

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP WORK IN AWASSA PRIMARY
GOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLS: GRADE 8 IN FOCUS

BY



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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP WORK IN AWASSA PRIMARY
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Table of Contents

Contents	page
Acknowledgements.....	i
Table of contents.....	ii
List of tables	vi
Abstract.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Objective of the Study	3
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	4
1.5 Delimitation of the study	5
1.6 Limitation of the study	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	6
2.1. General Concept of Group Work.....	6
2.1.1. Definition of Group Work	6
2.1.2. Critical Components of Group Work	7
2.1.3. Types of Groupings	7
2.1.4. Reasons for Using Group Work	8
2.1.5. Advantages of Group Work.....	9

2.2. Implementing Group Work	13
2.2.1. Designing Small Group Activities.....	13
2.2.2. Introducing the Group Work	16
2.2.3. Monitoring the Group Task:	17
2.2.4. Ending the Group Work.....	18
2.3 Factors that Affect the Implementation of Group Work	20
2.3.1. Personal Factors.....	20
2.3.2. Socio cultural Factors	22
2.3.3. Situational Factors	22
2.4. Issues in Group Work Learning.....	25
2.4.1. Role of the Teacher in Group Work Learning.....	26
2.4.1.1. Organizer	26
2.4.1.2. Monitor	27
2.4.1.3. Facilitator	27
2.4.1.4. Resource	28
2.4.1.5. Evaluator.....	28
2.4.2. Teachers Expectations of Students	28
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 Sampling technique	29
3.1.1 Research setting.....	29
3.1.2 Participants	29

3.2 Instruments	31
3.2.1 Questionnaire	31
3.2.2 Interview	32
3.2.3 Observation.....	32
3.3 Procedures of data gathering	33
3.4. Methods of Data analysis	33
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	34
4.1. How Group Work is implemented in Primary School EFL Classes?.....	34
4.2. The Frequency of Using Group Work in EFL Classes.....	40
4.3. Factors That Affect the Implementation of Group Work in EFL Classroom.....	41
4.4. Teachers' and Students' Roles During Group Discussion in EFL Class....	48
4.5. Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards the Advantages of Group Work	53
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	58
5.1. Conclusions	58
5.2. Recommendations	61
References	63
Appendices	66
Appendix 1 Students' Questionnaire	66
Appendix 2 Amharic version of students' questionnaire	71
Appendix 3 Students' interview	77
Appendix 4 Teachers' interview.....	78

Appendix 5 Transcriptions of teachers' interview scripts	79
Appendix 5.1 interview with teacher 1	79
Appendix 5.2 interview with teacher 2	81
Appendix 5.3 interview with teacher 3	83
Appendix 5.4 interview with teacher 4	85
Appendix 5.5 interview with teacher 5	87
Appendix 6 Transcriptions of students' interview scripts	90
Appendix 6.1 interview with student 1	90
Appendix 6.2 interview with student 2	91
Appendix 6.3 interview with student 3	91
Appendix 6.4 interview with student 4	92
Appendix 6.5 interview with student 5	93
Appendix 7 Classroom observation frame	94

List of tables

Tables	Page
Table 3.1. Information about students	30
Table 3.2. Information about teachers	31
Table 1. Types of Groupings the EFL Teacher Usually Use.....	35
Table 2. Size of a Group the EFL Teacher Usually Use	36
Table 3. Students' Responses to the Selection of Group Leader	39
Table 4. The frequency of using group work strategy by EFL teachers.....	40
Table 5. Lack of Language Proficiency.....	43
Table 6. Anxiety and lack of grouping Experience	44
Table 7. Authority and Leadership Problem.....	44
Table 8. Self-esteem and Group Cohesiveness.....	45
Table 9. Group Size, Group Composition and Seating Arrangement in EFL classroom..	46
Table 10. Nature of Group Tasks	47
Table 11. Organizing Group Work Learning	49
Table 12. Monitoring Group Discussion	50
Table 13. Facilitating Students' Group Discussion	50
Table 14. Evaluating Students' Progress	52
Table 15. Group Work Improves Students' Language Use.....	54
Table 16. Group Work Promotes Students' to Actively Involve in their Learning.....	55
Table 17. Group Work Helps a Teacher to Control Students' Academic Development....	56
Table 18. Group Work Makes the Classroom Atmosphere Attractive for Learning.....	56
Table 19. Group Work Provides More Language Practice Opportunities for students.....	57

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of group work strategy in primary school EFL classes. The focus was to assess if primary school EFL teachers appropriately use group work strategy in their classes. Besides, the study was attempted to answer some basic questions such as: how the EFL teachers implement it, how the EFL teachers and students perceive group work learning, whether they play their expected roles or not and what problems they face whenever they employ group work strategy in their classes.

To this end, three data gathering tools were employed to collect necessary information from the subjects of the research. The questionnaire was piloted at Bete Kihnet Primary School in Awassa town and administered to 86 grade-8 students who selected randomly from 4 sections of two primary schools, Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools. An interview was also managed for 5 EFL teachers and 5 grade-8 students selected using availability sampling and purposive sampling respectively while an actual classroom observation was held in three sections of volunteered EFL teachers. To analyze the data gathered through the above three instruments, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative method was used to analyze the data gathered through questionnaire and qualitative method was used to analyze the data gathered through an interview and classroom observation.

Analysis of the data indicated that primary school EFL teachers implement group work strategy rarely. Though they perceive that group work strategy is an active teaching approach to EFL classroom which give more chance for students to practice the language and for the teachers to check individual student's progress, the EFL teachers use it rarely due to many reasons such as shortage of time and large class size. The students also perceived learning through group work though they affected by factors like language problem, anxiety, group size, etc.

According to the conclusions made, concerned bodies like the Ministry Of Education and school administrative should either reduce the class size or increase the class time, to give EFL teachers and students a freedom to check their academic progress at the end of each lesson.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is taught as a second language in many countries including Ethiopia. In many non-English speaker countries English is used as a medium of instruction, language of diplomacy, commerce, administration etc. For example, in Ethiopia, it is used as a medium of instruction in high schools and higher educational institutions. As to Ellis (1994) in Adem (2007), the main goal of teaching English as foreign language is for a wider social communication.

For many years, especially before the last quarter of the 20th century, English as a second language has been taught using the teacher-centered instruction. As a result students could not bring about effective change in their communicative competence. Because, they did not expose to the target language in the classroom. In other words, since 30 and above students were learning in a single classroom, it is clear that the students hardly got the chance to practice the target language, English. Contemporary studies of foreign language classes showed that 80% of the class time was covered by the teacher talking to the students (TE Editor, 2003). One methodological solution for such communicative problem is to minimize the amount of teacher involvement in foreign language classroom (Brumfit, 1979).

Following the decline of Grammar Translation Method in 1970s, a search for a new language teaching approach was made which led to a shift in focus of language teaching from structural to the communicative aspect of the language. This help learners how to use the language to express their ideas (Brumfit, 1979). Because, second language can best acquire in an active involvement of learners. In line with this, Rivers (1987) explained that second language is used and learned through an interaction with the social group created by every group of teachers and students in the classroom.

In the last decade, there has been a growing interest among EFL teachers in using active teaching methods which led to the invention of new classroom practices and approaches to language materials. This reflects the commitment to find more effective ways of language teaching

brought a variety of methodological alternatives. This helped teachers to choose appropriate method base on students' interest, teachers' preferences and school environment (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). One of these varieties of methodological options or learning strategies is cooperative learning, which is believed to be as an active approach to encourage learners to sit in small groups and communicate using the target language. Supporting this idea, David and Johnson (2001) suggested that a collaborative learning is a successful strategy in which students are grouped in to small groups with different levels of ability, variety of learning styles etc to improve their language competence. In cooperative learning, students work together in a group of 2-4 (Richards & Renandya, N.D.). However, cooperative learning is more than just putting students in groups and giving them something to do. But it also ensures students' active participation and relatively less teacher talk.

Group work, as a communicative strategy introduced to standard EFL classroom in the 1970s with a particular problem that much (80%) of the class time was dominated by teacher talk (TE, editor, 2003). However, after wards, thanks to group work, teachers of EFL come to devote much time to students' language practice which gave less confident students the chance to put their knowledge in to practice.

The use of group in EFL classroom has long been supported by many strong pedagogical beliefs. It is believed that group work has the potential to maximize the amount of language practice opportunities to create effective learners' communicative competence (Long and Porter, 1985). However, as TE Editor (2003) suggested, group work may not be always the best option. There is a time and place for a whole class instruction as for group work.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The communicative goal of foreign language classroom can be achieved through active students' interaction with each other. Student-to-student interaction in the classroom is highly realized and manifested more through the use of group work. As to Alamirew (1992) and Berhanu (2000), the language competence of Ethiopian Secondary School students is below the threshold level. Though group work is believed to be an effective cooperative learning strategy in EFL classroom, many teachers and learners lack the trend to use it. Some times students seem reluctant to work in groups.

Furthermore, Mulat (2007) on a study ‘an exploration of teachers’ role in implementation of group work with particular reference to Debre Birhan College’ found that teachers act against the principles of group work. They did not plan group activities and even kept themselves silent when student use their mother tongue in group discussion. Another writer (Zelege 2006) in his study ‘how EFL teachers manage group work in grade 10’ concluded that teachers fail to manage group tasks effectively. Adem Mohammed (2007) similarly conducted a study on ‘challenges and opportunities of using group work in grade 9 in EFL classes’. He concluded that teachers used only few high competence students to discuss on class room activities. They did not also aim to have heterogeneous groups. Most activities which were to be accomplished individually were given to groups to discuss on..

Therefore, though there are some researchers who conducted a study on the issue of group work in high schools, colleges and universities, no one tried to study the case in the elementary level. Thus, the concern of this study will be the implementation of group work principles in primary school EFL class room with a particular reference to grade 8. The reason is that since the students and teachers of elementary school are different from those of the high school and higher educational institutions in terms of Knowledge, experience, age (usually students) and they use different methods, their attitudes and practices to implement group work may be different. Because experience, hence, grouping experience in my case, is an important factor in cooperative learning. Emphasizing this view, Altman and Pulitzer (1971:111) said, “Effective learning in small group requires experience in the part of both teachers and students.” In this case, the research results found in high schools, colleges and universities may not show the case in primary levels.

It is on the basis of this assumption that the researcher has been inspired to explore the implantation of group work and reasons why students and teachers fail to use it properly.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The intent of this study is to investigate the implementation of group work as an active learning strategy in EFL class room with a particular reference to Awassa governmental primary schools. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Observe the practices of group work strategy and how often primary school EFL teachers use group work in their classes.
- Identify the main factors that affect the implementation of group work in primary school EFL classroom.
- To gather data on the level of the conceptions and understandings of primary school teachers and students regarding the major components of group work strategy.

To this end, this study aimed at answering the following basic research questions.

- How group work is implemented in EFL classes?
- How do primary school teachers often use group work in their EFL classes?
- What problems (factors) do teachers and students face when using group work strategy in EFL classes?
- Do primary school teachers and students play their expected roles in implementing group work strategy in EFL classes?
- How do teachers and students of primary school perceive the idea of group work learning?

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is believed that this study will do something useful to those who engaged in EFL teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers, students, curriculum designers and interested researchers will be the beneficiaries of the study. It will help EFL teachers and students to understand the nature and principles of group work learning to shape their lessons. It will also inspire curriculum designers to revisit the existing syllabus if it can encourage teachers and students to use group work learning. Because, as Adem (2007) states, group tasks are rare in the students' text books. Besides the study will benefit other researchers in the way it provides a spring board (starting point) for further study and investigation on similar areas.

1.5. Delimitation

This study was conducted in an attempt to investigate how group work strategy is implemented in Ethiopian primary school EFL classes using grade 8 EFL teachers and students. The reason to delimit this study to this area was that group work is currently the active classroom approach to EFL classroom. English as a foreign language can better acquire through group learning. To conduct a measurable and in-depth research, the study was also delimited to Hawasa town primary schools. Of three governmental primary schools, the research restricted its scope to two; Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools. Five EFL teachers and 86 grade 8 students from 4 out of 16 sections with a total of 853 students were used as a sample respondents as the inclusion of other teachers and students in other sections and schools.

1.6. Limitations

The researcher believed that the study on the implementation of group work requires long time to investigate. It is also clear that it would be more comprehensive if the study included more teachers and students from the town and other regions. However, it was restricted by time and financial constraints. It was also the researcher's area of preference.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. General Concept of Group Work

Group work learning is a cooperative learning strategy in which a teacher arranged students in small groups so that they can perform purposeful communicative tasks interactively (Nation, 1994). For many years, group work and pair work have been recommended and widely used EFL classroom activities with what is so called 'communicative approach'.

Group work learning occurs when two or more students are asked to work together. Though there are many forms of group work, all share a common goal to create a cooperative learning environment for the learners. As Killen (N.D.) explains all approaches to group work have common feature that students work together without the teacher's direct intervention for at least some of the class time. But this does not mean that the students are left free to their own decision to learn what ever they like. It means that the teacher is to shape the lesson in a way students can interact productively under his indirect guidance.

2.1.1. Definition of Group Work

Many writers define group work differently at different times. For example, Brumfit (1984) defined group work as a number of students who interact each other, aware of one another and perceive themselves as a group. Omaggio (1993:250) in Getachew (2008) also defined it as "group work is any activity that involves two or more learners without direct intervention by the teacher." The definitions given by Harmer (1991), Cohen (1972) and Ur (1996) are also bound to the concept that a group work is any form of learning activity which can be accomplished by groups of learners.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) also defined group work as one of the natural ways of learning a language where the process (learning) depends on exchange of important information among the members of the group using their interactive skills. It is also a strategy that students use to work

together to accomplish different classroom activities (Eggen & Kauchack, 2001). Thus, group work is a teaching-learning strategy designed to enhance students' involvement in their learning.

2.1.2. Critical Components of Group Work

Group work is an active approach to language classroom. Group work encourages cooperative learning among learners, since cooperative learning is regarded as a formalized extension of group work learning. Therefore, according to Putnam (1997:11), it has more or less the following cooperative elements.

- Individual accountability
- Face-to-face interaction
- Positive interdependence ✓
- Interpersonal (cooperative) skills and
- Group reflection (goal processing or goal setting)

2.1.3. Types of Groupings

There are several ways in which teachers put their students in groups to discuss certain tasks. The teachers may group the learners based on different criteria. For example, Cohen (1994) pointed out the following types of groupings.

- a) **Age grouping:** students are grouped based on their age.
- b) **Attainment grouping:** the learners are grouped based on academic achievement.
- c) **Interest grouping:** students are left to their own preference to form a group.
- d) **Friendship grouping:** this is one of the commonest forms of grouping in which students are grouped simply with their friends next to them.
- e) **Mixed attainment grouping:** this is a way of grouping students by mixing up students with different abilities.
- f) **Gender grouping:** when single sex or both sexes together are grouped.

2.1.4. Reasons for Using Group Work

The traditional whole-class instruction (lock-step) reduces the status of students from active learners to passive recipients who only listen to what is articulated by the teacher than to communicate productively (Weinstein & Mignano, 1997). Lock-step instruction usually gives learners opaque instructions like:

Keep your eyes on your own paper.

Don't talk to your neighbor.

Pay attention to the teacher.

If you need help, raise your hand.

Do your own work Etc. (Weinstein & Mignano, Ibid).

All these instructions encourage the students to work alone; there are few opportunities for students to interact, assist one another and to discuss cooperatively. However, to achieve the instructional objectives of language classroom, students should cooperate and communicate freely. Because, the purpose of language learning is teach students how to use the language for communication, not to train the teacher. In line with this, Johnson (1994:261) cited in Berhanu (2000) discussed as “learning is conceived as something a learner does, not something that is done to a learner.”

From the above statement, we can infer that learning can occur when the learners dominate the process and do something for one another, not when a teacher does for the learners. Besides, Hock (2009) states two reasons for using group work learning. The first one is, to provide for the vast differences exist among any aggregation of individuals. This means that since people come to class with variety of interests, purposes, talents, skills, abilities, potential etc, group work can help the members of the group to learn what they lack from others. The second one is to vary our teaching-learning process. Using varieties of learning strategies in the learning situation is essential if we can match method with purpose, procedure with content, approach with maturity level and student needs.

2.1.5. Advantages of Group Work

Communicative language learning could help to develop fluency in the target language. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to create a natural communicative situation to encourage learners use the language. This natural communicative environment could be created when group work strategy is properly employed in the language classroom. Because large group (whole class) instruction is generally the least successful teaching strategy as it ignores the individual differences of learners in motivation and achievement of students' learning (Altman & Politzer, 1971).

The issue, advantage of group work is an important subject which is discussed by many writers in different ways. According to Altman and Politzer (1971) for example, group work provides students with a communicative approach to learn a language. Groups of different sizes help to vary learning experiences and make learning more interesting. Besides, Ashley (1976) states the benefits of group work that students who are shy because of physical or emotional problems will perform better in group work learning where the number of audience for one who speak is reduced from whole class to 4 or 5 people. With small groups, the teacher could also interact better with individuals and check their progress easily.

Altman and Politzer (1971) further explained that group work learning contributes to the effectiveness of education, humanizing learning, building a sense of responsibility among learners, create interest and focusing on the relatedness of ideas of the learner. In small groups, students have more opportunities to use the language for a range of functions. Student-to-student interaction, which is based on peer relationship, allows maximum degree of communication among the learners (Rivers, 1987; and Altman & Politzer, 1971). Rivers (Ibid) further stated the advantages of group work as it improves pronunciation, cross-cultural interaction and encourages joint task accomplishment among students. Other writers (David & Johnson, 2001) said that group work can be an effective method to motivate learners, encourage active learning, develop critical thinking, communication and decision making skills.

Kate (2010) argues that group work grants learners more freedom to make their own decisions about their learning. Similarly, Garry and Kingsley (1970) reveal that group work helps learners

to take an active role of their own learning. That is to ask questions, allocate turns for speaking, evaluate work of others, provide support and encouragement, to debate, to explain etc. To elevate this view, Garry and Kingsley (1970: 198) said “the more students explain, the more they learn.”

Since group work encourages cooperation, it helps students to share ideas, support and encouragement. A student can get what he/she lack from other learners in his/her group. Cohen (1972) strengthened this idea importantly as “no one of us is as good as all of us.” This implies that people can fill their gaps when they help each other, since all can not have the same and equal knowledge and experience.

Killen (N.D.) also explains several advantages of group work for both the teacher and the students of EFL. According to him, group work shifts the status of students from being passive recipients to active learners. Students’ prior knowledge becomes activated and helps them to reconstruct their understanding. It also encourages learners to verbalize their ideas and feelings. There by, students can concentrate on interaction and improve their communicative skills. Besides, group work creates a cooperative situation among students. This leads them to learn respect for one another’s strengths and weaknesses.

As Killen (N.D.) explained, group work can also helps EFL teachers in many ways. For instance, as group work helps learners to be less dependent on the teacher, the teacher also gets time to move around the groups and check individual student understanding. Similarly, group work allows students to experience group roles such as leaderships, peers and subordinates while it can reduce the teacher’s assessment load as well. In addition, group work learning helps a teacher to vary learning tasks for different groups of students.

Though the benefit of group work is stated in one or the other way by many writers, Weinstein and Mignano (1997) has also made a list of extra benefits such as:

- Less idle time while waiting for teacher’s help
- Increased motivation and More involvement in learning
- Greater achievement of learning objectives
- Increased interaction across gender, ethnic, and racial lines
- Strengthened students’ relationship

Another writer (Cohen, 1972) also list two sets of goals that group work can improve. These are:

- *Intellectual goals such as:*
 - ✓ Conceptual learning
 - ✓ Create problem solving
 - ✓ Higher order thinking skills
 - ✓ Oral language proficiency, and

- *Social goals such as:*
 - ✓ Positive inter-group relations
 - ✓ Socializing students for adult roles
 - ✓ Enhancing time on task accomplishment and
 - ✓ Providing constructive ways of managing academic heterogeneity

Now, it is better to finalize the advantages of group work learning by looking at the more general benefits that Long and Porter (1985) termed as ‘pedagogical advantages’ of group work. These are the following.

A. Group Work Enhance Language Practice Opportunities: according to Long and Porter (1985), since the main reason for students’ low achievement in language proficiency is lack of enough time to practice the target language, group work creates more opportunity for students to talk to each other. In line with this, Davies (1986) suggested that the only strategy to allow more students talk at once is group work learning. Group work allows more learning than teaching comparing to lock-step class to which Harmer (1991) described as “which involves too much teaching and little learning,”

Brumfit (1984) also suggested that group discussion creates a possibility of interaction among students. Hence, it minimizes anxiety and increase commitment for learning. Other writers (Harmer, 1991; and Byrne, 1987) argued that when learners interact with one another in small groups, they will get a freedom to practice the language. Met (2010) further stated that group

work activities provide a variety of ways in which foreign language teachers can increase students' opportunities to use the target language. As to Met, working in groups allows students to actively involve in a meaningful communication at all levels of instruction. Because, group work is not level specific; it does not suit only for students of specific grade level. Emphasizing this idea, Milson (1973: online) said "group methods are relevant to the school classroom situation, and not only in the primary levelBut in secondary school too....." From the above statement, we can infer that group work strategy is appropriate for every grade level to give students much opportunity to learn the language more successfully than in lock-step instruction.

B. Group Work Improves Quality of Student Talk: teacher-center instruction minimizes not only the quantity but also the quality of students' interaction. Group work on the other hand encourages both quantity and quality of students' talk (Harmer, 1991; Ur, 1996; and Long & Porter, 1985). Students in small groups use the language to ask, explain, apologize, promise, suggest, agree or disagree etc and thereby internalize a wide range of language functions in a manner closer to real life situation (Cohen, 1972).this view seems congruent with Long and Porter (1985)'s position that face-to-face communication in a small group discussion which is similar to natural communication setting better helps the learners to use the language in a meaningful manner.

C. Group Work Helps to Individualize Instruction: Long and Porter (1985) described the lock-step classroom as a strategy which takes many individual differences away such as age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude, personality, interest, cultural background, prior knowledge, experience etc. In fact, group work can not handle all these differences but it can help to accommodate classroom situation to these individual differences. Brumfit (1984:77) wrote:

.....experience also suggests that placing students in small groups assists individualization, for each group, being limited by its own capacities, determines its own appropriate level of working more precisely than can a class working in lock-step, with its larger members.

D. Group Work Promotes Positive Affective Climate: as Long and Porter (1985) explain, in lock-step classroom, students who are shy face a considerable stress when they are asked to answer a certain question. They perceive that they should give the correct answer. Even taking a pause is considered as losing an answer by them. Contrary to this, group work learning provides

students with supporting environment for all kinds of learners. Furthermore, Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) also stated that the opportunity of language practice for students is better adopted to individual needs if students discussion is conducted in a more positive affective climate.

E. Group work Motivates Learners: group work encourages learners to involve in the classroom activities freely. Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (Ibid) supported this notion as group work motivates learners in the way it allow students open talking for a greater quality and richer variety of language practice. In addition, having seen all the lists of advantages of group work above, it can be said that group work motivates learners to actively participate in their learning.

2.2. Implementing Group Work

Having seen all the above reasons for using group work and its advantages, there is no question for variety of group work in foreign language learning, but it may seek answers to genuine questions of effective implementation.

According to Bhardwaj (N.D.), group work can be an effective strategy to motivate students, encourage active learning and develop key critical thinking, communication and decision-making skills. However, unless it is carefully planned and facilitated, group work can frustrate than to motivate students and the teacher, and feel like a wasting of time. Killen (N.D.) suggested that if a teacher wants to use small group instruction effectively, students to regard it as a positive learning experience, it is necessary to follow certain steps. Furthermore, Bhardwaj (Ibid) suggested the following procedures to implement group work successfully in foreign language classroom.

2.2.1. Designing Small Group Activities

2.2.1.1. Planning Well Ahead: Teaching functions of the teacher and the activities of students in group work learning are different from those of in direct instruction. Thus, lessons for small group must be part of teacher's plan. Since group work can not be the best strategy or option for all lessons, the teacher should use it at the times when it can be effective (Killen, N.D.).

2.2.1.2. Specifying Instructional Objectives: Aiming to achieve the desired instructional goals through small group activities, a classroom teacher should specify the objectives of the lesson clearly (Bhardwaj, N.D.). Regarding this notion, Killen (N.D.) argued that at the beginning of a lesson, a teacher should notify his students the outcomes they are to achieve. The students should be informed how much time they have, and how their learning will be assessed. Unless the strategy is used very often, it is also very important for the learners to know why they are working in groups. Because, it is not fair to expect that the learners naturally know how to cooperate with each other in small groups and to identify the goal of the group work learning. The teacher is expected to orient them to the goal, principles and procedures of group work learning at the beginning of the lesson (Cohen, 1972). This notion seems to be congruent with what Bhardwaj (N.D.) wrote as:

When deciding whether or not to use group work for specific task, a teacher should consider these questions: What is the objective of the activity? How will that objective be furthered by asking students to work in groups? Is the activity challenging or complex enough that it requires group work? Will the project requires true collaboration? Is there any reason why the assignment should not be collaborative?

2.2.1.3. Making Task Challenging: It is common to provide students with relatively easy tasks early to arouse their interest in working in groups and encourage their progress. However, in most cases, collaborative exercises should be stimulating and challenging (Bhardwaj, N.D.). When group tasks are relatively challenging, students tend to debate or discuss actively and probably come up with more sophisticated product.

2.2.1.4. Assigning Group Tasks and Group Roles: When students are working in groups, all members should feel a sense of personal responsibility for the success of their teammates, since their individual success depends on the success of the group as a whole (Bhardwaj, N.D.). Besides, Bhardwaj (N.D.) and Killen (N.D.) argued that it is important to assign different roles to the other members of the group so that they are all involved in the process. (e.g. recorder, summarizer, checker, organizer, observer, timekeeper, conflict resolver, etc). "Knowing that peers are relying on you is a powerful motivator for group work."(Bhardwaj, N.D.:Online). However, Smith (2010) said that the teacher must decide whether to assign group

roles or to let the group members decide, at the beginning of the lesson. But he should consider things like maturity of the learners and familiarity with the group learning.

2.2.1.5. Deciding Group Size and Prepare Students for Group Work:

Before going in to assigning group tasks, it is necessary to determine the size of the group. Group size is determined by several variables. Concerning this, Bhardwaj (N.D.: online) wrote:

The size you choose will depend on the number of the students, the size of the classroom, the variety of voices needed with in a group, and the task assigned. Group of 4-5 tend to balance well the needs for diversity, productivity, active participation, and cohesion. The less skillful the group members, the smaller the groups should be.

Killen (N.D.) further suggested that when deciding the size of a group, experience of teachers and students should be taken in to consideration. If they are not accustomed to working in groups, they should be introduced in to it gradually. A teacher can start by having them work in pairs before he/she expects them to work in larger groups. This is a useful way to help students develop their ability to express their ideas clearly and precisely. It has the advantage that it is less stressful for shy or a student who has poor language proficiency. In fact, pair work may limit the amount of ideas produced and also may encourage one partner to dominate the discussion. For less experienced students, it is important to keep the group activities short until the teacher is sure that they can accomplish more tasks.

2.2.1.6. Deciding How to Divide Students in to Groups: In order to start their work well, the students must form a group under the guidance of the teacher (Killen, N.D.). However, the teacher also should decide on what basis the students will be grouped: either to let the students decide with whom to be grouped or the teacher direct the in to groups according to some predetermined criterion. Thus, to vary group composition and increase diversity with in groups, Bhardwaj (Ibid) advised that a teacher has to randomly assign students to groups using different strategies like calling off numbers, or have the students line up according to birthday, height, color of hair, etc.

In most cases, it is better that the teacher directs the students in to groups. This gives him (the teacher) more control over how the students will interact. However, some students who grouped

with whom they dislike may be disappointed. As a solution for this, Killen suggested that such kinds of students should choose one partner to work with for a part of the exercise, latter the teacher can combine the pairs in to groups of 4 or 6.

2.2.1.7. Preparing or Gathering Resource Materials: As Killen tried to explain, it is important to provide students with the materials they need. Alternatively, the teacher can prepare guidelines to help them find the resources on their own.

2.2.1.8. Allowing Sufficient Time for Group Work: before applying to the class, a teacher has to estimate the amount of time groups need to complete their activities. Then after, the teacher should cut back on the content to be presented so that the students are provided with enough time to accomplish their activities.

2.2.2. Introducing the Group Work

Having designed the group tasks, the teacher is expected to conduct the task in to the classroom practically. To introduce the designed group tasks in a language classroom effectively, the following steps are helpful.

2.2.2.1. Demonstrate What is Prepared: A teacher has to arrive at class punctually and carry the classroom tasks designed for group session (Bhardwaaj, N.D.).

2.2.2.2. Forward the Rationale for Using Group Work: it is necessary to inform students the reason why group work strategy is going to employ. This helps to arouse students' motivation. In line with this, Bhardwaj (N.D: online) wrote "students must understand the benefits of collaborative learning. If they do not see its value, they might conclude that you (the teacher) are using group work merely to get out of course preparation or lecturing." Unless the teacher clearly states the advantage and the reason for using group work, they consider that the teacher is making life easy for himself (Killen, N.D.).

2.2.2.3. Facilitating Group Cohesion: Learners best work when they know or trust one another, at least to some extent (Bhardwaj,n.d.). For this reason, students should introduce them selves to their group members before attending to their tasks.

2.2.2.4. Explaining the Task Clearly: students can work better if they are clearly introduced with the task. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce students exactly what they have to do and describing what the final result of their group will look like (Bhardwaj,n.d.; and Killen).

2.2.2.5. Preparing Instructions for the Students: though it is very important to provide the learners with clear instruction, it is better to have them form groups before giving them the instructions (Bhardwaj, .N.D.). If the teacher gives them the instructions first, they may be preoccupied with on deciding group membership to listen to him.

2.2.2.6. Setting detailed Rules or Guidelines for Group Interaction: For students to accomplish group tasks effectively, a classroom teacher needs to develop guidelines for group interaction. The students should be informed why they are doing the group tasks, what outcomes they are supposed to achieve, what they have to do, what decisions they have to make, what product they have to produce, and how they will be assessed (Killen, N.D.). Regarding providing groups with guiding rules, Bhardwaj(Ibid) argued as “.....especially for extended period of group work, establish how group members should interact with one another, mentioning principles such as respect, active listening and methods for decision making”(online).

2.2.2.7. Invite Students to Ask: According to Bhardwaj (N.D.), though the instructions given are quite clear, students may have other legitimate questions about the task. Thus, the teacher should give them time to ask questions before they get to work.

2.2.3. Monitoring the Group Task:

All the above processes have been done in favor of this part, conducting the actual group work. Having introduced the tasks, the teacher should monitor and facilitate the already designed tasks using the following procedures.

2.2.3.1. Monitor the Groups: The teacher is expected to move around the groups to maintain an appropriate degree of order, attend to any difficulties that arise, answer any questions raised, and gain feedback on learners' progress and help groups keep on track (Killen, N.D. and Bhardwaj, N.D.). However, this does not mean that the teacher should intervene in to students' discussions. For successful group learning, teacher's intrusion, but direction is necessary. The teacher should allow time for students to solve their own problems.

One of the important functions of a teacher is to monitor the group work and gather evaluative data about how the learners are thinking and acting. The teacher need to identify those things that occur to be helping students to learn from those appeared to create barriers for learning.

2.2.3.2. Expect a lot from Students: Brookfield and Preskill (1999) in Bhardwaj (Ibid) put it that the teacher has to assume that students know and can do well. Thus, as he (the teacher) moves around the groups, he should express his confidence in them.

2.2.3.3. The Teacher Should Be Slow to share his Opinion: Whenever a teacher comes up on students' disagreement or experiencing uncertainty, he/she should avoid the natural tendency to give answers or resolve the disagreement (Bhardwaj, (N.D.)). Let the learners struggle for with reason, unless they need clarification of the instructions.

2.2.3.4. The Teacher should clarify his Role as a Facilitator: students may criticize a teacher for his tendency to keep him silent whenever he observes them debating strongly. In this case, Bhardwaj (N.D.) advised that the teacher should consider himself whether he has communicated clearly enough as a facilitator.

2.2.4. Ending the Group Work

After having seen conducting the actual group lesson, it is time to close the discussion effectively. To achieve this effective ending of a group discussion, the following steps are very important.

2.2.4.1. Providing Closure to Group Activities: As the end of the lesson approaches, it is important to bring activities to a definite conclusion (Killen, N.D.). Some students may finish their work early than others. As to Ur (1996), a previously time limit and giving additional tasks for those who finish early helps to resume group discussion. Because, having finished their tasks, students may end up discussions and talk something else. As to Bhardwaj (N.D.), group work can succeed or fail based on how a teacher incorporates it in to the rest of the class and the course. Thus, it is important to end the discussion with students' report. As to Killen, the students' report help the whole class get to see the results of the discussions in each group. Similarly, Brookfield and Preskill (1999:107) in Bhardwaj (N.D.) describe how group work is done "can make the difference between students' feeling that they are just going through their paces and the sense that they are engaged in a powerful exchange of ideas."

2.2.4.2. Being a Model for Students to Participate: Bhardwaj (N.D.) advised a teacher to model the respect and sensitivity that he wants the students to display towards their peers when responding to their answers.

2.2.4.3. Connecting Students' Ideas to Course Objectives: Killen (N.D.) and Bhardwaj (Ibid) suggested the teacher to connect and summarize students' conclusions for two reasons. The first one is when groups do not come up with what the teacher intended to. The second one is when groups have reached substantially at the same conclusions.

2.2.4.4. Avoiding Unplanned Lectures: The teacher is advised not to forward unplanned ideas at the middle of students' discussion and even at the conclusion part (Bhardwaj, N.D.).

2.2.4.5. Asking Students to Reflect on the Group work process: Reflection on the group work process helps the students to discover what they learned and how they functioned in the group, and gives the teacher a sense of students' reaction to group work learning (Bhardwaj, N.D.).

Generally, if the teacher wanted the students not to report back on the group process, he/she should conclude their ideas as a summary. However, the summary should be a dynamic conclusion (not boring); otherwise, it will be of little interest or value to the students (Killen).

2.3 Factors that Affect the Implementation of Group Work

Though group work is believed to be an effective strategy to EFL classrooms, it may not be always successful due to several factors. Several writers suggest many factors that hinder effective implementation of group work strategy. The following are the factors most writers believed to hinder effective application of group work learning in EFL classrooms.

2.3.1. Personal Factors

These are factors that impede teachers and students from effective use of group work learning; which are related to students' personality. Some of these personality factors are the following.

- a) **Lack of Language Proficiency:** This is the ability of learners to use the target language to communicate with each other. According to Ellis (1994), language proficiency is an important resource groups need to accomplish their classroom tasks through talking. It is an important factor that affects students' group interaction. In this case, we can say that students with high language proficiency tend to participate better than less proficient learners. In line with this, Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996:187) wrote: "the more proficient the student is the greater his/her willingness to interact may be, since the classroom interaction is less stressful."
- b) **Anxiety:** Anxiety is the state of being nervous or getting mental tension. Ellis (1994) argued that learners with high level of anxiety are less likely to participate actively. Some students get stress because of their belief that they are under evaluation when they asked to speak in front of the class. They usually fail to take risks.
- c) **Leadership Problems:** A working group should have one group leader either elected by the members of the group or just nominated by the teacher randomly. As Killen (N.D.) suggested that the first job of groups should be to elect their group leaders. The main task

of group leaders is to provide necessary directions for their members. The group leader must also help the members to develop their willingness to participate and to continue participating in the group activities. Therefore, if a leader failed to achieve these goals, it is quite clear that the group will fail to achieve its goal.

- d) **Lack of Experience:** Experience is an important resource in group work learning. That is why Garry and Kingsley (1970) put “experience has long been called the best teacher.” It helps a learner to accomplish tasks properly. It is not only the learner who need an experience but also the teacher to organize the group activities and help students form appropriate groups to accomplish certain tasks. Regarding this, Altman and Politzer (1971) discussed that students learn in groups effectively when they both are experienced enough. Therefore, students should practice group work learning down from the beginning (in lower grades). Because, what happens today affects what will happen tomorrow (Weinstein & Mignano, 1997). Furthermore, Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) suggested that if students have not accustomed to group work learning, one can not expect them to develop a new behavior suddenly. Lack group work experience may result a long silence when group tasks are given.

- e) **Self-esteem:** Self-esteem is the evaluation an individual makes on himself (Brown, 1987). This evaluation is directly related to the significance (value) a student thinks he/she has in the group. Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) argued that learners in cooperative groups feel that they are more liked by members of the class. When students feel that they are liked by members of the group and contribute significantly to the group, they are more likely to feel successful academically. This encourages them to actively participate in the group discussion as their motivation rose.

- f) **Authoritarianism:** Some students believe that there should be a power distinction among learners (authoritarian) while others argue against this view (non-authoritarian). According to Berhanu (2000), when authoritarians are in position, they become powerful and active participants, otherwise, they tend to be passive participants in the group discussion. For example, some students need to be a group leader. Unfortunately, when

they fail to be elected as a group leader, they tend to keep themselves silent during the actual group discussion.

- g) **Extroverts vs. Introverts:** These are two types of personality traits. In contrast, extroverts tend to talk more often than introverts (Harmer, 2001). Thus, in case of students from both types being grouped together, the group discussion will probably be dominated by the extroverts.

2.3.2. Socio cultural Factors

These are factors related to students' cultural experiences in their social life within the community, and can affect group interaction in the classroom. Students usually come to class from various environments with varied social and cultural backgrounds. As a result, they may want to act according to their respective social and cultural norms (Getachew, 2008). This practice may be also reflected during students' group work interaction. In this case, as a difference in interest among students, their appetite for interaction may fall.

2.3.3. Situational Factors

These are factors which are directly related to the classroom situation and can affect students' group discussion. Some of these factors are discussed below.

1) **Group Size:** Group size is the number of students who sit and accomplish certain activities together. Many writers (e.g. Harmer, 1991; Ashley, 1976 and Byrne, 1987) agreed that the size of a group is an important factor in the effectiveness of group discussion. Size of a group in return is affected by class size; the number of students in a classroom. Class size affects the amount of individual attention, the responsiveness of teachers to students, the sustained and purposeful nature of interaction between teachers and students, and individual students' needs (Blatchford, 2003). Because, according to Blatchford, as class size increases, there is less time for teachers in the classroom to give individual support to students. Though there is no fixed number for group size, different writers suggested different limits for it. For example, Byrne (1987) suggested 4-8, Richards and Rodgers (2001) 2-4, while Brumfit (1984) and Zander (1982) limit to 7. There are also other writers who suggest different limit to group size as follows:

Vervoorn and Haren (2002) 4 as an optimum group size, David and Johnson (2001) as 3-5 is better, Davis (1993) 4 or 5. From all these suggestions, we can observe that the average size of effective groups revolves around 5 students. As Harmer (1991), Byrne (1987), Richards and Rodgers (2001) and, Weinstein and Mignano (1997) commenced, the size of a group depends on many variables such as age of students, nature of the task, time limit, class size, classroom setting etc. however, what is generally agreed is that smaller groups are preferable to give students high opportunity to interact, since the goal of group work learning is to get students talk freely (Richards & Rodgers, 1991; Cohen, 1972; Ashley, 1976 and Byrne, 1987). Harmer (1991) argued that if groups are large enough, obviously the amount of student interaction falls while group cohesion may also disintegrate. As group size falls, all group members tend to take part in the discussion at least to their share.

Finally, let us see two important quotes about group size with basic reasons. Exley and Dennick (2004: 17) in Getachew (2007) wrote:

two people can clearly have a fairly equitable discussion but what talk about will be limited to their own knowledge and experience.....but if group members are increased above certain limit, individual contributions will be minimized and some people may find themselves inhibited form talking.

From the above assertion, we can infer that neither very small group (pair) nor very large group size is advisable. If we use pair work, the students will lack variety of ideas and can not get new knowledge or experience. On the other hand, if we use large groups, all members may not get a chance to speak. Similarly, Cullingford (2004: 85) in Melka Hika (2006) put:

The standard group size for group work is 4 or 5. Having just 3 working together exposes one child to the danger of being isolated. Having more than 6 creates a group that is difficult to manage in terms of giving e very one a distinct ask.....the ideal group is one in which member has both an individual and collective role, where each one can contribute and can do individually." In line with this, Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) advised that a group should not exceed 6, while a good group size is 3 or 4.

Generally, we need to be flexible in our groupings (Atkins, Hailom & Nuru, 1996). this means, as has been stated before, we should limit our group size based on several factors like nature of the task, time limit and objective of the group discussion.

2) Group Composition: Group composition is the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a group regarding students' personality. When grouping students, it is better to make it heterogeneous and normal way of practicing the target language (Cohen, 1972). Besides, when grouping students a teacher needs to consider a wide range of academic and social variables such as age, sex, ethnicity, learning abilities, etc (Byrne, 1987; Harmer, 1991, Cohen, 1972, Vervorn & Haren, 2002; Harmer, 1991; and Ashley, 1976). However, it is important to change group composition frequently according to students' interests and abilities.

Regarding using mixed groups, Weinstein and Mignano (1997) and Garry and Kingsley (1970) argued that unless the students are of the same sex, ability group, etc, it is better to each group to have equal number of the variables. If the students differ much in age, grouping experience, skills etc, probably the group will be less successful.

3) Group Cohesiveness: Group cohesiveness is the extent to which members of the group like one another. It is the state of unity and confidence among group members. Knight and Lindsay (2006) in Getachew (2008) stated that language learning can be affected by how a learner feels about other members of the group. When one has negative feeling on someone else in the group, his/her interest to participate in the group discussion may decrease. On the other hand, if all the group members have positive feeling to one another, or if they give value to each other, they can interact actively and accomplish their tasks effectively, as their interest raises. From this assertion, it can be said that the higher cohesiveness a group has, the better its members discuss on their group tasks.

4) Seating Arrangement and Classroom Setting: The situation of a classroom and the way students sit in groups has an important role in group discussions and can affect the interaction between the teacher and students. Careful planning of the physical setting of a classroom and proper students' seating arrangements in groups is an integral part of good classroom management (Weinstein & Mignano, 1997). Effective classroom management is one of the important skills a teacher has to develop. As Weinstein and Mignano (Ibid) also stated, the teachers who view classroom management as a process of guiding and structuring classroom events tend to be more effective than their opposites. Because, effective classroom management means gaining students' cooperation and promoting to involve in their learning. Unless the

teacher arranged chairs and desks in a way students in a group can interact freely, the communicative goal of classroom instruction will not be achieved. Weinstein and Mignano (1997) strengthened this notion that bad classroom setting can influence the way students and teachers feel, think and behave. They further state the effect of room arrangement as:

the effects of classroom environment can be both direct and indirect.....for example, if students seated in straight rows are unable to carry on class discussion because they can not hear one another, the environment is directly hindering their participation.....students might also be affected indirectly, if they infer from the seating arrangement that the teacher does not really want them to interact. In this case, the arrangement of the desks is sending a message to the students about how they are supposed to behave.

According to Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996), teachers should make students to work seating facing each other. This means, students in groups should sit in circle than in rows to gain better communication through face-to-face interaction. In line with this, Weinstein and Mignano (1997) suggested that rows of desks minimize students' interaction and make it easier for them to concentrate on individual work. Besides, seating in rows also directs students' attention to ward the teacher, which implies that this kind of seating arrangement is appropriate for teacher-center instruction.

5) Nature of the Task: Group tasks have the power of determining students' achievement in group learning, especially at the elementary level, in which the tasks are closely related to the course material. Thus, giving an emphasis to this kind of material for classroom use is an advisable (Rivers, 1987). Tasks which are not interesting and motivating limit learners from taking part in the group discussion (Nunan, 1989). However, it does not mean that group task must be easy, but they should be stimulating and challenging (Bhardwaj, N.D.; Ashley, 1976; and Ur, 1996). When teachers facilitate students' group discussion, they should give clearly defined tasks and make sure that students accept the idea of working in groups.

2.4. Issues in Group Work Learning

Many scholars agreed that group work is a means to use communicative language teaching. Brumfit (1984) for example, said that if group work is not used in language classroom, learning

may not get appropriate situation to practice the target language. Group work is the possible effective way to teach and learn a language communicatively. Another writer (Kate, 2010) also stated that if group work is planned and well organized, it is an excellent vehicle for the promotion of learning. Since group work is part of collaborative strategies of teaching-learning, minimal teacher's intervention which is the interactive approach to language learning is very important (Kate, 2010; and Brumfit, 1984). This implies that group work needs effective application of individual roles on the side of both the teacher and the students.

2.4.1. Role of the Teacher in Group Work Learning

Classroom teachers are close to students (Rivers, 1987). No one can better understand students' problems and help them to learn the language better. Group work heavily relies on input from students. However, it does not always produce the expected learning outcomes. The reason is that teachers approached it too casually, and they do not prepare students properly for group work learning (Killen, N.D.).

The role of the teacher in group work learning is much different from that of in teacher-centered instruction. The teacher in group work helps the students learn, while the role of the teacher in lock-step instruction is as a lecturer (Harmer, 1991). Teachers in lock-step classroom want students to be under their control. Ur (1996: 232) described teachers in lock-step instruction as "teachers fear that they may lose control, that there may be too much noise, that the students may over-use their mother tongue, do the task badly or not at all." Generally, a teacher in group work learning has the following roles.

2.4.1.1. Organizer

Prior to the actual group discussion in the classroom, a teacher is expected to organize group tasks and arrange the classroom setting. As to Long and Porter (1985), a poorly organized and managed group work is considered as ineffective as badly teacher-centered instruction. As a result students may also develop negative attitudes towards group work. The ability of a teacher to organize students and the classroom tasks help the learning to be effective. Klausmeier, et al (1956: 93) supported this idea briefly as "In any classroom situation, the way the teacher

organizes the whole situation is most crucial importanceand how they use what they learn. The more the learning situation meets the children's interests and satisfied their present and future needs, the more likely it is to be effective." As to Killen (N.D.), in the pre group discussion, the teacher should design group tasks, form groups of appropriate size, and ensure effective group composition. Richards and Rodgers (2001:199) also wrote:

The teacher has to create a highly structured and well organized learning environment in the classroom, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks, establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles.....

2.4.1.2. Monitor

Some students find difficult to work and focus on the given task. Students who have not accustomed to group work learning may also tend to get lost in the process or to go parallel to the goals of the group work learning (Killen, N.D.). For this reason, a teacher should control the activity of every group. Killen (Ibid) further suggested that a teacher can not expect learners to discuss effectively in groups if he just sit at the back and let all things happen. In order for students work effectively, the teacher should move around the groups and control various factors that influence the ongoing group discussions. According to Altman and Politzer (1971), when groups work under close supervision of the teacher, they are generally very effective.

2.4.1.3. Facilitator

As groups begin their discussion, the role the teacher should become as a facilitator. According to Harmer (1991) and Littlewood (1981), unlike the teacher in lock-step, which act as a lecturer, a teacher in group work is considered as a facilitator of students' group learning. As a facilitator, a teacher should encourage all students to participate, foster group cohesion, and help group leaders to be effective (Killen N.D.). Thus, teachers in group work learning should design appropriate group tasks and provide clear guidelines for group leaders, check if every member understands them, and making sure whether the group leaders play their roles or not.

2.4.1.4. Resource

A teacher is a resource center for the students in their learning. For example, when the students get confused as a result of lack of critical information, he can provide them with the information they need, to save time and minimize students' frustration (Killen, .N.D.). A teacher may also share some ideas for inexperienced learners.

2.4.1.5. Evaluator

At the end of the group discussion, the teacher is going to assess students' progress. He may ask students for reflection on their group discussion (Killen, N.D.). In addition, the teacher is expected to give a feedback for the students (Ur, 1981). According to him, the students should be evaluated, criticized and appreciated by the teacher and the students themselves. Feedback helps the students to gain the picture of their performance during the group discussion, either to modify or to keep it up. However, a teacher does not have to provide feedback for every utterance of the students (Brumfit, 1984).

2.4.2. Teachers Expectations of Students

It is generally agreed that students should be the center of their learning (Fanshao, 2009: online). This means the role of the students is to control their learning, to be active participants and discuss on classroom tasks freely with their peers without much involvement of the teacher. However, there may be other various expectations teachers expect of the learners. The expectations of teachers will vary according to the learning outcomes, type of activities the teacher has planned, and maturity of the students (Killen, N.D.).As to Killen, it is important for the teacher to tell his students that he/she expect at least the following things of them.

- ✓ Ready to discuss in group work tasks in a way the teacher planned
- ✓ Each individual should actively play his role in the group discussion
- ✓ Each member should focus on collaborative results, and be accountable for group results
- ✓ Interactions should be limited to the group tasks and the students should interact freely
- ✓ To the most, they should actively try to learn.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this descriptive study, both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods are employed. Quantitative and qualitative methods help a researcher to come up with useful findings of a research work. In this specific chapter, the major research methods employed to conduct this study are clearly described. The sampling technique, the instruments used to collect data, the procedure of data collection and methods of data analysis are discussed in detail in this chapter.

3.1 Sampling Technique

3.1.1 The Research Setting

The research was undertaken at Awassa town which is located just about 230 kilometers south of Addis Ababa. There were 9 primary schools, i.e. 4 governmental and 5 private primary schools in Awassa town. As to Zeleke (1987) in Adem (2007), the problem of using group work strategy is more serious in governmental schools as compared to the private ones. The researcher thus, decided to conduct the study in the governmental schools. Of the 4 governmental schools in Awassa town, two, i.e. Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem Primary Schools were selected through purposive sampling technique based on their convenience (because other schools were inconvenient, as some were reluctant to be studied).

3.1.2 Participants

3.1.2.1 Students

Grade 8 students were selected as the population of interest for this research using purposive sampling technique. Because, as the students of this grade level (8th) are graduates of the primary level, they can more show us the situation in the primary schools using their 8 years experience. Many researchers who conducted a research on this issue in high schools and colleges found that teachers and students fail to implement group work strategy in EFL classes effectively (see statement of the problem). The writer of this paper therefore believed that this problem may be a

result of students' lack of group work experience in the primary school level. Thus, studying on the grade 8 can best show us this gap clearly.

Of the 6 sections which comprise 329 students of grade 8 students in Ethiopia Tikidem primary school, two sections were randomly selected. Similarly, two sections were also selected from Tabor primary school which has about 10 sections with a total of 524 students of grade 8.

The researcher believed that all the students are equally important for the study. But it is difficult to study a large number of populations too. Therefore, so as to ensure equal chance of selection, simple random sampling technique was employed. Thus, 86 students (10%) were selected from 4 sections of Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools for this research. In addition, 5 students were selected for the interview using purposive sampling technique from both schools.

The table below shows all the necessary information about respondent students in both Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem Primary Schools.

Table 3.1 Information about students

Schools	Sections	Total n ^o of students	N ^o of students during observation	N ^o of students filled the questionnaire
Tabor primary school	A	60	45	22
	F	60	37	21
Ethiopia Tikidem primary school	B	50	42	21
	H	50	43	22

3.1.2.2 Teachers

In this research, since EFL teachers were very few in number (i.e. 5 teachers), all were included in the study using availability sampling technique. All these 5 teachers were also interviewed. But the researcher selected only 3 teachers of them for classroom observation who were interested in. As a result; one individual teacher was observed twice.

The following table shows all the necessary information about respondent teachers of both schools.

Table 3.2 Information about teachers

Schools	Observed teachers	Interviewed teachers	Sex	Qualification	Working experience
Tabor primary school	T1	T1	M	BA in English	23
		T2	F	BA in English	11
Ethiopia Tikidem primary school		T3	M	BA in English	30
	T4	T4	F	Diploma	10
	T5	T5	M	BA in English	5

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

This study employed three data gathering instruments such as questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. These tools were selected with the following general assumptions:

- The tools will provide me (the researcher) with a clear picture of the issue under study.
- A failure to obtain necessary data through one tool may be obtained through the other tools. In other words, it helps me to cross check the results found from all the three data gathering tools.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are the tools which bring the information that is needed for formulating answers to the research questions. Therefore, in this research, closed-ended questions were prepared and delivered to the research respondents. The researcher used only close-ended questions because, since the research subjects are children (students of grade 8), it may be some what difficult for them to respond to open- ended questions.

The students' questionnaire were composed of ratings- to know how often teachers use group work, how much they play their expected roles and to identify the grouping styles of as well as the size of groups the teachers usually use. Furthermore, the questionnaire was used to collect data about how the students perceive the idea of group learning (advantages and disadvantages of group work), and identify the major factors that affect effective group work implementation in EFL classes.

The students' questionnaire was written in Amharic, the language of administration as well as language of instruction in primary schools in the town, Awassa. Since subjects of the study are students of English as a foreign language, they can better understand the questionnaire and express their ideas and feelings in Amharic than in English.

Prior to the actual data gathering process, the students' questionnaire was also piloted at Bete Kihinet primary school at Awassa town. Based on the pilot study, some questions have been left out while some others modified.

3.2.2 Interview

The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in the some one else's mind and allow the respondents to speak freely. Therefore, to collect data from teachers and students of grade 8, both structural and semi-structural types of interview were used. Since the researcher has not used a questionnaire for the teacher respondents, and the teachers in the stated schools were few in number, all the 5 grade 8 EFL teachers of both Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools were interviewed. Besides, samples of 5 grade 8 students from both primary schools were also interviewed. Generally, the focus of the interview was to evaluate and understand the teachers' and students' perceptions, implementation and factors that affect the implementation of group work in EFL class.

3.2.3 Observation

Observation is one of the major data gathering instruments in qualitative study. It gives primary information about the case under study. There can not be a better method to study on teaching than direct classroom observation while teachers are teaching and students learning. To these effects, the researcher employed actual classroom observation to collect data on the teachers' use of group work strategy in EFL class. The classroom observation was used to record the activities of teachers and students to implement group work in EFL classroom. Observation check list was prepared based on the review of the related literature in chapter two of this paper. Accordingly, two sections of Tabor and one section of Ethiopia Tikidem primary school were observed twice each.

3.3 Procedures of Data Gathering

Having reviewed the relevant literature so as to get adequate information on the topic and formulating basic research questions, assisted to show the direction of the study, necessary data gathering tools were developed. In the data gathering tools appropriate questions had been developed by referring to the basic research questions. Coming to the actual data gathering process, classroom observations were held initially.

The researcher observed each classroom twice except for one section three times, and put a tick (✓) for 'yes' or 'no' in the check list paper. Next, a questionnaire was administered for sample student respondents. To select sample students for questionnaire, the researcher asked one student randomly to tell me his roll number. His roll number was an odd number. Then, the researcher took all students whose roll numbers were odd until the sample size needed was up. Accordingly, the researcher took 21 students each from two sections and another 22 students each from another two sections. The students' questionnaire was translated in to Amharic in order to avoid any problem caused by inability to understand English, which might act against providing pertinent data. Before distributing the questionnaire to the respondents, clear explanations had been given on the purpose of the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 86 grade 8 students. All the participants had returned back all the questionnaire papers after they had already answered to the questions. Finally, interviews were conducted for 5 teachers and 5 students of both primary schools who were selected using purposive random sampling technique. Conducting an interview at the end was made purposefully both to prevent any contamination of data and to get an opportunity to raise a question from the remaining tools, i.e. from observation and the questionnaire.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

This descriptive study employed quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. Because, in conducting the research, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. The quantitative data were analyzed by counting and converting it in to percentages, while the qualitative data were analyzed by organizing and sorting in the form of paragraphs at different stages. In short, the data gathered through observation and interviews were described qualitatively in order to support the data gathered through questionnaire, which were organized numerically. But, this does not mean that the data gathered through an interview and observations are analyzed separately from the data gathered through the questionnaire. They are analyzed together to supplement one another.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This part of the paper deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion (interpretation) of data gathered from the target groups in Awassa governmental schools (Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools) to find answers for the basic research questions in chapter one of this thesis.

As indicated in chapter one, the primary purpose of this study was to assess primary school teachers' and students' effort to apply the principles of group work in their EFL classroom. Therefore, to achieve these research objectives, data were gathered from Tabor and Ethiopia Tikidem primary schools through three data gathering tools; questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. The study is based on the research data gathered between 14 Feb and 11 Mar 2011 using these procedures. These data are tabulated analyzed as can be seen in the forgoing pages. Moreover, the data gathered through the three data collecting instruments are presented and analyzed together in most cases to avoid a bulky and redundant report. Because, this may reduce the overall quality of the research work. Thus, the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data were made based on the responses obtained from the respondents of the research as follows.

4.1 How Group Work is Implemented in Primary School

EFL Classes?

This question was asked to the student respondents to explore how primary school EFL teachers implement group work strategy in their classes. Having admitted that their EFL teachers use group work strategy in the classroom, the students respondents had responded to the questions regarding the types of groupings, size of the group, use of group leader used by the teacher in the classroom. The students' responses are analyzed below.

4.1.1 Group composition

Group composition is the way or the basis on what students are assigned in to working groups. The data in the table below shows what type of groupings (group composition) the primary school EFL teachers use in their classes.

Table 1. Types of Groupings the EFL Teacher Usually Use

What grouping technique does your English teacher use?

Students' responses	Types of groupings					
	Attainment	Interest	Sex	Age	Mixed	Total
F	34	10	4	0	38	86
%	39.53	11.62	4.65	0	44.18	100

The way students are grouped (group composition) is very important element in effective group discussion. As indicated in the literature review part of this paper (see 2.3.3.2.), when grouping students, a teacher should consider variety of variables such as sex, ability, age, interest of the learners etc. According to Cohen (1972) and Weinstein and Mignano (1970), unless the students in the classroom are of the same sex, ability etc, it is better to form heterogeneous (mixed) groups. However, these groups should not be permanent. Group composition must be changed frequently based on students' interest and skill.

The student respondents were asked as what kind of grouping styles their EFL teacher usually uses when he/she wanted them to discuss in groups. Response of the majority (44.18 %) show that the EFL teacher uses mixed groups in terms of ability and sex when grouping students to discuss on classroom tasks.

The researcher also observed that the groups of students were heterogeneous in terms of sex. But it was not organized by the teacher purposefully. When the teacher ordered the students to discuss in groups, the students formed a group on their own. As a matter of chance the groups students had formed were heterogeneous. This means, when the teacher needs to group the students, he/she simply ordered them to form groups rather than he/ she organize them in to groups. This shows that the students had full freedom to form a kind of groups they like. The students may form a group of similar sex, ability, interest, etc.

Most of the interviewed teachers also gave similar answers for this question. They use mixed groups especially in terms of sex. For example, the extract below shows what T3 (teacher 3) said:

I assign students in to groups randomly. But I usually consider sex (mix boys and girls). This is to help female students which are mostly the passive participants in the classroom discussion.

Besides, when the students were asked to specify how their EFL teacher assign them in to groups, majority (82.55 %) of them said that their EFL teacher usually assign them in to groups on his/her own predetermined criteria. The student' grouping preferences were ignored at all.

This was also proved by the EFL teachers. In the interview, almost all teachers (except T5) admitted that they used their own style to group students. But T5 said that he allow students to form a group on their own interest.

4.1.2 Group Size

Group size is the number of students with in working groups in the classroom. Subjects of this study were asked regarding this issue. Table 2 below shows responses of the respondent students to the questionnaire.

Table 2. Size of a Group the EFL Teacher Usually Use

How many students does your English teacher include in one group?

Students' responses	Group size				Total
	Pair	3-5	6-10	More than 10	
F	4	19	59	4	86
%	4.65	22.09	68.60	4.65	100

According to 68.60 % of the respondents, their EFL teacher usually put them in a group of 6-10 students. 22.09 % of the respondents said that they usually asked to sit in a group of 3-5, while only 4.65 % said equally in pair and in a group of more than 10 children together. This shows that the EFL teacher usually uses a large group size during students' classroom discussion.

However, though there is no fixed rule for group size, smaller groups are preferable than larger groups to give students a chance to practice the language. The students seemed to be much aware that they surprisingly support the above idea during their interview. In the interview, all the (5)

students said they preferred to form a group of 5. S1 (student 1) in the interview for example, forwarded:

We usually allowed to form a group of 6-8. I think this is based on the class size. Since our class size is very large, our teacher may be forced to use large group size. But as to me a group of 5 students is better for group discussion. Because, as group size increases, the members tend to forget the aim of group learning and talk on other issues out side the given group task.

Similarly, T3 said:

5 students. Because, if more than 5 students are allowed to sit together, they tend to talk on an issue of their own than on the given classroom task. In addition, it will be very difficult for them to reach at a one final conclusion as their ideas are various as their number. On the other hand, if they are less than 5 they may not produce enough idea. Therefore, to me, a group of 5 is better for students to discuss productively

However, other teachers (T1, T2 & T4) in the interview said they prefer to use a group of 5-8 as a result of large class size. The researcher also observed that though there were groups which include less than 5, a group of 6 was an average number of students with in a group. Besides, it is noted that none of the teachers ordered their students to form a group of specific size. The teachers simply ordered the students to form a group and the students in return form a group of any size they like. Even after the students had formed a group, the teachers tried neither to reduce large sized groups nor to add to smaller groups. But in the interview, almost all teachers said they preferred small size groups. This implies that though the teachers have their own preferences in group size, they did not usually monitor the group size very well. The teachers did not implement what they know.

Many researchers agreed that the smaller the group size, the better students get enough opportunity to practice their classroom tasks; and improve their target language fluency (see 2.3.3.1 of the literature review). When the number of students in a group is very large, it is very difficult for the teacher to give each individual a freedom to say something, and to check individual student's progress at the same time. Therefore, according to these respondents, each group member hardly got the chance to contribute or participate equally during group discussion as the teacher used very large (6-10 students) group in EFL class.

Regarding the seating arrangement of students', 87.20 % of the respondents also admitted that they sat in circles when discussing in EFL class. Both the teachers and students in the interview also said that they use circle seating arrangements during group discussion. In response to this, T3 comments:

In circles. Because, people understand more when they communicate face-to-face. Because, many people better understand the idea of a speaker from his/her lip movement. For example, we (people) comprehends better when we listen to a Television than to Radio broadcast.

The teachers and students responses were very interesting and really reflected their actual classroom practices. During the actual classroom observations, the researcher observed that the students arranged their seating to face-to-face seating. Even in one of the visited classes, (when observing T5's class), the researcher observed that the desks and chairs of the students were already arranged in a face-to-face form of seating. No teacher would arrange them any more. Whoever enters to the class, he/she uses the seating as it is. In this case, whenever the teacher ordered them to discuss in groups, the students need not to form new groups and to arrange their seating as well. They need only to get directly in to the actual group discussion. From all these assertions, we can say that though the teacher used to put students in larger groups, he/she made their seating to be face-to-face. This helps the group members to listen one another and can enhance their unity and cohesiveness. Face-to-face interaction (seating in circles) helps learners to gain better understanding, while rows reduce the interaction between them (see 2.3.3.4 in chapter two of this thesis).

4.1.3 Selection of Group Leader

Working groups in a classroom need to have a leader who shape the discussion of members and provide them with necessary instructions. The table below shows the students' responses to the question that 'who elect the group leader?' The students' responses are presented in percentages and numbers.

Table 3. Students' Responses to the Selection of Group Leader

Responses	Students' responses	
	F	%
a) Group members	60	69.76
b) The teacher	20	23.25
c) Students become a leader by turn	2	2.32
Total	86	100

It is advisable to group members to elect their leader before going to work. Group leader helps to provide necessary directions to get the group working and to keep them (the members) on task. Therefore, many writers suggested that the first job of groups should be to elect their group leader (see 2.2.1.4 in review literature of this research document).

Regarding this issue, of the 83 students who admit that they had a group leader during group discussion, 72.28 % affirmed that the group leader was elected by the members of the group. 24.09 % said the teacher nominate a leader for every group while only 3.63 % of them said every member would be a leader by turn.

Similarly, all the interviewees (teachers & students) admitted that the group members usually elect their own leader. But, one teacher said that he sometimes nominate a group leader himself to minimize the time spent on election and to minimize bias and disturbance during election. As to T5, group leader should be elected by the group members themselves for a quite clear reason. When answering to the question, T5 said:

The leader of the group is usually elected by the members of the group. Because, they know to each other better. They know that who can organize them better. But I don't allow groups to have permanent group leaders. Rather I prefer all students to be group leaders, but not in a formal turn-taking system. A student who is not interested should not be a group leader, as to me.

In addition, students in the interview were asked if they like to be a group leader. Except one (female interviewee), all the interviewees were interested in being a group leader. When they state their reason for this, they listed several advantages of being a group leader, such as:

- *Personal satisfaction to help others*
- *Enhance commitment to learn and help others*

- Gives confidence to speak in front of people
- Develop listening and speaking skills
- Gain much knowledge: When you are a leader, you will listen to every member's ideas attentively. This helps you to gain much knowledge from others.

4.2 The Frequency of Using Group Work in EFL Classes

The data in this section mainly look in to how often primary school EFL teachers use group work strategy in their classes. The details of the study are presented in table 4 below.

Table 4. Students' responses to the frequency of using group work strategy by EFL teachers

Responses	F	%
a) Always	13	15.11
b) Sometimes	26	30.23
c) Rarely	43	50
d) Never	4	4.65
Total	86	100

This is to show how often EFL teachers use group work strategy in their classes. As can be seen in the table above, half (50 %) of the respondents said that their EFL teacher implements group work strategy rarely. This implies that the teacher usually uses whole-class instruction to teach English language to his/her students. Though not equivalent to the students' responses, the teachers in the interview also admitted that they did not always use group work strategy in their teaching, but they use most of the time. The interviewed teachers suggested many reasons why they fail to use group work always, such as content of the students; textbook, shortage of time, classroom atmosphere etc. T3 in the interview states the frequency of using group work strategy in her class as follows:

I used group work strategy sometimes. I can not use group work always (in every lesson). Because, some contents of the student's textbook are not suitable to teach using group work learning. For example, writing and reading lessons are not comfortable to learn or teach through group work strategy.

The response of T4 to the same question goes:

Ideally, I want to use group work strategy usually. But due to shortage of time I implement group work once a week. In addition to shortage of time, when I arrange the desks and chairs for group work discussion once, by the next day I got the chairs and desks arranged in the way students can sit in rows. Therefore, I can not use group work usually since it is difficult to arrange chairs and desks every day. This problem forced me not to use group work strategy always. Because, arranging tables and chairs in circles may consume much time.

However, as to Johnson (see 2.1.4 of chapter two), the objective of learning can be achieved when the students dominate the learning process. When students are discussing in groups, they are using the language. This helps them to experience using English for a meaningful communication. Otherwise, if the teacher gives students a lecture on the English language, the students may acquire only the structure of the language rather than its usage.

4.3 Factors That Affect the Implementation of Group Work in EFL Classroom

In this section, an attempt was made to obtain some information which could tell us whether some personal and situational factors affect the implementation of group work strategy in primary school EFL classes or not. Result of the data obtained from the respondents is discussed below and presented in tables 5 – 10 below.

Several factors may affect the implementation of group work in EFL classroom. When the subjects of this research were asked regarding this issue, 68.60 % of them said they have come across many problems during group work discussion. Some of the problems students suggest were: disagreement, disturbance, lack of interest, leadership problems, frustration, lack of vocabulary, shortage of time, no clear group tasks, misunderstanding among students, carelessness, lack of confidence, being selfish etc.

In addition, teachers and students were asked the same question in the interview. Accordingly, the interviewed students have suggested some factors that affect their group discussion in EFL classroom, such as: lack of vocabulary, disagreement, fear (especially females), boring, and shortage of time. Similarly, the respondent teachers in the interview suggested many factors that influence group work implementation. But, most of the factors suggested by the teachers were

related to the teachers themselves and to the classroom situation as well. To list some of these factors: students' less language proficiency, fear (especially females), lack of interest, some students are aimless, negative background, poor classroom arrangement, students' absence, poor relationship among students, use of mother tongue etc were the major ones. language proficiency, which may resulted from frustration, was one factor that T1 stated it as follows:

Language problem (language proficiency) is the main factor of students' group discussion. Fear is also another actor. Most students fear that they would commit a mistake. They thought "if I make a mistake the students will laugh at me". Fearing the joke from their peers, the students chose silence than to speak what they feel. Therefore, fear (shame) and language problem are the two serious problems usually affect students' effective group discussion.

T4 also clarified the other serious problem related to the classroom atmosphere. She forwards:

- *Poor classroom arrangement due to different interests among different teachers. That is, as I tried to explain before (see question 1 above), different teachers arrange the desks and chairs according to their own teaching preference. Therefore, the classroom arrangement of one teacher may not be suitable for me or any body else. In this case the classroom arrangement I have done today will not be kept intact for tomorrow. This is somewhat tiresome and time consuming.*
- *students' lack of language proficiency.*
- *silent (less active) students usually keep themselves out of discussion etc.*

The subjects of this research were also asked whether students' social background affects their group participation in EFL class or not. Accordingly, the responses gained from the students were much different from those of the teachers. The responses of the interviewed students were related to natural behavior and students' cohesion in the classroom. For example, S1 (student 1) in the interview forwarded:

Yes. If one is usually not allowed to speak freely at home, the same behavior will be reflected by him/her in the classroom. In addition, if a student mostly play football at home (out side the classroom), he/she thinks about football even when he/she is in a class. If a student also has not an experience to discuss in different clubs, parties etc, he/she may face difficulty in discussing in groups in the classroom.

When answering to the same question, S3 also said:

Yes. It results absence of students. Therefore, when students are absent, their relationship falls.

However, the responses from interviewed teachers show that the effect students' social life in group discussion is related to the students' economic and family status. T2, T4 and T5 in the interview for example, clearly put that since there are many students who are orphan and who come from very poor family, they usually bother about their life out side than their academic achievement. Similar to the interviewed student responses, T1 blamed the students' parents as follows:

Yes. Especially rural students fear to participate freely. They tend to keep themselves silent. Because, their family and community allow them not to speak freely.

From all these assertions, it is difficult to reach at a satisfactory conclusion. The teachers and students responses seemed their personal estimation. The teachers said the effect of students' socio-cultural background comes from their economic status while the students themselves go without saying regarding their economic problems.

Besides, the student respondents were provided with some factors to identify to what extent they affect students' group participation in EFL classroom. Based on the data gathered, the students' responses to these factors are discussed below.

Table 5. Lack of Language Proficiency

To what extent lack of Language Proficiency Affects your Group work Participation?

Responses	F	%
a) To high extent	71	82.55
b) To some extent	8	9.30
c) Little effect	2	2.32
d) No effect	5	5.81
Total	86	100

Regarding the lack of language proficiency, most (82.55 %) of the respondents admitted that it affects their group participation to high extent. This implies that the students usually face a problem to discuss effectively. Because, language proficiency means the ability of the students to

use the language for meaningful communication. Thus, the more proficient the learner is the better he/she can interact with his/her group members (see 2.3.1. in chapter two of this thesis). This in return implies that if a student is less proficient in English language, he/she may tend to be passive participant during group discussion in the EFL classroom.

Table 6. Anxiety and lack of grouping Experience

To what extent the following items affect Your group work participation?	Students' responses							
	To high extent		To some extent		Little effect		No effect	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Anxiety	68	79.06	10	11.6	6	6.97	2	2.32
Lack of group experience	68	79.06	8	9.30	0	0	10	11.6

Responses of the majority (79.06 %) for both the above items show that anxiety and lack of group working experience highly affects participation of the students during EFL class group discussion. Since group work experience means the practice of group discussion in the lower grade levels; and anxiety is the state of getting fear to speak freely in front of people (see 2.3.1. of chapter two), lack of experience may result anxiety. Therefore, if one has not accustomed to group work learning before, it would not be surprising if he/she keep him/herself out of the discussion. One should not be expected to know every thing on him/her self naturally. For a student, to be active participant in group work, first it necessary to train him/her for long time on how to discuss.

Table 7. Authority and Leadership Problem

To what extent the following items affect your group work participation?	Students' responses							
	To high extent		To some extent		Little effect		No effect	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Authority	49	56.97	21	24.41	7	8.13	9	10.46
Leadership problem	49	56.97	17	19.76	12	13.95	8	9.30

Majority (56.97 %) of the subjects responded to both the above items similarly that the authority (power in the group) of a student and leadership problem reduces their participation during group work in EFL class. As to the students, since being authorized student (e.g. being group leader)

encourages them to be active participant during group work discussion, having lost this power also reduces their interest to actively participate in the discussion. Even there are some students who get bored if they fail to be a group leader. Similar to this, a group which has not a good leader can little achieve the group objectives. A group leader helps members to continue participating in the discussion. Therefore, if a group has a careless leader for example, the students will probably end-up discussion and talk other issues of their own than the group tasks.

Table 8. Self-esteem and Group Cohesiveness

To what extent the following items affect your group work participation?	Students' responses							
	To high extent		To some extent		Little effect		No effect	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Self-esteem	63	73.25	7	8.13	9	10.46	7	8.13
Group cohesiveness	49	56.97	18	20.93	13	15.11	6	6.97

73.25 % of the respondents said that self-esteem highly influenced their participation in EFL class during group discussion. This means, they believe that the value a student give for him/her self has a positive or negative effect on the students' participation in group discussion; i.e. one who has positive attitude towards him/her self (high confidence) tend to be active participant than who is less confidence (one with negative self-esteem towards him/her self). In this case, students are advised to acquire a positive self-esteem (high confidence) to learn and the target language, English for a wider social communication. Besides, a student should think that he/she can produce as good idea as other students produce.

The goal of language learning can be best achieved through effective communication among the learners. As the goal of language learning is to use it for wider social communication, it can be acquired through interaction with others in the classroom and outside the classroom. But, it can be affected by the state of how one learner feels about his members, which is called as 'group cohesion' (see 2.3.3.3.).

When subjects of this research were asked regarding this issue, 56.97 % of them reported that the group cohesiveness among members highly influences their participation during group discussion in EFL class. However, as the researcher has observed, the classroom teachers hardly

tried to facilitate group cohesion among group members. Having ordered the students to work on a certain task, the teachers stood somewhere in the classroom until the time would be up. This implies that since the primary school students may not know how to develop their group cohesion, the teacher offered them no help to do so. This would definitely affect the students' participation during group discussion. If students have negative attitudes to each other, they would probably neglect the idea of one another.

Table 9. Group Size, Group Composition and Seating Arrangement in EFL Classroom

To what extent the following items affect your group work participation?	Students' responses							
	To high extent		To some extent		Little effect		No effect	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Group size	57	66.27	9	10.46	9	10.46	11	12.79
Group composition	56	65.11	10	11.62	13	15.11	7	8.13
Seating arrangement	55	63.95	19	22.09	9	10.46	3	3.48

Group size, the number of students with in a group, is believed to be one important factor that affects the implementation of group work in EFL classroom. The students were asked how much the size of a group affects their group discussion in EFL class. Accordingly, majority (66.27 %) of them said that the number of students in a group during group discussion affects them to high extent while 10.46 % said to some extent and little effect equally; and 12.79 % said it does not affect their group participation at all.

Similarly, 65.11 % of the respondents admit that group composition; the types of students in terms of sex, ability, learning style etc, influence their participation during group participation in EFL class to high extent. Mixed groups in terms of sex, ability, etc uses to share knowledge and information among students. If students with different abilities are sitting together, the group discussion will also be hot. Because, when less able students ask questions, other students will try to give them necessary responses. In this way the students will probably improve their language proficiency.

In response to the influence of students' seating arrangement during group discussion in EFL class, 63.95 % of the student respondents said it affects them to high extent, 22.09 % to some extent, 10.46 % little effect while only 3.48 % said it has no effect at all. This implies that the

way students sit during group discussion highly influences the students' participation. Students who sit in circles work better than those who sit in rows. When students are sitting facing each other, they can communicate better. For a group of greater than a pair, there is no better seating than a circle for group members to understand one another.

Table 10. Nature of Group Tasks

Question	Students' responses	Number	Percentage
To what extent nature group tasks affect your group work participation?	To high extent	56	65.11
	To some extent	16	18.60
	Little effect	6	6.97
	No effect	8	9.30

According to the majority (65.11 %) of the respondents, difficulty of the group task given by the teacher highly affects students' participation during group discussion in EFL classroom.

The type of a task has a great influence in students' group discussion. There are generally three types of tasks, easy, difficult and challenging. Thus, inline with the above students' responses to the questionnaire, both the teachers and students were asked to identify the type of task they prefer. According to the data gathered, almost all teachers and students in interview said that they preferred challenging tasks for effective group discussion. All believed that neither very difficult nor very easy tasks are interesting for discussions, but boring. Especially, T1 and T2 in the interview stated the disadvantages (influence) of both very difficult and very easy tasks. According to them, very difficult tasks usually discourage students' participation (discussion) while very easy tasks are very boring which may encourage students to end-up discussion and talk on their own issues. Besides, T5 in the interview surprisingly discuss the nature of group tasks for students' learning in brief as follows:

Before deciding on the difficulty of the task, there is one important thing to be taken in to consideration. That is, first of all you should identify your learners. The first step in providing group tasks should be identifying the level and capability of the students. For example, if your students are less able in language skills, you should provide them with easy tasks. Secondly and generally, for any kind of learners, you should give easy tasks first to motivate them and then challenging tasks to discuss hotly. This helps to motivate students for group discussion. Because, if a teacher gives them difficult task at the beginning, the students may hate not only the discussion but also the teacher even. Therefore, to motivate students' interest the

teacher should give them easy tasks first and when they have already being motivated he/she can add other tasks which are challenging than the first one.

This is what many writers argued for. As noted in the literature review of this research (see 2.3.3.5), group tasks should be stimulating and challenging. This means, the tasks must be neither difficult nor easy, but debating (i.e. challenging). The researcher also observed that group tasks were challenging. The students were actively participating during their classroom discussion.

4.4 Teachers' and Students' Roles During Group Discussion in EFL Class

In this section, data were gathered about the role of the EFL teachers and their expectations of students during group work. These data are presented and discussed below in brief.

4.4.1 Teachers' Roles

A teacher has some basic roles that he/she has to play during teaching-learning process. But, the role of a teacher in one type of instruction differs from the teacher in another model. For example, the role of a teacher in student-centered instruction (group work learning) differs much from that of a teacher in lock-step (whole class) instruction (see 2.4.1 in chapter two). In this case, the role of primary school EFL teachers during group learning is discussed below.

Five (5) teachers were interviewed and asked to state the roles they play during students' group discussion. Accordingly, the EFL teachers play the following roles during group discussion:

- *Move around the groups and check whether all members are participating or not*
- *Give guidance*
- *Offer help when necessary*
- *Monitor group discussion*
- *Motivate students for discussion*
- *Ask students to report on what they discuss*
- *Facilitate students' discussion (facilitator) etc.*

The students were also asked as how often their EFL teacher played his/her expected roles during students' group discussion in EFL lessons. Based on the data gathered, their responses to the

question “how often does your EFL teacher play the following roles during your group discussion?” have been tabulate and analyzed in the tables below.

Table 11. Organizing Group Work Learning

No.	Teacher’s Roles	Students’ responses							
		Always		Some times		Rarely		Never	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Organize the classroom & group tasks	24	27.90	36	41.86	19	22.09	7	8.13
2	Assigning group roles	25	29.06	35	40.69	19	22.09	7	8.13
3	State the reason for using group work	21	24.41	33	38.37	19	22.09	13	15.11

Regarding the teachers’ role to organize the class and group tasks, large proportion of the subjects (41.86 %) reported that their teacher play his/her expected role sometimes. In relation to this, the researcher observed during the actual classroom observation that the teacher did not specify instructional objectives, the objective of the lesson. Specifying instructional objective is one of the important roles a teacher should play to organize the classroom. As noted in chapter two of this paper (see 2.4.1.1), the teacher is expected to state the objective of the lesson for the students. However, the researcher observed that the teacher only explained the group task for the students, not the lesson objective.

Similarly, 40.69 % of them believed that their EFL teacher assign group roles sometimes. This was also observed during the actual classroom observation. The teacher simply ordered students to discuss on a certain task. How and why is not clear. Even the students had not told what they should come up with at the end of their group discussion. In response to item number 3 above, 38.37 % of the respondents said that the teacher states the reason for using group work sometimes. However, during the actual classroom observations held in 3 classes, the researcher observed that no teacher tried to state the reason for using group work strategy in EFL classes. This may reduce the students’ courage to work effectively. One who does not know his/her goal may achieve nothing at the end. To achieve a goal through a certain strategy, a teacher should inform his/her students the objective of the model or strategy they are using.

Table 12. Monitoring Group Discussion

No.	Teacher's Role	Students' responses							
		Always		Some times		Rarely		Never	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
4	Monitor group tasks	26	30.23	44	51.16	7	8.13	19	22.09

Most students (51.16 %) believed that their EFL teacher monitor their group tasks sometimes. Having given certain task for the students to work on, the teacher keep hi/h^e self out of the teaching-learning process. He/she kept his/her self away until the time give[^] for group discussion will be up. This implies that the teacher did not play his/her expected role of monitoring students' group discussion. However, monitoring group tasks encourage the learners to actively involve in their classroom discussion.

Table 13. Facilitating Students' Group Discussion

No.	Teacher's Roles	Students' responses							
		Always		Some times		Rarely		Never	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
5	Provide extra learning materials	17	19.7	12	13.9	19	22.09	38	44.18
6	Allow sufficient time for group discussion	17	19.7	27	31.3	32	37.20	10	11.622
7	Provide guidelines for group interaction	15	17.4	20	23.2	35	40.69	16	18.60
8	Ask for students' questions	50	58.1	24	27.9	8	9.30	4	4.65

As indicated in the review of literature in chapter two of this paper, a teacher during students' group discussion should be as a facilitator (see 2.4.1.3). Facilitating group discussion includes, providing extra learning material, giving sufficient time for group discussion, providing guidelines for group interaction and giving students a chance to ask question etc. these all activities encourage learners to effectively accomplish their tasks.

Regarding item 1 in the above table, a large proportion (44.18 %) of the research subjects reported that their EFL teacher never provide any extra learning material other than their textbooks. The teachers in the interview also admitted that they have never given their students extra materials. They blame the economic capacity of the school and themselves. The teachers

further revealed that they could not help their students by providing extra learning materials, but they usually advised them to use other books as a reference outside on their own. But one teacher-interviewee (T3) seemed confused with the idea of providing extra learning materials. She showed her misconception as:

No. what kind of material we (teachers) can provide? I don't understand that the kind of material to be provided for the students other than their textbooks. Because, the syllabus provides a material (the textbook) that the curriculum designers believed as helpful enough.

However, though what kind of material to be provided is not stated, many writers (see 2.2.1.7) suggested that providing extra learning materials is very important for students' classroom discussion.

Similarly, most (37.20 %) of the respondents said, their EFL teacher give them sufficient time for group discussion rarely. In other words, their EFL teacher usually gives them insufficient time for their group work. Concerning this issue, the researcher also observed the same treatment. The teachers gave students an average of 6 minutes for students' group work. Though, the teachers in the interview said they always give sufficient time for students' discussion. When they (the teachers) were asked how they know whether it is sufficient or not, T1 replied that he did not ask his students to report back on what they discuss until the students themselves ask him to do so.

In response to item 7 in the table above, majority (40.69 %) of the subjects reported that the EFL teacher provide guidelines for group interaction sometimes. Guidelines are some important rules of how to accomplish their group tasks. These guidelines also help the learners not to spend their time debating on how to do them. If students have been given certain guidelines on how to accomplish the given tasks, the students will do the tasks appropriately and on time.

Most of the respondents (58.13 %) believed that the teacher usually ask them if they had any question. The researcher also observed that the teachers give their students a chance to ask questions at the end of the lesson. However, the students should have been given this opportunity before getting in to work (see 2.2.2.7 in the review of literature). At the end of the lesson, students need much of a summary or conclusion than to ask a question. A question that rises at the end of a lesson may not get necessary answer as the class time comes to end. Thus, to gain an

appropriate answer, students' questions are better if asked at the beginning of the group discussion

Table 14. Evaluating Students' Progress

No.	Teacher's Roles	Students' responses							
		Always		Sometime		Rarely		Never	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
9	Summarize students' discussion	33	38.37	27	31.3	19	22.09	7	8.13
10	Ask students to report on their discussion	31	36.04	36	41.8	14	16.27	5	5.81
11	Giving feedback for students	40	46.51	26	30.2	13	15.11	7	8.13

According to 38.37 % of the respondents, the EFL teacher always summarizes students' group discussion at the end of a class lesson. This is one of the important roles an EFL classroom teacher should play during group discussion. Having discussed on certain task, students need to listen to the general concept (summary) of the issue under discussion and finally gain a feedback for their errors.

Majority of the subjects (41.86 %) said that the EFL teacher encourages the students to report back on their group discussion sometimes, while 36.04 % of them believed the teacher always asked them to do so. This all implied that the teachers encouraged their students to reflect on their findings at the end of their group work discussion. Contrary to this, the researcher has observed that no teacher asked the students to present what they discuss on. Rather, the teachers asked some short answers for the group tasks simply. This seems some what fruitless. Because, if students are have not asked to present on what they discussed, they would not probably get a feedback for their errors. Above all, they would not share ideas among themselves and learn from each other.

In response to the last item (item no. 11), many students admitted that their EFL teacher always give them feedback on their errors at the end of their group discussion. The result of the actual classroom observation also showed that the teachers gave corrections for students' errors. But, the teachers' corrections for students' errors were immediate; whenever students' errors happen. Though, it is better to identify errors which need immediate correction from those to be left or to be corrected at the end of the lesson. Finally, the students' errors would be corrected according their importance.

4.4.2 Teachers expectations of students

Since students are considered as the center of learning and should be active participants in the classroom, it is better to study what are expected of them during group discussion than to list the roles they should play. Because, their role is generally dominate the teaching-learning process. Hence, the interviewed teachers were asked regarding this issue to suggest some roles they expect of students during group discussion in EFL classroom. Though the teachers use different expressions, all their answers revolve around the following ideas:

- *To be committed for their learning*
- *Speak what they feel freely*
- *Feel as a group, not as an individual*
- *Be active listener*
- *Accomplish tasks based on the teacher's instruction and the lesson objective*
- *Help each other*
- *Dare to speak in English in the classroom etc.*

4.5. Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards the Advantages of Group Work

Group work is a strategy which is considered as effective learning model for EFL classes by many writers (see 2.1.5 of this research document). It is believed that group work has so many uses for EFL learning. Regarding this point, the respondent students were asked whether they believe that group work is advantageous or disadvantageous for EFL classes. Accordingly, 91.86 % of them believed that group work is advantageous for EFL learning. The following were some of the advantages the interviewed students suggest:

- *Develop students' attitude*
- *To learn from others*
- *Minimize frustration (anxiety)*
- *Express ideas freely etc.*
- *Develop listening and speaking skills*

Similarly, the teachers in the interview listed advantages and disadvantages of group work. The advantages stated by the teachers were similar to the student-respondents, while the

disadvantages suggested by the teachers were: disturbance (much noise), time taking, etc. But, beyond this, T1 stated one important disadvantage of group work. He forwarded:

Some students come to be dependent on the shoulder of other students. When the same task(s) are given to group members, one or two students may accomplish the task without the participation of all members. This means the passive students will be as successful or unsuccessful as the active members of the group. Especially whenever the task is to be graded, lazy (less participant students) tend to pass on the shoulder of the active ones. This implies group work may result the domination of group discussion by only few members of the group.

Besides, the respondent students were provided with some advantages of group work to state how much they agree to them. Based on their responses, the researcher has discussed it as follows.

The teachers and students respondents were asked about their awareness or perceptions of using group work learning in EFL class. In line with this, they were also asked how much they agree or disagree to some listed advantages of group work in EFL learning. The students' and teachers' reaction to the advantages of group work are presented below.

Table 15. Group Work Improves Students' Language Use

No.	Advantages of group work	Students' responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Group work helps develop fluency in English	49	56.9	31	36.0	2	2.32	0	0	3	3.48
2	Group work improves pronunciation	43	50	30	34.8	8	9.30	0	0	5	5.81

Regarding item 1 above, 93.01 % of the respondents reported they agree that group work learning improves students' fluency in the target language, English. When students are discussing in groups in EFL classroom, they are using English for a meaningful interaction. Using a language for communication with people helps one to develop fluency in the language. Language fluency can be developed through speaking (using it) than by listening to others.

Majority (84.88 %) of the subjects also agreed that group work improves students' pronunciation. It is understood that pronunciation is the way people articulate a sound or a word.

If this is so, pronunciation can never improved through other activities than speaking. One can not improve his/her pronunciation by reading a text or writing something. We can improve our pronunciation by using the language to interact with others. Therefore, using group work strategy in EFL classroom encourages students to use the language which can help them to improve their pronunciation.

Table 16. Group Work Promotes Students' to Actively Involve in their Learning

No.	Advantages of group work	Students' responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
3	Shy students perform better when they learn in groups	50	58.13	27	31.3	2	2.32	1	1.16	6	6.97
4	Students become more active participants in group learning than in teacher-centered class	46	53.48	26	30.2	7	8.13	2	2.32	5	5.81
5	Group work increases students' motivation	62	72.09	20	23.2	2	2.32	1	1.16	1	1.16

The response of the majority (89.52 %) of the subjects towards item 3 shows they agree to the idea that shy (less active students) perform better when they learn in groups than in lock-step instruction which allow to think individually. In lock-step (whole-class) instruction, all students have not the chance to express their ideas freely. To share ones idea to others, a student needs either to speak loudly or stand in front of the class. This may be very difficult for shy students. Some students are unable to utter even a word in front of a class (students). Thus, if students are discussing in a group of 4 or 5, one they would not expected to speak very loud. Secondly, their audience is minimized from a whole class population to 4 or 5, which is not much more than the number of one family. In this case, shy students can actively participate in the group work.

According to the majority (83.71 %) of the respondents, students become more active participants in the learning process when they involve in group discussion than in whole-class instruction. The researcher also observed students actively participating in the classroom discussion except in one section. But most of the time the students' participation was very hot when the teacher asked them to answer for short answer questions. As noted in the literature review part of this research document, group work strategy motivates learners to actively involve in their learning. When students actively dominate the learning process, they tend to improve the quality of their language use (see 2.1.5 of this paper).

In response to item 5, 95.34 % of the research subjects affirmed that group work strategy enhance students' motivation to actively involve in their English language learning. As discussed above, when students are in groups they feel some comfort. The concern of classroom learning comes from a property of all the class to their own. They feel that they are free to speak what they like. Their stress which comes from fear of committing mistakes will be reduced to some extent. This motivates them to actively participating in the group discussion.

Table 17. Group Work Helps a Teacher to Control Students' Academic Development

No.	Advantages of group work	Students' responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
6	When group work is employed, a teacher better gets time to check students' progress	43	50	23	26.7	8	9.30	2	2.32	10	11.6

Half (50 %) of the total subjects of this research believed that group work learning model grants the classroom teacher much time to efficiently check students' progress. This shows that the students perceived the idea of using group work strategy in EFL class positively. If a teacher uses a whole-class (teacher-centered) instruction, he/she can not identify which student shows progress and which is not. He/she can get enough time to evaluate every student's academic development. Unlike this way of teaching, group work strategy helps a teacher to have sufficient time to measure every student's academic progress. The time for a teacher to give a lecture will use him to move around the groups of students and check individual student's progress.

Table 18. Group Work Makes the Classroom Atmosphere Attractive for Learning

No.	Advantages of group work	Students' responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
7	Group work strengthens students' relationship	66	76.7	19	22.0	0	0	0	0	1	1.16
8	Group work makes the instruction suitable for learners with different individual differences	37	43.0	30	34.8	8	9.30	2	2.32	9	10.4
9	Group work makes the classroom interesting env't for learning	40	46.5	32	37.2	3	3.48	1	1.16	10	11.6

76.74 % and 22.09 % of the respondent students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that group work strengthened the relationship among them. This means almost all (98.83 %) of them believed that group work teaching helps students to strengthened their relationship. When students usually discuss in groups, they feel as a family. They come to forget to feel as an individual and start to think as a group. At this time their relationship comes to be very strong. This will in tern help them to cooperatively accomplish their group tasks.

Majority (77.90 %) of them also believed that group work learning strategy is suitable to learn for students with different individual differences as well as with different learning preferences. As described above, when students discuss in groups their relationship comes to be strong. If students' relationship is strong, it is easy for them to accommodate their individual differences and learn more using their variety of learning preferences.

Similarly, most of the respondents (83.71 %) agreed that group work makes the classroom environment an interesting situation for English language learning. A classroom is very interesting when students are discussing in groups. It is easy for the teacher to control students' activities and the students to listen to only few students' ideas as a group.

Table 19. Group Work Provides More Language Practice Opportunities for the Learners

No.	Advantages of group work	Students' responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
10	Group work enhances students' language practice opportunities	46	53.48	31	36.0	3	3.48	1	1.1	5	5.81
11	Group work improves quality of students' talk	51	59.30	30	34.8	1	1.16	1	1.16	3	3.48

Majority (89.52 %) of the respondents agreed that group work strategy enhances students' language practice opportunities. When students are discussing in groups, they can have better opportunities to practice the target language, English. In the student-centered (group work) learning, every individual student can get the chance to speak.

In response to the last item, 94.18 % of them agreed that group work improves quality of their talk (speaking). This shows that the students strongly believed that they can improve their English language proficiency by using the language with their peers in the classroom. Using the language all the time helps to improve ones speaking skill.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve the objective of this research, investigate the implementation of group work as an active learning strategy in EFL class room with a particular reference to Awassa governmental primary schools, data were gathered and analyzed in the previous chapter. Based on the result of the data analysis, the following conclusions are made.

5.1. Conclusions

The primary school EFL teachers use group work strategy in their class rarely. They did not use it most of the time. Several reasons have been stated for this problem. One of these reasons is that group work strategy is considered as time taking. A 40 minutes time is very short for students to get an opportunity to practice the language and for the teacher to check each and every individual student's progress. The second reason is that some contents of the course or the students' textbook are not suitable to teach through group work. For example, writing lesson is more difficult than speaking lesson to teach using group work strategy. Classroom atmosphere is also another reason for the EFL teachers not to use group work always in their teaching. Group work needs students to sit in circles (face-to-face). Thus, if students' desks are straight tables, or if the classroom setting itself is not suitable for face-to-face seating, teachers may face a problem to use group work in their class. These and other reasons impede EFL teachers from using group work strategy in their classes.

Whenever primary school teachers use group work strategy in their classes, they used a large group composed of 6-10 students. As a result, the students hardly got a chance to practice the target language, English. But the students usually tried to make their seating circle. The teachers assign students in to groups randomly. They use heterogeneous groups in terms of sex and ability sometimes. But most of the time ignoring the students' grouping preferences, they put the students simply on their own personal predetermined grouping style. The primary school students usually have a group leader during classroom discussions. They usually elect their leaders. Even the students are interested in being group leaders. Being a

group leader gives them personal satisfaction to help others and to learn from others. Be a group leader, they can also develop their confidence and their language skills.

When using group work strategy in the classroom, EFL teachers and students face many problems. Some of these factors that affect the implementation of group work in EFL learning are the following.

- ❖ Students' personal factors
 - Disturbance (much noise)
 - Leadership problem
 - Fear (anxiety): this may be resulted from lack of group work experience. Lack of group work experience in return may also result from frustration (fear of committing academic errors).
 - Lack of vocabulary (lack of language proficiency)
 - Use of mother tongue
- ❖ Situational factors
 - Large group size
 - Poor group composition
 - Poor relationship among students (lack of group cohesion)
 - Vague (not clear tasks): all primary school teachers and students prefer that group tasks should be neither very easy nor very difficult, but challenging. Challenging tasks encourage students to actively involve in the learning process. But if tasks are to the two extremes, it would be very boring for the students to discuss.
 - Shortage of time

It is known that though much is expected of the learners during group discussion, the EFL teachers are also expected to play many roles for the effectiveness of students' group discussion. Therefore, whenever they use group work strategy in their teaching, the primary school EFL teachers always check students' participation, ask for students' questions, summarize students' group discussion, give feedback etc and sometimes organize group tasks, monitor group discussion, ask students to present their findings etc.

However, they did not provide extra learning materials for their students. In addition to this, the primary school teachers did not state the reason for using group work strategy. Above all, the teachers rarely give sufficient time for group discussion to their students.

The primary school EFL teachers expect the following activities of their English language learners during group discussion.

- Committed for learning
- Feel as a group, and help each other
- Be active listener
- Use (speak) English freely in their interaction with their peers etc.

Group work is an active teaching-learning strategy for EFL classes. The primary school EFL teachers and students believe that group work strategy has the following advantages for English language learners.

- Develop students' attitude
- Reduce fear (anxiety)
- Develop listening and speaking skills
- Strengthen students' relationship
- Improve students' language quality etc.

However, group work strategy has also some limitations such as:

- *Dependency*: when students are discussing in groups, some students who are less participating in the group tasks would be charged equally with the active ones (especially when the group task is to be graded). This means, though the task is done by only one or two active participant students, the less active students would be graded equally with the hard working ones. This creates dependency of many students on few learners.
- *Disturbance*: when students are given a freedom to speak (discuss) in a group, probably they would produce much noise which could disturb other groups or other classes.
- *Time taking*: in the primary school level, the class time for any lesson is only 40 minutes time. To employ group work strategy, a 40 minutes time is very little. When it is divided in to the classroom activities such as arranging students' seats, assigning students in to

groups, giving group tasks, checking students' progress, asking for students' questions, asking students to report back on their group findings, giving feedback for students' errors etc, it is insufficient. A teacher can hardly check the progress of all students in the classroom.

5.2. Recommendations

As group work uses EFL teachers and students to achieve their educational objectives, it is better for them to always use group work strategy in their classes. In addition to this, having experienced to work in groups, students will be beneficial at higher levels. Because, group work experience helps both teachers and students to effectively discuss and share ideas among themselves. At the higher level (especially at universities), students are expected to learn without the direct intervention of the instructor. Thus, having accustomed to work in groups in the primary level, students will be productive in their group discussion at the higher level.

Any activity has its own specific objectives. In classroom instruction, teaching in general and the strategies used in particular have an intended objective to be achieved. These objectives should be clear and the students should know these objectives. Therefore, a classroom teacher should state the reason for using group work to the learners. Unless the teacher tells the reason for using group work strategy for the students, the students may not give much emphasis to the way of learning. They may not take it as a strategy to give them much opportunity to practice the language, rather as a way of using the class time simply.

One of the factors that affect the acquisition of second language is using mother tongue in the EFL classroom. A language can be acquired when the learners used the language for a meaningful communication. In this case, an EFL teacher should help students to avoid using mother tongue and encourage speaking (use) English freely in their group discussions.

Having understood the uses of group work for students' learning, the school administrations should restructure the classroom atmosphere (students seating). The desks and chairs on which students sat should be suitable for face-to-face seating. Otherwise, students can not form appropriate groups and discuss productively.

Group work strategy gives students a chance to practice the language freely with their peers. But it is difficult to say every group member can get a chance to participate in the discussion and the teacher to check every student's participation and progress within 40 minutes time. Therefore, it is better if the concerned body (Ministry of Education) revise the existing curriculum; either reduces the class size or increase the class time.

It is clear that several factors affect the implementation of group work in EFL classroom; personal factors like anxiety, lack of language proficiency, use of mother tongue etc and other factors related to the classroom situation such as group size, time, group composition etc. But, the influence of students' socio-cultural background needs further study. It is better to conduct a study on whether students' economy and family status affects their participation in classroom group discussion or not.

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APPENDIX 1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Questionnaire to be filled by students

Dear students!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the implementation of group work strategy in primary schools English language classroom. Your genuine answers will help the researcher to know how group work strategy is implemented in primary school English classes and identify the factors that affect the students and teachers in using group work. Thus, the responses you give will contribute a lot to the success of the research. Hence, you are kindly requested to respond to all the questions carefully and honestly according to the instructions given to each question. Your information will be used only for the research purpose and will be kept confidential.

Note: You need not to write your name.

Chose the answer which you believe it expresses your idea.

Thanks for your cooperation!

Part I: personal information

Some personal information related to students' status are listed below. Please, choose an appropriate answer and put a tick (✓) in the given box.

1. Age: 12-13 14-16 >16

2. Sex: Male Female

Part II: Questions related to group work

A. The following questions are related to group work in English language classes. Put a tick (✓) to indicate your answer in the box in front of each alternative.

1. Do you believe that group work learning is advantageous for English language learning?

Yes No

2. Do you believe that group work has disadvantages in learning English language?

Yes No

3. Have you come across problems when you discuss in groups?

Yes No

4. If your answer for question number 3 above is yes, list some problems you have ever faced.

5. When you discuss in groups, have your group had a group leader?

Yes No

6. If your answer for question number 5 above is yes, who elect the group leader?

a. group members

c. students become a leader by turn

b. the teacher

d. other (if any) state _____

7. Does your English teacher usually give you sufficient time for group discussion?

Yes

No

8. How much do you agree to the following ideas? Please, indicate your answers by putting a tick (✓) in the table below according to the response scales: AS= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree and ID= I don't know.

No.	Items	SA	A	D	SD	ID
1	Group work helps develop fluency in English					
2	Group work improves pronunciation					
3	Shy students perform better when they learn in groups					
4	Students become more active participants in group learning than in teacher-centered class					
5	Group work increases students' motivation					
6	When group work is employed, a teacher better gets time to check students' progress					
7	Group work strengthens students' relationship					
8	Group work makes the instruction suitable for learners with different individual differences					
9	Group work makes the classroom an interesting environment for learning					
10	Group work enhances students' language practice Opportunities					
11	Group work improves quality of students' talk					

9. List other advantages of group work learning. _____

B. The following are questions about the classroom arrangement and students' participation during group work discussion in English classes. Please, indicate your answers by circling the appropriate alternative from the given choices.

1. How often does your teacher use group work strategy in English language class?
 - a. always
 - b. sometimes
 - c. rarely
 - d. never

2. How does your English teacher assign you in to groups?
 - a. we form groups on our own choice
 - b. the teacher assign us in to groups
 - c. other (if any) state _____

3. When your teacher assigns you in to groups, which grouping technique does he/she usually use?
 - a. attainment grouping
 - b. interest grouping
 - c. sex grouping
 - d. age grouping
 - e. mix grouping
 - f. other (if any) state _____

4. What is the number of students your English teacher usually assigns in to one group?
 - a. Pair
 - b. 3-5
 - c. 6-10
 - d. more than 10

5. How do you sit during group discussion?
 - a. In rows
 - b. In circles
 - c. other (if any) state _____

6. How often your English teacher provides you with extra learning materials other than your textbooks during group discussion?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. rarely
 - d. never

7. When you are discussing in groups, how often your English teacher play the following roles effectively? Mark a tick (✓) in the table below.

No.	Teacher's roles	Always	Some times	Rarely	Never
1	Organize the classroom & group tasks				
2	Assigning group roles				
3	State the reason for using group work				
4	Monitor group tasks				
5	Provide extra learning materials				
6	Allow sufficient time for group discussion				
7	Provide guidelines for group interaction				
8	Ask for students' questions				
9	Summarize students' discussion				
10	Ask students to report on their discussion				
11	Giving feedback for students				

8. List some other roles your English teacher play. _____

9. To what extent the following factors affect your participation during group discussion? Put a tick (✓) according to the response scales given in the table below.

No.	Factors	To high extent	To some extent	Little effect	No effect
1	Lack of Language Proficiency				
2	Anxiety				
3	Leadership problem				
4	Lack of group experience				
5	Self-esteem				
6	Authority				
7	Group size				
8	Group composition				
9	Group cohesiveness				
10	Seating arrangement				
11	Nature of Group Tasks				

APPENDIX 2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ቤት የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ፋኩልቲ የእንግሊዘኛ ት/ት ክፍል

በተማሪዎች የሚሞላ የጽሑፍ መጠይቅ

አንዳንድ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ አስተማሪዎች የቡድን ውይይት የማስተማር ዘዴን በትክክል ለመተግበር ሲቸገሩ ይስተዋላል። ስለዚህ የዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ የአንደኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት ቤት የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ አስተማሪዎችና ተማሪዎች የቡድን ውይይት የመማር ዘዴን እንዴት እንደሚተገብሩት ለማወቅ ነው።

በተጨማሪም የአንደኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት ቤት ተማሪዎችና አስተማሪዎች በእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት ክፍል ጊዜ የቡድን ውይይት ዘዴን በትክክል እንዳይተገብሩ የሚያግዷቸው ችግሮችን ለይቶ ለማወቅ ይረዳል።

ስለዚህ ከዚህ በታች ለቀረቡት ጥያቄዎች የሚሰጡ ትክክለኛ መልሶች ለጥናቱ መሳካት የጎላ ድርሻ ይኖራቸዋል። በመሆኑም እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በጥንቃቄና በታማኝነት እንድትመልስ/ሽ በማሳሰብ ለምታደርግልኝ/ጊልኝ ትብብር ሁሉ ታላቅ ምስጋና አቀርባለሁ።

ማስታወሻ፡

- ሥም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም
- ለእያንዳንዱ ጥያቄ ከተሰጡት አማራጮች የአንተ/ሽ/ሷን ሀሳብ በትክክል የሚገልፀውን ምረጥ/ ምረጭ።

ለትብብርህ/ሽ አመሰግናለሁ

1	የቡድን ውይይት ተማሪዎች ቋንቋውን አቀላጥፈው እንዲናገሩ ይረዳቸዋል					
2	ሀፍረት/ፍራቻ/ የሚለማቸው ተማሪዎች በቡድን እየተወያዩ ሲማሩ የበለጠ ንቁ ይሆናሉ					
3	በቡድን በመወያየት መማር የአካባቢ/የድምፅ-ት/ችሎታን ያዳብራል					
4	ተማሪዎች አስተማሪ ከሚመራው የማስተማር ዘዴ ይልቅ በቡድን በመወያየት በሚመሩበት ጊዜ የበለጠ ንቁ ተሳታፊ ይሆናሉ					
5	አስተማሪ የቡድን ውይይት ዘዴ ሲጠቀም የተማሪዎችን መሻሻል /ዕድገት/ ለማረጋገጥ የበለጠ ጊዜ ያገኛል					
6	የቡድን ውይይት የተማሪዎችን ንቃት /ተካላሽነት/ ያሳድጋል					
7	የቡድን ውይይት የተማሪዎችን ግንኙነት ያጠናክራል					
8	የቡድን ውይይት የተማሪዎችን ቋንቋውን የመጠቀም ሁኔታ ያሰፋል /ያሳድጋል/					
9	የቡድን ውይይት የተማሪዎችን የንግግር ችሎታ/ጥራት/ ያሳድጋል					
10	የቡድን ውይይት የማስተማር ዘዴው የተለያዩ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ተማሪዎች የተመቻቸ ያደርገዋል					
11	የቡድን ውይይት የመማሪያ ክፍሉ ለተማሪዎች ት/ት የተመቻቸ/ ተስማሚ/ ያደርገዋል					
12	የቡድን ውይይት ተማሪዎች በትምህርታቸው ንቁ ሆነው እንዲሰተፉ ያበረታታቸዋል					

9. ሌሎች የቡድን ውይይት ጠቀሜታዎች ካሉ ዘርዘር

7. የሚከተሉት ምክንያቶች በቡድን ውይይት ጊዜ ለሚኖራችሁ ተሳትፎ ምን ያህል ተፅእኖ አላቸው ብለህ/ሽ ታምናለህ/ሽ? መልስህ/ሽ ከአያንዳንዱ ሀሳብ ፊት ለፊት ባለው ሳፕን ውስጥ የ (✓) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ አመልክት/ቺ።

ቁጥር	የተጽዕኖ ምክንያቶች	ከፍተኛ ተፅዕኖ	መጠነኛ ተፅዕኖ	ትንሽ ተፅዕኖ	ተፅዕኖ የለውም
1	የቋንቋ ችሎታ ማነስ				
2	ፍርሃት /ሀፍረት/				
3	የቡድን መሪ ችግር				
4	በቡድን የመወያየት ልምድ ማነስ				
5	ለራስ ያለን አመለካከት/ዋጋ/ ማነስ				
6	ሥልጣን / የቡድን መሪ መሆን/				
7	የቡድን አባላት ብዛት				
8	የቡድን አመሠራረት				
9	የቡድን ህብረት				
10	የአቀማመጥ ሁኔታ				
11	የቡድን ሥራው መክበድ/ችግር				

7. የሚከተሉት ምክንያቶች በቡድን ውይይት ጊዜ ለሚኖራችሁ ተሳትፎ ምን ያህል ተፅእኖ አላቸው ብለህ/ሽ ታምናለህ/ሽ? መልስህ/ሽ ከአያንዳንዱ ሀሳብ ፊት ለፊት ባለው ሳጥን ውስጥ የ (✓) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ አመልክት/ቺ።

ቁጥር	የተጽዕኖ ምክንያቶች	ከፍተኛ ተፅዕኖ	መጠነኛ ተፅዕኖ	ትንሽ ተፅዕኖ	ተፅዕኖ የለውም
1	የቋንቋ ችሎታ ማነስ				
2	ፍርሃት /ሀፍረት/				
3	የቡድን መሪ ችግር				
4	በቡድን የመወያየት ልምድ ማነስ				
5	ለራስ ያለን አመልካክት/ዋጋ/ ማነስ				
6	ሥልጣን / የቡድን መሪ መሆን/				
7	የቡድን አባላት ብዛት				
8	የቡድን አመሠራረት				
9	የቡድን ሀብረት				
10	የአቀማመጥ ሁኔታ				
11	የቡድን ሥራው መክበድ/ችግር				

APPENDIX 3

Interview for students

- 1 Do you like to learn through group work strategy? If yes, how many students do you want to be in one group? Why?
2. Do you want to be group leader? Why?
3. What problems have you face when discussing in groups?
4. How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?
5. Do you prefer easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?
6. Do you believe that your social life influences your participation during group discussion?
How?

APPENDIX 4

Interview for teachers

1. How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom?
Why?
2. What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction? What about disadvantages?
3. How and what basis do you usually assign students in to groups? (Attainment, age, sex, interest, mix etc) why?
4. What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?
5. Do you think that a group should have a leader? If yes, who will elect him?
6. Do you provide extra learning materials rather than students' textbook for students and allow them sufficient time for group discussion?
7. How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be during group discussion? Why?
8. Do you design easy or challenging or difficult tasks for group discussion? Why?
9. What factors do usually affect group discussion in your EFL classroom?
10. Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work discussion? If yes, how?
11. What roles do you play during group work learning?
12. What do you expect of students during group discussion?

APPENDIX 5

Teachers' Interview Guide

5.1 Interview with teacher 1

M (Mehari): How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom? Why?

T1(teacher1): I don't use group work strategy always, but most of the time. Because, there are lessons which are not suitable for using group work strategy. For example, it is difficult to use group work strategy during writing lesson. But speaking lesson for instance, is very suitable to implement group work strategy. Therefore, I shall say I use group work strategy most of the time than 'always' in my English class.

M: What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction?

T1: Since all students have not equal knowledge, it helps them to share their ideas. In addition it enhances their confidence.

M: What about disadvantages?

T1: Some students come to be dependent on the shoulder of other students. When the same task(s) are given to group members, one or two students may accomplish the task without the participation of all members. This means the passive students will be as successful or unsuccessful as the active members of the group. Especially whenever the task is to be graded, lazy (less participant students) tend to pass on the shoulder of the active ones. This implies group work may result the domination of group discussion by only few members of the group.

M: How and on what basis do you usually assign students in to groups (attainment, age, sex, interest, mix...)? Why?

T1: When I assign students in to groups, I usually used to make it mixed group in terms of sex. Because, most of the time female students are very shy. Therefore, to help them share ideas with their peers it is important to put them together with male students. I also use random grouping technique in terms of other factors, means; I don't consider age, result and other criteria.

M: What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?

- T1: Usually I put 5-6 students together in a group. But sometimes I also used a pair of students to discuss on classroom tasks.
- M: Do you think that a group should have a leader?
- T1: Yes. Even I usually allow groups to have a chairman (group leader) as well as a secretary, who records the answers, ideas and opinion of the group or points to be reported to the class.
- M: Who will elect the group leader?
- T1: The group leader is usually elected by members of the group. But sometimes I may randomly nominate one student as a leader for every group to minimize bias and time spent for election.
- M: Do you provide extra materials other than student's textbooks for students?
- T1: No. Providing students with some kind of texts such as news paper, magazine, and books which are appropriate to their level can help them to develop their knowledge of English language. But I have never provide students with extra materials. Because, the economic capacity of the school and me (the teacher) limits the probability of providing extra learning materials for the students.
- M: Do you allow sufficient time for students' group discussion?
- T1: I usually give groups enough time for discussion.
- M: How do you know whether it is enough for them or not?
- T1: I don't ask students to report on their group tasks until they themselves ask me to report back.
- M: How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be? Why?
- T1: In circles. Because, circles help students to interact face-to-face, which is very helpful to understand the ideas of the speaker.
- M: Do you design easy or challenging (debating) tasks for group discussion? Why?
- T1: Challenging tasks are better for group discussion. Because, challenging tasks promote students to communicate in a debating manner. But if tasks are very easy, it will be very boring for the students. The members may end up discussion and talk something else out of the given issue. But, the type of the group task is not on the hand of the teacher. It is based on the student's textbook.
- M: What factors do usually affect group discussions in your classroom?

- T1: language problem (language proficiency) is the main factor of students' group discussion. Fear is also another factor. Most students fear that they would commit a mistake. They thought "if I make a mistake the students will laugh at me". Fearing the joke from their peers, the students chose silence than to speak what they feel. Therefore, fear (shame) and language problem are the two serious problems usually affect students' effective group discussion.
- M: Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work? How?
- T1: Yes. Especially rural students fear to participate freely. They tend to keep themselves silent. Because their family and social background allow them not to speak freely.
- M: What roles do you play during group work learning?
- T1: During students' group discussion, I usually move around the students and check whether they are properly discussing or not. In addition, I also check whether all members are participating or not. But I don't interfere in their discussion unless they ask me to help them. But I give guidance for each group and offer help whenever necessary.
- M: What do you expect of students during group discussion?
- T1: - to be committed for their learning
 - speak what they feel freely
 - feel as a group, not as an individual
 - be active listener
 - write what they hear, because, unless they record what they have heard, it is difficult to remember after times. It will also be helpful to refer at home once again.

5.2 Interview with teacher 2

- M (Mehari): How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom? Why?
- T2(teacher 2): Most of the time, but not always. Because, all the contents in the student's Textbook can not be appropriate for using group work learning. Thus, I use group work method whenever I believe the content of the lesson is suitable for using group work strategy.
- M: What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction?
- T2: Group work has many advantages for language learning. For example, it has the advantages such as: it helps students to communicate freely, promote them to share ideas among themselves etc.

- M: What about disadvantages?
- T2: Disturbance; when students are given an opportunity to speak freely in groups, they tend to produce much noise which may disturb the class environment and even they may fail to listen to one another correctly in their discussion.
- M: How and on what basis do you usually assign students in to groups (attainment, age, sex, interest, mix...)? Why?
- T2: I usually use my own code (system) to assign students in to groups. For example, I propose names of animals in my mind such as Lion, Ostrich, Elephant, Tiger, and Crocodile etc and ask students to call one of these names. Thus, the students will be assigned in to groups accordingly, i.e. students who call the same names are going to sit together to form a group. I made this because, if students are given much freedom to form groups on their own interest, friends or students who have similar needs may sit together. In this case, these students may talk another issue of their own other than what they have been given.
- M: What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?
- T2: 6-8. Because, the class size is very large; more than 60 students. Therefore, it is difficult to group students in to a group of 4 or 5, though it was better to give them enough chance to express their opinion.
- M: Do you think that a group should have a leader?
- T2: Yes. A group should have a group leader to organize the group activities as well as the group members.
- M: Who will elect the group leader?
- T2: Members of the group usually allowed to elect their own leader. The group leader will help the group to organize group tasks, and members of the group.
- M: Do you provide extra learning materials other than student's textbooks for students?
- T2: No. But most of the time I advise them to refer to the library or to buy other books which can help them to learn English.
- M: Do you allow sufficient time for students' group discussion?
- T2: Yes.
- M: How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be? Why?
- T2: In circles. Because seating in circles help students to discuss face-to-face.
- M: Do you design easy or challenging (debating) tasks for group discussion? Why?

T2: Very difficult tasks usually keep students silent, while very easy tasks create boring too. Medium (challenging) tasks however, help students to debate or communicate actively. This helps them to practice English freely.

M: What factors do usually affect group discussions in your classroom?

T2: Fear, (usually female students) and language problem are the factors mostly influence students' group interaction.

M: Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work discussion? How?

T2: Yes. It affects students very much! Because, there are many students in my class who are orphan, came from very poor family and the like. They tend to focus not on their academic learning, but on their life outside (at home). When they are in the classroom, they usually bother about their social life. Because,

- there is no one who can attend to their activities (at home)
- they have very serious problems economically.

M: What roles do you play during group work learning?

T2: Move around them and offer them help when necessary.

- monitor group discussion
- motivate students
- ask students to report back what they have discussed about
- check the parliamentary process (participation of all members in decision) of the group discussion

M: What do you expect of students during group discussion?

T2: Accomplish tasks based on teacher's instruction and based on the lesson objective. In addition, I expect students to be active participants in their group discussion.

5.3 Interview with teacher 3

M (Mehari): How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom? Why?

T3(teacher 3): I used group work strategy sometimes. I can not use group work always (in every lesson). Because, some contents of the student's textbook are not suitable to teach using

group work learning. For example, writing and reading lessons are not comfortable to learn or teach through group work strategy.

M: What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction?

T3: Group work helps students to share knowledge among themselves. It is also more important for less active learners or for those who are shy to speak freely.

M: What about disadvantages?

T3: Group work allows students to produce much noise. Because, if students have given more freedom to communicate freely, they tend to speak as loudly as they like. This disturbs the whole classroom discussion. Therefore, production of unnecessary noise is one disadvantage of group work learning.

M: How and on what basis do you usually assign students in to groups (attainment, age, sex, interest, mix...)? Why?

T3: I assign students in to groups randomly. But I usually consider sex (mixing boys and girls together). This is to help female students which are mostly the passive participants in the classroom discussion.

M: What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?

T3: 5 students. Because, if more than 5 students are allowed to sit together, they may talk on an issue of their own than on the given classroom task. In addition, it will be very difficult for them to reach at a one final conclusion as their ideas are various as their number. On the other hand, if they are less than 5 they may not produce enough idea. Therefore, to me, a group of 5 is better size for students to discuss productively.

M: Do you think that a group should have a leader?

T3: Yes. It is necessary for a group to have a group leader to shape their discussion.

M: Who will elect the group leader?

T3: Members of the group usually elect their leader.

M: Do you provide extra learning materials other than student's textbooks for students?

T3: No. what kind of material can we (teachers) provide? I don't understand that the kind of material to be provided for the students other than their textbooks. Because, the syllabus provides a material (the textbook) that the curriculum designers believed as helpful enough.

M: Do you allow sufficient time for students' group discussion?

T3: Yes. I usually ask them whether they have finished their work or not.

M: How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be? Why?

T3: In circles. Because, people understand more when they communicate face-to-face.

Because, people usually understand the message from the lip movement of a speaker. For example, we (people) comprehend better when we listen to a Television than to Radio broadcast.

M: Do you design easy or challenging (debating) tasks for group discussion? Why?

T3: Medium (not very easy and not very difficult as well). Yes! challenging tasks. Because, challenging tasks encourage students to discuss actively. When students debate on an issue, they can develop their speaking skill which is the major goal of language learning.

M: What factors do usually affect group discussions in your classroom?

T3: language problem, lack of interest, lack of purpose to learn, students background etc

M: Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work discussion? How?

T3: Yes. Some students who are naturally silent (even at home) due to family behavior usually come to be very passive in the classroom as well. Most of the time these kinds of students can not speak unless the teacher asks them to answer a question.

M: What roles do you play during group work learning?

T3: Move around the groups and ask them if they need any help. Help students, ask questions, check the participation of all group members etc.

M: What do you expect of students during group discussion?

T3: -Participate actively in the group discussion
- help each other
- ask if they face any problem and speak freely etc.

5.4 Interview with teacher 4

M (Mehari): How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom? Why?

T4(teacher 4): Ideally, I want to use group work strategy usually. But due to shortage of time I implement group work once a week. In addition to shortage of time, when I arrange the desks and chairs for group work discussion once, by the next day I got the chairs and desks arranged in the way students can sit in rows. Therefore, I can not use group work usually since it is difficult to arrange chairs and desks every day. This problem forced me not to use

group work strategy always. Because, arranging tables and chairs in circles may consume much time.

M: What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction?

T4: Group work learning helps students to get what they don't know, from their friends. It also develops students' speaking skill.

M: What about disadvantages?

T4: - Disturbance, i.e. much noise,
 - It is time consuming, especially to arrange the classroom situation. Because the total amount of time given for instruction is only 40 minutes.

M: How and on what basis do you usually assign students in to groups (attainment, age, sex, interest, mix...)? Why?

T4: I usually assign students in to groups randomly. For example, I call roll numbers randomly and students will be assigned in to groups based on the number they chose (call). But I don't use permanent grouping. I always use flexible grouping technique.

M: What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?

T4: 5-6. Because more or less than this size can not be productive. They can either produce unsatisfactory ideas or all students can not get enough chance to participate.

M: Do you think that a group should have a leader?

T4: Yes.

M: Who will elect the group leader?

T4: The group leader is usually elected by group members.

M: Do you provide extra learning materials other than student's textbooks for students?

T4: No. Because I have no economic capacity to do that. There is also no access in the school.

M: Do you allow sufficient time for students' group discussion?

T4: Yes. I usually try to give students enough time for group discussion.

M: How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be? Why?

T4: Circle. Face-to-face interaction helps students to understand more.

M: Do you design easy or challenging (debating) tasks for group discussion? Why?

T4: I don't decide on the difficulty of the group task. It depends on the lesson in the student's textbook.

M: What factors do usually affect group discussions in your classroom?

T4: poor classroom arrangement due to different interests among different teachers. That is, as I tried to explain before (see question 1 above), different teachers arrange the desks and chairs according to their own teaching preference. Therefore, the classroom arrangement of one teacher may not be suitable for me or any body else. In this case the classroom arrangement I have done today will not be kept intact for tomorrow. This is somewhat tiresome and time consuming.

- students' lack of language proficiency.

- silent (less active) students usually keep themselves out of the discussion etc.

M: Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work discussion? How?

T4: There are many students who are orphan and come from very poor family. Therefore, since these students are usually come to class being hungry and stressed, they usually tend to be passive during group discussion. Because, they are already get bored with their life outside the class (at home).

M: What roles do you play during group work learning?

T4: move around the groups and check whether they are discussing on the issue or not.

- motivate them to actively discuss on the given task.

- ask them if they face any problem etc.

M: What do you expect of students during group discussion?

T4: I expect students to participate or discuss actively on the classroom task I have already given them.

5.5 Interview with teacher 5

M (Mehari): How often do you use group work strategy in your English language classroom? Why?

T5(teacher 5): I know or believe that I should use group work strategy always in my English language classroom. But due to shortage of time or since I can not cover the contents of in student's textbook in such method, I currently implement group work usually but not always. Because, I know that there is no better method than peer teaching (group work) for English language learning.

M: What do you think the advantages of group work learning over whole-class instruction?

T5: There are many advantages of group work learning. For example,

- promote students to use the language (English)

- share ideas among themselves.

- help each other etc.

M: What about disadvantages?

T5: It is time taking. i.e. 40 minutes time is very little for group work learning. It is difficult and impossible for a teacher to allow all students to report back their group results (findings) in this case.

M: How and on what basis do you usually assign students in to groups (attainment, age, sex, interest, mix...)? Why?

T5: I allow students to form a group on their own interest, but I usually inform them to form a mixed group especially in terms of sex and learning ability (academic achievement). If I observe that only active participant students sit together, I try to separate them and mix others who are less able with them.

M: What is the number of students you usually include in a group? Why?

T5: 4 students. Because, as you have observed the classroom, the desks are not suitable for students to sit in circles. Their seat is made up of straight desks. Therefore, more than 4 students can not sit in circle. They can not listen to one another. But if 4 students are allowed to form a group they can sit face-to-face with two people on one side and two others on the other (opposite to them).

M: Do you think that a group should have a leader?

T5: Yes.

M: Who will elect the group leader?

T5: The leader of the group is elected by the members of the group. Because, they know to each other better. They know that who can organize them better. But I don't allow groups to have permanent group leaders. Rather I prefer all students to be group leaders, but not in a formal turn-taking system. A student who is not interested should not be a group leader.

M: Do you provide extra learning materials other than student's textbooks for students?

T5: I don't provide students extra learning materials other than their textbooks, but I usually advise them to refer to other materials in the library and to buy other helping books.

M: Do you allow sufficient time for students' group discussion?

T5: Yes. I usually wait until they finish their work.

M: How do you like the seating arrangement of students to be? Why?

T5: In circles. Because, when students sit in circles they can better listen to each other.

M: Do you design easy or challenging (debating) tasks for group discussion? Why?

T5: Before deciding on the difficulty of the task, there is one important thing to be taken in to consideration. That is, first of all you should identify your learners. The first step in providing group tasks should be identifying the level and capability of the students. For example, if your students are less able in language skills, you should provide them with easy tasks. Secondly and generally, for any kind of learners, you should give easy tasks first to motivate them and then challenging tasks to discuss hotly. This helps to motivate students for group discussion. Because, if a teacher gives them difficult task at the beginning, the students may hate not only the discussion but also the teacher even. Therefore, to motivate students' interest the teacher should give them easy tasks first and when they have already being motivated he/she can add other tasks which are challenging than the first one.

M: What factors do usually affect group discussions in your classroom?

T5: Yes. Most students are poor. The environment is also very hot. As the students have problem of clothing, they don't feel comfort in the classroom. This leads to for absency of most students from the class. The absency in turn results boring for the rest of the groups. Seating in groups, they think and speak about their lives outside.

- lack of language proficiency
- poor relation ship among students
- lack of aim to learn
- use of mother tongue etc.

M: Do you think students' social background affects their participation in group work discussion? How?

T5: Yes. When they are in the classroom, they are reluctant to discuss. This may resulted from the discomfort out side, i.e. they usually think about the life at home.

M: What roles do you play during group work learning?

T5: Move around and help them when they need. Generally, I try to be as a facilitator, not another else.

M: What do you expect of students during group discussion?

T5:

- listen to one another
- participate actively
- avoid fear and speak freely
- dare to use English during the discussion etc.

APPENDIX 6

Students' Interview Guide

6.1 Interview with student 1

M (Mehari): Do you like to learn through group work strategy? Why?

S1(student 1): Yes. Group work helps us to share ideas and knowledge. Because, we all students have not equal knowledge and ability.

M: How many students do you want to be in one group for discussion? Why?

S1: We usually allowed forming a group of 6-8. I think this may be based on the class size. Since our class size is very large, our teacher may be forced to use large group size. But as to me a group of 5 students is better for group discussion. Because, as group size increases, the members tend to forget the aim of group learning and talk on other issues out of the given group task.

M: Do you want to be group leader? Why?

S1: Yes. Because, it gives me personal satisfaction as I share knowledge with others

- it increases commitment to learn and to help others learn
- when you are a leader you will listen to every members' ideas attentively. This helps to gain much knowledge from others.

M: What problems have you ever face when discussing in groups?

S1: - language problem

- lack of (words) vocabulary to speak English very well
- conflict (disagreement) as varieties of ideas produced from different Students etc.

M: How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?

S1: Yes, in circles. Because, face-to-face interaction increases understanding.

M: Do you want easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?

S1: Some what difficult, yes what you call challenging, to debate. Because, if tasks are very easy or very difficult, it will be boring, but challenging tasks motivate to communicate using English.

M: Do you believe that your social backgrounds influence your participation during group discussion? How?

S1: Yes. If one is usually not allowed to speak freely at home, the same behavior will be reflected by him/her in the classroom. In addition, if a student mostly play football at home (out side the classroom), he/she thinks about football even when he/she is in a class. If a student also has not an experience to discuss in different clubs, parties etc, he/she may face difficulty in discussing in groups in the classroom.

6.2 Interview with student 2

M (Mehari): Do you like to learn through group work strategy? Why?

S1(student 2):Yes. Because, it helps us to develop our relation ship. It also uses to exchange ideas.

M: How many students do you want to be in one group for discussion? Why?

S1: 5. because more than 5 is not interesting.

M: Do you want to be group leader? Why?

S1: Yes. Because, I like to help others.

M: What problems have you ever face when discussing in groups?

S1: language problem, fear (especially female students) etc.

M: How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?

S1: face-to –face, because, it helps us listen to one another better.

M: Do you want easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?

S1: Debating (yes challenging). Because, it encourages students to communicate more and very actively.

M: Do you believe that your social backgrounds influence your participation during group discussion? How?

S1: Yes. Naturally silent students are usually passive during group discussion.

6.3 Interview with student 3

M (Mehari): Do you like to learn through group work strategy? Why?

S3(student 3):Yes. Because, it helps us to communicate more.

M: How many students do you want to be in one group for discussion? Why?

S3: 4-5, to help each other.

M: Do you want to be group leader? Why?

- S3: Yes. Even I am a group leader currently. Because,
- It gives me confidence to participate during the discussion.
 - to help others
 - to gain knowledge from others etc.
- M: Who elect the group leader? Is the leader permanent?
- S3: Members of the group elect their leaders. But it is not permanent, they can change whenever they want.
- M: What problems have you ever face when discussing in groups?
- S3: Boring, especially when some students keep themselves silent.
- M: How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?
- S3: face-to –face, to hear what others say correctly.
- M: Do you want easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?
- S3: Difficult, to practice speaking skill.
- M: Do you believe that your social backgrounds influence your participation during group discussion? How?
- S3: Yes. It results absency of students. Therefore, when students are absent, their relationship falls.

6.4 Interview with student 4 (female)

- M (Mehari): Do you like to learn through group work strategy? Why?
- S4(student 4):Yes. It uses to help each other.
- M: How many students do you want to be in one group for discussion? Why?
- S4: 5. more than 5 may create disagreement on ideas.
- M: Do you want to be group leader? Why?
- S4: NO. Because, I usually fear to speak English. Therefore, I prefer to be a member than a group leader.
- M: Who elect the group leader?
- S4: Members.
- M: What problems have you ever face when discussing in groups?
- S4: - disagreement as different ideas come from different students.
- shortage of time for group discussion etc.

- M: How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?
- S4: In circle. To discuss face-to-face. Because, face-to-face discussion increases understanding.
- M: Do you want easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?
- S4: It is better if tasks are some what difficult. But not very difficult.
- M: Do you believe that your social backgrounds influence your participation during group discussion? How?
- S4: Yes. Because, most students reflect what they habitually acquire at home. Therefore, if students are naturally silent at home, they will be very silent in the classroom as well

6.5 Interview with student 5

- M (Mehari): Do you like to learn through group work strategy? Why?
- S5(student 5): Yes. Because, it uses to share knowledge and experience.
- M: How many students do you want to be in one group for discussion? Why?
- S5: 5. I prefer to discuss in a small group size.
- M: Do you want to be group leader? Why?
- S5: Yes. It uses to develop the ability to speak. I am personally very happy to help others in learning.
- M: Who elect the group leader?
- S5 Group members.
- M: What problems have you ever face when discussing in groups?
- S5: Disagreement, i.e. some students needs to change the issue for discussion. But some others defend this idea. This creates disagreement among them and the class time will finish without discussion as a result.
- M: How do you like your seating arrangement to be? Why?
- S5: In circle. Because, when we sit face-to-face, we can understand and listen to each other better.
- M: Do you want easy or challenging tasks for group discussion? Why?
- S5: It is better to discuss on medium (not easy and not very difficult tasks). This kind of tasks help to discuss actively.
- M: Do you believe that your social backgrounds influence your participation during group discussion? How?
- S5: Yes. Most students in the classroom behave the same as they behave at home.

APPENDIX 7

Classroom observation check list

Observation check list for the implementation of group work in English class

Total number of students in the class _____

Number of students during observation _____

Average number of students in a group _____

No.	Items	Yes	No
1	Does the teacher use group work strategy?		
2	Does the teacher specify instructional objectives?		
3	Are group tasks challenging?		
4	Does the teacher assign students in to groups?		
5	Does the teacher provide extra learning materials for students?		
6	Does the teacher allow students sufficient time for group discussion?		
7	Does the teacher explain group tasks clearly?		
8	Does the teacher tell students the reason for using group work?		
9	Does the teacher facilitate group cohesion?		
10	Does the teacher provide students with instructions and guidelines for group interaction?		
11	Do students sit in circles?		
12	Are students in groups heterogeneous in terms of sex?		
13	Does the teacher invite students to ask questions?		
14	Does the teacher monitor group discussion?		
15	Do students in groups participate actively?		
16	Does the teacher summarize students' group discussion?		
17	Does the teacher ask students to reflect on their group discussion?		
18	Does the teacher give students feedback on their discussion?		

Declaration

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

Name: Mehari Abreha

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university advisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____