

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies**

**The Organization of Group Work in Spoken English II
Classes: Adama and Jimma Teachers
Colleges in Focus**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the organization of group tasks in teaching Spoken English II at Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges. A descriptive case study was employed to achieve this research goal. Two English language instructors and one hundred and six students from both colleges were considered to be the subjects of the study. Questionnaire with a set of both closed and open-ended items were used to secure relevant data from the students. In addition, a semi-structured interview was designed to elicit pertinent information from the instructors. Finally, the third instrument used for data collection was classroom observation. During classroom observation, semi-structured observation checklists were used to collect data while the instructors were teaching Spoken English II to the students.

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and chi-square test. But those data gathered through the interview and classroom observations were qualitatively analyzed. All the data secured from different sources were collated in the discussions to arrive at conclusions regarding the instructors' practices of group task organization.

The results of the study generally suggest that the instructors did not properly organize group tasks, which were designed for teaching Spoken English II. Consequently, group tasks seemed to suffer from different problems created at various stages of organization. The tasks did not appear to provide the students with helpful learning atmosphere in order to practice speaking and develop their oral skills. Recommendations were forwarded to alleviate the problems.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Communicative language teaching emphasizes the active involvement of learners in classroom language practices by interacting among themselves in a meaningful way instead of passively responding to language models initiated by the teacher. In harmony with this point, Hyland (1991:28) asserts: "At the heart of communicative language teaching is the need to provide learners with experiences that promote student interaction"; and she goes on to say, "learners are no longer expected to simply absorb and repeat language models provided by their teacher". Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2000:126) writes that communicative language teaching places emphasis on "communicative interaction" that offers learners ample opportunities to use the target language for negotiation of meaning rather on getting learners to carry out structural drills aimed at "just the mastery of language forms". In short, the approach advocates the need to create communicative situations that engage learners in realistic language use while doing classroom tasks.

Group work is recommended by scholars (e.g. Larsen-Freeman 2000; Nunan and Lamb 1996; Jacobs and Manida 1996; Lockhart and Richards 1994; Long 1990; Gower et. al 1995) for devising such interactive settings. This is because as it is hardly possible to provide students with extensive opportunities to use the language they are learning for communicating among themselves in a teacher-fronted activity. The scholars reason that group work, unlike a teacher-centered language instruction, enhances the amount and quality of language practices, and provides supportive and cooperative atmosphere for these practices. They also argue that group work is used to individualize language learning by allowing students to proceed at their

own pace as opposed to teacher-led language practice that does not seem to recognize individual differences among students.

Group work, therefore, has significant place in communicative language teaching and represents a marked departure from a teacher-dominated class where the role of the learners is reduced to merely imitating and absorbing what is provided by their teacher. In this regard, Ngoh (1991:19) points out that “the use of group work represents a shift away from the teacher-fronted or lockstep system”; and thus she adds, “Group work has been central in communicative language teaching”. In other words, group work is an essential tool for implementing student-centered language instruction, which is the principal tenet of communicative language teaching.

If group work is, however, to be used as tool to implement student-centered language learning, it has to be properly organized. As opposed to other language learning activities, group work is an intricate task which implies that teachers may not simply set it up by just ordering students to get into groups in the middle of other activities (McDonough and Shaw 1993; Leighton 1997). Because of this reason, Jacobs and Ball (1996:99) argue that group work is not an activity, which teachers switch to in the middle of whole-class session without making the necessary arrangements in the organization of the class. This shows that group tasks need careful and effective organization to be productive.

Many scholars recognize the need for good organization in setting up language learning activities. For instance, Harmer (1991:293) holds that the success of many activities is contingent on "good organization". Group work is no exception and the need for organization is even more emphasized in setting up group work owing to its relatively intricate structure. In

this perspective, Ur (1996: 233) maintains that the success of group work, among others, “immediately depends on careful and effective organization”. Ngho (1991:12), and Lewis and Hill (1985) hold a similar position when they argue that group work ought to be thoughtfully and carefully set up to offer a richer environment for language learning. This means that it is essential to invest a great deal of care and thought in organizing group work to maximize the good opportunities it provides for language practices.

In sum, it seems possible to conclude that the organization of group work cannot be taken for granted, nor is the success of group work the result of a chance event. It is rather the result of a deliberate and effective organization. It is, therefore, crucial to investigate how group work is organized wherever it is used as one form of language activity.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges produce teachers for the secondary cycle primary schools in Oromia Regional State. These colleges train teachers at a diploma level in English and in many other fields of study. One of the courses offered to students majoring in English in these colleges is Spoken English II. As the course catalogue prepared by the Ministry of Education (1996) shows, the main objective of this course is to help students develop oral skills in order to "communicate effectively and provide good models of English for learners in grades 5-8". Thus, the course is designed to promote students' speaking skills in order that they will be orally proficient to effectively teach learners in the specified grades.

In the course catalogue, communicative activities (e.g; role play, debate, discussion), which favour the use of group work, are suggested for attaining the set goal. Hence, the success of the instructors at the colleges in producing language teachers with a good command of oral

English, among others, is dependent upon group tasks that are employed for developing the desired oral skills in the trainees. As has been pointed in the previous section, it should be, however, noted that the use of group work per se could not guarantee success unless it is properly organized to offer good contexts in which to practice the skills in question. This appears to provide a compelling need to explore the practice of group work organization to see whether or not it facilitates the students' development of oral skills.

A review of local research on speaking and group work, however, reveals that the organization of group work in speaking classes has not been explored. From among, the studies that looked into speaking skills, the study conducted by Meaz (1999), for instance, assessed a class interaction and its bearing on the development of learner speaking skills in some high schools in Addis Abba. Sisay (1999), on his part investigated factors affecting learner development of oral skills in the Ethiopian Civil Service College. On the other hand, Tsegay (1995) and Fasil (1992) focused on describing and exploring communicative strategies used by high school and college students in the oral production of the target language respectively.

Few studies have been conducted on group work in the local context; and these studies are different in purpose and focus from those cited in the preceding paragraph. One of the studies was carried out by Alamirew (1992) in order to establish the feasibility of using group work in teaching English in Ethiopian high schools. The other study was conducted by Amanuel (1996) to research into the patterns of oral participation of female and male freshman students in discussion groups at Addis Ababa University. None of the studies has addressed how group work is organized for teaching speaking skills.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was, accordingly, to fill this gap in our understanding of the organization of group in speaking classes by exploring how group tasks are set up in teaching Spoken English II at Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges. In particular, the study attempted to:

- explore how the instructors at these colleges set up the preparatory stage of group work in Spoken English II classes
- investigate whether or not the instructors monitor group tasks in Spoken English II classes, and if they do, how they monitor group task
- examine how the instructors draw group tasks to a close and organize report back and feedback sessions in Spoken English II classes.
- draw implications for future development of the students' oral skills from the ways group activities are organized for teaching the skills.

In line with these objectives, the study tried to answer the following questions:

- How do the instructors set up the first stage of group work in spoken English II classes?
- Do the instructors monitor group work in Spoken English II classes? If yes, how?
- How do the instructor bring group tasks to a close and organize report back and feed back sessions in Spoken English II?

1.4 Significance of the study

Group work has “become almost synonymous with the modern, communicative language classroom” and thus, has an important place in communicative language teaching (Wharton and Race 1999: 21) As a result, it can receive the attention of language teachers, course

writers, teacher educators and researchers in a pedagogical arena. Therefore, this study is hoped to benefit these groups of people, who have access to its results, in their efforts to improve language teaching practices. For example:

1. Language teachers can get valuable insights from the study on how they ought to organize group work.
2. The results of the study may encourage course writers to suggest essential procedures regarding the organization of group tasks in their materials so that teachers can use them for effective teaching.
3. The study may raise the awareness of teacher educators to equip their trainees with the essential skills of group work organization.
4. Finally, the study can initiate further research on group work to get still deeper understanding of its different aspects.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study limited itself only to two teacher training colleges; namely, Adama Teachers College and Jimma Teachers College, out of seven teacher training colleges in the country, on the basis of proximity and convenience.

Group work has different facets and can be used for teaching different skills of a language but the study focused on its organizational aspect in one macro skill, speaking. There are two courses, Spoken English I and II, designed for teaching this skill. However, the study was confined to Spoken English II for it was offered to the subjects of the study in the second semester when I scheduled to collect relevant data for the study.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted on subjects who speak the same mother tongue, Oromo language. For this reason, it was not possible to see whether or not the instructors who participated in study used first language as one criterion of student allocation in grouping students for group tasks.

The study was initially intended to be carried out on three colleges, but one of the colleges was dropped due to unforeseen circumstances that occurred during the data collection. The instructor, who was teaching Spoken English II (a course on which the study focused) passed away after I started but before I finished collecting data from that college. The instructor who replaced the departed one did not resume teaching the course until the end of my schedule for collecting data. Due to time constraint, it was not possible to substitute another college. The focus of the study was limited to the organization of group work in one macro skill, speaking. Thus, the findings of this study might not give us wide and deep insight into how group tasks are set up and managed in teaching other skills.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Preview

The purpose of this study was, as noted in the previous chapter, to examine how group tasks are set up and managed in teaching speaking skills in two colleges. In view of this, the chapter deals with a review of previous works that are meant to provide background information on the organization of group tasks in teaching speaking skills. First, the chapter presents a brief definition of group work and different goals of oral group work. Second, it takes up the rationale for organizing group work. Finally it discusses the three stages of group work organization and provides a short summary.

2.2. Group Work Defined

People use the term "group work" in two different ways and it is essential to make sure that we are referring to the same concept when we use the term. Many writers (e.g. Todd 1997; Wallace 1991; Long 1990; Bejerano 1987; Long and Porter 1985) refer to "group work" as a form of language activity done by a group of students without a direct involvement of the teacher. This definition is general in that it subsumes all language learning tasks carried out by a pair of students and those, which are done by a group of more than two students.

On the other hand, several other writers (e.g. Wharton and Race 1999; Sensnan 1997; Nunan and Lamb 1995; Edge 1993; Byrne 1986; Storch 2002) 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. For example, Nunan and Lamb (1995) describe

group work as a language learning activity which is organized to be done by three to six students under a careful supervision of a teacher. This and the previous definitions are essentially similar in that they show that group work is independently done by learners without direct control from their teachers. However, the second definition of group work excludes pair work and the term is used with this meaning through out this paper.

2.3. Goals of Speaking Group Work

Speaking group tasks are set up to achieve one or more goals in teaching speaking skills. According to Nation (1989: 160, 161), they are organized to attain five main goals; and these goals, in effect, provide pedagogical justifications for the use of group work in a speaking classroom.

2.3.1. Negotiation of Input

In order to carry out group activities of speaking, 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 refers to language features a bit beyond learners' current level of understanding (Krashen 1985). This linguistic input has to be negotiated through such strategies classification, confirmation, checking comprehension and repetition for mutual understanding to take place among the learners in doing the task in hand (Nation 1989; Ellis, 1997).

There is a body of evidence, which shows that group work provides opportunities for negotiation of input. After reviewing many studies on the interactions between second language learners and native speakers, and second language learners, Long and Porter

(1985:214) conclude that a great deal of negotiation occurs among speakers of different level of linguistic proficiency. They suggest that group work also puts learners in a similar situation where they negotiate new input in order to simplify it to the level comprehensible to their listeners. Similarly, the study conducted on non-speakers discourse by Shehadeh (1999) reveals that in communication, non-native speakers modify their output to make it understandable to their interlocutors through negotiation. Thus, taken together, the studies imply that learners are engaged in negotiation of input when they interact to complete group work.

2.3.2. New Language Items and Functions

In a teacher-led classroom, the role of learners is responding in unrelated sentences to what is initiated by their teachers. On the contrary, group work allows learners to initiate, to maintain, and to terminate interaction in an extended discourse (Long and Porter 1985). In order to be engaged in such discourse, learners may need to be pre-taught relevant language features, in which they get exposure to new language items and functions. In harmony with this, Nation (1988:161) indicates that "group work gives learners exposure to a range of language functions and items" through the pre-teaching of language required to carry out the task. Thus, group work can be used to achieve the goal of exposing learners to new language functions and items.

2.3.3. Fluency

Language learners need ample opportunities to use what they have learned in realistic communication situations and this facilitates their language development. The view is supported by the principle of first and second language acquisition which postulates that

language development takes place when a speaker tries it out for communication (Nunan 1991: Hudelson 1991). In other words, learners need situations that allow them to put what they have learned to an immediate use to see whether or not it can lead to success in getting across their idea. Besides, they can realize lack or adequacy in their linguistic ability when they get the chance to use their growing language for communication (Swain 1995). These practices can facilitate their progress towards being fluent speakers of the target language.

It is suggested that group work offers wider opportunities for such fluency practices. For example, Byrne (1987:53) recommends that "group work should be frequently employed to get the students to use language freely and to try to express their own ideas". Nation (1989) and Shumin (1997) hold a similar view when they state that group work creates an interactive environment conducive for fluency work. This is because in group work learners are more concerned with the accomplishment of the task in hand by interacting in the language than with the form of the language they are using. Hence, teachers can organize group work to encourage fluent use of the target language.

2.3.4. Communicative Strategies

These are the most important aspects of communicative competence and they are concerned with the manipulation of language features to achieve communication goals (Brown 1994:228). In speaking, communicative strategies refer to the ability to manage interaction; in Shumin's (1997:11) words, they are "the ability to know when and how to take floor, how to keep conversation going, how to terminate conversation, and how to clear up communication". They also include "negotiation strategies" (seeking clarification, repetition, confirmation, and

checking comprehension) used to reduce uncertainty and increase common understanding among speakers (Nation 1979: 161).

As was also said earlier, group work helps student learn communicative strategies in many ways. First, the learners can get these strategies as language input when they interact to carry out group tasks in groups of mixed gender (Ngho:1991). Second, they can be pre-taught particular communicative strategies that are needed by the group task and practice them in doing the task. Finally, unlike teacher-fronted language activities, group tasks engage learners in an extended conversation in which they acquire the skills of managing interaction.

2.3.5. Content

In some language teaching situations, the target language is taught through the contexts provided by a content subject. In such cases, the purpose of organizing group work is to help learners master the content subject and the language that serves as a medium of instruction (Nation 1989; Hudelson 1991).

2.3. The Need for Organizing Oral Group Work

It is essential that group tasks be properly organized if they are to serve as important tools in achieving the goals discussed in the preceding section. A great deal of literature on group work emphasizes the significances of organization in order to guarantee success in using it as a form of learning activity. For instance, Ur (1996:233) contends that the success of group work, among others, depends "more immediately on effective and careful organization". Similarly, Lewis and Hill (1985:47) argue that group work "must be well organized" to help students learn speaking by interacting in a conducive atmosphere. Harmer (1991:239) holds a

similar position when he asserts that "good organization" is indispensable for the success of many activities including group work.

Effective organization is needed in setting up group work for teaching speaking skills due to various reasons. First, as has already been pointed out, group tasks are set up to achieve different goals in teaching speaking skills and they should be appropriately set up for the attainment of the goals. For instance, if the purpose of the task is to teach fluency in the target language, the students should sit in a circle and be grouped based on mixed ability so that they can comfortably interact and help one another (McKay and Tom 1999). But it is a wrong organization to sit learners in a row and to put them into the same ability groups to achieve this goal due to the same reasons cited above.

Therefore, it is possible to say that a mismatch between group work and its purpose is likely to happen when a proper care is not taken in organizing it. This is echoed in McDonough and Shaw's (1993:225) statement that "a mechanical organization may pay insufficient attention to the relationship between an activity and its purpose". By the same token, Cullingford, (1995:47) indicate that group activities should not be "a fun alternative" which teachers switch to in the middle of whole class activities without making the necessary re-arrangement in the organization of the class. Such a haphazard organization can possibly omit the need to give a due attention to the crucial link between why and how group work is set up. Hence, the need to maintain a close link between an activity and its purpose seems to provide a strong justification for properly organizing speaking group tasks.

Second, it is essential to maintain good discipline in speaking classes in order for the learners to successfully complete group activities without much or little distraction. Good discipline is, among others, the result of effective organization of an activity which helps maintain a rapid and smooth flow of activity (Cruickshank et. al, 1999). This is because a sustained flow of activity is very important to prevent the creation of situations that breed disruptive behaviors. In this respect, Ur has the following important point to make.

When a lesson is clearly...organized, there is likely to be constant momentum and feeling of purpose, which keeps students' attention on the task in hand... and this does not allow the formation of a 'vacuum' which may be filled by distracting or counterproductive activity (Ur 1996:265)

In other words, in a well-organized group activity, there could be no room for the creation of a gap in the process of accomplishing the task, which may lead to disruptive behaviors, as every student is actively engaged in the task in hand. On the contrary, when group activity is poorly set up, it may be difficult to hold the attention of students on the task and create 'constant momentum of activity. As a result, discipline problems are likely to crop up in the vacuum created in the instructional flow. As Kyriacou (1997) observes, any activity can generate discipline problems unless a great deal of care is put into its organization. This suggests further rationale for carefully setting up group tasks in speaking classes.

Finally, lack of good organization in setting up group tasks can lead to learners' reluctance to be actively involved in the task in hand. This is because students perhaps need a well-organized setting where they can trustfully and confidently invest their time and energy with the expectation that the setting may provide them with good learning atmosphere. Regarding the significance of organization in winning the willingness of learners, Edge (1993:11) holds

that when students find themselves in a well-arranged setting, they feel that they are putting their effort in "a framework they can trust". This means that in classroom where everything is properly set in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process, the learners get the assurance that they are being engaged in worthwhile language practices that are carefully organized to promote their language development.

In sum, the organization of group work cannot be taken for granted. As it is evidenced by the discussion in the foregoing paragraphs, the success of group work can be guaranteed by effective organization; and a poorly organized group task can have counterproductive effects on student learning.

2.4. Phases of Organizing Speaking Group Work

Unlike other forms of language learning activities, group work is a "complex structure" which involves various phases of organization (McDonough and Shaw 1993:227). There are two models of group work organization proposed by two writers: Ur (1996) and Wanjryb (1992). Ur's (1996:234) model has four stages: presentation, process, ending and feedback each of which has clearly identified roles of teachers. In the presentation stage, teachers are expected to group students and provide instruction whereas in the process phase, they should discreetly monitor groups at work. In the ending and feedback phases, the teachers' task is to wind down the task and provide feedback in a full-class session.

On the other hand, Wanjryb (1992:110) proposes a model of group work organization, which has three stages: moving into, monitoring and moving out. In the moving into stage, teachers divide students into groups, arrange seats, select group leaders and secretaries, and provide

clear instructions. In the second phase, monitoring, they carefully circulate in the class to ensure good learning environment for learners. In the final phase, they wind down the task and organize report back and feedback sessions. This model is relatively brief and comprehensive and thus adapted by scholars (Todd 1997; Nunan and Lamb 1995). In this paper, too, this model is favored for the same reasons. It is equally important to note that the model is general and can be used for setting up group activity intended for teaching different skills of the target language.

2.4.1. Moving-into Phase

As its name implies, this is a preparatory stage where the teacher groups students, re-arranges seats, appoints and briefs group leaders and secretaries, provides clear instructions so as to moving into the speaking task. As we shall see later, a teacher is involved in making a number of decisions when he/she carries out these organizational tasks.

2.4.1.1. Student Grouping

Group work, as its name suggests, requires dividing learners into manageable and productive groups, which work on the speaking tasks independently without a direct involvement from the teacher. Dividing students into groups needs making decision on group size and composition appropriate for the speaking task.

Group Size

When teachers want to set up group tasks, they will first find themselves confronted with one crucial question. How big should the groups be for effective learning? Different scholars respond to this question in different ways. For instance, some writers (Littlejohn 1987; Ngoh

1991, Harmer 1991) believe that the optimum group size should be between three to seven students. They argue that groups larger than this size will create management problems and offer few opportunities for students to participate in the task. But Byrne (1987) and Dobson (1996) feel that the optimum group size ought to range between six and eight students but they do not provide any real evidence for their claim.

Several scholars (e.g. Sensnan 1997; Nunan and Lamb 1996; Hyland 1991; Honeyfield 1991; Todd 1997) still contend that a group should usually consist of three to six students to be manageable and productive. The group size suggested by this group of writers is supported by evidence from general education and social science research. Honeyfield (1991:12) summarizes the results of the studies saying as group size increases beyond six:

- *Intimacy decreases*
- *Sub-groups are more likely to form*
- *Spoken contribution becomes formal*
- *Tension tends to increase; group cohesion decreases*
- *The discrepancy between "high contributors" and "low contributor" increases*
- *Time taken to reach decision tends to increase*
- *Variety of opinions tends to increase*

It is possible to see that as a group size increases, undesirable behaviors, which can be detrimental to the group activity, will start to crop up. Hence, it is essential that a group size be set between three to six students because, as the study conducted by Gass (1987) cited in Cruickshank et. al (1999: 54) shows, "small group size results in more participation, increased satisfaction, and greater academic achievement".

However, it is still necessary for the teacher to decide the appropriate group size within the optimum one, even sometimes beyond it depending on three factors. Firstly, the nature of the

activity dictates group size. For instance, a jigsaw activity with five pieces requires a group of five students. Secondly, class size is worthy of consideration. It is difficult for teachers to monitor many groups. The research conducted by Jacobs and Manind (1996) on group work shows that teachers are obliged to divide students into larger groups in oversized classes to reduce their supervisory loads. Finally, the purpose of the activity may determine group size. While larger groups decrease the amount of student participation and have management problems, they allow for varied contribution and language input. Concerning the value of larger groups, Todd observes:

Although larger groups decrease the number of words per student, they normally allows for more variation, more overlaps in interaction, and more valuable input. If these are central to the purpose of the activity, then perhaps the teacher should organize the students into larger groups (Todd 1997:44).

This shows the disadvantages of larger groups can be weighed against the ample opportunities they offer for sharing different ideas and getting different language input from different group members. But if this to be achieved, the group activity should be carefully monitored by the teacher and group leaders.

In conclusion, teachers should try their best to set activity that allows them to form groups no larger than six students to avoid problems associated with larger groups. But they sometimes need to put students into larger groups if their goal is to give learners the opportunity for varied contribution and language input.

Group composition

Once the group is decided, the next step is to determine how to allocate students to groups. There are various criteria suggested for assigning students to groups. Honeyfield (1991:14)

states that students can be allocated to groups on the basis of self-selection, ability level, sex and first language. The decision on these criteria cannot be intuitively made, but it depends on different factors-purpose of the activity, learner preferences and variety (Todd 1997; Nation 1989). Next, we will see how each factor affects teachers' decision on the student allocation criteria.

As was said earlier, group activities are organized to achieve one or two ends in teaching speaking skills. The manipulation of group composition can help arrive at this end. For instance, if the purpose of the activity is to promote free expression of ideas in the target language or fluency practice, the teacher ought to group students preferably based on mixed ability level, as it is found that clever students can help weak students by providing them with comprehensive input and by effectively developing the discussion when they carry out the group task (Dobson, 1996; Krashen in Honefield 1991; Byrne 1987; Lewis and Hill 1991). Working with weak students is also advantageous to clever students in that they get ample chance to practice the language and strengthen their own oral skills (Mckay and Tom 1999).

Preference is another important factor that influences teachers' choice of student allocation criteria. Respecting learners' preference is very crucial as Macaro (1997:157) quoting Haris and Noyou (1990) indicates that students show an expressed preference to do group work with their friends. Besides, grouping students according to their preference is sometimes vital in that "students in friendship groups were more eager to interact" (Nghoh 1991:25). Thus, it is sometimes essential to let students form groups according their preferences.

Variety is still another factor that can affect the choice of student allocation criteria. It has the advantage of motivating students and increasing their involvement in learning. After

reviewing the studies on variety, Cruickshank, et. al (1999:27) conclude that "variety has a positive effect on students' attention and involvement, thus making them more receptive to learning". In addition, in learning speaking, variety helps" students obtain both sufficient language input and opportunities for using language to develop a full range of English language" (Enright 1991:395).

Therefore, changing group composition provides learners with an opportunity to work with different classmates. This is used to avoid the monotony results from usually working with the same partners. Moreover, doing group tasks with different partners gives learners ample chance to get new language input and contexts for using it.

On the contrary, working with the same partners every session has drawbacks. It takes away the opportunities cited in the preceding paragraph. According to Hadfield (1991: 52), static grouping restricts the exposure to different language input and contexts for using what they have learned. She also points out that in static grouping learners "get to know each other very well and have too few information gap, thus becoming bored of each other". It is, therefore, crucial to have variety in group composition by avoiding static grouping.

In order to achieve variety in speaking classes, teachers need to manipulate criteria of student allocation and make different homogeneous and heterogeneous groups based on language ability, gender and mother tongue. As a study conducted on students at tertiary level shows homogeneous and heterogeneous groups have their own advantages. Groups with homogeneous members are found to be "more cohesive, communicative and have greater self-esteem" while heterogeneous groups are "more effective" in completing group tasks

(Cruickshank, et. al 1999:175). Hence, it is advisable to exploit these advantages by changing student composition in groups.

Intentionally changing group compositions for variety can have concomitant effects. For instance, a mixed gender provides opportunity for increased negotiation of input for males and females are found to have different patterns of language use and need to negotiate much to arrive at common understanding (Ngho 1991; Cruickshank, et. al 1999). On the other hand, same gender may result in bonded and interactive groups because; as McKay and Tom (1999:16) indicate friendly and supportive environment helps learners feel secure to take risk in using their growing language. So, mixed and same gender have important place in student grouping.

First language also has an added advantage besides creating variety. Students with the same mother tongue can, occasionally, be grouped to work together for different good reasons. The first reason is that a code switching is one of the strategies employed by second language learner and it should be allowed in group work as well. Furthermore, linguistically insecure learners tend to take risk in a monolingual group for they feel that they can fall back on L1 when they fail to express themselves in the target language (Cook 2001). As Ngho (1991:21) observes, insisting on the use of the target language with such learners may result in no interaction at all. Coury (2002:10) is of a similar opinion when she argues that denying learners an opportunity to resort to L₁ may lead to much hesitation in their interaction. Thus, first language should be considered in student grouping.

2.4.1.2. Seating Arrangement

The arrangement of seats can either facilitate or impede interaction among group members. For instance, Block (1997) and Cruickshank, et. al, (1999) assert that seats arranged in a row hinder oral interaction as they prevent students from talking by facing one another through this is very vital for oral communication. According to Rinne (1997:111), lack of seeing the face of the speaker puts group members "at high risk of inattention and distraction". It is also indicated that if seated in a row, some learners tend to feel neglected when they fail to face their group members and interact comfortably. As Schumck and Schumuck (2001:89) observe, sitting in a row may make learners "develop feelings of being peripheral to the group which can lead to a reduction of communication with others and possibly also start a negative process of feeling like an outsider". This implies that a row seating arrangement is not appropriate for speaking group work.

The writers, therefore, recommend circular or horseshoe type of seating arrangement for speaking group tasks. This kind of seating arrangement allows all students to interact facing one another and cultivates the feeling that all group members are equally important for the success of the speaking task in hand. In harmony with this view, Katie and Pauline (1997:84) suggest: "Sitting in a circle horseshoe helps all students concentrate and listen to each other, feel like a group and talk to each other easily as there is no barrier between them." Hence, arranging seats in circle or horseshoe facilitates interaction among students and contributes to the successful completion of group tasks.

It is equally essential to leave some space between the seats of students belonging to different groups in order to prevent them from talking to each other leaving their groups. In case this is

impossible due to lack of space, it is a good idea to shift their seats within their groups so that students who are tempted to each other can be placed afar (Rinne 1997).

In many language classrooms the size of the class and the style of furniture can constrain the effort to set up a suitable seating arrangement for group activities. However, teachers ought to try their best to find solutions to the problems. For instance, if the seats are fixed and if there is no space to rearrange movable seats, students can be asked to turn round and work with those sitting at their backs (Edge 1993; Nolasco and Arthur 1988).

2.4.1.3. Group Leaders and Secretaries

Group leaders have significant roles to play in many speaking group activities. They act as facilitators by coordinating the efforts of group members towards a successful completion of a task (Hill 1994; Harmer 1991; Byrne 1987). They are of great help to 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 (Kasambire 1993). In other words, they are still responsible for supervising the performance of each group.

Group leaders can be appointed by the teacher or nominated by groups. But it would be better to let groups 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, it encourages learners to bear responsibility for their own learning. So, groups should be allowed to choose their leaders for effective and orderly interaction in speaking activities.

Groups may need secretaries in case the task involves discussion in which the decision of the groups should be recorded for a report back session (Hyland 1991). Like group leaders, secretaries can be either nominated by the 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. In other words, they need good orientation about their roles to effectively serve their groups (Hill 1994; Wanjryb 1992). It is also important to make sure that all students get the opportunity to serve as group leaders and secretaries for it helps them develop social skills (Hyland 1991).

2.4.1.4. Instructions

Instruction is an indispensable part of speaking group task. It communicates to learners what they are expected to do with the task, how they are supposed to do the task, when they ought to complete the task, and what is required of them at the end (Kyriacou 1997). Instruction has to be clear enough to give all these essential pieces of information to learners. Unclear instruction can leave students in confusion and doubt. Nolasco and Arthur (1988:26) assert: "Poor instructions are a major source of problems in many teaching situations in that they leave students confused and uncertain". Similarly, Ur (1996:234) holds that unclear instruction results in "confusion, inefficiency, a waste of time and disorder". Therefore, lack of clear instruction adversely affects the success of group task in that it leads to poor performance of the task and discipline problems.

It is, then, crucial to know how to give a clear instruction. Todd (1997:37,38) and Gower, et. al (1995: 40,41) suggest various ways of providing an effective instruction. According to these scholars, teachers can elicit instruction from their students if the students are familiar with the task or they can simply provide it if the task is novel to students. Regarding the procedures of providing instruction, teachers are advised to either demonstrate it if the task involves a physical action or explain it if the task does not involve a physical action. If the instruction has a series of steps, it should be broken down into meaningful segments for better understanding and it is also vital to check comprehension after each segment.

In order to provide instruction, teachers have to decide whether to use the target or first language. The decision rests on the level of the students, linguistic composition of the class and whether or not the teachers know the learners' mother tongue. At the lower level, mother tongue is recommended for providing instruction in monolingual class, for students at this level cannot grasp instruction in the target language (Todd 1997; Gower, et. al, 1995; Schweers 1999; Atkinson 1987). However, with advanced students, the target language can be used because it provides opportunity for genuine communication and increase learners' exposure to the target language (Parrot 1992 in Todd 1997). A teacher is also forced to use the target language if she/he does not know the learners' mother tongue or if the class is multilingual.

It is not good to take for granted that students have grasped the instruction without checking. It is essential to make sure that students have clearly understood the instruction to carry out the task. In this respect, Harmer observes that:

Certain things should be definitely done with organizing an activity: teachers should never assume that students have understood the instruction. It is always wise to check that they have grasped what they have to do (1991:239)

It is wise, as the writer says, to ascertain that all learners are clear with the instruction before they embark on a group task. This can be done by asking a couple of concept-checking questions to see to what extent learners have grasped the instruction.

2.4.2. Monitoring Phase

2.4.2.1. Teacher's Views of Monitoring

Monitoring is the second phase of group work organization where teachers facilitate the environment for learners to actively interact in the target language while carrying out the speaking activity. Nonetheless, teachers hold two extreme views concerning monitoring group work. Some teachers do not sense the importance of monitoring and they believe that students can successfully complete the task as long as they are organized into groups (Jocabs 1988). This belief does not seem true for group work may not be successfully done if left unmonitored. McDonough and Shaw (1993) observe that if group work is not monitored, few students, supposedly the clever ones, can monopolize the task while the majority remain passive, having no chance to take active part in the task. It is also a common experience to observe, as a teacher, that in the absence of monitoring students tend to slip away from a task and get into a noisy talk, usually in mother tongue, or other common language casting the task aside. Thus, as Cullingford (1995:85) suggests, putting "students, into groups is not enough in itself" for the success of the task unless it is monitored.

On the other hand, other teachers feel the urge to interfere now and then for they fear that learners might not be successful in completing the task without their direct control. They think that they are not doing their jobs unless they are directly involved in the task (Gower, et. al 1995; Underwood 1987). Frequent interruption may disturb the flow of student interaction and can be annoying to students. Supporting the idea, Arends (1997:134) asserts interference and unasked help is disturbing to students. He goes on to say, "it takes away opportunities for student initiation and self-direction. " So, interference is detrimental to the success of group work and thus needs to be restrained. First of all, group work is supposed to be done by learners under a careful and continuous supervision of their teachers; a task ceases to be group work if teachers take a complete control of it (Todd 1997).

2.4.2.2. How to Monitor Speaking Group Work

As we have seen in the preceding section, teachers should not sit back and watch while students are doing group activities, nor should they frequently interfere. Their proper role is to create good learning environment for students. They may play their facilitative role appropriately when they are aware of what they ought to do while learners are at work. Next, we shall see how to monitor speaking group tasks properly.

While students are engaged in a group task, teachers need to check quickly whether the task is being done smoothly by moving from group to group after the groups have got on with the task (Katie and Pauline 1997). While they are going about the class keeping their ears and eyes on group performance, they can intervene to prompt groups that seem to lose interest or get stuck, to encourage groups working slowly and to provide information if invited (Gower, et. al 1995:50). Furthermore, as Doff (1988:14) says, teachers can step in to give instruction to groups that did not understand how the task is done. According to Ur (1996:2334), teachers

can also intervene to encourage student to interact in the target language and carefully regulate participation in groups where few members dominate the task. They can still cautiously interrupt to provide further task for early finishers (Wharton and Race 1999).

It is suggested that while monitoring, teachers do not have to stay long with one group as it jeopardizes the success of the task in hand. The presence of the teacher has an inhibiting effect on group interaction (Kyriacou 1997; Tessa 1995). Learners seem to associate the presence of teacher with evaluation and thus, can get inhibited. Moreover, if the teacher spends much time with one group, the other groups may feel neglected and start to drift away from the task (Gower et. al 1995). Underwood (1987:79) holds a similar view when she states: "It is best not to spend too long with one group as this sometimes leads to others losing interest in the task as they feel you have lost interest in them". For this reason, teachers need to be accessible to all groups acting as "a resource person" or as "consultant" who is called up on when needed (Harmer 1991:242; Katie and Pauline 1997:104).

Collecting data on the performance of group is one of those important tasks that teachers are expected to carry out while monitoring speaking group tasks. When the task is intended to encourage fluent use of the target language, correcting errors on the spot is generally undesirable as it impedes the group's flow of interaction and results in annoyance (Dobson 1996; Byrne 1987; Klippel 1993;). In such oral activity, teachers should take note of frequently occurring common errors and treat them in a feedback or other separate session. But they can provide gentle corrections during oral tasks aimed at promoting the accurate use of the language. (Gower, et. al 1995; Pattison 1987). Hence, it is the purpose of the task that determines whether or not to give correction on the spot during oral group tasks.

2.4.3. Moving –out Phase

This is the last stage in the organization of group work and teachers have important tasks to do at this stage. They wind down the task and organize report back and feedback sessions. Moving-out phase is as essential as the other stages.

2.4.3.1. Winding Down Oral Group Tasks

It is essential that a speaking group task be closed at the right time. If the learners are left too long on the task after they have finished, they get bored and may finally start to make a lot of noise, which disturbs the class. In this regard, Underwood (1987:79) observes that "group work which is allowed to go on far too long causes problems as the students get bored". Teachers can prevent boredom to be created as a result of staying too long on a group task by stopping the task at the right.

There are two ways of ending group tasks at a proper time. First, teachers can set a time limit for tasks (like role play, games) and stop when the time is over. Setting a time limit helps the teacher bring the task to a close at "a certain point" (Ur 1999:16). Moreover, it helps learners adjust their pace according to the given time and complete the task on time. It also trains learners how to budget their time and use it economically.

Second, teachers may not set a time limit for some tasks (say, debate) and may need to "go with the feel of the groups" (Wharton and Race 1999:22). According to Ur, this type of tasks can be closed in the following ways:

Sometimes it may be best to wait until all groups have completed the task; sometimes, this takes too long, and it is better to stop the last ones before they finish. At other times, it is even expedient to stop all groups while they are still absorbed and active (Ur 1981:22).

This means that there are three alternatives to stop tasks of the type. First, the tasks can be closed preferably when all groups have finished if it does not take too long to wait for the late ones. In this case, provision should be made to give further tasks for the early finishers; otherwise they could get bored and disturb the class by making noise (Wharton and Race 1999). Second, it is possible to stop all the groups at one time if it is found that the late ones will be unlikely to complete the task within a short time. Interestingly, this situation may not always occur as teachers help groups that lag behind during a monitoring phase (Wharton and Race 1999). Finally, the task can even be closed while all the groups are still enjoying. This has the advantage of "leaving students with a taste for more, and thus with heightened enthusiasm, or at least willingness for further such activity" (Ur 1981:22).

It is, therefore, important that teachers let their students do group activities without time limit for three reasons. First, it enhances learners' taste or interest in group tasks by leaving them with "heightened enthusiasm". Second, it helps stop group work before learners get bored. Finally, it is used to release the tension students might experience as a result of always doing group tasks under time pressure.

2.4.3.2. Report back and Feedback Sessions

A report back is a full-class discussion in which the learners are allowed to report to the class what they have done in oral group tasks; and it has advantages to learners. It gives them "reassurance and emotional satisfaction" and an added opportunity to use the target language

when they report what they have done to the whole class (Wharton and Race 1999). In other words, it offers them a sense of achievement and additional opportunity to use the language for real purpose when they report what they have accomplished to the class. Hence, teachers should call up on some groups to report to the class after oral group activities.

A feedback session takes place in the final stage of group work organization in a whole-class discussion. It is a session in which teachers wind up speaking group tasks. Feedback is an essential part of oral group work. According to Hyland (1991:32), feedback offers the teacher "a means of assessing and correcting students' communicative deficiencies". The awareness of being assessed in turn gives the learners the reassurance that their performance is always being monitored during group tasks by their teacher who is concerned with their academic progress (Kyriacou 1997). Moreover, feedback removes the feeling of many students that group work is "a waste of time" if not corrected (Arthur and Nolasco 1988:49).

Feedback is of two types, content feedback, which is "an assessment of how well the student performed the activity as an activity rather than as language exercises" and form feedback, which relates to an assessment of the learners' language use during a group activity (Harmer 1991:45). While feedback ought to be given on both the content of the task and learners' language use, it is reasonable to focus more on the latter since this is the principal target of teaching speaking (Nunan and Lamb 1996; Ur 1996). In view of this, as Pettision (1987) writes, a form feedback can be treated in a separate session if it is found that many errors have been made by many students. A separate session is needed to design a remedial activity in order to help learners get further practices in areas they have not well mastered.

2.5. Summary

In sum, it seems reasonable to conclude that a teacher who wants to set up a group task for teaching speaking has a series of organizational tasks that can possibly affect the benefit learners get from group work to promote their oral skills. A carefully and effectively organized group activity provides learners with extensive opportunities to practice speaking in supportive and caring communicative settings. This may greatly contribute to the development of their oral proficiency. On the contrary, a poorly organized group activity cannot give learners a good environment to practice speaking and thus, places obstacles for the development of their oral skills. In short, the success of group work, as a productive language learning activity, heavily relies on effective organization.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents methods used in carrying out the study. In particular, it presents the research design, characteristics of the participants and sampling procedure. It also deals with the delineation of data elicitation techniques and techniques of data analysis.

3.1. Design of the Study

A descriptive research design was used to conduct the study. Descriptive study is helpful when a researcher wants to look into a phenomenon or a process in its natural contexts in order to get its overall picture instead of taking one or some of its aspects and manipulating it or them in a simulated or an artificial setting (Seiliger and Shohamy 1989; McDonough and McDonough 1997). Thus, descriptive study was favored to investigate the organization of group in Spoken English II classes from a holistic perspective in its natural settings.

Moreover, the study adopted a case study approach because the main focus of the study was examining how two English language instructors organized group tasks for teaching Spoken English II at two colleges. A case study is appropriate when an investigator desires to research into the performances or behaviors of a limited number of subjects (McDonough and McDonough 1997; Nunan 1992; Seliger and Shohamy 1989). In view of this, a descriptive case study was felt to be appropriate to answer the research questions raised in this study.

3.2. The Participants and Sampling Procedure

The participants in the study were one hundred and six second year students majoring in English and two language instructors teaching Spoken English II (a course in which the study

was interested) to these students in Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges. All available students (56 from Adama and 50 from Jimma) and instructors (one from each college) were involved in the study. It was the limited number of the participants that dispensed with the need for random sampling.

The student participants were composed of 79 males and 27 females. All of them speak Oromo as their first language. With regard to their ability levels, 24 of them were top-ranking while 52 and 30 of them were average-and bottom-ranking students respectively.

The division of student into three levels of ability was based on a three-semester CGPA. Initially it was intended to use the students' CGPA in conjunction with their Spoken English I results. This was due to the belief that some students might do well in speaking but poorly perform in other areas and thus might achieve low or average CGPA. Contrary to this belief, there was a great overlap between the students' Spoken English I results and their CGPA. Hence, the use of Spoken English I results seemed to be redundant and only the CGPA was employed as a basis of ranking. The judgments of instructors were also considered to validate the ranking procedure.

The instructor participants are M.A. holders with many years of teaching experience. One of them received an M.A. degree in TEFL and has taught for twenty years. The other instructor is a foreigner who came to the country via Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). She held an M.A. degree in Journalism and has taught for twenty-three years.

3.3 The Data Collection Instruments

Three data collection instruments were used to gather relevant data for the study. These were interview, questionnaire and classroom observations. The instruments were tried out on

students majoring in English and taking Spoken English I at Adama Teachers College. The pilot study was helpful in testing the appropriateness of the instruments for collecting relevant data for the study. It was also used to validate the procedures of administering the data collection tools. Moreover, provided a good opportunity to identify and correct some faulty items to render them appropriate for the purpose they were intended.

The Interview

Interview was felt to be suitable for the study for two reasons. First, as indicated earlier, the study was descriptive, in which interview can be employed for securing relevant data. Second, the subjects with whom the interview was conducted were few in which case an interview is appropriate (Seliger and Shohamy 1989: Nunan 1992).

Therefore, a semi-structured interview was set to collect pertinent information from two English language instructors. A semi-structured interview was employed as it allows a wider freedom to ask further questions; and it also helps control the direction of the interview to elicit the desired data. Moreover, it enables the interviewees to express their ideas and yet its semi-structured nature saves them from being off the point (Nunan 1992).

The interview consisted of three parts. Each part had one or more categories related to different stages of oral group activities. Under each category were open-ended, and closed-ended items which are followed by probing questions. In addition, the interview was conducted after the classroom observations were over to avoid the risk of sensitizing the instructors and tempting them to show behaviors different from the usual ones.

The contents of the interview were similar to that of the questionnaire and thus are used to crosscheck the responses of the students drawn through the questionnaire.

The questionnaire

Questionnaire was one of the data elicitation techniques used for securing pertinent information for the study. It was employed to collect data from hundred and six students regarding their instructors' practices of group work organization for teaching them Spoken English II .

The questionnaire comprises four sections. The first section has fifteen closed-ended one open-ended items dealing with the first (moving into) stage of speaking group tasks in Spoken English II classes. The second part has five close-ended items, which pertain to the instructors' behaviors while speaking group tasks were in progress. The third section consists of four close-ended and one open-ended items used for securing data on how the instructors bring group tasks to a close and organize report back and feedback sessions. The last section contains one close-ended item which is followed by two open-ended questions. The items were used for eliciting information on whether or not the ways group tasks were organized contribute to develop the learners' oral abilities in the target language.

Like the interview, the questionnaire was administered after the classroom observations to overcome its sensitizing effect on the students. Furthermore, the administration was carried out in the presence of the student researcher to clear up any possible misunderstanding the respondents might face in filling in the questionnaire and to ensure 100% return.

The Classroom Observations

Classroom observation is important in descriptive and other qualitative research for collecting genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting (Seliger and Shohamy 1989; McDonough and McDonough 1997; Creswell 1994). Hence, in order to gather genuine and relevant information on the organization of oral group activities in Spoken English II Classes while the classes were in progress, semi-structured observation checklists were employed.

The checklists were originally designed by Wanjryb (1992) but were adopted to suit the purpose of the study (See Appendix J) They have three categories, which are based on the three stages of group work organization. Each category subsumes two or more general items relating to organization skills needed under each stage of oral group tasks. The general nature of the items is believed to increase the focus of the observations in order to accommodate as much related information as possible. This semi-structured nature of the checklists seems to accord with the purpose of the study because the study was designed to get a panoramic view of the instructors' practices of group work organization in Spoken English II classes. Thus, a further specification of the categories was intentionally avoided since it might place a limit on the focus of the observations and might result in missing out of important information.

The observations were carried out four times at each college. They were conducted at three-day intervals to establish the recurrence or frequency of the instructors' practices in organizing group tasks for teaching Spoken English II. In the first observation, the student research familiarized himself with the classroom situations and collected some background information

like the style of seats, student composition (linguistic and gender), class size and sizes of the classrooms.

The remaining observations focused on what the instructors did or how they behaved in various phases of group activity. However, information about group composition with regard to their ability levels, objectives and familiarity of group tasks could not be obtained through these instruments. Thus, two techniques were devised to overcome this limitation. In order to know the composition of every group regarding its members' ability levels, students were given code numbers 1,2, and 3 depending on their ability levels. 1 and 2 denoted top-ranking and average ranking respectively while 3 represented bottom ranking. Then, students were required to write their code numbers on sheets of paper distributed to them at the beginning of group tasks. The sheets were separately collected from each group at the end of the tasks. Depending on these code numbers, the composition of each group with respect to its ability levels was worked out. The intention was to see whether or not the instructors intentionally used ability levels as basis of student grouping in oral group tasks.

Experience obtained from the first classroom observation shows that it was impossible to obtain information about the objectives and familiarity of group tasks through observations. The instructors did not provide written or oral information on these aspects of group tasks. Hence, the information was elicited from the instructors through an informal interview after each class.

3.4 Techniques of Data Analysis

As repeatedly stated, questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were instruments used for collecting relevant data from students, instructors and classroom practices

respectively. The data gathered through these instruments were analyzed differently. The responses secured from 106 students through the questionnaire were tallied and converted into percentages. In addition to percentage, chi-square was calculated for data obtained from items with dichotomous options (yes or no) to establish the level of statistical differences between the responses given to them.

The interview was conducted with two instructors. Their responses were sorted out and organized. The classroom observations were conducted eight times at the colleges while these instructors were teaching Spoken English II using group tasks. As indicated earlier, the first two observations focused on collecting background information and getting acquainted with the classroom situation in each college. The rest six observations (three at each college) helped gather a lot of raw data, which were organized into separate chart. On top of this, data collected on student composition, group size and type of group tasks in all sessions were collated, presented in a separate chart and appended to the paper along with other charts. Here, the intention was to vividly present the data for better understanding.

In the discussion, all data obtained from different sources were triangulated to arrive at sound conclusions regarding the instructors' practices of group work organization in Spoken English II classes. The results of the interview were employed to crosscheck the responses of the student concerning their instructors' practices in setting up and managing group tasks. On the other hand, the classroom observation results were used to confirm or confute the data collected through the questionnaire and the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

4.1. Introduction

This study was, as noted earlier, aimed at investigating how English language instructors at Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges organized group tasks for teaching Spoken English II to students majoring in English. To collect relevant data for the study, questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were employed. The data obtained from different sources through these instruments were presented and discussed in this chapter.

The chapter is divided into different sections. The first three sections were based on different stages of group work. Accordingly, the first section dealt with the data related to the moving into (first) stage of group work while the second was concerned with the presentation and discussion of data pertaining to the second phase (monitoring) of group tasks. In the third part, the presentation and discussion of data relevant to the last (moving-out) phase of group work was taken up. The last section was concerned with the presentation and discussion of data regarding the students' overall views about organization of group tasks in developing their oral skills.

4.2 Moving-into phase

Under this section, the presentation and discussion of data gathered through different instruments regarding group size, group composition, seating arrangement, group leaders and instruction were dealt with separately. The section started with the presentation of the data

obtained through questionnaire. The results of interview and classroom observations were also incorporated for triangulation or for crosschecking in the discussion.

4.2.1 Group size

The student subjects were asked two questions in the questionnaire to indicate how their instructors determine group size in group tasks intended for teaching Spoken English II. The discussion of the information elicited through the questionnaire and other instruments is presented as follows.

Table 1 The students' responses regarding how their instructors determine group size in Spoken English II classes

No	Item	Options	Responses		X ²
			No.	%	
1.	Whether the instructors usually limit the group size for group activities to be between three and six	Yes	89	84	* 52.2
		No	17	16	
		Total	106	100	
2.	Whether the instructors allow students to do group work in larger groups (in group of more than six members)	Yes	32	30.2	* 18.0
		No	74	69.8	
		Total	106	100	
* P < 0.05			df = 1		

As it is apparent from the above table, 84% of the respondents indicated that their instructors fixed the group size in oral group activities to be between three and six while the remainder (16%) responded that their instructors did not limit the group size to be between three and six. The result of the chi-square shows that there is a significant ($\chi^2 = 52.2$ $p < 0.05$) difference between those who affirmatively and negatively responded. This may mean that the instructors determined group size to range between three and six. Furthermore, as it can be seen from the

table, 30.2% of the students said that their instructors allowed them to do group tasks in larger groups but 69.8% of them reported that the instructors did not let them do group tasks in larger groups. The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 18$ $p < 0.05$) shows that there is a significant difference between the negative and affirmative responses. This could mean that the instructors did not organize students into larger groups in Spoken English classes.

Taken together the data presented in the table seem to show that the optimum group size was usually between three and six and that the students were not put into larger groups for doing group activities in Spoken English II classes. Similarly, the instructors said, in the interview, that the optimum group size usually ranged between three and six students. The instructors also replied that they did not organize students into larger groups.

Before arriving at a conclusion regarding group size, it seems a good idea to see what the instructors' actual practices looked like. Contrary to the responses of the students and their instructors, the classroom observations showed that the group size ranged usually from three to nine in Adama Teachers College, and from three to eight in Jimma Teachers College. In addition, it is evident from the observations that the group size almost never changed regardless of the nature and objective of tasks. The instructors were observed simply ordering students: "Get into groups and do the task!" This implies that they did not determine group size to be between three and six and that they did not purposefully organize students into larger groups since the group size remained static from session to session.

However, there is no way to keep the group size unchanged from session to session. It changes in response to the nature and objective of a task (Todd 1997; Nation 1989). In other words, it is the nature of the task and the objective teachers want to achieve through the task that dictate

group size. In the interview, the instructors were asked how they determined the appropriate group size for group activities. They stated that they decided the appropriate group size leaning on the nature of the task. None of them mentioned objectives of group tasks as one criterion for determining group size.

Although the instructors claimed that they determined group size depending on the nature of the task, in their actual classroom practices, they were not seen deciding purposefully on group size based either the nature of the task or on its objective. For instance, in Jimma Teachers College, the instructor was observed running a group instruction, guessing game. The task requires one of group members to think of a common object and get other to guess by providing clues. The objective to be achieved through the task was helping students to correctly ask yes or no questions for eliciting information. The instructor ordered the students to make groups in order to do the task and the students formed 10 groups with group size ranging from 3-8. The group size was different from group to group (see appendix E and G). Given the nature of the task and the objective, the group size ought to have been perhaps three or four so that every group member had enough opportunity to practice and acquire the oral skill in question. This could have also helped the instructor reduce the big difference (5) in group size in order that every student had fairly equal chance to participate.

It is possible to imagine that lack of uniformity in group size was, perhaps, created by lack of determining an appropriate group size for the task. The difference in group size might bring about differences in the opportunity to practice and attain the desired objective. This might be the case in the example we took above. As the task favors a small group size, those in smaller group could have more chance to practice and attain the objective while students in larger groups were at a disadvantage. This is due to the fact that as group size increases, the

opportunity for participation falls and group behaviors change unfavorably, and these bad situations place an obstacle for group members to successfully complete the task in hand (Honey field 1991).

Conversely, when the objective is to help learners get varied input and elicit varied contributions from every group member, students in big groups, would be more advantageous because the task set for this purpose favors a large group size. This seemed to happen in the colleges selected for the study. For example, in one of the classes observed at Adama Teachers' College (see appendix C), the instructor was found helping students obtain varied input by using a group task, ranking. The task required students to order essential qualities of a good teacher according to their own criteria. The group size was three to nine and the difference between the smallest and the biggest group was six (see appendix G). Thus, this big difference can create disparity in attaining the objective. Students in a big groups were more likely to benefit from the task than those in small groups, because as Todd (1997:44) points out, “big groups allow, for more variation more overlap interaction and more valuable in put.”

From the above discussion it looks tenable to conclude that the instructors, participated in the study did not determine an appropriate group size depending on the nature and objectives of group tasks, nor did they deliberately put students into larger groups to provide them an opportunity for varied linguistic input and interaction. As result, a mismatch between group tasks and their objectives and disparity among students in benefiting from group tasks were created. This could lead to difference in the learner’s oral proficiency.

In some classroom situations, a large class size, lack of space and fixed seats can constrain the effort to suit group size with the nature and goal of a group task. However, this was not the

case in colleges selected for the study. The class size, classroom size and styles of seats did not seem to hinder the instructors from determining an appropriate group size for a group task.

The class size was 50 and 56 in Jimma and Adama Teachers Colleges respectively (see appendices A and D). This class size might force the instructors to increase the group size to decrease the number of groups because it is difficult to monitor many groups (Jacobs and Manid 1996). The instructors could form groups with small size if the task and its objective demand but they should have group leaders who share their supervisory loads.

Moreover, the size of the classroom did not seem to present an obstacle for deciding the appropriate group size. In all colleges, the classrooms were spacious to allow the organization of students into groups of different size. There was space that was not occupied in all sides of the rooms and the middles rooms were only cluttered up with seats. Finally, both colleges were furnished with movable seats, which are ideally suitable for conducting group instructions. Hence, the physical environments were conducive for deciding the appropriate group size for group tasks even though the instructors did not exploit them.

4.2.2 Group Composition

Students may have different or the same sex, ability, first language and preferences. These differences and sameness can be used as criteria for assigning students to groups in group work. In the questionnaire, the students were asked to indicate how often their instructors employed sex, ability, and preferences as criteria of students allocation in Spoken English II classes. In addition, relevant data were collected through interview and classroom observations to see how the instructors determine group composition. All the data were collated and discussed as follows.

Table 2 The students' responses on their allocations to groups in Spoken English II classes.

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
3.	Students are allocated to groups based on:										
	a. Mixed ability levels	4	3.7	9	8.5	12	11.3	81	76.4	106	100
	b. Same ability levels	5	4.7	5	4.7	20	18.9	76	71.7	106	100
	c. Different L1	-	-	-	-	-	-	106	100	106	100
	d. Same L1	106	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	106	100
	e. Mixed sex	2	1.9	10	9.4	14	13.2	80	75.5	106	100
f. Single sex	1	0.9	3	2.8	19	17.9	83	78.3	106	100	
4.	Allowing students to decide with whom to form a group	90	84.9	4	3.7	4	3.7	8	7.5	106	100

As the above table shows, 3.7% and 8.5% of the students respectively indicated that their instructors almost always and sometimes allocated them to group based on mixed and same ability levels. On the other hand, 11.3 % of the respondents said that mixed ability was rarely used for assigning them to groups. The remainder (76.4%) replied that mixed ability was never used as a student allocation criterion. Furthermore, as the table reveals, an equal percentage (4.7%) of the respondents reported that their instructors almost always and sometimes allowed students of the same ability levels to work together while 18.9% of the subjects said that they rarely did group work in same ability level groups. The majority (71.7%) of the students indicated that student allocation did not hinge on same ability levels.

Regarding L1, all the subject said that their instructors did not assign them to groups depending on difference in L1 but they indicated they were almost always allocated to groups based on the same L1. This is due to the fact that all of them speak Oromo as their L1. As a result, it was not possible to see whether or not L1 could be used as criterion of student allocation. Moreover, the table shows that 1.9% of the subjects specified mixed sex as being

almost always used for assigning students into groups while 9.4% of them said that they were sometimes allocated to groups based on mixed sex. As the table also shows, 13.2% of the students indicated that they were rarely grouped based on mixed sex while a very large proportion (75.5%) of them showed that they student grouping did not depend on mixed ability.

It is still evident from the same table that very few (0.9%) students indicated that a single sex was almost always used as a basis of student allocation. 2.8% of the subjects responded that a single sex was sometimes employed for grouping them while 17.9% of them said that student allocation rarely depended on a single sex. But a sizeable number (78.3%) replied that students of the same sex were not assigned to do group work together.

Regarding the last student allocation criterion, as it is apparent from the data presented in the same table, a great proportion (84.9%) of the students said that they were almost always allowed to group themselves while a equal percentage (3.7%) of them indicated they were sometimes and rarely let to decide with whom to do group tasks. Finally, according to 7.5% of the students, they were not given the opportunity to decide with whom they want to make a group.

Hence, according to the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, the instructors did not allocate students to groups based on ability levels and sex but they let students almost always decide with whom to form groups. In other words, the allocation criterion seemed to be only free grouping. In the interview, the instructors did not confirm that they only held to student selected grouping. They claimed that they also used ability levels and sex for assigning students to groups.

Despite their claim, the instructors were observed, saying “Get into groups” while they were running group instruction in both colleges and this may imply that they only considered free grouping in allocating students to groups. As classroom observations reveal, free grouping led to static grouping in which group composition and size never changed from session to session (see appendices A-F).

In the interview, the instructors were also asked how they determined student allocation criteria and they replied that they based their choice of student allocation criteria on solely student preference. At this point it is important to note that this response of the instructors contradicted with their response regarding student allocation criteria because student allocation which hinges on preference leads to free grouping but not to grouping that yields uniformly the same or mixed ability levels and mixed or single sex. Instructors should deliberately manipulate a group composition to make groups, which are only homogeneous or heterogeneous. So, the response of the instructors concerning student allocation criteria agreed with the student response to the questionnaire that their instructors only based student grouping only on free grouping, which results from grouping based on student preferences.

The instructors' insistence on student preference in determining student allocation criteria was apparent in the classroom observations. The instructors were not seen changing student allocation criteria to achieve the purpose of group task and variety. It is possible to cite instances from classroom observations. In one of the classes observed at Jimma Teachers College, the instructor was running a group lesson (discussion) to promote oral fluency in the target language. The students grouped themselves according their preferences and this resulted in the formation of mixture of heterogeneous and homogeneous groups with regard to their ability and sex (see appendices D and G). The objective is best attained with groups of mixed

ability levels as relatively clever students can help the weak ones (Byrne 1987; McKay and Tom 1999). By inference, groups with mixed ability levels might have achieved the objective, which means they might have acquired the oral skill implied in the objective. The rest might have been in a disadvantageous position in achieving the objective.

Similar problem happened in the other class I observed at Adama Teachers College (see appendices A and G). The objective the instructor wanted to achieve was enabling students to acquire communicative strategies, in particular negotiation of meaning. The objective favors mixed sex, but in the grouping, male and female student formed separate groups (Ngoh 1991). The instructor did not make any attempt to manipulate group composition to attain the instructional objective. As a result, a mismatch between group composition and objective of the group task was created. As it could be imagined, the task might not have been successfully accomplished and thus the learners may not have benefited from it to get the skill in question.

The criterion of student allocation adopted by the instructors had another limitation. They had only one way of assigning students to groups, free grouping. This may not enable them to address deliberately needs of students by setting them group activities pitched at their ability levels. In other words, free grouping may not help the instructors organize students into same ability level groups and give them separate tasks in the same session since free grouping does not make all students form groups of same ability levels. Therefore, due to their insistence on one criterion of student allocation, the instructors could not cater for the needs of their students.

As stated earlier, not only did the instructors ignore objectives of group tasks but also seemed to overlook the value of changing group composition for variety. However, variety is essential

to motivate students by circumventing monotony, to provide opportunity for getting different language input, and to encourage friendship among students in a class (Cruickshank et. al, 1999; Enright 1991; Schmuck and Schmuck 2001). The instructors did not manipulate group composition to help their students enjoy these advantages of variety. As a result, the students might miss good opportunities to enhance their oral skills. First, there might be a little information-gap or they may not have much to negotiate as a result of working very frequently with one another. Second, they did not have chance to learn from classmates other than their groups. In other words, they did not have a wider opportunity to get varied linguistic input by working with different students. Finally, they could develop their own territory and might be reluctant to mix with others or accept new members (Hadfield 1991). This tendency is detrimental to a cohesiveness of the class, which is very vital for “the instructional transaction or interaction between teachers and the students, among students” (Schmuck and Schmuck 2001: 136).

In sum, the instructors whom took part in this study appeared to unwittingly insist on one criterion of student allocation, free grouping, neglecting other criteria, which are equally important for effective organization of group tasks. In addition, they seemed to have based their choice of student allocation criteria on student preferences ignoring objective of group tasks and variety that are essential for the success of group tasks.

4.2.3 Seating Arrangement

The way seats are arranged for group task can impede or facilitate interaction among students, even between the teacher and students. In view of this, data were collected through questionnaire, interview and observation from students, instructors and classroom practices to see the lay out of seats in Spoken English II classes in colleges considered for this study.

Table 3. The students' responses concerning seating arrangement during group work in Spoken English II classes.

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometime s		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
5.	While doing oral group task students: a. sit in a circle or horse shoe	6	5.6	9	8.4	50	42.1	41	38.7	106	100
	b. sit in a row	69	65	2	1.9	29	27.3	6	5.6	106	100
	c. others	-	-	-	--	-	-	--	-	-	-
6	The students are able to talk to students in the adjacent groups	59	55.6	20	19.9	19	17.9	8	7.5	106	100

As the above table indicates, 5.6% of the subjects responded that they almost always sat in a circle or horseshoe when they did group tasks while 8.4% of them reported that they sometimes sat in a circle or horseshoe during group activities. 42.1% of the subjects said that they seldom sat in a circle or horseshoe. The rest (38.7%) indicated that they never sat in circle or horseshoe in their groups. It is further apparent from the table that their seats were almost always laid in a row according to 65% of the students. Very few (1.9%) subjects said that their seats were sometimes arranged in a row. But 27.3% of the students indicated that they rarely sat in a row and 5.6% of them disclosed that they never sat in a row during group tasks in spoken English II classes. No respondents mentioned other ways of seating arrangements during group tasks.

Finally, the same table shows that more than a half of the respondents reported that they were almost always able talk to students in adjacent groups during a group activity and 19.9% of them replied they were sometimes able to talk to groups near them. On the other hand(17.9%)

of the students said that they could rarely communicate with students belonging to other groups while 7.5% of them indicated that they were not able to speak with students in other groups while they were doing group activities.

It looks evident from the description of the data in the above table that the students almost always sat in a row, but they rarely sat in either a circle or a horseshoe when they did speaking group activities. Besides, the seating arrangement permitted them to talk to each other leaving their groups. This conclusion runs contrary to the instructors' replies to the interview question and agrees with the results of classroom observations. When interviewed, the instructors stated that they always sat students in a circle or horseshoe and that they put groups afar to prevent members from talking to one another by leaving their groups.

The data obtained from classroom observations seemed to confute the instructors' responses to the interview. Students in both colleges were observed sitting in two ways: they sat either side-by-side in a row or in two rows facing one another. These patterns of seating seemed to be dictated by group size. If the group was small (say, 3-4 members), its members sat abreast. But if the group was bigger, the members sat in two rows facing one another and this seating arrangement resulted from two small groups merging with each other by turning round to work with groups at their back (see appendices A-F). Admittedly, this style of seating arrangement is better than a side-by-side seating arrangement in allowing students to interact among themselves. However, such seating arrangement should be resorted to when it is not possible to move seats. This is because it may not permit to students communicate as comfortably as when they sit in a circle or horseshoe (Katie and Pauline 1997).

During the classroom observations, it was noted that students experienced discomfort when they interacted group activities due to their seating arrangement. In a side-by-side seating, presumably, in order to overcome the obstacle arose out of improper seating arrangement, they turned side-way to communicate. Similarly, in groups sitting in two rows facing one another, at the beginning, they attempted to interact by bending towards the speaker who had to talk loudly to be heard by all members. In the middle, probably, to reduce the inconvenience, subgroups were formed. So the seating arrangement seems to have contributed to the noise of the classes and the degeneration of groups (see appendices A-F).

In spite of the problems created due to seating arrangements, the instructors were not observed making any practical attempt to solve the problems. Actually in many classroom situations, seats are fixed and enough space may not be available if the room is small. Hence, it could be argued that the instructors should not be blamed for these factors might have constrained their efforts to set up a suitable seating arrangement for group activities. In fact, these physical restrictions did not exist in both colleges. The seats were movable and there was enough space to move and organize them into circles or horseshoes. Besides, the rooms were big enough to leave space among groups so as to prevent unnecessary talk between students of different groups (see appendices A-F). The instructors did not take the advantage of these favorable conditions the classroom offered them to lay seating arrangements suitable for group activities.

At this point we may ask why these instructors were reluctant to exploit the good physical environments in their classes. With the limited data available it is possible infer that the instructors did not seem to be unaware of suitable seating arrangements for group work. For

instance, in the interview, they said that they sat students in a circle or horseshoe. They added that these modes of seating layout enable the students to communicate facing one another. They also know partly the importance of leaving space within groups because they replied to an interview question saying that leaving space within groups allows free movement for monitoring the performance of every group. So, the instructor appeared to lack not awareness, but they are reluctant to practice what they know. However, the factors attributing to their reluctance needs to be identified by further research.

In general, speaking group tasks seemed to suffer from a poor seating layout. As evidenced by discussion of data students always sat in rows that contributed to disintegration of the organization of groups, inconvenient for communication, and deafening noise in classrooms. Thus, the seating arrangements adopted in Spoken English II classes do not seem to be facilitating the opportunity for students to comfortably interact in order to further their oral proficiency.

4.2.4 Group leaders and secretaries

Group leaders and secretaries play vital roles in many group tasks, in facilitating the successful accomplishment of group tasks under the supervision of teachers (Harmer 1991 ;Hill 1994). Through different instruments, relevant data were collected in connection with the selection of group leaders and secretaries, and orientation about their roles. The next part of the paper is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the data.

Table 4 The selection and orientation of group leaders and secretaries in spoken English II classes

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
14.	When needed for group activities the instructors: a. nominate group leaders	75	70.7	20	18.9	4	3.7	3	2.8	106	100
	b. lets students select their own	3	2.8	20	18.9	30	28.3	53	50	106	100
	c. nominate group secretaries	80	75.4	2	1.9	3	2.8	11	10.4	106	100
	d. allow students to choose their own	10	9.4	-	-	21	19.8	76	71.7	106	100
15.	Briefing group leaders and secretaries about their roles	3	2.8	3	2.8	-	-	100	94.3	106	100
16.	Rotating an opportunity for every student to be a group leader and secretary	3	2.8	-	-	12	11.3	91	85.8	106	100

As it can be seen in the table , a large proportion (70.7%) of the students said their group leaders were almost always nominated by their instructors, while 18.9% and 3.7% of them indicated that group leaders were sometimes and rarely selected by their instructors respectively. The rest (2.8%) of the subjects responded that group leaders were never nominated for group tasks. The table also shows that students were almost always allowed to select their elders according to 2.8% of the students. 18.9% of the students replied that they sometimes chose their readers while 28.3% the subjects said that they were rarely let to choose their leaders. But half of the subjects reported that they were not allowed to select their own leaders.

Regarding group secretaries, according to the table a sizable proportion (75.4%) of the samples disclosed that their instructors almost always nominated groups secretaries for them while a very small proportion (1.9%) of them said that their instructors sometimes selected secretaries for them. On the other hand, 2.8% of the subjects said that their instructors rarely

chose secretary for them and 10.4% of them replied that their instructors selected secretaries for them. The same table shows that 9.4% of the subjects disclosed almost always they were let to select their secretary while none of them indicated they were allowed to have their own secretary. But 19.8% of the subjects reported that they were rarely allowed to choose their secretary and the majority (71.7%) of responded that they were never let to have their secretary.

Furthermore, as the data presented in the table still reads, an equal proportion (2.8%) of the respondents reported they were briefed about their roles when they acted as group leaders and secretaries. However, none of the respondents indicated that their instructors rarely oriented group leaders and secretaries about their roles. A great number (94.3%) of the students reported that their instructors never briefed group leaders and secretaries about their roles. Finally, as the table shows, a small proportion (2.8%) of the respondents said that every student almost always had the opportunity to become a group leader and secretary while none of them indicated that every student sometimes had a turn to be a group leader and secretary. According to 11.3% of the subjects, the turn to be group leaders and secretaries rarely rotated. A good proportion (85.8%) of the respondents reported that the turn for becoming group leaders and secretaries never cycled.

From the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, it seems that the instructors most frequently nominated group leaders and never let students choose their own. Similarly, they most frequently chose secretaries for students and did not allow them to select their own. Nevertheless, they never briefed group leaders and secretaries about their right roles nor did they ensure that every student get the opportunity to become group leaders and secretaries.

The conclusions drawn from the responses of the students to the questionnaire, however, seemed to discord with their instructors' replies to the interview. According to the instructors, students selected their leaders and secretaries in every group activity and they were briefed about their appropriate roles. But in the classroom observations, the instructors were not seen nominating group leaders and secretaries, nor did the students select their own leaders and secretaries (see appendices A-F).

Half of the tasks done in the classes I observed needed group leaders and secretaries who could maintain orderly interaction and who could record what the groups did to report to the class at the end of group tasks. For instance, simulation, ranking and discussion require group leaders and secretaries who contribute greatly to the successful completion of the tasks (see appendices B, C and D). However, the instructors were not observed choosing group leaders and secretaries. Moreover, they did not allow the students to have their own leaders and secretaries for the tasks. Lack of group leaders seemed to contribute to disorder and 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 discussed. Hence, the students did not appear to benefit from the tasks because of these problems.

4.2.5 Instructions

Instructions are integral parts of group task organization and it goes with out saying that good instructions facilitate learning and poor instructions lead to confusion and a waste of time (Ur 1996; Nolasco and Arthur 1988). In connection with this, relevant data were gathered from students, the instructors and classroom practices to explore how instructor at the selected

colleges provided instruction for group tasks in Spoken English II classes. This section was concerned with the presentation and discussion of these data.

Table 5 The students' responses regarding their instructors' ways of providing instructions for group tasks in Spoken English II classes.

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
7.	Eliciting for students for familiar tasks	12	1.9	3	2.8	-	-	100	94.3	106	100
8.	Directly providing for novel tasks	89	83.9	11	10.4	6	5.6	-	-	106	100
9.	Demonstrating tasks with physical actions	8	7.5	1	0.9	1	0.9	96	90.6	106	100
10.	Explaining tasks without physical actions	99	93.7	-	-	-	-	7	6.6	106	100
11.	Using English	100	94.3	6	5.6	-	-	-	-	106	100
12.	Breaking down long instructions for better comprehension	3	2.8	74	69.8	19	17.9	10	9.4	106	100
13.	Checking for comprehension	7	6.6	10	.94	6	5.6	83	78.3	106	100

As it is apparent from the table, 1.9% of the subjects indicated that their instructors almost always elicited instruction for familiar group tasks while 2.8% of them said that they were sometimes asked how to do group tasks, which are familiar. Nonetheless, none of them reported that their instructors rarely elicited instructions from them when the task is not new. The majority of the respondents (94.3%) reported that their instructors did not elicit instructions from them for familiar tasks. The table further shows that according to 83.9% of the subjects, the instructors almost always directly provided for novel tasks while 10.4% of them said that they were sometimes told how to do unfamiliar group tasks. 5.6% of the respondents replied that they were rarely given instructions for new group tasks but no one said the instruction for new tasks were not directly provided.

The table still reads that the instructors almost always demonstrated group tasks involving physical actions in their classes according to 7.5% of the respondents. Equal percentage (0.9%) of the subjects indicated that demonstration was sometimes and rarely used for providing instruction for group tasks involving physical actions. But a very large proportion of (90.6%) of the respondents said that their instructors never demonstrated group activities with physical actions.

Explanation is favored when the task involves no physical action (Todd 1997). Concerning the use of explanation in providing instructions, as the table shows, 93.4% of the respondents reported that their instructors almost always explained how group work involving no physical action is done. On the other hand, none of them said that explanation was sometimes or rarely used for giving instructions for a task of the type. Finally, 6.6% of the subjects said that explanation was never used for giving instruction to group tasks involving no physical actions.

Regarding the language employed for providing instructions, as it is evident from the above table, almost all (94.4%) of the respondents said that English was almost always used for providing instruction except that 5.6% of them replied that their instructors sometimes gave instructions to group work in English. None of them responded that their instructors rarely or not at all provided instructions in English. In addition, the table reveals that 2.8% of the respondents said their instructors almost always broke down long instructions for better understanding while several (69.8%) of them indicated that long instructions sometimes were divided into meaningful segments for better comprehension. On the other hand, 17.9% and 9.4% of the subjects respectively reported that their instructors rarely and not at all broke down long instructions for better comprehension.

Finally, as shown in the table, 6.6% of the subjects responded that their instructors almost always made sure that they had understood instructions and 9.4% of them revealed that their instructors sometimes checked that they had grasped instructions. A small proportion (5.6%) of the subjects said that their instructions seldom checked for comprehension of instruction in group tasks. But a large proportion (78.3%) of them disclosed that instructors never not ascertained that they were clear with instructions.

It looks apparent from the responses of the subjects described above that the instructors did not elicit instructions for familiar tasks from the students but they almost always directly provided instructions for a new task. Similarly, they did not demonstrate group tasks with physical actions though they explained very frequently how to do group tasks without physical actions. The responses of the students also show that English was almost always used for giving instruction and long instructions were sometimes broken into meaningful segments for better understanding. Finally, the instructors did not seem to check that their students were clear with instructions before beginning group tasks.

These responses of the student subjects seem to disagree with that of their instructors' responses elicited through interview. For instance, in the interview, the instructors replied that they directly gave instructions regardless of whether the task was new or not and that they used explanation for providing instructions for all types of group tasks. However, according to the responses of the student subjects, direct provision of instructions and explanation were used when the task was strange and involves no physical action respectively. But the results of classroom observations agree with the responses of the instructors. In the classroom observations the instructors were seen simply providing instructions and using explanation for

all types of group tasks (see appendices A-F). They were not observed eliciting and demonstrating instructions.

Hence, it appears plausible to arrive at the conclusion that regardless of the nature of the tasks, the instructors directly provided instructions instead of eliciting them from students when the task is not new. This restricted the chances students had for using the target language because students are engaged in a genuine communication when they explain how a given task is done to the class. Besides; they used explanation for activities with and without physical actions. As it could be imagined using explanation for activities like role-play may hinder understanding since it lacks actions, which could be better captured by demonstration.

Regarding the other ways of giving instructions, the instructors stated, in the interview, that they used English for providing instructions and that they broke down long instructions into meaningful segments for better comprehensions. They also replied that they checked whether or not their students understood instructions. It is interesting that in the classroom observations, the instructors were found using English in their classes. According to Parrot (1992) in Todd (1997), this is encouraging because it provides an opportunity for using the target language for a real purpose. Nonetheless, they were not observed cutting long instructions into meaningful parts for better understanding and checking for comprehension. As a result, students were very often heard asking their adjacent groups how to do group tasks which shows that they were not clear with the instructions and thus might not have performed the task effectively (See appendices C and F).

4.3 Monitoring phase

This is the second phase of group work organization whereby teachers assist their students who are at work, by creating supportive environments. Thus, teachers have different roles to play during a group activity but they may appropriately or inappropriately play their roles and impede or facilitate the completion of the task in hand. Therefore, to examine whether or not and how the instructors participated in the study monitor group work, different data were gathered from different sources. The following part of the paper dealt with the presentation and discussion of the data under two headings.

4.3.1 The Instructors' Perceptions of Monitoring as Manifested in their practices

Teachers' perceptions regarding monitoring group work can be manifested in their classroom practices. Some teachers do not sense the importance of monitoring. Once they put students into groups they believe that the students can accomplish the task without their assistance (Jacobs 1988). On the other hand, other teachers think that group work could not be done without their direct control; so, they feel the need to interfere now and then (Gower et. al 1995). In view of this, pertinent data were collected to see the instructors' perceptions of monitoring. The data were presented and discussed as follows.

Table 6. The students' responses concerning their instructors' behaviors during oral group work.

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
20.	Sitting back and observing	87	82.1	19	17.9	-	-	-	-	106	100
17.	Staying long with one group while monitoring	70	66	17	16	9	8.5	10	9.4	106	100
19.	Interfering with groups at work	2	1.9	-	-	6	5.6	98	92.4	106	100
18	Being available for help to all groups whenever needed	-	-	12	11.3	91	85.8	3	2.8	106	100

As the data presented in the table shows, a good number (82.1%) of the respondents said that their instructors almost always sat back and observed them when they did group work while 17.9% of them reported that their instructors sometimes did not monitor their performances. No respondents indicated that their instructors rarely or not at all monitored group task. Concerning the duration of time the instructors stayed with a group while monitoring, as the table reads a large number (66%) of the subjects disclosed that their instructors almost always spent a lot of time with one group while 16% of them responded that their instructors sometimes stayed long with one group. 8.5% and 9.4% of the subjects respectively reported that their instructors rarely and not at all took a long time with one group while monitoring.

The table also reveals that according to 1.9% of the subjects, their instructors almost always interfered with groups at work. But no respondents indicated the instructors sometimes interfered during group task. 5.6% of the subjects disclosed that their instructors seldom interfered with them while they were doing group task. Finally, as great proportion (94.4%) of the respondents reported their instructors never interfered now and then when they did group work. The table still reads that no subjects said their instructors were almost always available for help during group work while 11.3% of the respondents indicated the instructors were sometimes available when they needed them.

In general, the data presented in the table disclose that the instructors most often sat back and observed their students at group tasks but whenever they monitored they stayed long with one group ignoring others. They were rarely available for help to all groups. In addition, the instructors were said not to interfere with students when they were doing group task.

In the interview the instructors seemed to dissociate themselves from the responses students provided to the questionnaire. They claimed that they actively monitored group tasks moving in the class and providing help where necessary and that they never interfered needlessly and stayed long with learning groups. As to the time they spent with a group during monitoring, they added, however, that they took longer time with weak groups than clever groups since the weak groups need more help.

Though their view that weak groups need more help and thus more time is acceptable, the instructors were not observed in their classes doing what they claimed in the interview. For instance, the results of classroom observations at Adama Teachers College show that the instructor usually perched at a high table in front of the class reading her manual or magazines while group work was in progress. In the middle of a task, she either stood up or went forth and back in front of the class glancing over the students. She exhibited, a similar behavior in all sessions observed. (See appendices A, B, and C).

The other instructor (he was from Jimma Teachers College) showed different behaviors while the students were at group tasks. In the first time of observation, he was seen moving around the whole groups once and sat down with one group and spent four minutes with them. Then he moved to another group and spent the same time with them. In the second observation, which was conducted three days later, the instructor was seen going once around the class and sat down in front of the class until the task was closed. In the last observation that was carried out at the same interval, the instructor was observed sitting in front of the class without moving around (see appendices D, E and F). The instructor's behaviors were somewhat unpredictable and seemed difficult to generalize.

It looks apparent from the descriptions of their behaviors during group tasks that instructors did not actively monitor group tasks. Consequently, the tasks suffered from lack of monitoring. Many students usually slipped away from the task and tacked in L1. Others who persevered at group tasks were frequently dominated by few members (see Appendices A and .F). This seems to confirm McDonough and Shaw's (1993:231) observations that students were dominated in group tasks by few members if the tasks are not monitored. Hence, due to the absence of monitoring, the learners might not seem to benefit from group tasks to develop their oral skills.

4.3.2 Purposeful Intervention

Probably one of the most important advantages of group work is that it can be effectively used for implementing student-centered language instructions, in which students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and in which teachers withdraw and play facilitating roles. When they play their roles, teachers may intervene in order to assist or turn away the learning groups from any potential problems or help them when they face problems in progressing towards the completion of the task (Gower, et al 1995, Ur 1999). The following part of the paper is devoted to the presentation and discussion of data collected on whether and how instructors at Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges made purposeful interventions when they monitored group tasks in Spoken English II classes.

Table 7. The instructors' purposeful intervention as observed by their students.

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
21.	The instructors intervene to: a) give instruction if learners are not clear with how to do the task.	3	2.8	10	9.4	10	9.4	83	78.3	106	100
	b) encourage the learners to talk in English when they resort to excessive use of L ₁ .	-	-	2	1.9	20	18.9	84	79.2	106	100
	c) encourage learners to interact when they get stuck or lose interest in the task.	2	1.9	3	2.8	32	30.2	69	65	106	100
	d) manipulate participation when few members dominate the task	-	-	10	9.4	20	18.9	76	71.7	106	100
	e) encourage learners when they lag behind the time.	3	2.8	3	2.8	23	21.7	77	72.6	106	100
	f) give information or advice if invited.	-	-	6	5.6	2	1.9	98	92.4	106	100
	g) provide extra task for early finishers.	3	2.8	4	3.7	10	9.4	89	83.9	106	100

As the data portrayed in the table show, 2.8% of the respondent said that their instructors almost always intervened to give them instructions if they did not understand how to do a group task. Equal number (9.4%) of the subjects indicated that their instructor sometimes and rarely gave them instruction if they did not grasp how to do group tasks. A large portion (78.3%) of the subjects reported that their instructors did not intervene to provide them instruction if they were not clear with the task. Moreover, as the table shows, none of the respondents reported that they were not given encouragement to express themselves in English when they resorted to overuse of L1. 1.9% and 18.9% of the subjects respectively said that their instructors did not help them speak in English when they over used L1. A great majority (79.2%) of the respondents, however, reported that they were not encouraged to talk in English when they excessively used L1.

The table also shows that the instructors almost always helped them to interact when they got stuck or lost interest in a group task according to, 1.9% of the subjects. As 2.8% of the subjects indicated, their instructors sometimes encouraged them to interact when they found difficult it to proceed or lost interest in a group task. While 30.2% of the respondents reported that their instructors rarely encouraged to take up interaction when they got stuck or lost in a group task, 65% of them indicated their instructors never encouraged them to resume the task when they got stuck or lost interest in a group task.

It might happen that one or few group members could hog or dominate the task when students work together. The teacher is accountable to ensure that every group member has a fair share of participation during group task. Regarding this role of their instructors, no respondents said that their instructors almost always manipulated participation when they were dominated by few members but 9.4% of them indicated that their instructors sometimes ensured a fair share of participation in group tasks. According to 18.9% of the subjects their instructors seldom manipulated participation when they discovered that few students hogged the task. The remainder (71.7%) of the respondents replied their instructors never ensured a fair participation among group members.

In group work, instructors still have another purpose, to intervene in group tasks. They should encourage those who are lagging behind to increase their pace. In connection with this, as the same table depicts, equal percentage (2.8%) of the respondents said that their instructors almost always and sometimes encouraged them when they lagged behind to increase their pace while 21.7% of them reported that their instructors rarely provided them support when they lagged behind the time set of the task. The rest (72.8%) of the respondents said that they were not given any encouragement when they lagged behind the time set for the task.

Teachers have still another good reason for intervening during group work. Learners may need them to get information about the task in hand (Gower, et.al 1985). In view of this, no respondents said that their instructors provided them information and advice during group work. While 5.6% and 2.9% of them respectively disclosed that their instructors sometimes and rarely gave them advice information in group tasks. However, a large proportion (92.4%) of the subjects reported that their instructors never provided them any information or advice in group tasks.

Finally, teachers may have a sound reason to make intervention while students are doing group tasks. They need to provide extra tasks for early finishers (Wharton and Race 1999). With regard to this point, as the table shows, according to 2.8% of the respondents, their instructors almost always provided extra tasks for early finishers while 3.7% of them reported that their instructors sometimes gave extra tasks for those who completed tasks early. And 9.4% of the respondents replied that their instructors rarely intervened to give further tasks for early finishers. A large portion (83.9%) of the subjects disclosed that their instructors did not come in to provide early finishers with further tasks while the task was in progress.

As a whole, the data portrayed in the above table show that the instructors did not seem to intervene to give instruction if learners did not understand how to do a group task and they did not appear to encourage them to talk in English when they resorted to overuse of L1. Furthermore, as the data reveal they did not seem to prompt learners when they got stuck or lost interest in the task and did not ensure a fair share of participation when the task was monopolized by few members. The discussion of the data still discloses that the instructors did not encourage learners to increase their pace when they lagged behind. Moreover, they did not give information or advice to students during group work and did not provide an extra task

for early finishers. Thus, it is possible to infer that the instructors did not intervene to play them various roles.

The instructors were asked in the interview whether or not they intervened during group work and why they did so if they intervened. All of them replied that they intervened but only cited two reasons for their interventions: to prevent few students from dominating others and to keep them speaking in English. They did not seem to be aware of their other roles. However, in classroom observations none of the instructors were found intervening for any real purposes. As stated in the previous section, one of the instructors was observed, in one session, intervening to two groups. The instructor's intervention was not justifiable and deliberate because the groups did not seem to have special problems. Like many other groups they talked in L1 and drifted away from the task(see appendix D).

As it was evident from the classroom observations, there were many situations in which the instructors could have made a purposeful intervention. It is possible to mention examples from the data gathered through classroom observations. For instance, in both colleges selected for the study due to lack of understanding how the task in hand was done, students in some groups were seen seeking help from their adjacent groups. This could consume the time the students could have used for doing the task and lead to distraction on the part of the groups, which were asked for help. The results of the classroom observations also show that the students frequently spoke in L.1 and that some groups which persisted in groups tasks were very often dominated by few members (see appendices A-F).The overuse of L1 might limit the opportunity to use the target language and the domination of tasks by few members might deny the majority of the students to participate and thus, might impede the learners' development of oral skills.

The results of the classroom observations further reveal that the instructors did not provide an extra task for early finishers (see appendices C and F). These students seemed to join the majority of the students who strayed from group tasks and were involved in a noisy chat. As a result, the classrooms became always very noisy. According to the data obtained from classroom observations, though some students raised their hands for help, the instructors did not notice them. This is because the instructors were engrossed in either reading or thinking during group tasks (see appendices B and E). The students might have got stuck or needed information regarding the task in hand. This could cause the students to feel neglected and turn away from the task.

In the classroom observations, it was not possible to see groups that needed encouragement as a result of lagging behind the time set for tasks. The reason was that many groups strayed from group tasks and they did not stay at the tasks up to the end. This seems to forbid the opportunity to observe groups, which had the problem. However, the occurrence of the problem in-group tasks does not appear to be questionable. It is common to observe, as language teachers, that when groups with different ability levels work on the same task, some groups (the weak ones) can be half way through while others (the clever ones) are on the verge of finishing the task.

The important point is that whether the instructors are aware of the problem and reduce the time difference between fast and slow groups by helping the slow ones. As their responses to the interview show, the instructors did not seem to be aware of the problem. As noted earlier, the instructors said, in the interview, that they intervened to keep students speaking in the target language and to prevent students from dominating one another. Moreover, their students indicated in the questionnaire that the instructors did not help them when they lagged behind

in group tasks. So, these bodies of evidence show that the instructors might not provide encouragement groups that were proceeding slowly in doing group tasks.

In all, it looks reasonable to conclude that the instructors who participated in the study did not seem to monitor group tasks intended for teaching Spoken English II. Hence, the success of group tasks appears to be endangered due to this poor management. This confirms Ur's (1996) view that the success of group work "immediately depends on effective and careful organization". It also validates our common experience, as teachers, that if left unmonitored, learners can easily drift away from group tasks and turn to noisy task in L1. Thus, the instructors might not be able to equip their learners with the desired oral skills if they did not change their present practices of group work management.

4.4 Moving-out phase

At this stage, teachers wind down group tasks and organize report back and feedback sessions. The data gathered on these practices of the instructors are presented and discussed in the following two parts.

4.4.1 Winding down oral group tasks

Group tasks need to be closed at a right time otherwise they would create discipline problems, which result from staying too long on tasks after having finished the task (Underwood, 1987). The next part of the paper is concerned with the discussion of data related to the instructors' practices in winding down group tasks in Spoken English II classes.

Table 8. The students' responses regarding whether or not their instructors set a time limit for group tasks.

No	Item	Option	Response	
			No	%
22	Whether or not the instructors set a time limit for group tasks and how often they do so.	Yes	106	100
		Almost always	-	-
		Sometimes	-	-
		Rarely	-	-
		No	-	-
		Total	106	100

It is evident from the table that all of the respondents said that their instructors set a time limit for group tasks. The respondents also disclosed that their instructors almost always gave a time frame within which group tasks had to be completed. Moreover, as the table shows, no respondents indicated their instructors did not set a time limit for group tasks. In conformity with this finding, the instructors said, in the interview, that they had a time limit for group tasks. The data from classroom observations were also consistent with the responses of the students and the instructors.

It may be encouraging to learn that the instructors set a time limit for group tasks because it helps the instructor to draw the task to a close at a given point of time (Ur 1999). In addition, it encourages learners to adjust their space of performance in accordance with the given time. However, the instructors could have sometimes avoided setting a time limit for some group tasks like, discussion or debate and gone with the need of the groups. This could have a motivating effect on the students because it allows the instructor to bring the task while the groups are still engaged which in turn makes the learners long for a similar task. In other words, it is used to sustain the interest of the learners in the task and make them eager to do a similar task again (Ur 1981). The instructors could not hold out this advantage for their

students as they set time for all tasks. As result, they might fail to keep the students eager for group tasks, which could lead to the avoidance of the tasks on the part of the students.

Table 9. The instructors' practices of closing group task for which a time limit was set

No	Item	Responses									
		Almost always		Sometimes		Rarely		Not at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
23.	If your response is yes to Item 25, when does your instructor stop the task?										
	a. when the set time is over	93	87.7	13	12.2	-	-	-	-	106	100
	b. while some of you are still enjoying	-	-	3	2.8	8	7.5	90	84.9	106	100
	c. long after you have finished and got bored	8	7.5	-	-	-	-	98	92.4	106	100
	d. others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

According to the majority (87.7%) of the respondents, the instructors almost always drew group tasks to a close when the time set for the task was over while 12.2% of them reported that the instructors some times stopped group tasks when the set time was over. None of them replied that tasks were rarely or not at all closed at the set time limit. As can be also observed from the table, no respondents said that group tasks were almost always stopped while some of them were still enjoying. A few subjects (2.8%) indicated that group tasks sometimes were brought to an end while some of them were still enjoying. But 7.5% of the subjects disclosed that group tasks were seldom closed while some of them were still enjoying them. A great portion (84.9%) of the subjects, however, said that group work was never wound down while some of them were still enjoying it.

Furthermore, as the table portrays, 7.5% of the respondents said that group activities were almost always closed long after they had finished and got bored. But none of them reported that group activities were sometimes or rarely drawn to a close long after the student had finished and got bored. Finally, 84% of the respondents showed that group work was not at all

brought to a close long after they completed group tasks and got bored. No respondents made any mention of other ways of closing group tasks practiced by their instructors.

In general, the discussion of the data portrayed in the table shows that the instructors stopped group activities when the time they set was over. The results of the interview and classroom observations confirmed these responses of the students. In the interview, the instructors stated that they brought group tasks to a close when the set time was over and in the classroom observations they were seen also closing group tasks at the time limit they set at the beginning of tasks (see appendices A-F).

Closing group tasks at the time set for them is crucial. This is because students, who persisted in group tasks up to the end can get bored if left waiting for a long time. Supporting this view, Edge (1991) asserts that learners become bored if they are let to stay on group tasks after they have finished. This could lead to disruptive behaviors. Therefore, it is encouraging to learn that the instructors closed group tasks before their students stayed long on group tasks.

4.4.2 Reportback and feedback

Reportback and feedback mark the end of group activities. Teachers need to organize sessions in which they let their students report on what they did and in which they provide feedback on the content of group tasks and learners' language use during the tasks. To investigate the practices of the instructors selected for the study, different data were secured from different sources. The presentation and discussion of these data was taken up in the next part of the paper.

Table 10 The students' responses regarding how their instructors organized report back and feedback sessions.

No	Item	Options	Responses		X ²
			No	%	
25	Whether or not the instructors allow their students to report what they did at the end of group tasks	Yes	94	88.7	* 57.54
		No	12	11.3	
		Total	106	100	
26	Whether or not the instructors provide feedback on	Language use	10	9.4	
		Contents of tasks	10	9.4	
		Both	16	15.2	
		None of them	70	66	
		Total	106	100	

* P < 0.05

df = 1

The table shows that a large proportion (88.7%) of the respondents said they were allowed to report what they did to their classes while 11.3% of them indicated that they were never let to report what they did to their classes. The chi-square result ($\chi = 57.54$ $p < 0.05$) shows the difference between the two groups (who said yes and no) was big and thus was significant.

Moreover, the table reveals that according to 9.4% of the subjects, their instructors provided feedback on language use during group work while 9.4% of them said that their instructors gave feedback on contents of tasks. On the other hand, 15.2% of the subjects disclosed that their instructors provided feedback on both the language use and contents of tasks. Finally, 66% of the respondents said that feedback was not given on either their language use or their performance in group tasks.

Hence, it looks from the discussion of the data presented in the table that the instructors organized a report back session to allow their students to present what they did to the whole class. But they did not seem to provide feedback on the contents of group tasks and learners' languages during the task. The result of the questionnaire and the interview seem to converge regarding report back and feedback. For instance, the instructors said, in the interview, that

they organized a report back session. They also claimed that they gave feedback on both contents and language use of their learners during group tasks. Besides, they said that they emphasized feedback on language use of learners, as it was a central goal of group work.

On the contrary, the results of classroom observations show that the instructors only organized a report back session. They called up on two or three groups to report to the class (see appendices A-F). As it was observed the students did not do the reporting very well. First, in case the report back required demonstration (e.g. role play), group which broke up during the task and which did not do the task together had to come together. Since they did not practiced together, they found it difficult to demonstrate to the class very well. Second, in other group tasks like discussion, the students had to nominate one group member on the spot who reported on the behalf of the group. The nominated student had to speak from her/his memory since there was no group secretary who recorded what was discussed. It was evident from the report back that group tasks were not properly done as students lacked good learning atmosphere perhaps due to poor organization.

In the interview, the instructors were also asked whether or not they gave feedback when oral group task was in progress. They replied they did not give feedback as this was annoying to students. The classroom observations confirm this response of the instructors. The classroom observations show that the instructors did not provide correction on the spot for group tasks organized to encourage accurate production of the language (see appendix F).

It is true that correcting students during an activity intended to promote fluency may be inappropriate as it can interrupt their flow of interaction. But in an activity designed to promote accuracy it is necessary to provide gentle correction since the goal is to help students

practice the accurate use of the target language in a controlled situation (Gower et. al 1995). So, the instructors did not seem to know when they should refrain from giving the correction on spot. Lack of correction may lead to fossilization of errors, which may be difficult to remove it. However, this does not seem to bother the instructors because most of the students speak in L1 during group tasks.

In the final analysis, it is possible to say that the instructors provided their learners with the opportunity to report what they did to their groups by organizing a whole class session. Despite their claim in the interview, the instructors seemed to ignore providing feedback on both the content of group tasks and learners' language use. This can have an adverse effect on the success of group task because learners may consider the task as a waste of time if they do not receive feedback on their performance. This is because, as Nolasco and Arthur (1988) suggest, feedback removes the feeling of many students that group work is a dissipation of time if not assessed.

4.5 Learner reflections on the organization of group work in Spoken English II classes

The students were asked one question in the questionnaire to specify whether or not the way group work was organized helped them develop oral skills in the target language. They were also asked to justify their responses by writing short notes. The responses and the summary of the notes are dealt with in this section.

Table 11. Learners' responses on whether or not the organization of group work in Spoken English II classes help them develop oral skills

No	Item	Option	Responses		X ²
			No	%	
27	Whether or not the organization of group work in Spoke English II classes helped you develop oral skills	Yes	20	18.9	* 41.1
		No	86	81.1	
		Total	106	100	

* P < 0.05

df = 1

As the data presented in the above table show, 18.9% of the respondents said that the ways group work was organized helped them develop their oral skills while the majority (81.1%) of them reported that they never benefited from the ways group work were organized in developing oral skills in the target language. The calculated value of Chi square ($\chi^2 = 41.1$ P < 0.05) test indicates that the difference between the responses of the learners was big and thus was significant. Therefore, it looks tenable to say that the organization of group work did not enable the learners to promote their oral skills and the summary of the short notes provided by the students appears to validate this conclusion.

In the questionnaire the students were given an opportunity to justify their responses to item No.27. Accordingly, those who affirmatively responded justified their responses citing different benefits they derived from group work. They wrote that group work gave them opportunities for sharing experience with their friends, for practicing oral skills in a less intimidating atmosphere and for helping one another. Furthermore, they cited that they got enough time to practice the language to express their ideas in communicative situations.

On the other hand, those who said that they did not benefit from group work stated different problems related various stages of group work. They wrote that a static grouping restricted the chance to learn from different classmates and to get to know them. Besides, they stated that

the seating arrangement did not allow them to comfortably interact and that their instructors did not make sure that they had understood instructions before they embarked on group tasks. They still mentioned that groups usually broke up shortly after group tasks started, members turned away from the task, and were involved in a noisy chat. They lamented that their instructors did not seem to take group work seriously. This is because they said that the instructors organized them into groups and sat back and watched them instead of moving around to help them with their problems and to assess their performance. Finally, they emphasized that the group activities did not bring on their oral English and thus they came to consider the activities as a dissipation of their precious time and energy.

At this point it is important to note that the limitations cited by the students confirm the conclusions we have already drawn regarding the instructors' practices of organizing group work for teaching Spoken English II. Therefore, it looks reasonable to conclude that group work in the colleges selected for the study appeared to have different impediments at various stages of organization. These impediments might place obstacles to the students to benefit from group tasks in order to adequately practice and improve their oral skills. In other word, lack of effective organization appeared to deny the learners conducive atmosphere for successfully completing group tasks and thereby enhance their speaking skills. Hence, the instructors might not succeed in equipping their students with the desired oral skills through group tasks. This implies that the objectives of the course might not be achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study was carried out to investigate how language instructors at Adama and Jimma Teachers Colleges organize group tasks for teaching Spoken English II. In particular, the purposes of the study were to:

- explore how the instructors set up the preparatory stage of group activities in Spoken English II classes .
- investigate whether or not they monitor and if they do, how they monitor group tasks intended for teaching Spoken English II
- examine how the instructors draw group tasks to a close and organize report and feedback sessions.
- draw implications for the development of the students' oral skills from the ways group activities are organized for teaching the skills.

In order to attain these research objectives, relevant data were gathered through questionnaire, interview and classroom observation checklists from 106 students, two instructors and actual classroom practices respectively. The data were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and chi-square test. Based on the discussion of the data, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The results of the study suggested that the instructors did not seem to prepare a good ground to move into oral group tasks. They did not determine group size depending on the goal and nature of group tasks. They simply ordered students to get into groups and this seemed to lead to the formation of groups with varying sizes for a single activity. Furthermore, it resulted in the formation of static grouping that never changes from session

to session regardless of the nature and the goal of tasks. Though the standard group size established by research usually ranges from 3-6 students depending on the natural goal of group tasks, the group size in the colleges selected for the study was big. The group size in Adama Teachers College was 3-9 and 3-8 in Jimma Teachers College.

2. The variation of group size for a single task seemed to put students at either advantage or at disadvantage based on the nature and goal of the task. Students in small groups would be at advantage when the tasks favored small size while student who formed big groups would not be a beneficiary. Conversely, when the goal of the tasks was to allow students to get varied input, students in small groups did not benefit as much as those in big groups since the task designed to achieve this goal favors big groups. However, students in bigger groups were usually found suffering from the problems associated with a large group size. They usually broke up in the middle of group tasks and formed subgroups. These disparities in group size might add up and in the long run might bring about discrepancy in the learners' speaking abilities.
3. The findings of the study also revealed that instructors held to a single student allocation criterion, student selected grouping. They seemed to totally neglect proficiency levels and sex as criteria of assigning students to groups. Their choice of student allocation criteria seemed to be dictated by student preference, whereby students are allowed to decide with whom they want to do group tasks. They overlooked goals of group tasks in deciding on student allocation criteria. Consequently, a mismatch between the group task and student composition was observed. This might hinder for the development of learners' oral skills. Moreover, the instructors did not manipulate group composition for variety and this could

be source of boredom and may place a limit on students' exposure to different language input and contexts for using these inputs.

4. The study showed that students were bound to sit in big rows either facing one another, or in small rows side-by-side facing one direction. Though the seats were movable and the classrooms were spacious, the instructors did not arrange seats into circles or horseshoe to enable students to communicate comfortably when they carried out group activities. The seating arrangements adopted by the instructors were observed contributing to disintegration of groups. The seating arrangements also contributed to the intolerable noise in classrooms because students in big rows had to speak loudly to be heard in their groups. Furthermore, the seating arrangement allowed students of different groups to talk to each other since there was enough space between their seats. This was observed to be a source of disruptive behaviors.
5. The results of the study further suggested that there were no group leaders and secretaries nominated by the instructors or selected by the students. Lack of group leaders and secretaries appeared to result in lack of order and contributed to poor performance in group tasks as observed in report back sessions.
6. It was found in the study that the instructors only explained instructions irrespective of the nature of the task. They did not elicit instruction when the task was not new to create realistic contexts for using the target language nor did they demonstrate tasks involving physical actions for better comprehension. Moreover, they did not ensure that students understood instructions and this contributed to chaos that seemed to be a natural part of the classes intended for teaching Spoken English II. However, it was interesting to find

- that the instructors used English for giving instruction it provides a realistic situation for using the target language for real purpose.
7. The findings of the study also revealed that the instructors did not actively monitor group tasks. They very often sat back and watched groups at work. They did not intervene to play their facilitating roles. However, in rare cases, one of the instructors intervened and stayed long with one group. This was observed to have an inhibiting effect on the learners. Due to lack of active monitoring most groups usually drifted away from tasks and were involved in noisy chat in L1. One or two group members dominated the few students who persevered at group tasks. In general, there was scarcely any conducive learning atmosphere for students to practice speaking and bring on their oral proficiency.
 8. The study still disclosed that the instructors set time limit for all group tasks and closed the tasks when the time was over. They did not sometimes let students do group tasks without time limit and stop them while they were still enjoying to enhance their interest in group tasks.
 9. The results of the study showed that the instructors allowed students to report at the end of group tasks. This practice needs to be encouraged since it provides learners with opportunities to use the target language for expressing themselves. But instructors did not provide feedback on either contents of group tasks or on learners' language use during the tasks. Due to this, learners might consider group tasks as a dissipation of their time.
 10. Finally, it is important to note that, as their responses to the interview showed, the instructors seemed to be unaware of most procedures of group work organization. Their responses to the interview also revealed that the instructors seemed to possess partial

knowledge in such aspects of group work organization as student grouping, seating arrangements and monitoring. However, as their classroom practices revealed, they were reluctant to practice what they knew.

In the final analysis it seems reasonable to conclude that group tasks were not properly organized in Spoken English II classes at both colleges. As the student opinions about the organization of group tasks show, due to lack of effective organization on the part of the instructors, group tasks seemed to suffer from several possibly avoidable problems that might hinder the development of the learners' oral proficiency. The instructors, therefore, might not succeed in equipping the learners with the desired oral skills using group tasks if they did not change their current practices of group work organization.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded to, researchers, instructors and colleges.

1. The results of the study show that the instructors seemed to display lack of knowledge in most procedures of group work organization. Hence, the instructors ought to read relevant materials to be well informed in these procedures of organizing group activities.
2. As it is apparent from the results of the study, though the instructors appeared to be aware of some procedures of group work organization, they were found reluctant to use their knowledge. Thus, the instructors should feel professionally responsible to use their knowledge in helping their students develop oral skills.
3. A study needs to be conducted to get insight into the causes of the instructors' reluctance to practice what they know.

4. Further research needs to be carried out on group work organization on a large scale to get a wider and deeper understanding of how group tasks are set and managed in teaching speaking and other skills.

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Appendix A

The Results of Classroom Observation 2 at Adama Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 56

Size of the classroom: spacious

Styles of seats: Movable

Class composition:

Linguistic: homogeneous

Sex: mixed

Ability levels: mixed

Type of the task: Role play

Objective of the task: To enable learners to practice communicative strategies ,negotiation of meaning

Familiarity of the task with students: familiar

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size	The instructor ordered the students to get into groups to do the task. Accordingly, learners made 12 groups with group size ranging from three-nine students. Subgroups were formed after a while.	The task suggests a group of three to four students
	Determining group composition	Female and male students did not mix. They formed separate groups. With respect to their ability levels, they were homogeneous and heterogeneous	The task is preferably done with mixed sex; perhaps with students of different ability levels
	Arranging seats	In a big group, learners sat in two rows facing one another while in small groups, they sat in a single row side-by-side. They had to speak in larger groups to be heard. All groups had trouble interacting due to their seating arrangements. Members of adjacent groups could talk to each other.	As all seats are movable and as the room is spacious, the instructor could have arranged them into circles or horseshoe.

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Providing instructions	The instructor explained how the learners carried out the task in English. But he did not check whether the instruction was clear or not. Though the instruction was long, she did not break it into manageable segment for better comprehension	Demonstration may be more effective than explanation. The instructor could have given chance to students to demonstrate as the task was familiar.
	Nominating and briefing group leaders and Secretaries	There were no group leaders and secretaries selected or nominated for the task	The nature of the task dispensed with the need of group leaders and Secretaries
Monitoring	Teacher's position	She sat back in front of the class and read her manual. But at a time, she stood up and glanced around the class, perhaps, pretending that she was keeping a close watch over the students.	She did not play her facilitating roles.
	Verbal contact	She did not make any verbal contact with the groups. But many groups strayed from the task, being engaged in private talk in L1. Few groups persevered at the task.	She completely left the responsibility of accomplishing the task to the learners
Moving out	Ending the task	She told students to complete the task with in 10 minutes and she stopped the task when the time was over	She was strict about keeping the time set for a task
	Organizing report back Session	She called out three groups to demonstrate to the class. They did not demonstrate the task very well, since they drifted away during the task.	No comment was given to the groups which demonstrated to the class
	Organizing feedback session	No feedback was provided on the content of the task and on the learners' language use.	Since she did not monitor the task, she could not provide feed back

Appendix B

The Results of classroom Observation 3 at Adama Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 56

Size of the classroom: spacious

Style of seats: Movable

Class composition:

Linguistic : homogeneous

Sex : mixed

Ability levels: mixed

Type of the task: Simulation

Objective of the task: to encourage fluency in the target language.

Familiarity of the task with students: not familiar

Phases	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size	The instructor told students to make groups and do the task; and the students formed 12 groups with 3-9 students. As in the previous session larger groups broke up and formed sub group	The task did not favor large groups but the instructor did not determine group size in line with the nature of the task
	Determining group composition	Female and male students made separate groups. But as far as their ability levels were concerned, they formed homogeneous and heterogeneous groups	The task needs mixed ability levels whereby strong students can help the weak ones.
	Arranging seats	The seating arrangements were the same as in the previous session. The students sat in rows either facing one another or sat abreast. They had problems to communicate due to their improper seating arrangement. The seating arrangement allowed students of different groups to talk to each other	She did not make any attempt to make the seating arrangement suitable for the task

Phases	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Providing instruction	She explained the instruction in English. But she did not make sure that the students understood the instruction students in some groups near my seats heard asking “Attamitti hojjenna?” (How do we carry out the task?) to students in the adjacent groups	She seemed to take for granted that her students had grasped the instruction. As the task was new, learners might not understand how to do it easily
	Nominating and briefing group leaders and secretaries	There were no group leaders and secretaries. As a result in two groups which persevered at the task, the task was dominated by few members. No one took responsibility to record their discussion in all groups	The activity needs group leaders who moderate discussion or who ensure orderly interaction, and group secretaries who record the groups’ discussion for a report back session
Monitoring	Teacher's position	She read a book sitting at a table in front of the class. At a time, she moved back and forth in front of the class, glancing over the whole class. Three students in different groups sought help by raising hands but they were unnoticed by the instructor who was reading a book	She seemed to assume that once put into groups, learners need no assistance
	Verbal contact	As in the previous session, the instruction did not make a verbal contact with any groups. But many groups slipped away from the task and talked in L1. A few groups seemed to be engaged in the task. Even in these groups, the task was monopolized by few students	She did not intervene to keep learners on the task, and help them with their problems

Phases	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving out	Ending the task	As usual, she set 15 minutes for the task, and she stopped when the time was over.	She should not have set a time frame. She could have gone with the feel of the class for such a task
	Organizing report back session	As usual, three groups were called up on to report to the class. The groups selected one students who reported to the class representing them. The reports were not organized as learners talked from their memory	The report back could have given the instructor a hint that the task was not properly done.
	Organizing feedback session	She did not provide feedback on the content of the task and learners' language use	As she did not monitor the task, she failed to provide feedback

Appendix C

The Results of Classroom Observation 4 at Adama Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 56

Size of the room: spacious

Styles of seats: Movable

Class composition:

Linguistic : homogeneous

Sex : mixed

Ability levels: mixed

Type of the task: Ranking

Objective of the task : To enable the students to obtain varied input and varied contribution.

Familiarity of the task with students: not familiar

Phases	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size	The students made a total of 12 group which had different size ranging from 3-9 students. As observed in the other sessions, big groups degenerated into smaller groups in the middle of the task.	The grouping remained static in are sessions observed. The task seemed to favor larger groups (with more than six members)
	Determining group composition	The groups were homogenous with respect to their sex, but heterogeneous and homogenous regarding their ability levels.	Group composition also never changed for variety
	Arranging seats	The seating arrangements were not altered. In larger groups (more than four members) students sat in two rows facing one another, but in smaller groups they sat in a single row side-by-side. The seating arrangement posed obstacles to comfortably interact. The seating arrangement permitted students of different groups to interact.	The instructor did not try to rearrange seats for the task.

Phases	Skills	Observations	Comments
	Nominating and breading group leaders and secretaries.	There were no group leaders and secretaries for the task. So the interaction was chaotic and no one recorded their decisions in ranking qualities of good teachers.	The task is hardly done without group leaders and secretaries.
Moving into	Providing instructions	As she did in other sessions, she explained how the task was done using English. Though the activity was new, she did not make sure that learners understand the instruction clearly. Some groups were heard seeking help from adjacent groups regarding how the task was carried out.	Explanation is a right way of providing instruction for the task.
Monitoring	Teachers' position	She sat at a table in front of the class and read a magazine. At a time, she sat up and glanced over the class which were chatting in L1 and drifted away from the task, except a few groups which persisted in the task.	The classroom atmosphere was not conducive for learning as it was chaotic.
	Verbal contact	She did not intervene to any group to proved assistance though the task was suffering from lack of monitoring. This groups which were at work finished the task earlier but they were not given an extra task. So, they started to chat like others.	She did not appear to sense the value of monitoring groups tasks.
Moving out	Ending the task	She set 15 minutes for the and stopped it when the task was over.	Setting time for the task might not have been necessary as it was possible to bring the task to a close while students were still enjoying it.
	Organizing a report back session	She nominated three groups to report to the class. The groups chose representatives on the spot for reporting what they did. The representatives seemed to be confused when they reported as they just talked from their memory.	As it was evident from the reports, the task was poorly done.
	Organizing a feedback session	There was no feedback given on the content of the task and on the learners' language use.	Feedback seemed to be completely ignored.

Appendix D

The results of classroom observation 2 at Jimma Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 50

Size of the classroom: spacious

Styles of seats: movable

Class composition:

Linguistic: homogeneous

Sex: Mixed

Ability levels: mixed

Type of the task: Discussion

Objective of the task: To promote fluency in the target language

Familiarity of task with students: not new

Phase	Skill	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size.	The instructor simply ordered students to get into groups. Then, the students formed 10 groups which consisted of 3-8 students. In the larger (more than four) groups students broke up and formed subgroups in the middle of the task.	The instructor did not determine group size based on the purpose of the task.
	Determining group composition	The students made single sex groups, and heterogeneous and homogeneous ability groups	Students decided with whom they wanted to work. The instructor did not seem to intentionally determine group composition.
	Arranging seats	Students in larger group (greater than 4 members) sat in two rows facing each other while those in smaller groups sat in a single row side-by-side. The seating arrangement made it difficult for students to interact. There was also not enough space between seats of different groups. So students turned round to talk to students of other groups.	The instructor could have set a suitable seating arrangement as the seats are movable and as the room is spacious

Phase	Skill	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Nominating and briefing group leaders and secretaries	The instructor did not let students select their leaders and secretaries, nor did he select them for the students. Hence, there were no leaders secretaries who moderated the discussion and recorded the results of the discussion.	The task needs group leaders and secretaries.
	Providing instruction	The instructor explained how to do the task in English but did not check whether or not students had grasped the instruction. The instruction was long but the instructor did not cut it into segments.	Since the task was not new, the instructor, could have elicited the instruction from the learners.
Monitoring	Teachers' position	He moved around the groups and finally sat down with a group with three students. He stayed with it for four minutes. Then he moved to another adjacent group with four students and stayed with for the same time.	He was forced to move around the whole groups as there was no space to move among the groups. He intervened to the groups without good reasons as they had no special problems.
	Verbal contact	He only intervened in two groups and stayed with them for relatively a long time. He neglected other groups and thus, they drifted away from the task and were involved in noisy chat. Probably, feeling neglected, the other groups seemed to stray from the task.	He did not intervene to play his facilitating roles by being available to all group.
Moving out	Ending the task	He set 10 minutes for the task and ended the task when the time was over.	It is possible to avoid setting time and to stop the task while students are still enjoying to sustain their interest in the task.
	Organizing a report back session	He called up on two groups to report the class. They groups selected one member who reported to the class. The representatives experienced difficulty presenting what discussed as they did not do the task very well and had no secretary who recorded their discussion	The instruction could have given chance for more groups to report to the class as they had enough time to wind up the class.
	Organizing feedback session	He did not organize a feedback session	He failed to provide feedback as he did not monitor the task.

Appendix E

The results of classroom observation³ at Jimma Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 50

Size of the classroom: spacious

Styles of seats: movable

Class composition

Linguistic: homogeneous

Sex: Mixed

Ability level: mixed

Type of the task : Guessing game

Objective of the task: To enable students to practice asking yes / no questions for eliciting information

Familiarity of the task with students: familiar

Phase	Skill	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size	The learners formed 10 groups, which had three to eight students when their instructor ordered them to form groups. The group size and numbers were not changed. They were the same as in the previous session. As usual, larger groups broke up to form sub groups.	The task seem to suggest groups of three to four students, for all students to get enough chance for participation.
	Determining group composition	The group composition was the same as in the previous session. It was changed.	The instructor should have at least change group composition for motivating students
	Arranging seats	The student patterns of sitting also remained static. Students faced similar problems in communication while doing the task.	The seats could have been arranged in horseshoe for interaction.

Phase	Skill	Observations	Comments
	Nominating and briefing group leaders and secretaries.	There was no group leaders and secretaries selected or nominated for the task.	The task might not need group leaders and secretaries.
	Providing Instructions	The instructor explained the instruction in English but he did not check whether or not the students understood the instruction. Some groups were seen asking students in the adjacent groups how to do the task.	The instructor could have elicited the instruction thereby check how much the students were familiar with how the task was done.
Monitoring	Teacher's position.	The instructor moved around the class once and a down in front of the class and engrossed in thinking .Two students in different groups raised hands for help but the instructor did not notice them.	The instructor movement within groups seemed to be constrained by disarranged seats.
	Verbal contact.	While he was circulating, he never intervened to provide assistance for groups.	He avoided intervening with out good reasons.
Moving out	Organizing a report back session.	Two groups were called upon to demonstrate what they did to the class. They did not demonstrate very well as they did not do the task together. The group broke up during the task but reunited to demonstrate the game to the class.	The way the report back was organize was the same as the previous one.
	Organizing a feed back session.	Feedback on the content of the task and on learners language use were ignored in this session as well.	The instructor had nothing to provide feedback on as he did not assess learners' performance during the task.

Appendix F

The Results of classroom Observation 4 at Jimma Teachers College

Background Information

Class size: 50

Size of the classroom: spacious

Style of seats: Movable

Class composition:

Linguistic: homogeneous

Sex: mixed

Ability levels: mixed

Type of the task: Interview

Objective of the task: To encourage accurate use of tenses

Familiarity of the task with students: New

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving into	Determining group size	As in the previous class the instructor told students to form groups and do the task. The students did not change their group size. The group number was also the same. A similar problem happened; larger groups broke up in the middle of the task	The task seems to favour a group of 3-4 students
	Determining group composition	The composition of the group was not altered. It was the same as in the previous class	The instructor did not change group composition to achieve variety. It was left to be static
	Arranging seats	The students did not change their styles of setting. As in the previous session, they sat in a double s a single row in smaller groups. Some groups bent themselves forward or side way to interact. The students could talk to students of adjacent groups at there was no enough space between them to prevent the task.	A horseshoe type of seating arrangement is preferable for the task as the interviewee can take the other end and the interviewers can cluster around.

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
	Nominating group leaders and secretaries	As in the previous session, there were no group leaders and secretaries.	The task does not need group leaders and secretaries as every group member has a definite role to play.
	Providing instruction	The instructor explained the roles of each group member in English. He did not make sure that the students had comprehended the instruction. Students in some groups were seen asking students in other groups in Oromo how the task was done.	Demonstration is more effective to provide instruction to the task.
Monitoring	Teacher's position	He sat back and watched the students at work. He did not move around and provide assistance where necessary.	He completely withdrew from the task leaving it to the students.
	Verbal contact	He did not intervene and talk to any group. As a result, the class was noisy, the learners talked in L1 and many groups slipped away from the task.	He did not make any attempt to create a good learning atmosphere for the task.
Moving out	Ending the task	He set fifteen minutes for the task. Some students who persevered at the task seemed to finish earlier and joined the majority who were disturbing. He did not give extra task to early finishers. He stopped the task when the set time was over.	He was strict about the time he set for tasks.
	Organizing report back session	He nominated three groups to demonstrate the class. The groups broke up during the task but reunited to demonstrate the task. They demonstrated poorly as they did not practiced the task together.	The instructor could have understood from the demonstration that the task was not successfully completed.
	Organizing the feed back session	There was no feedback given on the content of the task and learners' language use.	Feedback was completely ignored

Appendix G

Summary of student grouping as observed in Spoken English II classes at Jimma and Adama Teachers Colleges

College												
Instances of Observation	Adama Teachers Colleges						Jimma Teachers College					
	Type of group tasks	Group No	Group size	Group composition			Type of group tasks	Group No	Group size	Group composition		
				Linguistic (L1)	Ability level	Sex				Linguistic (L1)	Ability level	Sex
2 nd	Role play	12	3-9	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single	Discussion	10	3-8	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single
3 rd	Simulation	12	3-9	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single	Interview	10	3-8	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single
4 th	Ranking	12	3-9	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single	Guessing game	10	3-8	Oromo	Partly mixed & Same	Single

APPENDIX H

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
Questionnaire for students

Dear Students:

This questionnaire has been intended for the research planned to be conducted at your college and two other teacher training colleges. In particular, it has been designed to collect data on how your English language instructor organizes group work for teaching you Spoken English II. It has nothing to do with the evaluation of your instructor. The findings of this study are hoped to contribute to the improvement of your training program. You are, therefore, kindly requested to respond to all the items in the questionnaire.

General Direction:

The questionnaire has four sections. The sections deal with what you do or your instructor does at each stage of speaking group tasks in Spoken English II classes. Please, respond to each item in each section according to their respective instructions. You do not need to write your name; write only the name of your college.

Name of your college _____

Thank you in advance!

Section I

The items under this section refer to your and your English language instructor's behaviors in the first (moving-into) stage of group tasks in Spoken English II classes. Put a tick (✓) in **only** one of the boxes for items 1 and 2, and put the same mark (✓) for items 3-16 under **only** one of the letters in front of each item.

1. Does your English language instructor usually limit the group size (the number of students in a group) for speaking group activities to be between three and six students?

Yes No

2. Does your instructor sometimes allow you to do group tasks in larger groups (groups of more than six members)?

Yes No

Key: *A. Almost always*

B. Sometimes

C. Rarely

D. Not at all

No	Items	Frequency			
		A	B	C	D
3.	When forming groups, your instructor assigns:				
	a. weak and clever students to work together				
	b. weak and weak or clever and clever students to work together.				
	c. students with the same mother tongue to work together.				
	d. students with different mother tongue to work together.				
	e. students with the same sex to work together.				
	f. students with different sex to work together.				
4.	You are allocated to groups according to your will.				
5.	When you do oral group tasks, you sit in:				
	a. a circle or horse shoe (curved seating arrangement with one open end)				
	b. a row				
	c. others				

No	Items	Frequency			
		A	B	C	D
6.	You speak to a student of another group while you are doing group work.				
7.	Your instructor asks you how to do a group task if the task is not new to you instead of telling you directly how to do it.				
8.	Your instructor directly tells you how to do a group task if the task is new instead of asking you how to do it.				
9.	Your instructor demonstrates how group work involving a physical action (e.g. role play) is done.				
10.	Your instructor explains how a group activity involving no physical action (e.g. discussion) is done.				
11.	Your instructor provides instructions in English.				
12.	Your instructor breaks down long instructions into meaningful segments for better comprehension.				
13.	Your instructor makes sure whether or not you have understood instructions.				
14.	When they are needed for group activities, your instructor:				
	a. elects group leaders for you.				
	b. lets you choose your own leaders.				
	c. nominates secretaries for you				
	d. allows you to elect your own				
15.	Your instructor briefs (orients) you when act as a group leader or secretary				
16.	Every one of you get the opportunity to be a group leader or secretary.				

Section II

This section consists of items relating to your instructors behaviors while you are doing speaking group activities. Put a tick (✓) under **only** one of the letters in front of each item, depending on what you observe your instructor doing while you are doing speaking group tasks.

No	Items	Frequency			
		A	B	C	D
17.	While monitoring your instructor stays with one group for a long time.				
18.	Your instructor is available for help when needed.				
19.	There is too much interference from your instructor while you are doing group tasks.				
20.	While you are engaged in group activities, your instructor sits back and observes you.				
21.	Your instructor intervenes to:				
	a. give you instruction if you have not understood how to do the task.				
	b. encourage you to talk in English when you resort to excessive of use of mother tongue.				
	c. encourage you to interact when you are silent or lose interest in the task.				
	d. manipulate participation when you are dominated by few members.				
	e. encourage you to proceed faster when you lag behind the time set for the task.				
	f. give you information or advice on the task when you invite him/her.				
	g. provide a further activity to early finishers.				

Section III

This section contains items referring to how your instructor stops group tasks, and organizes report back and feedback sessions in spoken English II classes. Put a tick(✓) in **one** of the boxes for items 22, 25, and 26; and put the same mark under **only** one of the letters in front of each item. for No. 23 and 24 indicating the practices of your instructor.

22. Does your instructor set a time limit for group tasks?

- almost always
 Yes Sometimes No
 Rarely

No	Items	Frequency			
		A	B	C	D
23.	If your response is yes for No 22, when does your instructor stop the tasks?				
	a. when the set time is over				
	b. while some of you are still doing				
	c. long after you have finished and got bored				
	d. others				
24.	If your response is no for No 22, when does your instructor end the tasks?				
	a. when all of you have finished, no matter how long it may take.				
	b. while all of you are still enjoying.				
	c. long after you have finished and got bored.				
	d. others				

25. Does your instructor allow you to report at the end of group tasks?

- Yes No

26. Your instructor gives feedback on:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your language use | <input type="checkbox"/> Both |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The content of the task | <input type="checkbox"/> None of them |

Section IV

Put a tick (✓) in one of the boxes for item 27 and give short answers to those following it.

27. Do you think the ways speaking group tasks are organized help you develop your speaking abilities in English? Yes No

a. If your response is yes, why?

b. If your response is **no**, why?

Appendix I
Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
Interview with Instructors

1. Personal Information

Name of the College: _____

Qualification: _____

Field of specialization: _____

Year of experience in teaching English: _____

II. The Interview

Part one

This part includes questions relating to what you do in the first (moving-into) stage of group tasks in Spoken English II classes

1. Student grouping

- a. What is the standard group size in your Spoken English classes?
- b. How do you determine an appropriate group size for every oral task?
- c. Do you allow students to work in larger (say, more than six members)?
- d. What are your criteria (if any) for allocating students to groups?
- e. How do you determine student allocation criteria?

2. Seating arrangements

- a. How do you sit students during oral group tasks?
- b. Do you think the seating arrangement allows students to comfortably interact facing one another?
- c. Do you leave some space between seats of students belonging to different groups?

3. Group leaders and secretaries

- a. How are group leaders and secretaries selected?
- b. Does every student have the opportunity to be a group leader or a secretary?
- c. How do you help group leaders and secretaries play their roles appropriately?

4. Instructions

- a. How do you provide instruction to group tasks, like role play?
- b. How do you give instructions to group tasks, like debate or discussion?
- c. Do you make sure that your students have grasped instructions? If yes, how?
- d. Do you directly give instructions or elicit them from students? If yes, when do you elicit and directly provide instructions?
- e. What language do you use to provide instructions?

Part two

This section consisting of questions pertaining to what you do while students are doing oral group tasks.

1. Monitoring

- a. What do you do while a group activity is in progress?
- b. Do you intervene and talk to students during group activities?
- c. If yes, for what purposes? If no, why?
- d. How long do you stay with a group while monitoring?

Part three

Finally, this part contains questions dealing with how you bring oral group activities to a close and how you organize report and feed back sessions.

1. Stopping group tasks

- a. Do you set a time limit for all oral group tasks?
If yes, when do you stop these activities?
- b. If no, when you do close group activities for which you do not set a time frame?

2. Report back and Feedback

- a. Do you give correction during group work? For what type of activities?
- b. Do you allow students to report after group tasks?
- c. Do you provide feedback on group tasks?
- d. If yes, which aspect of group tasks do you emphasize? Why?

Thank you very much!

Appendix J

Classroom Observation Checklists

Background Information

Name of the college: _____

Class size: _____

Size of the classroom: _____

Style of seats: _____

Class Composition

Linguistic : _____

Sex _____

Ability level _____

Type of the group task: _____

Objective of the task: _____

Familiarity of the task with students: _____

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
Moving-into	<i>Determining group size</i>		
	<i>Determining group composition</i>		
	<i>Arranging seats</i>		
	<i>Nominating and briefing group leaders and secretaries</i>		
	<i>Providing instruction</i>		

Phase	Skills	Observations	Comments
Monitoring	<i>Teacher's position</i>		
	<i>Verbal contact</i>		
Moving-out	<i>Ending the task</i>		
	<i>Organizing report back session</i>		
	<i>Organizing feedback session</i>		

Declaration

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

Name Feda Negesse
Sign _____
Place Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University
Date of Submission June 7,2002

This thesis has been submitted for examination with the approval of the University advisor.

Name Tamene Kitila (PhD)
Sign _____
Date _____