuses on collective efforts rather than individual efforts.

- Students believed that group work grounds them to actively participate in the teaching and learning process and help them to improve their understanding to overcome issues.

- Generally, Instructors believed that group work gives the chance for shy students to speak and express themselves freely in class as they will not speak immediately with their teacher.

- Instructors believed that division of groups plays an essential role in good group work activity since it affects positively or negatively on students performance depending on both level and personality of group members.

- Instructors stated that they faced some challenges when working in groups such as dividing students' roles in group activity and monitoring their performance, controlling time and noise and students' use of native language.

# CHAPTER V

## DISSCUSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of this study. Moreover, conclusion, limitations of the study and recommendations and possible opportunities for further research study were provided.

### 5.1. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions (see 1.4). In an attempt to assess the implications of the results and make conclusion, the discussions are linked with the background of the theoretical framework and the review of literature.

### 5.1.1. Students' Attitudes Towards Using Group Work

This study focuses on investigating the attitudes of Libyan EFL university instructors and students towards using group work. The findings of the study revealed positive outcomes in terms of using group work as a teaching and learning technique. The results indicated that group work helps students in understanding and exchanging their knowledge and experiences with their group members. This idea was emphasized by Cohen's (1994,p.1) statement in the literature review chapter which indicates "different members of a group bring different knowledge to the gathering". The participants were positive about using group work for solving problems during

group work activity, this conforms with the belief in the literature about the great help of group work in making problem solving easier and faster (Beebe & Masterson, 2003). This explains that group work helps the students to cooperate in solving any problem that faces the group. In addition, Totten et al., (1991) illustrated that working in groups makes learners become more responsible for their learning and develop critical thinking skills (see 2.4.1.4).

25% of the students were not sure about the idea that group work could provide a more relaxed atmosphere. They might believe that group work does not make them feel comfortable and participate freely in language classroom. They might also believe that working and sharing the same activities with others could make them confused and feel bored. This contradicts with the results of a study done by Rahaman (2014) who believes that learners feel more comfort and enthusiastic by doing group work activities (see 2.5).

Moreover, the findings revealed that students can be effectively engaged in the learning tasks and more focused on collective efforts. This belief was supported by some researchers, Gross (1993) students learn best when they are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning. Group work emphasizes that the whole group behavior is more important than its individual parts (Ibtissem, 2013). Therefore, the evaluation of the group work is focused on the whole members and how each member helps in doing the required job. Group work enables weak students to watch and learn from higher-level students and improve their performance. This matches with the belief of Nihalani et al.,(2010) in the literature (see 2.4.1.1).

Furthermore, the findings showed 69% of the students agreed that group work enhances communication skills. This could be attributed to the students' need to

communicate in order to achieve their assignments. Ibtissem (2013) shared the same belief about using cooperative group work technique on improving students' speaking and communication skills (see 2.3).

The students were positive about the impact of group work for making new friends. This confirms that group work makes students work with people whom they might not know. Therefore, this could lead to make relationships with them and they might become friends. This result corresponded with Hendry & Davy's (2005) belief (see 2.4.1.1).

### 5.1.2.Instructors' Attitudes Towards Using Group Work

Most of the interviewed instructors hold positive attitudes towards using group work. They indicated that students can improve their speaking proficiency when working in groups as they get the chance to share ideas and introduce new information. Students can also enrich their vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency while speaking to their classmates. Many researchers indicated the same idea, Jiang (2009) stated that group work serves as an alternative way of teaching for promoting speaking and social interaction among students. Cooperative learning is of great effect on developing students' speaking skills (Pattanpichet, 2011). Moreover, MacGregor (1990) indicated that, over time, by successive conversations, and by ever-changing social and political environments knowledge is shaped.

The relationships among students can be enhanced by using group work. The participated instructors were positive about this notion, as they stated that students develop a kind of friendship and start supporting each other. This supports the claim of Hanham and McCormick (2009); Chung (2015) who said that collaboration between friends is reported to be more productive than collaboration between non-

friends, because friends know each other's similarities and differences, understand and motivate each other better and feel more secure in working with one another.

Furthermore, the participated instructors agreed that using group work helps in motivating shy students. As they believed that shy students can speak and express themselves freely with their classmates. Some scholars shared the same belief (Richards and Rodgers ,2001) pointed out that collaborative learning improves learner motivation and reduce learner stress and create a positive affective classroom climate. Group work helps students to reduce anxiety when they are private than when they are shown in front of the whole class. It can also help shy students, who would never say anything in a whole class activity, to gain more confidence in their learning (Jayanth & Soundiraraj, 2016; Badache, 2011).

Group formation is one of the most important parts in designing group work activity. Instructors believe that there are different strategies for dividing groups. One of the instructors said that groups can be divided according to same or mixed level. However, this makes instructors to pay more attention and motivation for those passive students. This notion is consistent with Albaqshi's (2016) view who indicates that formation of groups requires some considerations (see 2.5).

In spite of the benefits of group work, some negative effects can discourage instructors from using it. For instance,  there is sometimes a member in the group who wants to control the group. For instance, Nihalani et al., (2010) reached to a similar conclusion, when one group member dominates the group, the group performance reflects the groups' member level instead of the whole group together. Using  the Arabic language while working in groups is one of the disadvantages that most instructors were sure about it. This conforms with a study done by Jiang (2009) who pointed out that in an EFL context, students might prefer using their native language,

since it is easier for communication. It can also be argued that students may not get feedback on their errors (see 2.4.1.5).

### 5.1.3.Challenges of Implementing Group Work

The participant instructors indicated that they might face some challenges when students work in groups. For example, instructors cannot monitor all the groups at once, they cannot control the time and noise. The time is one of the obstacles as many instructors complain that group work is time consuming (Beebe and Masterson, 2003; Mohammed, 2016). In addition, noise is one of the outstanding disadvantages that discourage many instructors from using group work. The researcher indicates that instructors can overcome these difficulties by designing good lesson plans, designing group work into the course syllabus, using effective techniques for forming groups and evaluating the students. Therefore, the instructors can manage their class time. They need also to grasp the students attention by giving clear instructions and keep constant observation over groups to reduce the amount of noise and conflicts.

The analyzed data revealed that the instructors pointed out that dividing the work between group members and dealing with different personalities inside groups is a challenge. They clarified that it is not easy to deal with dominating students who want to control the group. Furthermore, having members who do not want to cooperate with others and let others do all the work for them is a problem. This is consistent with Frost's (2019) findings who anticipated some challenges of implementing group work (see 2.4.1.6). Burke (2011) suggested a method to help groups succeed which is devising a plan of action. It involves assigning roles and responsibilities among the group members. Therefore, each member have a role, such as the note taker or the group spokesman.

Instructors added that students may tend to use their mother tongue for communicating in groups. They also believed that it is difficult for students to get corrective feedback on their work. This supports the views of Kasim (2015) who reported that the use of the students' native language and the reinforcement of the students errors are regarded to be major problems of group work. Instructors showed that it is difficult to make sure if the students are working on a task rather than something else. This conformed with Othman and Murad's (2015) findings which showed some negative attitudes of students regarding group work (see 2.5). Instructors can overcome these problems of assessment by designing a grading rubric. It should focus on students' participation, time management skills, active listening and engagement with tasks (Burke, 2011).

From the previous discussions, it can be seen that about 70% of the respondents hold positive attitudes towards group work. For instance, both students and instructors agreed that speaking and communication skills can be developed through group work activities. It enhances the relationships among students and motivates shy students to actively engage in the class. However, there are some challenges that might hinder using group work such as using native language, not receiving corrective feedback and one student dominates the group. Therefore, instructors play a big role in controlling the groups and dividing the roles inside each group, in order to work more effectively.

## 5.2. Conclusion

The use of group work in classroom activities has shown its usefulness in learning English. Group work creates a positive learning environment for students to practice English language. It improves students' achievements, increases their relationships, enhances their understanding and develops their communication skills.

Moreover, group work offers opportunity for students to use authentic language in order to perform communicative tasks more effectively. These benefits of group work help EFL learners improve efficiency in their language learning, and draw the instructors' attention towards using it as an effective instructional method.

The participants of this study were generally positive about using group work in teaching and learning English. The analysis of students' questionnaire showed that the majority of students have positive attitudes towards group work. Students indicated that group work facilitates the acquisition of academic, social and generic skills. Furthermore, regarding the instructors' responses, group work can improve speaking proficiency, enhance relationships among students and motivate shy students to speak and express freely. However, there are some negative effect on students' learning that might hinder the process of learning such as using native language and not receiving corrective feedback. Instructors also might face some challenges when implementing group work such as controlling time and noise and monitoring students' performance. Therefore, it is the role of the instructors to improve certain aspects of group work practice to make it more enjoyable and interesting.

## 5.3. Limitations of the Study

The study involved a small number of participants which can be a barrier for generalizing the findings of the study. However, this was not possible due to some difficulties of time and effort. A classroom observation could be employed for data collection. Nevertheless, the researcher was interested in investigating instructors' and students' attitudes through their previous experiences of implementing this technique.

## 5.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and reached conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Instructors can prepare language activities that may enable students to work in groups during lessons, as a result students may be able to learn, practice and use English in a comfortable atmosphere.

- Students should take into their consideration the usefulness of group work, since it urges them to use the target language, develop their communication skills and improve their performance.

- Group work should be taken into account while designing English language curricula due to its essential role in motivating the students to get involved in the learning process.

- Both EFL instructors and learners should be provided with training sessions on how to teach and learn through using group work.

## 5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

- Further studies could be done to investigate the effect of group work on improving EFL university students' academic achievement.

- A study investigating some factors such as, the effect of group characteristics on the performance of the students, it is an interesting issue for further research, as through this investigation, it could be possible to provide some additional insights on the use of group work technique.

- Experimental approaches could be utilized to assess the effectiveness of implementing group work for various subject areas within the Libyan context.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire**

I am Hana Abdullah Algarady. I am conducting a research about " *An Investigation into some Libyan EFL University Instructors and Students' Attitudes Towards Using Group Work*". I would be very grateful if you take part in this study by completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be used for the purpose of this research and will be kept confidentially.

Please use a tick(√ ) to indicate your choice

| No. | Working in pairs and groups | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | Disagree |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|-------------------|----------|
| 1 | Helps understanding/comprehension | | | | | |
| 2 | Fosters exchange of knowledge, information and experience | | | | | |
| 3 | Makes problem-solving easier | | | | | |
| 4 | Stimulates critical thinking | | | | | |
| 5 | Provides more relaxed atmosphere | | | | | |
| 6 | Receives useful/helpful feedback | | | | | |
| 7 | Gets fresh insights | | | | | |
| 8 | Focuses on collective efforts rather than individual effort | | | | | |
| 9 | Entails greater responsibility – for myself and the group | | | | | |
| 10 | Enables learners to help weaker learners in the group | | | | | |
| 11 | Enhances communication skills | | | | | |
| 12 | Improves performance | | | | | |
| 13 | Causes learners to actively participate in the teaching/learning process | | | | | |
| 14 | Is fun | | | | | |
| 15 | Makes new friends | | | | | |
| 16 | Fosters team spirit | | | | | |
| 17 | Is a waste of time regarding explaining things to others | | | | | |
| 18 | Is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks | | | | | |
| 19 | (Pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued | | | | | |
| 20 | Work best when maximum group size was four | | | | | |

*Thanks for your cooperation*

**Appendix 2: Interview Schedule**

An interview schedule was developed in order to guide the interview. It was designed in relation to the research aims and to explain the instructors' attitudes, the following are the interview questions:

1- First of all, how familiar you are with group work activities?

2- How can group work activities improve students' speaking proficiency?

3- How can working in groups enhance relationships among students?

4- How can group work enhance students' communication skills?

5- Have you noticed any improvement in students' performance through working in groups? Explain?

6- Do you think that group work has some negative effects towards students? If yes, how?

7- What are the main activities that you use during the speaking classes?

8- What are the main challenges that you encounter in using group work?

## Appendix 3: Pilot Study

10 copies of the questionnaire were distributed for piloting the study. The following

are the results.

## Students' Questionnaire

| No. | Working in pairs and groups | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Help understanding/comprehension | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Foster exchange of knowledge, information and experience | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | Make problem-solving easier | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | Stimulate critical thinking | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | Provide more relaxed atmosphere | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 6 | Receive useful/helpful feedback | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | Get fresh insights | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Focus on collective efforts rather than individual effort | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 | Entail greater responsibility – for myself and the group | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Enable learners to help weaker learners in the group | 3 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 11 | Enhance communication skills | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Improve performance | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | Cause learners to actively participate in the teaching/learning process | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | Is fun | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 15 | Make new friends | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 | Foster team spirit | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | Is a waste of time regarding explaining things to others | 1 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 19 | (Pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | Work best when maximum group size was four | 1 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 |

**Table 1:Questionnaire Items**

The above twenty items were analyzed as shown in (Table 1). Also, the responses were merged into three: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and strongly disagree and disagree for disagree responses, and neutral refers to the participants' uncertainty about the statement.

| | Agree responses | Neutral responses | Disagree responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8(80%) | 0 | 2(20%) |
| 2 | 8(80%) | 0 | 2(20%0 |
| 3 | 4(40%) | 5(50%) | 1(10% |
| 4 | 7(70%) | 2(20%) | 1(10%) |
| 5 | 4(40%) | 5(50%) | 1(10%) |
| 6 | 8(80%) | 2(20%) | 0 |
| 7 | 6(60%) | 4(40%) | 0 |
| 8 | 7(70%) | 1(10%) | 2(20%) |
| 9 | 7(70%) | 3(30%) | 0 |
| 10 | 8(80%) | 0 | 2(20%) |
| 11 | 9(90%) | 1(10%) | 0 |
| 12 | 6(60%) | 4(40%) | 0 |
| 13 | 9(90%) | 1(10%) | 0 |
| 14 | 6(60%) | 1(10%) | 3(30%) |
| 15 | 6(60%) | 2(20%0 | 2(20%) |
| 16 | 7(70%) | 2(20%0 | 1(10%) |
| 17 | 4(40%) | 0 | 6(60%) |
| 18 | 4(40%) | 2(20%) | 4(40%) |

| 19 | 9(90%) | 1(10%) | 0 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 20 | 6(60%) | 2(20%) | 2(20%) |

**Table 2: Combined Students' Responses**

From the results obtained as shown in (Table 1 & Table 2) it can be seen that most of the participants (80%) agreed that group work helps in understanding and comprehension and fosters exchange of knowledge, information and experience. Only 40% of the participants agreed that group work makes problem-solving easier and 50% were not sure about this issue. 70% of the respondents believed that working in groups stimulate critical thinking. 40% of the students thought that group work provides more relaxed atmosphere, but 50% were not sure about this notion. 80% of the participants thought that working in groups provide them with useful and helpful feedback. 60% were positive about getting fresh insights when working in groups, but 40% were neutral about this issue. 70% of the students believed that group work focses on collective efforts rather than individual effort. Similarly, 70% agreed that working in groups entail greater responsibility for all of the group members. Surprisingly, 30% were not sure about this notion. 80% of the participants thought that group work enables learners to help weaker learners in the group. 90% agreed that group work enhances communication skills. 60% of the respondents believed that they improve their performance when they work in groups. However, 40% were not sure about this issue. In addition, 90% of the participants thought that working in groups cause learners to actively participate in the teaching/learning process. 60% agreed that group work is fun. Whereas, 30% of them were not positive about this issue. Similarly, 60% of the respondents believed that working in groups make new friends. 70% of the students agreed that group work fosters team spirit. 60% did not agree that group work is a waste of time regarding explaining things to others, while

40% of them were positive about this notion. 40% of the students agreed that working in groups is difficult regarding getting members to actively participate in tasks and 40% of them were not positive about this issue. 90% believed that group work should be encouraged and continued. 60% thought that groups work best when maximum group size is four.

For clarity of analysis , Brown (2008) categorized the items in the questionnaire into four groups: academic benefits, social benefits, generic learning skills and negative aspects of collaborative learning.

Items no. 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 are academic benefits .Items no. 5, 14, 15 are social benefits .3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 16 are generic skills . 17, 18 are negative aspects ,19, 20 are not included.

**Table 3: Percentage Combined Students' Responses by Categories**

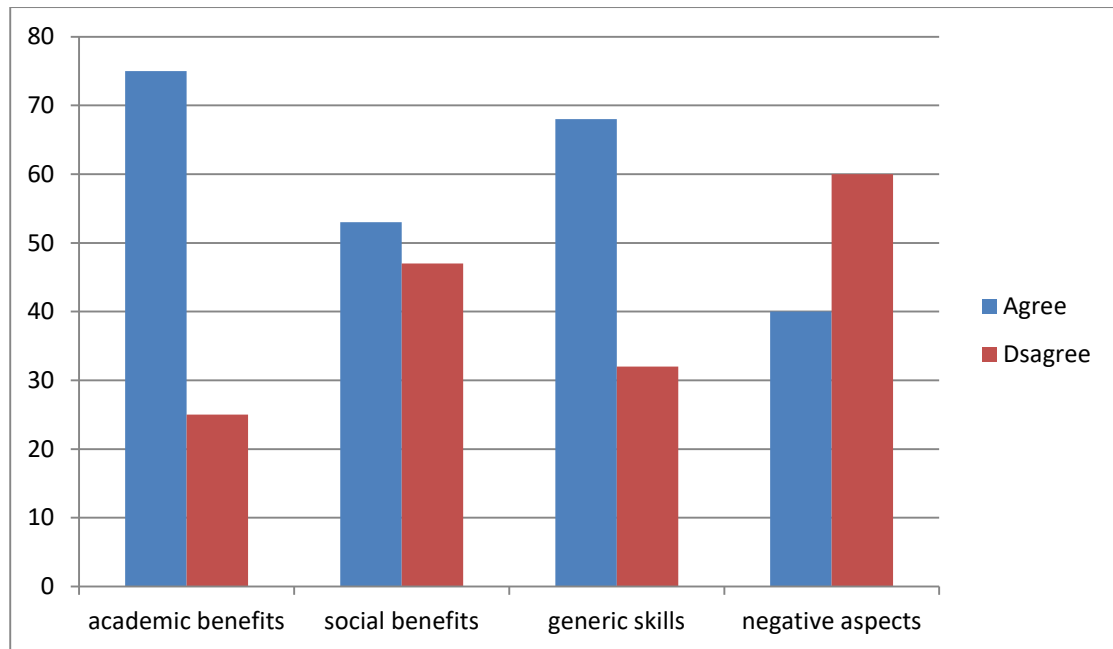| Category | Agree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|
| Academic benefits | 75% | 25% |
| Social benefits | 53% | 47% |
| Generic skills | 68% | 32% |
| Negative aspects | 40% | 25% |

**Figure 1: Agree and Disagree Responses by Categories in Percentage**

From the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire, it can be seen that most students (70%) agreed that group work has academic benefits. Only about half of the respondents (53%) believed that group work has social benefits. Moreover, 68% of the participants agreed that group work enables students acquire generic skills. 60% of the students disagreed regarding the negative aspects of group work.

**Appendix 4: Sample of Interview Transcript**

**1-Interviewer: First of all, how familiar you are with group work activities?**

**Interviewee:** Amm..Well, I've been working about group work activities for more than five years and I use them in all my classes. Actually, it is like the main strategy in my lectures.

**2-Interviewer: How can group work activities improve students' speaking proficiency?**

**Interviewee:** Well, I think working in groups doesn't really improve students' speaking proficiency. It does actually, but to some extent. **Why?** Because it doesn't give a good chance for Ss to participate and speak. It is only for A students ; those who have the majority to speak,, like most of the time they speak and express themselves freely more than those shy students.

**3-Interviewer: How can working in groups enhance relationships among students?**

**Interviewee:** I think working in groups is very perfect in improving students relationships because they are working in mixed groups and the learn each other names, and the know about each other interests. So it kind breaks the ice at the first and then it strength the relationship. Ah… it makes them to deal with each other as one family.

**4-Interviewer: How can group work enhance students' communication skills?**

**Interviewee:** Well, I think it enhances their communication skills. **Explain?** Amm… because like when they have time to think about an activity, they think about it individually and then they pair when they work in twos and then they share among the group. So this is a very good opportunity for them to communicate. So here they listen to each other and the speak…so it is like we have those skills while the are doing their activities.

**5-Interviewer: Have you noticed any improvement in students' performance through working in groups?**

**Interviewee:** yes, to some extent. **Explain how ?** Because it gives a chance for shy students to participate…because shy students when they work individually they're not motivated to speak and express themselves in class. So when they work in groups we can shed the light only on one or two students. Sometimes other students motivate those shy students like come on it s your time now you can speak , you can participate. It gives them a door or opportunity to go ahead and speak. It is a very effective way for this hind of students. Also, it is good for introverted students, by time and from my experience they become an extroverted students, they're no more shy, they have self-esteem and self-confident, they feel like they are safe. They are working in a very safe environment, because when it is teacher-centered the situation is different like teacher asks and student answers but when they work in a group, they help, cooperate and motivate each other.

**6-Interviewer: Do you think that group work has some negative effects towards students?**

**Interviewee:** yes, **How?** dividing the students into groups depends on two different strategies. If you as a teacher divides them according to the same ability like As students together Bs together and Cs who work less together. This has negative aspects, A students get the answer and the others are less confident as A students. The solution for this; if you want your students to work with the same ability let them as A, B , C and try to help B once and a while, you can motivate C and give them some ideas. If it is for a mixed ability group they can do well, but the problem is within the group. Because shy students feel that they are behind the back of the A students. The negative aspect here is that the teacher need to keep moving around those groups and paying attention to those shy and passive students and motivate them.

**7-Interviewer: What are the main activities that you use during the speaking classes?**

**Interviewee:** Mingling activity, when students stand up , talk randomly and move and speak to each other. Talking circles, inner circle and outer circle, you give them a specific task and limited time and when you want them to move you just clap and you want them to stop you say stop. Actually the outer circle is the one which keeps moving around. Talking lines, where they stand in a line; line A and line B, this time A asks B or B asks. Also, you can use posters on the walls. You have two group, you can give a chance to one student to the word , sentence or expression and then try to draw it on the post and his group try to say the right expression and then we see the winner.

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**8-Interviewer: What are the main challenges that you encounter in using group work?**

**Interviewee:** there is no challenge if the students know the rules, the classroom instructions and when, why and how they have to work as a group and what are their main tasks to do. But teaching students for the first time that they are not aware of working as group .This will be new for them, when dividing them a little bit noise at the beginning then you need to control them, repeat the instructions once and a while and remind them. One more challenge is when they have group assignment, passive students depend on active students to do the assignment during the year.