

Assessing Practice and Challenges of Group Work in English Speaking Classroom in Dawro Zone: In the Case of Dali Secondary School

Abraham Bulcha Gamu

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Wolaita Sodo University, Dawro Tarcha Campus, Tarcha, Ethiopia

Email address:

abraham.gamu@gmail.com

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Abstract: The English language plays significant roles in various fields. This study was conducted in Dawro Zone Southwest Ethiopia with assessing the practice and challenges of group work in English-speaking classrooms in Dawro Zone with particular reference to Dali Secondary School. The school was selected through purposive sampling technique. To achieve the purpose of this study, a descriptive research design was employed. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to report the findings of the study. Similarly, grade 9 and 10 classes were selected through the purposive sampling method. Then, students were selected through simple random sampling of the lottery method, while English language teachers were chosen through comprehensive sampling technique. A total of 222 students and 3 English teachers were selected for this study. To gather relevant data for the study, open and close-ended questionnaires were prepared and used to collect primary data from the respondents. The findings of this study indicated that English teachers did not give clear instruction, motivate, encourage, and give their students appropriate speaking activities as well as they rarely use group work to teach English speaking which in turn impede the practice group work in English speaking classrooms. Moreover, the study reported that students lack confidence, worry to speak in the target language freely and to express their ideas in the language and the opportunity given them to practice English speaking in the group was insufficient and they frequently taught in the teacher-centered method. The suggested solutions were focused on allowing students to speak in class, providing necessary guidance along with immediate feedback for their students after speaking tasks, minimizing students' nervousness by advising students not to fear of any mistakes since mistakes are learning opportunities, supplying of necessary authentic materials, allocating sufficient time for speaking activities, helping their students overcome shyness by having friendly, helpful and cooperative behaviors to make students feel comfortable when speaking in the class.

Keywords: Challenges, Speaking, Group Work, Dawro

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Internationally and nationally, English language plays significant roles in various fields like academic success, science innovation, business process, social interaction and for economic purposes. Similarly, it plays vital role in trading, every day activities, to travel abroad and means of gaining money [3, 31]. According to [22] these communicate language teaching approaches become widespread in

language teaching since its emergence in the 1970s, and to be proved as an effective strategy in foreign language. English language teaching method has its own strategy and techniques how to teach the English subject [29]. Among these, group work strategy is one of the most commonly used effective strategies of communicative way of teaching English as foreign language education.

According to [32], group work as a communicative language teaching strategy, which offers a safer environment for students to try out their speaking because fewer people hear them, but all students have opportunities to speak and

listen. This enables students to develop confidence in their speaking in English.

In addition, students get real opportunity to practice target language and it gives insight for teachers to design and implement any real communicative tasks which are critically any communicative tasks which are vitally important for EFL learners to experience meaningful language use [15]. In generally, these above arguments indicate that working in group allows learner to achieve good fluency, accuracy and ensure that all members participation or involvement in learning activities.

However, it is suggested as effective strategy in teaching EFL in general and speaking skill in particular, the teaching experience of the researcher showed that the practice of group work in English speaking till today challenged by different factors. Therefore, it is very important to investigate to what extent the group work strategy practiced and what factors challenge its practice in English speaking classroom at Dali Secondary School.

1.2. Statement of Problem

The goal of English language teaching is to allow students to communicate with the target language [28]. In connection to this, [16] stated that the main concern and objective of language teaching is to enable the students to develop their ability to use the language for variety of communication process. To address these students' communicative needs in a target language in Ethiopia, English is taught as subject starting from grade one up to university education and is also used as medium of instruction [23]. In communicative language teaching approach, different scholars invented different language teaching and learning methods and strategies like group work, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, community language learning and others in contrast to traditional teacher centered method [28].

In connection to this, [16] stated that group work activities have become one of key tools in communicative language teachers tool boxes because it provides opportunity for students to communicate and provides means of integrating all basic skills of language namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition to this, [9] noted that group work encourages students to share ideas, knowledge and enables them to explore the meaning of text, improves their participation and enhances their foreign language fluency. Furthermore, [26] proposed that group work is one of strategies of communicative language teaching which is applied to achieve modern language teaching goal.

Similarly, [14] stated that practicing speaking is the central part of English lesson and the extent to which students practice of speaking determine how far students develop their speaking skill. In line with this, [1] noted that the low communicative competence of students would be improved if learners learn through proper group work activities.

Gebrewahid. T., [12] has conducted a research on "Perception and roles of EFL students' in group work" and his study revealed that students have perception problems and they did not perform their expected roles in group work

activities. Furthermore, [13] has conducted research on "Assessment factors that affect students' participation of group in EFL classroom". His findings indicated that there were assessment factors that impede students' participation of group in EFL Classroom. But they have not said anything about the practice and challenges of group work in English speaking classroom.

Moreover, as far as reading of the researcher is concerned, no research has been conducted and in the research setting in particular. In addition to these, the researcher's experience and informal observation in teaching English, there might be many problems of practicing group work in English speaking classroom at Dali Secondary School. In casual observation of the researcher, however it is not empirical, it was witnessed that students face difficulties in expressing their idea in group work practice of English speaking in target language and teachers might not also been using group work to teach speaking. Therefore, the current study focuses on the practice and challenges of group work in English speaking classroom.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate the practice and challenges of group work in English speaking classroom in Dali Secondary School: grade nine and ten students and their teachers in focus.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- 1) To identify the opportunity given by English language teachers to practice speaking in group.
- 2) To explore the students practices of English speaking in group at Dali Secondary School.
- 3) To assess teachers related challenges that affect the teaching English speaking in group at Dali Secondary School.
- 4) To identify students related challenges that affect the learning English speaking in group at Dali Secondary School.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The finding of the study may create better awareness to teachers of English language to pay special attention for group work during English speaking classroom. It may be used to make useful practical contributions in anticipate the possible ways of addressing the existing main challenges with learning English speaking in group. Additionally, it may create the ways of upgrading the teaching and learning of English speaking in group and finally the study can serve as a spring-board for those who want to conduct further study on the related problems.

1.5. Scope of the Study

As it is clearly understood from a variety of literature review, there are different aspects of group work that can be seen from different angles in language classroom. But this

study was only delimited to explore the practice and challenges of group work in English speaking classroom at Dali Secondary School in 2012 E. academic year. In addition, the study was also delimited to only Dali Secondary School.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

The descriptive research design was used for this study. This is because descriptive research design attempts to describe, explain and interpret condition of present and helps the researcher to make investigation with narration of events and drawing of conclusion based the information obtained from sample of target population [17].

Therefore, mixed approaches of both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to validate each tool.

2.2. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were three English language teachers; all grade nine and ten students. However, for the manageability of the study 222 students were taken by slovin's formula of social science and 3 English language teachers were included as population of the study due to their small number.

2.3. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Slovin's formula of social science research was used to draw appropriate sample size of students to fill questionnaire, because Slovin's sample size determination formula is the fair way to select appropriate sample size without bias. On other hand, 3 English language teachers were selected through comprehensive sampling technique due to their small number. According to the data available, there were eight sections in the target school; four grade nine and four grade ten. The total numbers of students in grade nine are 245 and the total numbers of students in grade ten are 255 and the total numbers of students in focus school were 500. According to Slovin's formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$ where n =number of sample population, N =Total population=500 and e =error tolerance=0.05. Therefore, $500 / (1 + 500(0.05)^2) = 500 / 1.125 = 500 / 2.25 = 222$. This implies that the sample populations of students were 222. After determining total number of sample population through Slovin's formula, students in each section were selected by random sampling method. In each of section there were about 57-64 students.

2.4. Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, questionnaire was used. The researcher used both close ended and open ended items. Close ended items was offered for respondents as a set of alternatives to choose one of them to reflect their views whereas open ended items require the respondent to write their opinion.

Moreover, the researcher used semi-structured interview comprising eleven key open-ended questions to obtain relevant data from three English language teachers and to get

in depth response and more significant information about the study.

Furthermore, the researcher used non-participant classroom observation, structured observation check list to catch all accurate information. During classroom observation the researcher carefully observed every activity based on observation checklist.

2.5. Pilot Test

Pilot test was used to assess the quality of instruments in order to revise and improve every single aspect of it before the study [10]. To this end, the researcher conducted pilot study Ofa secondary school of Dawro Zone. The students' questionnaire was given to purposefully twelve students and they were carefully completed. Then, Cronbach alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the data and 0.82 of reliability result was obtained. Then, some questions were reshaped and five questions were deleted due to their redundancy. Finally, the questionnaire was approved and administered to sample population.

2.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative approach of data analysis was used in this study. The researcher quantitatively analyzed the data collected through close-ended part of questionnaire. The descriptive statistics mainly frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data. Frequency was used to show the number of respondents, while percentage was used the degree of respondents.

In addition, the data obtained through open-ended questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were analyzed qualitatively by using description and narration. Then, the discussion was made by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data.

3. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Data

3.1. Students' Response on Teachers' Practice of Group Work in English Speaking Classroom

Regarding the use of group work in English speaking classroom as shown in figure 1, 91 (41%) of students responded that their teachers use group work for teaching English speaking, whereas the majority of students i.e., 131 (59%) replied that their teachers do not use group work to teach English speaking. In addition, English teachers were interviewed whether they use group work in English speaking classroom or not. T1 and T2 forwarded almost similar ideas in their part. They replied that they sometimes use group work to teach English speaking. T1 forwarded his reason why he does not regularly use group work in English speaking. Finally, the researcher observed each class to check the information gained via the above tools. During observation it is witnessed that the group work was used rarely in English speaking classroom. The results of above

discussion indicate that group work was not adequately used in English speaking classroom. Regarding speaking opportunity given in foreign language, [30] stated that providing maximum opportunity to student to speak the

target language by providing a rich environment that contains group work, authentic materials and tasks (activities), reducing teachers' speaking time there by increasing student talking time and promote foreign language.

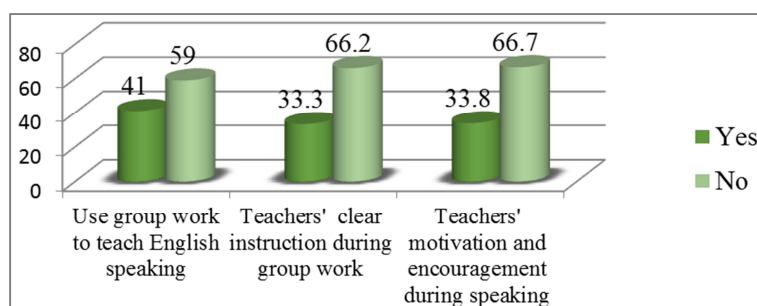


Figure 1. The practice of group work in EnglishSpeaking classroom.

As it can be seen in Figure 1 item 2, 74 (33.33%) of respondents replied that their teachers give them clear instruction and explanation about how to practice of speaking in group. But majority of students i.e., 148 (66.66%) responded that their teachers do not give them clear instruction to run group work activities of English speaking classroom. In line with this, teachers were interviewed whether they give clear instruction or not. In response, T1 and T2 said that they always give clear instruction in simple understandable words and even in their mother tongue when they teach English speaking in group. But another interviewee further explained the issue by saying "I sometimes gives them clear instruction because they are high school students".

Moreover, during the observation time, the researcher observed that the instruction given was not clear and was not understand by many students. Only a few active students were observed as they understand the instruction and do activities accordingly. In addition to this, most students did not able to start tasks immediately after their teacher told them what and how to do.

Concerning the motivating and encouraging students

during group work practice of speaking English, almost one-third of respondents i.e., 75 (33.4%) confirmed that their teachers motivate and encourage them by using different techniques, while 147 (66.7%) of students revealed that their teacher do not motivate and encourage them during group practice of speaking English by using different techniques. On other hand, teachers interviewed the same question reported that they sometimes motivate and encourage their students by using different oral appreciation techniques. Contrary to teachers' response during observation, the researcher has not seen that teachers motivating and encouraging their students through group work practice of speaking English.

Unlike above result, [21] noted that the motivation is the crucial force which determines whether learners actively engage in a task at all and how much energy he or she preserves. Furthermore, [20] state that motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue course of action. Similarly, [11] stated that more motivated students are more eager to engage in future communication when they have more opportunity to speak.

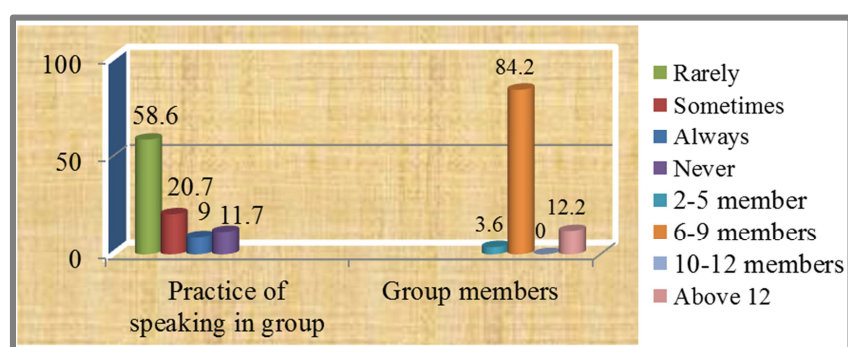


Figure 2. Practice of speaking in group and group members.

As presented in figure 2 of item 5, 20 (9%) students confirmed that they always practice speaking English in group, while 46 (20.7%) of sample students said that they sometimes practice speaking in group, but the large numbers of students accounting 130 (58.6%) replied that

they rarely practice speaking English in group. Opposing the majorities' idea, remaining 26 (11.7%) students replied that they never practice speaking in group. In line with the above finding, the interviewed English teachers reported that they rarely use group work to teach speaking English,

whereas few teachers replied that often use group work to teach speaking in group.

They reasoned out why they do not use group work regularly in English speaking classroom. Accordingly, they forwarded various factors that affect the use group work in English speaking classroom. Most English teachers frequently mentioned bulky contents of textbooks, lack of students' interest, students' reluctance to bring text book into classroom, large numbers of passive students and lack of training in CLT in general and group work in particular. The study conducted by [14] supported the findings that practicing speaking in group is the central part of English lessons and the best ways to practice English speaking are practicing by group or get practiced with friends and

listening to practice. The above data clearly indicates that English speaking was rarely practiced in group work activities at focus school. In the other words, the extent to which students practice English speaking in group was not in the pace of addressing their communicative goal or need. The majority of students, 187 (84.8%) replied that they form a group that consists 6-9. On the other hand, the remaining students confirmed their group consists of 2-5. In addition to this, during interview all English language teachers reported that they use 6-8 students in a group or one to five grouping system. Therefore, result of above discussion indicated that the number of students work in a group is relatively 2-8 and this number is a little bit more than what scholars recommend.

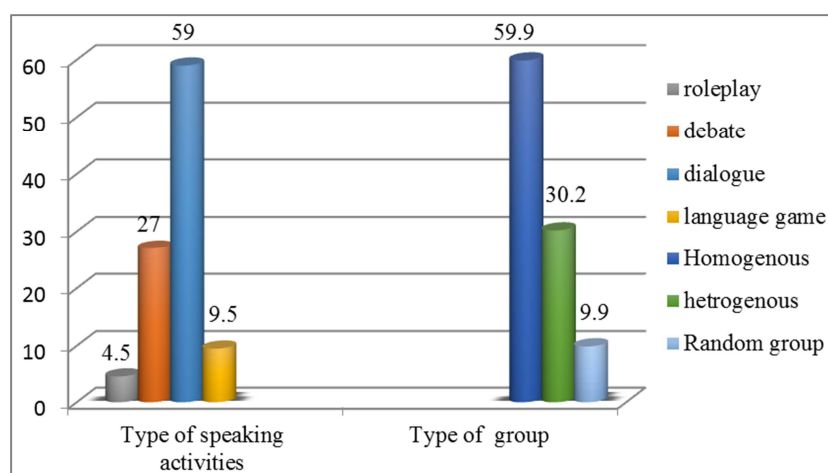


Figure 3. Type of speaking activities and group.

As to different activities used in group work practice of speaking, majority of respondents i.e. 131 (59%) revealed that they practice speaking in group by using dialogue, while 60 (27.02%) and 10 (4.50%) of students said that they practice speaking by debate and role play respectively. Underlining similar idea, one of the interviewed teachers reported that he frequently uses dialogue and debate only. In the interview no teachers reported that he uses different activities to teach speaking in group. Similarly, during classroom observation the researcher observed that students were rarely provided with dialogue and debate. This implies that teachers' failure to incorporate different speaking activities in group work was one of the impeding challenges in English speaking at school under study.

Regarding students' preference of group type, majority of respondents 133 (59.90%) replied that they prefer homogenous grouping. It refers to grouping students of similar background: sex, ability level, learning style, etc. are grouped together. On other hand, 67 (30.18%) of students revealed that they prefer heterogeneous grouping. It refers to grouping students of different background: sex, ability level, learning style etc. The remaining 22 (9.9%) students said that they prefer random grouping. This is putting students together by alphabetical or seating arrangement.

Moreover, teachers' were asked, which types of grouping

they use during group practice of English speaking. In reply to this, T1 and T2 said that they use homogenous but another teacher said that he uses heterogeneous (the same achievement level). But during observation, the researcher proved that teachers do not actually practice any particular group type. In addition to these the researcher rarely seen purposefully assigned heterogeneous grouping. Furthermore, researcher observed that some groups were homogenous [some groups are only female, some are only male, some are active) but some groups were mixed. Referring to the above data, one can say that majority of teachers do not care and aware about the importance group type about students' group work practice of speaking. Similarly, [6] stated that heterogeneous grouping increases students' communicative and social skills.

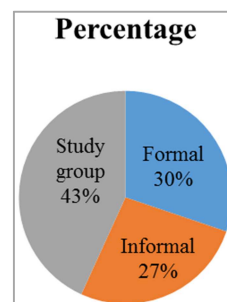


Figure 4. Kind of group pattern.

As can be seen in figure 4, majority of the students that accounts (43%) revealed that the study group is used during group practice of speaking English. On other hand, about (30%) said that formal grouping was used during group practice of English speaking. This pattern is formed to complete clearly stated role within single class session and the members stay together until the work is finished. The remaining group of respondents (27%) of students said that they practice speaking in informal grouping. This type of grouping is made by clustering students within a single class session to check students understanding and they are made for carrying some activities whenever interact in any situation [8]. Furthermore, the teachers' interview and researcher's observation also underlined the majorities' ideas of students' questionnaire. The result of above discussion the study group was outstandingly used group pattern in research cite. In study group, member stay a semester and more time as well as fix group members so as to complete course requirement and enables students to become aware, to

identify one another strength, and to learn to support and couch on another.

3.2. Students Practice of Speaking in Group

As clearly indicated in the Table 1 of item 1, 155 (69.8%) of students confirmed that the time given was not sufficient to perform the tasks given during group work practice of English speaking classroom. But some students i.e., 67 (30.81%) said that the time was sufficient. On other hand, supporting majorities' idea, the teachers' interview result and classroom observation confirmed that the time allocated for speaking activities in group was not sufficient to perform speaking. The researcher further observed that teachers allocate 5-10 minute for group work activities and they interrupt students by asking them to report before checking every group completed the given task. The above finding matches with the study conducted by [25], the shortage of time are a serious problem that hindering students practice in student centered method.

Table 1. Students' responses on their practice of group work in English speaking classroom.

| N | Items | Alternatives | Response | |
|---|---|--------------|----------|------|
| | | | No | % |
| 1 | Do you think that the time given to complete speaking activities in group is sufficient? | Yes | 67 | 30.2 |
| | | No | 155 | 69.8 |
| 2 | Do you speak English freely with your friends without shyness or anxiety when you are learning speaking skill in group? | Yes | 77 | 33.7 |
| | | No | 145 | 65.3 |
| 3 | Does your teacher always give you constructive comments? | Yes | 97 | 43.7 |
| | | No | 125 | 56.3 |

In reply to item 2, students' confidence to speak English in group freely, majority of students 145 (65.31%) revealed that they do not speak English freely in group. Only 77 (34.68%) of students said that they speak English freely in group without shyness or any anxiety. Therefore, the result of above discussion implies that students' inability to speak English freely or their anxiety to speak the language during group work was one of the challenges of speaking practice in group in school under study.

As presented in the above Table item 3, regarding constructive comment/feedback given to students during group work practice of English speaking, large number of students i.e., 125 (56.30%) confirmed that they were not given enough constructive comments after end of group work activities of speaking, while 97 (43.63%) reported that they were given constructive comments at the end of group work practices of speaking English. On other hand, the teachers interviewed the same question replied that sometimes they give constructive comments after end of speaking activities in group. They mentioned some reasons why they do not regularly comment on students' mistakes happen during English speaking practice of group work. Some of these reasons are; shortage of time, large numbers of groups, and difference in mistakes. Similarly, during classroom observation the researcher observed that there was almost no constructive comment given to speaking

practice in group at end of language classroom. As stated in above this discussion, in contrast to its crucial role in creating awareness about their mistakes, the constructive comment given during group work practice of speaking English was insignificant.

But unlike above discussion result, [18] underlined that constructive comment/feedback in language classroom informs students to correct their mistakes, raises their awareness of information linguistic, expectation of language learners and increases students' attention on language subject they are learning.

3.3. The Students' Response on the Teachers' Challenges That They Face While Teaching Speaking in Group

Regarding teachers' focus in English lesson, majority students i.e., 172 (77.47) response indicated that their teacher focus on grammar rather than group practice of speaking English. Only 45 (20.27%) of student said that their teachers do not focus on grammar section. During teachers interview, T1 and T2 said that they relatively allot more time to the grammar and vocabulary sections than that of language skills in group work and one interviewee said that he allocate the most of class time to grammar sections. These teachers presented different reasons for why they focus on grammar sections and complain to use group work.

Table 2. Analysis of challenges that teachers face while teaching speaking in group.

| | | SA | AG | UN | DA | SD |
|---|--|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Our English teacher give as clear instruction during group work | F 40 % 18.0 | 34 15.3 | 10 4.5 | 57 25.67 | 81 36.5 |
| 2 | Our English teacher focuses on English grammar rules | F 92 % 41.4 | 80.0 36.0 | 5 2.3 | 19 8.55 | 26 11.7 |
| 3 | Our English teacher uses supportive teaching aids to teach speaking skill in group (like table, chart) | F 23 % 10.4 | 16 7.2 | 6 2.70 | 86 38.7 | 91 41.0 |
| 4 | Our English teacher grade and evaluates our speaking activities during group work | F 39 % 17.6 | 22 9.9 | 11 5.0 | 66 29.72 | 84 37.83 |
| 5 | Our English teacher gives us low attention when we practice speaking | F 82 % 36.9 | 70 31.5 | 28 12.6 | 19 8.55 | 23 10.36 |
| 6 | Our teachers moves around, helps and monitored each group during group work practice of speaking | F 43 % 19.4 | 27 12.2 | 8 3.60 | 66 29.27 | 78 35.13 |

Strongly agree= SA, Agree= AG, Undecided =UN, Disagree =DA, strongly=SD.

Underling similar idea, during classroom observation, the researcher observed that most of the time, student work individually on provided grammar tasks than work in group. This indicates that most of English class was extremely dominated by teachers' explanation of grammar rules.

With regard to using teaching aid to support the group work practice of speaking English, only a few students 39 (17.56%) agreed that their teachers use different teaching aids to support group work practice of English speaking during group work. But majority of students 177 (79.72%) confirmed that their teachers do not use different teaching aids to teach speaking in group. By supporting the idea, two of interviewed teacher reported that they sometimes use teaching aids to facilitate the oral practice of English speaking in group work and one interviewee said that he does not use teaching aids at all during group practice of speaking. By opposing this, [27] suggested that teaching aid as an auxiliary instructional device is intended to facilitate learning and leads to a more effective learning, greater interest or a higher level of motivation, and enables teacher to do better his job.

As pointed out in the above Table, teachers' attention given to encourage students during group practice of English speaking, majority of students i.e., 152 (68.46%) replied that their teachers do not give attention when they were given speaking activities in group, whereas 70 (31.53%) of the students said that their teachers give them due attention when they practice speaking in group. Furthermore, the teachers interviewed reported that they do not give much attention to students' group work practice of speaking English and give due attention to students' master of the different grammatical structures. Referring to the above data, it can be inferred that the majority of the teachers in focus school give less attention to support their students' participation.

Students were asked whether or not their teachers grade their English speaking practice in group. As clearly indicated in above table of Item 5, almost one-third of respondents 61 (27.46%) reported that their teachers grade their group work practice of speaking activity. However, two-third of respondents 144 (64.86%), replied that teacher do not grade their group work practice of speaking activities. All teachers said that they rarely grade students' group work practice of

speaking. This indicates that the lack of grading was one of the challenges of teaching English in group. However, [15] stated that evaluating students' speaking practice of group by assigning grade is recognized as an essential feature of teaching foreign language oral production.

According to [4, 5], the role of teachers during group work is to control, guide, check the activities of the learners, encourage students, comment, to stop if the time is up, forward general and specific feedback and tell the result if the task is graded. Underlining similar idea, a few students 70 (31.33%) agreed that their teacher move around the classroom, help and monitor each group. However, majority of students i.e., 144 (64.86%) reported that their teacher do not move around the classroom, help and monitor each group. But during interview all English teachers said that they carry out these duties as much as possible. In contrast to their idea, the researcher does not saw that they perform their duty as expected. They do not, move around, guide, and help each group.

However, group work activity is suggested to be performed under continuous guidance and continuous support of teacher, the result of above discussion illustrated that the guidance, monitoring, and helping given to facilitate the group practice of speaking was not reasonable. Therefore, it can be inferred that the lack of guidance, monitoring, and helping were identified as the challenges of group work practice.

3.4. The Challenges That Students Face While Learning Speaking in Group

As can be displayed in the above Table of item 1, majority of students i.e., 135 (60.8%) agreed that they do not actively participate in group work practice of speaking English, whereas 65 (29.3%) students said that they actively participate in group work practice of English speaking. On other hand, a few students i.e., 22 (9.93%) replied that they were uncertain about their participation. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed English language teachers about their students' participation in group work practice of speaking. Those interviewed teachers seriously complained that their students do not strongly participate in group work practice of speaking classroom.

Table 3. *The challenges that students face while learning speaking in group.*

| № | Items | SA | | AG | | UN | | DA | | SD | |
|----|--|-----|------|----|------|----|-----|----|------|-----|------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | I actively participate in group work practice of speaking English | 35 | 15.8 | 30 | 13.5 | 22 | 9.9 | 78 | 35.1 | 57 | 25.7 |
| 2 | I'm reluctant to practice speaking in group | 67 | 30.2 | 81 | 36.4 | 4 | 1.8 | 31 | 14.0 | 39 | 17.6 |
| 3 | Some active students dominate us in group work during English speaking. | 125 | 56.3 | 70 | 31.5 | - | - | 18 | 8.10 | 9 | 4.1 |
| 4 | Absence of group leader in group work affects the group work practice of English speaking classroom. | 62 | 27.9 | 66 | 29.7 | 1 | 0.4 | 44 | 19.8 | 49 | 22.0 |
| 5 | I fear to speak English in group | 89 | 40.1 | 65 | 29.3 | 5 | 2.2 | 30 | 13.5 | 33 | 14.8 |
| 6 | Unavailability of textbook affects the group activities of speaking. | 76 | 34.2 | 91 | 41.0 | - | - | 34 | 15.3 | 21 | 9.5 |
| 7 | Lack of students' language proficiency affects group work practice of English Speaking Class. | 80 | 36.0 | 83 | 37.4 | - | - | 37 | 16.7 | 22 | 9.9 |
| 8 | The seats are not suitable for group discussion of English speaking. | 67 | 30.2 | 86 | 38.7 | 5 | 2.2 | 31 | 14.0 | 33 | 14.9 |
| 9 | The classroom has well-built block without any noise heard from outside during group work in speaking classroom. | 13 | 5.9 | 14 | 6.3 | - | - | 85 | 38.2 | 110 | 49.5 |
| 10 | There is no common ground rule during speaking session in group work. | 83 | 37.4 | 46 | 20.7 | 4 | 1.8 | 43 | 19.4 | 46 | 20.7 |
| 1 | The seating arrangements in a classroom are not suitable for group work activities. | 80 | 36.0 | 76 | 34.2 | 6 | 2.7 | 29 | 13.1 | 31 | 13.9 |
| 12 | The numbers of students in class is not manageable to arrange them in groups for speaking. | 86 | 38.7 | 65 | 29.3 | 4 | 1.8 | 30 | 13.5 | 37 | 16.7 |

NB: SA=strongly agree=, AG Agree, UN=Undecided = DA= Disagree =, SD= Strongly =ESC.

Similarly, the classroom observation showed that learners hardly took the part to start doing group tasks provided to them in the foreign language classroom. Most of them preferred to listen to teachers' talk than participate in activities. By opposing this idea, [28] states that students achieve the potential advantages of group work when they actively participate on given tasks. Based on above data, it can be inferred that lack of active participation of learners is the severe challenges of implementing group work in English speaking classrooms.

About students' reluctance of English speaking in group, 148 (66.66%) of respondents revealed that it was one of the greatest challenge of learning speaking in group. But some students 70 (31.15%) suggested that it was not challenge for learning English speaking in group. The teachers' interview result also indicated that small numbers of students actively participate and rest students sit inactive. In open-ended parts of questionnaire students listed the various reasons what make them reluctant. Some reasons they forwarded were fear of making mistakes, lack of grade, low level of students' language proficiency and lack of speaking experience and active students' dominance, assumption about waste of time etc. In addition to these, all interviewed teachers indicated that especially clever students refuse to participate in group work practice of speaking because they perceive group work practice of speaking as misuse of time. Finally the researcher observed that most students during group work practice of speaking were unwilling to take part in group work practice of English.

Regarding this, [33] stated that in student-centered/ group work activities students become reluctant and they may resist taking responsibility until they understand the rewards attached with the taking responsibility for their own learning. From the result, it is possible to deduce that most students were reluctant to participate in group work practice of English speaking classroom. Therefore, it was seen as one of the underlining challenges of teaching speaking English in

group at target school.

Students were also asked whether active students dominate their speaking practice in group work activities or not. Regarding this, majority of students that accounts 195 (87.83%) agreed that it was one the challenges of learning English speaking in group. But the rest of students 27 (12.16%) revealed that it was not the challenges of learning speaking in group. On other hand, English language teachers were interviewed the same question illustrated that only some active students usually participate more actively, carry out the most of activities and talk more time than that of passive students. This implies that the passive students were dominated by some active students and get little chance to speak in group. In line with this, [2] stated that in a group work activities one or two active members may force the passive learners to accept their ideas that less able students did not understand.

Concerning to the effect of presence of group leader in group activities, 128 (57.65%) of respondents confirmed that there was no group leader and the absence group leader was seen as one of the challenges of learning English speaking in group. On other hand, some students i.e., 93 (41.89%) students said that there were group leaders, so it does not affect their participation in the group work practice of speaking English. Regarding their role in group work, [5] stated that group leader nominated by classroom teacher or by group members play a significant role by facilitating, coordinating and ensuring every member's participation.

On other hand, all English language teachers during interview revealed that there were group leaders who assigned to accomplish different responsibility. In contrast to this, during observation, the researcher has not seen that the group leader effectively carry out their expected role during group work practice of English speaking.

Item 5 of Table 3, the question aims at determining whether students afraid to talk English in group, majority of students i.e., 154 (69.36%) revealed that they feel fear when

they practice English speaking in group, but a few students i.e., 63 (28.37%) said that it is not the problem of learning speaking English in group and they consider themselves as talkative or able to participate. In addition to this, in open ended part of the questionnaire respondents clarified that they do not take initiative to express what they want to say and do not feel at ease to speak because of fear of making pronunciation and grammatical mistakes and not being laughed by rest of members. They also indicated that teachers' negative feedback in class was another devastating problem for practicing speaking in group.

In addition to these, the teachers' interview and classroom observation result indicated that majority of students do were motivated to speak target language and do not actively participate in different group work activities of English speaking classroom and they were shy and lose confidence to express their idea in group when they try to speak English. In relation to this, [19] argued that it is too easy for English as foreign language classroom to create shyness and anxiety. On other hand, [7] students' anxiety of foreign language speaking could be improved by continuous practice of speaking in group. He further states that when students feel good about themselves as learners, they are willing to take risks and focus attention necessary for further learning.

In item 6 of table 3, students were asked whether or not unavailability of textbook was challenge of group work practice of speaking. To this question, 167 (75.22%) responses of students confirmed unavailability of textbooks were decisive challenges of learning speaking in group at focus school. On other hand 55 (24.76%) respondents replied that unavailability of text book was not problem of learning speaking in group. But during teachers interview teachers said that it was the problem. According to interviewee the problem was that their students do not bring the text when it is needed. The reason for complains were the size of book, the cost of the text and the probability of losing textbook. For this reason, they prefer lecture or explanations rather than applying group work in English speaking classroom and they hurry to cover contents on time. As result of above discussion, that unavailability or not bringing textbooks to the classroom was one of shocking challenge for group work implementation of speaking activities.

As it can be seen from above table (Table 3), majority of student respondents i.e., 163 (74.41%) confirmed that low language proficiency was the major challenges of learning English in a group. The rest of them 59 (ie. 26.56%) pointed out that it was not the problem of learning English in group because they actively take place during group practice of speaking English, but most students in open ended questionnaire supporting the first idea, clarified that the current level of their English language proficiency delay them from expressing idea and what they wanted to say in group. Underling similar idea, all English language teachers interviewed acutely complained that low language proficiency was the first ranking serious challenge of the group work practice of English speaking in target school. Furthermore, the researcher observed that most students in

group bother to express their idea in English and do not actively participate in oral activities. He further observed that almost all students do not effectively carry out their respective role in program may indicate the existence of the factors that hinder them in carrying out their roles. For example, most of student in English speaking classroom use their mother tongue to share their idea; do not say even a word when they were asked to present their group work discussion.

Regarding this, [15] stated that language proficiency is either facilitating or impeding factor for group work practice of speaking in foreign language (English). Students with high language proficiency are likely to participate in foreign language more actively than less proficient ones [11]. Therefore, from the above mentioned points, it can be inferred that low language proficiency of English language was one of critical challenges for effective practice of English speaking in group.

As indicated in above Table, there are different factors that impede the use of group in English speaking classrooms. One of these factors is unsuitable seats as responded by majority of students i.e., 163 (73.41%) reported that the seats were not suitable. But 59 (26.56%) of students replied that seats are suitable and were not the problem of learning English speaking in group. Underlining the first idea, all interviewed teachers also reported that seats are not suitable and they are combined, very heavy to rearrange and more than three students' seat in one desk. The classroom observation also indicated the same reality almost in all of its section. This indicates that seats were not suitable. As result of this discussion it can be inferred that unsuitable seat was one of the challenges of that affect the effective practice of speaking English in group.

Concerning the suitability of classroom and the building, (item 9, Table 3), majority of students i.e., 195 (87.83%) revealed that the classrooms currently they learn English were not well built and that allow noisy from outside the door, too hot, not bright enough and unclean. But some students 27 (12.16%) reported that classrooms were not the problem of leaning English in group. On other hand, very few students said that they were unsure about classroom suitability of learning speaking through group work.

In the interview, all English confirmed that classrooms were built below the standard. Finally, during observation researcher also proved that classrooms were not appropriate and that negatively affect the group work practice of speaking English. Thus from the above mentioned points, it can be said that unsuitable classrooms were taken as challenges that affect the effective group practice of speaking English.

With respect to commonly accepted ground rules put into practice, during group work practice of speaking English, majority of students i.e., 129 (58.10%) confirmed that there was no commonly accepted ground rule. On other hand some students 89 (40.09%) reported that there was ground rule. The teachers' interview result also indicated that there was commonly accepted ground rule applied during group work practice of English speaking classroom. Contrary to teachers'

interview result, during observation, the researcher has not seen that teachers and students apply any common ground rule in English speaking classroom. From above discussion, it can be inferred that lack of commonly accepted ground rule was one of the challenges that affect the group practice of English speaking.

In table 3, item 11, students were asked whether or not seating arrangements in the classrooms were suitable to the group practice of speaking. Regarding this question, majority of students 156 (70.27%) pointed out that seating arrangement in class was no suitable for group work practice of speaking English. But some students 60 (27.02%) respondents confirmed that the arrangement of the seats were suitable for the group work practice of speaking English. According to [6], the seating arrangements need to be made according to the type of activities for oral practice. He further, suggested seating arrangement for oral practice should be done by mixing active participants with students who are assumed to be less able during oral interaction. This helps those students who may have difficulty in speaking to practice learn how the active students manage their oral performance and share their experience. But during observation the researcher has not seen any effort made to arrange students in recommended way. Therefore, it was one of the serious problems that affect the effective practice of group.

As clearly seen in the above table (Table 3), the number of students in group and manageability of group, that large numbers of students i.e., 151 (68.01%) reported that it was not manageable to practice speaking English in group. On other hand, some students 67 (30.18%) revealed that it was not the problem of leaning speaking through group. But all English language teachers during interview reported that there were more than 60 students in one section and thus numbers were difficult to manage the group practice of English speaking. Similarly the researcher observed that there were more than 50 students and ten groups in one class and each group consists of more than six students. Regarding this, the current standard for Ethiopian high school, recommends a class size of 40 students in a room with the total area of 46.00m². But in most high school it is not practical as much as 80 students and more students are being overcrowded in a classroom [24]. Because of above data, it is possible to infer that the number of students were challenges of implementing group work in speaking classroom.

Moreover, students and teachers were asked what factors impede their group work practice in English speaking classroom and the way of alleviating the existing problems in open-ended students' questionnaire and the last part of teachers' interview respectively.

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Summary of Major Findings

Different findings were drawn from the above analysis and discussion of data. These major findings are presented

according to the objectives and research questions of the study.

4.1.1. Summary of Findings Concerning to Teachers' Practice of Group Work in English Speaking Classroom

The findings of this study indicated that teachers of Dali Secondary School rarely use group work to teach English speaking. In addition to this, the clarity of instructions play a significant role to accomplish the given task, but English teachers of Dali secondary school do not give clear instruction during group work practice of English speaking. The finding also confirmed that English teachers in the target school do not motivate, encourage and give their students with appropriate speaking activities were considered as an impeding factor of group work practice in English speaking classrooms of the target school.

4.1.2. Summary of Findings Concerning Students' Practice of Group Work in English Speaking Classroom

Majority of the respondents revealed that opportunity given for students to practice English speaking in group and English teachers frequently employed teacher-centered method in teaching speaking skill of English language. Additionally, majority of the respondents confirmed that they lack confidence, worry to speak in the target language freely and to express their ideas in the language. Moreover, the study indicated that the time given to students to practice speaking through group work was insufficient. For this reason, each student in a group has little opportunity to practice, to see his/her mistakes and to get comments based on their mistakes. Furthermore, the study also indicated that teachers in focus school do not give sufficient constructive comments/ feedback after group activities of English speaking classes.

4.1.3. The Summary of Findings Concerning with the Challenges That English Teachers Face During Group Work Practice of English Speaking Classroom

The study also identified challenges like teachers' inability to give clear instruction during group work, inability to use different supportive materials to teach speaking skill in group (like table, chart, picture....) and lack of teaching aid. Moreover, the study identified teachers' inability to motivate encourages, help and monitor students during group work practice of English speaking.

4.1.4. Summary of Findings Concerning the Different Challenges That Students Face During Group Work Practice of English Classroom

The study also identified several student related challenges that affect their proper practice of group work in English speaking classroom mainly focused on the tendency among students to wonderful emphasis on teachers' explanation of grammar rules instead of making effort to practice speaking in group, being inactive and students' reluctance to participate in group work practice of speaking English. Moreover, a few active students' dominance of group work activity, lack of group

leaders and secretary to facilitate the group work practice of speaking English in group are seen another challenges. Furthermore, low language proficiency of English language and poor background of English speaking of students in group, mother tongue interference, unsuitable classroom, unavailability of textbooks and inappropriate seating arrangement were seen as considerable challenges of implementing group in English speaking classroom in focus school.

In general, findings of the study indicated that group work practice in English speaking classroom at Dali secondary school was given little attention irrespective of its importance in English speaking. The study further reported that the opportunity given to group work practice of speaking English was similarly insufficient and much emphasis was given to grammar and vocabulary sections. Moreover, the study identified different challenges that hinder students and teachers practice of speaking English.

4.2. Conclusion

Based on above discussion of the study, the following conclusions were stated about practice and challenges of group in English Speaking classroom.

- 1) The study indicated that English language teachers of Dali secondary school do not use group work regularly to teach English speaking and they do not give sufficient opportunity for learners to interact in the target language through group work. Similarly, the study revealed that teachers focus school gives much emphasis to grammar and vocabulary section. In addition, most teachers were focusing on area where national examinations center.
- 2) Teachers in target school do not orient and inform students about the importance of group work in English speaking and unsuccessful in providing clear instruction during group work practice of speaking. Equally, they do not use varied scholarly recommended activities during group practice of speaking.
- 3) Most learners in target school were passive, reluctant and unwilling to participate actively during group work activities and could not reflect their ideas.
- 4) To practice speaking English through group work, students face different challenges in target school. Some of these are: poor background of target language, lack of language proficiency, poor English speaking background, frequent use of mother tongue, inappropriate seating arrangement and unsuitable classroom they learn were the significant challenges of speaking English.

4.3. Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, the researcher forwarded the following recommendations.

- 1) It is advisable that English teachers should allow students to speak in class and they should walk around in the class to check whether students are discussing on the given point.

- 2) It is recommendable that English teachers should build their students' interest ever since communicative approach plays great role in developing students' speaking skill and minimize students' nervousness by advising students not to fear of any mistakes since mistakes are learning opportunities.
- 3) In order to overcome the problems beyond the capacity of classroom teachers, such as class size and supply of necessary authentic materials, the school should work in collaboration with Woreda Education Office and community at large should build additional learning classroom and supplement the text book with authentic materials as much as possible.
- 4) The English teacher should develop students' interest to perform speaking task through CLT method and build confidence as well as motivate students just by making the classroom welcoming and free from frustration.
- 5) The English teacher should also allocate sufficient time for speaking activities to increase each student's opportunity to practice and should motivate, encourage, comment on and use different speaking activities that can create authentic, meaningful and realistic situation to enhance the practice of English speaking.
- 6) English language teachers should work in collaboration with the school to improve the performance conditions by giving their students time to prepare for a speaking task, guiding students to perform a speaking tasks, teaching the students how to use mind map to generate ideas and giving students enough time to perform their tasks.
- 7) It is better if English language teachers should help their students overcome shyness by having friendly, helpful and cooperative behaviors to make students feel comfortable when speaking in the class, reminding students not to worry about making mistakes and giving them with clear instructions and sufficient guidance.
- 8) The teacher should personalize and simplify the topics in the textbook to make them easier, more interesting and relevant to their lives, give students more opportunities to speak English in class by using some speaking activities that require students to speak and use English in the classroom frequently so that the students have more exposure to the language.
- 9) It is recommended that students should comprehend the importance of speaking skills, practice speaking English outside the classroom more often by doing the speaking tasks in the textbook at home with their classmates, joining speaking club where they can use English to communicate and speaking on their own in front of a mirror.
- 10) Finally, the researcher would like to recommend further research to be conducted on related/different aspects in similar topic/area. As the study was delimited to only one secondary school and limited in its sample size, the

further study that cover more than one secondary school and larger sample sizes are suggested to increase the reliability of the results and thereby make more accurate generalization on the group work practice and challenges of English speaking classrooms. As a result, any concerned and interested bodies can make use of this study as opportunity for further studies and is expected to contribute a lot.

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