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LANGUAGE (TEFL)**

PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE
THROUGH GROUP WORK IN EFL CLASSROOM AT THREE SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN ABAYA WOREDA: GRADE NINE IN FOCUS.

BY

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Practices and Challenges of Teaching English Language Through
Group Work In EFL Classroom at Three Secondary Schools in
Abaya Woreda: Grade Nine in Focus.

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As thesis research advisor, I hereby certify that the research paper prepared by **Musa Usha** entitled: “**Practices And Challenges of Teaching English Language Through Group Work In English Foreign Language Class** at three secondary schools in Abaya woreda: Grade Nine in Focus” submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Art (TEFL) complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Declaration

I declare that, this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for this thesis have been properly acknowledged.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- CC - Communicative Competence
- CLT- Communicative Language Teaching
- EFL- English As A Foreign Language
- ESL- English As Second Language
- FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia
- FGD- Focused Group Discussion
- FL – Foreign Language
- GW- Group Work
- L1- First Language or Mother Tongue
- L2 - Second Language
- N.D- No Date/Date Was Not Mentioned In The Reference

Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to explore the Practices and Challenges of Teaching English Language Through Group Work In English as a Foreign Language at Guangua, Shara and Biyo Secondary Schools in Abaya woreda particularly grade 9 in focus. To achieve the objectives of the study, descriptive study was employed. Data were gathered from 120 students, which was 20% of the total population in four randomly selected classrooms. Additionally, the researcher took all of the teachers as participants of the study by using comprehensive sampling technique since they were manageable and a few in numbers. The researcher used four types of data collection instruments: Classroom observation, questionnaire, interview and FGD. The data obtained through classroom observation, open ended questions, teachers' interview and students' FGD were analyzed qualitatively; whereas, the data collected through closed ended questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage). After analyzing and interpreting the collected data qualitatively and quantitatively, the findings of the study related to teachers and students were specified clearly. Even though the results of the study showed both students and teachers perceived group work positively, the following were seen as the main challenges of teaching English language through group work activities: poor educational background, low language proficiency, insufficient time given for group work, absence of stable group leader and secretary in each group. Therefore, students intended to use their L1 or became careless to take part in activities and did not play their expected roles in group activities. Similarly, teachers did not; determine or limit the number of students in a group, use group work activities regularly, allow students to report, comment and criticize the tasks, give sufficient time for group work activities, provide feedback and graded group work activities to create competition among groups. Thus, to alleviate the existing problems, possible recommendations were stated by researcher. The teachers should: form permanent groups that stay for long period and allow appropriate tasks with learners' level through students centered method, grade group work activities to make all students participate in the groups, appropriate time should be given for the tasks and the tasks should enhance students to suggest their own ideas, criticize, comment, or report the works done at the end of the activities. Furthermore, there must be group leader and secretary in each group to improve their academic competence and performance in English language.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

English is the medium through which technological, social, political and cultural information has been transmitted. With this regard Sisay Tilahun (2013), states, English is the language expanded breaking the barriers of color, race, belief, and has continued to spread all over the world. It has become the language that links the world all together.

As to Fang (2010), more students will use English in future careers such as business, law and journalism. In other words, the popularity of English worldwide provides a clear reason to reform ELT get rid of exam-oriented education, and to focus on developing students listening and speaking skills. So, they learn to communicate effectively with others. Students should learn how to use a language in their daily communication in order to demonstrate their mastery of a language. If students can use the English knowledge, skills and cultural aspects they have learned to communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds in real language contexts, they are then using English as a communication tool.

On top of this, Kramersch (2006) states language learning as the acquisition of communicative competence. It is an expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning between two interlocutors, or between a text and its readers. He also suggests that if students can use knowledge of English language, skills and cultural aspects, they have learned to communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds in real language contexts. Freeman (2000), suggests communicative language teaching gives emphasis to communicative interaction that offers learners ample opportunities to use the target language for negotiation of meaning rather than getting learners to carry out structural drills aimed at just the mastery of language forms. In simple words, the approach advocates the need to create communicative situations that engage learners in realistic language use in classroom group activities.

Unlike the traditional way of teaching, today's world requires the way of language teaching that enables learners develop their communicative competence through group work using group activities to make learning more memorable (Reynolds, 1994).

Group work has become a regular practice in the foreign language classroom. This is because it provides opportunities for real communication. Group work promotes a positive affective climate. A small group of peers provides a relatively intimate setting and usually a more supportive environment in which to try out embryonic language skills to cooperate. Also group work motivates learners (Atkins et al, 1996:20).

As to Burke (2011), group tasks should be integral to the course objectives. This means that the group work should complement the learning objectives outlined in the syllabus. If one of the learning objectives is to promote critical thinking skills or writing enhancement, then the group work should support these areas. Since group work has many advantages, EFL teachers should implement it as a teaching technique in their EFL classes and play a vital role by facilitating and managing the group work. Students also should play their role by participating and monitoring their own learning.

In the Ethiopian educational system, the learning of English begins at the elementary level and it gives different functions at various organizations. A document from the Federal Ministry of Education (2007:1) also reveals that “*English is a corner stone in the development of Ethiopia’s commerce, communication systems, technology and education*”. On top of this when we observe the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ethiopian educational settings, plenty of challenges like; teachers use traditional method of teaching rather than using GW in real life communication, and students’ low interest toward learning using GW could be seen in the schools.

Furthermore, the roles of EFL teachers and Students are very crucial in the implementation of group work activities. Therefore, this issue inspired the researcher of this study to explore whether teachers and students are actually practicing their respective roles for implementation of group work activities in EFL Classroom because the roles of both teachers and students cannot be separated in teaching-learning process and its effective application.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Asto Lasala (2014), the communicative competence model emphasizes the importance of the four language skills since they are viewed as manifestations of interpreting and producing a spoken or written piece. With this framework as the basis and taking the intercultural component as the point of departure, a variety of activities in the four language skills are presented for teaching learners intercultural communicative competence.

According to Burke (2011), many students cringe and groan when told that they will need to work in a group. However, group work has been found to be good for students and good for teachers. Employers want college graduates to have developed teamwork skills. Additionally, students who participate in collaborative learning get better grades, are more satisfied with their education, and are more likely to remain in college.

Furthermore, as to Akbari,(2015)the students in English classes do not have common background knowledge because some of them are trained in rural areas in which un-qualified English teachers teach them.While other students are taught in urban areas having access to a lot of classroom facilities to gain advantages, some of the students take advantage of using satellite programs, video tapes, and go to private language schools. Under such circumstances, there is no placement test to put students into different groups homogeneously based on their language proficiency levels.

Amatobi & Amatobi, (2013) suggested that, as classes are crowded, most of the students do not have enough practice in English and do not overcome language learning problems and are not proficient enough to communicate in the foreign language. Because in the limited hours of instruction, they normally could not have the chance of learning English especially the most favored skills of listening and speaking. There is no place for group work discussion. To acquire the target language effectively, learners need to engage actively in processing the meanings of whatever they hear and read.

As Atkins, et al, (1996:206) states “leading a successful group work is not an easy task. There are some factors that need to be considered when implementing group work. For example,if the students are not well-managed they may promote errors, discipline, frustration or anxiety.” Moreover, if the activity to be performed is not appropriate to the abilities and interests of the class, it is not well- timed and well- prepared. The activity may not help to meet the intended objective as mentioned.Many researches have been

conducted in abroad and in Ethiopia in relation to this area, which indicate that teachers and students face various challenges in the implementation of group work in language teaching in EFL classroom.

For instance, Alamirew (1992), conducted research on the title 'Practicability of Group Work In Learning English' at Some Selected High Schools in Addis Ababa, and found out students achieved better communicative competence through group work than teacher centered approach. He suggests in his research, low communicative competence of students would be improved if learners learn through proper group work activities than the traditional teacher centered approach.

Similarly, Adem (2007) conducted a research on 'challenges and opportunities of Using Group Work in EFL Class, at Grade 9 Dire Dawa Comprehensive School. He declared academic status,insufficient time given to group work activities and domination as major challenges of teachers in using group work.Additionally, Sintayehu (2015),Investigated Factors That Affect the Practice of Teaching-Learning Speaking Skills in Group Work at Bole Preparatory School in Focusand found out:students' use of mother tongue, disciplinary problems, motivation, and fear as factors that negatively affect group work.

However, the above researchers have investigated the role of teachers or students separately in applying group work. They did not try to relate teachers' and students' role with practical problems in the implementation of teaching English language using group work in EFL classroom. This is because the concept of teaching and learning, as well as the role of teachers and students in the classroom are inseparable. The above researchers' studywereconducted in a different setting, methodology and context from this study. They did not try to mention students' participation and performance of learning English through group work. The researcher was therefore, inspired to fill this gap that was not specifically and adequately addressed by the previous researchers.

Thus, this study attempted toinvestigate practices andchallengesof teaching English language through group work on both students and teachers side, and the possible ways of alleviating the existing problems for better teaching learning activities.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explore practices and challenges of teachers and students in teaching English language through group work in EFL classroom at Guangua secondary school, shara secondary school, and Biyo secondary school grade nine students in focus.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

To achieve the main purpose of this study, the following specific objectives have been set.

- To investigate the teachers' practices and challenges of teaching English using group work in EFL classroom.
- To find out the students' practices and challenges of learning English through group work in EFL classroom.
- To assess advantages of using group work in active learning in EFL classroom.

1.4. Research Questions

To accomplish the objectives specified above, this study tried to answer the following research questions.

- What are the teachers' practices and challenges in teaching English using group work in EFL classroom?
- What are students' practices and challenges in learning of English through group work in EFL classroom?
- What are the advantages of using group work in active learning in EFL classroom?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The researcher of this study hopes, this work will be significant in that:

Primary, it can help the learners to be aware of their role in group activities. Similarly, it may help the teachers to be aware of practices and challenges of using group work, and raise teachers' awareness of using appropriate techniques and strategies to teach English language through group work. Additionally, this work may serve policy makers and curriculum designers on implementation of group work activities in EFL classroom as data sources. It can give hints to parents and school communities on the importance of giving necessary support to teaching and learning English language through group work because the researcher put a copy of the study in the library of each three secondary

schools. In other way, it may help other people who want to conduct a research in related areas by offering them data source. Generally, it may serve as a source of direction for wider scope of study.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to investigate practices and challenges that encounter teaching English through group work in Guagua, Shara and Biyo Secondary Schools in Abaya Woreda, Oromia Regional state. Group work activities can be performed both inside and outside the classroom. However, this study was restricted only to the group work activities performed inside the classroom. If the researcher covered all governmental and non-governmental schools found in Abaya woreda, it was better. However, this study was restricted to only grade nine students of the above mentioned three secondary schools.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The major problems that the researcher faced were: poor library service, there was problem of internet access including the failure of connection to download the required materials. Other problems that the researcher encountered were: the participants of the questionnaire did not give the paper back to the researcher on time, reluctance to accept and fill the questionnaire, to be interviewed and observed because of being unfamiliar with this kind of study. However, the researcher advised and motivated the learners rather than compelling them. Since the sample of the study was limited, it was difficult to draw generalization about the findings. The limited number of EFL teachers and students also uncompromised with the reliability of the research findings.

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

This study was organized in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction which includes: background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, basic research questions, significance of the study, delimitation (scope) of the study and limitations which faced the researcher while conducting the research. The second chapter contained review of related literature includes: Importance of language learning, definition of group work, some advantage and disadvantage of group work in active learning, the role of teachers and students in group work and problems encounter in group work.

The third chapter composed research design and methodology such as: research design, sample size and sampling techniques, research setting, instruments of data collection, procedures and techniques of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter contains analysis and interpretation of data. Conclusions and recommendation are discussed under the last chapter. Finally, references and appendices are attached.

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CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Importance of Language Learning

Kramsch (2006) states language learning as the acquisition of communicative competence, it is now defined as the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning between two interlocutors or between a text and its readers. If students can use the English knowledge, skills and cultural aspects they have learned to communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds in real language contexts, they are then using English as tool of communication. From the above paragraph one can comprehend that, while developing their speaking abilities and increasing their vocabulary level, students simultaneously develop their listening skill and also gain confidence during the process of communication.

As to Fang (2010) it is apparent that English context is automatically created during various activities when implementing CLT while English is used as the medium for students to communicate with each other. The English context can help students cultivate their sense of the language, and create an atmosphere where students can improve their English ability.

As Bamford & Mizokawa (2001), several studies indicate that individuals who learn a second language are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not. Language learners show greater cognitive flexibility, better problem solving and higher order thinking skills.

As to Richards and Rodgers (2001), English language teaching started along with the classical languages of Greek and Latin. At that time, the method of teaching was that teachers transmit their knowledge of the language to the students and students obtain what they heard. Such method of teaching considers the teacher as an all knowing and a resource of everything, while learners were considered as passive receivers. The reason was that students were believed to be an empty vessel, which could be filled by all knowing teachers.

As to Cook (2001) in such method almost all the time is covered by the teachers and students have no time to practice the language. The only thing that students do is to respond a single word or phrase to their teachers when they asked. For this reason, this method of teaching is called traditional approach or lock step teaching. The main goal of

lock step teaching is to make students master the grammatical aspects of the language through memorization and drill.

From the above, one can conclude that, the traditional method does not provide adequate time for students to practice the target language. Because of the students cannot use the language in a natural way, their role is restricted only to respond to their teachers' questions.

Brown(1994) and Yule(1996) suggested that, in the recent years a shift emerged to 'what' and 'how' to teach a language. So a major shift of emphasis is from concentrating and developing grammatical competence to a balance between grammatical accuracy and communicative effectiveness. This change has involved students to use and practice the language in different situation in-group activities.

However, it has to be noted that group work does not offer opportunities without effort.

Generally, Fang (2010) suggested that CLT provides students an opportunity to speak and share ideas in a relatively relaxing way. Therefore, students become the protagonists in the classroom, and their initiative and motivation are both enhanced. English study can be solved by implementing this teaching method, because CLT not only focuses on developing students' listening and speaking skills of English, but also reading and writing skills.

2.2. Concept of Group Work

At different times, different scholars have tried to define group work in different ways. However, the general concept of their definition tends to be similar. They put the concept of cooperative learning as integral definition of group work.

People use the term "group- work" in different ways and it is essential to make sure that we are referring to the same concept when we use the term. For example, as Todd (1997) referred to "*group work as a form of language activity done by a group of students without a direct involvement of the teacher.*"(P.76). This definition is general in that it subsumes all language-learning tasks carried out by a pair of students and groups of more than two students do that.

Christenson (1990), suggested group work as a method of teaching in which two or small number of learners discuss together on a particular issue to reach an agreement. In this method of discussion, every member of the group can suggest his /her idea in the group to find solution.

In addition to this, Hill (2006) and Smith (2008) said that group work is a collection of people who interact with one another accept rights and obligations as a member, and who share a common identity criteria for a group. This includes formal social structure, face-to-face interaction, two or more persons, common fate, common goals, interdependence, and self-definitions as a group members and recognition by others.

From this idea one can believe that, group work is a small discussion which has its own purpose, ideal for helping students to make meaning, take responsibility for learning, and practice effective strategies

Additionally, according to Richards & Renandya (2010), Cooperative learning in English as a second/ foreign language learning is proposed: increase students' talk, motivation, more relaxed atmosphere and more negotiation of meaning. It is one of plethora of techniques that is employed in education as general and in English teaching in particular. On the one hand, it cannot be imagined that English classrooms are without a group work activity. On the other hand, it is not an activity of putting some students together and asks them to do a task.

As stated in Sintayehu Teferi (2015) group work can be defined as: "One or more meeting of small groups of people who thereby communicate, face-to-face in order to fulfill a common purpose and achieve a common goal."(p:8). On the other hand, a method of involvement in group discussion talking over pertinent problems either to increase the degree of participation on the part of the students or bring about decision making.

According to Albaqshi (2016) definitely putting some students together is not the target of group work. In fact, teachers need such a practice, since learners are different in their preferences. There are seven types of learning styles. They are visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, field independent, field-dependent and reflective. This diversity requires implementing a variety of strategies and activities to fulfill learners' needs according their preferences. Thus, group work as a cooperative activity is compatible to those learners who learn differently with individual differences in which group work is not confined to only sitting on chairs together to do some tasks.

From the above explanation what could be inferred is that, those who meet for group work to exchange ideas on the subject matter can get mutual interest and common benefit. Group work can range from classroom discussions interspersed with short lectures, through entire class periods, to study on research teams that last a whole term or

year. The goals and processes of group activities also vary widely. Some members design small group work around specific sequential steps, or tightly structured tasks. Others prefer a more spontaneous agenda developing out of student interests or questions. In some collaborative learning settings, the students' task is to create a clearly described product; in others, the task is not to produce a product, but rather to participate in a process, an exercise of responding to each other's work or engaging in analysis and meaning-making. Gregore T. Mac et al (N.D).

From the above definition, one could understand that group work covers a broad territory of approaches with wide variability in the class or out of the class activities.

As to Spiegel (2005), when students work alone, of course they can make meaning. But group discussion provides opportunities for reflection and revision of meaning, opportunities that are less likely to occur when working alone. Furthermore, sharing their thoughts forces students to be explicit in their thinking, so they can present their ideas clearly. While the discussion is on, listening to the meaning others construct may lead to conflict from which new ideas may emerge. Students are more likely to engage in the discussion as the context is more personal and the group may stay more focused because there are fewer people to move the discussion off.

From the above explanation one could comprehend that, group discussion has fewer participants than whole class discussion and the quality of interaction is likely to be better and more suitable for meaning making.

In addition, other writers (e.g. Nunan and Lamb 1995), use the term "group work" to denote all kinds of language learning tasks accomplished by usually a group of three to six students without much intervention from a teacher. They described group work as a language learning activity, which is organized by three to six students under supervision of a teacher. Groups are formed for doing an activity in order to achieve a given objective. The result would be to develop knowledge, improve communicative competence and reach on an agreement as a solution.

In general, group work is a collaborative learning (learner-to-learner interaction) and negotiation of meaning in which all members of the group contribute and receive equally to achieve a certain goal or solve a problem Harmer (2001).

2.3. Group Formation

Frey (2013) states that group formation is a procedural decision teacher should follow in-group work activities. It has to be done carefully because it influences the pattern of interaction between group members. Before Starting the Group Work; give students explicit directions about the group, process for the activity, limit the time for the group-work activity, and give the students the time limit at the beginning of the activity (or part of the activity), give small-group roles and define the group roles. Activities should generate discussion among students.

There are four stages of group work: First, the instructor must decide that he/she wants to incorporate group work into the class. The group work should be designed into the syllabus. The second stage involves teaching the students to work in a group. Instructors cannot assume that students know how to work together, structure time, and delegate tasks. The instructor must be able to teach the students how to work proactively in groups. This leads to the third stage, which involves monitoring the groups. The last stage and the most important to the students is the assessment of the group. The instructor must develop a concrete rubric for grading students (Burke 2011p:89).

From the above paragraph one can conclude that, assigning a group does not itself create critical thinking outcomes. Therefore, the instructor must be knowledgeable about how to facilitate effective collaborative learning environments.

As to Sisay Tilahun, (2013) states that “putting students in group is not effective enough for group learning unless they are engaged in meaningful learning and using higher thinking skills. In order to make it effective, the purpose of group tasks must be clear to the learners” (p:30). Students must know what they do, report orally or in written form. Furthermore, the teacher is an active participant in facilitating the group work. In order to suit students learning they can be organized in sitting near each other by ability, interest, self-selection, and randomly.

From the above idea one could interpret that, the one organized group should contain the group leader who motivates the participants equally. For that reason, the learners can be motivated to participate actively without separating boys and girls in the group work.

Harmer (1991) states that, the way of forming a group depends on different variables such as time duration that students have to stay together for achievement (ability level),

sex, friendship, background sitting arrangement and social class. some teachers ask students to divide themselves according to their interest while others nominate them in to groups based on academic ability; mixing high achievers with low achievers, or putting them in to groups separately.

From the writers idea one could suggests that, a good mix can be achieved by mixing students in terms of performance, sex, status and so on.

However, making students sit with their peers in a room does not mean that group work is taking place. With regard of this issue, Porker (2009), cited in Gebrewahid (2011) revealed that effective group work learning needs five points:- Positive interdependence, Face-to face interaction, Individual accountability, Social skills like: (effective communication, interpersonal, leadership, decision-making and conflict management skills) and group processing or decide how it can be improved.

2.3.1. Ways of Assigning Students in Group

According to Davis and et al (1993) based on the time that students stay together, group forming could be divided in:

2.3.1.1. Formal Grouping

As to Davis, (1993) suggested that, in this type of grouping students are grouped more or less permanently or temporarily with some defined or clearly stated roles with in a single class session. Such learning groups are made when students are expected to complete a specific task like producing a term paper and writing a report. The group members work together until the work is finished and if it is graded.

2.3.1.2 Informal Grouping

According to Brumfit, (1994) states that Informal grouping is clustering of students within a single class session to check students understanding and they are made for carrying out some social purpose activities whenever people interact in any situation. For example, students might discuss with the students sitting next to them for a very short time on issue raised by their teacher and it is not graded.

2.3.1.3 Study Group

Davis, (1993) again suggests that, the study team shares some features of the formal grouping. It needs a semester and more time as well as fixed group members so as to complete course requirement. This enables students to become acquainted, to identify one another's strength and to learn, to support and coach one another. So students should

remain together about half a semester. In addition to the above three, other scholars also suggest different ways of grouping as:

2. 3.1.4 Heterogeneous Grouping

As to Harmer (1991) Students could be grouped heterogeneously with different age, ability level, sex, background, social class and ethnicity. This method of grouping allows students to work constructively with varied individuals who will bring different strength and approaches to academic tasks. In addition to success in the task, positive interactions with diverse individuals can develop. More over in such a group weaker students gain by watching how better students perform and approach problems and strong students gain a deeper understanding of the subject by teaching others. Students increase their communicative and social skills. Also self-esteem rises and peer relation become more positive. This implies that mixed group encourages students to help one another and promote interaction among each other.

From the above paragraph one can understand that, heterogeneous grouping increases the ability to remember things and students feel more positive towards the subject matter.

2. 3.1.5 Homogenous Grouping

Harmer,(2001) the other method of grouping is homogenous grouping in which students of similar background, sex, ability, learning style, etc. are grouped. Teachers use this method to help weak students. However, if fast and slow students are put in separate groups they all go at their own pace. Hence, the fast ones can finish quickly which could create problem on those who did not finish on time. This drawback of homogenous grouping summarizes as; the strong groups have advantage over other groups in the class. In addition, the team members tend to divide the activity and communicate only quickly with one another omitting the dynamic interactions that lead to the benefits of group work.

From the above paragraph one can conclude that a group of weak students cannot benefit as strong students do in the group.

2.3.1.6 Random Grouping

As to Cohen, (1994), another method of grouping students is randomly putting together (which is similar to heterogeneous grouping) alphabetically or by sitting arrangements. This might be with friend ship, homogeneity or heterogeneity of students. Moreover, students tend to think of group work in terms of play rather than work

they show a tendency to play than to work. On the other hand, when teachers assign students to work together without their choice they tend to oppose each other. However, such feeling may not exist if students are aware of the purpose of gathering in groups.

From the above discussions, one can conclude that there is no clear formula for how to form a group. Students should work collaboratively to achieve the intended goal that is communicative competence. However, in order to maximize the efficiency of group-work, language teachers need to treat problems that affect group interaction.

Cohen (1994) also pointed several ways in which teachers group their students based on different criteria to perform a given task as follows: Friendship grouping - a way in which students are grouped simply with their friends next to them, attainment grouping - students are grouped based on academic achievement, interest grouping - students are given chance to their own performance to form a group, age grouping - students are grouped based on their age gender grouping - is a way in which single sex or both sexes are grouped together, and mixed attainment grouping - is the way of grouping students by mixing up students with different abilities.

One can conclude that, these ways of grouping could enhance students to group themselves in the way they prefer in taking part actively in groups.

2.3.2. Group Size

Harmer (1991) states that during group work activities, the first thing that teachers should consider is deciding the number of students in each group. Despite the quality of the task, if groups are large, obviously the amount of student's participation fail and the group cohesion may tend to disintegrate. Large groups may result in unequal participation of each other in the task. There seems to be no consensus as to what the optimal group size is. For instance, as stated in Harmer (1991), three to fifteen members, and Cohen (1994) said four or five members. However, they share with each other that the decision of group size largely depends on the nature and objective of the group activity, class size, nature of furniture, students back ground, workspace and time allowed.

From the above scholars' view, one can comprehend that different scholars forward different views about the number of participants in a group. They agree that groups should be small enough; so that every member of the group can participate actively.

Several scholars for example, (Nunan and Lamb, 1995; Hyland, 1991; Honey field, 1991; Todd, 1997; as cited in Feda, 2002), group should usually consist of three to six students to be manageable and productive. The group size suggested by these groups of writers was supported by Honeyfield (1991) summarized, as group size increases beyond six:

Intimacy decreases, Sub-groups are more likely to be formed, Spoken contribution becomes informal, tension tends to increase, group cohesion decreases, the discrepancy between "high contributors" and "low contributor" increases, time taken to reach decision tends to increase and variety of opinions tends to increase (p:12)

Hence, it is essential that a group size be set between three to six students, It is possible to see that as group size increases, undesirable behaviors, which can be detrimental to the group activity, will start to crop up.

As the study conducted by Gass (1987) cited in Cruickshank et. al (1999: 54) shows small group size results more participation, increased satisfaction, and greater academic achievement. Accordingly, if the task needs multiple ability and negotiation of ideas, a group of four or five is usually an optimal size for effective discussion.

Atkins et al, (1996) also suggests that group work should be a collection of three to four students working together collaboratively and it should not exceed six. The typical group size is two to four students. "A group of three to six is an excellent way to give students opportunity to speak. On the other hand, a group of three is not good as there may be a tendency for two members to form coalition, leaving the third isolated. The optimal size of group is four to five"(Cohen, 1994: 64).

From these one can understand that there is no exact numbers of participants in a group but as many of the scholars suggest four to six is preferable group size.

Generally as to Harmer and et al, (1991), suggestes that, still scholars did not agree on the exact number for a group. Whenever there is more number of students in a group, it hinder each members opportunity to practice actively and frequently in a group work. This means, in large group students become passive observers than active participants. Moreover, the more groups in a class or the more students in one group, the more difficult for teachers to control what is going on in each group.

Therefore, one can conclude that, groups with large size and classes with more groups tend to be unmanageable, disciplinary problems, and passive recipients than the small size.

2.4. Advantages and Dis Advantages of Group Work

2.4.1. Advantages of Group Work in Active Learning

As Brown (2007), in his book explains the process and the implementation of group work which asserts maximizing students' roles while teacher's role is minimized. He enlists the advantage of group work: group work generates interactive learning, offers an embracing affective climate and promotes learner responsibility and autonomy.

Additionally, Horwitz (2008), relates the group work activity to oral skills and speaking activities. He asserts that using group work in speaking activity reduces anxiety because students will feel to be more comfortable talking to small groups instead of speaking in front of the whole class.

Christenson (1990), suggests group work as a method of teaching in which two or small number of learners discuss together on a particular issue to reach an agreement. Group work covers a broad territory of approaches with wide variability in the class or out of the class activities. The goals and processes of group activities also vary widely. Some members design small group work around specific sequential steps, or tightly structured tasks. Similarly, Alamirew (1992), explains the use of group work as follows: Group work is used not only for its convenience to make the learners use the language but it could also raise the learners' self-esteem. Students feel that they are liked by the group and give some value to themselves as they have a hand in whatever activity the group performs. This would in turn, increase their motivation to learn.

Here what one can understand is that, group work crates good opportunities for student to learn from one another and promotes experience of learning by them.

Albaqshi, (2016), also states group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. But without careful planning and facilitation, it can slow students' linguistic improvement and can be a waste of time. There are success and failure

factors for group work implementation and this is based on how much planning and skillful practices will be exerted.

On the other hand, the use of group work in second language learning has supported by many scholars. Some of these advantages are discussed below.

2.4.1.1 Group Work Increases Language Practice.

Little wood (1988) suggests:

Group discussion provides learners with opportunities to express their own personality and experience through foreign language. It also gives valuable experience in using the language as a means of handling their social relationship(p:48).

According to Long and Porter, (1985), cited in Harmer,(1991), one of the main reasons for the learners' low achievement of English language competence is that they do not have enough time to practice the new language. Therefore, EFL or ESL learners should get ample opportunities to develop their language skills through group work, which provide learners with opportunities for practicing the target language. Group work creates possibilities of interactions among learners, which is not observed in lock steps.

Schmuck and et al. (2001) says group work also reduces anxiety; increase awareness of possible solutions to problems, and increase commitment to learning in group work, learners are interacting with one another, get freedom for practicing the language skills, and as a result they learn best. However, in lockstep, the teacher sets instructional pace and content for every one by lecturing, explaining grammatical points, leading drill work or asking questions for the whole class.

From the above explanation one can predict that, by the time learners work together in groups to complete a common task, they interact and communicate about the issue by: explaining, listening, making suggestions, criticizing, agreeing or disagreeing, asking questions, seeking clarification, paraphrasing, followed also by nonverbal interactions such as nodding and smiling.

Group work requires groups to struggle on using the target language freely on their own, talking and making mistakes, without immediate supervision of the teachers. In line with this, Richards and Rodgers (2001) say language learning is something that results from the learners' direct involvement. "Group work allows more language

learning than lockstep that involves too much teaching and little learning.”(Harmer, 1991p:244).

2.4.1.2 Quality of Students’ Talk

Mc Donough and Shaw, (2003) reveal that Students discussing in small groups can use language meaningfully for communication purpose. This refers to as quality of students talk and this is not possible in the match inhabiting teacher-fronted classes. Members in the group can perform different roles. They can use the language, to ask, explain, apologize, promise, suggest, agree and internalize a wider range of language use. As a result of this, role differentiations appear in a manner closer to real life.

In favor of this experience, Davis (1993) suggests that students learn best when they actively involved in the process regardless of the subject matter. Students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. “Small group provides greater intensity of involvement, so that the quality language practice is increased” p:34). Therefore, group work improves both the quality and quantity of students talk.

One can conclude the above idea as, it is rare to have authentic student’s communication. However, attempting to ask the question in the class and discussing together about certain issue with small group have great value for quality of students talk in communication purpose.

2.4.1.3 Motivating Learners in Learning through Group Work

As Johnson and Johnson (1975), stated in lasala (2014), students feel less inhibited and freer to speak and make fewer mistakes, not discouraged and reduce anxiety if they learn in small groups than in lock steps. In general, group work raises learners self-esteem, increases opportunity to acquire new language, and enables to: Learn new language that they do not get from textbooks, shy students tend to join better in groups, it creates intimacy in-group to cooperate, more English is practiced, students practice leadership and learners learn to respect different ideas.

Mehari, (2011), declares several advantages have already been claimed for group work. It allows for a greater quality and richer variety of language practice that is better adapted to individual needs and conducted in a more positive affective climate. For all these reasons and because of the variety group work inevitably introduces in to a lesson, it seems reasonable to believe that group work motivates classroom learner.

In general from the above scholars' citation one can understand that, when learners actively involved in-group work, they will be highly motivated for learning. This implies group work provides an opportunity to speak, to promote a positive affective climate and motivates learning.

2.4.1.4. Individualizing Instruction

Individualization in language teaching, according to Mc Donough and Show, (2003) is response to learner and learners need on the assumption that direct teaching may not result in learning because learning is something that can only be done by learner himself. In this case, group work not only helps for more learning but also helps individualization. Students in the classroom seems to differ from each other in terms of general knowledge, language proficiency, sex, age, experience, attitude, interest, motivation and personality.

Similarly, Burke (2011), suggests that, placing students in small group's assists individualization for each group being limited by its own capacities, determine its own appropriate level of working more precisely than can a class working in lockstep with its large members. Group members who work on different set of materials simultaneously to suit their goals avoid risk of boring. Therefore; group work is a way of keeping learners responsible for directing their own learning.

2.4.1.5 Positive Affective Climate

Ur (1996) reveals that in the teacher-fronted lessons, learners have no chance to practice the target language. The only chance they have is when they answer questions asked by their teachers. Learners also feel comfortable in accepting explanations and corrections from peers.

Similarly, Mc Donough and Shaw (2003) state that Unlike the lockstep, which is limited to produce hurried and isolated sentences, group work engage in cohesive and coherent sequence of utterances, thereby develop discourse competence rather than a grammatical sentence. In addition, students can take roles and adopt positions, which are an exclusive of the teacher in lockstep. In the group work, students could be engaged in information exchange characteristic of communication outside classroom with all creative language use and spontaneity-where the focus is on meaning and form.

From the above paragraphs one can comprehend that, group work activities enhance learners with variety of skills, which make up communicative competence in second language learning.

2.4.2. Disadvantages of Group Work In Active Learning

Although working in groups has its advantages, there are also times when problems arise. Regarding this idea, Beebe and Masterson (2003), list four disadvantages in Burke (2011).

1) There may be pressure from the group to conform to the majority opinion. Most people do not like conflict and attempt to avoid it when possible. By readily accepting to the majorities' opinion, the individual may agree to a bad solution just to avoid conflict.

2) An individual may dominate the discussion. This leads to members not gaining satisfaction from the group because they feel too alienated in the decision making process.

3) Some members may rely too heavily on others to do the work. This is one of the most salient problems that face groups. Some members do not pitch in and help and do not adequately contribute to the group.

4) It takes more time to work in a group than to work alone. It takes longer to accomplish tasks when working with others. However, the time spent taking and analyzing problems usually results in better solutions (p:88-89).

From the above stated demerits, one can understand that effective student participation in group work is an important learning outcome for higher education. The solution to the listed problems can be to make every group member aware of the goals and objectives of the group and assign specific tasks or responsibilities to each member.

Besides the above disadvantages, other scholars also put the following demerits.

2.4.2.1 Domination of Some Clever Students

In-group work activities one or two of the group members may force the passive learners to accept their ideas. This means some students are active participants than the others and these higher able students dominate the less able once.

Concerning this idea, Mehari (2011), states that students with high academic status are commonly believed by their teachers to do better in-group activity than those with low academic status. These make academically able students dominate the group alone,

As to Cohen (1994), high status students are generally expected to do well on new intellectual tasks, and low status students are generally expected to do poorly on the same

task. When a teacher assigns a group work task, general expectations come into play and produce a self-fulfilling Prophecy in which the high status students talk more and become more influential than the low status students.

Additionally, Arends (1997) mentions:

“During cooperative learning some students dominate group activity; others may be unwilling to participate. Sometimes those who avoid group work are shy students. Shy students are often very bright and they may work well alone or with one another. However, they find it very difficult to participate in a group”(p:136)

The rejected student is another type of student who may have difficulty to participate in-group activity. Finally, there is otherwise typical student who chooses for whatever reason to work alone refuses to participate in cooperative group endeavors Arends (1997).

Similarly, there are several ways in which group efforts go wrong. They further go that low achiever students sometimes leave group’s task to others to be completed. Thus, the high achiever members become ‘free riders’ of doing the majority of group activity.

Concerning this, as Waxman and Walberg, (1991) cite in Getachew (2008), in group learning high ability group members may be differed to and may make over the important leadership roles in ways that benefit them at the expense of the other group members (‘the rich-get-rich effect’).The more able group members may give all the explanations what is to be learned. Since the amount of time spent explaining correlations highly with the amount of learned, the more able members learn a great deal while the less able members flounder as a captive audience.

From the given explanation one can conclude that, the group leader may assure equal opportunity for all participants and encourage members to express their ideas as freely as possible using the target language. In addition, since some students work harder in small group and finish quickly, the teacher has to join the weaker students as a group member for a time being and settle the problem.

2.4.2.2 Difficulty in Measuring Achievement

As Kramsch (2006),in small group discussions, it is difficult to measure the progress of learners, especially during the practice stage. However, students may not lack consolidating what they have learned but also using. Moreover, the teacher could tell how

well students are doing from the way they do activities and the language they use; because using the language is an essential part of learning.

2.4.2.3 Anxiety

Anxiety is the state of being nervous or being mentally tensioned. Ellis, (1995) argued that learners with high level of anxiety are less likely to participate actively .Some students get stress because of their belief that they are under evaluate when they are asked to speak in front of the class. They usually fail to take risk.

2.4.2.4 Waste of Time

As to Putnam, (1997), sometimes group work is considered as a time consuming for the time it takes during arranging the furniture and students introducing each other and returning to their former place. However, even if it wastes time for accomplishing the above-mentioned issues, students learn in-group work better than the lockstep; in lockstep, students have no time to participate in the target language and they cannot get time to learn from one another. Therefore, students who take part in-group activities do not waste time compared to lockstep.

2.5. Different Roles in the Group Work

2.5.1 The Role of the Teacher

As Richards, and Rodgers, (2001) the role of the teacher in-group activities is significantly different from the role that is expected of him in traditional classes. Teachers should encourage equal participation between group members to structure each activity that has various parts and sections to be performed by different group members. However, in communicative language teaching and group work in particular, the teacher is facilitator, organizer, guider and motivation reviver.

As to (Harmer,2001 and Cohen, 1994) suggested, before the start of the group work, teachers should tell students what to do (the instructions and the tasks).They should decide the size of the group and group formation. They have to brief the roles of each group member and tell the time given for the task. Teachers need to assign a role to group member and make explanations clear for all.

In the other way, as to Harmer (2001), teachers should encourage students' for cooperation by assigning functionary roles such as a chairperson (group leader), secretary or reporter. Teachers can encourage balanced groups interactions by assigning roles to group members by reminding them the skills for cooperation. During the group work, the

role of the teacher is to control, guide, check the activities of the learners and stop if time is up. After group work, the teacher should allow learners to report their works, encourage students to comment and ask forward specific and general feedback and tell their results if the task is graded.

From the above explanation, one can comprehend, for effective utilization of group work teachers should perform or play their expected role.

As to Hill (2006:48) persuasively describes the shared vulnerabilities when teachers and students climb together:

The Teacher as mountaineer learns to connect. The guide rope links mountain climbers together so that they may assist one another in the ascent. The teacher makes a 'rope' by using the oral and written contributions of the students, by forging interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary links where plausible, and by connecting the course material with the lives of students.

Teachers are like good midwives, empower and find ways to activate students for they know that learning requires active engagement between the subjects and object matter and know when to hang back and be silent, when to watch and wonder at what is taking place all around them. They can push and they can pull when necessary just like midwives but they know that they are not always called upon to perform Weimer, (2002:75).

2.5.2 The Role of the Student

As Nunan, and Lamb(1995)state in order to carry out-group activities, learners need to interact or make a verbal exchange in the target language. In the process of interaction, they get exposure to comprehensive input, which refersto language features a bit beyond learners' current levelof understanding. Learning in-group work gives high responsibilities for learners toimprove their communicative competence. He suggests Learners must take responsibility for their own learning by developing autonomy and skills in learning how to learn.

From the above paragraph one indication is that although teachers play their roles, the goal of learning in groups cannot be achieved unless students perform their roles. According to(Ellis 1995), before group work, students should be clear with the instruction and ready to participate actively in the group. For the success of the designed work, students should introduce each other, select group leader and secretary. During the group work, students are expected to play different roles. As to Harmer, (2001) suggests some of these activities as: - group leader, who is responsible for all the

discussion in the group; keeping the group on task for each assignment and ensuring everybody assumes his share of the work involved. In general, members in the group have to contribute different roles to perform the task.

Regarding the above idea, one can summarize that every team member should support the work of the team, contribute ideas about content and process and listen carefully to each other.

As cited in Weimer, (2002) Successful students exhibit a combination of successful attitudes and behaviors as well as intellectual capacity. Members in a group:- Are responsible and active by involving in their studies, accept responsibility for their own education, and are active participants in the group, have legitimate educational goals and are motivated by representing in terms of career aspirations and life's desires, ask questions to provide the quickest route between ignorance and knowledge, do not sit at the back and minimize classroom distractions that interfere with learning, take good notes that are understandable and organized which they review them often, understand that personal behavior, feelings and emotions affects learning, discuss about what they are learning and get to know something well enough that they can put into words and are good managers of time.

Based on the above points, we can conclude that, members of the group could help each other to move their team to its goal in order to keep the task and maintain a positive attitude.

2.5.2.1 The Role of the Group Leader

As to Kasambire, (1993), group leaders have great help for teachers especially in oversized classes where they cannot keep an eye and ear on all groups. However, they cannot substitute their teachers. Teachers are grand group leaders who are accountable for the success or the failure of the class as a group. Group leader could be appointed by the teacher or nominated by group members. Moreover, it would be better to let groups to elect their leaders for "group communication is generally more effective and successful if members elect a leader to ensure orderly interaction" Hyland, (1991:27).

Besides this, it encourages learners to bear responsibility for their own learning. Harmer,(1991) and Hill,(1994) say the group leader has to be sure that everyone benefits from an optimal learning situation with the opportunity to learn, participate and gain respect of his team member. She/he has significant roles to play in many group work

activities. She/he acts as facilitator by coordinating the efforts of group members towards a successful completion of tasks. In other words, they are still responsible for supervising the performance of each group. Group work is used as management device. In lockstep classes, a teacher cannot control what each student is doing. However, in-group work the group leader can control what every individual or the group member is doing,

From the above paragraphs one can comprehend that, groups should be allowed to choose their leaders for effective and orderly interaction in performing any activities. Because the students cannot disturb, rather they work the task to share their works with others since group work is a positive interdependence.

2.5.2.2 The Role of the Secretary

As to Hill, (1994) and Wanjryb, (1992) suggested that, like group leaders secretaries can also be nominated either by their teacher or by groups. However, it would be advisable if teachers let each group select its secretary as this encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning by taking part in organizing their groups. In order to be effective, group leaders and secretaries should be told how to carry out their roles. They need to know that they should not dominate their groups, abusing their powers and that they should not forget their roles as participants like any other group members.

Additionally, Hyland (1991) the group's secretary or recorder- takes note of the group's discussion and prepares a written conclusion. She/he writes:- the date, names of members, the role of each member, the decisions made and important ideas to be reported to the class. It is also important to make sure that all students get the opportunity to serve as group leaders and secretaries for it help them to develop their social skills.

From these two paragraphs above, one can review that, the group secretaries need good orientation about their roles effectively to serve their groups and each member should serve as facilitator or recorder and build on others ideas.

2.6. Tasks in learning English through Group Work

There are many types of tasks in learning English language through group activities. As Pica et al, (1987), stated in Martin and Yada, (2009) based on the input and interaction of group members, tasks is divided into problem solving and debate. Though both types are

two-way exchange of information, they have difference. Problem solving tasks allow or involve great frequency of questions and greater syntactic and lexical clarifications of meaning; whereas Debates reduce the opportunity for negotiation since they involve long turns and may reduce the amount of comprehensible input learners need to receive.

As to Jacobs and Manida, (1996) suggested that, since it is difficult to find tasks that essentially encourage group interaction; usually those that could be done easily by each member should be set to groups. For example, some problem solving activities allow low opportunity for language use that involves deeper thinking and may accomplish by long pause.

Based on presence or absence of only one correct answer, Ur, (1996) states, tasks are divided in to discovery(open ended) and skill (closed ended). Open-ended tasks are coded as discovery and tasks with only right answer (close ended) are skill tasks. Discovery tasks promote more lively discussion, while skill tasks are more likely to engage group members in negative behavior-refusing to help and reject other's ideas. Similarly, one-way tasks are less effective than open -ended problems because the interaction ends the moment one-member lights on the right answer.

From the above paragraph, we can predict that, tasks can depend on the quality of materials that are provided for learners and discovery tasks need deep discussion than skilled task.

According to Yule, (1996) group members are allowed to bring their individual products or results together; they are classified into disjunctive, conjunctive, or additive. If the group accepts only one of the different alternatives provided by different members of the group, it is a disjunctive task. If each group member constitutes the final products, it is called conjunctive task. The task is additive if the success of the group depends upon the summation of individual products. If members are allowed to combine their individual contributions in any way, they wish it is an agreeable task. Tasks can also be classified as one way task and two way tasks.

While everyone is able to contribute information, everyone needs to get some information (e.g. jigsaw tasks). One way task, is a task in which one participant or some participants possess all the information and the others have to get information (e.g. describing a picture to another person (Brown 1994; Yule, 1996).

As to (Yule, 1996; Harmer, 2001) discussed that two way tasks led to a higher incidence of interaction and interactional modifications which are believed to be favorable to second language acquisition. Similarly, tasks can also be classified as easy and difficult tasks. Easy tasks allow all students to participate actively and use the targeted language than first language. However, difficult tasks involve high able students to dominate the discussion and lead students to frustrate and use L1 than the target language.

From the following one can conclude that, the tasks should be easy that all students to use the TL and participate actively.

Jacobs and Manida (1996) suggested that, after the end of each group work activity, the teacher has to decide how to grade members of the group. Some faculties assign all students in the group the same grade on the group task. Grading students individually, they argue, inevitably leads to competition within the group and benefits group work. Other faculties grade the contribution of each student based on individual test scores or the group's evaluation of each member's work. If you assign the same grade to the entire group, the grade should not account for more than a small part of a student's grade in the class (perhaps a few bonus points that would raise a test score from a B - to B.)

2.7. Some Factors that Affect Group Work Activity

There are many factors that hinder positive aspects of group work. These factors have deeply recognized by different scholars as follows:

2.7.1. Mother Tongue Interference

Second language students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. According to Mc Donough and Shaw (2003:88) "*barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language.*" Therefore, the learners will not be able to use the foreign language correctly if they keep on being influenced by the use of their mother tongue. Lack of the vocabulary of the target language usually leads learners to borrow words from their native language. On the other hand, they revealed that in small group discussion, some or all of the students might use their L1 than the L2. However, it is very natural to have such a situation and to use in time of frustration.

From the above paragraph one can understand that, the task given to group work should be easy and available to students' participation using the target language. The use of L1 may lead to the productive use of the targeted language if handled with care.

2.7.2. Academic Status and Language Proficiency

Academic status is a factor that affects the implementation of group work. In group work activities some members seems to be more influential than others even though they are equal in every respect. To have equal benefit in the group, members of a group should have equal chance to talk, interact and contribute. Status difference inhibits the normal pattern of interaction and meaning negotiation.

To have equal benefit in the group, members of a group should have equal chance to talk, interact and contribute. In relation to this Cohen (1994) states:

Status characteristics are general expectations for competence. High status individuals are expected to be more competent than low status individuals are across a wide range of tasks that are viewed as important. If a teacher assigns a task to a group of students, some of whom are higher and some lower on any of the status characteristics, which come in to play(p:28).

From the above issues one can conclude that, student who is seen as best in reading is likely to dominate group activity, on the other hand a student who is seen as poor in reading is very likely to be relatively inactive in other tasks.

Language proficiency is also one of the problems that impede groups to accomplish their task. With regard to this idea, Girma (2005:117) states: because of students very little proficiency, they do not participate when asked to work in groups. When they are asked, they say they do not understand. This is because the student's proficiency in English is not good enough to enable them to use the language or to carry out a group work activities. Students resist to use English or to work in groups is due to their lack of proficiency.

Similarly, Jacobs and Manida (1996) states, lack of language proficiency is a reason for student's failure to do well in groups. When the gap between high and low achievers is meaningful and the atmosphere is competitive, the impact of language proficiency becomes: Firstly, the dominance of few fluent speakers make the less proficient learners to give up the task, and Secondly, they may return to use their mother

tongue as an alternative to succeed. According to Harmer, (2001), the main challenges often mentioned in using group work, are the desire to use the first language.

From the above idea one can believe that, this could be due to inability or unwillingness, which proposes convincing students to use the target language or doing controlled activities until they are ready for communicative activities.

2.7.3. Nature of the Task

According to Ur (1996), after preparing necessary conditions, the teacher has to set tasks and materials for the groups. This is the stage where groups are actively engaged in their work to solve tasks in an effort to achieve high quality of group products. The group members are expected to collaborate with each other and coordinate their efforts using their target language English.

In addition McDonough and Show (2003), stated that the teacher has to play three main roles acting as a: -facilitator, participant and observer. Parallel to this the students can take greater initiative.

The point is that learning is something only the learners can do for themselves. Regarding how to overcome problems of low interactions resulting from the nature of the task; selection of activities to be simple, interesting, and encouraging the learners for interaction. It is also necessary to adopt activities based on the level, interest, age and background of the learners to solve the problems.

2.7.4 Grouping

The other problem is the challenge of grouping. If their teacher groups students, they may conflict each other. In addition, if they are allowed to form groups by themselves, they talk/play other issues than the task, and shy students are at disadvantage. Therefore, they consider group work as a playing time than seeking knowledge. As to Hare (1994), if group work is properly organized and handled; students properly use or perform their expected roles, the problems will be reduced and it will pave the way for a good end in language learning.

2.7.5 Peer Status

Students often establish friendship as they play with each other at the school or outside of the school, mainly based on their interest, competence, attractiveness and popularity. Cohen (1994) states that since peer status is closely associated with academic ability,

informal social leaders, regardless of their competence, dominate social isolates or low peer status members while the task is purely academic and has nothing to do with the play.

2.8 Feedback

According to Ur, (1996) Feedback usually holds in whole class context at the end of an activity to be evaluated, criticized and appreciated by the teacher or the students themselves. The purpose of feedback is to help groups observe how successful their performance was; so that they could have insights into their relative strength and what they could do to improve their weakness.

As to Cohen, (1994) Feedback focuses on: the final product, the group process and language use. The feedback on product allows knowing how successful the group members have been in achieving the final products. Feedback on process focus on how successful groups have used skills for cooperation to organize and get the discussion well. Finally, Feedback on language use is observation of discussion that inform the teacher as to what language is properly or poorly used and what needs remediation.

Commonly, whenever group work is taking place, there might be some factors that encounter the effective performance group activity. These are teachers, students and learning environment related factors that could be seen as the main issues. Moreover, as McDonough and Shaw (1993) stated, students may not perform their expected role due to their previous learning experience, poor perception about group work, lack of language proficiency, lack of motivation to learn, fear of making mistakes and the nature of the task.

To sum up, group work is a way of promoting student-centered approach in which learners could have equal chance of practicing the targeted language in a natural way in the classroom. As briefly stated in this chapter, group work help students if constraints encounter teaching through group work are handled and tasks are carefully planned.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter: research design, research setting, the sample size and sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, pilot study, validity and reliability of the tools, procedures of data collection and methods of data analysis are discussed.

3.1. Research Design

In order to have clear idea of the practices and challenges of teachers and students have in teaching and learning English through group work, mixed research method was employed. A mixed research method can be described as a kind of research in which the researcher combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study (Hunduma, 2013).

To realize the above stated idea, the researcher used mixed approach that involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The nature of the problem and the research objective invited the researcher to use this research approach. The researcher employed descriptive research method because he believed that the method is suitable and relevant for the study to address what actually happened in the classroom with regard to teaching learning process.

Similarly, Kumar (2011), states that descriptive study attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, and provide information about the living conditions of a community, or describe attitudes towards an issue. This kind of research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. It is used to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describing them.

3.2. Research Setting

This study was conducted in three secondary schools in Abaya Woreda of West Guji zone which is located at the south of Gedeo zone. Abaya woreda is located in southern extension of Ethiopian highlands about three hundred fifty-seven kilometers (357km) from Addis Ababa. In Abaya woreda, there are three governmental secondary schools and one preparatory school.

The researcher conducted this study on grade nine students of Guangua secondary school, Shara secondary school, and Biyosecondary school in Abaya woreda in 2011 E.C. academic year, and EFL teachers who taught grade nine students. Shara and

Biyo Secondary Schools are located around 43 and 82 Kms away from Guangua secondary school to the west respectively. The researcher taught three years in Shara Secondary School and two years in Guangua Secondary School.

Even though the researcher is a teacher of Guangua Preparatory School now, he had acquaintance with the school community of Shara and Guangua. Moreover, based on his experience as a teacher in the above secondary schools, he noticed low participation of students' in group work activities and low communicative competence. Thus, the above secondary Schools were preferred for study and these issues initiated him to study the reason in-depth and recommend the solutions. Additionally, regarding group work, there was no other related research conducted in these schools. Grade nine students were preferred for they are on the transmission from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction.

3.3. Population of the Study

Guangua Secondary School had 8 sections of grade 9 and each section had an average of 39, totally 312 students. The number of teachers who were teaching grade 9 in the school was 5. On the other hand, Shara Secondary School had 4 sections. The average number of students in every section was 42, totally 168 students and 3 English language teachers of grade 9. Thirdly, Biyo Secondary School had 3 sections. The average number of students in each section was 40, totally 120 students. There were also 2 teachers who taught grade 9 students. Totally, all grade nine English language teachers and students of three secondary schools in Abaya woreda were the populations of the study. This means, 600 students in 15 sections and 10 English language teachers of grade 9 in three secondary schools were target populations of the study.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

As stated before, the research was conducted in three secondary schools in Abaya woreda. Since it was too difficult for the researcher to take sample in all sections of grade 9, first the researcher selected four sections randomly (2 from 8 sections of Guangua Secondary School, 1 from 4 sections of Shara Secondary school and 1 from 3 sections of Biyo Secondary School) for observation.

Besides this, 120 students (20%) of total population (60 students from Guangua secondary school, 30 students from Shara secondary school, and the rest 30 students from Biyo secondary school) were selected randomly for questionnaire from 4 sections of

observation as the subject of the study because random sampling method deliver equal chances for everyone to be a member of the study. In these selected sections students used their better language of understanding (Afan Oromo) to fill the questionnaires.

Additionally, eight English language teachers who taught grade nine in those three secondary schools were taken as participants of the study using available sampling technique because they were small in number. With this regard, three students from each observed classes (totally twelve students) were selected for FGD purposively because purposive sampling method relies on the judgment of the researcher and he focused on particular characteristics of a population that best enable to answer the research questions.

3.5. Instruments of Data Collection

The researcher used four types of data collection instruments: Classroom observation, questionnaire, interview and focused group discussion. The instruments were selected because of their suitability for gathering important data for the study.

3.5.1. Classroom Observation

Observation is a purposeful and systematic way of watching classroom interactions. It was used as a major instrument to gather first-hand information about the issue. Many scholars believe that observation provides accurate information about an issue under investigation. For instance, Kumar, (2011) defined that observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place. The main purpose of the observation was to have direct experience on what role EFL teachers play to maximize learners' participation in English language during group discussion. To collect the data, the researcher arranged his schedule with one of the experienced English teacher of Guangua Secondary School who had done this kind of study and observed the class using an observation checklist which was prepared by the researcher.

From 15 sections in above three secondary schools, the researcher selected four sections for observation (2 sections from 8 sections of Guangua Secondary School, 1 section from 4 sections of Shara secondary School and 1 section from 3 sections of Biyo Secondary School through random sampling method. The researcher employed observation in randomly selected four sections. Among ten EFL teachers in the schools, two during the pilot study and four (those taught the class of observation) were observed during main study. The classroom observation made three times in each section to see the practices

and challenges of teaching English language through group work. The classroom observation checklist was prepared based on the review of related literature of chapter two.

3.5.2. Questionnaires

The researcher used this instrument of data collection for it is quick method of gathering information. The questionnaires were prepared for students only. It was prepared in English and translated to Afaan Oromo because the learners can comprehend more the concept of the questions with their mother tongue than English language. Copies were distributed for 120 participants in the observed four sections.

Before the forth main study was collected, the students' questionnaires were prepared by the researcher, and then declared and piloted in two sections of Guangua Secondary School which mean 10 students from (9th "B") and 10 students from (9th "F") totally on 20 students through random sampling method. Based on this pilot study, some questions were dismissed and some were modified through decision made between the researcher, his advisor and the support of two English language teachers of Guangua Secondary School. Totally, 30 items (25 closed ended and 5 open ended) were modified for students for the main study.

3.5.3. Interview

The researcher used interview for teachers to check the reliability of the data that was obtained from students' responses on questionnaire and what had been observed in the classroom. Eight English language teachers (3 from Guangua Secondary School, 3 from Shara Secondary School and 2 from Biyo Secondary School were interviewed) using available sampling techniques as they were a few in number. Since the information gained by interviews was personal and it helped to get detailed information, both structured and semi structured types of interview were used to get information concerning: feeling, attitude, or emotion to certain questions which were not possible to be answered through questionnaire and classroom observation. Based on review of related literature and the classroom observations, seven questions were prepared by researcher using English language for teachers' interview.

3.5.4. Focused Group Discussion

Regarding the students sampling, the researcher selected 6 students (in one group discussion) from Guangua Secondary School and other 6 students (in one group

discussion) from Shara Secondary and Biyo Secondary school. Totaly 12 students (in two group discussion) were the participants of the study. The participants for group discussion were sampled using purposive sampling technique for availability of the researcher and to save the time. Having selected the participants, the researcher underwent to elicit additional information from the group discussion to check gaps between the classroom observation and the questionnaire. To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher explained and asked the FGD questions in students' first language (Afan Oromo) during the discussion. To realize the evidence, the FGD was video recorded for future analysis.

3.6. Pilot Study

The pilot test had the following major goals: to establish that the instruments were clear and understandable to the research participants (to avoid confusion) and to check if the data gathering instruments were appropriate to collect the data that help to answer the research questions.

3.6.1. Validity and Reliability

Instruments (students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation) were revised based on the information collected from 20 students and two English teachers of piloted sections at Guangua secondary school. Then modification was made based on the judgment and correction given. Moreover, pilot study (pre-test) was carried out and adjustment was made based on the pilot test.

3.6.2. Reliability of the Questionnaire, Interview and Classroom Observation

Before collecting the actual data, a pilot test was conducted on 20 grade 9 students of Guangua Secondary School (out of the sample subjects). The questionnaire was administered in randomly selected two sections of grade 9 students at Guangua Secondary School. Interview was held with two teachers whose classes were observed. Generally, 6 closed ended questions (question number 1, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 14) and 2 open ended items (question number 25 and 27) were modified from the mistakes of grammar, punctuation and capitalization rules. Similarly, 3 closed questions (item number 2, 3 and 8) and 1 open ended question (item number 26) were omitted from questionnaire. Therefore, an items were reduced to 30 (25 closed ended and 5 open ended) on the main study from 34 questions (28 closed ended and 6 open ended items). Beside this, the teachers' interviews were reduced from 10 to 7 items after pilot study. Interview question number 3, 5 and 8 were discarded since they had similar concept with item number; 4, 7

and 10 respectively. Finally, an error of spelling and capitalization in classroom observation checklist were modified after adviser's comments. Guangua Secondary School was chosen for having large number of population and not far from researcher's work place.

3.6.3. Validity of the Questionnaire, Interview and Classroom Observation

In addition to testing the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the pilot study was used to verify whether the statements in the questionnaire were comprehended by the students or valid. Feedback was sought from the students regarding the wording of the questionnaire. After all, the questionnaire was revised based on the comments and suggestions given by the students and teachers regarding the use of some words and the structure of some statements. Since the teachers' interview questions were worded in very simple English, it was not required to translate it into other languages.

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

To get adequate information from the study, the researcher explained the importance of this research to the subjects of the study. The researcher did not administer all the data collection instruments at the same time but rather he used them one after the other in order to achieve desired outcome. Classroom observation was employed before employing other data gathering instruments. At the time of classroom observation, each class was observed three times and a checklist had been served every time. As an assistant observer, the researcher was entering the class with one experienced English teacher with similar checklist. The researcher had discussed and gave training for an assistant observer before entered the class. Finally, the overall activities in the classes were crosschecked by comparing the two lists in addition to the notes taken by the researcher.

Unfortunately, the time when the data obtained by observer and co-observer were different, the observation was revised to check correlation between two observers and significance of checklist. After deep inspection obtained from the analysis of observation, the researcher administered another instruments such as questionnaire, interview and FGD one after the other respectively. Clear explanations were given by the researcher before using the tools with both the students and the teachers.

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

Since the main purpose of this study was to investigate practices and challenges of teaching English language through group work activities in the class, the descriptive

research method was employed. The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The data obtained through classroom observation, open ended questions, interview and FGD were analyzed qualitatively. Whereas, the data collected through close-ended questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively. Simple statistical techniques such as percentages and bar-graphs were used for the numerical interpretation through counting and converting the frequency distribution into percentages.

Tables were prepared for each result and appropriate percentages were calculated using scientific calculator. The results of the tables were summarized with mean values. On the other hand, bar-graphs were used for interpretation of personal information related to students' background using the SPSS software. Finally, based on the gathered and conducted information, summary, conclusion and recommendation have been drawn respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data gathered from the subjects in Guangua, Sharaand Biyo Secondary Schools. As noted earlier, the study aimed at practice and challenges of teaching English through group work in Grade Nine. To collect relevant data for the study, classroom observation, questionnaire, interview and FGD were employed from February 22 to May28 /2018.

The data gathered through the above instruments were presented and analyzed separately. Thus, the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data were made based on the responses obtained from the participants of the research. Moreover, to maintain the overall quality of the research work, the data gathered through the questionnaire and interview were tabulated and analyzed as seen in the forgoing pages.

4.1 Personal Information Related to Students Background.

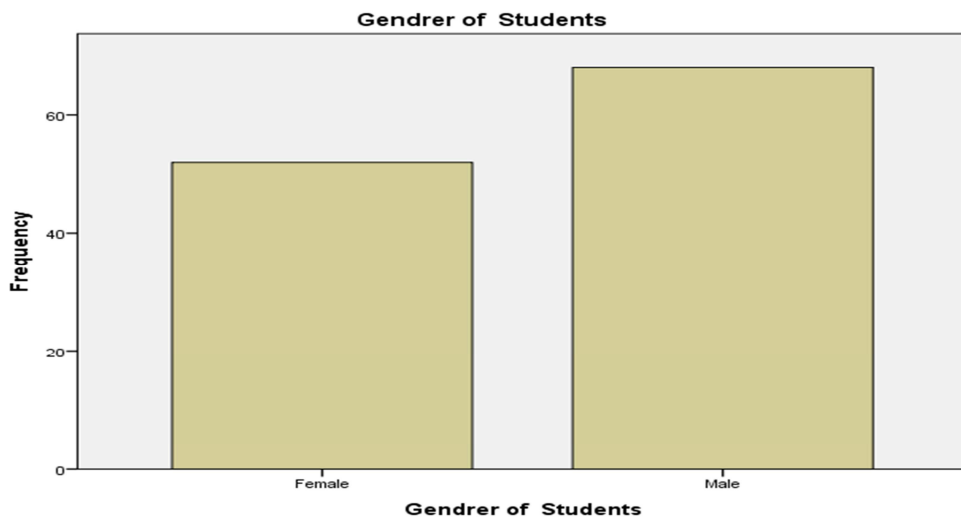


Figure 1: Bar Graph that Shaw the Gender of theStudents

As indicated in the bar graph that show students' sex, 52 (43.3%) of the participants were females whereas the remaining 68(56.7%) of the respondents were males. This indicated that both maleand female were proportional participants in filling the questionnaire.

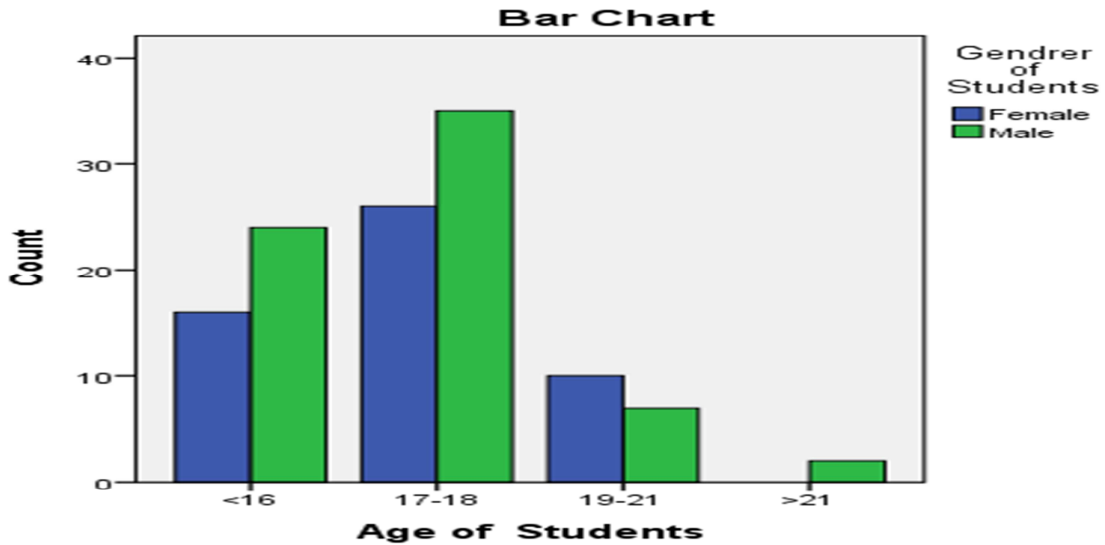


Figure 2: Bar Chart that Show the Age of the Students

As indicated in the above graph, out of 120 participants in the three secondary schools, 40 students (16 female and 24 male) were under 16 years. Majority of the respondents or 61 students (26 female and 35 male) were found between 17-18 years. Additionally, 17 of them (10 female and 7 male) were between age of 19-21, and 2 of them (0 female and 2 males) were above 21 years. Thus, it was concluded that most of the participants were matured enough to their grade level.

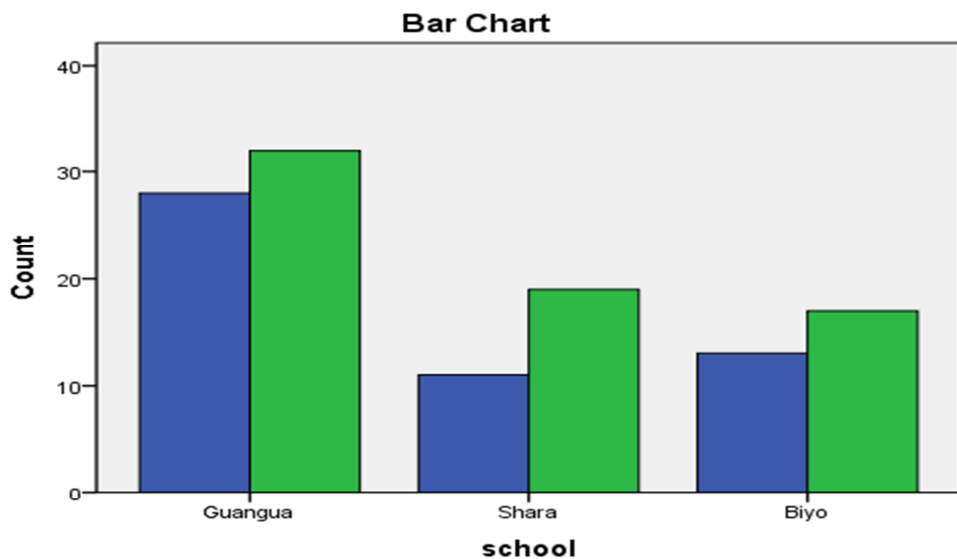


Figure 3: Bar graph that Show the school of the students

As shown in the above bar graph concerning the school of participants, 60(50%) of participants (28 female and 32 male) were students of Guangua Secondary School while 30(25%) participants (11 female and 19 male) were from Shara Secondary School. Furthermore, the rest 30 (25%) of study subject (13 female and 17 male) were taken from Biyo Secondary School. This indicates that, the majority of the learners were taken from Guangua secondary school because this school contained 8 section or more than half of total population.

4.2 Group Work and Experience Related Issues

According to many writers, group work is a strategy which is considered as effective learning method for EFL classes. Regarding this, Students were asked to express their experience of learning in group work activities and their feeling towards the method of learning. In addition to class observations, the following responses were obtained with frequency (Fre) and percent (%)

Table 1. Students' Response of Different Issues Related To Group Work

	Items	Responses			
			Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think that group work has advantage in learning English language?	Fre	109	11	120
		%	91	9	100
2	Have you an experience of learning in group work activities in your previous classes?	Fre	81	39	120
		%	68	32	100
3	At the beginning of the school year, have you been oriented about learning English language in groups?	Fre	17	103	120
		%	14	86	100
4	Which type of grouping do you prefer? A. Heterogeneous /mixed sex and mixed ability B. Homogeneous/ similar sex and similar ability.		A	B	Total
		Fre	111	9	120
		%	92	8	100
5	What type of task given is interesting for group work activities? A. Open ended B. Close ended	Fre	38	82	120
		%	32	68	100
6	During your group work activities, do you have a group leader and secretary? A. Yes B. No	Fre	47	73	120
		%	39	61	100
7	If your answer is Yes, who elects them? A .The teacher B. students	Fre	41	6	47
		%	87	13	100
8	Do you think that the time given for group work activities is sufficient? A. Yes B. No	Fre	54	66	120
		%	45	55	100
9	While you perform group work, is there a problem that encounters you/ your group member? A. Yes B. no	Fre	96	24	120
		%	80	20	100

The first item on table 1 was prepared to perceive students view about group work activities. According to the students' responses, 91% of them believed that group work had advantage for learning English language, while the remaining 9% did not believe. Nevertheless, acceptance by the majority was an indication of positive image of students on group work activities. On top of this, teachers were interviewed about students feeling/ interest of group work activities and they forwarded their views as: Students had a mixed feeling for group work activities. Only a few members of students were interested in the activity, then after looking at others' participation, some were attracted and started to join. Some students seem to be confused about the tasks given, later they made themselves familiar and tend to take part in the group.

Similarly, Students were also asked through FGD if they like learning through group and explain the advantages they gain from it. The majority of students said that group work activities: help to develop tolerance and respects of different ideas, made us feel free to speak with our friends without fear, motivate us to learn from each other. Additionally, it create conducive learning environment for learning, enhance equal opportunity for members to practice in the language, help to develop listening and speaking skills and mostly it benefit shy and low achiever students.

According to Christenson (1990), grouping is a method of teaching in which two or small number of learners discuss together on a particular issue to reach an agreement. In this method of discussion, every member of the group can suggest his /her idea in the group to find solution.

From the above stated idea, one could understand that group refers to a number of people who interact with one another and exchange information or sharing experience about common goal. The way students were grouped is essential for effective group work.

According to the responses of students on the second item, 68 % of them had revealed their experience of learning in group in their previous schools. However, the rest 32% of the respondents assured that they had no experience. Similarly, the interviewed teachers said that, the new curriculum implementation about learning through group activities and modern published textbook is used to make students actively participate in group. However, responses from FGD displayed that teachers used to apply group work activities rarely because their intention was to cover the portion / whole topics in the book rather than using group work activities. Additionally, participants of FGD said

that some learners liked to participate in-group work activities because they could get a free option to speak freely and share ideas without fear, but they revealed that they did not perform their role effectively as teacher's instruction yet.

On the third item, students were asked if they had been oriented about learning English in group at the beginning of the school year. Regarding this, (14 %) of the respondents said that they had been oriented about learning in groups and the majority (86%) of the participants responded that they had not been oriented. It would have been good for students to know and perform what was expected if they had taken such training. Similarly, the way students were grouped is essential for effective group work.

Accordingly on item number four, 92% of the respondents preferred to form heterogeneous (with mixed sex and ability) grouping, and the rest 8% of respondents preferred homogeneous (With similar sex and similar ability) grouping. The responses from teachers and the classroom observation also revealed similar ideas. The response from teachers' interview and students' FGD also showed that teachers need students to form heterogeneous groups. Teachers assigned students to form a mixed groups because in the mixed groups all types of students; the low achievers, medium and high achievers could be grouped together. Therefore, construction of heterogeneous grouping was more valuable than homogeneous grouping.

Item number 5 tried to find answer about the types of tasks that interests them while learning through group activities. For this item, 32% of the respondents replied that the tasks given were open-ended while 68% said that the tasks were closed-ended. This implies, the types of tasks given had great influence in students' group work activities. Concerning these issues, teachers replied that mostly they preferred close ended types of activities because students can focus on the given issues and try to come up with a solution easily. On the other hand, the open-ended activities could take too much time and students may not reach on an agreement within the given time.

However, scholars suggested open-ended tasks are preferable for a better communicative language use of students. Concerning this issue, Atkins, et al (1996) suggested that the objective of learning a language is to enable students develop their communicative competence of the target language through group work where there was a hot discussion among group members and if the tasks are open ended tasks.

Some students preferred close-ended type of group tasks to reach on an agreement and correct the mistakes on time but closed ended tasks could not give an opportunity of exchanging ideas through group discussion. Additionally, during the classroom observation, teachers were assigning students with close ended activities and write the correct answer on the black board. As a researcher, it is better if the teachers highly use open ended item in GW to improve students' communicative competence.

On item number 6, the relevant data were gathered in connection with the selection of group leaders and secretaries. Regarding this issue, Fedaa (2002), in his MA thesis indicated that, group leaders and secretaries play vital roles in-group tasks, in facilitating the successful performance of the group's tasks under the supervision of teachers. Similarly, as seen in the table 1, a large proportion (61 %) of the students said that there was no group leader and secretary, while (39 %) of them said that there was a group leader and secretary in the groups they formed. This implies that, the formation of group work and election of group leader and secretary were not similar from one school to another school. In teachers' interview majority of respondents supported the idea of no group leader and secretary during group work.

According to the feedback of the interview and the classroom observation, none of the respondents indicated the presence of secretary during group work activity. The observed classes needed group leaders and secretaries who could orderly maintain interaction and who could record what the groups did to report to the class at the end of group tasks. Generally, lack of group leaders seemed to contribute disintegration of many groups because well-oriented group leaders could ensure order, and keep the students on the tasks by coordinating their efforts towards the accomplishment of the tasks. Besides, due to the absence of secretaries in those tasks, no one took responsibility for recording what the groups have discussed.

Concerning the item about time given for group work activities, 45% of the respondents suggested that the time given for group activity was enough, whereas, 55% of them claimed that the time given was not enough. As seen in the classroom observation, the time teachers allot for group work activity was not ample. Except one teacher in the observed sections, the maximum time given for a task was 4 to 7 minutes. This implies, teachers used to interrupt before the members get chance to share ideas and started revising or made students to continue the next topic.

Similarly, Mehari, (2011), stated that 15 minutes is very short time for EFL students to practice the language as they have no exposure/opportunity to practice the target language outside of the classroom.

Finally, Students were asked if they come across with problems when they work in groups. Concerning this issue, most of the respondents (80%) said that they come with different problems during group work activities. Participants of the study in both the questionnaire and interview were asked to list some problems they faced in group activities.

Accordingly, as the main problem during group work activities, the majority of the respondents stated the following issues. Views related to teachers included: less support from teachers for group work activities, insufficient clarification for the tasks to be performed by students, tiredness and lack of interest of teaching, using much of the time for lecturing, humiliating students when committing mistakes, non-grading of the group work activities, reluctance to check activities while students perform and absence of supportive teaching materials.

On the other hand, issues related to students included: shyness to express ideas in front of others (cultural pressure), disagreement /conflict with each other, carelessness because of non-grading of group work activities, lack of textbooks (even though they have, they do not bring in fear of being stolen), poor language proficiency, unpreparedness and lack of interest to learn, aimlessness and misbehaving, the fear of being laughed at, lack of group leader or someone who takes responsibility of coordinating, the total shift of medium of instruction and a tendency to use L1, domination of clever students, lack of language proficiency/poor educational background, misunderstandings of students ideas on the given issues, reluctance and joking during activities and shortage of time for the given tasks were issues concerned with learners.

4.2.1 Issues Related to Frequency of Using Group Work

Key: 4= always 3= Sometimes 2= Rarely 1= Never

Table 2 Students' Response on frequency of Using GW and grouping preference.

	Items		4	3	2	1	Total	Mean	
10	How often do you learn English using group work?	Fre	6	24	78	12	120	264	2.2
		%	5	20	65	10	100		
11	With how many members in a group do you work together?		A 2	B 3-6	C 7-10	D >10			
		Fre	-	101	16	3	120	338	2.8
		%	0	84	13.5	2.5	100		
12	What type of grouping do you prefer for group work activity?		Formal group	Informal group	Study team	Other			
		Fre	84	11	24	1	120	418	3.5
		%	70	9.2	20	0.8	100		

As expressed in the table 2 item 10, 5% of the total participants suggested that they learn always through group work, and 65% of the respondents said, they rarely learn in-group work activities. While 20% of the respondents suggested as they sometimes learn in-group work activities, 10% of the participants revealed as they never learn through group work. As displayed in table 2 above, the mean value (2.2) indicates that the students rarely learned English language through group work activities. This could imply majority of participants responded as learning through group was not performed in the class by teachers. Similarly, teachers' interview also indicates that they usually dominated the class for lecturing method. This was also seen during classroom observation. This indicates that, the implemented curriculum referred to GW was not applied in schools because teachers did not understand the value of cooperative learning by themselves.

According to the learners' response on item number 11, 84% of them revealed that they formed a group that consisted of 3 to 6 members. In addition, 13.5% of the respondents said that they formed a group of 7 to 10 students. This shows the rule of group formation was not supported by curriculum and carelessness highly took place between both teachers and students. The other 2.5% said they formed a group that contains more than 10 members and finally no one said two students could form a group. Similarly, as displayed in the table 2 above, the mean value (2.8) indicated that sometimes 3-6 members of students worked together in a group.

Nevertheless, as seen during classroom observation, teachers allowed their students to form a group but no one of them limited the number in the groups. Surprisingly, in one of the classes with a population of 43 students in Biyo Secondary School, the teacher ordered students to form two groups (two rows of desks as one) to suggest ideas with agreeing and disagreeing with the given issue, which was unimaginable for students. However, one hot group discussion with 4 to 5 members was seen in Guangua Secondary School during classroom observation. Accordingly, Harmer (1991) stated in the review of literature part despite the quality of the tasks, if groups are large, obviously the amount of student's participation fails and the group cohesion may tend to disintegrate.

Based on the above, the researcher can interpret the number of students that work together is essential for effective implementation of group work. Even though, there is no fixed number for grouping that scholars agreed on, the group should not be too large or too small in number. Besides this idea, most writers suggest 3 to 6 as preferable number. From our experience, 4 to 5 students are preferable to make hot discussion.

As stated in table 2, regarding the type of grouping, the majority of students(70%) preferred formal grouping. In contrary, 9.2% of the respondents preferred to form informal grouping. The remaining 20% preferred to form study team which shares some features of the formal grouping. It needs a semester and more time as well as fixed group members to complete course requirement. The mean score (3.5) in above table expressed that majority of the respondents preferred formal grouping for group work activity.

Additionally, the data of teachers interview also revealed formal grouping was more advantageous for both the students and the teacher because the students could adopt the behavior of each other when they stay together for long period. This may also help the teachers to grade their students' group work activities as they stay permanently for semester or more.

Brumfit (1994), and Davis (1993) suggested that grouping is more or less formed permanently or temporarily with some defined or clearly stated roles with in a single class session. Such grouping of students is expected to complete a specific task like producing a term paper and writing a report. Members stay together until the work is finished and if it is graded. As one's interpretation, formal grouping is more preferable to grade students in a group as continues assessment permanently.

4.2.3 Assumed Challenges of Using Group Work Activities

This section of the discussion deals with the assumed challenges during teaching English language through group work. Respondents were made to tick or put (x) in front of each of the items using the 5-point Likert scale rating system. Rating under 2 and 3 was understood as negative or rejection of the factor/issue whereas, rating under 4 and 5 was taken as positive confirmation by the researcher. Thus, the interpretation was performed by combining the two together. There could be different challenges that one could encounter in applying group work as a method of teaching in the classroom.

KEY 5= Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Disagree 2= Strongly Disagree 1= Undecided

Table 3 The Students' Responses on Related Challenges About Group Work

	Students' related problems	Fr & %	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Mean	
1	Lack of language proficiency	Fr	90	20	7	3	-	120	557	4.6
		%	75	16.7	5.8	2.5		100		
2	Lack of experience in group work activities	Fr	75	24	12	6	3	120	522	4.35
		%	62.5	20	10	5	2.5	100		
3	Absence of the group leader	Fr	62	34	13	9	2	120	505	4.2
		%	51.7	28.3	11	7.5	1.6	100		
4	Group size / large number of student in the group.	Fr	58	38	21	2	1	120	510	4.25
		%	48.3	31.7	17.5	1.6	0.8	100		
5	Group composition/the way the group is formed.	Fr	48	37	24	7	4	120	478	3.98
		%	40	30.8	20	5.8	3.3	100		

On table 3 above, respondents were asked if their language proficiency was one of the limited factors. In this regard, 91% of respondents strongly agreed that it was the main constraint during group work activities. This indicated that the reluctance of students to take part in group activities was because of inability to use the language for meaningful communication. Similarly during classroom observations, students were seen hiding themselves or simply sat alone without taking role in group work activities. Accordingly, the mean value (4.6) for item number 1, imply that the respondents strongly agreed about lack of student's language proficiency as the main problem of learning English through group work activities.

On second item, respondents were asked if their experience had influenced group work activities. Referring to this item, 82.5 % of the respondents showed that lack of

experience was one of the main challenges that they faced during group work activities. According to the students FGD, some teachers used group work frequently whereas others used sometimes or rarely. Therefore, students who had no experience of working in groups in their previous schools could be confused until they familiarize themselves with classroom situation. Beside this, the mean value (4.35) for item number 2 expressed the respondents' agreement about lack of students experience as another challenge that highly affected the group work activities.

Correspondently, respondents were asked if absence of the group leader might be challenge of learning through group activity. With this regard, Brumfit (1994), group work is used as management device. In lockstep classes, a teacher cannot control what each student is doing. However, in group work the group leader can control what every individual or the group member is doing. Therefore, students cannot disturb rather they do the task to share their works with others since group work is a positive interdependence.

Similarly, as stated in above table, absence of the group leader was confirmed by 80.1% of the respondents to be one of the problems encountered in group work. Group leader helps to provide necessary directions for members to perform the given task properly. Therefore, the presence of group leader should be mandatory for effective group activity. The interviewed teachers also replied as: they made the group members and elect group leaders themselves. However, sometimes the teachers selected group leader from low achiever to motivate and create moral feeling in their mind, but they serve only for a period.

Even though electing low achiever as group leader could motivate and create competition among students, the researcher was doubtful that academically gave such kind of responsibility for low achiever students to guide the group were not achieve the given task as expected outcome.

Group size is the number of students that act together in the group. Whenever the number of students in a group exceeds six, the probability of getting chance to share ideas will minimize. Concerning this issue, Atkins et al (1996), also suggests that group work should be a collection of three to four students working together collaboratively and it should not exceed six. From this we can understand that, many of the scholars suggest four to six as preferable group size. Concerning this, 80% of the total respondents agreed that large group size was major problem during group work activity. Whereas, the rest

20% of the respondents revealed that number of students could not affect group activities. The mean value (4.25) expressed the large number of students in one group could highly affect the group task.

On item number 5 in table 4, with regard to the way group was formed, 70.8% of the respondents revealed that group composition was one of the constraints they faced while learning English language through group work. Unless students form mixed or heterogeneous groups (with different sex, ability, background etc.), the group may fail to succeed its goal. When mixed groups are formed, one could share ideas from peers, and some students who fear talking to their teachers dare to talk and raise different question. From the above one could conclude that, students can achieve their language proficiency when they organized heterogeneously with dissimilar sex and abilities.

4.2.3.1 Assumed Factors that Affect Learning through Group Work

KEY 4= strongly agree 4=Agree 3= Disagree 2= strongly disagree 1= undecided
Table 4 The Students' Responses on assumed factors

	Assumed factors	Fre & %	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Mean	
1	Anxiety	Fre	92	13	9	5	1	120	550	4.58
		%	76.7	10.8	7.5	4.2	0.8	100		
2	Nature of the task given to the learners.	Fre	59	30	15	10	6	120	486	4.05
		%	49.2	25	12.5	8.3	5	100		
3	Mother tongue interference	Fre	55	34	17	8	6	120	484	4.03
		%	45.8	28.3	14.2	6.7	5	100		
4	Domination of active learners.	Fre	49	41	14	9	7	120	476	3.97
		%	40.8	34.2	11.7	7.5	5.8	100		
5	Unavailability of textbooks	Fre	70	24	19	5	2	120	515	4.3
		%	58.3	20	15.8	4.2	1.6	100		
6	Insufficient time given for the task	Fre	69	31	15	5	-	120	524	4.37
		%	57.5	25.8	12.5	4.2	-	100		
7	Lack of interest to share knowledge with others	Fre	54	23	17	16	10	120	455	3.8
		%	45	19.2	14.2	13	8.3	100		
8	Reluctance to work in groups.	Fre	81	20	14	4	1	120	536	4.47
		%	67.5	16.7	11.7	3.3	0.8	100		
9	Shyness to practice the language in the group activities.	Fre	65	28	16	7	4	120	503	4.2
		%	54.2	23.3	13.3	5.8	3.3	100		

Anxiety was confirmed as one problem of learning English language through group work. In this regard, 87.5% of the respondents agreed that anxiety was the main problem of the students to speak in front of the class. It could be because of different reasons like

students cultural background, lack of self-confidence and fear of the group members. The mean value: (4.58) for item number 1 indicated, the respondents strongly agreed about the issue of anxiety as the main constraints of learning English through group activities. According to the data from students' FGD, anxiety was fear or nervousness about what might happen. It was affected and blocked students to provide or present the result of discussion in front of the students. They expressed anxiety as an illness of achievement and it could be reduced through regular practice of group work beside encouragement of teachers.

Regarding the nature of the task, as stated in chapter 2; 2.9, Harmer (2001) indicated that different tasks involve students to dominate the discussion and lead students to frustrate and use L1 than the target language. Similarly, 74.2% of the respondents confirmed that it was one of the limiting factors in group work. Tasks given for group work activities should match the need and level of students. During classroom observation, the tasks forwarded for students were those which seek only correct answer. Students were notable to think beyond the texts, so activities should be adapted to suit the learners need and interest.

with regard to mother tongue interference, as stated in chapter two of this paper, scholars like Mc Donough and Shaw (2003), revealed that in small group discussion, some or all of the students might use their L1 than the L2. But it is very natural to have such a situation and to use in time of frustration. Referring to this, the majority of the respondents (74.1%) agreed as the mother tongue was the main obstacle in learning English through group activities. Both the students and teachers confirmed as it was the usual problem that can be seen in group work activities. According to classroom observation in the majority of the groups, the learners discussed about the task given by their mother tongue rather than L2. In line with this, group leaders and the teacher have to check the language used in the group and take corrective measures. However, to reduce such problems, the task should be easy and be designed to participate students using the target language.

Concerning item number 4 above, 75% of the respondents agreed on the domination of active learners in the cooperative learning was one of the constraints in teaching and learning English language through group work. As seen during classroom observation and some oral interview from respondents, those students who were seen as best in

reading and writing were likely to dominate group activity. However, such kind of conditions could be improved if the group has a responsible group leader, because the group leader allows equal opportunity and time for all group members. Concerning this idea, Arends (1997:136) states:

During cooperative learning, some students dominate group activity; others may be unwilling to participate. Sometimes those who avoid group work are shy students. Shy students are often very bright and they may work well alone or with one another.

With regard to item number 5, the responses of the majority, (78.3%) revealed that unavailability of textbooks was the frequent constraint that both the teachers and students encountered in teaching and learning English language through group work. In addition, as observed in the classrooms, the average number of textbooks in each class was 4. Surprisingly, in one observed class of Guangua secondary school, only the teacher's textbook was found in the class.

In addition, since the size of the new textbook is too big to fit their bags and expensive cost for being stolen, they did not bring them. In teachers' interview one individual said that "since texts are essential for group work tasks, students have to bring the text, and strict corrective measures should be taken on those who steal textbooks." However, the researcher has proved that above three fourth (3/4) of the students from each classes had received the newly arrived textbooks (English for Ethiopia Student's Textbook for Grade 9 by FDRE, Ministry of Education 2003 E.C).

In item number 6 concerning insufficient time given for the task, 83.3% of the respondents confirmed that the time was insufficient to practice the tasks given in-group work activities. This was also seen during class observation as the time given did not match with provided tasks. The teachers were not scheduled the time of lecture and group discussion before the class.

Referring to item number 7 in table 4 above, 64.2% of the respondents suggested that, lack of interest to share knowledge with others was the main constraint that displayed in learning English language through group work. In fact, it was difficult to judge the students interest by classroom observation because the behavior of each student was not well known. Nonetheless, one interviewee (T01) said, "All of the students did not

participate equally in group activity. This could be improved if group work activities measured and graded to create competition among different groups in the class.

With Regard to reluctance to work in group work, 84.2% of the respondents confirmed as it was the main factor that affected learning through group. As seen during classroom observations, students' reluctance had a direct relation to their language use. Only few students in the group were participating actively and the rest were sitting idle. This was a result of ineffective language skill of group members.

Finally, regarding shyness to practice the language in the group activities, about 77.5% of the respondents have agreed that shyness to practice in the target language was one of the impeded factors of group work activities. Similar to anxiety, shyness could be improved by continuous practice in group work. As seen in classroom observation, the Shy students neither spoke loudly nor stood in front of the class and express their ideas. This was because of cultural influence of the society. For example, some cultural norms do not permit girls to eat or speak in front of people. If they eat or speak in front of dozen people, that girl is assumed to be rude. Such influences could be reflected in all observed classrooms, however, one amazing thing that the researcher had faced in class of observation at Shara Secondary School was one of the female student had failed in the classroom after shivering some minutes without any speech.

To sum up, the mean values in the table 4 above shows, the majority of the respondents believed or agreed the questions raised were crucial problems during teaching learning through group activities.

4.3. Overview of Classroom Observation

As seen from classroom observation, all teachers introduced the previous lesson before starting actual daily lesson. Sometimes the explanations given for the tasks were vague that students got confused. Teachers allowed students to form groups but they did not limit the number in each group. Therefore, there were no fixed numbers to form a group. As a result, some groups' exceeded six. Teachers did not allow students to report comment and criticize their works so there was no chance for students to be encouraged or appreciated. There was no sufficient feedback given for the tasks from the teachers.

In rare cases teachers told students to elect group leader but the duties of the leader was not explained by their teachers. But nothing was mentioned about secretary. Again in rare cases teachers were seen trying to help students in the group during the activity, but the time they gave for students to accomplish an activities was not sufficient enough.

Some students did not perform activities as told by the teacher since the number of students in each class was unmanageable. Too much noise was heard during the activity because Students tried to group themselves. In some groups, the number of students was more than six. Beside this, some group did not elect their group leader and secretary. Thus there were much noise and disturbance. The model group which performs the given tasks and reflects the result of discussion on time was seen in three secondary schools. The sample document used to grade the group activities was not seen much in the classroom.

In addition, there was a frequent interference of mother tongue (L1). During the activity, some groups were seen doing irrelevant things rather than the given tasks, and sometimes students called their teacher by their mother tongue for help. At the end of the task, reflecting what the group done, and criticism given by the teacher or students was not seen. In addition, there were no teaching materials that support the teaching learning process in the classrooms.

4.4 Explanation of Teachers' Interview and Students'FGD

4.4.1 Teachers' Interview

Key: 4= always 3= Sometimes 2= Rarely 1= Never

Table 5 Teachers' Responses Regarding Frequency Of Using Group Work Activities.

	Item		4	3	2	1	Total
Q 1.	How often do you use group work activities in your classes?	Fre	1	6	1	-	8
		%	12.5	75	12.5		100

As seen in the table 5 above, 75% of the interviewees said that they sometimes used group work activities. On the other hand, 12.5% of the interviewed teachers suggested that they always teach using group work method whereas the rest 12.5% of the respondents put their ideas as they used group work rarely. This indicates that teachers usually dominate the whole class through lecturing method rather than permitting students to work in-group work activities.

The interviewed teachers suggested many reasons why they did not regularly use group work. The nature of the tasks, shortage of time, reluctance of students for group work and the classroom situation were mentioned as the failure to apply group work. According to their response, dominate the class with lecture method could not enhance students to develop communicative competence. Rather students may acquire only structures of the language than the use.

Q.2. How do you observe the interest of students toward learning through group work?

Observing someone’s interest is difficult. However, majority of the teachers (T1, T3, T4, T5, T7 and T8) suggested that learners have a mixed interest on learning English language through the group work. Sometimes, while students seem to be confused about the tasks given, later they make themselves familiar with others and tend to take part in the group. With this concern, respondents said only few members of students were interested in the activity. Not only these, other participantsaid “some students have less interest for group work and prefer to do their own works. This implies that students can talk irrelevant issues during the group activities”(T2 and T6).

As the researcher’s observation, students who like the subject perceived group work positively, and those who don’t like English subject perceived negatively. On the other hand, few students had no positive feeling of learning through group. They acted reluctantly even the clever students too.

Key: 4= Mixed ability and sex, 3=only ability, 2= only sex, 1= student’s interest

Table 6 Teachers’ Responses on Assigning Students In Groups.

	Item		4	3	2	1	Total
Q 3.	On what bases do you usually assign students in groups? Why do you prefer it?	Fre	8	-	-	-	8
		%	100	-	-	-	100

All of them raised similar ideas on assigning students in group. As shown in table 6 above, almost all teachers 8(100%) usually allowed students to form heterogeneous groups to enhance them learn from one another and share their knowledge and experience. None of the respondents answered as they attribute students based on ability, sex, or students’ interest only. In mixed groups, all types of student (fast and slow) learners could be grouped together, so one can learn from the other.

Q4. From your experience what are the main problems that you face when you assign Students to work in-group?

With regard to this, one teacher of Biyo Secondary School (T7) said that, “when I assign Students to work in-group the main problem was lack of interest to participate and some students feel shyness. Since the learners had weak language background, they keep silent during group work activities.” In addition to this, other respondent revealed interference of mother tongue, much noise, talking issues out of the topic, look outside through the door and windows while doing activities and lack of teachers’ commitment for their profession as the main challenges of assign the students to work in-group. Furthermore, during classroom observation, the researcher observed lack of interest to participate, selfishness and, weak educational background as great problems.

Table 7 Teachers’ Responses about the existence of group leader and a secretary.

	Item		Yes	No	Total
Q5.	Do you think groups in the class should have a group leader and a secretary? If yes, how and who elects them?	Fre	8	-	8
		%	100		100

As showed in table 7 above, all interviewees 8(100%) displayed as the groups in the class had group leader and a secretary. Leader and a secretary could be elected either by the teacher or by the students themselves. On this, one experienced teacher of Guangua Secondary School said, “*The main thing that should be focused on is the one elected to be a group leader could be somewhat better than the others to lead and make members perform accordingly.*” Even though the members of the group elected the group leader and secretary by themselves, the group they formed ends when the period ends. Therefore, it was not constant leader and secretary. Other respondent suggested that, it is preferable if the teacher elect the one who had better confidence from each group as group leader and secretary by him/ herself because the mandate of these students could not end with in a single period.

Q6. Why do you think that some students participate more actively than others? Has it an impact on other students?

6 teachers or 75% of total interviewee were agreed on the following ideas as the main reason why some students actively participate than others due to; the way they have been

grown or their educational background and some families discourage children as they speak with people because it was seen as rude if they do so. On the other hand, some families send their children to a better school starting from kindergarten and encourage their children to feel free and express their ideas. This practice was also reflected in the classrooms and it had both positive and negative impact.

Because of these reasons, some could be challenged to speak freely and the others participated and talked freely in the class. Since the discussion in the class could be held between those who participated well only, the other students dominated by clever students. Some families do not worry about education completely. Such behavior has its own disadvantage on students' participation. Beside this, one teacher proposed the idea of "some students may have sociable personality that they like to express their ideas because they think others can learn from them. It has a positive impact as others could be motivated to do similarly" (T4).

Q7. Do you believe that grading group work activities in continuous assessment form will encourage students' participation actively?

On this item, majority of the respondents (87.5%) believed that grading group work activities in continuous assessment form will encourage students' participation actively. Since students need to make competition to get good marks, they participate actively in the class. One of the respondent commented as he used grading group work activities some times, but it would be done regularly in order to improve students' competition in the class.

The respondents raised that grade was the issue which various students need more than learning and gaining knowledge. With regard to this clue, two experienced teachers of Guangua secondary school put the following ideas:

The group leaders and secretaries have great responsibilities. The elected group leader and secretary work cooperatively throughout the semester. The secretary prepares a permanent document in a form of portfolio to record all the activities perform during group work session. The group leader also prepares a permanent list that contains names of members. Additionally, they add another available method of grading students in study group through the following chart and at the end of the daily period, the group leader put

a tick mark for those who participated in the group and put (x) for those who did not participate actively. For example, the table below shows the group leaders check list.

Table 8 Available Method of Grading Participation in Study Groups

	Teachers signature																		
	Dates of participation, e.g.	09/04/10																	
	Group members name																		
1	Alemu Jemal	✓																	
2	Genet Tedese	✓																	
3	Halima Bedru	X																	
4	Tolessa Tibabu	✓																	
5	Markos Alemu	X																	

According to the table 8, the group leader put a tick mark for those who tried to participate during the group work activity. On the other hand, the ' x 'shows those who did not participate or sit idle. At the end of the period, the teacher moved round and put his signature on the group leader's list above the dates of participation. For example, 09/04/10 means the 9th day of the 4th month, 2010. At the end of the semester, the teacher collects the group leaders list and gave mark /grades for the activities. For example, if there were 20 group work activities in the semester and one attended the whole, he/she would get the full mark.

Finally, the researcher believed that grading group work activities is an important task in the class because students do better in the activities that have mark. So that, they can do regularly and strictly if a mark is provided.

4.4.2 Students Focus Group Discussion

R- First, I would like to thank you for your cooperation to be voluntary for making discussion with me.

Q1. Do you think learning through group work activities has advantages? How?

The respondents of the group discussion replied that rather than speaking with teacher, students feel confident to speak with their group members. Similarly, when they discuss together, it enhances them to share ideas with different students without fear. As they pointed out, students develop their integrative skills when they share ideas with members in the group. With this regard, one participant of the group raised the following ideas. "I remember what I discussed in group rather than what the teacher lectured in the class

because Students can share ideas from each other in a mixed ability groups. But here we have not done more group work activities until now.”

Q2. Why do some students fail to participate actively in-group work?

The students explained dominance of clever students and fear of being laughed as the main reason why students do not participate actively in-group work. Moreover, they added the educational background and family encouragement, leave activities to be done only for active students and lack of students’ language proficiency were the major failure of participating well in group activities. In some cases, they raised the shortage of books as another problem. Even though majority of the students in the class had textbooks, they put it at their home and come to classes. Not only this, one student expressed in FGD “Sometimes the given topics were vague or unclear for students, and teachers did not manage whether students performed the given activities or discussed about other issue out of the given task.”

Q3. Have you a group leader and a secretary in your group work? If ‘yes’, who nominate them?

In this question, more than half of students’ group discussion members said they had temporary group and group leader that ends in a period, but there was no a secretary. Some students mentioned that, the teacher guide them to form a group and elect the leader. Then, they select the one whom they believed as better student to be a group leader. On the other hand, they had no group leader or secretary, because they had no strict command that enforces them from the teachers as they elected group leader. As a member of FGD explained, “Most of the time, the teachers use lecture method whole period. We do not usually participate in group work activities in our classroom. However, in rare cases when we form a group, we select the group leader by ourselves.”

Q4. What is your view if group work activities are graded in a continuous assessment form?

As almost all members of FGD suggested, grading group work activity was very important because every student could participate actively for a mark. For that reason, competition would hold among the group and no one could be passive. In addition, class disturbance would decrease. Since the students’ speaking ability increases gradually, the

competition among the group develops and the number of participants could increase from time to time.

Q5. What will you suggest to overcome the challenges of learning English language through group work?

To eliminate the challenges of group work the students suggested, Teachers should encourage and follow students' performance and treat the learners friendly. Additionally, permanent grouping that stays for one semester should present and time given for the tasks should sufficient. Other idea raised from group members said, "Teachers have to give brief explanations on the activities to be performed, encourage students and tolerate the mistakes of students. Moreover, students have initiated with the group work grading and misbehaved students should penalize." Beside this they raised, Teachers should observe students while they discuss in groups. The groups and group leaders should stay together until the end of the semester.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The ultimate objective of teaching English language is to enable students promote the skill of expressing their ideas, feelings or emotions and understand messages of others. To achieve these objectives, group work activity plays an incredible role especially for students who face a shift of medium of instruction from L1 to FL likegrade ninestudents of secondary schools inOromiya Region. The main objective of this study was to investigate practices and challenges of teaching English language in-group work, with particular reference to Grade 9 students of three Secondary School in Abaya woreda.

In order to attain specific research objectives, relevant data were gathered through classroom observation, questionnaire, interview and FGD. The study incorporated 140 sample students (of whom 20 participated in the pilot study and 120 (20%) in main study).The data were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage). The overall findings of the study revealed a number of challenges encountered in teaching English through group work. Based on the discussion of the data, the following conclusions were drawn:-

5.2. Conclusions

- Teachers gave more emphasis on grammar and almost more time was used for lecture method rather than group work and provides the result through presentation. Therefore, some students were afraid of presenting what they discussed together in group and preferred keeping silent in fear of being laughed at because of Poor language background, language Proficiency, frequent mother tongue interference, anxiety to speak in front of other people and lack of self-confidence to use the target language. In addition, few passive participants those chewing gums during group work activities were noticed.
- The time given for all group tasks was not sufficient enough. Beside this, the group leader and the secretary were not elected during group work activities. Therefore, there was no one who guided and facilitated the activities in the group. Similarly, teachers did not allow students to criticize, comment, or report the works done in each group at the end of the activities and provide feedback on group tasks. Due to this, learners considered group tasks as wasting of their time rather than gaining and learning knowledge from each other.

- The groups formed were not a study team or permanent group that work together for about a semester, and group work activities were not graded by supporting formal check list to make all students participate in the groups. So that, some students had no interest of participating with others in group work.
- Teachers did not seem to contribute their expected roles in-group work and actively monitor group work. They did not determine group size depending on the nature of group tasks. They simply ordered students to make a group. This seemed to lead the formation of groups with varying sizes for a single activity. Consequently, only one or two group members tended to dominate the group tasks. Due to this, most groups usually drifted away from tasks, and the tasks were involved in noisy chatter in L1 or some students totally ignored the activities.

Generally, it is important to note that both the teachers and the students seemed to be unaware of most procedures of group work organization. The classroom observation also revealed that the teachers seemed to possess partial knowledge of group work organization as:- grouping student, allowing to elect group leader and secretary, limiting the number of participants in a group, monitoring, providing ample time for students to discuss and reflect their work, giving or accepting comments, giving feedback for the tasks and grading of group work activities.

Although students seemed to understand the importance of group work, some tend to be reluctant towards activities as they were not graded. At last, as the respondents of the interview suggested and proved by researcher during the observation, most of the time was used by the teachers' lecture rather than students' discussion. In the final analysis, it seemed reasonable to conclude that the practices and challenges of teaching English language through group work activities both with students and teachers cause a failure that hinder the development of the learners' language proficiency and affect the normal teaching learning process.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were forwarded to improve the challenges that face teaching English language through group work activities.

- By forming permanent groups that stay for long period, teacher should allow appropriate tasks with learners level through students centered method, and give emphasis to speaking and preparing presentation rather than teaching grammar to overcome: poor educational background, language proficiency, frequent mother tongue interference, anxiety to speak in front of other people and lack of self-confidence to use the target language.
- Appropriate time should be given for the tasks and the tasks should enhance students to suggest their own ideas or tasks should not always restrict on close ended type. Teachers should guide students to: criticize, comment, or report the works done in each group at the end of the activities and provide feedback on group tasks. Additionally, there must be a group leader and a secretary in each group because they facilitate, lead all the tasks in the group, list the activities of members and record what has been done in the group.
- To make students active participants, the study team that could enhance students stay together for about a semester should be formed. The teachers should apply available method of grading students' participation during group work activities to develop students' language proficiency, motivation to participate in group, to decrease reluctance of some students and group work activities become interesting.
- The teachers should have preexisting awareness about procedures of organizing effective group work. However, they ought to gain training or workshop to enable them feel professionally responsible and apply group work activities to help their students. On top of this, only one or two group members should not dominate the group tasks. The number of students in each section should also be reduced in order to manage the activities of each group and provide necessary help and guidance.
- problems related to both teachers and students could be resolved: if heterogeneous or mixed groups were formed, the group activities were graded, the number of participants in a group did not exceed six, activities were

adapted to the level of students, teachers had to perform their pedagogical procedures like before, while and after group work duties, and the concerned bodies should try to minimize the load of the teachers.

- In general, all concerned bodies: the Abaya Woreda Education Office, the school managements, English language teachers, students and parents are the most responsible bodies to overcome the challenges of teaching English language through group activity and make improvement in the teaching learning environment that would create a conducive atmosphere.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Students Questionnaire Of English Version

Madda Walabu University
School Of Graduate Studies
Department Of English Language And Literature
Questionnaire To Be Filled By Students

Dear students,

I am conducting this research for the partial fulfillment of M.A degree in TEFL at MWU, Department of English Language and literature. The research focuses on the “practices and challenges of Teaching English Language through Group Work in Grade Nine at Guangua secondary school, Shara secondary school and Biyo secondary school”. The purpose of this study is to explore how the problems hinder the teaching learning process. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. The researcher appreciates your completing and returning the questionnaires.

Note

- Please do not write your name.
- Complete all the pages and return it.
- Make sure that the questionnaire has four parts in four pages.
- If the space provided is not enough to express your idea use the backspace.

Part I/ Personal Information Related To Students Background.

Choose one that expresses about you and circle the choice.

1. Sex ----- A. Female B. Male
2. Age----- A. <16 B. 17_18 C. 19_ 21 D. Above 21

PART II/ Questions Related To Students Perception of Group Work

The following questions are related to learning English language through group work activities. Circle the letter that you think is right.

1. Do you think that group work has advantages in learning English? A. Yes B. No
2. In your previous classes have you the experience of learning English through group activity? A. Yes B. No
3. At the school, have you been oriented about learning English language through group work? A. Yes B. No

4. Which grouping do you prefer?
 - A. Homogenous grouping (based on the same sex, age, ability and friendship)
 - B. Heterogeneous grouping (based on mixed sex, age, ability not based on friendship).
5. What type of task given is interesting for group work activities?
 - A. Close ended activities (to complete the tasks based on the text).
 - B. Open-ended activities (to complete the tasks with your own ideas).
6. Do you think that the time given for group work activities is sufficient? A. Yes B. No
7. When you discuss in group, have you a group leader and a secretary? A. Yes, B. No,
8. If your answer is yes who elects the group leader? A. the teacher B. students
9. How often do you learn English using group work?
 - A. sometimes B. always C. rarely D. never
10. With how many members in one group do you work together?
 - A. Two B. Three to six C. Seven to Ten D. above Ten
11. What kind of grouping do you prefer in learning English?
 - A. study team which is formed with fixed group members to work together for a semester or more.
 - B. permanent grouping which is formed to complete specific task in a single class session.
 - C. Temporal grouping which is formed to check students' understanding for a short period of time only,
 - D. If you think other, specify.....
12. While you perform group work, is there a problem that encounters you/ your group member? A. Yes B. no

Part III Factors that Affect Group Work

13. To what extent do you agree on the following factors in affecting your group participation? Put a tick or (x) according to your answer.

KEY: 5= strongly agree 4=Agree 3= Disagree 2= strongly disagree 1= I don't know

	Factors related to students	5	4	3	2	1
13.1	Lack of student's language proficiency.					
13.2	Shyness to practice the language in the group					
13.3	Reluctance to work in groups.					
13.4	Lack of students experience in group work activities					
13.5	Absence of the group leader					
13.6	Group size / large number of student in the group.					
13.7	Group composition/the way the group is formed.					
13.8	Anxiety					
13.9	Nature of the task given to the learners.					
13.10	Mother tongue interference					
13.11	Domination of active learners.					
13.12	Unavailability of textbooks					
13.13	Insufficient time given for the task					
13.14	Lack of interest to share knowledge with others					
13.15	Lack of practicing with friends to learn English					
	Factors related to teachers					
13.16	Lack of teacher's teaching experience					
13.17	Lack of teaching aids					
13.18	Lack of teacher's encouragement for the group performance					
13.19	Lack of teacher's control, guidance and checking of activities during group work.					
13.20	Non grading of group work activities in a continuous assessment form					
13.21	Teachers' failure to give clear explanation for the tasks					

14. Do you like learning English through group? A. yes B. no. If your answer is no, Why

-----.

15. Write some of the disadvantages of learning through group activity. -----

16. Please, write any advantage you can gain from participating in-group work. -----

17. Please, write any other factor that affects group work activity. -----

18. Write any suggestion you think to overcome the problems that encounter in learning English language through group activities. -----

NB: You can use at the backspace if the space provided is not sufficient to you

APPENDIX- B: Students' Questionnaire of Afan Oromo Version

YUUNIIVERSITII MADDA WALABUTTI

MUUMMEE AFAAN INGLIIZII FI HOG-BARRUU

BARUMSA DIGIRII LAMMAFFAA KUTAA QO'ANNOO AFAANII

Jalatomoo barattoota,

Ani digrii lammaffaa dhaf Yuuniiversitii Madda Walabuu kessatti qo'annoo kuta barnoota afaan Ingiliizii akka addunyattii barsiisuu jedhun gaggeessaan jira. Qo'annoon kunis kan xiyyeefate "Rakkolee barumsa Afaan Ingiliizii barattota kutaa 9ffaa gareedhan barsiisuu keessatti rakkolee jiran hubachuudhan furmaata barbaadudhafi. Kaayyoon qo'annoo kanaas rakkooleen jiran kunniin akkamitti barumsa afaan Ingiliizii barachu irratti gufuu akka ta'an hubachuudha.

Abbaan qorannoo kana gaggeessu dursee odeeffanno hundaa amanamummaa dhan waan guttaniifi isin galateefataa. Odeeffannon isin kenitan hundi icitiidhan kan eegamu fi hojii kanaan ala qorannoo biroof akka hin fayadamne ibsa.

Yaadachiisa

- Maqaa kee hin barreesin
- Waraqaan kun Kutaa afurii fi fuula shan qabaachuu isaa mirkaneessi.
- Fuula hundaa erga guuttee booda waraqaa deebisi.
- Iddon irratti bareesitu yoo si hanqate waraqaa duubatti fayyadamuu ni dandeessa.

Yeroo kee kennitee waan odeeffanno naaf kenniteef baayisee sigalateefadha.

KUTAA I Odeeffannoo dhunfaa seenaa barattoota wajjin walqabate.

Kanneen armaan gadii keessa kan si ilaalu filadhu.

1. Saala A Dhiira B Dubra
2. Umrii A.15-16 B. 17-18 C. 19--21 D. 21 ol

Kutaa II/ Gaaffilee yaada barattootaa waa'ee hojii garee irratti qabaniin wal qabatu.

Gaafileen armaan gadii barnoota afaan Ingiliizii gareen barachuu ilaalichisee qubee sirridha jettu filachuun irra mari.

- 1 Affan Ingiliizii gareedhan hojjachuun faayidaa qaba jettee ni yaaddaa?
A. Eeyyeen B. Lakki /miti
2. Kutaalee kanaan dura baratte keessatti muuxannoo hoji gareetin hojjachuu qabdaa?
A. Lakkii/miti B. Eeyyeen
3. Mana barumsaa keessatti waa'ee hojii garee ilaalichisee leenjii argattee beektaa?
A. Eeyyeen B. Lakkii/miti
4. Garee kam irra caalaa barbadda yookiin fiilataa?
A. Garee walfakaataa/homogenous grouping/(kan dubara fi dhira addaan qoodee umrii,dandeetti fi hiriyumma irratti bu'urame.
B.Garee makaa /heterogeneous grouping / (kan dhiira ,dubara fi dandeetii makaa ta'een kan hiriyummaa irratti hin bu'uramne.
5. Gosa hojii akkamtu hojii garee keessati akka hojjetan isiini kennemaa?
A. Hoji murta'aa hin taane (open ended task) baratononii ofi isaaniittin kan xumuran
B. Hoji murta'aa ta'e (close ended task) baratononii kitabaa irratti hunda'ni kan xumuran
6. Yeroon hojii gareedhaf kennamu ga'aa dha jettee ni amantaa?
A.Eeyyeen B. lakki/ mitii
7. Gareedhaan yoo hojjatan dura taa'a barreesaa/tuu qabduu?
A.Eeyyeen B. Lakkii
- 8 . Debiin kee yoo 'eeyyen jette eenyutuu filata?
A. Barsiisaa B. miseensota garee
9. Barnoota Afaan Engiliizii yeeroo hammamiitiif garee dhaan barattu?
A.Yeroo hundaa B. al tokko-tokko C. darbee,darbee D.Siruma hin jiru/ hin barannu.
10. Garee tokko keessatti baay'ini miseensotaa walin hojjetan meeqa?
A. Lama B. sadii hanga jahaa C. torbaa hanga kudhanii D. kudhanii ol
11. Ademsa baruu- barsiisuu keessatti garee hojii isa kam filatta?
A. Garee dubbisaa(study team) isa miseensa dhabbataan ijaaramee seemsteera tokkof yookiin seemsteera oliif waliin hojjatu
B. Garee dhabbataa (permanent grouping) ijaarame hojii murta'aa tokko daree keessatti woliin hojjatu.
C. Garee dhabbataa hin ta'in (temporal grouping) isa yeeroo gabaabaaf qayyabannaa barattootaa qofa mirkaneessuuf dhaabbate.
D. Kan biro yoo jirate ibsii.....

12. yeeroo garee keessatti hirmaattuu, rakkoon dhuunfaan si muudatu yookiin miseensa garee keetii muudatu ni jiraa? A. eeyye jira B. miti hin jiru.

KUTA III/ Rakkoolee hojii garee miidhuu danda’an

13. Rakkoleen armaan gadii kun hagam hojii garee irratti dhibbaa uumu?

Deebii kee mallattoo(X)gabatee keessatti buusuun agarsiisi.

Fuurtu: 5= Baayy’een walii gala, 4=Wali gala, 3= Nan morma, 2=Baay’een morma
1=Hinbeeku

	Rakkoolee baratotan walqabatan	5	4	3	2	1
13.1	Hanqina dandeeti afaanii.					
13.2	Qaana’uu					
13.3	Diddaa yookiin mormii hojii garee irrattii calanqisiisuu					
13.4	Gareen hojjachudhaf muuxannoo dhabuu barattoota.					
13.5	Rakko wolitti qabaa (dura bu’aa) garichaa					
13.6	Baay’naa barattota garee kessatti					
13.7	Akkataa gareen itti ijaaramee.					
13.8	Sodaa garee keessatti hirmaachuu					
13.9	Haala Uumama gochoota kennamanii.					
13.10	Qoqa ofiitin fayadamuu					
13.11	Hirmaannaa barattota ciccimootiin haguuggamuu/ uwwifamuu					
13.12	Hiri’ina/ Hanqina kitaabaa.					
13.13	Hanqina yeroo hojiidhaaf kenamme.					
13.14	Beekumsa namoota biroof kennuuf/dabarsuuf feedhii dhabuu					
13.15	Hanqinna shaakala afaan ingiliizii hiriyyaa wojjiin					
	Rakkoolee basiisootaan walqabatan					
13.16	Hanqina muuxanno barsiistoota					
13.17	Hanqina meeshaalee barnootaa .					
13.18	Hanqina deeggarsa barsiisotaa ijarsa hojii garee keessatti					
13.19	Hanqina hordoffii,qajelchu fi to’annoo barsisonni hojii gareedhaf godhan					
13.20	Madaallii wolittii fuufaa hojii garee irratti qabxii qabaachuu dhabuu.					
13.21	Ibsii brsiisoonii hojii keenammeefif Kennan gahaa ta’uu Dhabuu					

15. Gareen barachuu ni jallattaa? A. eye B. miti. Yoo deebiin kee miti ta’e, maaliif?

.....

16. Faayidaa hojii garee keessatti hirmachuun qabu barreessi.

.....
.....
.....
.....

17. Hojii garee keessatti faayda kan hin qabne jeettee yaaduu yoo jira ta'ee barreessi...

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. Rakkoolee biro hojii garee irratti dhibaa fidan barreessi

.....
.....
.....
.....

19. Rakkoolee afaan Ingliizii gareedhan barachuu keessatti qunnaman to'anna jala oolchuudhaaf maal akka gochuu qabnu yaada qabdu barreessi

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Hub: Yoo iddoon si haanqate waraqaa dubaatti fayadamii

APPENDIX –C: Teachers’ Interview Guide

1. How often do you use group work activities in your classes?
2. How do you observe the interest of students toward learning through group work?
3. On what bases do you usually assign students in groups? Why do you prefer it?
4. From your experience what are the main problems that you face when you assign Students to work in-group?
5. Do you think groups in the class should have a group leader and a secretary? If yes, how and who elects them?
6. Why do you think that some students participate more actively than others? Has it an impact on other students?
7. Do you believe that grading group work activities in continuous assessment form will encourage students’ participation actively?

APPENDIX –D: Students’ Focused Group Discussion Guide

1. Do you think learning through group work activities has advantage? How?
2. Why do some students fail to participate actively in-group work?
3. Have you a group leader and a secretary in your group work? If ‘yes’, who nominate them?
4. What is your view if group work activities are graded in a continuous assessment form?
5. What will you suggest to overcome the challenges of learning English language through group work?

APPENDIX- E: Classroom Observation Check List

Grade _____ Section _____ Teacher _____

Date _____

Number of students during observation; Male..... Female..... Total.....

Topic of the lesson

...

The observation checklist is intended to assess classroom activities or performance of the teacher, the learner and classroom situations in English classes. The items are coded with **yes** or **no**.

1	List of observation items	yes	no	Remark
	Teachers role			
1.1	The teacher introduces the daily lesson.			
1.2	The teacher allows students to form groups.			
1.3	The activities given to students are related to the text.			
1.4	The group task is explained clearly.			
1.5	The size of the group exceeds six students.			
1.6	The time given for group work is sufficient.			
1.7	The teacher allows students to report, comment and criticize their Work			
1.8	The group leader and the secretary are nominated.			
1.9	The teacher moves around, monitors and helps groups during the group work activities.			
1.10	The teacher gives feedback at the end of the lesson.			
1.11	The teacher tells group leaders to document works for grading.			
1.12	The teacher accepts responses positively when members try to express their idea and the group's decision.			
2	Students Role			
2.1	Students are fluent enough to express their idea.			
2.2	Students participate actively in their groups.			
2.3	Students understand the instruction and perform accordingly.			
2.4	Students make a group themselves without teacher interaction according to the information given.			
2.5	Students have their group leader and secretary.			
2.6	The group leaders/ monitors equally participate with the members.			
2.7	Activities are performed on the given time.			
2.8	During activities, students call their teacher for help.			
2.9	The group leader documents the works to be graded.			
2.10	At the end of the tasks, students reflect their work; accept comments given by the teacher and other members.			
2.11	The number of students in the class is manageable.			
2.12	Students sit in a face-to-face position.			

