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FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING-LEARNING
SPEAKING SKILLS IN GROUP WORK: BOLE PREPARATORY
SCHOOL IN FOCUS

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ADDIS ABEBA, ETHIOPIA
AUGUST 2015

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Abstract

In this study, an attempt was made to identify factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work with reference to grade 11 students in Addis Ababa. The main aim was to find out problems that affect students' speaking through group work and to identify English teachers' roles in maximizing students participation using L2 English in group work. The subject of the study was grade 11 students and English teachers at Bole preparatory school. 280 students from four randomly selected sections have taken part in filling the questionnaire, and three English teachers who teach in these sections were interviewed. Initially, the instruments were administered on a pilot sample based on this, item analysis was carried out and improvement was made. SPSS Software was employed to analyze the data. The results obtained from questionnaire, interview and observation were considered together in the analyses. The analysis of data shows that personal factors like low self-esteem, language anxiety, low English ability, culture, and situational factors like group size, group composition, group cohesiveness, quality of speaking tasks and seating arrangements and on the other side the teachers' roles are found to be some factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work. Based on the findings, it was concluded that students' personal and situational factors and again teacher's deviation from performing of their roles are some factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking during group work. Therefore, course designers and particularly English teachers should consider these factors, and exert their maximum effort to alleviate the problems students face during learning speaking in English class through group discussion.

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Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	vi

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3. Objectives of the study.....	4
1.3.1. General Objective.....	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives.....	4
1.4. Scope of the Study	4
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	4
1.6. Procedure of the study	4
1.7. Limitations of the study	5
1.8. Definitions of key terms.....	5

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature.....	7
2.1 The Importance of Speaking in L2 Class.....	7
2.2. Group Work	8
2.2.1 Concept of Group Work.....	8
2.2.2 Merits of Group Work	8
2.2.2.1 Group Work Increases Language use Opportunities	9
2.2.2.2 Group Work Increases Quality of Language Use	10
2.2.2.3 Group Work Promotes Positive Affective Climate.....	10
2.3. Major Factors that hinder the Practice of learning speaking skills	

in the Context of Group Work.....	10
2.3.1 Individual Factors	10
2.3.1.1 Personality Factors	10
2.3.1.2 Socio Cultural Factors	12
2.3.2 Situational Factors	12
2.3.2.1 Group Factors	12
2.3.2.1.1 Group Size	12
2.3.2.1.2 Group Composition	13
2.3.2.1.3 Group Cohesiveness	13
2.3.2.2 Nature of the Task	13
2.3.2.3 Seating Arrangements	13
2.4. Teachers' Role in Maximizing Students Participation	13
2.4.1 Process during Presentation	14
2.4.2 Process during Practice	15
2.4.3 Feedback, Assessment and Evaluation	15
2.4.4. After Group Work	16
2.5. Concept of Communicative Competence	16

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology	18
3.1 Source of Data.....	18
3.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique.....	18
3.2.1. Students.....	18
3.2.2. Teachers	19
3.3. Instruments for Data Collection.....	19
3.3.2. Classroom Observation	19
3.3.2. Interview.....	19
3.3.3. Questionnaire.....	20
3.4. Pilot Study	20
3.5. Validity and Reliability	20

3.5.1 Reliability of the Questionnaire, Interview and classroom observation	20
3.5.2 Validity of the Questionnaire, Interview and classroom observation.....	21
3.6. Procedures of Data Collection	21
3.7 Data Analysis	22

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussions	23
4.1. Background of the Participants	23
4.2. Factors that Hinder Practice of Teaching-Learning Speaking.....	24
4.2.1 Personality and Socio Cultural Factors	24
4.2.2 Group Formation Factors that Hinder Practice of Speaking.....	27
4.2.2.1 Situational factors	27
4.3 Teachers' Role in Maximizing Learners' Speaking Participation.....	21
4.3.1. A class room English teacher	29

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Implications	33
5.1. Summary of the Findings.....	33
5.2. Conclusions	35
5.3. Implications	35

Bibliography

Appendix A Students' Questionnaire

Appendix B Teacher's Interview

Appendix C Classroom observations checklist

Appendix D Transcription of Observed Teacher's Record Interview Scripts

List of Tables

	Page
Table 4.1: Description of Participants	24
Table 4.2: Personality and socio cultural factors	25
Table 4.3: Situational factors	27
Table 4.4: Classroom Teacher	30

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the important skills in language teaching and learning. Being able to speak English language is very essential for a learner to be successful in academic activities. According to Cunnin Worth (1984:43) the ability to communicate effectively through spoken English enables one to be 'proficient' in various language skills. For example, when we see students' academic performance, it is highly dependent on their ability to ask questions, to discuss and to understand concepts from their teachers and peers.

However, unlike the traditional way of teaching speaking, today's world requires the way of language teaching that can enable learners develop their communicative competence through group work.

The importance of the practice of learning speaking in the world has given much emphasis. For example, Long and Porter (1985), Michael Swan (1985) argue that one of the main language learners' problems is simply that they are not given the opportunity to practice the new language.

And in Ethiopian context, the practice of speaking starts from grade 1, and then becomes the medium of instruction from elementary school onwards, but the level of students' English language has not been found to be sufficient enough to help them to study. Other subjects and even students could not disclose their ideas in English language effectively. According to Aberash (2005,36) the English language proficiency level of students in Ethiopia is low that it doesn't allow them to follow their studies during their preparatory school and university years.

Most language courses now emphasize the importance of group discussion to foster learners' ability to communicate in foreign language rather than their skills in constructing correct sentences and there is a corresponding increase in the time and energy allotted for speaking exercises in the classroom. It is, however, worth noting here that if speaking practice is one of the most important components of the language teaching/learning process, and it is also one of the most problematic components for students in language classroom. And some studies show that group work has a positive effect on learning speaking. According to Reynolds (1994:26)

using group activities make learning more memorable because they are more engaging. "Taking part in group activities involves not only in the mind; values and feelings but also brought into play. Learning under these conditions is more likely to 'stick'."

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Communicative language teaching and learning method advocates the use of group work in language classes. For example, Brumfit (1984) considers group work as essential feature of this method. The importance of group work is to ensure that all members are fully involved in learning activities.

However, teachers' method of teaching, students' little experience of English or either problems such as language anxiety may hinder the effective participation of learners in speaking skills in the context of group work. Rivers (1987: 22) believes that, there are conditions or others inhibit learners' active engagement in learning activities.

Her actual words run thus:

Unless students feel at ease with their teachers and their fellow students and are relaxed within themselves they withdraw from expressing what they really think in another language.

So she is arguing that one problem is anxiety.

These days, to see students working in small groups in classes is common. And in speaking classes, there are lots of activities that require students to work in groups. But there has been very little research carried out to assess the effectiveness of speaking practice in group works. As we all know, English language is an important school subject and compulsory in addition to other subjects to join a higher institution. Nevertheless, according to a report to the Ethiopian ministry of education about the use and study of English in Ethiopian schools' Student (1986: 6), reported the following:

...the English possessed by the vast majority of students at all levels is totally inadequate for the purpose of learning other subjects through it. Students do not possess sufficient English even to understand what they hear from their teachers or read in their textbooks, let alone to participate actively through their own speaking and writing ... as a result of this, inability of students to function through English, the quality of teaching and learning in school has been very adversely affected.

Similarly, Aberash (2005,37) pointed out that, preparatory school students' classroom participation in speaking activities were low. She also demonstrated that there was a sign of disinterest in group discussion on the students' side. At the end, she recommended that the impediments that hinder students' participation require a more intensive study. Following this, Berhanu(2000)also explained in his abstract section,“The thesis concludes by considering the implications of the findings for increased or more equitable verbal participation among students in group discussion and the need for research into internal and external variables affecting participation.” He also explores that there was a huge difference in participation among students in terms of their verbal participation in group discussion. But both Aberash's and Berhanu's study were conducted in a different setting, methodology and context from this study.

Likewise, the problems of learning speaking English language have been observed among students at Bole preparatory school. The researcher works as an English teacher and teaches students in this school. From the researcher teaching experience, the researcher observes that when teachers give speaking tasks in group, students start discussing in English and later they shift to their mother tongue (L1) (Amharic) or they prefer silence.

And learners may use mother tongue if they may feel they can't say something in English or when they worried about making mistakes. Making mistake is a best teacher in learning language or learning speaking. However, L2 language learners usually feel nervous when they asked to speak in second language (foreign language) and their language of first language can also lead them to make incorrect guesses about how L2 language works (Ellis, 1986). Totally, although using first language has some benefits, over-using first language during L2 language learning can interfere with target language and can reduce learners' chance of involvement in learning L2 language.

It is on the basis of these assumptions that the researcher is inspired to conduct another study on factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work at Bole preparatory school, grade 11 students in focus.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of the study is to assess factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work activities in EFL classes at Bole preparatory school in focus.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To investigate personal and situation factors affecting students' involvement in learning speaking skills throughout the discussions.
2. To explore how teachers' maximize their students' speaking participation in group discussions using L2 English.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study was restricted only factors that affect students' Teaching- learning speaking in group work and the English teachers' role to maximize learners' speaking practice in group work. Had it been all factors stated in chapter two, it would have given full comprehension on this area. In addition, the students' current status of learning speaking, the role of other stakeholders like parents, school administrators, favorable classroom conditions, more preparatory schools and students' background would be a more comprehensive study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that the result of the study will provide invaluable information that could probably help responsible bodies and English teachers to take necessary steps to improve preparatory students' learning speaking in groupwork during speaking classes. Furthermore, as there is little or no research done on this topic at the preparatory level, the study may serve as a spring board for other researchers who is interested in this area.

1.6. Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized in to five chapters. First chapter is an introduction which provides the outline of the research, its purpose and the context of the study. The next one is review of related literature which refers to factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work, the importance of speaking in L2 learning classes and advantages of group work etc.

The third chapter explains research methodology, sample size and techniques and also instruments used for research accomplishment. Chapter four is about analysis, interpretation and discussion of the collected data. And finally, a concise summary of research, and conclusions and implications have been discussed in the fifth chapter.

1.7. Limitation of the study

The researcher believes that a study on factors that affect the practice of teaching-learning speaking in group work needs longer time to evaluate as many factors as possible. However, the time and financial resource limitations didn't allow the researcher to conduct the study in-depth and for a long time and there is also procedural limitations. Similarly, when the researcher entered to observe classes for the first time the students showed artificial behavior. So, to get sharp and stronger data, the researcher uses repetition methodology. Though it was not absolute data the researcher tried to assess factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking skills in group work.

1.8. A. Definition of key terms

The following terms are used frequently throughout this paper. It is defined as follows in the context that the researcher used in this paper.

- ❖ *Practice Speaking* is the action of conveying information or expressing one's feelings in speech.
- ❖ *Group work* is the ability to work in group and allows for the utilization of the different skills, knowledge and experiences that people have.

B. Abbreviations

- L1: Mother Tongue (Amharic)
- L2: Second Language (English)
- T1: Teacher one,...
- I: Interviewer

C. Acronyms

- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science.
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- UEE: University Entrance Exam
- MOE: Ministry of Education

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1. The Importance of Learning Speaking in L2 Class

In this part of the paper, a review of related literature to the research topic of this thesis is presented. This includes the importance of learning speaking in L2 learning class through group work, factors that hinder the practice of teaching-learning speaking and the teacher roles in maximizing students' L2 participation are included as well.

The fact that learning speaking is very important because it is the skill which engages learners to participate in the process of oral communication. It has also problem. (Bygate, 1986, Harmer, 1991, and Nunan, 1998,) Likewise, speaking is a very important part of second language learning, because the ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and later in life.

The scholars strengthen the above idea by indicating 'how' and 'why' speaking must be taught. According to Chaney (1998):

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. Despite its importance for many years teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking, just as repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues.

This definition also strengthen the idea of the above educators indicating that speaking is very important, undervalued and taught in the way it could not be developed. Still another educator stresses that speaking as a skill is not the oral production written language but it involves learners mastery of a wide range of sub-skills which added together constitute an overall competence in the spoken language (McDonough, 2003). As we can analyze from the above definition, oral production of drills (written language) cannot be considered the teaching of speaking because it requires learner's mastery of language in different contexts or settings. Thus it seems to mean that a teacher must understand the meaning and methods of teaching speaking a head of time. Although speaking has not been given due attention, today's world requires that the goal of teaching learning speaking should be given consideration and improve students' communicative

skills. This is because only in that students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

2.2. Group Work

2.2.1. 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 the same.

For example,

Borman (1977:12) defines group work 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.”

Borman adds another element in his definition, that is, “one or more meetings”. By this, he means, the intended objective of the group may not be achieved in one day, thus members of the group need another meeting(s) to accomplish their ultimate objectives. As cited in GirmaWossnie, A Dictionary of Education (1973: 187) defines group work as:

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.

From this definition what could be inferred that those who meet for group work exchange ideas on the subject matter of mutual interest to come to consensus.

2.2.2. Merits of Group Work

Group work has a paramount importance in teaching foreign language communicatively. It encourages learner centered teaching/ learning process by increasing students talking time. In support of this, Michael (1985:46) explains the multipurpose of group discussion as follows:

Many, if not most activities in language classroom can be performed by the students working in groups. Working in this way means more students are directly involved more students talking, while the teacher talks less; students can help each other; and not least, the atmosphere is more relaxed and conducive to good language learning.

Bygate (1988:96) supports the above idea by stating the following. “Small group interaction allows more talks of each of the students, and a greater variety of talk. Learners spend more time negotiating and checking on meetings in small groups...”

Here what one can understand is that after intensive discussion students convince or are convinced at the end.

Among the relevance of group discussion is that students feel confident in the activity they are involved in whenever they successfully complete the given activity. Alamirew (1992:33) explains the idea 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. They 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.

Moreover, it creates good opportunities for student to learn from one another and promotes experience of learning by them.

Similarly, Eggen and Kauchack (2001:60). “Group work is a strategy that students use to work together to supplement other models.” This is to say, group work is not an instructional model per se, rather, it is a strategy designed to increase involvement when another model is used.

This discussion also elaborates the above idea. It stresses that the learner must be fully involved in the teaching learning of speaking by the context of group work which is participatory method of teaching language.

2.2.2.1 Group Work Increases Language use Opportunities

According to Long and Porter (1985:209) explain that group work increases students talking time as it allows many students to talk at the same time instead of one as in lock-step (At the same rate). The above views stress the need for interaction in language learning classes and the opportunities for such interaction can be increased by the use of group work.

2.2.2.2 Group Work Increases Quality of Language Use

Brumfit (1984) explains that the term quality does not imply students' response to teachers inhibiting in questions in whole class setting. But it refers to more natural setting which group work provides for normal conversation via release from the demand for accuracy at all costs.

So that, it is true that learners develop the quality of their talk and then get indispensable language competences as they fight or struggle to communicate in group work.

2.2.2.3. Group Work Promotes Positive Affective Climate

Harmer (2001:1170), Lockhart and Richard (1994: 152) also explain that in small group discussion students can interact in non-treating situation and then can complete different kinds of tasks. Unlike lock -step, group work may allow shy and less able learners to participate in group oral interaction.

In the same manner, Brumfit (1984:77) explains that the small group setting is more natural than that of the full class, for the size of the group resembles that of normal conversational groupings. Because of these, the stress which accompanies 'public' performance in the classroom could be reduced.

2.3. Major Factors that hinder the Teaching-Learning Practice of speaking

Researchers have different view about the main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking. These mainly deal with (a) students, and (b) teacher (Berhanu, 2000:41).

2.3.1. Student Factors

As we all know from different research findings and from our own experience as teachers that learners participate verbally in language classrooms to very different levels. Most are verbally reserved, while few tend to dominate the interaction. Some of these behaviors seem to be related to personal factors in heterogeneous classes (Alwright and Bailey, 1991:138).

2.3.1.1 Personality Factors

Personality, according to LittleWood, (1984) explains that knowledge about the complex ways in which personality factors interact with each other and influence L2 learning is indefinite. With this caution in mind, this paper will now consider some personality variables.

(a) self-esteem

Based on Brown views (1994), “self-esteem is the value we place ourselves. In specific terms, it is our attitudes, feelings and knowledge about our abilities, skills, appearance and social acceptability.” Brown (1987:102) added that it refers to the evaluation which the individual makes with regard to himself.

(b) extroversion-introversion

Regarding extroversion-introversion some researchers have found the familiar division between these two kinds of personality traits. These traits suggest that in-terms of verbal performance, introverts one likely to tend towards low level of participation or silence in group interaction. Extroverts, in contrast, tend to talk a lot often more than their fair-share (Harmer 2001:135; Larsen freeman and Long 1991:86).

(c) Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is about acceptance versus opposing authority.(Davies,1994b.)cited in(Berhanu, 2000) explains that when authoritarians are in position of power, they become powerful. When authoritarians are in subordinate position, they accept this as natural and appropriate, less tend to participate in group discussion.

(d) Anxiety

Anxiety can be defined as “a feeling of apprehension, worry, tensions or nervousness” Ellis (1994). He argues that learners with high level of anxiety are less likely to take risks and be active participants. So, anxiety has a decisive effect on students’ relations to others and their oral performance in group work.

(e) Ability

Ability or language proficiency is one of the main resources groups need to accomplish their tasks via talking Ellis (1994). Thus it is a main factor that affects the practice of students’ learning speaking in small groups.

2.3.1.2 Socio Cultural Factors

Students usually come to class from different environment with varied social and cultural backgrounds. And the researcher assumes that most preparatory school students are affected by their socio cultural norms since their parents restrict them from most social interaction at home concerning this view Alamirew (1992) stats that, old parents in some nationalities restrict their children from speaking in front of their elders. So, this could hinder learners' attitude during group oral interaction in language classes.

2.3.2. Teachers Factors

Some of the situational variables, as many scholars suggest are group factors, the nature of tasks and seating arrangements.

2.3.2.1. Group Factors

2.3.2.1.1. Group Size

As to the average number of students who are going to participate in each group, different writer forward different views. Byrne (1987:78) Stated "There is no magic number for group but four to eight students in each group is a good general guide." on the other hand, Dennick and Exley- (2004:17) suggested optimal group size with brief justifications.

They write:

Two people can clearly have a fairly equitable discussion but what they talk about will be limited to their own knowledge and experience: Increasing the numbers involved will inject greater variety in to the debate and may expose individuals to a very of alternative viewpoints that they had not previously considered. But, if group members are increased above a certain limit individual contributions will be minimized and some people may find themselves inhibited from talking. To solve this problem Ur (1996) suggests that five students is a good size for group work.

All in all, it should be considered that the decision of group size largely depends on the nature and objective of the group activity, nature of furniture or desks and class size. And these situations influence group members' opportunity to use the language.

2.3.2.1.2. Group Composition

During group composition, a wide range of academic and social abilities should be considered, and the group should be heterogeneous with regard to sex and ethnicity (Brubacher, Payne and Prickett, 1990: 215). Similarly, Cohen (1972) states that a good mix can be achieved by mixing students in terms of performance, sex, age, ethnicity, status and etc...

2.3.2.1.3. Group Cohesiveness

This is how learner feels about the other learners in the group can affect language learning. As some literatures indicate, if students in a group are unfamiliar with one another, lack of responsiveness could happen and less participation in group activities may follow. For example, Knight and Lindsay, (2006:9) writes, "If group members like each other, their participation and fruitful communication will be increased" The implication behind this view is that teachers' should take care of group cohesiveness while they organize group learning since it has a considerable impact on students participation in group work.

2.3.2.2. Nature of the Task

The other influential factor students do not speak English when they discuss in group work is the nature of the tasks. For instance, tasks that are not interesting and motivating may inhibit learners from taking part in group discussion(Nunan 1998).

What is more, the difficulty level of tasks given to students in group cooperative learning should be suitable to the level of learner's understanding. Ur (1996) suggests that group activities should be simple, interesting, challenging and encouraging.

2.3.2.3 Seating Arrangements

In order for group members to successfully cooperate and interact with each other, they need to be seated close enough to one another in a way every one can see and hear each other preferably in a circular arrangement of seats. And class room setting requires rearrangement of chairs and tables based on nature of furniture, group size, task type and space available (Cohen, 1972).

2.4. Teachers' Role in Maximizing Students'speaking Participation

As the researcher stated earlier (in unit one) from his teaching experience and his class room observations, learners reluctance or unwillingness to participate in group activity using English language is found to be a serious problem in foreign language classes. To overcome such

problem, many scholars suggest organizing cooperative learning groups as a remedy solution for instance, Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain that the success of maximizing learners' verbal participation in group work is crucially depend on the nature and organization of group work. This is because well organized group work increases the amount of students' verbal participation.

2.4.1 Process during Presentation

a. Warm up and introductions

Students are likely to participate actively if and only if, they are clear with the instruction, language and expected roles. For example, Ur (1996:234) explains the introduction that is given at the beginning is crucial. If students do not understand exactly what they have to do, there will be time wasting, confusion, lack of effective practice, possible loss of control. Regarding warm up, Dennick and Exley (2004:19) point out that there is a period of insecurity and anxiety when groups of human get together for the first time depending on the cultural context. This implies that a good teacher should begin lessons by reducing anxiety and optimizing the self confidence of the group.

b. Preliminary rehearsal

The teacher should provide students with preliminary grasp of the language as they expected to practice. Based on this, Ur (1996:235) indicates that, students are unable to cooperate and participate without the necessary language that fosters their communication.

c. Group size

Research recommends that the ideal group size is from three to five. Hence the teacher's role concerning this point is crucial.

d. Assigning Students to groups

To assign students to groups, ELT teachers may take different positions because of the difference that exist among students. (Richards and Rodgers 2001:200) some tend to group the students in terms of their ability as heterogeneous or homogenous learning groups. Some other may prefer

random, interest, achievement, friendship or convenience grouping techniques depending on the purpose and type of the task.

e. Classroom arrangement

According to Brubacher, Payne and Pricket (1990:123) suggest that teachers should arrange members of a group to sit close enough to one another so that they can talk to one another and maintain eye contact with all group members.

f. Time limit

Scholars suggest that teachers should limit the time for a certain group task. According to Dennick and Exley (2004:24) put it in short as “There is nothing more boring to a student than to be involved in confused small group talks session where the time to complete tasks is either too long or too short...”

2.4.2 Process during Practice

The researcher takes only the major ones of the focus of this paper.

a. Movement in the classroom

Concerning teacher’s movement, Moore (1995:222) suggests that teachers’ movement among the students or to the back of the room will allow students to interact during group activities. But, if the teacher over does this movement, it can have a negative effect as it is unnecessary interferences in students discussion.

b. Monitoring and intervening

Teachers should monitor the group interaction continuously and give help when asked. During this process, teachers see what problems the students are encountering doing the task and work co-operatively. Brubachaer, Payne and Pricket (1990:120).

2.4.3 Feedback, Assessment and Evaluation

Ur (1996:24) explains that, feedback session usually takes place in the context of full class interaction after the end of group work. Ur emphasizes that, teachers should give feedback for students as it helps them to learn from what they did.

2.4.4. After Group Work

After group work, students should play the following roles (Yada and Martin, 2009).

- ✓ Report their work.
- ✓ Add additional information, ask for clarification and comment on the report.
- ✓ Discuss what they did good and wrong.
- ✓ Congratulate oneself on any progress.
- ✓ Keep any mistaken of stumbling (hesitant)

2.5. Concept of Communicative Competence

Since the concept of communicative competence is fundamental to this study, it is necessary to briefly summarize the term. In (1964), Chomsky, the generative linguist, first distinguished the term “competence” from “performance”. He proposed that competence indicates the internalized linguistics and grammatical knowledge of the language user, but has nothing to do with the actual use of language in concrete situations whereas performance means the practical usage of language in a specific social context. Disagreeing with Chomsky’s exclusion of the socio-cultural features of language from his definition of competence, Hymes (1972) coined the term “communicative competence” that refers to a language user’s grammatical and social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. He stated that communicative competence consists of four types of abilities:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed,, and what its doing entails (Hymes, 1972, P. 281).

Afterwards, many scholars did research on communicative competence and provided various definitions and classifications. Canale and Swain (1980) redefined communicative competence as consisting of three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence can be understood “to include knowledge of

lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammatical semantics and phonology” (Canale and Swain, 1980: 29). Sociolinguistic competence consists of two sets of rules: socio cultural rules and rules of discourse (Canale and Swain, 1980). sociolinguist rules specify the ways in which speakers’ utterances are produced and understood appropriately in a specific socio cultural context and rules of discourse are about “the extent to which appropriate attitude and register or style are conveyed by a particular grammatical form within a given socio cultural context” (Canale and Swain 1980 P. 30). Strategic competence is “made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (Canale& Swain, 1980: 30). Canale and Swain’s model of communicative competence have great influence on L2 teaching and learning. In (1990), Bachman puts forward the concept “communicative language ability” that “can be described as consisting of both knowledge or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use” (P. 84) and includes three components: language competence strategic competence, and psycho physiological mechanisms. Up to now many studies have addressed the development of students’ communicative competence (e.g., Gilmore, 2011; Greenewald 1980).

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

In this section; the sample size and sampling technique, instruments of data collection, procedures of data collection and methods of data analysis are the main points that are discussed.

3.1 Source of Data

In this study, data was gathered from the primary source. These are Bole Preparatory grade 11 Students and teachers. The data were collected by questionnaire, classroom observation and interview of some English teachers.

3.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.2.1. Students

There was one government preparatory school in Bole Sub-City. This school was Bole preparatory school which was located around Bole Medhanealem church. The researcher selected this school since it was the only preparatory school found in the sub city. Besides, this kind of research has not been done in the school. Above all, the researcher has been working this school for 12 years. So, the researcher had enough opportunities to see learning speaking problems of the students through group work. The subjects of the study were grade 11 students. It was because grade 12 students were preparing for UEE during the time of data collection and they couldn't give much attention to the questionnaire. So, their responses cannot be valid.

The sample size of this study was taken from 26 sections in the school. There were a total of 1035 students. From these eight sections were social sciences while eighteen of them were natural sciences. In the social sciences stream there were 330 (82 male and 248 female) students where as 705 (319 male and 386 female) students were in natural sciences stream.

To conduct this study, the researcher uses the process of determining sample participants. This was calculated using a scientific sample size technique with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The 95% confidence level means the researcher can be 99% certain and the 5% indicates that when the researcher administers the questionnaire, the paper may not be filled or returned due to different reasons.

In addition, 86 male and 105 female from natural sciences stream and 22 male and 67 female from social sciences stream that were a total of 280 samples were selected.

Finally, the questionnaire was administered to sections of natural students (1,2,3,4,5) and social science students(19,20 and 21)of the 26 sectionswhich were selected using simple random sampling.

3.2.2. Teachers

In the study,out of nineteen English teachers of Bole Preparatory School, three teachers were included.Their number is selected using scientific sample size procedureand random sampling technique. The rationale behind using this technique is that it gives equal opportunities for the participants to be selected.

3.3. Instruments for Data Collection

Data was collected using three tools. These were questionnaire, interview and observation. Techniques followed in designing these tools, their contents, and the way in which they were discussed below.

3.3.1. Classroom Observation

The main purpose of the observation was to have direct experience on what role EFL teachers play to maximize learners speaking participation in English during group discussion. And the observation check list was prepared from the objective of the study. The observation check list contained two or more items that show the number of opportunities given for group discussion in each observed sections. Notes were taken about any relevant issues during the class room observation

3.3.2. Interview

As Ranjit (1996: 115) shows that “In situations where in-depth information is required, interviewing is the preferred method of data collection.” Depending on the nature of the study and the degree of control, the same structured interview which is highly favored for its flexibility has been selected for this study.

3.3.3. Questionnaire

Questionnaire is one of the important means of collecting data. Because it is suitable for large scale inquiry. Additionally, the reason behind using questionnaire is, it gives enough time for the respondents to read and give well thought responses. Besides, it is economical in terms of time and energy (Best & Khan, 2006). The items in this tool were designed in line with the objective of the study, research questions and issue raised in the review of related literature

Twenty-five questions were included in the questionnaire for the students. The main objective of administrating these questions was to take out more information from the concerned research groups.

The questions were derived from the objective of the study, research questions and points raised in the review of related literature.

3.4. Pilot Study

The pilot test had the following major goals.

- To check if the data gathering tools were appropriate to collect the data that help to answer the research questions.
- To establish that the instruments are clear and understandable to the research participants (to avoid confusion)

3.5. Validity and Reliability

All instruments that are, students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation were revised by the information collected from students and English teachers in the sample 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.

3.5.1. Reliability of the Questionnaire, Interview and classroom observation

Before collecting the actual data, a pilot test was conducted on 40 voluntary grade 11 students from Bole preparatory school (out of the sample subjects). The questionnaire was administered by randomly selecting two sections each from social science and natural science. The researcher checked the internal consistency of the questionnaire through SPSS (version 20) then the

calculated Cronbachalpha revealed an acceptable reliability (0.6) which fitted the purpose of the study. By the same token, before the actual use, the items included in the interview and classroom observation were tried out in a pilot study conducted in Bole preparatory School.

3.5.2. 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. Additionally, the researcher gave the questionnaire to English language teachers to review the items of the questionnaire and assess whether the items were suitable for the purpose of the study. 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. Thus, as the questionnaire was worded in very simple English, it was not required to translate in to Amharic. Likewise, to avoid ambiguity of interviewee effects and language used, the interview questions and the classroom observation checklist were piloted with two English teachers at Bole preparatory School.

3.6. Procedures of Data Collection

The following procedures are conducted to collect data. First, the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 280 students, after explaining the purpose of the study to the subject in each section. Second, the observations were made using a check list. Third, three teachers in the sample sections were interviewed and the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed into interpretations and analysis. For the sake of clarity, the five point Likert Scale collapsed in to the following use of frequency range used by Tibabu (2011,35) was adapted for the purpose of identifying the most and least commonly used strategies. Thus, the Mean value between 1.0-2.49= low, 2.5-3.49 = medium and 3.5-5.0= high.

The data collected through these three tools were carefully analyzed and interpreted together. Finally, based on the findings, summary, conclusions and implications were made.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data gathered through questionnaire, interview and observation were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Accordingly, mean scores is used to analyze the quantitative data. Similarly, information generated from interview and classroom observation was described qualitatively.

To analyze the response of the questionnaire the raw data entered into a computer to be analyzed using SPSS (version 20).

To make the analysis easier and based on the specific objectives of the study the items of the questionnaire, interview and observation were categorized into two sub parts. These were:-

- ✓ Factors that affect students to speak out effectively in English language during the group discussion.
- ✓ How teachers' maximize their students' learning speaking in group discussion in L2 class.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Background of the Participants

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis were presented. The data were collected and analyzed from March 1 to March 28, 2015 G.C. The results were organized to two major sections corresponding to the research questions that the study were designed to answer and the data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS Software. In the first research question, the investigator wanted to assess factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking in group work. In the second research question, the study looked for how teachers' maximize their students' speaking in group discussion in L2 class.

To find out answers for the above research questions, data were gathered through questionnaire, observation and interview. The participants' backgrounds are summarized below in **Table 1**. The participants of this study were 280 grade 11 natural and social science students of Bole preparatory school. Their age was ranging from 16 to 25 years.

These subjects were enrolled in Eight sections (5 natural science and 3 social science) proportionally selected from the total of 26 sections (18 natural and 8 social science).

These sections (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 from natural science and 19, 20 and 21 from social science) were selected using simple random sampling technique. In these sections, there were 280 students (98 Male and 182 Female).

However, a total of 6 students (4 males and 2 females) were absent when the questionnaire was administered. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to 274 (95 Male and 179 Female) subjects. Which is 34.7% of the participants were Males, while 65.3% were Females.

Table 1. Description of Participants

Sex	Stream				Age		Total	%
	NS	%	SS	%	Range	%		
Male	100	56.50	7	7.22	16-20	96.4	107	39.05
Female	77	43.50	90	92.78	20-25	3.6	167	60.95
Total	177	100.00	97	100.00	16-25	100.00	274	100.00

To avoid a bulky report and unnecessary repetition that might reduce the quality of research work, the researcher has omitted presenting separate analysis of the data obtained through the three data gathering instruments. Hence, the data collected from the questionnaire, interview and classroom observation are also presented and analyzed together. The data gathered using the questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed and presented as follows:

4.2. Factors that Hinder the Practice of Teaching -Learning Speaking

4.2.1 Personality and Socio Cultural Factors

In this part, the researcher tries to find information which could tell us whether or not personality and socio-cultural factors affect students to speak out in English language during the group discussion. Mean values of each item may indicate whether the factors are the most significant one or not.

Table 2: Personality and socio cultural factors

Descriptive Statistics				
	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I fear my English teacher.	274	2.38	1.171
2	Worry to speak	274	2.83	1.322
3	I am shy so that I often use my mother tongue when I talk to peers.	274	3.05	1.390
4	I feel that other students are better in speaking English language.	274	2.62	1.335
5	My culture doesn't allow me to speak English a lot in front of elders and guests.	274	2.22	1.348
6	I don't have good speaking ability.	274	2.79	1.246
7	The way I was brought up influences me to be silent in front of groups. (Cultural Influence)	274	2.38	1.171
		274	Grand mean =2.65	Total Std.= 1.316

As it is shown in the **Table 2** above, the mean of item 3 is 3.05. This shows that students strongly believed that, they do not learn speaking actively in group work because of shyness while speaking English language. In items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 which have medium mean values display that there mean values are (2.8.3,2.6.2,2.7.9, and 2.3.8 respectively),the students tended to “Agree” with a statement that asked whether they have language anxiety, the way they brought up and the assumption of other students in the group discussion are by far better in English. When the interviewed teachers were asked to suggest some major personality and socio-cultural factors that affect learners speaking during group work, their responses are similar to the responses given by the students.

One of the interviewees (T1) for example, says

S: Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?

T1:She justified that, the respondents agreed that, most students grew up with in strict communities that do not allow children to participate actively during discussions with family. So, this may hinder students to be quite in any group work activities.

Another teacher (T3) also responded that for the same question:

I: Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?

T3: Also responded that,he used to get such information from his students when they were talking about problems students face during the practice of learning speaking in group activities.

To item 5, (the mean value is 2.22) this shows that the students incline to strongly disagree for this item that they don't speak English during group discussion. It is because there cultures do not allow them to speak English a lot in front of elders and guests.

Related interview questions was raised for the three teachers and one of them (T1 reflected the case.

I: Do all students speak in English language during discussions? If there is a shift to their mother tongue, what could be the reason for this?

T1: No, not all students. Only some participate actively. And the reason for this is, some have poor background knowledge about the topic, some are shy, some feel nerves when they try to learn speaking and others do not speak freely due to their cultural influences.

But, these teachers (T1, T2 and T3) did not react effectively against these problems during classroom observation.

In general, the finding obtained from students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation showed that there were lack of self-confidence, low ability in English, low self esteem. So, these were some factors that affect large number of grade 11 students of Bole preparatory school when speaking tasks are running on through group works. Hence, it can be concluded that the factors mentioned above are the most important factors so far as they affect large number of students.

4.2.2. Group Formation Factors

4.2.2.1 Situational factors

Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were prepared to draw out information on the way that whether the learners affected to speak English language when they discuss in groups. The analysis of each item is illustrated in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Situational factors

Descriptive Statistics				
	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
8	In my English text book, speaking tasks are interesting, using group work and inviting to speak in English.	274	2.87	1.273
9	I choose small group sizes (2-5). Because my participation in speaking English increases in small groups	274	3.22	1.286
10	I don't prefer large group (6 and above) for discussion in order not to miss the opportunity of practicing speaking.	274	3.12	1.236
11	I participate better in homogenous groups (groups with similar ability).	274	2.22	1.348
12	I participate actively when group members are my friends.	274	3.99	1.174
13	I participate more in heterogeneous groups (mixed ability group).	274	3.49	1.238
14	Speaking ability in the English textbook is suitable to my age, background knowledge and level of understanding.	274	2.89	1.224
15	Seating arrangements like the immovable desks affect our communication competence in group work	274	3.04	1.395
		274	Grand mean = 3.55	Total Std.= 1.453

As indicated in the **Table 3** above, the mean value of item 12 is 3.99. So, the subjects in the study strongly agree that they participate more and practice learning speaking actively when the group members were friends to each other.

Additionally, the students preferred items 9, 10, 11 and 13 which have 3.22, 3.12, 3.49, and 3.04 consecutively inclined to “Agree.” These items affect the learners’ effective use of English language in group work. The respondents strongly believed that small groups suit them for group discussion since they speak up and learn speaking in small groups. However, they didn’t believe that large groups suit them for learning speaking in English language. So, the responses and the finding in **Table 3**, match with the review of related literature which discusses about “...but if group members are increased above a certain limit individual contributions will be minimized and some people may find themselves inhibited from talking.” Similarly, one of the interviewed teachers, for example, has put this as follows:

I: In which group of students speak English language more? Is it in high group size or in less group size?

T3: He said when the learners are in small group, they participate much well than when they are in large group.

In the same manner, during classroom observation, students in small groups i.e. three students per desk have been seen participating in a better way than when they were in a group more than three. Likewise, the target groups strongly believed that heterogeneous groups are suitable for them to speak English and learn freely in group work.

As can be seen above in **Table 3**, to item 11, the mean value is 2.22. This shows that the respondents did not strongly agree in participating more in homogeneous groups.

To item 15 (the mean value is 3.04), the respondents strongly believed that fixed desks and immovable chairs in their classroom affect their communicative competence in group work. In addition, three of the interviewed teachers responded that fixed desks were not suitable for different groups, in the way they like. For instance, T3 said that:

Seats are unsuitable for students' communicative competence in group work because of their arrangements. Students cannot sit face to face for group discussion because this furniture is obstacles and barriers. They didn't suit me to form appropriate group size and group composition.

As to the researcher observation, the above problem was seen in the class.

The mean values of items 8 and 14 are 2.87 and 2.89 respectively. These values are inclined to "Agree." This means the respondents believe that the speaking tasks in the new English grade 11th textbook are interesting and inviting to learn speaking in English while participating in group activities. In the same manner, respondents believed that these tasks were appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

As data obtained from teachers' interview indicate, two teachers assured that, the tasks of grade 11 English textbook are motivating and interesting for intended group. Teacher one, for example, responds as follows:

I: Do you think the new textbook is interesting to the students with regard to speaking tasks?

T1: She assured that, Speaking tasks find in the new textbook are by far better than the old textbook. And topics of group discussions presented in the textbook are motivating and encouraging. They are appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

With regard to the researcher observation the tasks of the textbook were inviting and letting students learn speaking to some degree.

4.3. Teachers' role in maximizing learners' Speaking participation

4.3.1A classroom English teacher

In this section, an attempt was made to gather information about important roles, the class room teacher plays for the purpose of maximizing learners' participation in group activities. (Items 16 to 25 were included in this section.)

Table 4: Classroom English Teacher

Descriptive Statistics				
	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
16	introduces the topic of the lesson in English.	274	3.80	1.131
17	gives explanation in English when the textbook's presentation is not clear.	274	3.51	1.287
18	encourages us to speak English in group discussions.	274	3.36	1.314
19	uses different methods of group formation.	274	2.47	1.173
20	goes around during discussion to observe groups.	274	3.39	1.316
21	facilitates group discussion	274	3.34	1.281
22	intervenes and helps us when it is necessary.	274	3.43	1.259
23	evaluates our group performance.	274	3.27	1.309
24	suggests his/her opinions when students stop speaking in English or shift to their mother tongue (L1) during discussion.	274	3.21	1.372
25	gives us feedback (correction).	274	3.41	1.324
		274	Grand mean = 3.40	Total Std.= 1.408

As indicated in **Table 4**, above, the mean value of item 16 is 3.80. This shows that the participants responded “strongly agreed” about their English teacher introduces the topic of the lesson. The mean value of item 17 is 3.51, displays the subjects strongly believed that, their class room teacher gives more explanation when the text books presentation is not clear.

In response to item 18 (the mean value is 3.36.) indicates, the respondents strongly believe that their classroom English teachers encourage them to participate in English language in group discussion. Concerning assigning groups (item 19) the mean value is 2.47. These show the participants didn't strongly believe that their class room English teachers use different methods to assign students into groups. When the interviewed teachers were asked what important

activities they do, they replied that, they perform most of the activities. For example, two teachers put their responses as follows:

I: What do you do during presentation stage?

T1: First, she said that, she introduces the day's lesson during presentation stage and in the practice stage, she moves and monitors groups' whether the speaking tasks given in groups done or not and during ending stage she gives them related homework to do text based tasks.

I: What do you do during presentation stage?

T2: She confirmed that at presentation stage she introduces the topic and divides students in to groups and at the practice stage, she presents the text speaking tasks and lets them speak in groups. And finally (ending stage) she tells them about the next lesson

As to the researcher observation, it was contrary to T1 and T2 were not seen presenting the activities that they mentioned as if they did. Therefore, the finding of this research may explain that classroom teachers' effort in maximizing learners' speaking participation in group discussion is very low. Regarding teacher's movement, item 20, (A mean value =3.39), indicates, the students inclined to "Agree" that their classroom English teachers move from place to place to observe groups. With regard to item 21 which concerned on facilitating group discussion, the mean value, 3.34 reveals majority of the respondents also tended to 'Agree' that their English teachers facilitate group discussion. Concerning item 22, (A mean value =3.43.) the students accepted that, their classroom English teachers intervene and help them when it is necessary.

Results of the teachers' interview responses' to questions related to the above items (16-22) show that teachers activities during the practice stage are vary based on the exercises given to the students. As it was noted during observations, T1 seemed eager to monitor group discussion though he didn't do many important activities. But he seemed to be keen on time given to group tasks. The same were true for T2 and T3.

In general, the results from students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation or the row data, (items 16-22) may indicate that there are negative relationships to the items raised with teachers' performance in the classroom.

To item 23, the mean value is 3.27. (Which inclines to “Agree”) shows that the target groups believed their teachers evaluate their performances. Similarly, the mean of item 24 is (3.21.) It approaches to “Agree” that the teacher suggests his/her opinions when students stop speaking in English or shift to their mother tongue (L1) during group discussion. However, the observation result shows that the observed teachers were not seen evaluating group performances and they didn’t encourage them to use only English language while they were speaking in group discussions. To item 25, it has 3.41 mean value reveals that the respondents inclined to “Agree” with the statement that their classroom English teachers give them feedback. And during the interview, three teachers said that they sometimes give them feedback at the end. However, the observation contradicts with the teachers’ response to the interview questions.

In short, the results of the above data (From item 23 to 25) may imply that English teachers do not give attention to the three important roles (evaluate, suggest their opinion and giving them feedback) when they manage to let learners practice speaking in group work activities. As a result of these, group members may be discouraged that there is no any difference between sitting passively and being active speaker if a teacher does not evaluate group discussion and does not give attention in giving feedback.

Discussion

This sections, is the place or the room where the researcher discusses the important issues raised using the three tools and its analysis above. The following findings are extracted from the analysis. The questionnaire reported that, there are some factors that impacted the effective practice of learning speaking related to students, teachers, and course designers themselves. These are first, the students indicated that, the following personal factors highly impacted their’ learning speaking practice in group discussion. This is to say, most students do not speak English throughout group discussion in group work because of their shyness or lack of confidence while speaking. And the students’ willingness and motivation to use English in the group discussion can have a positive impact on students’ learning speaking. However, students’ resistance, language anxiety, low-English proficiency cultural influence or upbringing (the way the learners were brought up in the strict family) weaken their speaking practice and shift to L1, or they prefer silence.

Second, the students were impacted not only by personal factors, but also in situational factors. They resist participating in English during group discussion. The questionnaire, interview and classroom observation reported another explanation for the students' unwillingness to use English and not to speak English effectively in group work. The data pointed out that students' speak up in small group size (1-5) while they decrease learning speaking in English in large group size discussion (6 and above). They also revealed that their learning speaking practice increase when they were assigned in heterogeneous groups better than in homogenous groups. Likewise, learners' interaction could be high when they are in high cohesive group.

Third, the natures of tasks in grade 11 English textbook were not attractive and participatory to the expected level. And again, the findings from the three tools justify that fixed desks and immovable chairs in Bole preparatory school are obstacles for learning speaking in group discussion.

Finally, as the data display that the teachers' role in maximizing learners' participation in group discussion using in English is very high. Teachers usually introduce topics of discussion and give more explanations when the text approaches is not clear and to their best abilities they should speak English in during any activities at presentation stage.

But, they do not make use of these activities at the presentation stage. Moreover, English teachers don't pay attention to use different methods of grouping. In addition, they don't give feedback, or comments and suggestions for group performances at the ending stage.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

This chapter deals with summary of the findings, conclusions and some possible implications.

5.1. Summary of the Findings

The objective of this study, as it has been indicated earlier, was to explore factors affecting students' involvement in learning speaking using group work in English classes. On the basis of this assumption, the researcher has gone through analyses of the information gathered; the researcher has come up with the following summary:

- The results of the data collected from the questionnaire, interview and classroom observation are used to reveal the effective practice of learning speaking on students' group participation. These are Personal and Situational factors and teachers' role in speaking participation in group discussion using English.
- Personal factors include low self-esteem or the learners' give less value to themselves, language anxiety, low English ability, their culture or the way learner were brought up.
- Situational factors like small group size (2 to 5) students per group, the nature of tasks written in grade 11 English text book and seating arrangements especially fixed desks or immovable chairs in Bole preparatory school affect students' attempt to practice learning speaking effectively and successfully.
- Teachers' role in maximizing students' learning speaking tasks in group discussion using L₂ English. In this section, the data indicates that at the presentation, practice and ending stages of group discussion the role of some teachers are not strong. They do not pay attention in monitoring and observing groups when students discuss in groups. Moreover, the finding proves that classroom English teachers do not evaluate groups' effort and do not give comments.
- As the researcher assumption, results of this study summarized that preparatory students' attitude towards learning speaking through group discussion need improvement. These initial silence or shifts from L₁ where grounded in their limited English speaking proficiency. And in the researcher's view, this study also showed that besides facilitating students' learning speaking in group work under classroom English-speaking settings contributed to the development of preparatory students' English.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the outcomes of the study, the researcher come-up with the following conclusions:

- ❖ From the findings, the researcher reached the conclusion that most of the teachers disregard the following important activities these are specifying objectives of group tasks, using different techniques to form groups and creating a cooperative environment during presentation stage. Perhaps, these activities help students' involvement and continue learning speaking in English in group work.
- ❖ The investigation points out that almost all learners experience language anxiety and shyness, to speak in English in front of their peers. The researcher assumes that teachers should spare some of their time to advise their students on how to reduce language anxiety.
- ❖ The study discloses that learners fail to sustain their learning speaking in English language group discussion beyond few sentences. And they don't generate meaning so, teachers should strictly monitor their group discussion and play a facilitative role to use English in group discussions thoroughly.
- ❖ If possible, instead of desks, the classroom should be furnished with armchairs so that flexible seating arrangements would be possible and students could be easily grouped for effective speaking discussion outcomes.

5.3. Implications

Taking in to account the conclusions, the study has made the following implications:

The finding of this study will have practical importance to educational researchers, preparatory school English teachers and course designers. Further study can address the relationships between group work and speaking and even individual variables such as age, gender, English ability or /proficiency/, English communicative competence/and students' educational background. And finally all concerned bodies need to conceptualized strategies for solving the problems existing in current situation, such as playing a grouping importance on learning speaking, creating more effective communication opportunities both inside and outside the class with learning the target language.

Those teachers who teach English in preparatory school

- ❖ Should try to present interesting and motivating speaking activities that appeal to learners' age and interest. They should also motivate and encourage learners to speak in English in group discussion. Moreover, they should give encouraging feedback for students' speaking participation.
- ❖ Since group factors have serious effects on students' learning speaking, teachers should pay attention to different grouping techniques. Accordingly, they should try to assign students in relatively small and mixed ability groups as there help students in a relatively small and mixed ability groups help students to learn speaking better in group discussion. Teachers should also make some that learners are a high cohesive group since it is comfortable for high interaction.
- ❖ Education bureau and other concerned bodies should help preparatory schools to arrange seating arrangements in classroom in accordance with the language teaching approach used. Besides, course designers should also consider the seating arrangements when they design speaking tasks using group work. For instance, as teachers explained, a group of three and a group of six are the only possible group sizes which can be used in other classes.
- ❖ Group participation in Teaching-learning speaking class should be given attention and give credit to it or rewarded in marks.

- ❖ As much as possible, teachers ought to organize their learners' on the basis of mixed ability group to increase students' involvement in speaking. Permanent grouping which remain unchanged over a semester is difficult to group, administer and to reduce indiscipline.
- ❖ If the researcher is not mistaken, the result of the study levels that teachers' provision of feedback and motivation for group activities in learning speaking is below the students' expectations. So, the teacher should give enough feedback and follow students' progress regularly to the needed standard during learning speaking in group discussion.
- ❖ In the researchers understanding, the investigation points out that during learning speaking students should group according to their interest as they are sitting next to each other. And should speak English in group work during speaking classes. Because learning speaking comes through practice speaking.
- ❖ Most importantly, as the researcher assumption, the result of this study implies that preparatory students' attitude towards learning speaking through group discussion need improvement. Their initial silence or shifts to L1 are grounded in their limited English Speaking Proficiency. And in the researcher's view this study also shows that besides facilitating students' grasp of speaking in group work under classroom English-speaking setting, to the development of preparatory students' English communicative competence in terms of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. On the top of the above concepts, with their increasing improvement in communicative competence through group work they are able to speak appropriately in a wide variety of settings which will advances their speaking ability to their life time.

Finally, this study suggests that additional research should be conducted to come up with full comprehension on factors that hinder the practice of Teaching-learning speaking in group work and teachers' best role in maximizing learning potential in speaking English using group work.

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Appendix A

Addis Ababa University

College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

I would like to thank you for your unreserved cooperation to fill this questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to gather information on factors that affect the effective practice of speaking skills in group work in grade 11 students. It has no intention to evaluate you based on the responses. Each of your genuine responses has high value for the success of this study. Thus, the researcher kindly requests you to give your open and honest responses to the questions.

Thank you in advance!

Instruction 1: Complete the following background information using tick(s)

Sex: Male Female

Age: _____

Stream: Social science Natural science

Instruction 2: This questionnaire has three parts. Read items under each part and indicate your degree of agreement using the following five points scale.

5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= I have no idea, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree

Part One: Questions about your personality (like self-esteem,...)

And socio-cultural factors (like group size,...)

No	Items	Possible response				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I have no idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	During group discussion in speaking class, I do not speak English language throughout discussion because (of)					
1	I fear my English teachers.					
2	I worry and feel stress to speak English.					
3	I am shy so that I often use my mother tongue when I talk to peers.					
4	I feel that other students are better in speaking English Language.					
5	My culture doesn't allow me to speak English a lot in front of elders and guests.					
6	I don't have good speaking ability.					
7	The way I was brought up influences me to be silent in front of groups. (Cultural Influence)					

Part Two: Questions on Situational Factors (like the nature of tasks,...)

No	Items	Possible response				
		Strongly agree	Agree	I have no idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	I can/can't speak English in running group work (because)					
8	In my English text book, speaking tasks are interesting using group work and inviting to speak in English					
9	I choose small group size(2-5).Because my participation in speaking English increases in small group.					
10	I don't prefer large group (6 and above) for discussion in order not to miss the opportunity of practicing speaking					
11	I participate better in homogenous group (groups with similar ability)					
12	I participate actively when group members are my friends.					
13	I participate more in heterogeneous group /mixed ability group/					
14	Speaking activities in the English textbook are suitable to my age, background knowledge and level of understanding.					
15	Seating arrangements like in the immovable desks affect our communication competence in group work.					

Part Three: Questions about a Class Room English Teacher

No	Items	Possible response				
		Strongly agree	Agree	I have no idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	My English teacher					
16	introduces the topic of the lesson in English.					
17	gives explanation in English when the textbook's presentation is not clear.					
18	encourages us to speak English in group discussions.					
19	uses different methods of group formation.					
20	goes around during discussion to observe groups.					
21	facilitates group discussion.					
22	intervenes and helps us when it is necessary.					
23	evaluates our group performance.					
24	suggests his/her opinions when students are passive or shift to their mother tongue during discussion.					
25	gives us feed back					

Appendix B

Classroom observation checklist

English teacher's role during	Activities done	Observed teacher			Total	Remark
		01	02	03		
Presentati on stage	Providing starter /warmer/ in English language.	+	+	+		
	Introducing the day's lesson in English language.	-	+	+		
	Encouraging learners to participates in English.	-	-	-		
	Forming groups using different techniques.	+	-	-		
	Assigning functioning roles.	+	-	-		
	Telling objectives of tasks.	-	-	-		
Practice stage	Going around groups.	+	+	+		
	Monitoring and facilitating group discussion	+	-	-		
	Intervening and helping groups.	-	+	-		
Ending stage	Evaluating group performances.	-	-	-		
	Giving feedback	-	-	-		
	Chances given for group discussions.	+	+	+		
Time given for the group discussions in each class.	20 min.	10 min.	15 min.	Total = 45min.		

Key:

Where: -

01= Observed 1 and “+“sign shows the activities are done.

02= observed 2 “-”sign shows the activities are not done.

03= observed 3

Appendix C

Teacher's Interview

1. Do you encourage students to speak English in group work? If yes, how? If no, why?
2. Do all students speak in English language during discussions? If there is a shift to their mother tongue language, what could be the reason for this?
3. Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?
4. How do you form groups? How do you decide the group size and group composition?
5. In which group of students speak English more? In high group size or in less group size?
6. Do you think that group size and group composition affect students' speaking practice?
7. What do you think about speaking tasks in the text book? Are they interesting and inviting to speak in English during group works?
8. Do you prepare group activities from the text book to the student level of understanding, interest, and age?
9. Do you think classroom desks are suitable to you to form groups in the way you like?
10. What important activities do you do to maximize students' participation in group discussion using English language? (At presentation, practice and ending stages?)

Appendix D

Transcription of Observed Teacher's Record Interview Scripts

D.1. Interview with Teacher One (T1)

I: I would like to thank you for your willingness to give me an interview. I want you to ask some questions related to factors that affect the effective practice of learning speaking skills. To begin with my first question

- Do you encourage students to speak English in group work, If yes, how? If No, why?

T1: (Selam) Yes, by giving enough speaking tasks using group work as one to five organizations.

I: Do all students speak in English language during discussions? If there is a shaft to their mother tongue, what could be the reason for this?

T1: No, not all students. Only some participate actively. And the reason for this is, some have pool background knowledge about the topic, some are shy, some feel nerves when they try to speak and others do not speak freely due to their cultural influences.

I: Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?

T1: Yes, most students grew up with in strict communities that do not allow children to participate actively during discussions with family so, this may hinder students to be quite in any group work activities.

I: How do you form groups? How do you decide the group size and composition?

T1: I decide the group size using their numbers. And I use small groups. Regarding group composition, I use mixed ability /heterogeneous groups/. It is because I feel that learners will help each other.

I: In which group of students speak English language more? *In high group size? In less group size?*

T1: In less group size. *Because if the group size is large, their discussion will be diverted.*

I: Do you think that group size and group composition affect students speaking practice?

T1: Yes, if the group size is large they may be silent or shift to their mother tongue and talk others things.

I: what do you think about speaking in the text book? Are they interesting and inviting to speak in English during group work?

T1: Speaking tasks find in the new textbook are by far better than the old textbook. And topics of group discussions presented in the text books are motivating and encouraging. They are appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

I: Do you prepare group activities from the text book to the student level of understanding, interest and age?

T1: Exactly, I try to choose activities from the text book and add others from reference books.

I: Do you think classroom desks are suitable to form groups in the way you like?

T1: No! The desks are not suitable, but I try to use a row and let them practice speaking.

I: What important activities do you do to maximize students' participation in group discussion using English language?

T1: First, I introduce the day's lesson and during practice stage, I move and monitor groups and during ending stage I give them related homework to do the tasks.

D2: Interview with Teacher Two (T2)

I: First and most, I thank you for your co-operation for this interview. And let me start my question. Do you encourage students to learn speaking in English in group work? If yes, how? If no, why?

T2: (Askalu): Yes, I encourage them though there are problems when they continue discussing.

I: Do all students speak English during discussions? If there is a shift to their mother tongue language, what could be the reason for this?

T2: No! They come from different background, and abilities.

I: Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?

T2: Yes, students' have to be confidence. Because confidence in students' abilities deal with any speaking problems.

I: How do you form groups? How do you decide group size and group composition?

T2: I first *observe*, their number and then I use a group of three to six concerning group composition; I arrange students in heterogeneous group because I know that students help each other and discuss the tasks nicely.

I: In which group of students speak English more? *In high group size or in less group size?*

T2: In less group size.

I: Do you think that group size and group composition affect students' learning speaking practice?

T2: Yes, it affects but the desks are not suitable to use the suitable group size.

I: What do you think about speaking tasks in the text book? Are they interesting to speak in English?

T2: Somehow, it is interesting and if it is not inviting, I skip it and move to another part.

I: Do you prepare group activities from the text book to the students' level of understanding, interest and age?

T2: Yes, sometimes I try to prepare my own, but most students do not use English during group activities.

I: Do you think class room desks are suitable to form groups in the way you like?

T2: No: they are not suitable; they don't allow me to form groups the way I like.

I: what important activities do you do to maximize students' speaking participation in group discussion using English language? *At presentation, practice and ending stage?*

T2: At presentation stage I introduce the topic and divide students in to groups and at the practice stage, present the text speaking tasks and let them speak and learn in groups. And finally (ending stage) I tell them about next lesson.

D3: Interview with Teacher 3 (T3)

I. Thank You very much for your cooperation to this interview. Let me ask you the first question.

- Do you encourage students to speak English in group work? If yes, how? If no, why?

T3: (Meron): Yes

I: How?

T3: I give a lot of speaking tasks for group discussion and follow up their discussion.

I: Do all students speak English Language during group discussions? If there is a shift to their mother tongue languages what could be the reason for this?

T3: No, not all, a few students speak English language in group discussion. They usually prefer silence due to poor background knowledge. I mean they are baseless students

I: Do you think there are main factors that hinder the practice of learning speaking in group work? If yes, what are they?

T3: Of course students' religion, culture and their ethnicity affect them to learn speaking in group discussion. And mainly I used to get such information from my students when they were discussing about problems students face during group activities.

I: How do you form groups? How do you decide the group size and group composition?

T3: I use their classroom number and desk mates. And mostly, I prefer small size since students get concentration for speaking tasks in small group size.

I: In which group of students speak English language more? In high group size or in less group size?

T3: When the learners are in small group, they participate much well than when they are in large group.

I: Do you think that group size and group composition affect students' speaking practice?

T3: Yes, they have bad effect, for example, when students are in small groups, they learn speaking better. Similarly, when I group them based on their ability or friendship group, they participate actively. This is maybe, they know each other well.

I: What do you think about speaking tasks in the text book? Are they interesting to speak in English during group work?

T3: The text book tasks are not difficult to students. But they are not attractive and interesting. It doesn't focus to their back ground knowledge.

I: Do you prepare group activities from the text book to the students' level of understanding, interest and age?

T3: I sometimes do

I: Do you think classroom desks are suitable to form groups in the way you like?

T3: No, they are not suitable to sit face to face for discussions. And the desks are not easy to form group size and group composition.

I: What important activities do you do to maximize students' speaking participation in group discussion using English Language? (At presentation, practice and Ending stage?)

T3: I let students present their speaking tasks in groups and I evaluate their presentation and give them comments.

Declaration

I declare that the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with Academic Rules and ethical conduct. Besides, Ithe under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name: SintayehuTeferiYigezu

Signature: _____

Place: Addis Ababa university: Faculty of Language Studies department of English (Post Graduate)

Date: August, 2015 G.C