Verbal Participation in Group Work: A Case Study of First Year Students at Addis Ababa University

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Verbal Participation in Group Work: A Case Study of First Year Students at Addis Ababa University

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Verbal Participation in Group Work

Abstract

This study is an attempt to gain insight into the verbal participation behaviour of first year students at Addis Ababa University, as they take part in group discussion in College English classes. The main aims are to investigate the extent to which students differ in terms of verbal participation in group discussion, to explore the factors that account for the differences, students' perceptions of low and high participators, and whether students change their participation behaviour (increasing or decreasing in participation) and, if so the factors responsible for the change. Thus a longitudinal dimension has been used in which students' views and behaviours are seen developmentally.

The main subjects of the study were 35 first year students at AAU. Also 108 students took part in filling in a questionnaire. Data on verbal participation in group discussion were gathered by means of audio and video recordings and different types of questionnaires (self-ratings, group member ratings, classmate ratings, and instructor's ratings). Based on their participation level 18 students were selected for in-depth individual and focus group interviews.

Analysis of the data indicated that there was a huge difference among students in terms of their verbal participation in group discussion: some were extremely silent (17.1%), and others were very high participators (17.1%), some times to the point of almost

totally dominating other group members. Then students' (especially the silents' and the talkers') views of the factors that accounted for the difference in participation were discussed. It was also found out that by the end of the academic year or in the second semester some high participators became silent; and some very silent students became active participants. Students' perceptions of the silents and the talkers has also been presented and discussed.

The thesis concludes by considering the implications of the findings for increased or more equitable verbal participation among students in group discussion and the need for research into internal and external variables affecting participation.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

The shift in language classroom organisation from teacher-fronted to student group work has received a growing amount of theoretical and empirical support (Long, 1983; Slavin, 1985; Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1992; Gillies and Ashman, 1994; Lamberights, 1994). In fact, group work has now become a generally accepted mode of teaching foreign languages in higher education and its benefits seem widely recognised, so much so that advocates such as Long claim to no longer have to plead for its use.

Different writers recommend group work in the foreign/ second language classroom mainly based on pedagogical objectives. These objectives derive from broader educational goals applying on education in general. According to Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1990:178), for instance:

> ... The goal of education is not simply to impart knowledge to learners and leave it at that. It must also provide learners with the opportunity to develop their individual talents and their personalities. It must also foster a sense of responsibility and sociability in learners and make them creative members of society.

The same writer argues that putting the theory of group work and group dynamics into practice is one way of achieving some of the objectives mentioned above.

Group work has also taken on psycholinguistic significance as a result of relatively recent research findings (which are not really conclusive, yet): the role of comprehensible input in second language acquisition, (Krashen 1985), and the value of interlanguage talk, or language learners' interaction. Some writers believe that such interactions offer language learners the opportunity to practise L2 skills, to test out their hypothesis about how the

language works (in comprehension and production), and to get useful feedback (Long 1983; 1985; Swain, 1985; Pica et al, 1991).

Similar studies on the effect of group work on learning have also shown that group work has a positive effect on learning. Many writers agree that group work encourages student-to-student interaction, promotes mastery of subject matter objectives (especially those involving higher cognitive learning), problem solving ability, moral development, communication skills, attitude development, and attitude change (Gillies and Ashman, 1994; Lamberigts, 1994; Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1992; Slavin, 1985). Research done in the area of social and affective development also strongly supports the use of group work in classrooms. Most reviewers have concluded that using group work contributes positively to social dynamics within classes, i.e., increases interpersonal attraction, enhances student self-esteem, and improves social relations between students (Callaghan, 1994; Johnson and Johnson, 1985; 1992; Hertz-Lazarowitz, et al. 1992; Blumberg, 1994; Slavin, 1985). Alamirew (1992), who did his research on Grade 9 students in Addis Ababa, has also concluded that students liked working in groups and that students who worked in groups achieved significantly better than students who were taught in the traditional way, teacher-fronted classes.

Some writers have however, challenged the view that group work encourages student-to-student interaction. According to Bennet and Dunne (1990), for example, the possibility of 'free riders (those who do not contribute but take credit for group effort), and 'suckers' (hard workers who slacken off), is wide open in group work. If learners display any of these behaviours the possibility of rejection, domination, and argument within the group is increased. This can however be corrected, according to the writers, if groupings are carefully structured.

In short, there seems to be little disagreement about the effectiveness of using group work in language classrooms. More contentious are issues related to which group structure works

best with what kind of task structure in what kind of situation, etc. Group structures that work well in one situation may not work in other situations. What works well with a certain group of learners may not work with others. This indicates the need to understand the group work situation being applied, how learners are doing, and ensuring the situations that facilitate group discussion.

1.2 Justification or rationale for the study

In EFL/ ESL classrooms it is not uncommon, these days, to see students working in small groups. In College English classes at Addis Ababa University (AAU), where this study has been carried out, for example, group work is used quite frequently. In fact, it is, one can say, the dominant type of classroom organisation. This can be clearly seen from the teaching materials recently prepared for use in College English classes. Students are required to form groups and participate actively in carrying out group tasks. They are sometimes evaluated based on their participation in performing group tasks. In short, while there are lots of activities that require students to work in groups there has been very little research carried out to assess the effectiveness of group work in such situations. This study has sprang out of the belief that in situations where group work is quite frequently used, it is necessary to at least describe the situation and see the pros and cons of group work as seen mainly from the point of view of the learners. It is only then that certain measures can be taken to use group work effectively. Such a research will be of paramount importance not only for teachers and materials producers or textbook writers, but above all for the consumers: the students. The main reason for the shift from teacher-fronted and lecture-oriented method to the learner-centred classroom organisation is after all to help learners learn the language in as short and as effective a way as possible.

This study examines group discussion from a perspective which assumes that the likelihood of understanding classroom dynamics is enhanced when students' perceptions of behaviours

in the classroom are taken into considerations. Such a research study on students' thought processes promises to enhance our understanding of teaching and its outcomes by providing information about the ways students' perceive interaction in the language classroom. As Allwright (1984) argues, the instruction students experience may be different from teachers' intended instruction. Allwright over the years has noted that it is students' perceptions of teaching, rather than the teaching itself that actually influences subsequent learning and achievement.

1.3 The focus of this research

Some people who have taken part in a small group discussion of four, five or six may wonder why it is that some of the group members seem unable to make a contribution while others seem unwilling even to pause for breath. I attended a few classes in one of the MA courses given at Lancaster University and I noticed that whenever there was a group discussion task and we were supposed to discuss in groups of five or six, some of the students remained silent most of the time while just one or two students did most of the talking. I became very interested in understanding why that could be the case. I would sometimes make a note of the number of turns taken, and the amount of verbal participation made by each of the participants in my group. Sometimes it was students whose English was hardly understandable that would do most of the talking, while some of the native English speakers kept quiet. It was during this time, in fact, that I changed the area of my research and decided to study *verbal participation in group discussion*.

In other words, this study sprang out of the interest in such behaviour. I wanted to know what makes students quiet or talkative in group discussions. Some people may feel that they can give accurate explanations for student behaviour of this kind believing it to be a fairly straight forward matter. In one of the departmental social gatherings I happened to be discussing with a certain lady who asked me what area I was focusing on in my research. I

told her that I was studying the verbal participation behaviour of students in group work, why some students are silent and others are talkative, how students perceive the silents and the talkatives, and so on. *I think I can tell you that,* she said, *it is their personality, the quiet ones are shy; the talkative ones are extrovert, that is why they have plenty to say*. This 'popular' view is also evident in student thinking, but is unfortunately not confined to them- evidence of its pervasiveness can also be found in the thinking of academics, and often who can blame them? When faced with two students, one of them is inclined not to communicate much, and another who seems eager to engage in the exchange of ideas, it would be difficult to believe in the ability of the former unless s/he happens to produce exceptional written work, and even then there would be a tendency to look for evidence of 'real' thinking in terms of some verbal ability.

Feelings of dissatisfaction with this popular view of silence and talkativeness prompted my focus on students and how they perceive themselves and others in relation to behaviour of this kind.

I wanted to start by identifying students as belonging somewhere in the silent – talkative continuum. It is only after students were identified in this continuum that they could be studied more meaningfully. It might appear easy to identify silents and talkatives just by observing or asking students. This has actually proved difficult and it was found necessary to use a variety of methods to even classify students as silents and talkers. Once the students were identified, however, it was possible to move on to other questions.

Why do some students keep silent while others talk too much or more than their fair share? Is it for example because of their language proficiency, or their personality? Would their high school background matter or is it just because of their gender role? What do the silent students say about it? What do the talkative say?

Once that is answered the next question was to do with how students perceive or view the silents and the talkers, or how students perceive silence and talkativeness. Do students, for

example, view silents negatively or positively? Would they like to be viewed as talkers? How do the silent students perceive themselves, for example? How do the rest of the student's perceive silents and talkers. Similarly, I wanted to know how talkative students perceive themselves. Do they, for instance, have a more positive self concept, or can being talkative, or seeing oneself in that way, sometimes be a problem for students? Alongside this interest in the personal attitudes of students towards themselves in the discussion situation, I wanted to find out what they think about the discussion group itself as a teaching method and learning experience.

In addition to all these, I became interested in the issue of change over time in the verbal participation behaviour of students in group discussion. I have therefore attempted in this study to see silence and talkativeness across time. That is, I tried to see students' verbal participation in group discussion in one academic year or two semesters. I was interested to know whether students change their participation behaviour. For instance, do some students who were silents towards the beginning of the year become more active participants or do they show some significant change? If they do what factors account for the change? Similarly, do some students who tended to be high participators towards the beginning of the year or during the first semester show a significant decrease in their verbal participation towards the end of the academic year or during the second semester? If they do, what factors account for the change? Adopting this longitudinal dimension I aimed to focus on the possibility of change in the verbal participation of both silent and talkative students, to discover whether the long term experience of silence or talkativeness brings with it differential outcomes, for example in terms of participants' perceptions of their ability, confidence or satisfaction.

Thus, my aim in this study is to examine the ways in which learner factors and situational factors (discussed in Chapter 4), singly and in combination, affect students' participation in

group work. In short, the aim of this study is to explore answers to the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do students differ in their amount of verbal participation in group discussion?

RQ2. What factors account for the difference in the amount of verbal participation?

RQ3. How do low and high participators view themselves and others, and how do others view them?

RQ4. Do students change their participation behaviour over a period of time? What kind of change- increase or decrease in participation? Are there any possible reasons for this?

1.4 Why I chose to study my own class

The bulk of the data for this study has come from one section of first year English language students. Taking the longitudinal nature of the study into account, I decided to look closely at students in my class. In so doing I tried to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of studying one's own class. I then found that the advantages would outweigh the disadvantages.

The main disadvantage of studying ones own class could be that the researcher might be biased in his / her interpretation of the results. But it can be argued that it has got many advantages, especially in this kind of study where students' behaviour needs a close follow-up and observation across a long period of time.

The first main advantage is, I felt, that it would be possible for me to convince students about the purpose of my study- that it was not meant to evaluate or judge students based on the data they

would provide me with and decide their grades based on such judgement. In fact, I felt I should be very open about what things would determine their grades at the end of each of the semesters. That is instead of just telling students what final grade they got I decided to tell them or show them how they performed in the continuous assessment, mid-semester examination, and final semester examination. By so doing I felt it would be possible to win students' willingness and confidence in providing me with natural and reliable data.

This kind of treatment of students would not have been possible if I were to depend on data to be collected from students outside my class. If at all attempt was to be made to win students' honesty and willingness to take part in this kind of study it would be through another teacher – which involves again dealing with the teacher. Again, even if this is possible it could be difficult to make sure that the instructor would be doing as required – mainly because the study requires a lot of patience and full co-operation. That the study is longitudinal in nature also meant that the data had to be collected through out the year. It could be hard to find instructors who would be willing to take up the same section for the second semester. There are different reasons why teaching the same section could be unwanted by instructors (one of which has got to do with the teaching effectiveness assessment made by students).

The second reason for choosing my own class was that the nature of the study required frequent recording of groups while carrying out group discussion. It was possible for me to do the recording myself (the experience I had got from two pilot studies was very important in this respect – This would also mean that if it were to be done by another instructor that instructor had to start the training afresh). In short considering the nature of the study and after weighing the advantages and the disadvantages I decided to study my own class.

1.5 Organisation of the study

This study is organised into three parts and eleven chapters. In part one the general introduction, background, and literature review are provided. In part two the research method or data collection methods and the system of data analysis used in the study will be explained. Part three presents the results or main findings of the study therewith the discussion and conclusion. This last part is organised into 5 chapters. The first four chapters are designed to deal with the four research questions – each of the chapters deals with a single research question. The last chapter (Chapter 11) summarises the findings of the study; presents some pedagogical and research implications, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 THE BACKGROUND

2. 1 Introduction

English now fulfils in Ethiopia the role of a second official language in various areas. It is used in the legislation, broadcasting, and, in some cases, in official correspondence. There are monthly and annual publications issued by various ministries in the country. T*he Ethiopian Herald* is, for instance, a government newspaper published daily by the Ministry of Information. There are also other newspapers coming out weekly in Addis Ababa (like *Addis Tribune, The Monitor, The Reporter*, and *The Sun*) published for local consumption by the private press. Most significantly, English is used extensively in the teaching- learning process in Ethiopian schools.

In the following four sections of this chapter I will briefly discuss issues related to the use of English in the education system. In the first section a general background of modern (as opposed to church) education in the country will be provided. Then, the role of English in education will be discussed briefly. This is followed by a discussion about the teaching of English in the high schools. Finally, the teaching of English in Addis Ababa University (where the present study has been carried out) will be overviewed.

2.2 General background of modern education in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia the first government operated school was opened in 1908 in Addis Ababa by Emperor Menilik. The language of instruction then was French. Students had also to study English, Italian, and Amharic (Pankhurst, 1976:315).

This was, however, interrupted in 1936 by the Italian invasion. The process of modernising the schools resumed after five years, in 1941. One major difference then was the fact that

English took over the role of French as the medium of instruction in the schools. Between 1941 and 1974 Ethiopia experienced drastic but uneven changes in all sectors. It was during this period that the education sector experienced a sharp expansion. According to Tekeste Negash (1996:78) the number of students enrolled on various grade levels rose from 35,000 in 1946 to over a million in 1973. It was also during this period that Amharic was introduced as the medium of instruction for the first six years of primary education throughout the country.

The 1974 coup removed the monarchy and introduced the *derg*- a committee formed of the armed forces - as the rulers of the country. During the reign of the *derg* (1973- 1991) the education system, expanded with at least two undesirable consequences. Firstly, the system was producing school leavers who had no chance of getting employment. Secondly, overstaffing manpower was inescapable because of the commitment of the government to guarantee employment to graduates from colleges and universities (Tekeste 1996:79).

In 1991 the *derg* regime was removed and the EPRDF (the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) became the successor power. Two years later, the EPRDF put out an official education policy through proclamation 45/1993. The proclamation has structured schools in a three-tier system: with eight years of primary, two years of secondary and two years of senior secondary education. Each region, by virtue of this proclamation, has also been given the right to use its own language as a medium of instruction at the elementary level.

Prior to 1993 continuation from elementary to secondary and from secondary to senior secondary schools was determined by success in a national examination conducted by the Ministry of Education. The national examination was, however, abandoned as of June 1993 for the reason that regions had already begun to teach in their regional languages, and, therefore, they saw no reason to administer a national examination in Amharic. At present elementary school education is conducted in 12 different languages: Amharic, Tigrinya,

Oromiffa, Wollayta, Sidama, Kaficho, Benchi, Somali, Afar, Hadiya, Kembata, and Giideo. The number of languages of instruction is expected to rise, as there are, according to Bender et al. (1976), at least 70 languages in the country.

The Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) at the end of grade 12 is prepared and administered by the National Examination Board (NEB) and is used for streaming students to different institutions of higher learning depending on their grade point average. Students who fail to obtain a passing grade in English are not allowed to join any of the different institutions. This is mainly because English is the medium of instruction in higher institutions and it is believed that students' performance at this level will depend to a large extent on their English language proficiency.

2.3 The position of English in education in Ethiopia

At present, English is taught in Ethiopian schools starting from Grade 1 or the first year of schooling when pupils begin their formal education. It is a medium of instruction from grade 9 onwards up to university level. It is also an important school subject in that pupils' future is largely dependent on success in English. A student has to pass in English and mathematics (the two compulsory subjects), in addition to other subjects, in the ESLCE in order to join a higher institution.

Although English has continued to be taught as a subject starting from the first year of schooling, and then becomes the medium of instruction from junior high school onwards, the level of students' English has not been found to be sufficient enough to help them study other subjects. Some studies (Stoddart, 1986; McNab, 1989; Hailemichael, 1993; and Gebremedhin, 1993) have already indicated that the English language proficiency level of students in Ethiopia is so low that it does not allow them to follow their studies during their high school and university years. In a report to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education about

'the use and study of English in Ethiopian schools' Stoddart (1986:6), based on impressions that he gained from interviews and his own personal observation, reported the following:

> ...The English possessed by the vast majority of students at all levels is totally inadequate for the purpose of learning other subjects through it. Students do not possess sufficient English even to understand what they hear from their teachers or read in their textbooks, let alone to participate actively through their own speaking and writing. .... As a result of this inability of students to function through English, the quality of teaching and learning in schools has been very adversely affected ...mere rote learning often prevails, with no critical and creative participation of students, and little enough of even simple comprehension by them of what they are being told.

Various explanations have been given for this state of affairs. Some of these are lack of conditions to use the language both in and outside of classroom; inappropriate textbooks; large class size; and lack of motivation on the part of students.

Stoddart suggested that Amharic should be adopted as the medium of instruction up to and including first-degree level. However the claim that it is impossible to carry on with English as a medium of instruction at high schools and universities and the suggestion that it should be replaced by one of the major languages in the country is according to Seime (1999:48). "unwarranted, because Stoddart's main assumption is highly impressionistic and subjective. He did not ascertain the magnitude of the 'language gap', i.e. the difference between what students require for successful English –medium education at a particular level and what their competence actually is".

The other reason mentioned is that if one of the local languages becomes the medium of instruction in high schools, the task of producing teaching materials will be forbidding, aside from training teachers to teach, and the inadequacy of the vocabulary of the language selected. On top of these, of the many languages in the country only three are used by much more than one million speakers. Amharic would thus be the second or third or even fourth

language for some students. Thus, according to Seime (1999) the suggestion by Stoddart would neither be a solution to the problem of inadequate English, nor the solution to the problem of providing accessibility to education. The suggestion is that the solution to the problem lies not only in maintaining English as a medium of instruction in the high schools and in the universities but also in enhancing the quality of teacher training, and improving the proficiency level of the students.

2.4 English language teaching and education in Ethiopia

2.4.1 ELT in the high schools in Ethiopia

English was adopted as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian schools in 1944. The teaching of English was, then, mostly handled by Indian teachers. Then American Peace Corps Volunteers taught the subject for a few years. Later, however, teacher training institutes were founded to train Ethiopians to teach English as well as other subjects.

Prior to 1966 schools were using English course books that were not specifically designed for use in Ethiopian schools. In September 1966 Book I of the *New Oxford English Course Ethiopia* was introduced into the elementary schools. Four years later, in 1970, the first book in *The Oxford English Course for Ethiopia*- popularly known as the *Contact* series started to be used in grade nine - with the introduction of a new book from the series for the remaining grade levels each year. Murison-Bowie (1976:427), the editor of the series, expounded the contemporary theories that informed the methodology used to develop the books. He also mentioned the educational context in which these books were designed to be used:

> The series is being written against a background of research into the overall aim of teaching English in Ethiopia at this level, into the role of the textbook in the classroom, and into the relevance to language teaching of developments in linguistic and related sciences. An attempt is being made to produce a course which will require minimum reliance upon the teachers in equipping the pupils with the skills required of them at the end

> of their secondary education. These requirements are seen to centre upon the linguistic skills of being able to understand fairly sophisticated spoken and written English and of being able to speak and write fairly simple English, and on the educational skill of being able to appreciate more than one point of view, and assess a situation or opinion when presented with conflicting evidence.

According to Gebremedhin (1993), the books were the first of their kind specifically designed to be used for teaching English in Ethiopian secondary schools. Unfortunately, before their effects on developing students' linguistic ability could be reliably assessed, the books were replaced in 1979 by a new series – English for New Ethiopia (ENE) which was developed by the Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education. The ENE series was produced in haste to fill the gap created as a result of the Ministry's decision to dispense with all materials and textbooks that were believed not to be reflecting the contemporary ideology – socialism.

Some writers (e.g. Stoddart 1986) feel that this step was taken to minimise the role of the English language teaching in the country as it was generally believed that most students found it difficult to think in abstract terms, to generalise concepts and to comprehend things and phenomena in English. Another argument for scrapping the *Contac*t series could be that "the books followed the structuralist approach in an inconsistent way and they were too limited in scope and methodology to provide an adequate exposure to the English language in order to help students to develop their linguistic abilities. Most of the reading passages were too difficult to follow and many students did not read them at all" (Gebremedhin, 1993:38).

After the introduction of the ENE series in 1979, the English teaching –learning situation in most government schools has deteriorated so much that hardly few benefited from it. Last (1983:ii) believes that the condition is created "by the strenuous efforts made for quantitative development in response to political and social demand for the universalism of

access to education and the democratisation of educational services (that) have limited the volume of resources which could be applied to upgrading the environment of education. These shortages of quality and even of essential input have obviously placed limits on the experiences which can be offered in the nation's schools."

It can be argued, thus, that AAU cannot remain unaffected by the changing situations in schools. It is believed that the changes have affected both the educational system and the nature and quality of English language teaching in the university as well. As a result, most of Addis Ababa University first year students do not have the required knowledge of the English language. (Gebremedhin 1993; Hailemichael 1993).

2.4.2 English Language Teaching in the Addis Ababa University

Starting from its inauguration in 1951 Addis Ababa University (University College of Addis Ababa as it was called then) used English as the medium of instruction. Thus students were required to have a high level of English language competence in order to perform successfully as university students. Until the mid-sixties it seemed that there were no complaints about students' language proficiency level. Later, however, as the student population in the high schools started to increase and as teacher qualifications decreased, there were complaints about students' poor English language proficiency. Consequently, students joining the university were found to be linguistically incompetent to cope with their academic studies, and the incompetence became more evident as time went on. The fundamental aim for the introduction of service English courses at the university level was, thus, to help students improve their English language proficiency so that they could follow lectures and perform effectively as university students.

2.4.2.1 Teaching materials

Initially, there were no standard teaching materials for the courses that were designed to help students develop their English. Rogers, Tan and Hutton (1967) produced the first set of textbooks in two volumes: *College English Volume 1&2.* The service English course and the books, which presented vocabulary and structure in context and had extensive drills, were meant to be temporary and remedial, only to last two to three years. This was because some instructors expressed their view that the two volumes were not up to the standard and did not help students much. Asfaw and Murison-Bowie (1976:426), for instance, argued that "on the whole, the books made wide use of available techniques.... The books' treatment of grammar, however, fails to develop the learner's ability in this field systematically. Such explanations as are given tend to be incomplete and confusing, and the amount of drilling and exercising of grammatical points is unlikely to be sufficient for the remedy of common errors."

The remedial work was not phased out as planned. The two volumes of College English were, however, made available to senior high schools in 1969 in the hope that the university English language service courses would soon phase out. In the mean time, the service English courses were offered without any standard course books. Instructors used a set of hand-outs (Asfaw and Murison-Bowie 1976:428). In 1978 the *Freshman Intensive Remote English*, or *FIRE*, by Mortimer, was introduced. The book had separate volumes for arts and science students. The volumes had an ESP orientation and consisted of a teacher's book and students' workbooks. *FIRE* was dropped, for various reasons, and the courses continued to be given without any standard text book until 1985 when *Freshman English 101A* and *Freshman English 101B* came out. Each volume consisted of six units and each unit had a reading comprehension passage, followed by a few multiple choice and wh-questions on the reading passage. The second section consisted of vocabulary exercises based mostly on the reading passage. The third section provided the definition and

explanation of selected grammatical items, followed by exercises mostly on sentence level, like providing the appropriate form of a given verb. The last section was on writing (see Gebremedhin 1993 for extensive review).

The course books again proved to be inappropriate in their form of presentation and deficient in their content. The reading passages were mostly too long and uninteresting. The questions on the reading comprehension mostly focused on students' ability to recall and were sometimes easily answered either without reading the passage in question or looking back at the body of the passage. The exercises on vocabulary development did not fare better than those on reading. They were mostly fill-in types. Typically, a list of vocabulary items taken from the previous reading passage was provided with isolated sentences with blanks. Similarly, the section on grammar took a certain grammatical notion, like the passive, and provided a definition with accompanying sentences to demonstrate the point of discussion. The general emphasis on grammar was apparently as prominent as before. In the introduction to the first volume of Freshman English 101A it is stated that "the aim of these courses is to review and revise the ground rules of English structure and usage while at the same time extending the students' active and passive command of the language" (Conroy, 1985). As a result, the exercises on the structure and usage part mostly encouraged the mere study of verb forms. In a survey carried out by Gebremedhin (1988) Freshman English instructors also mentioned most of these points.

In 1993 it was agreed that the two volumes of Freshman English should not be used anymore. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, with financial and man power support from the British Council, started a new project on developing new textbooks for the Freshman English course. In the mean time, a textbook designed for use in one of the colleges in Addis Ababa was adopted. After three years of writing and experimenting the new textbooks – College English Volume 1 and College English Volume 2 – appeared. The new volumes are skill-based and unlike previous volumes the emphasis is on use than usage.

Each volume has seven units and each unit has sections on listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar and vocabulary. There are lots of activities students are required to carry out in groups. In fact, most of the tasks require students to work in pairs and in groups. The use of group work in English classes at the moment seems to be accepted by both students and teachers. The improvement it has brought about on students' language proficiency, students' verbal participation behaviour in group work, and whether it has been used properly has, however, not been yet studied.

2.4.2.2 System of grading and evaluation

First year students taking the course College English are usually required to take different tests which add up to 100 per cent– including mid-semester and final examination. The weighting for the components may sometimes differ from year to year. One recent development in the Testing of College English is however the fact that different skills are tested. Table 2.1 below shows the skills tested and the weighting in percentages.

Table 2.1 Mark allotment to the different skills

		Per cent	Remarks
1	Listening	10	Prepared by the Testing Committee
2	Speaking	10	Instructors are encouraged to assess students' based on their performance in group work/ discussion
3	Writing	20	Part of this is usually given as a class test
4	Reading	30	Prepared by the Testing Committee
5	Grammar	20	Prepared by the Testing Committee
6	Vocabulary	10	Prepared by the Testing Committee

The main system of grading in the First Year English courses has over the years remained almost unchanged. The basis for grading students has been the use of the 'normal curve' to decide the marks or points that should be awarded a certain grade. The guiding principle is that 16% of the students should get an A and a B (usually divided between 5% and 11%, for an A and a B, respectively) and the same proportion of students should get a D and an F (again 11% a D and the remaining 5% an F). This would leave the vast majority of the students (68%) to get the middle pass grade: a C.

There are usually certain procedures that the Freshman English Testing Committee, responsible mainly for the preparation of the examination and later the cut-off points, follows. What the Committee does is it would first collect a tally sheet from all or the vast majority of instructors as to the number of students who have scored between 1-100 points. Then the committee decides the cut-off points based on the frequency of students who have fallen into the required range or percentage. Once the cut-off point is decided it applies to all students who have taken the same set of examination – whether it is a degree programme or a diploma programme. All instructors are expected to strictly follow the suggestions or the cut-off points the committee has prepared.

A different set of examination is usually prepared for students who attend extension or evening classes. As a result, the Committee prepares a different scale or cut-off point – although the principle or procedure remains the same.

It is important to mention here that there are students who come from different backgrounds. There are students who come from remote regional schools with poor facilities and less experienced teachers. There are on the other hand students who come from well equipped private schools (most of them in the capital, Addis Ababa) that constitute nearly 2% of the student population at high school level. The ESLCE pass rate of the students from such schools is however nearly 100% (Awol 1999). As a result they constitute

quite a big proportion of the student population in higher institution, specially AAU. The system of grading seems to favour such students who have a very good English language background.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to briefly discuss the position of English in the Ethiopian system of education, the problems faced at different times and how they have been dealt with. Inasmuch as the present study concerns the use of group work at AAU, some discussion has also been devoted to the discussion of the problems faced, the textbooks used over the years, and the system of grading used at the university.

This chapter has provided the background in which English has been taught and used in the educational system in Ethiopia. The next chapter will present current theoretical background for using group work in the language classroom.

CHAPTER 3

GROUP WORK IN ELT: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

Brumfit (1984:71) has reported that there has been an increasing interest since the 1930s in verbal interactions in small groups. The use of group work in ELT has, however, been put firmly on the agenda since the mid 1970s when educational and applied linguistics researchers (such as Hoetker and Ahlbrand 1969, Long 1975, Fanselow 1977, and Mehan 1979) revealed the pedagogic and psycholinguistic advantages it has over lockstep methods. There have been a number of studies of features in small group interaction since the beginning of the 1980s (e.g., Long and Sato 1983; Gass & Varonis 1986; Pica & Daughty 1985; and Long & Porter, 1985). Methodologists have recommended small group work (including pair work) in the second language classroom based on arguments which, for the most part, are pedagogical. While those arguments are powerful enough, group work has also taken on increased psycholinguistic significance. This is due to new theories and research findings on three related topics: 1) the role of comprehensible input in second language acquisition (SLA), 2) the role of comprehensible output in SLA, and 3) the interaction between language learners, or interlanguage talk.

In this chapter I will first present the main arguments for using group work in education in general and in ELT in particular. This is followed by a discussion of the criticisms against the method.

3.2 Reasons for using group work

3.2.1 Group work in education: pedagogic arguments

A number of theoretical and philosophical underpinnings have been put forward by practitioners concerned to substantiate their enthusiasm for using group work in education

in general and in language classes in particular. The work of Long and Porter (1985) is of much importance in this section, and I have drawn considerably from their work. Their ideas and formulations provide a wealth of insight for those interested in finding out more about the assumptions behind using group work in language classrooms in particular.

3.2.1.1 The changing paradigm of teaching

The use of group work in education stands against a traditional teaching model that depicts the teacher as the owner and giver of information, and students as learners and receivers. The old paradigm of teaching is based on the assumption that the untrained student mind is like a blank sheet of paper waiting for the instructor to write on it. Student mind is viewed as empty vessel into which teachers pour their wisdom. According to Johnson and Johnson (1994) these and other assumptions led teachers to think of teaching in terms of 1) transmitting knowledge from teacher to students. That is to say, the teacher's job is to give it; the student's job is to get it. Teachers transmit information that students are expected to memorise and then recall. 2) It is also assumed that it is the teacher's job to fill passive empty vessels with knowledge. Students are passive recipients of knowledge. Teachers own the knowledge that students memorise and recall.

The old paradigm of teaching is, however, being dropped for new paradigm based on theory and research that have applications to instruction. Following are four, among many other, commonly held assumptions for using group work in education. The assumptions are interrelated, and are not distinctly separate.

First, it is believed that "knowledge is constructed, discovered, transformed, and extended by students" (Johnson and Johnson 1994:261). According to the same writers the main role of teachers is to create the conditions within which students can construct meaning from the

material studied by processing it through existing cognitive structures and then retaining it in long-term memory where it remains open to further processing and possible reconstruction.

At the core of this assumption is the belief that people can learn from each other as well as from teachers and knowledge is constructed and reconstructed as a social process. It is not all 'out there' to be uncovered as 'truth '. On this issue Reynolds (1994:26) writes "understanding in any field of enquiry is something which is constantly being created and negotiated and formal education should support that process through its methodology."

In group discussion, it is assumed that all participants come to see themselves as mutual discoverers making contributions of equal weight in a co-operative and non-threatening atmosphere. According to Abercrombie (1975:11) "... if the student receives a body of knowledge from what seems to be a remote monolithic source and swallows it whole and in childlike way, he is less likely to question it, less likely to be able to modify it as need arises, than if he has received it as a mature person, from a challengeable equal."

Second is the notion of 'active' as opposed to 'passive' learning, an idea involving a view of the learner as a seeker of solutions rather than a gatherer of information. Giving weight to student discovery in the learning process is a view which emphasises the importance of learner involvement if a deeper and more enduring learning experience is to be achieved. In this framework, understanding comes from the learner actively "manipulating symbols, posing questions and seeking answers, reconciling what is found one time with what is found at another, comparing findings with those of other students" (Piaget, 1964:98). Johnson and Johnson (1994:261) take up this idea when they argue that "learning is conceived of as something a learner does, not something that is done to a learner. Students do not passively accept knowledge from the teacher or curriculum. They activate their existing cognitive structures to subsume the new input".

Thirdly, group work is thought to foster creativity and a capacity for critical thinking in students rather than simply the retention and unquestioning acceptance of spoon-fed

knowledge. Bruner (1957) refers to this kind of creativity as 'going beyond the information given', a learning process which, through an active dialogue with other students, encourages in students the desire to work things out for themselves, to sort out information and ideas so as to be able to go on to new ways of seeing and understanding the subject.

Finally, group work is seen as vital in "bringing about a change in the authority-dependency relationship" which exists between teacher and student (Abercrombie & Terry, 1978:153). It does so by allowing students greater freedom of expression thus promoting an increase in autonomy and willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. On this Abercrombie (1975:13) writes: "...the distinctive contribution that small group teaching can make to education is in encouraging students to become more autonomous as learners." The group system aims to emancipate students from the authority-dependency relationship, and to help them develop intellectual independence and maturity through interaction with peers, by glimpsing not only the context in which a more experienced scholar sees his problem, but the various contexts in which several equals see the problem. The idea of learner autonomy has also been emphasised in the field of language teaching (Wenden 1987).

Taken together, advocates argue that the use of group work in teaching offers participants the opportunity to gain access to a valuable learning experience with the potential to liberate them from over dependency on the 'word' of the tutor, through the development of their own capacity for critical thought, encouraging them to take a more active responsibility for their own learning. What Dillon (1994:109) has written regarding this might summarise the issues raised so far in this section.

> Through discussion we experience personal growth, considered apart from academic learning and communicative competence. For instance, in discussion our personal involvement is deeper, and more significant to us. The dynamics of our self become increasingly active, independent, searching, by contrast to passive, dependent or even infantile, reactive and quiescent. We grow also in interpersonal respects. A review of the literature on adult group discussion lists growth in perceptiveness of the feelings and behaviours of others, openness in interrelationships,

acceptance of differences in others, understanding and skill as a group member, self-awareness and self-confidence in interaction.

The discussion in this section has emphasised the pedagogic value of group work in education in general, including language teaching. In the next section more emphasis is put on pedagogic arguments for group work that are discussed in ELT.

3.2.1.2. Group work increases language practice opportunities.

Some writers (e.g. Long and Porter 1985) argue that one of the main reasons for low achievement by many language learners is simply that they are not given the opportunity to practise the new language. (This claim also turns out to have considerable psycholinguistic importance- discussed under section 3.2.2).

When lessons are organised in such a way that the teacher sets the same instructional pace and content for everyone, by lecturing, explaining a grammar point, leading drill work, or asking questions of the whole class, a typical teacher of any subject talks for at least half, and often for as much as two thirds of any class period (Flanders 1970). In a 50-minute lesson, that would leave 25 minutes for the students. If 10 minutes is spent on activities related to classroom management like checking attendance and assigning homework, that leaves 15 minutes. In an EFL class of 30 students in a public secondary school classroom, this averages out to 30 seconds per student per lesson-or just one hour per student per year. (In College English classes at AAU, where there are 40 students in a section, this would in fact turn out to be less than 25 seconds per student per lesson and less than 50 minutes per year.)

Brumfit (1984:87) holds that "the use of pair and group work is the only available basis that can increase the amount and intensity of practice during oral work". Long and Porter (1985:209) illustrate this with the public school setting. Supposing that just half the time

available for individual student talk is devoted to work in groups of three instead of to lockstep practice, in which one student talks while 29 listen. This will improve the total individual practice time available to each student by over 500 percent, i.e., from one hour to about five and half-hours, per academic year.

3.2.1.3. Group work motivates learners.

It is widely believed (e.g. Reynolds 1994:26) that people learn more when they are involved and are enjoying themselves- when they are motivated. According to Reynolds using group activities makes learning more memorable because they are more engaging. "Taking part in group activities involves not only the mind; values and feelings are also brought into play. Learning under these conditions is more likely to 'stick' " (Reynolds, 1994: 26).

Long and Porter also believe that group work motivates the language learner – because it allows for a greater quantity and richer variety of language practice, practice that is better adapted to individual needs and conducted in a more positive affective climate. Students are also individually involved in lessons more often and at a more personal level.

The belief that group work motivates learners has also been supported by empirical evidence. It has been found, for example, that small-group, independent study can lead to increased motivation to study a second language among beginning students. In another study second language learners responding to a questionnaire also reported that they felt less inhibited and freer to speak and make mistakes in small group discussion than in lockstep organisation (Littlejohn 1983).

3.2.1.4 Group work improves the quality of student talk.

Inasmuch as teacher-fronted lessons favour a highly conventionalised variety of conversation, one rarely found outside classrooms, they may also limit the quality of talk

students can engage in. In such settings, Long and Porter argue, a teacher may, for instance, ask a series of display questions, such as 'Do you come to class at eight o'clock?- a question to which there is only one correct answer, already known to both parties. The student responds 'I do' and then, in the classroom, typically has the correctness of the response confirmed (Yes, Right, or Good). This does not, however, usually allow for genuine communication to take place. Such work may be useful for developing grammatical accuracy (although, according to the writers, this has never been shown). It is unlikely, therefore, to promote the kind of conversational skills students need outside the classroom, where communicative ability is always at a premium, no matter how accuracy is also important. One of the main reasons for the introduction of the communicative methodology in ELT lies, it is argued, in the fact that this methodology attempts to motivate learners and stimulate psycholinguistic processes, which Long and Porter argue is very rare in the lockstep organisation. Johnson (1998:70) writes: "...the justification of techniques like the information gap is motivational: the tedium of non-information gap practice, where learners constantly tell each other things that they already know, is replaced by at least a degree of genuine information exchange. But an equally plausible justification relates to processing."

Long and Porter (1985) hold that group work can help a great deal to develop students' communicative ability. First, unlike the lockstep where the teacher acts as a distant initiator of talk and students as the interlocuters, face-to-face communication in a small group is a natural setting for conversation. Second, two or three students working together for five minutes at a stretch can engage in cohesive and coherent sequences of utterances, thereby developing discourse competence. In other words, they are not limited to producing hurried, isolated "sentences" which are thought to be typical in lockstep teaching. Thirdly, as shown by Long, et.al. (1976, cited in Long and Porter, 1985), students can have the chance to take on roles and adopt positions and can thus practice a range of language functions associated with those roles and positions.

To sum up, it is argued that when students work in small groups the quality of student talk improves a lot. Learners can also have the opportunity to develop at least some of the variety of skills which make up communicative competence in the target language.

3.2.1.5 Group work helps individualise instruction.

According to Long and Porter (1985) one major shortcoming of the lockstep organisation in language classes is the fact that it rides roughshod over many individual differences. Some students, for example, may have much better comprehension than production skills, and vice versa. Some may speak haltingly but accurately, while others may make lots of errors, although they speak fluently. Other kinds of individual differences ignored by lockstep teaching include students' age, cognitive/ developmental stage, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude, personality, interests, cognitive style, cultural background, native language, prior language learning experience, and target language needs.

Long and Porter (1985) hold that group work can help although it may not handle all the differences. Small groups of students can be made to work on different sets of materials suited to their needs. Thus, group work is, the writers argue, a first step towards individualisation of instruction, which everyone agrees is a good idea but which few teachers or textbooks seem to do much about. Brumfit (1984:77) also argues that "placing students in small groups assists individualisation, for each group, being limited by its own capacities, determines its own appropriate level of working more precisely than can a class working in lockstep, with its larger numbers".

3.2.1.6 Group work promotes a positive affective climate.

Barnes (1973), who has extensively studied children's talk in small groups, has reported a high incidence of pauses, hesitations, stumbling over new words, false starts, changes of

direction, and expressions of doubt. This is because, it is argued, an intimate group provides a more supportive environment and allows students to be relatively inexplicit and incoherent, to change direction in the middle of a sentence, to be uncertain and self-contradictory.

Due to the "audience effect" of the large class, the perception of the listening teacher as judge, the need to produce a short and polished product, many students, especially the shy or linguistically insecure, experience considerable stress when called upon in the public arena of the lockstep classroom. This stress is increased by the knowledge that they must respond accurately and above all quickly. Research (see, for example, Rowe 1974) has shown that if students pause longer than about one second before beginning to respond or while making a response, or appear not to know the answer, or make an error, teachers will tend to interrupt, repeat, or rephrase the question, ask a different one, "correct," and/ or switch to another student. Seime (1999: 358) has also studied wait time in college classes in Ethiopia and has found out that it is o.75 seconds, on average. Not all teachers do these things, of course, but most teachers do so more than they realise or would want to admit.

Brumfit (1984:77) holds that "the small group setting is more natural than that of the full class, for the size of the group resembles that of normal conversational groupings. Because of this, the stress which accompanies 'public' performance in the classroom should be reduced."

3.2.2 Group work in language learning: Psycholinguistic arguments

In many traditional as well as current teaching methods and materials group work is commonly used because it is believed that participation in face-to-face interaction offers language learners the opportunity to practise L2 skills, to test out their hypothesis about how the language works (in comprehension and production), and to get useful feedback. In addition, many writers claim that participation in interaction can play an even broader and

more theoretically important role in the learning process by assisting language learners in their need to obtain input and feedback that can serve as linguistic data for grammar building and to modify and adjust their output in ways that extend their current interlanguage capacity (Hatch 1978; 1983; Long 1983; 1985; 1990; Pica 1991; Long and Porter 1985; Swain 1985; Allwright 1984).

In this section I will review the main psycholinguistic arguments for using group work in language classes: the role of comprehensible input, a comparison of the role of interactive and non-interactive input and their role in SLA, and the role of comprehensible output in SLA.

3.2.2.1 Comprehensible input and SLA

The role of comprehensible input in SLA has been the focus of attention in much SLA research and theory for more than a decade and a half. Comprehensible input has been defined as L2 input just beyond the learner's current L2 competence, in terms of its syntactic complexity. If a learner's current competence is ***i***, then comprehensible input is ***i* +1**, the next step in the developmental sequence. It has been claimed that input which is either too simple (already acquired) or too complex (*i* +2 / 3 / 4...) will not be useful for acquisition (Krashen, 1985).

Some researchers (e.g. Krashen) see comprehensible input as a major causative factor in L2 acquisition. The most influential theoretical positions are those advanced by Krashen and Long. Two of the most influential theoretical positions are the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), and the input and interaction hypothesis, an extension of the input hypothesis (Long, 1983;1985). Krashen's input Hypothesis (Krashen 1981; 1985; 1989) makes the following claims:

1. Learners progress along the natural order by understanding input that contains structures a little bit beyond their current level of competence.

2. Although CI is necessary for acquisition to take place, it is not sufficient, as learners also need to be effectively disposed to "let in" the input they comprehend.

3. Input becomes comprehensible as a result of simplification and with the help of contextual and extralinguistic clues: "fine-tuning" (i.e. ensuring that learners receive input rich in the specific linguistic property they are due to acquire next) is not necessary.

4. Speaking is the result of acquisition, not its cause; learner production does not contribute directly to acquisition.

The idea that 'comprehensible input' at the right level of difficulty is not only necessary but sufficient to ensure acquisition has been questioned. There are many cases of L2 learners who have failed to progress beyond a fossilised and deviant interlanguage, at least as far as their own production is concerned, despite abundant meaning-oriented input. For example, in Canada in recent decades, many English L1 students have received French-medium education, in so-called immersion programmes. These students have been exposed to large amounts of French communicative input, in the school setting. Their progress has been extensively researched, and it is known that in some respects these immersions make very good progress (e.g. their comprehension of French approaches native speaker levels). However many of these students seem to 'fossilise' as far as spoken French is concerned – that is, they fail to achieve productive control of many aspects of French grammar and lexis (see e.g. Swain 1985; Swain and Lapkin 1995). On the basis of such evidence, Swain argues in her Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (discussed under 3.2.2.3), that comprehension of L2 input is often achievable by semantic / pragmatic means, making it unnecessary for the L2 listener (or reader) to struggle to process unfamiliar syntax in full. She suggests that it is the effort of composing new utterance which is more likely to drive learners to form new hypotheses about target language syntax, and to try them out. Thus she sees the acquisition

of new syntactic structures in particular as more likely to result from learners' attempts at L2 production, than simply from the struggle to comprehend i +1 utterances.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis has also been frequently criticised (e.g. McLaughlin 1987:36-51) for being vague and imprecise: how do we determine level *i*, and level *i*+1? Nowhere is this vital point made clear. Moreover, Krashen's claim is criticised for being somewhat circular: acquisition takes place if the learner receives comprehensible input, and comprehensible input is claimed to have been provided if acquisition takes place. The theory becomes impossible to verify, as no independently testable definition is given of what comprehensible input actually consists of, and therefore of how it might relate to acquisition (Mitchell and Myles, 1998).

3.2.2.2 The relationship between input, interaction, and SLA

The theoretical claims made by Krashen (1982; 1983; 1985) and Long (1983; 1985) have led to research in two aspects of input: 1) the relationship between input (both interactive and non-interactive) and comprehension, and 2) the relationship between linguistic /conversational adjustments and acquisition. To date, there has been far more research directed at the first one, mainly because of the difficulties of designing studies to investigate the second one – dealing with the relationship to acquisition.

The input and interaction hypothesis (Long, 1983; 1985) combines an argument regarding the value of comprehensible input to SLA and an argument for the importance of modified input for learner comprehension. In other words, while accepting the view that simplified input and context can play a role in making input comprehensible, Long emphasises the importance of the interactional modifications that occur in negotiating meaning when a communicative problem arises.

In recognition of these difficulties, Long (1985:378) has suggested the following three steps as a way of gaining insight into how interactive input affects acquisition:

Step 1. Show that linguistic/ conversational adjustments (a) promote comprehension of input (b)

Step 2. Show that comprehensible input (b) promotes acquisition (c)

Step 3. Deduce that linguistic / conversational adjustments (a) promote acquisition (c)

Young (1988) has pointed out that although a number of studies have demonstrated step (1), in Long's syllogism, there have been few which have tackled (2), which is, in fact, the crucial step. But what evidence is there that linguistic /conversational adjustments promote comprehension of input? To answer this question, it is helpful to separate out research that has investigated non-interactive input from that into interactive input.

Pica, Young, and Doughty (1987) compared the effect of three types of input on the ability of sixteen low-intermediate ESL learners to comprehend oral instructions. The three types were 1) unmodified input (i.e. input of the kind that native speakers use when addressing each other, 2) premodified input (i.e. input that had been modified and made redundant), and 3) interactionally modified input (i.e. the subjects listened to unmodified instructions but were given the opportunity to seek clarification). The results showed that interactionally modified input resulted in the highest levels of comprehension. Subsequent studies by Loschky (1989) have confirmed these results.

Half a decade later Pica (1992) conducted an other similar study and found that when the extent of the input adjustments was carefully controlled in the premodified and interactionally modified conditions no difference in comprehension was found. A post-*hoc* analysis, however, suggested that those learners rated as having lower comprehension ability by their teachers benefited from the opportunity to interact. Pica's study also found no

significant differences in the comprehension of learners who observed negotiation taking place but did not actually negotiate themselves, and those who actively participated.

It should be noted that in all these studies the opportunity for negotiation led to considerable repetition and rephrasing with the result that interactionally modified input provided the learners with much more input than was available in unmodified input and premodified input. It is not clear, therefore, whether the advantage found for interactionally modified input arises from greater quantity of input or better quality (i.e. input made relevant through the negotiation of meaning).

3.2.2.3 Learner output / production and acquisition

Swain (1985) argues that learners need the opportunity for meaningful use of their linguistic resources to achieve full grammatical competence. She argues that when learners experience communicative failure, they are pushed into making their output more precise, coherent, and appropriate. She also argues that production may encourage learners to move from semantic (top-down) to syntactic (bottom-up) processing. Whereas comprehension of a message can take place with little syntactic analysis of the input, "producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning (Swain 1985; 249).

A decade later Swain (1995, 125-144) has slightly modified (developed) the output hypothesis and has proposed three functions of output in second language learning. The first hypothesis is that output promotes 'noticing'. That is to say, in producing the target language (vocally or subvocally) learners may notice a gap between what they *want* to say and what they *can* say, leading them to recognise what they do not know, or know only partially. In other words, under some circumstances, the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognise some of their

linguistic problems; it may bring to their attention something they need to discover about their L2 (Swain 1995). This may trigger cognitive process which might generate linguistic knowledge that is new for learners, or which consolidate their existing knowledge (Swain and Lapkin 1995).

A second way in which producing language may serve the language learning process is through hypothesis testing. That is, producing output is one way of testing a hypothesis about comprehensibility or linguistic well-formedness. A considerable body of research and theorising over the last two decades (e.g. Corder 1981) has suggested that output, particularly erroneous output, can often be an indication that a learner has formulated a hypothesis about how the language works, and is testing it out. Sometimes this output invokes feedback which can lead learners to modify or 'reprocess' their output.

Thirdly, as learners reflect upon their own target language use, their output serves a metalinguistic function, enabling them to control and internalise linguistic knowledge. Swain considers this as the pedagogical means by which we can ensure that the other two functions operate.

When Swain (1995) argues that a function of output is to test hypotheses, she is assuming that the output itself is sometimes the hypothesis. That is, the output represents the learner's best guess as to how something should be said or written. We rarely ask learners what their hypotheses are, but rather infer them from the output itself. Under certain task conditions, however, learners will not only reveal their hypotheses, but reflect on them, using language to do so. It is this 'level' of output, Swain claims, that represents its metalinguistic function of using language to reflect on language, allowing learners to control and internalise it.

To summarise, although there are sufficient indications to suggest that it is worth pursuing, there is little tangible evidence to support the output hypothesis. It is possible that when learners produce pushed output they are able to develop greater control over the features

they have already acquired. It is not clear, however, whether pushed output can result in the acquisition of new linguistic features.

3.3 Some drawbacks to group work

So far, I have been concerned with outlining the way proponents of group discussion present their case for the use of the method and the theoretical basis for using group work. However, group work is not without its problems, and the doubtful have been concerned to point these out. In this section, I will consider some of the problems identified, and issues raised by those who, although not necessarily arguing against the use of group discussion, feel that reality of the experience of the method does not always quite match up to the promise made by enthusiasts.

While not totally opposing the idea of using group work in language classes, Prabhu (1987:81) suggests that a "systematic group work" be used. This term refers to the 'right' given to learners to "consult fellow-learners either briefly or to an extent amounting collaboration". His argument for using a systematic group work is that " it will generate spontaneous interaction between members of a group, creating opportunities for the deployment of their emerging internal systems". What he refers to as deployment is a process "during which learners' internal systems get firmed up (in production as well as in comprehension) and revised or extended (in comprehension). This opportunity arises when the internal system encounters samples of language which "embody a more highly developed internal system". The latter is, it seems, quite similar to what Krashen (1985) calls i+1. Continuous exposure to such samples of language helps learners to balance the process of "firming up" by a process of revision and extension.

Prabhu (1987:81) goes on arguing: "Since differences between learners are much smaller than those between the internal systems of the learners as a group and that of a teacher,

sustained interaction between learners is likely to provide much less opportunity for system-revision." Thus, if learners internal systems become too firm, as a result of extended learner-learner interaction or each learner's output reinforcing the internal systems of others (without there being a balance between firming up and revision) then there will be a risk of fossilisation - the internal systems become much less open to revision when superior data are available.

According to Pica and Doughty, (1985), ungrammatical production by students is more likely to be directed at their teacher than at other classroom participants. However, based on the more equalised distribution of role relationships in group work, a steady diet of group activities appears to increase the proportion of ungrammatical input directed toward the classroom learner. This may lead perhaps to stabilised non-target variety – or fossilisation.

It has been mentioned under section 3.2.1.5 that one major argument for using group work is that small peer-groups provide a more supportive environment for learners which is less threatening than interaction with the teacher. But, Prabhu argues, "at least some learners find it more humiliating to lose face in front of their peers than in front of the teacher: they wish to see themselves as being equal to the former, but not to the latter". Also, some learners wish to work alone, to prove to themselves that they can succeed in doing the task without help.

Prabhu (1987:82) has also argued that there are likes and dislikes, and patterns of rivalry, friendship, and aspiration in the context of the class as a social group. "To expect learners to shed or subdue such feelings of conflict in the interests of better second language learning is idealistic, and to cast the teacher in a threatening role and see learners as mutually supportive individuals seems simplistic". He insists that teachers should give learners the right to seek or not to seek help from peers on any given occasion.

A number of studies have compared the interaction in teacher-centred lessons with that found in group work. Long et al. (1976) report that students working in small groups

produced a greater quantity of language and also better quality language than students in teacher-fronted, lockstep classroom setting. Pica & Doughty (1985), however, found no difference in the overall quantity of interactional adjustments in a one-way task performed in a lockstep setting and in small-group work, but when they replicated this study using a two-way task , they found significant differences. Thus, group work only results in more negotiation of meaning if the task is of the required -information exchange type. (The role of tasks will be further discussed in the next chapter.)

However, both Pica & Daughty (1985), and Porter (1986), point out that interlanguage talk is less grammatical than teacher talk. It is possible, therefore, that exposure to incorrect peer input may lead to fossilisation. However, two of Porter's findings give reason to believe that this may not be the case. She reports that when learners corrected each other's errors, they did so wrongly only 0.3 per cent of the time and also that only 3 per cent of the errors the learners produced could be attributed to repetition of a fellow learner's error. In general, therefore, learners do not appear to be unduly disadvantaged by exposure to deviant input from other learners. In one respect, though ILT maybe inferior. Porter (1986) found that non-native speakers did not provide sociolinguistically appropriate input and suggests that learners may not be able to develop sociolinguistic competence from each other.

To summarise the issues raised in this chapter, it has been claimed by some writers (notably Krashen) that comprehensible input or language just beyond learner's current L2 competence can be useful for acquisition. It has also been claimed that the language learners produce can help learners in their effort to learn the target language. An intermediate position (or the interaction hypothesis), which focuses on the interaction or negotiation process, has also been suggested by some writers, such as Long. Many writers agree that these theories have not yet been directly proved by research. In addition to the psycholinguistic claims made for interaction among students, group work has other pedagogical advantages (such as in helping students become active, independent, motivated,

and perceptive learners). On the other hand, most writers, it seems, agree on the pedagogical values of group work.

In short, for the purpose of this study, it seems reasonable to conclude that any perspective on group work should emphasise that it is not appropriate for all learning occasions with all students. Variety is important, i.e., we need to provide a learning environment which recognises that different people have different ways of learning and that some will find group learning worthwhile and enjoyable, and others may find it uncongenial or difficult.

The discussion so far has been on the theoretical arguments related to learners' interaction or the value of learner-learner interaction and working together. The next chapter will focus on research done so far on group discussion, particularly on factors that affect verbal participation in group work.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS LOOKING AT FACTORS THAT AFFECT VERBAL PARTICIPATION IN GROUP WORK

4.1 Introduction

The management of participation by learners is, according to Allwright (1980:1), a "negotiated process, and potentially a crucially important one." He has also noted that although the teacher's aim is to secure an even distribution of participation among learners, "some learners will negotiate for more than their 'fair' share, others for 'less' some consciously, others unconsciously". This situation has led researchers in different fields of study to see the issue from different perspectives.

In an attempt to account for the differences in participation of students in group work, researchers have been dealing with the identification of certain criteria (Shaw, 1976; Nijhof and Kommers, 1985; Johnson and Johnson, 1985; Driskell et al. 1987; Skehan, 1989; Shuttlesworth, 1990). These criteria mainly deal with a) *individuals*, and b) *situations*. Studies which have concentrated on characteristics belonging to individuals in relation to their participation behaviour in group work may be divided into two main categories: a) those coming from a *psychological perspective* focusing on cognitive factors such as ability, personality, self-concept, and anxiety; and b) those coming from a more *sociological perspective* focusing on social factors such as gender role, age, etc. Studies which have concentrated on the classroom learning situation itself can also be divided into two main categories: a) studies that have focused on *group factors* - aspects such as group size, cohesion among group members, and group composition; and b) studies that have concentrated on *task factors*, aspects such as task type and task difficulty.

Most of the work I have examined has been taken from an area of research collectively referred to as group dynamics which is a bewilderingly vast area. It comes fundamentally from a social psychological perspective, with more emphasis on psychological rather than social aspects.

In my review in this chapter I will first try to briefly discuss individual factors- from psychological and sociological perspectives. Then, I will look at situational factors: group factors and task factors.

4.2 Personal or individual level factors

According to Shaw (1976), classroom groups start with a given set of input factors that define the groups' potential for productivity. Inasmuch as these factors determine a groups' potential productivity, they are significant points of intervention to begin examining group performance at. Personal level factors are one of the two main input factors in the group interaction process. The factors are called 'personal' to indicate what individuals bring into the group discussion process. Three personal level factors will be discussed in this section: psychological, motivational, and sociological factors.

4.2.1 Psychological factors

Four input factors are discussed under this section: personality, anxiety, self-concept, and ability.

4.2.1.1 Personality

Personality trait, according to Shaw (1976:175), is defined as "a tendency or predisposition to behave in a particular manner in differing situations". To say that individuals possess a particular personality trait is equivalent to saying that they are expected to behave in a

particular way in many different situations; or there is some degree of consistency in their behaviour. Social psychologists have often found that certain personality traits are good indicators of interaction in group situations (Shaw, 1976; Webb, 1982a; 1982b; Davies, 1994a; Hare and Davies, 1994).

Over the years, researchers in the field of social psychology have identified and investigated a large number of personality traits. According to Mann's (1959) review of personality characteristics over 500 different measures of personality had been used in group research alone. One reason for this tremendously great number of personality traits could be that different writers often use different terminologies to refer to or measure the same traits. Mann concluded that the multitude of "measured personality" traits could be subsumed under seven categories of personality.

Shaw (1976:175) has even reduced the dimensions of personality to just five classes (all of which correspond reasonably well to Mann's categories -excluding two of them: intelligence, and masculinity-femininity). These are interpersonal orientation, social sensitivity, ascendant tendencies, dependability, and emotional stability.

Hare (1976) has used four-dimensional analysis of interpersonal behaviour as a framework for reviewing research on personality traits in group interaction. However, the most comprehensive new theoretical perspective to be introduced since 1976 has been the SYMLOG (A System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups) theory of personality and group dynamics (Hare, 1989; 1994a). The theory assumes that all interpersonal behaviours can be understood in terms of three principal interpersonal dimensions. These are a) *Dominant* versus *Submissive* (which includes traits such as Ascendancy, assertiveness, dominance, self-reliance, extroversion, introversion, and depression), b) *Friendly* versus *Unfriendly*- this is a person's tendency to approach (like, esteem, trust) or to avoid (dislike, distrust) other people, and c) *Accepting* versus *Opposing Established Authority* (the variable that has attracted sufficient attention from researchers is authoritarianism).

In my review of the three dimensions of behaviour in the following section, I will try to focus on those behaviours that are said to have significant effects on group work. Before reviewing the concepts, however, I would like to point out that the category boundaries between personality, self-concept and motivation are blurred, and certain concepts, such as anxiety, might be equally well discussed under any or all of these categories. The most commonly cited traits that are associated with group interaction are extroversion-introversion, risk taking, authoritarianism, and assertiveness.

1. Extroversion / introversion

Eysenck and Eysenck's (1963) famous distinction between these two personality types appears to involve a number of dimensions: sociability, gregariousness, adventuresomeness, impulsiveness and liking change. These may boil down to sociability and impulsivity.

> The typical extrovert is sociable, likes parties, has many friends, needs to have people to talk to, and does not like studying by himself. He craves excitement, takes chances, often sticks his neck out, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. He always has a ready answer, and generally likes changes.
>
> The typical introvert, on the other hand, is a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; he is reserved and distant, except with intimate friends. He tends to plan ahead... and distrust the impulse of the moment. He does not like excitement, takes matters of everyday with proper seriousness, and likes a well ordered mode of life...(59-60).

Skehan (1989:101) points out that while, in general educational research, the evidence points to a superiority among the introverted learners, in language learning the expectation has been that extroverts would be superior because they tend to dominate in obtaining talk opportunities. Actual research results have been somewhat conflicting. Naiman et al (1978), in their good language learner project, found no relationship between Eysenck's personality

inventory and language learning achievement. However, on a combined measure of class activity, using the foreign language and demanding attention, they found a positive relationship with higher scores on their measures of listening comprehension and sentence repetition.

In short, the evidence for a general correlation of sociability and language learning is positive but weak and highly context-dependent. Observational classroom research has suggested that in certain contexts, learners who mainly observe other learners engaged in interaction remember more of the lesson than those participating (Slimani, 1989).

Generally speaking, findings on intro-extroversion suggest that in terms of verbal performance introverts are likely to tend towards low level of participation, or silence, in the small group setting, and to need prompting by the tutor or discussion leader before making a contribution. Extroverts, in contrast, tend to talk a lot – often more than their fair share.

2. Risk-taking

Another element in the dominant-submissive cluster is risk-taking. The term, in applied linguistics, refers to the level of learners' willingness to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong (Brown, 1994). Communicative approaches to language teaching have emphasised the need to take risks on the grounds that formulating a learner's own meanings in sentences of their own construction in the foreign language is beneficial. Thus, learners who prefer high-risk situations should perform better in the classroom than more conservative users who prefer low-risk situations, and would be able to draw more lasting benefit from the opportunities in interaction. Risk-taking might also be seen as preferable in terms of cognition as well as in a social sense: language learners who are willing to try out their own conclusions before they have sufficient evidence from the language input may have an advantage.

There are very few direct studies of risk-taking that focused on language learners. One is the small-scale classroom-based study by Ely (1986). On the basis of six items in a questionnaire that were relevant to the risk-taking construct, Ely found that there was a correlation between high risk-taking and classroom verbal participation. As for the correlation between class participation and achievement itself, only one comparison achieved significance, between the low group of students and oral retelling of a story.

Generally speaking, in group work situations high risk takers are seen as having greater influence and group decision is usually closer to the high risk taker's opinion. It has also been found that high risk takers actively participate in group discussion situations than do low risk takers. It has also been suggested that males might make more risky decisions in groups because they perceive risk taking to be an attribute of manliness (Wallach et al, 1964).

3. Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is the central trait in the third dimension of behaviour: Acceptance versus Opposing Authority. It is in the personality of authoritarian persons to believe that it is right and proper to make a power and status distinction among different individuals. They believe that some persons occupy a more powerful position than others. When they are in a position of power, thus, authoritarians become powerful, demanding, directive and controlling in their relations with other group members or with those less powerful than themselves (Davies, 1994b).

When authoritarians are in a subordinate position they accept their subordinate position as natural and appropriate, are compliant and submissive, and tend to participate less in group discussions. On the other hand, non-authoritarians believe that there should not be power and status difference among individuals. Therefore they reject both the superior and subordinate positions. They also tend to actively take part in group discussions.

In general, there is evidence that the authoritarian behaves differently from the nonauthoritarian in group situations (Davies, 1994b). The authoritarian is autocratic and demanding and tends to conform to the norms of the group more closely than the nonauthoritarian. However, the most significant effects of authoritarianism are consequences of the particular combinations of individuals in the group and the kind of structure the group has established or had imposed upon it.

4. Assertiveness

Individuals vary markedly in the extent to which they wish to be prominent in group situations, the degree to which they wish they assert themselves as individuals, and the extent to which they with to dominate others. All these tendencies reflect an individualistic orientation, or at least a tendency to emphasise self in contrast to submission to oblivion in the group. This general ascendant tendency is referred to variously by such terms as ascendancy, assertiveness, dominance, and individual prominence. It is claimed that individuals who participate more actively in group activities tend to be assertive. They also attempt leadership, and are believed to be creative. They tend to emerge as leaders, promote group cohesiveness, influence group decisions, conform to norms, and are popular. They also tend to be dissatisfied with the leader – when the leader is someone else. Less assertive students, on the other hand, are believed to be low on self-esteem, anxious and participate less in group discussions (Davies, 1994b:44). Amanuel (1995) studied the relationship between the trait assertiveness and participation in group work in College English classes at AAU. He concluded that there was no significant difference in the participation behaviour of learners and assertiveness.

4.2.1.2 Self- concept

According to Byrne (1984: 429), self-concept is, "in general terms, our perception of ourselves; in specific terms, it is our attitudes, feelings and knowledge about our abilities, skills, appearance, and social acceptability". Thus, the same writer argued, self-concept can be identified as the nucleus of one's personality. Self-concept as a learning variable had been given, according to Shuttlesworth (1990), considerable theoretical attention. As maintained by Maslow (1973) and Rogers (1984), high self-concept is related with individual willingness to participate, and low self-concept with individual reluctance to participate actively in social situations. Anderson and Kell (1954 – cited in Shuttlesworth 1990) also reported that students actively involved in discussion participation tend to be characterised by positive attitudes toward themselves as participants. In addition, as claimed by Hopkins (1971), there is evidence which suggests that high participating students as well as possessing a positive self-concept, are usually rated higher than other students in terms of leadership, popularity and group members skills by other members of the group. Mussen and Porter (1959) have also put forward a similar case for positive self-evaluation and effective group interaction.

Furthermore, it has been maintained that the most frequent speakers in a group tend to be perceived by other group members as contributing more and being more influential in getting a solution or opinion accepted than those who speak only infrequently. Klein (1965) also noted that quieter students tend to be ignored even when they offer a good solution to a problem. Their suggestions tend not to be accepted unless a talkative member gives support. In a more recent survey Davies (1994b:47) reported that high self-concept learners managed to shift relative credit for group success to themselves and relative blame for failure away from themselves. Students low on self-concept, however, have been found to be equally influenced in all conditions. It has also been pointed out that people low in self-concept are more susceptible to the influence of social cues because they are uncertain about the appropriateness of their behaviour or beliefs, such that they are more likely to imitate others.

Hopkins (1971) has also found that tutors appear to be strongly influenced by the amount of student participation when making assessment of their ability- students making frequent contributions tend to be assessed most favourably, while those students making less frequent contributions tend to be given low assessment scores. This is, in fact, what is exactly happening in College English classes at AAU- instructors are advised to evaluate their students' speaking skills based, mainly, on the learner's amount of verbal output in group work. Hopkins observes that the quantity of student participation, while perceived by tutors as essentially different to quality, is almost impossible to separate in the making of observed assessments.

In short, how students view themselves and how other group members view individual participants in group work seems to be influential in the shaping of students' behaviour in terms of frequency of participation, and the response of the group to individual participation. Research done in the area suggests that low verbal involvement will tend to relate to low self-concept, and the reverse, high levels of verbal involvement will relate to high self-esteem.

4.2.1.3 Abilities of group members

Ability may refer to general situations (intelligence), or to a particular area or field of study related to the task faced by the group. Some writers argue that general ability as measured by intelligence tests may estimate the individual's ability to deal with a variety of situations and problems. Some studies indicate that more intelligent individuals tend to be more active in groups than less intelligent persons (Shaw, 1976:173). Like wise, if an individual possesses special skills (abilities, information, or knowledge) that are related to the group task, he or she tends to be more active in the group, to make more contributions to the group's attempts to complete the task, and to have more influence on the group's decision (Shaw, 1976:189).

Learners' language proficiency is among the special skills that may have effect on learners' participation behaviour in group work. Porter (1986) investigated the verbal participation behaviour in NNS dyads of mixed proficiency levels. The study has revealed that intermediate learners get more input and better quality input from advanced than from other intermediate learners. Conversely, advanced learners get more opportunity to speak when they are communicating with intermediate learners. Porter argues that mixed pairings offer something to both sets of learners; i.e., advanced learners have greater opportunity for practising speaking through participation whereas intermediate learners by mainly remaining silent get more input.

In their research on the effects of different participant arrangement on task performance and interaction, Yule et al. (1990) concluded that pairs in which the higher proficiency member had the dominant role engaged in little interactional exchanges whereas pairs in which the lower proficiency member had the dominant role engaged in substantial negotiation work, and shared much more in the interactive turn-taking.

In short, students who are more proficient than other group members are more likely to participate in the group discussion. It is also argued that high-proficiency language learners benefit from working with low-proficiency members, and vice versa.

4.2.1.4. Anxiety

The construct anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry. According to Shaw (1976:183) anxiety is defined as "a general worry or concern about some uncertain or future event". Scovel (1978:134) also defined it as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear..." Anxiety can be experienced at various levels. Trait anxiety is a more permanent predisposition to be anxious. Some people are predictably and generally anxious about many things. At a more momentary, or situational level, state

anxiety is experienced in relation to some particular event or act, as a response to a definite situation. Two types of anxiety have been identified and studied as particularly related to performance in groups: manifest or trait anxiety and test anxiety. The former is the level of anxiety that is manifested at any particular time whereas the latter is a form of state anxiety linked with the evaluation process or test taking.

Anxious persons are characterised by the manifestation of an overall picture of inadequacy in their relations to others and to the group. They also tend to show lower interest for the group and the group task. Their responses tend to be slower and more variable, they conform to the norms more closely, they change their judgement in response to the group more readily, and they are better contented with the group performance than are non-anxious individuals. It is believed that such individuals can scarcely contribute to effective group functioning (Shaw, 1976).

According to Phillips & Erickson (1970) there are at least two possible reasons for anxiety and personal distress in social situations. One comes from the internal understanding of inability to achieve one's goals; the other comes from input of negative evaluations (or evaluations interpreted negatively) from the other participants. Klein (1965) notes that low participation tends to be evaluated negatively while high participation is almost universally regarded positively. In other words, students who speak often tend to be evaluated by the rest of the group in a positive way in terms of leadership, ability, popularity; students who speak little tend to be seen unfavourably.

To sum up, despite the existence of conflicting findings in research, it is possible from what we have seen so far to detect something of an overall trend from which to construct in a generalised sense a suggested profile of low and high participators in group discussion. Research suggests that students displaying low levels of participation in group work appear to exhibit tendencies towards introversion, low risk taking, authoritarianism, low self concept, and high anxiety. As far as group perceptions go, such students tend to be

evaluated negatively and their contributions, when they make them, tend to be unfavourably received, or ignored unless taken up by a high level participator. Conversely, those high on levels of participation, are more likely to tend towards extroversion, high risk-taking, antiauthoritarianism, high self concept, and low on measures of anxiety. Such students seem to gain group approval, being popular and persuasive, and perceived as having leadership ability. It is important to point out that these are only suggested groups of tendencies which, put together, do go some way beyond research findings.

4.2.2 Motivation

Motivation is usually defined as a psychological trait, an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire which moves people to achieve some goal. In language learning, that goal may be mastery of the language or achievement of some lesser aim.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

The contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been discussed widely in the ELT literature (Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1989; Brown, 1994; Harmer, 1991). Intrinsic motivation is demonstrated when we do something because we get rewards enough from the activity itself. This type of motivation is thought of as being within the task itself: a sense of achievement, self-esteem, pride in solving the problem, enjoyment of the class, and being able to use the language as desired. "Extrinsically motivated behaviours, on the other had, are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self- it is therefore external to the task itself. According to Brown (1994:157) "typical extrinsic rewards are money, prizes, grades, and even certain types of positive feedback. Behaviours initiated solely to avoid punishment are also extrinsically motivated, even though numerous intrinsic benefits can ultimately accrue to those who, instead, view punishment avoidance as a challenge that can build their sense of competence and self-determination."

When groups are asked to undertake co-operative and collaborative tasks for learning, there is an expectation that the motivation to work within the group will be enhanced if the product of their efforts is rewarded. Rewards may be of an intrinsic or extrinsic nature, and they may apply to individual members of the group or the group as a whole. Both Webb (1989) and Slavin (1990) found that individual rewards discouraged group work and whole-group rewards were most likely to promote help and collaboration within the group.

Which form of motivation is more powerful – intrinsic or extrinsic? Brown (1994:156) argues that the question leads to consideration of another very important component of motivation: the learner's scale of values. It is not possible to generalise about intrinsic or extrinsic motivation without considering what the learner regards as important. To some learners, the extrinsic benefits of success may be sufficient to keep them working hard to learn the language; to others, the supposed benefits of ultimate success may mean little but the sense of achievement. Thus, motivation depends on the learner's evaluation of the motivating forces (McDonough, 1998:221).

4.2.3 Sociological perspective

Although the psychological type of study has tended to dominate studies of group work in a variety of situations, many writers still see the interaction and participation behaviours of learners from the sociological point of view. I will very briefly survey two of the most studied sociological factors in group work: gender and age.

4.2.3.1 Gender

Gender is one of the participant variables that has been found to affect the level of participation and performance of participants in group discussion (Huguet and Monteil, 1994; Webb, 1982a; 1984; Fassinger, 1995; Gass and Varonis, 1985; 1986).

In a review of the literature on mixed-sex groups, Webb (1984) made a meta-analysis of studies using collaborative tasks. Of 64 datasets that she examined, 45 showed greater male activity, influence, or leadership, 8 showed greater female activity, and 11 showed no sex differences. Most of the group tasks used in these studies were, however, non-academic discussions (games, puzzles, machine-fixing, jury deliberations, and spatial-judgement decisions) and may make it difficult to make a comparison with language classroom situations. Yet, according to Johnson (1996) there is still the possibility that the discussion of such tasks may share characteristic features applied to the study of language - inasmuch as both perceptual motor skills and language are skills. This may make it possible to make some useful comparisons.

Gass and Varonis (1985) note that in conversational pairs, males signal a lack of understanding, thus initiate non-understanding routines or negotiate meaning, more often than females. On the other hand, females tend to increase in their use of these signals on the second task, while men did not. This suggests that women feel less confident, at least initially, in signalling a lack of understanding in interactions with men- this confirms Fassinger's (1995) finding --also discussed in this section.

Another research by Gass and Varonis (1986) shows that while men appeared to dominate in interactions with women in ways that provide opportunities for producing comprehensible output, women initiated more meaning negotiations than men in mixed-sex dyads. The study also shows that male-male pairs exhibit more involvement in the communication itself. This, Gass and Varonis (1994) hold, may play an important role in providing the pairs with comprehensible output. If women are better at obtaining comprehensible input and men at the production of comprehensible output, the result may be used, the writers argue, to show the value of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in second language development.

In addition, many writers agree that males engage in more active task behaviour (e.g. giving opinions, or information), whereas females engage in more positive socio-emotional behaviour (e.g. agreeing, being friendly). Both aspects are believed to be important in group discussion (Johnson and Johnson, 1992; Davies, 1994a; Issroff, 1994).

Anticipating that learners' behaviours and expectations would play an important role in their participation in discussion, Fassinger (1995) examined learners' behaviours in classrooms from a broader and more social psychological perspectives. He used class participation as his dependent measure, and a) class traits b) student traits, and c) professor traits as his independent variables. He concluded that:

a) Gender is a significant component in class participation

b) Males are more likely to offer comments or raise questions in their classes

c) Females respond to the emotional climate of a class more than do males

d) Females' classroom participation is related to their confidence

e) Faculty gender has no significant impact on classroom participation, and

f) Professors' interpersonal style may not play a central role in classroom interaction. Rather, class traits and student traits seem better predictors of students' silences or involvement .

In connection with amount of participation in a discussion, there are findings (e.g. Webb, 1984) which suggest that high levels of participation are likely to come from male participants, and females who are assertive and have a positive attitude to academic discussion. Other research studies support the finding that men tend to contribute more often than women in discussion regardless of social situation, whether formal or informal; and regardless of the composition of the group, whether it is made up of mostly women or mostly men.

To sum up, research findings into gender differences in participation suggest that several tendencies can be identified. Firstly, in terms of rates of participation, men appear to be more willing to participate verbally in small group discussion than women, who seem reluctant to participate fully. Secondly, males appear to have more influence over group opinion and decisions than females- Lockheed & Hall (1975) suggest that women are more likely to defer to the opinion of a man than vice versa. Thirdly, males seem to be more 'task' oriented, that is they are more likely to make suggestions and state opinions than females who have been shown to be more concerned with making supportive moves, such as agreeing with and building on observations made by others and thus might be described as 'process' oriented. Finally, men seem to receive positive evaluations, while women, even when they make useful suggestions and solutions to problems, may be negatively evaluated.

4.2.3.2 Age

Almost all the studies reported in the ELT / SLA literature are directly concerned with the comparison in L1 and L2 acquisition and learning process. Age has been a neglected variable in the study of verbal interaction among learners in group work in language classrooms. In spite of this neglect, there are some significant studies in social psychology.

Some research findings have been reported that have shown the relationship between chronological age of the group member and several aspects of group interaction. Diplomacy, which may be used to regulate the emotional climate of the group, increases with increasing age (Kent, 1994b). Individuals have an increasing number of contacts with others, and there is a change toward greater selectivity of contacts and greater complexity of the interaction pattern. Conformity increases to a maximum at about age 12 and decreases thereafter, at least in peer groups. There is little evidence, however- according to Kent, that age and group leadership are related in any simple way. In most cases it is not the mere fact that the

individual has aged that is important, but rather that he has had greater experience in social situations.

4.3. Situational factors

According to Kent (1994b), and Hare and Davies (1994), personality, or dispositional variables do not act as single causes in vacuum, but often interact with each other and with situational variables to affect behaviour. Situational variables include what Driskell et al. (1987) call group-level factors, and task factors.

4.3.1 Group factors

4.3.1.1 Group size

According to Cartwright and Zander (1968) one of the most visible aspects of a group's structure is the size of the group or the number of persons in the organisation. Many writers agree that group size has several important consequences for group process. Zander (1982:34), for example, notes that the size of a group greatly affects how often a member can talk and how much he expects others will contribute.

Different writers have different views on what constitutes the average group size. According to Zander (1982:34) discussion proceeds better in a group of closer to seven or so whereas according to Darkenwald (1994) groups of fewer than six or seven are too small to sustain a productive group discussion: seven to twelve seems to be the optimal group size. For Callaghan et al. (1994) a group of 3-4 members, 3 being optimum, is the optimum group size for many group discussion tasks, whereas for Hare (1994b), 5 members make the ideal size for group discussion.

Group size and members' participation

As the size of a group increases, larger and larger proportions of group members tend to participate less than their "fair share". Shy persons can get greater anonymity and thus may tend to be more attracted to the larger group. As a result, few members can have the chance to dominate the group discussion. In other words, it is likely that a smaller and smaller proportion of persons become central to the discussion, and make decisions for the group. As a consequence of such centralisation, more members become peripheral and engage in activities that are less important for the group's outcome (Cartwright and Zander 1968).

A study by Bales et al. (1951) has clearly demonstrated the fact that there are remarkable differences in the amount of participation in group discussion among groups of different sizes. Differences in percentage of total participation among members of the small group (3-4 persons) are relatively small. With larger groups (5-8 persons), however, the difference among members' participation, especially the most active group member and the rest, increases.

Levine and Moreland (1990), in their research review, have also concluded that as a group grows larger, it also changes in other ways, generally for the worse. People who belong to a larger group are less satisfied, participate less often, and are less likely to cooperate with one another.

O'Dell (1968) studied two, three, four, and five-person groups as they participated in a discussion. He then analysed the content of the group's discussion which indicated that as group size increased members showed a) greater disagreement, b) greater antagonism toward others, c) less tension, and d) greater tension release. It was also found out that compared to larger groups, smaller groups were more cohesive (Cartwright and Zander 1968: 499), members were better satisfied, and individual members assumed more importance (Slater, 1958).

Group size and performance

According to Shaw (1976) the effect of size on group performance is a function of two opposing forces: resources that are available (the range of skills, abilities, knowledge, range of opinions, etc.) -which increase with increasing group size; and organisational problems (interpersonal relationships, subgroups, potential for conflict, fewer members' participation, etc.) which also increase with increasing group size. The relative effects of these opposing forces largely depend upon the kind of task faced by the group. According to Steiner's (1972 – cited in Shaw 1976) theory of group productivity group performance should increase with group size when the task is either additive (i.e., the outcome is the result of some combination of individual products) or disjunctive (i.e., the outcome depends upon at least one person in the group performing the task). When the task is additive, the more persons who work on the task, the greater the group's output, and the more effective the group's performance.

If the task is disjunctive, the potential group performance is determined by the most competent member of the group. Therefore, the effect of group size on performance is the resultant of the proportion of individuals who have the ability to perform the task. If the task is conjunctive (i.e., every group member must accomplish the task), the group's performance depends upon the performance of the least competent member of the group. When the group must perform on such tasks the probability that the group will have one least competent member increases with increasing group size. Therefore, group performance on conjunctive tasks may decrease with increasing group size. In other words, the larger the group the lower the probability that the group accomplishes the task successfully (Shaw, 1976).

In short, the smaller the group the more opportunity each member has to take part in discussion, to express his/her opinions. On the contrary, the larger the group the less opportunity each person has to participate in discussion. A few members can thus dominate

the group discussion. Group performance also depends to a marked degree upon the kind of task the group is facing.

4.3.1.2 Group composition

According to Hertz-Lazarowitz (1985) group composition (as defined by ability, gender, and personality measures) is a key factor in group discussion as a predictor of interaction and achievement.

Webb (1984) examined cross-sex and same-sex interactions to determine whether sex differences are due to the mixed-sex group situation or whether sex differences would appear regardless of the composition of the group. To achieve this purpose, mixed-sex groups in co-operative learning with different ratios of females to males were used to determine the effect of group composition on interaction patterns.

Before the start of the study students were divided into 20 groups (with similar means on ability) of 3-5 members; six groups had 1 female and several males; six groups, again, had 1 male and several females; 5 groups had equal numbers of females (two) and males (two); and 3 groups had only males. Throughout the two-week study, students worked in small groups. They were instructed to work together, to help each other, and to ask for help if they needed it. At the end of the two-weeks, all students completed the achievement test -- working individually.

Results indicated that a) in majority female groups, the females tended to direct their request for explanations to the male in the group rather than to the other females, b) in all types of compositions or groups females tended to be more responsive to requests for help than males. Males responded more to other males than to females. This effect was accentuated in majority-female and majority-male groups. This particular study, however, did not look at all-female groups.

According to Bishop (1994), children working with more capable children perform better than children working by themselves. A similar study by Howe and Rodgers (1994) shows that children working in groups learn better when they work in groups with differing initial abilities. Webb (1982a, 1982b) has widely researched in this particular area; the following findings are worth mentioning here:

a) At the group level of behaviour, there was more helping behaviour in mixed-ability groups and uniform medium-ability groups than in uniform high-ability and uniform low-ability groups.

b) Because the helping behaviour in mixed-ability groups consisted of the highs helping the lows in a teacher-learner relationship, high-ability and low-ability students were quite active in mixed-ability groups. In uniform high-ability groups students assumed that every one in the group knew how to solve problems and did not make much effort to explain the material. In uniform low-ability groups, few students understood the material well enough to give adequate explanations. Medium-ability students, who tended to be ignored in mixed-ability groups, were very active in uniform-ability groups.

In sum, males tend to participate more actively in group discussions than females in mixed-sex groups. This is partly because they are dominated by males in the groups and partly because females are more responsive to the emotional atmosphere than to the task at hand. High-ability students give more explanations in mixed-ability groups than in uniform-ability groups; low-ability students receive more explanations in mixed-ability groups than in uniform-ability groups; and medium-ability students give more and receive more explanations in uniform ability groups than in mixed-ability groups.

4.3.1.3 Cohesion

Group cohesiveness, according to Cartwright and Zander (1968:91), refers to "the degree to which the members of a group desire to remain in the group". Shaw (1976:446) defines it in a similar way: "the resultant of all those forces acting upon group members to remain in or to leave the group". According to Cartwright (1968: 107), "group cohesiveness is the resultant of two sets of component forces acting on members to remain in the group - those arising from the attractiveness of the group and those deriving from the attractiveness of alternative memberships".

Group cohesion, interaction, and performance

Cohesiveness is related to both quantity and quality of group interaction. Members of high-cohesive groups communicate with each other to a greater extent, and the content of group interaction is positively oriented (Slavin, 1992), whereas members of low-cohesive groups are less communicative and the content of their interaction is more negatively oriented. Members of high-cohesive groups are co-operative, and friendly, whereas low-cohesive group members behave much more independently, with little concern for each other. When group-cohesiveness is high members are attracted to the group; they are motivated to behave in accordance with the wishes of other group members and in ways that are designed to promote group integration and group functioning. Berndt et al. (1988) have a different view from this. They argue that if nonfriends, students who would not normally choose to work together, are assigned to the same group, social relationship between students might be maximised.

The general findings with respect to group cohesiveness and group performance are reasonably consistent. Relative to low-cohesive groups, high-cohesive groups engage in more positive interactions (friendly, co-operative, democratic, etc.), exert greater influence over their members, perform more effectively, and have higher member satisfaction.

4.3.2 Task factors

Many writers agree that the relationship between personal factors (personality, ability, etc.) and group performance partly depends on the type of task involved (Driskell et al. 1987; Shaw, 1976).

4.3.2.1 Task typologies

There have been a number of attempts to classify tasks into different typologies (Driskell et al., 1987; Hackman, 1968; Steiner, 1972; Pica et al., 1989; Kruger, 1994). In their attempt to classify, describe, and compare tasks different writers use different terms to refer to similar tasks: one-way/ two-way versus required / optional; information gap versus jigsaw, etc. Making a distinction between task typology and task dimension may help to understand the naming and classification of tasks. Task dimension refers to the criteria used to put or classify tasks into different relatively independent dimensions or continua. In other words, it is a way of assigning any task somewhere on each of the task dimensions or continua identified. The first question to be asked here could be: What are the dimensions and how are they identified?

Shaw has developed a method for the construction of attitude scales to identify different task dimensions. The technique involved several steps:

a. Identifying and defining a number of potential task dimensions .

b. Assembling a large sample of group tasks and describing each task as clearly as possible

c. Sorting the set of tasks into eight categories on each potential task dimension (different people familiar with the field do this)

d. Deciding the scale value - using median of the distribution of judgements by the judges (for each task and on each dimension)

e. Computing and using interquartile range as a basis for validating potential dimensions

f. Computing intercorrelations among dimensions - to combine highly correlated ones into a single one.

Using this procedure Shaw (1976) analysed a set of 104 tasks that resulted in six task dimensions: difficulty, solution multiplicity, intrinsic interest, co-operation requirements, intellectual-manipulative requirements, and population familiarity.

Task typologies, on the other hand, sort tasks into exclusive categories; for example, simple versus complex (Shaw, 1964); disjunctive, conjunctive, or additive (Steiner, 1972); and production, discussion, or problem-solving tasks (Hackman, 1968). These categories are rarely interchangeable because they differ in terms of the dimensions used to distinguish them. For example, Hackman's typology is based on the performance processes involved in a task, Steiner's is based on how members contribute to the group task, and Shaw's is based on task difficulty.

Pica et al. (1989) divide tasks into three categories based on the degree of control they give to participants over the preciseness and relative quantity of information needed to carry out the tasks: information-gap, jigsaw, and discussion.

Kruger (1994) divides tasks into two: discovery and skill, based on the presence or absence of only one right answer. Open-ended tasks are coded as discovery, and tasks with only one answer as skill tasks. Discovery tasks, Kruger holds, promote more lively discussion. Skill tasks, on the other hand, are more likely to engage group members in negative behaviours - refusing to help, rejecting other's ideas, etc.

Tasks may also differ with respect to the ways members are allowed to bring their individual products or results together. If the group accepts or should accept the outcomes produced by a group member / or if the group has to accept only one of the different alternatives provided by different members of the group, it is called a disjunctive task. If the performance

of each group member constitutes the final product, the task is called conjunctive. The task is additive if success of the group depends upon the summation of individual products. If members are allowed to combine their individual contributions in any way they wish, it is called a discretionary task. The group's decision may, here, change the task into either disjunctive (assigning total weights to the contributions of the most capable group member) or conjunctive (requiring every group member to complete the task) or additive (assigning equal weight to each group member's contribution) or any unique type of combining individual contributions.

According to Shaw and Briscoe (1966), the quality of group performance, as measured by time and errors, is negatively correlated with the co-operation requirements of the group task. Groups make more errors on high co-operation requiring tasks than on low co-operation requiring tasks. Groups perform more efficiently when the task is disjunctive than when it is conjunctive.

Duff (1986) has examined the effect of two different types of tasks (problem-solving tasks and debates, and two examples of each) on the input and interaction in NNS-NNS dyads. While both types of tasks may be considered two-way, in the sense that there must be a two-way exchange of information, Duff claims that there is an important difference. Debate is a 'divergent' task whereas a problem-solving is a 'convergent' task. Her hypothesis that two different types of tasks will produce different kinds of language use is supported by her data. She has found out that debates reduce the opportunities for negotiation since they involve long turns; and may thus reduce the amount of comprehensible input learners need to receive. On the other hand, problem-solving tasks demand or allow or involve greater frequency of questions and greater syntactic and lexical clarification of meaning.

In addition, the research reported by Long and Porter indicates that there is more evidence of interaction in 'two-way-tasks' than 'one-way-tasks'. 'Two way tasks ' is the term used for tasks in which both participants (in a dyad) and all participants (in a group) possess some

but not all of the information they need to resolve the task, and so, while everyone is able to contribute information, everyone also needs to get some information. Jigsaw tasks are typical two-way tasks. A one- way task is one in which one participant or some participants possess all the information and the other(s) have to get the information. Describing a picture to another person is a typical one-way task. Doughty & Pica (1986) have studied the effect of two-way tasks and one-way tasks (they used the terms 'required information exchange' and 'optional information exchange') on interaction. Their study concludes that the former type of task leads to a significantly higher incidence of interaction and interactional modifications which are believed to be favourable to SLA.

4.3.2.2 Task difficulty

Difficulty may be defined as the amount of effort required for task completion. Different writers use different criteria to determine the level of difficulty of tasks. Brown and Yule (1983) examine five factors to determine task difficulty: speaker (one/ many), listener (participant/ observer), content (familiar/ unfamiliar), support (contextual/ no contextual support), and purpose (narratives/ argument). Nunan (1985) bases his criteria for task difficulty on learner response (communication, production, and interaction). Brindley (1987) takes learner (confidence, motivation, experience), task (cognitive load, steps, context, time, help), and text (amount of facts, manner of presentation, familiarity, and contextual clues) as factors to determine task difficulty. Anderson and Lynch (1988) make reference to information sequence, topic familiarity, degree of explicitness, non-verbal support, and item correspondence to determine task difficulty.

In short, group interaction, and group effectiveness, are a function of a multitude of factors related to task environment. Howe and Tolmie (1994:434) emphasised that "unless future methodologies consider task structure in addition to group composition, our ideas about the optimisation of group work are likely to be limited".

Further studies need to be carried out in these areas but the suggestion is put forward here that the level of difficulty or challenge of a task in small group work is an important independent variable that can ensure the learner more opportunities to produce comprehensible output and in the words of Swain (1985; 249) "to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her intended meaning".

4.4 Forces hindering group performance

It has been pointed out that the variety of groups found in classrooms and their effectiveness in promoting effective verbal participation will depend on various factors- group members' ability and personality, the learning task assigned, group composition (especially size and ability range), etc. There are also conditions under which groups function ineffectively. One major potential barrier to group effectiveness is the fact that individual effort is decreased as a consequence of the diffusion of responsibility when tasks are assigned to groups as opposed to individuals. Hertz-Lazarowitz (1992:257) discusses the 'free-rider effect', that is a group member who reduces his or her individual effort by taking advantage of the efforts of others; and the 'sucker effect', in which an able group member reduces his or her effort due to perceived free riding or inferiority of prior output by others. These phenomena may all fall within the broader category of 'social loafing' (hiding in the crowd)- discussed next.

A brief review of the social loafing literature

Social loafing is a reduction in individual effort when working on a collective task compared to when working either alone or coactively. Recently, Williams et al. (1993) conducted a meta-analytic review of this research. I will briefly review their findings, which cast light on the strength and generality of social loafing, and the extent to which various parameters moderate or mediate the effect. Across all studies, there was a statistically reliable and moderately strong social loafing effect: people produce lower effort levels when working collectively than when working coactively. In addition a number of factors were found to moderate social loafing. I will briefly consider some of the major factors.

a) Evaluation

Evaluation potential is an especially potent determinant of collective effort. Individuals tend to be less likely to loaf on collective tasks when evaluation potential is held constant (either high or low) across the coactive versus collective comparisons. In fact, only when inputs can be evaluated coactively, does the social loafing effect reach significance. These findings are consistent with the claim made by Harkins (1987) and others that evaluation mediates the social loafing effect.

b) Task valence

Some studies have manipulated how involving or interesting the task is to the participants. Findings indicate that the tendency to engage in social loafing decreases as task valence has increased. Group members loaf when task valence is moderate or low, but they do not loaf when task valence is high. Consistent with their actual efforts, individuals are less likely to report that they engaged in social loafing when task valence is high than when task valence is moderate or low.

c) Group valence

Studies are classified according to how well acquainted group members are to each other. Individuals do not loaf when group valence is high, but they do in all other conditions. The magnitude of the social loafing effect is highest when subjects work with strangers but is lowest when subjects work with close friends or team-mates. Thus, enhancing group cohesiveness might serve to reduce or eliminate social loafing. Similarly, the tendency to engage in social loafing is reduced when participants are provided with a group-level comparison standard.

d) Expectation of other group members' performance

Some studies (Williams et al., 1993) also manipulated students' expectations for how well their group members would perform, usually by manipulating perceptions of the effort or

ability of the co-workers. Individuals engage in social loafing when working with group members whom they expect to perform well or when working with group members for whom no performance expectations are provided, but do not loaf when working with students they expect to perform poorly.

e) Group size

Group size has also been found to be positively related to size of the social loafing effect. In other words, as group size increases the social loafing effect also increases and vice versa. Ringelmann (cited in Wilke and Meertens, 1994) had one, two, three and eight persons pull on a rope attached to a device which measured the amount of force exerted on the rope. One person exerted a force equal to 63 kilograms, the two 118, the three 160, and the eight 248 kilograms. This shows clearly that the total force exerted by the group increases with size of the group; it may also be observed that the amount of force exerted per person decreases with increasing group size. In this case the eight persons together have exerted a force required by just four persons. According to Wilke and Meertens (1994), some individual potential is lost due to faulty group process. That is, as group size increased more and more individuals relied upon others to do more than their share of the work- they loafed.

f) Population differences

The social loafing effect has also been found to relate to group members' heterogeneity. The effect tends to be greater for studies that used samples of only male subjects than for studies that used either mixed samples or samples of only female subjects. In addition, social loafing is exhibited in a variety of cultures. It has been found out, for instance, that the social loafing effect is stronger in magnitude for subjects from Western cultures than for subjects from Eastern cultures (whose group orientation could be described as more 'collectivistic' than 'individualistic' (Triandis, 1989).

4.5 Conclusion

The use of small group work in education in general and in language classes in particular is gaining support from time to time. Most educators seem to have no doubt about its value and they recommend it for use in almost all classroom situations. The effective use of group work, however, depends on a number of factors. In this survey, I tried to look at some of the factors that influence participation and performance in group work. These factors are seen from two different (but interrelated) perspectives: individual factors and situational factors (these can also be called internal and external factors).

Individual factors are seen from two perspectives: psychological (which includes aspects like personality and learners' ability, and language proficiency), and sociological (which includes gender and age). Situational factors are discussed under two main factors: group factors (which includes group size, cohesion, and group composition), and task factors (task type and task difficulty).

It has also been pointed out that there are situations where working collectively may reduce the drive to exert effort. This has been discussed under the phenomenon called 'social loafing'. Social loafing may not be always detrimental, I think, to the common good- equal participation among members of a group. There are circumstances in which loafing may improve performance, if that is to mean verbal participation. I do not see why, for instance, social loafing by a very talkative student is undesirable. The question should be, I think, 'in what situation are group members loafing?'

So far we have seen the research context and the theoretical and research background on group work. In the next part I shall present the methodological aspects of the study: the research design and systems of analysis. I would like to start with the methods of data collection in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
METHODOLOGY AND DATA GATHERING

5.1 Introduction

Inasmuch as the main objective of this study is to explore students' perceptions of some aspects (related to the research questions, presented under Section 5.4 in this chapter) of verbal participation in group discussion, it can be called an exploratory research. Furthermore, since qualitative methodology is better suited to capture or investigate the complex nature of studying perceptions, I have decided to depend more on the broad domain of qualitative methodology in my research. The specific methods used within this domain are interviews and observations of group discussions. In addition to the qualitative methods, quantitative methods have also been used to triangulate findings from qualitative methods or to find answers to some of the research questions. Following is a discussion and rationale for using the dominant methods used in the study.

5. 2 Interview

In this study interviews are used sometimes as the central methods of data collection and other times as just one of several methods to explore a research question. That of course depends on the type of research question being investigated. Since most of the research questions have been investigated using interviews, it can be said that interview is the dominant method of data collection or generation used in this study. An attempt has also been made to achieve some form of methodological triangulation, where interviewing is used in tandem with other methods to see how they corroborate each other. This particularly refers to the first research question. (See Table 5.1, at the end of this chapter, for relationship between research questions and methods of data collection)

5.2.1 The rationale for using interviews

The main purpose of interviewing is "to find out what is in and on someone else's mind ..., to access the perspective of the persons being interviewed..., we interview people to find out from them things that we can not directly observe" (Patton, 1990:278). According to Arksey (1999), interviewing is a powerful way of helping people to articulate their tacit perceptions, feelings and understandings. The main reason for using interviews in this study can not be different from the ones mentioned above.

The interview approach is not without its critics, however. Some critics say that the collection of data by interview involves a complex set of social relationships that can contaminate the final product. The social relationship may result in the distortion of the information supplied as well as being open to unconscious bias on the part of the researcher in assessing it.

The fact remains, however, that interview can yield rich material unobtainable in any other way, and which can support or be supported by other data from questionnaires or standardised test responses. Byers and Wilcox (1988:12) offered a clear rationale for interviews: "If we want to know how people felt, what they experienced, what they remembered, what their emotions and motives were like and the reasons for acting as they did – why not just ask them?"

5.2.2 What kind of interview is it?

Once decision was made to use interview as a data collection method then a decision had to be made which type of interview to use. Interviews fall into three categories. There is the 'structured' interview in which the interviewer has a list of prepared questions from which he can not deviate. This is effectively an 'assisted questionnaire' (Gajendra and Mallick, 1999: 122).

At the other extreme there is the 'unstructured' or open-ended interview in which the researcher has some broadly defined objectives but allows the interviewee a great deal of freedom in his or her responses. Indeed the researcher positively encourages him or her to explore at depth issues within those broad research objectives that are of interest to the interviewee.

Between these two extremes lies the 'semi-structured' interview. Since there is a continuum between the two extremes, the extent to which a semi-structured interview is structured varies from case to case. I preferred to use what Patton (1990) calls 'the general interview guide approach' within qualitative interview. This approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins. The issues in the outline need not be taken in any particular order and the actual wording of questions to elicit responses about those issues is not determined in advance. The interview guide simply serves as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. The interview guide presumes that there is common information that should be obtained from each person interviewed, but no set of standardised questions is written in advance. The interviewer is thus required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to specific respondents in the context of the actual interview. The following figure shows my understanding of the position of the different types of interviewing in the structured – unstructured interview continuum.

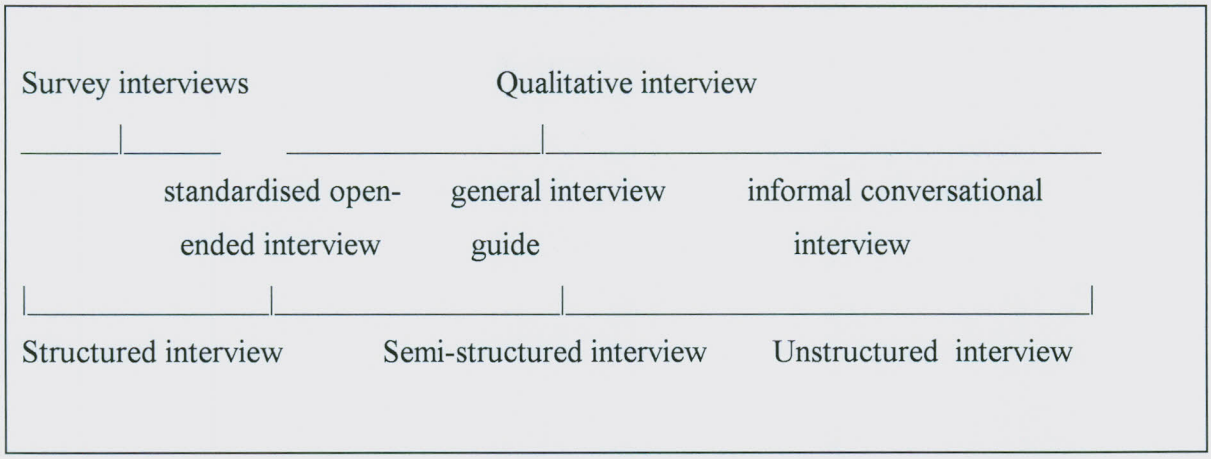


Figure 5.1 The position of the different types of interviewing on a continuum

Because it is the qualitative or semi-structured interview that has been used in this study, I will discuss it briefly in the following section.

5.2.3 Qualitative/ semi-structured interview: rationale

The term 'qualitative interview' is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or somewhat loosely structured form of interviewing. Burgess calls them 'conversations with purpose' (1984:102). Qualitative interviewing is a way of uncovering and exploring the meanings that underpin people's lives, routines, behaviours, feelings etc. (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) . Qualitative interviews may involve one to one interaction (referred to as *individual interview* in this study), or larger groups (referred to as *focus group interviews,* in this study).

Focus group interview in qualitative research may be classified into two different types: full groups, and mini groups. Both have some elements in common, regarding the procedures followed, for example, but there are also areas of significant differences between the two. A full group, for instance, consists of a discussion involving 8-12 persons while mini groups consist of 4-6 persons (Greenbaum, 1998:2). In the first pilot study a full group had been used. Taking

some of the technical problems it created into account, the mini group type had to be adopted for the second pilot study and the main study.

5.2.3.1 Group interview or focus group interview?

It is probably important here to make a distinction between 'group interview' and 'focus group interview'. The two notions are similar in some aspects (mainly, as the name suggests, because a group of people are involved or interviewed) and different in other aspects. The main difference is that group interviews (some times called The Delphi Technique) are techniques for seeking consensus among a group of experts. The main purpose of using group interviews is to produce convergence of group opinion while eliminating the bias resulting from individual opinion. The outcome of focus groups, on the other hand, is a broad range of ideas, hypotheses, solutions, and so on (Jonassen et al., 1989: 402).

5.2.3.2 Advantages and disadvantage of the focus group interview

Vaughn et al. (1996) noted that the focus group interview offers researchers distinct advantages over the individual interview. These include synergism (when a wider bank of data emerges through the group interaction), snowballing (when the statements of one respondent initiate a chain reaction of additional comments), stimulation (when the group discussion generates excitement about a topic), and spontaneity (because participants are not required to answer every question, their responses are more spontaneous and genuine). Thus the data available from a focus group interview are often richer and fuller than the data available from an individual interview (Lederman, 1990).

On the other hand, there are assumptions that focus group interviews may sometimes stimulate some of its members to open discussion while it may inhibit others. Resistance to reporting before the group is of course most marked for matters which may threaten to humiliate students before their fellow classmates. Interviewees may also find it humiliating to "confess" in the semi-public situation of the focus group interview, to certain attitudes,

perceptions or experiences. This partly justifies why in this study the individual interview method has also been used.

5.3 The process of searching for methods

Different methods of data collection have been employed in the main study. The process followed to arrive at these methods was not, however, a straight forward one. In most social scientific research the process of arriving at a particular method is probably a matter of informed trial and error. In this case before a final approach was established, a number of possibilities had to be tried at the pilot stages. What follows is an account of the developments, changes and problems encountered in the process of searching for particular methods used in the study. I have divided this section into three parts: methodology and data gathering in the first pilot study, methodology and data gathering in the second pilot study, and methodology and data gathering in the main study.

5.3.1 The first pilot study: the IELE experience

In an attempt to focus my study on some aspects of verbal participation in group discussion, I carried out an initial observational study of a group work in action with a view to administering a set of questionnaires and carrying out follow-up interviews. Observation was by audio and video recording a group of students and finally conducting a group interview focused around participation in group work in general and the group discussion task in particular. It was anticipated that particular themes would emerge as students offered comments and interpretations based on the video and the group discussion task. The first pilot study then, in terms of overall objectives, was to be an opportunity to experiment with the observational techniques, to gain some experience in interviewing, and to identify and define emerging themes on areas of perceived importance. What follows is the specific procedures I followed to gather data in the first pilot study.

5.3.1.1 The Setting

The subjects selected for the first pilot study were students attending summer English language improvement course at the Institute of English Language Education (IELE), Lancaster University. They would usually meet in a classroom (George Fox Building – Lancaster University) assigned to them by the co-ordinator. That was where audio/video recording was made. The room was suitable for recording- wide enough for arranging groups and for positioning the video camera in such a way that it can include all the students in the frame.

5.3.1.2 The group

The group chosen for the study was made up of eight students of which four were male and four female. The group had already experienced a few weeks of regular, daily, meetings. So participants were relatively familiar with each other and likely to be reasonably relaxed in the group discussion situation. Initial contact was made through the program co-ordinator and then one of the instructors recommended the group as potentially suitable in that there were equal number of males and females and the size manageable for observation. The instructor also told me that the students would most of the time split into two groups, forming two smaller groups having four members each.

The next day I approached the students during their regular class to explain the nature of my research at this stage, and to persuade them to agree to take part in both the video session and subsequent interviews. They agreed and we arranged to meet five days later.

5.3.1.3 The task

The topic of discussion followed the normal course schedule. In other words, the task was not designed with the video recording in mind, it was rather one of the topics designed to be covered in the course of the students' two months stay at the Institute. Right at the start of the class students were given a two-page handout which was about euthanasia, 'mercy killing'. They were

asked to read the passage and later express their views, discuss and share ideas with their group members. Students had a very hot discussion as some of them supported the view that euthanasia should be made legal while some of them were strongly against it.

5.3.1.4 Audio and video recording procedures

When decision was made to record a group of students at the IELE, that is before arrangement was made with the teacher and the students, I had taken the necessary training on how to use video and audio recording machines for research purposes. Following is the procedures I followed when recording:

I took the necessary recording machines (audio and video) with me and reached the classroom where the group discussion and recording was to take place, with 30 minutes to spare before students came to class. That was to be my first experience to make classroom observation using audio and video recording machines. Because I was told that the class would most of the time split into two groups of four, I had to take two audio recorders, one for each group, and a video camera to be focused on both groups.

Extension microphones were attached to the audio recorders and were put in the centre of each of the groups. The audio recorders were put in one of the corners- as far away from the groups as the length of the extension microphones allowed. This might serve two purposes: it would make it easy for me to control the recording from a distant, without getting close to the students; and secondly, it would decrease, to some extent, the visual effect the machine might have on students. In other words, students would be conscious of the presence of a small microphone only. That is besides the camera, in fact, which was put some five metres away from both groups. It was put on a tripod and situated so that all participants were included in the frame. To achieve this seating was in a semi-circle arrangement. The camera was put into operation when all members were present but remained in a static position throughout the session.

5.3.1.5 The Questionnaire

Students were given a 23 item questionnaire to be filled in right after the group discussion session. The questions were designed to help me get some ideas about the group discussion situation. It took most of the students about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

5.3.1.6 The interview

When all the students handed in the questionnaire they filled in, arrangement was made for a group interview. Four days later all the students turned up for the interview. Interviewing took place in one of the classrooms in the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, Lancaster University, mainly for reasons of convenience in that it provided easy access to essential equipment needed for replay. Students were sometimes shown the video discussion from which they were to select episodes they felt to be of some relevance to their points.

During the interview session students were given questions for discussion. They were required to discuss as a group- the eight of them. One audio tape recorder and a video camera were used to record the discussion. Students were asked to choose a secretary who would write answers to the discussion questions. My role then was to give explanations whenever students got stuck somewhere and raise some follow up questions that would add to my understanding of participation in group discussion. The whole discussion took nearly 50 minutes.

The group interview session was actually something between a group discussion and a group interview. The element that might make it a group interview was that I was there to rephrase questions and make things clearer, as an interviewer and a moderator. The element that made it a group discussion was that all the students had the interview questions (equivalent to group discussion tasks) which were also read out by the group leader, also the group secretary, who would write the main points raised in the discussion.

5.3.1.7 Outcomes

There were lots of things for me to learn from the first pilot study. In fact, I could say that the main lessons I got from the first pilot study were to do with problems of all sorts: the recording, questionnaire administration, and the interview. Here are some of them:

a) The video recording – the video camera was put on a tripod and made to focus on the two groups. The focusing was excellent in that both the groups were clearly visible when the video was watched later. It was, however, difficult to identify who said what because there was voice coming from two groups and that made it impossible, most of the time, to make sense out of the utterances. The video recording would still be useful if it were to be used simultaneously with the audio recording. The idea was that the audio tape would provide clear and distinct voices from each of the groups and the video recording would be used to identify who said what when transcribing from the audio recording, because I had two audio recorders – one for each group.

b) Audio recording - There was another problem with the audio recording as well. One of the recording machines was not working. The other was working perfectly. What it recorded was, however, not the interaction of a single group but the interaction of both groups – so it suffered the same problem I had with the video camera. So that made it impossible for me to transcribe the interaction. The lesson for me was, however, very significant. In order to have some transcripts of a group discussion, I had to think of another way of getting the group's interaction. One immediate effect was my decision to make use of the next meeting to get the group's interactions in a group discussion situation. Thus, unlike the first audio and video recording session, the second recording had come out very clear and I was able to transcribe it without any problem. Therefore, the group interview session had given me the chance to see some aspects of verbal participation in group discussion, which I missed during the first group discussion recording.

c) Questionnaire administration – Students felt a bit tired to fill in the questionnaire which took them about 20 minutes. I later felt that asking students to fill in a questionnaire that took up to 20 minutes after having finished a tiresome group discussion task that lasted more than an hour was a bit unfair. Therefore, I felt I should limit the number of questions for the next stage of the research.

d) The interview– There were 8 students who took part in the group. That size was good for group interview but there were some problems when it came to the discussion – sometimes sub-groupings would start and that made the task of transcribing the interaction difficult. So, it made me think about the number of questions and the group size in the next stage of the study.

5.3.2 The second pilot study

5.3.2.1 The setting

The second pilot study was carried out in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University- Sidist Kilo Campus. I chose the Sidist Kilo Campus mainly for reasons of convenience. That is where the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature and my office are situated. That meant I would not have to transport video camera and audio recording machines from one campus to another. The group discussion and the recording both took place in the usual classroom students regularly met in. That was the classroom assigned for the section for one semester. In the second semester students were not assigned the same room for their College English Two class but the one next to it.

5.3.2.2 The group and procedures for selecting subjects

The group chosen for the second pilot study was made up of one section of students (there are normally forty students in one section for the course). I had to choose a section from among 25 sections of first year students at Sidist Kilo Campus of Addis Ababa University. I was assigned to

teach two sections so my next task was to choose one of these two sections for the pilot study. In one of the sections there was only one female student and in the other 10. Inasmuch as gender could be among the factors that might have some influence on verbal participation, I chose to study a group that would have equal number of boys and girls. Therefore, the group which had more females was chosen for the study.

Once the section had been chosen the next step was to identify six students who would be closely studied. I set two major criteria for the selection: gender and language proficiency. Therefore, I was looking for three males and three females; two top ranking, two middle ranking and two bottom ranking as far as their language proficiency was concerned.

A test of speaking was prepared to help put students into three categories according to the level of their oral proficiency: high ranking, middle ranking and bottom ranking. The speaking test used was a slightly adapted version of the test designed by the Testing Committee of the Spoken English Unit of the Department. The test had two sections. In section one students were given warm-up exercises (like introducing themselves to the interviewers). Section two was a kind of individual interview in which students gave their views on topics they randomly chose from a 30-item list.

Two instructors from the DFLL took part in the administration of the test. The instructors had previously been given the necessary training on how to administer the test in as uniformed a way as possible. Then the average of the marks given by the two instructors was used for the purpose of the research. Six students were selected based on their test performance and gender: two top ranking (a male and a female), two middle ranking (a male and a female), and two bottom ranking (a male and a female).

Personality tests were also designed to see if there was any correlation between participation type and personality. There were three types of tests: sociability, risk-taking, and self-concept.

5.3.2.3 Group formation

First day students came to class they sat randomly, most of them crowding in the middle, no rows no gangways. Normal class did not start that day. All that students were told was to sit by the walls forming an 'n' shaped or horse-shoe shaped classroom layout. So next time students came to class they sat by the walls and the middle space was free and almost all students could see each other. When students were told to do some activities in pairs, all they would do was start discussing with one of the students sitting next to them. Pair formation (pairing) was, thus based on physical proximity - who sat next to whom. When students were required to do certain activities in small groups they would most of the time merge two or three neighbouring pairs. Most of the students would take the same seat or position every time they had class. This position was, however changed every two weeks. I would assign students numbers one to six. If I were to begin with the first student by the door, then I would assign the first six students numbers one to six, the next six students again numbers one to six, and so on. Then I would ask number one's to come together and sit next to each other, number two's to come together and sit next to each other, and so on. That way I managed to make students change their group partners every two weeks and that meant students would know each other well after some time because they would have worked with most of the students by the end of the first semester (sixteen weeks or nearly four months).

Sometimes when there was going to be a recording, those students selected based on the criteria mentioned earlier (three males and three females, and two of them top ranking, two middle ranking and two bottom ranking) would be asked to sit and perform group discussion tasks together. The students were recorded three times while performing group discussion tasks.

5.3.2.4 The task

All the tasks used in the study were taken from the students' text books- College English Volume 1 for the first semester and Volume 2 for the second semester. Most of the tasks required students to think of answers, sometimes in writing, individually first and then get together as a

group and share views. The tasks chosen for the discussion during audio and video recording sessions were on a) AIDS b) Gender issues, and c) Coping with stress.

5.3.2.5 Video and audio recording procedures

a) Group discussion – Care had to be taken not to repeat the mistakes made during group discussion recording in the first pilot study. The corrections that had to be made included the following: first, the video camera should be focused on only one group at a time. Secondly, if an extension microphone is to be used, it had to be put in the middle or centre of the group. What is more, if the group to be recorded would sit next to another group then the microphone would pick the voices of neighbouring groups, therefore the group to be recorded should be positioned a little bit away from other groups. Finally, checking whether the instruments used for recording were working properly was important.

After all the necessary care had been taken, as far as possible, then all the students including the focus group were asked to work on the tasks chosen for the recording session. During the third recording, which was done towards the end of the second semester, the selected students were asked to fill in a 21-item questionnaire, when recording was over.

b) The interviews – There were two types of interviews during the second pilot study- individual interview and focus group interview. Two groups were chosen for the interview. Each group had five members. Both groups had earlier filled in the post-task questionnaire. Members of group A were called for group interview and all of them took part in the discussion. Members of group B took part in the individual interview.

The recording of individual and group interviews was fairly easy, because there was no voice coming from other groups and the recording was, as a result clear. During the group interview session, the video camera was put on a tripod and situated so that all participants were included in the frame. To achieve this seating was in a semi-circle arrangement. The microphone that went into the audio recorder was put in the centre of the group. Video recording was not used during

individual interview. Apart from this, similar recording procedures had been followed during the individual interview session.

5.3.2.6 The questionnaire

The questionnaire used during the second pilot study was more or less similar to the one used in the first pilot study. The major difference being that some questions were simplified and two questions were excluded. There were 21 items in the questionnaire. It took students about 15 minutes to complete it.

5.3.2.7 Outcomes/ issues raised

1. The fact that questionnaire was administered only once, towards the end of the academic year, had made it impossible to compare the types of changes (behavioural changes/ change in verbal participation) that students were perceived to have made by the end of the year.
2. An attempt had been made in the second pilot study to use some standard personality tests. The tests had apparently not indicated any correlation between personality and verbal participation. Further reading in the area suggested the need to design personality traits that are very specific to the second language classroom situation.
3. The data collection methods used at this stage were limited to observing only one group. It is felt later that although the focus could be on a group of students, the verbal participation behaviour of the class in general had to be known. A) – since a group can not be seen separately from the class if the verbal participation of the group is important. This would entail using other methods that can give some picture of the participation level of all the students in that section.

5.3.3 The main study

The setting of the main study is similar to that of the second pilot study (discussed in section 5.3.2.1 above). Similarly, most of the procedures for the second pilot study and the main

study were quite similar. In the following section I will focus on aspects that are different from the second pilot study.

5.3.3.1 The group and procedures for selecting subjects

The main study was carried out in the 1998/99 academic year and participants were first year students who joined the college of social science in September 1998. I was assigned to teach two sections in the Sidist Kilo Campus. I explained to my students in both sections about the kind of research I was going to carry out. I asked them to say whether they would volunteer to take part in the study. I passed round a form in which students put a check mark in to one of two columns: column one for volunteering and column two for not volunteering. All students but one volunteered in one of the sections, while in the other section there were six students who did not want to take part in the study. I selected the section where there was only one student who did not want to take part in the study. The one student who did not like to take part in the study was offered the chance of changing section but the student did not even want to come forward and make himself/ herself known. There were 40 students in that section out of which 29 were males and 11 females. So that was the section chosen for the main study.

Once the section had been chosen the next step was to identify six students who would be closely studied. I set two major criteria for the selection: gender and oral proficiency. Therefore, I was looking for three males and three females, two top ranking, two middle ranking and two bottom ranking as far as their language proficiency was concerned.

All the students in that section took the same speaking test used in the second pilot study. The same instructors who had taken part in the administration of the test during the second pilot study helped in the administration of the test in the main study as well. Six students were selected based on their test performance and gender : two top ranking (a male and a female), two middle ranking (a male and a female), and two bottom ranking (a male and a female).

5.3.3.3 Group formation

In the main study again similar procedures to the second pilot study were followed to assign students to different groups. One major difference could be that the target groups were allowed to work in the same group for about two weeks before they were recorded while carrying out group discussion. That was intended to give students some time to get to know each other to some extent, so that they would not at least fear each other during the recording session.

Like in most other sections in the university, there were some students in this section who faced academic dismissal in the second semester. One of the six students in the target group was also among the dismissed. As a result, there was a slight change of groups and group sizes in the second semester. The target group had thus to continue with only five members.

In the second semester all students were allowed to sit with who ever they wanted to sit with. Sometimes when there was going to be a recording, those students selected based on the criteria mentioned earlier would be asked to sit and perform group discussion tasks together. This, however, does not mean that recording was made only with the target group. In fact, most of the recordings were made with students who were not in the focus/ target group. In other words most of the students (students in the target group did not have to sit together) were recorded while working with those students they work most of the time – probably friends.

5.3.3.4 The task

All the tasks used in the study were the ones used in the students' text books- College English Volume 1 for the first semester and Volume 2 for the second semester. Most of the tasks required students to think of answers, sometimes in writing, individually first and then get together as a group and share views.

5.3.3.5 Video and audio recording procedures

All in all 15 students took part in the individual interview. These students were selected based on certain criteria: level of participation in group discussion- low or high, change of

degree of participation by the end of the year- increase or decrease, and target group membership. Two groups participated in the focus group interview. Both groups were selected following the same criteria explained earlier: gender and language proficiency.

The recording of individual and group interviews took place in the same room students used as a classroom. This was done mainly to add to the ecological validity – to avoid whatever effect new rooms might have on students' interaction and to make sure that students focus on the interview at hand. This actually helped a lot specially when students wanted, during the interviews, to refer to some students or groups that would sit in certain places or corners in the classroom.

The medium of discussion for both the individual interview and the group interview was Amharic. This was done to avoid any retreats on the part of the interviewees from expressing their honest perceptions of the group discussion situation. It was, in other words, to reduce the amount of information students might withhold if it were to be in a language they could not comfortably communicate. In addition, students had also showed preference for Amharic language to be used as the medium of discussion. Other recording procedures are similar to that of the second pilot study.

5.3.3.6 Post-task questionnaire

To gather some data on students' perceptions of their group members' levels of participation, all students (there were 35 students in the second semester) were required to fill in a 2-item post-task questionnaire. This same procedure was repeated after about 8 weeks when most of the students had changed their groups. As a result most of the students have filled in at least two post-task questionnaires. Students in the target group, however, have done this more than three times. During their first group discussion recording they filled in a 13-item post-task questionnaire, a 3-item during their second recording, and a 2-item questionnaire during their third recording.

5.3.3.8 Students' perceptions of their own level of participation

Students were asked to indicate their own level of participation in group work, in comparison to other students they had worked with. The question was "how do you perceive your own level of participation? "1—2—3—4—5—6, one being *very silent*, two *silent*, three *on the silent side*, four *on the talker side*, five *high participator*, and six *very high participator*. Students were given the Amharic version.

5.3.3.9 Students' perceptions of their classmates' levels of participation

Now that students had worked together for nearly one academic year, it was felt that they could say something or would have developed some perceptions of the levels of participation most of the students in that section had. Four categories had been identified and students were required to state their perceptions of other students' participation from this point of view. The four categories were: a) students thought to be high participators or talkers, b) students thought to be low participators or silents, c) students perceived to have increased participation in the second semester, and d) students perceived to have decreased participation in the second semester. To obtain this information, students were asked, at the end of the second semester, to identify students or their classmates as belonging to any of the four categories. They were asked to write the names of three students under each category. In other words a student would write the names of 12 students. To make it easier for students to easily identify others by sight and by name seating was in a semi-circle arrangement, in such a way that all of them could see each other. Next, students names were written and stuck to their desk. The question was written in Amharic language and students were given out papers to write their answers on. Students were also told not to identify themselves or write their names on the paper.

The result or summary of the four categories was then used as a basis for interviewing students. This had created the chance to interview at least two students from each category.

5.3.3.10 Questionnaire based on categories that emerged out of transcript analysis

Three sets of questionnaire were prepared based on transcript analysis of the main study. There were 29,28, and 25 items in the first, the second, and the third set, respectively. This questionnaire was prepared to help determine the strength of some factors. The questionnaire was administered to 108 first year students. Details of this are presented in the next chapter – data analysis.

5.3.3.11 The instructor's perception of students' levels of participation

It was felt that after teaching a whole year the instructor would have enough knowledge of the students' level of participation and the information could be compared with students' ratings of their own and their classmates' levels of participation. The instructor's ratings of students' levels of participation in group work was done two times: one week before the end of the first semester and right at the end of the second semester. There were 6 categories here as well: 1—2—3—4—5—6, one being *very silent*, two *silent*, three *on the silent side*, four *on the talker side*, five *high participator*, and six *very high participator*.

5.4 Summary

This chapter dealt with developments emerging out of two pilot studies, and illustrated the way the main study was finally shaped. In terms of data gathering, I outlined the informed trial and error approach undertaken in an attempt to find the methods that best suited the specific objectives of the research. The findings from the two pilot studies shaped the final approach involving the use of fewer questionnaire items (but with multiple administration), rating scales, more individual interviews based on the criteria developed informed by the pilot studies, and the developing of quantifiable data prepared to determine the strength of some factors which involved 108 students. The following table summarises the relationship between research questions, methods and subjects involved.

Table 5.1 The relationship between research questions, methods of investigation, and subjects involved

	Research questions	Group discussion	individual interview	Focus group interv.	Tests	Questionnaires and ratings					
						SQ1	SQ2	SQ3	SQ4	SQ5	TR1
1	To what extent do students differ in their amount of verbal participation in group work?	✓ 10 groups	✓ 13	✓ 2 groups			✓ 6	✓ 38	✓ 38	35	✓ 1
2	What factors account for the differences in the amount of verbal participation in group work?		✓ 13	✓ 2 groups	✓ 35	✓ 66					
3	How do students perceive silents and talkers?		✓ 13	✓ 2 groups		42					
4	(Why) Do students change their participation behaviour?	✓ 5	✓ 13	✓ 2 groups			✓ 38		✓ 35	✓ 35	✓ 1

SQ1 Factor ratings

SQ2 Post-task questionnaire

SQ3 Group member ratings

SQ4 Self ratings

SQ5 End-of-year questionnaire

TR1 Teacher's ratings

This chapter has focused on data collection methods used during the different stages of the study. The two pilot studies were used to help arrive at a more workable type of data to deal with the research questions. The next chapter presents how the data collected during the main study has been analysed.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce and describe the methods and procedures of data analysis that will be used in the next four chapters. Data analysis in qualitative methodology is a process that goes on throughout the study. In this chapter I will focus on the system of analysis of the dominant data collection tool used in this study – interview. The chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section the system of analysis of interviews is presented. Then the categories that emerged out of the interview transcript analysis will be indicated. This is followed by some observations on the use of computer software. Finally, the system of analysis used to investigate some of the quantitative data will be outlined.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have been used in the study. Table 6.1, below, shows the relationship between research questions and methods used.

Table 6.1 The relationship between research questions and methods used

	Research question	Qualitative methods	Quantitative methods
1	To what extent do students differ in their amount of verbal participation?	Interview	a. Group discussion transcript analysis b. Self rating c. Post group discussion rating d. End-of-year questionnaire e. Instructor's rating
2	What factors account for the difference?	Interview	Factor rating
3	How do students view silents and talkers?	Interview	Factor rating
4	Do students change their participation behaviour? Why?	Interview	a. Group discussion transcript b. Self rating c. End-of-year questionnaire d. Instructor's rating

Two types of qualitative interview have been used in the study: individual interview and focus group interview. The system of analysis is quite similar mainly because the approach followed and the issues raised during the interview were almost the same. Therefore, in the discussion in this chapter interview transcript analysis refers to both individual and focus group interview unless specified otherwise.

6.2. Step-by-step procedures followed to analyse interviews

6.2.1 Identifying the main ideas

Much of stage one actually took place during and immediately following the interview. At this stage I considered the students' words, ideas that occupied the participants, and I identified several *main ideas* that represented the findings from the interviews. These *main ideas* were at later stage altered or refined after further data analysis. Nonetheless, they helped to provide the initial framework for the development of the major categories and findings.

6.2.2 Unit identification

This is a very time consuming process. It refers to the process of identifying those units of information that later became the basis for identifying categories. Several important things were considered when identifying units. First of all, for a piece of information to be a unit, it should be heuristic. In other words, it should assist the researcher to better understand the topic or research question. If the information does not meet the criteria of better informing the research question it is not considered relevant – even if it is interesting. Secondly, it should be the smallest amount of information that is informative by itself. This unit of information should be interpretable without more than a broad understanding of the purpose of the study. Thirdly, the size of a unit of information can vary from a word or a phrase to a sentence or a paragraph, and sometimes even many paragraphs.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) advise that the data analysts be very familiar with the purpose of the research and the research questions. Hence I undertook the primary job of analysing the interviews. But, for reasons explained later, others had to also analyse the data from interviews. Thus, I made several copies of the transcripts and then other analysts had to also identify units, underline and code them- paragraph by paragraph and sometimes line by line, depending on the size of the unit.

Once the units were identified, the next step was to bring the information units into separate groups so that they could be categorised. Since the information units were entered into the computer the process of bringing the units together was taken care of quite easily. Next, all the relevant information units – and the information codes that provided relevant information about them – were separated from the text. At this point, categorising the units was possible.

6.2.3 Categorising the units

Categorisation refers to the putting together of the different units of information under some headings, which were also developed based on the overall themes or issues raised in the units and the main ideas identified during the interview (discussed under-6.2.1). At this stage, the units that were identified in stage 2 were sorted into relevant themes that eventually represented categories. Categorising brings together those information units that are related to the same content. Categories are superordinate headings that provide an organisational theme for the units of data.

During this third stage, rules that describe category properties were defined to justify the inclusion of units into that category and also to serve as a basis for later tests of inter-sorter reliability. Following are the procedures I followed for categorising units:

1. The initial categories emerged from the information available after participating in the interviews, reading the transcript, and identifying the units of information. I

briefly described the criteria for each category on a separate sheet of paper. Next, I looked through information units that contributed directly to that category or could be sorted as representing that category. These information units were then given the same code. I revised the criteria for the category as I worked with information units. When I had identified all information units that directly relate to the category, I carefully reviewed them and looked for any examples that did not relate.

2. I continued this process with other categories until I had exhausted those categories that were most apparent. While engaged in the process, I would sometimes think of other categories. I would jot down these category titles and initial criteria, and I returned to them after I finished the one I was working on.

3. When I found information units that did not fit with established categories and yet did not seem to warrant their own category either, I would simply pass them uncategorised and uncoded and I would return to them later.

4. Once all of the information units had been exhausted, I reviewed the categories for overlap and completeness. When categories had similar properties, I collapsed them into a broader category that included all of the information in the previously separate categories.

5. Those information units still uncategorised and uncoded were finally dealt with- either included in other categories, used as their own category, or discarded.

6.2.4. Inter-rater agreement

This is sometimes called inter-observer reliability. Here I was concerned with two things. First, with establishing that my categories were fit for the purpose of analysis and, secondly, with establishing the accuracy of my indexing or categorisation.

I felt that others should be able to apply my categories and the rules for indexing the data to a selection of transcripts. What I was looking for at this point was confirmation that the categories I have chosen are workable, that they take in all the significant data, that they are not unnecessarily fine-grained, and that no sub-categories are needed. I asked two colleagues to apply the categories I had developed. There were very few disagreements / differences between us on the use of the categories. I regarded the disagreements as raising points for me to consider and respond to. The aim was to tune my system of categories, leading to a final set that, informed by others' comments, would be more reliable or plausible. When the categories were fixed in their final version one other person indexed a sample of transcripts. This time there were even fewer differences between my system of categorisation and the other person's. That way it was possible to achieve some degree of reliability.

The same procedures identified above had been followed for each of the individual interviews (with 13 students) and two focus group interviews. Thus, theoretically, it is possible to have themes that are supported by as many as 13 individual interviewees and two focus groups and as few as just one. In other words, the aim at this stage is not to determine the strength or frequency, but rather the presence of factors or influences as the study is basically exploratory –aimed to exhaustively identify as many units or themes or factors as mentioned by the participants.

6.3 Categories emerged out of the interview transcript analysis

Once the analysis had been carried out, then it was possible to find answers to all of the research questions. In relation to the first research question interviewees said who the very silent students were and who the talkative ones were. Students also gave their views about themselves, i.e., whether they saw themselves as silent or talkative. It should be noted at this point, however, that the interviews were not used to identify all the students in that section into one category or another. Therefore, students may tend to talk about those students who

were clearly silent or talkative. The majority of the students tend not to be mentioned in this kind of discussion.

To answer the second research question (to do with the factors that accounted for students' silence or participation), the same procedure described under 6.2 was followed and 29 factors were identified.

With regard to the third research question, which dealt with how students perceive silents and talkers in group discussion situation, 25 categories were identified altogether. Of these 15 were about the talkers and 10 were about the silents.

The main instrument used to investigate the fourth research question (whether some students have changed their participation behaviour in the second semester, and why they did) was interview. Following the usual system of analysis the transcript was analysed and three main categories emerged out of the analysis: identification of students who have increased or decreased participation, why some students have decreased participation (6 factors), and why some students have increased participation (again 6 factors).

6.4 Some observations on the use of computers

I used a qualitative data analysis software called NUDIST (an acronym for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising). This is a computer package designed to aid users in handling non-numerical and unstructured data in qualitative analysis. NUDIST does this by supporting processes of indexing, searching and theorising. The chief benefit of programs like NUDIST is that they are able to alleviate the cumbersome task of cutting, pasting and subsequent retrieval of interview transcripts. The process of presenting results and using quotes is, for instance, facilitated by using this software which automatically retrieves all quotes related to a particular category. (See Appendix 21 for illustration with selected categories). It should be noted, however, that the coding of materials still needs to be done and its laboriousness is not really diminished, but the

computer software opens up the possibility of those operations that follow on from coding being greatly eased.

A computer programme has its limits, however, as Kruger (1994) says, it cannot substitute for the imagination that is a necessary ingredient of analysis and interpretation. Indeed, Seidel and Clark (1984), who have developed a qualitative data analysis software, have written that one of their chief aims was to free researchers from cutting and pasting in order to allow them to concentrate on the interpretation of their data.

6.5 Quantitative methods of analysis

As indicated in Table 6.1, six different quantitative methods have been used to investigate the different research questions: a) post group discussion rating, b) self rating, c) instructor's rating, d) group discussion transcript analysis, e) factor-rating, and f) end-of-year questionnaire. Following are systems of analysis used with each of the methods.

6.5.1 Post group discussion rating

Post group discussion rating refers to the questionnaire in which students in a group were asked to rate members of the group on participation in that particular discussion and right after they finished discussion. Two types of ratings were used in the study. The first one required students to rate each member of the group on a 9-point scale, 9 for students who *talked constantly* and 1 for students who *did not talk at all*. The points were multiplied by the number of students who have selected that particular scale. This was done for each of the group members. Since the number of group members was six for the first stage of the study, the maximum point a student could get here was 9x6= 54 and the least was 1x6= 6, that is for a student who did not talk at all (see Appendix 11).

In another questionnaire (and another time) in order to determine the participation level of students in a group, members of different groups were asked to write the number codes (used instead of names) of their own group members in descending order of participation.

Thus, if there are five students in a group each student would write the numbers (used instead of names) of these students beginning with the top participator in the first box given in the questionnaire and the number code of the least participator in the last box (See Appendix 15)

6.5.2 Self rating

Students' ratings of their own participation level was done twice: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester. Based on these data, there are two ways of classifying students: using the average of the two ratings and comparing it with the rest of the class, and making comparisons twice without the need for averaging the ratings.

In relation to the fourth research question, students' ratings at these different points in time were then compared. The comparisons helped to indicate whether students changed their participation level or remained the same. If they have changed, again whether it was an increase or a decrease. This method was used to gather ideas about students' perception of their own participation level in the course of the two semesters. That is if, from their own point of view, they have remained the same, increased or decreased participation.

6.5.3 Instructor's rating

This study is essentially about the perceptions of students about their own and their classmates' verbal participation. I have preferred here to present the instructor's perceptions as well so that it can be compared with that of the students. The instructor has rated the students on participation in group discussion two times: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester. The ratings when compared were expected to indicate a) the level of participation of each student, and b) whether students have, from the instructor's point of view, generally remained the same, increased verbal participation, or decreased verbal participation.

6.5.4 The group discussion transcripts

There are group discussion transcripts from 10 different groups of students (see Chapter 5 for method of selection of groups). These students were recorded while taking part in group discussion: towards the beginning of the first semester, towards the beginning of the second semester and towards the end of the second semester.

Once the discussion was transcribed the next step was to feed the information into the computer. The same programme, NUDIST, was used to analyse the transcript. There were two ways of looking at the interaction: a) looking at the number of turns taken by each participant or group member, and b) looking at the total number of words uttered by each of the participants. For various reasons, discussed in Chapter 7, the total number of words uttered are thought to shed more light on the students' level of participation in group discussion. Percentages are computed for each participant to help easily see the extent, or variation in participation. The results are compared with students' views of their own and others' ratings.

6.5.5 Factor-rating

To determine/ assess some of the major factors that make Ethiopian students silent or talkative in group discussion situation, all constraints or factors mentioned by the students in response to both the individual and focus group interviews were listed. Then, another group (consisting of 66 students) rated the extent to which each factor accounted for students' silence or talkativeness.

When designing the questionnaire, I listed the factors reported during the interviews and requested two other groups or sections of students in the social science faculty at AAU to indicate the extent to which each of the factors would play some roles in making students silent or talkative. Students were required to indicate the strength of each of the factors by

circling a number on the scale. The numbers ranged from 6 (strong agreement) to 1 (strong disagreement).

In other words, 36 first year students rated the 29 factors that were perceived to account for students' talkativeness. The maximum point for each item would then be 36 x 6 (the number of students who did the rating multiplied by the highest degree of agreement). The minimum would be 36 x 1 (the number of students who did the rating multiplied by the highest degree of agreement). Thus the higher the total the stronger the influence of that item in contributing towards students' active participation.

Similarly, another group of 30 students rated the 28 factors perceived to account for students' silence. Similar procedure was followed to the one above. Thus, the higher the total the stronger the influence of the item in contributing towards students low participation in group discussion. The lower the total, then the lower the influence the factor would have on students' silence.

In relation to the fourth research question, students' views of the silents and the talkers were analysed following the same procedure for analysing all the interviews. Altogether, 25 categories emerged out of the analysis of the interview: 15 views about the talkers and 10 about the silents. Then, in order to determine the extent to which students view silents and talkers in a certain way, again another set of questionnaire was prepared and distributed to students in two other sections. 42 students took part in this activity. The results of this rating are expected to give some hints on how students view or perceive silents and talkers.

6.5.6 End-of-year questionnaire

This is the questionnaire students filled in at the end of the academic year. They were required to write the names of students they think have been silents or talkatives, and those who they think have increased or decreased participation in the second semester.

Each student was required to identify a) three students who they think had been silent, b) three who had been high participators, c) three students who had decreased participation, and d) three students who they think had increased participation in the second semester (See Appendix 20). A table of summary has been prepared to indicate how each of the students was identified as belonging to the four categories. Percentages have been used to make comparisons easier. Thus the higher the number of students (or percentages of students) who have identified a student as belonging to a category (silent, high participator, increased participation, or decreased participation), the clearer the indication that the student belongs to that category – as far as his/ her classmates' perceptions are concerned.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt has been made to describe, in some detail, the system of analysis used with the dominant method of data collection – the interview. The attention given to the interview method in this chapter indicates the fact that it is the main tool used for investigating students' perception in this study. Inasmuch as the interview data has been categorised and later retrieved using a computer software, some space has also been given to the discussion about the use of computers. Finally, the procedures followed to analyse the quantitative data collection methods have been discussed.

CHAPTER 7

TO WHAT EXTENT DO STUDENTS DIFFER IN THEIR AMOUNT OF VERBAL PARTICIPATION IN GROUP WORK? (RQ1)

7.1 Introduction

We now come to the results of the main study. Chapter 7 investigates the extent to which students in the study (one section of College English students) differ in their amount of verbal participation in group discussion. Chapters 8 and 9 look at the factors that account for students' differences in verbal output, and how students perceive low participators and high participators. Chapter 10 describes (by taking a longitudinal approach) students' changing orientations, that is, whether some students have increased or decreased participation by the end of the year. The last chapter (Chapter 11) presents the summary, pedagogical and research implications, and the conclusion.

In this present chapter, the results obtained by using different instruments (interviews, ratings, transcripts of group discussion and group interviews, and end-of-year questionnaire) are presented. The last section provides the main conclusions of the chapter.

7.2 Interviews

There were two types of interviews: focus group interview and individual interview. In the interview intended to address this part of the study students were basically asked three questions: a) whether they saw themselves as silent or talkative, b) whether they knew some silent students, and who they were, and c) whether they were able to say that there were some students who talked a lot in group discussion, and who they were.

The three questions resulted in three categories in the analysis of both the individual and focus group interview data. These are a) what students said about themselves, b) what students said about the silent students, and c) what students said about the high participators. The discussion under this section is based on these categories.

7.2.1 What do students say about their own level of participation?

In the interview students were asked whether they knew, among the students they had worked with in groups, some students who were silent or quiet most of the time. There were two possible responses: *yes, I do* or *no I don't*. Under this section I will discuss responses in which students said something about the way they perceived their own level of participation.

Tsegaye, when asked if he knew some silent students, replied that *there are some five or six students who are very silent. I am among these students myself.* Another student, Abera said he was the most silent student in one of the groups he had worked with for some time. When he was asked who the most silent student was in the target group. Abera said *it is I myself, and probably relatively speaking Yodit.*

In a focus group interview Firew, when asked whether he belonged to the silents or the talkers side in group work, he said he was among the silent. Admas pointed out that there were students who kept quiet most of the time. *For instance, I myself keep quiet most of the time*. He added that *that is the way I have got used to. Although I may know the answer I prefer to keep quiet. I participate very rarely, probably*, he added.

Unlike Admas who would prefer to keep quiet although he may know the answer, Dawit said *if I have something to say then I don't keep quiet or I don't hesitate to express my thought.* Similarly, Tesfa did not find it difficult, it seems, to tell whether he belonged to the silents or the talkers group. *When I* (Tesfa), *Saba, Yodit, Dawit and Abera work together, and may be because I feel I might have dominated the group I try to keep quiet.*

It can be seen, from this extract, that Tesfa was, in fact, trying to keep quiet because he felt he might have dominated other group members. In other words, it seems that he has gone beyond perceiving himself as talkative to the need to give others the chance to participate or say their share in the group interaction.

For some students the issue of identifying oneself as silent or talker seems a bit difficult. Hailu for example said *I am not aware of it. But some students told me that I speak a lot. I am not aware of it, however. I have the interest. I have the interest to spea*k. Towards the end of the interview when the same question was repeated he made up his mind, it appears, and said he was among the talkers. May be it could be easier for silents to tell their level of participation than for the talkers.

In short, some students (Admas, Tsegaye, Abera, and Firew) perceived themselves to be among the silent students in that section. Others (Hailu, Dawit, and Tesfa) perceived themselves, although not as clearly as the silents do, as belonging to the talkers group.

7.2.2 Students' responses about low participators

7.2.2.1 Individual interview

In this section I will present about those students who are identified as 'silents' or 'low participators' by other students. Interviewees were asked whether there were some silent students in any of the groups they had been to in the course of the year.

Tsegaye pointed out that there were some five or six very silent students in that section. Another interviewee mentioned Tsegaye, the student who pointed out that he was silent. In fact in the individual interview four students mentioned this same student as very silent. Another student mentioned as one of the most silent students in that class was Zeru who was described as keeping silent most of the time.

Other students in that class who were described as keeping silent most of the time were Firew, Abera, Eshetu, Nega, and Adane.

It is important to point out here, however, that students' response to the interview question is sometimes based on a single observation and sometimes on multiple observation. The latter gives a more reliable picture of the student being described. This is the case especially where a student is described as silent or talkative by only one student.

7.2.2.2. Focus group interview

In a focus group interview all the participants agreed that there were some very quiet students. Zeru was, for instance, described as *very quiet* by one of the interviewees and the rest agreed. When one of the interviewees mentioned Eshetu as a silent student, however, the rest of the focus group interview members did not agree. They pointed out that he was among the high participators. It would be interesting here to compare the views of these students with the word count analysis of the group discussion transcript, as this particular student had taken part in group discussion with both students who described him as silent and as a high participator. See section 7.5 for some 'objective' ratings where Eshetu's participation is evaluated using word count analysis. Another interviewee said *of the students I have worked with Selam keeps quiet most of the time.*

7.2.3 Students' responses about the high participators

7.2.3.1 Individual interview

When students were asked if they came across students who talked much more than others, they mentioned some students. *Tesfa participates a lot and he is very critical about the things he says... there are some girls as well, Marta for example*. Another interviewee said *I have worked with Tesfa a number of times, he dominates other group members very much, most of the time*. Another student said *when we work four or five together I think Eshetu participates more actively*. This is the same student mentioned earlier in section 7.1.2 as being one of the silent students. Another student said *Azene for example, I worked with him in the first semester. He would participate very much, and Adane*, he added.

Another interviewee (Azene) mentioned several students who he thought participated very actively in group discussions: *Marta, the girl, Girma, Kassa, Adane, sometimes, and Darge. They are clever. ... Tesfa speaks a lot, he has got ideas, and Dawit as well, and Saba.* Another student said *Dawit speaks a lot. In fact, he overdoes it. Sometimes he talks too much. He likes arguing on almost all issues, all the time.*

Marta said *I have worked with different groups and Kassa is clever, he participates very actively, Dawit also speaks a lot, Saba and Elleni as well.* The same interviewee described one of the groups she had worked with for quite a long time as all-talkers group: *the five of us- myself (Marta), Negasa, Hailu, Desta, and Girma- no, no, no there is no one silent.*

7.2.3.2 Focus group interview

In the focus group interview a student said *I think Hailu's participation is very clearly seen – he was dominating other group members.* Other students who were identified as high participators by the focus group interview participants were Tesfa, Dawit, Saba, Elleni, Marta, and Eshetu. The latter was, however, labelled as silent by one of the interview participants.

The following tables summarise the findings reported so far by way of categorising the students mentioned by the interviewees. Table 7.1 is about students who were labelled as silents. Table 7.2 presents the list of students who were classified as high participators.

Table 7.1 Low participators

	Name of	Low participators		
		Said s/he is silent	Individual Interview	Group interview
1	Tsegaye	✓	✓	✓
2	Admas	✓	✓	
3	Abera	✓	✓	
4	Firew	✓	✓	✓
5	Eshetu		✓	✓
6	Adane		✓	

7	Nega		✓	
8	Zeru		✓	✓
9	Selam			✓

Table 7.2 High participators

	Name of	High participators		
		Said s/he is high	Individual interview	Group interview
1	Tesfa	✓	✓	✓
2	Marta	✓	✓	✓
3	Azene		✓	
4	Adane		✓	
5	Girma		✓	
6	Kassa		✓	
7	Saba		✓	✓
8	Dawit		✓	✓
9	Elleni		✓	✓
10	Hailu	✓	✓	✓
11	Negasa		✓	
12	Desta		✓	
13	Darge		✓	
14	Eshetu		✓	✓

It can be seen, from the above tables, that some students were identified as both 'low participators' and 'high participators'. The case of such students will be further discussed in subsequent sections.

7.3 Self-ratings

Students rated their own level of participation in group work twice in the course of the year. The averages of the ratings can be used to determine students' level of participation in the

course of the two semesters. Students were asked to rate their participation in a six point rating scale– beginning from 1 (for a very low participation in group work) to 6 (for a very high participation in group work). As can be seen from Table 7.3 below, students preferred to avoid the two extreme categories. As a result, no one rated himself/ herself as being extremely silent or extremely talkative. Based on students' ratings of their own levels of participation, students can be broadly divided into 4 categories.

1. Silent
2. On the silent side
3. On the talker side
4. High participators

Table 7.3 Students' perceptions of their own level of participation in the first and second semester

Ratings	Students' ratings in the 1st sem.		Students' ratings in the 2nd sem.		Students' average (Sem. 1&2)		Instructor's rating in the 1st sem.		Instructor's rating in the 2nd sem		Instructor's average (Sem. 1&2)	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Very silent	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	14.3	2	5.7	3.5	10.0
Silent	5	14.3	6	17.1	5.5	15.7	7	20.0	8	22.9	7.5	21.5
On the silent side	11	31.4	6	17.1	8.5	24.3	6	17.1	3	8.6	4.5	12.8
On the talkers side	12	34.3	12	34.3	12	34.3	5	14.3	13	37.1	9	25.7
High participators	7	20.0	11	31.4	9	25.7	6	17.1	4	11.4	5	14.3
V. high participators	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	17.1	5	14.3	5.5	15.7

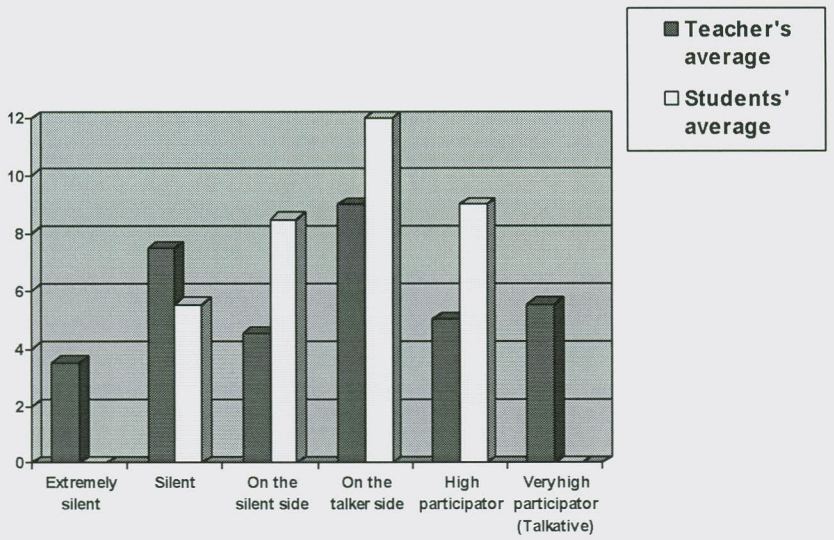
Table 7.3 shows how 35 students rated their own level of participation in group work in two semesters. The average of the two has also been provided. It can be seen from the table that most of the students see themselves as belonging to the middle categories in the verbal participation continuum. 14.3% of the students perceived themselves to be silent. The

number of students who chose this category, however, slightly increased in the second semester to 17.1%. Most of the students or the majority of the students (more than 65%), perceived their participation to be in the middle range, in the first semester. This figure has however decreased in the second semester and about 51% of the students said they perceived their level of participation to be in this middle category. While only 20% of the students perceived themselves as high participators in the first semester, the figure has increased by more than ten percent to slightly more than 31% in the second semester.

Notwithstanding students' avoidance of the extreme categories, the instructor's evaluation or perception of the students' level of participation shows that there are some students who fall under the extreme categories. If we look at the instructor's average ratings for the first and the second semester, 10% of the students were categorized as extremely silent. Similarly, 15.7% of the students were perceived to be *very high participators*, or talkatives. Slightly more than 38% of the students fall under the middle categories, some of them *on the silent side* others *on the talker side*.

Another way of looking at students in terms of their perceptions of their own verbal participation level is by roughly putting students into three groups: silents, averages, and high participators; then the students in the study could be divided in to 15.7%, 58.6%, and 25.7%, silents, averages, and high participators, respectively. This is as far as the average of the two semesters evaluation of students' own level of participation in group work is concerned. The instructor's perception of students' level of participation in group work is slightly different and worth comparing with that of the students'. According to the instructor, 31.5%, 38.5%, and 30% of the students on average fall under the silent (including very silent students), average, and high participators (including very high participators) categories, respectively. The following graph may show the difference more clearly.

Figure 7.1 Instructor's and students' ratings on verbal participation in group work



7.4 Post group work ratings

After certain group discussion sessions students were asked to put their group members names in descending order of participation. That is, if there are five students, for instance, then students would write the names (number codes were used instead of names) of these students in descending order of participation. Table 7.4 is a summary of the post-group discussion ratings. What I have presented here are not the complete ratings (which I have put under Appendix 15). The table also does not show the ratings given to all the students. That is to say students' ratings are presented here if they show that a student is either clearly a high participator or clearly a low participator as far as students' post-group-work ratings

are concerned. In other words, the case of students who tend to be on the average side or somewhere in the middle, has not been presented here.

There were three types of groups speaking in terms of group size: groups of four, five and six.

Table 7.4 Post group discussion ratings of low participators and high participators

		Group size 4			Group size 5		6
1	Kassa	1	1				
2	Darge	1	1				
3	Marta	1			1		
4	Tesfa	1	2		1		1
5	Elleni	1			1	2	
6	Chane				1	2	
7	Hailu	1	2		1	2	
8	Azene	1	3		1		
9	Saba	1	3		1		2
10	Dawit	3			1	1	4
11	Selam	4			5	3	
12	Abate	4			5		
13	Tsegaye	4	4				
14	Abera	4	4		5		5

The above table shows that there were some students who were almost consistently rated as high participators, like Kassa, Tesfa, Darge, Elleni, Marta, and Hailu (the first ten students in the table are students rated as high participators). It also shows how some students were consistently rated as low participators, at different times- this includes the last four students in the table, Selam, Abate, Tsegaye and Abera.

It should be made clear that this is only one way of looking at students' perceptions of their own and others' verbal participation in group work. The advantage of this type of rating is that it gives students the chance to evaluate their partners' verbal participation in group

work immediately following the group discussion and while almost everything is still fresh in their mind. The disadvantage is that silent students may work together in one group and when it comes to the rating, one of the better silents would be rated 'number one' for participation. Similarly, it would be possible that all high participators work together in one group, in which case one of the relatively lower participators of the four or five students in the group may be rated as the least participator. It is to redress this disadvantage that I wanted students to do the ratings as many times as possible, and working with different students.

7.5 Transcripts of group discussions

A number of groups were recorded while carrying out group discussion activities. The discussions from 10 different groups have been transcribed. Following the transcriptions a turn count analysis has been done. The turns would, however, not say much about students' involvement. This can be seen from a student who would always backchannel. A better and more objective way of evaluating students' verbal participation would be to do a word count analysis.

Most of the students were recorded while carrying out group discussion activities. In fact, some of the students were recorded many times. This was done with the intention of comparing how some students might behave or participate when they join different groups, when the activity changed or the composition of the group changed in some way. It was not possible to record all or most of the students while they were carrying out group discussion with different group members. This is because there are hundreds of combinations to attempt even part of the recording. That would be too much to handle in one dissertation. Therefore, some students had to be randomly chosen. The following group discussion transcript analyses may be used to objectively present the extent to which some students have participated in group work activity.

The results of the complete analysis have been attached to the appendix (see Appendix 17). Therefore, only some of the tables, those found interesting and particularly relevant to the specific issue being discussed will be presented here.

I would like to start by showing how turn counts may not be important sometimes to determine the level of participation of discussion participants. In the following table (Table 7.5) we can see that Marta ranked first when turn count is made, that is she has taken 59 turns or 25% of the total turns taken by the group. If we see the word count analysis we can see that it is another student (Hailu) who talked a lot or has used more words, 28%. This may indicate that students may not take many turns to be active participants. Conversely, the fact that a student has taken many turns should not necessarily mean that that student has talked a lot. In most cases, however, there is some positive correlation between percentage of turns taken and the amount of verbal participation in group discussion, as determined by the number of words uttered- (see Appendix 17) for comparison with other turn and word count analysis).

Table 7.5 Group discussion analysis for Group 8

GW8	Turn	%	Word count	%
Hailu	54	23	381	28.1
Marta	59	25	369	27.2
Negasa	45	19	197	14.5
Girma	43	18	198	14.6
Desta	27	11	125	9.2

Group discussion transcript analysis may also be used to show that students' level of verbal participation may not be necessarily consistently low or high. It has been found that students sometimes take an active role in a certain group and quite a passive one when they join another group. Good examples are the interactions among members of GW4 and GW9.

Table 7.6 Group discussion analysis for Group 4

GW4	Turn	%	Word count	%
Tesfa	41	46	577	55.43
Saba	38	34	274	26.32
Jemal	18	16	146	14.02
Elleni	14	12	44	4.22
Eshetu	1	0.9	5	0.5

Table 7.7 Group discussion analysis for Group 9

GW9	Turn	%	Word count	%
Chane	16	22	167	15.5
Abera	12	16	117	10.9
Eshetu	19	26	473	43.9
Dawit	26	36	320	29.7

Common to the two groups in the tables above is only one student: Eshetu. This student was described as one of the most silent students in the class by one of the members of the first group. It seems that there was enough and convincing reason for that student who described Eshetu as a silent student. While the average percentage of turns and word counts for this group was 20% (100 per cent equally distributed to five students), Eshetu contributed less than one percent (in terms of both turns and word counts) to the group's interaction. Thus, seeing this, there was a good reason to say that this student was an extremely silent student.

Table 7.7, however, shows something completely different. This student took just about his "fair" share of the total turn, he took 26% of the turns where the average was only slightly less than that- 25%. When it comes to word count analysis the picture is quite different. This student used or produced nearly 44% of the total words the group has produced. It can also be seen that this student talked the most and hence, would rank first in verbal participation in that group. Two of the students who disagreed (in a focus group interview) when Tesfa described Eshetu as a silent

student were also in this group- Abera and Dawit. Again it was perfectly acceptable and logical for these students to describe Eshetu as one of the high participators in the class.

Thus, it can be observed that students' perceptions or evaluations of their group members can be reliable to some extent. At the same time, it can be seen that different students might describe the same student as both silent and talkative. The question to be asked here could be how some students can describe a student as silent and others describe the same student as talkative and both can be right. This issue will be discussed at some depth in the next chapter but at this stage it could simply be observed that a student can be silent in one group but talkative in another.

The use of group discussion transcript analysis may also be used to determine or see whether those students classified as silent or talkative were consistent in their behaviour. Some students were recorded while carrying out group discussion activities, in different groups or with different group members. Good examples are Elleni, Negasa, Tesfa, Dawit, Saba, and Hailu.

Elleni joined five different groups. In two of the groups (GW1 & GW5) she ranked the least in terms of both turns and word counts. In another group of five (GW4) she took only 4.2% of the average 20% and she ranked fourth. In another group of four (GW7) she ranked second taking more than the average of the turns and word counts for that group. In one of the groups (GW10), however, she ranked first in terms of both turn count and word count. In the latter case, in fact, she took a considerable proportion (45%) of the total words the group produced.

Tesfa's participation in four different groups has also been analysed. In one of the groups (GW1) he ranked third in terms of the turns he took. However, in terms of verbal participation, as determined by the number of words uttered, he ranked first in all the group discussions he participated in (GW1, GW4, GW5, and GW6).

Dawit's participation in four different groups has also been examined. In three of the groups (GW5, GW6, GW9) he ranked second in terms of the total number of words uttered. In another group in which four students participated (GW3), however, he took 50% of the turns and of the

total number of words uttered by the group discussion participants 87.5% of the words were his. This is very evident that he had done almost all the talking and dominated the rest of the participants. In an individual interview session Admas, one of the participants in GW3, said *I have worked with Dawit and he speaks a lot.*

Saba was also one of the students whose participation in four different groups has been investigated. In one of the groups (GW1) she ranked first in terms of the total number of words verbalised by the group. She ranked second in another group (GW4), third in another (GW5) and the least in the last one (GW6).

Hailu's level of participation is also quite interesting. In all the groups he joined (GW2, GW7, and GW8), he ranked first. In fact, in one of the groups (GW2) he produced nearly 75% of the total words uttered by the five-person group. It was very clear that he almost totally controlled the discussion and dominated the group members.

Generally speaking it is quite clear from the sample group discussion transcript analyses that some students play a very dominant role in group discussion. It has also become evident that students like Tesfa, Hailu, Dawit, and Eshetu are potentially dominating. Their dominance, for that matter their participation, actually depends on the group type they work on and may be some other factors as well, which will be dealt with in full in the next chapter.

7.6 Transcripts of group interviews

This has been presented here in order to reveal the extent to which students participate in relation to whether the discussion is carried out in L1 or L2 (English). Two groups participated in the focus group interviews. Following is the percentage of turns taken by each of the students who took part in the interviews, which were carried out in students' L1. The turns taken by the interviewer have not been included in the calculation of the percentage of turns and word counts, since they are not important to make the comparisons.

The following table (Table 7.8) shows that the students who talked the most during the interview were Tesfa and Dawit. Both of them were found (by the different methods discussed in preceding sections) to be among the most talkers. The most silent student in the group interview was Abera, who was also found to be one of the most silent students in the class.

Table 7.8 Group interview analysis for focus group interview one

Focus group interview 1	Turn	%	Word count	%
Saba	24	22.2	393	13.9
Abera	9	8.3	25	1.1
Dawit C	35	32.4	679	29.3
Tesfa	24	22.2	771	33.2
Aster	16	14.8	452	19.5

The next table (Table 7.9) shows that the two students who talked the most were Girma and Elleni. These are the students who were identified as belonging to the category of talkers. The most silent student in the interview carried out in students' first language was Firew who was also identified as one of the most silent students in that class.

Table 7.9 Group interview analysis for focus group interview two

Focus group interview 2	Turn	%	Word count	%
Elleni	33	28.9	523	24.7
Girma	42	36.8	1078	50.9
Negasa	27	23.7	476	22.5
Firew	12	10.5	38	1.8

In short, the interviews carried out in the students' first language indicate that those students identified as high participators in group work also participated more actively in the focus group interview than those students who were identified as belonging to the silents' group.

7. 7 The end-of-year questionnaire

By the end of the two semesters, or the academic year, it was almost obvious that students differed greatly in their amount of verbal participation in group work. Thus, it was found worthwhile asking students to identify three top participators and three extreme silents. Students did not seem to have found it difficult to categorise or identify students as belonging to one of the groups. Tables 10 and 11 summarise what has been found from the questionnaire.

Students were asked to write the names of three students they think had been silent in group work situation in College English classes. Of the 35 students, 5 were absent and did not fill in the questionnaire. Following is the response of 30 students. A student was allowed to write the names of three students in one category, i.e. three silent students and three talkative students. (The full results of the rating have been attached to Appendix 20)

Table 7.10 Results of the end-of –year questionnaire: silent students

Name	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Tsegaye	13	43.3%	1
Admas	8	26.7%	2
Gugsa	7	23.3%	3
Zeru	6	20.0%	4
Firew	5	16.7%	5

Table 7.10 shows how students in one section identified low participators in group work situation. The percentages may not add up to one hundred because students were allowed to write the names of three students in that category. The percentages here refer to those

students who have identified the student (the 30 students who filled in the questionnaire) as belonging to the category mentioned - 'silent'. Thus, it can be seen that most of the students have identified Tsegaye as the most silent student in that class – who also admitted in an individual interview that he was the most silent student in the class.

Table 7.11 Results of the end-of –year questionnaire: high participators

Name	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Tesfa D	22	73.3%	1
Saba H	13	43.3%	2
Marta W	10	33.3%	3
Dawit C	8	26.7%	4
Elleni M	8	26.7%	4

The above table also indicates that students did not find it difficult to pick out the most talkative students in that section. More than 70% of the students agreed that Tesfa was the most actively participating student. The top five actively participating students have got 61 of the maximum 90 'votes'. In other words because a student can write the names of three students the maximum 30 students can write would be 90. Out of this total possible 'voting' chance more than half of it has gone in support / favour of the top five actively participating students. This could be a good indication of the students' perceptions of who the active ones were.

It would be interesting to objectively compare these five students. The problem with objective comparison is, however, that if these very high participators worked together in a group then it is possible that one of them might still dominate others and have a higher number of turns and word counts, when compared to others; rendering others relatively low participators. It is interesting, however, to see the patterns of participation when these high

participators work together. Therefore, I decided to compare the participation level of these students when they worked in the same group and when they joined other group members.

Of these students it was possible to have the four of them work together, excepting Marta. GW5 shows that Tesfa and Saba ranked first, as regards the number of turns taken by the group. When it comes to the number of words produced by each group participant, however, Tesfa still ranked first while Saba ranked third. It was Dawit who ranked second producing nearly twice as many words as Saba's, although he used far fewer turns than Saba did. When all-talkers work in a group, one of them, the relatively less participator has to produce the least number of words compared to others. It was Elleni who produced 17% of the total words for the group and ranked fourth.

It was also possible to have Tesfa, Saba, and Elleni work together with two other students in a group- see GW4. Here also it was Tesfa who ranked first in terms of both the percentage of turns and word counts. In fact, he accounted for more than half (55.43%) of the total number of words produced by the five-person group. This was also the group where Elleni, one of the very active participants in group discussion produced very few words (4.2%) in the group's interaction.

In another group (GW6) Tesfa, Dawit, and Saba worked together with another student. Interesting here is also the case of Saba who took almost the highest number of turns, but ranked the least when word-count was calculated. This student was very consistent in taking larger proportion of the turns for the groups, although at times she produced the highest number of words as well. This raises the interesting question, which unfortunately was not pursued in this study, of whether students see the number of turns students take or the amount of words they produce to judge their verbal participation behaviour.

7.8 Summary and Discussion

The fact that students engaged in group discussion differ in their verbal output has been confirmed by many studies (Shaw, 1976; Davies, 1994b). The main concern of this chapter has, thus, been to investigate *the extent* to which students in one section of College English class differ in their amount of verbal participation in group discussion. It might appear easy to observe and label students as low participators and high participators, but the experience in this study has made it clear that the issue is far from simple. One major problem with labelling students as lows or highs is that every time the group composition has changed, then there is also a change in the pattern of interaction and in the amount of participation by each member of the group.

In addition, it is possible that some students are perceived to be the highest contributors in one meeting and it could be another student who appears to be the highest contributor in another meeting or discussion session. In other words, students in a class (rather than in a group) can be reliably labelled as high participators or low participators in group discussion when they are observed over a relatively long period of time; when they are observed participating in group discussion with different groups; and when they work on various tasks- in terms, for example, of the level of familiarity of the task or the topic.

In this study an attempt has been made to systematically categorise or identify students as belonging somewhere in the low – high verbal participation continuum. This has been made possible by using various methods that helped support or strengthen, or sometimes even disqualify, the different results obtained. It has also been very essential to observe the same students as they take part in discussion in different groups.

The various methods have, thus, made it clear that students differ greatly in their amount of verbal output in group work in college English classes at AAU. Some are *extremely quiet* while others are *extremely talkative* and tend to *over do* the talking. This is similar to the results obtained by Fassinger (1995:82), who studied verbal interaction at college level, and noted that "some students eagerly participate in class daily. Yet, at semester's end most classes

contain students who have not uttered a word since first-day introductions". Allwright (1980) has also noted that there is uneven distribution of participation among language learners, some students participate or talk "more than their fair share", and others "negotiate for less".

The students in this study can be roughly identified as belonging to one of the following 5 categories indicated in Table 7.12 below. The categories could have been made more than five thus making the distinctions finer, or just three (lows, averages, and highs). The former type is thought to be unnecessarily fine-grained and complicated, whereas the latter is thought to probably hide some facts or unnecessarily put some students in the same group while they visibly differ in some aspects. Therefore, five is thought to be an average and quite reasonable way of categorising the students.

Table 7.12 Number and percentage of students in the verbal participation categories

	Category	No. of students in each category	%
1	Very silent students	6	17.1
2	Silent students	3	8.5
3	Average participators	15	42.9
4	High participators	5	14.3
5	Very high participators	6	17.1

Following is the description of the categories and the criteria for assigning or putting students in one of the five categories.

1. Very silent students

These are students who were consistently found, by the different methods, to be silent most of the time. They themselves admitted, in the interviews, that they were silent most of the time; they rated themselves as belonging to the silent group (that is number two or number three in the self-rating scale); they were rated as silents or very silents by the instructor; they were rated as among

the least participators in the post-group-work questionnaire; they produced the least number of words in their groups on group discussion tasks; and they were identified by quite many students, in the end-of-year questionnaire, as silent students.

2 Silent students

These are students who were assigned the lower points in some of the ratings: in the self-rating, post-group-discussion ratings, group discussion word count analysis, the instructor's rating, and in the interview.

3 Average participators

These are students who were not rated as silents nor as talkers in the end-of-year questionnaire; not mentioned in the individual and focus group interview as belonging to the silents or talkers category. They also categorised themselves as average participators; and they were categorised by the instructor as belonging to the two middle scales.

4. High participators

These are students who got some of the top ratings in the self-rating, post-group-discussion ratings, group discussion word count analysis, the instructor's rating, and in the interview.

5 Very high participators

These are students who were rated as top participators in the post-group-discussion questionnaire; rated themselves high in the self-rating scale; were chosen by the class, in the end-of-year questionnaire, as high participators; and taken considerable proportions in the word count analysis of group discussion transcripts, to the point of dominating others, sometimes.

Since it is now clear that students greatly differ in their amount of verbal participation in group discussion, we need to find out why. In Chapter 8, therefore, there will be a presentation and discussion of students' own accounts of the factors that bear a part in students' low or high participation.

CHAPTER 8

FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE DIFFERENCES IN THE AMOUNT OF VERBAL PARTICIPATION (RQ2)

8.1 Introduction

An attempt will be made in this chapter to see the factors that account for the differences in the verbal participation behaviour of freshman students at AAU. The main method of data collection used to investigate the factors is interview. Two types of interviews have been used: individual interview and focus group interview. In the individual interview 13 students were interviewed. The students were heterogeneous, i.e., the sample included students who tended to be silent (4 students), students who tended to be high participators (6 students), and others (3 students). There were top ranking and bottom ranking students in terms of their language proficiency. There were also both males and females, 10 and 3, respectively.

In the first section I will present and discuss the findings from the interviews. In the second section quantitative ratings of the factors will be presented and discussed.

The findings from the interview indicate that there are a number of factors that come into play to determine the situations that account for the difference in the verbal participation behaviour of students. There are 22 different factors that have been perceived by students to affect their verbal participation in group work in some way. These factors have been classified under 9 main topics. These are summarised under Table 8.1, below.

Table 8.1 Classification of factors discussed in this chapter

	Factors related to	Factors
1	Personality	Shyness Courage or self-confidence Fear of making mistakes Self concept Anxiety or worry
2	Motivation	The desire and hope of improving their English Enjoy talking/ some students get satisfaction out of talking Have the interest to learn
3	Language	Language proficiency Experience/ speaking
4	Background	Family background High school background
5	Orientation	Orientation by senior students, and graduates The assumption that students from AA talk/ participate a lot
6	The instructor	Encouraging/ discouraging
7	System of evaluation	Mark for class activity (evaluation) System of grading
8	The task	Degree of preparedness Interesting / uninteresting
9	The group	Composition of the group Cohesion Dominating students

8.2 Personality

As indicated in Table 8.1, above, five different factors have been picked out that relate to personality. These are: 1) shyness, 2) courage or self-confidence, 3) fear of making mistakes,

4) inferiority complex, and 5) self-concept. In this section I will discuss these factors using extracts from the interviews where necessary.

8.2.1 Shyness

Interviewees were asked why some students kept silent in group discussion situations in College English classes. Many students have singled out fear or shyness as one of the factors contributing to students' silence. Let us see what the silents themselves said about it. Admas is one of the very silent students in the class. He said his silence was mainly due to his shyness, especially if the discussion was in English. Again another silent student, Firew, who took part in the focus group interview said that he kept silent mainly because he was fearful.

Hailu also felt that some students tended to be low participators because *they are shy or fearful*. Darge has also a similar view. Shyness as one of the factors contributing to students' silence was also raised in a focus group interview. Tesfa had the following to say: *now for example she (Selam) learnt at Cathedral. But because she is naturally shy, she does not speak a lot even out side class. She keeps quiet most of the time. I think it is because she is very shy. She has good potential but she is very shy.* This same point was raised and commented on in another focus group interview.

> Elleni yes, well Selam wants to speak, she has the interest. In fact I know that she has the ability as well. But, when she speaks even her voice changes, that is out of fear. Even when we are working in a group of four she does not speak, she is afraid of speaking. Her problem is fear not lack of ability. So she most of the time keeps silent.
>
> Negasa: the reason why most students don't speak is because they are shy.

Another interviewee (Girma) thinks, in fact, that fear or shyness is the main reason for students' silence. As far as Saba is concerned, some students keep quiet because they are naturally silent.

> Saba I mean they could be naturally silent. Sometimes you know some students are shy. I saw a student shaking with fear one day when we had a debate session. He was shaking like this (shaking her hands). He was almost unable to speak out of fear.

For Dawit the main reason for students' silence is their behaviour. *It is mainly because of their behaviour. There are some students who can not express something as clearly as others.* He then mentions one of his high school classmates as an example: *he was very silent. I don't think he has the courage to give response to such a simple question as 'what is your name?'*

In a focus group interview the participants agreed that there are some students who are naturally silent.

> Elleni Yes, let alone students who come from the regions, we those of us who learn in the same school have varying natures- I know students who have the ability, the language, but keep silent most of the time because it is their nature.
>
> Int They are naturally silent?
>
> Elleni Yes, that sort of thing. Just silent.
>
> Negasa For example, Zeru is naturally silent. Whichever class it may be, whenever we have informal gatherings, or just come together, he is always silent.

8.2.2 Courage or self-confidence

Courage or self-confidence has effect on both low participators and high participators. The absence in the former case and the presence in the latter. In a focus group interview one reason given for students' active participation in group work was confidence. An interviewee said some students talk a lot because *they have the confidence and the ability. Especially because they have the confidence and they are not fearful of others in the group.*

Marta, one of the very high participators in group discussion, also feels that courage or self-confidence is important if students are to be active participants in discussion. She is of the view that some students talk a lot because *they don't worry. They don't worry about what the silent students might think of them. But if they were to think what others might think of them, or if they were to say 'what would others say or think about me, how would others evaluate me, they view me this way or that way' sort of thing, then 'that would really be hard'.*

Tsegaye (a very silent student) also feels that confidence is important. He said *participation is a matter of confidence. The main problem with silent students is lack of self-confidence. I would be happy if I were able to speak as well as others do.*

8.2.3 Fear of making mistakes

This factor is closely related to shyness. The interview with students also suggests that students sometimes keep quiet for fear of making mistakes. While students who are not afraid of making mistakes tend to take active roles students who particularly feel that they might break language rules show a tendency to keep quiet. Abera is one of the very silent students.

Int You said you are among the silent?
Abera Yes
Int Why do you keep silent?
Abera Well, I intend to say something but then I feel I make mistakes.
Int Is that at the level of language or idea?
Abera I have ideas, my problem is with the language. Others speak out the very thing I had thought of speaking.

Tsegaye, again one of the very silent students had a similar thing to say: *we feel that we may break language rules or things like that then we keep silent and pass the time that way.* It would be interesting here to compare what the active participators had to say regarding their feelings about making mistakes. Following is Dawit's advice to silent students:

Int Many students approach you?

Dawit Yes. Therefore those students who keep silent in group discussion most of the time tell me about their problems and I tell them about my own experience. I tell them that I would not hesitate to express my ideas- not because I think my English is good but because I feel that it should not be a big problem. I advise them to speak even if their English is broken, if they want to improve their English.

Further down in the interview the same student said *even if I am not good at the language, even when I make mistakes, I would not worry. ... I can say I have no fear.*

Tesfa, the top participator, has the view that if one wants to improve then one should not be afraid of making mistakes. He said *I would not care about whatever students might say about me. If I don't do this I am not going to improve or develop. I don't care about others' comments and criticisms. In fact, that should help me develop my critical abilities, it should not hurt my feelings or moral. That is how I convince myself.*

As far as Saba, one of the very high participators, is concerned, some students talk a lot or participate more actively than others because they are not afraid of making mistakes. She said *they concentrate on the message they are trying to transmit and they do not worry about making mistakes in grammar. Therefore they talk a lot.* The silent, on the other hand keep quiet, she said, because *...they lack the language skill to express themselves. So, many students retreat from speaking when they feel they have problem expressing themselves. For fear that they may not speak correctly.*

Another high participator, Hailu, said the silly mistakes he made, far from making him worried, would make him laugh.

Hailu No, not at all, I am not shy at all

Int No fear?

Hailu No fear, I may make mistakes but I take that as normal. Sometimes I think of the silly grammar mistakes I make and that makes me laugh. I would not make such mistakes when writing.

This same issue was raised in a focus group interview where Girma said that some students were silent because *they compare themselves with others. They are not trying to express themselves, they rather worry about making mistakes and being laughed at if they make mistakes.*

8.2.4 Self concept

The results of the interview indicate that students who have a negative or low self-concept tend to be quieter, where as students who have a positive self-concept tend to be high participators in group work situation. This has been clearly expressed by one of the most silent students, Tsegaye. He said *no matter how hard we try to participate, there are always students who perform better than we do, that could be one. The other thing is I don't have self-confidence, I assume that I don't speak well. I feel that I am less able compared to other students. I feel inferior. That could actually be the case, we are criticised.*

Saba has gone as far as suggesting that silent students should be allowed to work together because they feel inferior and keep silent when they join a group of students with good language proficiency.

> Saba So that silent students can show some improvements, I think some kind of programme should be planned- in order that they can compose, read in front of their audience, and talk. They may not undergo much tension when they are together. What happens when students mix and work together is that some of them keep quiet because they feel that other students speak much better than they do. So it is better to let them work together for some time.

As pointed out by Tesfa, again, one of the reasons for silent students to be quiet in group discussion could be that they feel inferior to the rest of the group members.

> Tesfa As far as Abera is concerned, when the five of us (Abera, Yodit, Saba, Dawit, and Tesfa) work together, I think he feels sort of inferior to the rest of us. He would probably imagine that we will laugh at him or do not

> accept his ideas or - kind of feeling. So he does not express himself freely because he feels that the rest of us are better than he is and probably reject his ideas.

According to Hailu some students keep silent *because they are depressed and think others are superior to them.*

Self-concept in relation to high participation in group discussion was also mentioned by Marta. She said *when a student talks a lot, it could be the self-concept he/she has. There could be a student who has been brought up in such a way that he/she could be influential. So they may have that characteristic.* The implication is that if a student feels that he/ she should influence or dominate others, then that student can turn out to be a high participator.

8.2.5 Anxiety or worry

According to Azene some students are silent because they worry a lot about their English language command. *Because they don't have the English language command they keep quiet and they feel that they are dominated. They worry most of the time, and that is why they keep quiet.*

Abera, a very silent student, pointed out that *it is only those students from Addis Ababa who get good grades, most of the time. Most of the students from the regions worry about their English course, because considering the background we had and the way the course is offered here I can say it is beyond our level.*

Again according to Marta another possible reason for some students' active participation could be the fact that *they don't worry. They don't worry about what the silent students might think of them.*

8.3 Motivation

Motivation or interest is another factor pointed out by students to have effect on students' verbal participation behaviour. The presence of motivation is felt to increase the verbal

participation of students, while the absence of it decreases participation in group discussion. Motivation in this sense generally refers to the need or interest on the part of students to a) improve their English, b) score good grades, and c) just enjoy talking or derive satisfaction out of talking. I shall discuss motivation from the point of view of these three different but interrelated factors.

8.3.1 The desire / interest to learn and improve their English

Hailu, a very high participator, has pointed out that motivation is one of the most important factors that contributes towards students active or passive role in group discussion.

> Int Why do you think some students talk or participate a lot?
>
> Hailu In my view it is mainly because they have the interest. If we see our experience in high school what mattered most was studying grammar rules and scoring good grades. There is also motivation from parents. What my parents were advising me was for example to read fictions in English. So, to improve your language you have got to read and speak a lot. For this reason we are interested in speaking. That is the reason, I think. Therefore students who have this kind of attitude try their best even if they may not have the ability.

Speaking of his own reasons for participating actively Hailu said *I have the interest. A lot of interest. I am very eager to improve my English. I also like the subject. I will be happy if the course continues to be offered throughout our stay in the university- because I want to be a fluent speaker by the time I graduate from university.*

Some students on the other hand keep silent, according to the same interviewee, because they do not have enough motivation. *I don't think they have the interest in the speaking activity. They think they gain nothing out of it. That is the reason, I think.*

Dawit, one of the very high participators said *because I am very eager to learn the language, I use it frequently although I might make mistakes. In fact even when my English is not understandable I won't stop trying in English unless I am told to speak in Amharic.*

Darge feels that some students (including himself) try to improve their language by actively participating in discussion. *Some of us try to improve our speaking and listening abilities by participating actively.*

Tsegaye, the most silent student, said that some students keep quiet for most of the time in class because they have lost hope of improving their English. He has also picked out motivation as one of the factors that contributed to his silence.

> Tsegaye ...we convince ourselves that the subject is difficult and that we may not show improvements, and things of that sort make us keep silent or participate only from time to time.
>
> Int Is that kind of losing hope?
>
> Tsegaye Yes, it is sort of. I mean we have not had the experience right from lower levels. Now that we have reached this stage, it is very difficult to change things, in fact it is unthinkable.

8.3.2 The desire to score good grades

According to Azene some students participate more actively in discussions because they have hope of scoring good grades. He said *these students have hopes. Some of them want to join the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature because they feel that they will score good grades and hope that they will, one day, make their dreams come true. So because they think that they will get good grade if they work hard, they are full of hopes. That is why I think.*

Other students keep silent sometimes because they are discouraged by the way the course is offered at university level. *In addition, as far as our informal discussion in the café is concerned, those who come from remote areas are not satisfied with the way the course is given here at university level. They were used to studying grammar rules and getting satisfaction out of scoring top marks. That is what they count as knowledge of language.*

8.3.3 They enjoy talking/ get satisfaction out of talking

Some students have reported that they participate in group discussion just because they enjoy talking. What Kassa, one of the high participators, has said could be a good illustration of the factor mentioned here.

> Kassa If we see each and every student, it is not only because they have good language command that they speak a lot, there are some students who like talking and get satisfaction out of talking.
> Int They enjoy speaking?
> Kassa Yes, there are many students who enjoy speaking. I, for instance, although I may not get good grades I just enjoy talking or speaking in English. 'I get satisfaction.'

Similarly, according to Saba, a very high participator, one reason for students' active participation in group discussion could be that *they naturally like expressing themselves or speaking out their thoughts.* This observation is similar to Goldman-Eisler's hypothesis (formed nearly half a century ago, 1951) that "each person has a characteristic level of communication congenial to himself" (This point is discussed in some details under Section 8.12 – Summary and discussion).

8.4. Language

Two points have been pointed out under this section: language proficiency, and experience in speaking or taking part in group discussion using English.

8.4.1 Language proficiency

Language proficiency is one of the factors mentioned by both silent students and high participators as affecting students' participation behaviour. Marta and Tesfa (both high participators) agreed that good language command helped students make contributions or speak a lot. Saba in fact said she knew of some students who had the English language command and tended to dominate those who did not have the command. She said *because the language is English some students may have problems expressing themselves clearly, although they may have the idea to talk on. Therefore someone who has got good English*

language command may dominate the group, because he can express himself without any problem. I know of such students.

Expressing her view about why some students tend to be silent the same student said *may be they lack the necessary language skill to express themselves. So many students retreat when they feel they have problem expressing themselves. For fear that they may not speak correctly.*

Abera, one of the most silent students in the class, has the following to say about silent students: *these students keep quiet because of their language command, otherwise they would not have kept quiet. And that is as a result of their background.*

Admas, also one of the very silent students, said that *some of them may have ideas but because they don't have the language to express their ideas in English, either they try to use Amharic or they keep quiet, just because they are not good at spoken English.*

8.4.2 Experience/ speaking

Another factor students commonly mentioned was the presence or absence of experience in using English. Admas, one of the most silent students in the class, for instance attributed his silence to his lack of experience in speaking in English – be it in English language class or in other classes where English is the medium of instruction. He said *if there is in case something I don't know and if I have to stop in the middle of my speech. Even when we were asked simple questions in biology, I would keep quiet may be because I had not developed the experience.*

Tsegaye, also one of the most silent students in the class, had a similar view: he blamed his lack of experience in speaking and discussing in English for making him silent. *I mean we have not had the experience right from lower levels. Now that we have reached this stage, it is very difficult to change things, in fact it is unthinkable.*

Dawit, a very high participator, who said that he had had informal discussion with some of the silent students said that *they did not have enough experience at high school level. They would give more attention and worry more about grammar and construction. They sometimes feel that they did not learn the grammar of the language, because if they had learnt the grammar effectively, they would not have faced problems to express their ideas. They say it could be because they would use Amharic in class even to ask questions. They regret it.*

In a focus group interview Firew, one of the very silent students, also said that his silence was due to lack of experience.

> Firew because I did not have the experience- I have been silent always, right from the start.
> Int why could it be that you have been quiet?
> Firew experience
> Int you did not have the experience?
> Firew no, not at all

8.5. Background

Under background in this section I shall present the role or influence of family and high school background in contributing towards students' silence or talkativeness.

8.5.1 Family background

Family background may affect students in one of two ways. In a family where English is spoken sometimes, students may tend to speak the language well, and as a result develop their language ability, this may in turn help them or give them the confidence to take part in group discussion. Another way family background may affect verbal participation in group discussion is related to the fact that some families bring their children in a democratic way - allow their children to speak freely.

Tesfa, the top participator, explained how his family background has helped him develop his English. In addition to the school he went to, his families used English at home sometimes. So this has created the opportunity for him to develop his spoken English. Family background may thus affect students' verbal participation in group discussion in the foreign language classroom indirectly by contributing to one of the factors that may directly affect verbal participation in group work- language proficiency.

> Tesfa Yes. The other thing probably is that, I mean that is my personal background. My father is in Cairo. He works there. So during the summer, when schools are closed, I go to Cairo to visit my father. He was in Tanzania before he moved to Cairo. So I used to go to Tanzania, as well. There I had to use English as a medium of communication, whether I like it or not, and it was a must. Things like that --
> Int Others speak to you in English?
> Tesfa Yes. Therefore I had to use English whether I make mistakes in grammar or not because I had to communicate.

Another way family background might affect students' verbal participation in group discussion is, it is argued – Seime (1999) for example, by providing the experience of discussing things with other people. Some families allow children to freely discuss things with grown-up people and guests while others do not. Those who are allowing are providing the opportunity, and those who are not, are depriving their children of this chance.

The issue of allowing children to take part in discussion with grown-up people, or guests is believed to be closely related to the culture or the society. According to the literature (Sato, 1981, for example), the way children are brought up and the culture has significant effect in the way students participate verbally in the language classroom.

In this particular study, however, both silents and talkers did not say they have problems of this sort. Sato (1981:21) in her exploratory investigation on the relationship between ethnicity and the distribution of talk in university ESL classrooms (Asian and non-Asian subjects) has demonstrated that the participation patterns in two university classes has

shown speaking opportunities to be differentially distributed between Asians and non-Asians.

According to Seime (1999:105), students in Ethiopia presumably share broadly the same cultural experiences and thus have broadly similar assumptions. In this study some students pointed out that they had some opportunities as a result of their family background while no one mentioned negative influences.

8.5.2 High school background

High school background is one of the factors mentioned by most of the students as contributing towards students' silence or talkativeness. Those students who tend to be silent blame their school background or the way they were taught in high school, or the way things were in high school. Those students who had the chance to take part in group discussion (or for that matter in whole class discussion in whatever subject given in English) while at high school tend to be active participants at university as well.

Students also said that verbal participation was not limited to the English class. Students' views seem to suggest that if a student is an active participant in one subject offered in English medium, then he or she is likely to be an active participant in English class as well, - depending on the interest students have and some other factors. Kassa, a high participator, said *I used to participate very actively. I had always liked speaking in class, in our geography class especially. I would always ask questions- almost every time we had a geography class. ... in our maths classes, for example, students in the social science stream would not attend classes actively. And only I used to do my assignment and when it came to discussion only I would participate actively.*

Abera, one of the very silent students, when asked about why some students kept silent most of the time said *these students keep quiet because of their relatively low language proficiency, otherwise these students would not have kept quiet. And that is as a result of*

their background. Regarding his own reason for taking a passive role in group discussion he said that it is mainly because of his poor high school background.

> When you see the background we have come from, we did not give attention to the English course because our focus was on subjects that involved a lot of calculation. And here at university the textbook is quite different and it does not encourage us to read much.... it is quite different from the one we used to have at high school level. In fact, I sometimes feel that I have forgotten most of the things I learnt at high school. There is almost nothing I have learnt here at university, I can say. We could have benefited from this kind of teaching if it had started from lower grades. Now, in the new curriculum, students take it as of grade 8. I have seen the textbook prepared for grade 8 and I think it is useful. Only the grammar and vocabulary we learned would appear in the ESLCE and group discussion was not practised there, at high school level. So I think it is something new and difficult here.

For Tsegaye, again one of the very silent students, the very idea of improving things and becoming an active participant in group discussion is unthinkable – because he had lost the chance when he was at high school. He said *we have not had the experience right from lower levels. Now that we have reached this stage, it is very difficult to change things, in fact it is unthinkable*

Dawit says that students' silence is mainly due to their poor high school background. *They say that they did not have enough experience at high school level.* On the other hand he attributed his active participation in group discussion to his good high school background. He said *because I had some experience at high school, I convinced myself that I should keep the same pace.*

Tesfa also ascribed his high participation to his high school background.

Tesfa	Probably my background matters
Int	Background?
Tesfa	I mean the school I was at previously.
Int	Which school was it?
Tesfa	Saint Joseph
Int	What was the situation there?

> Tesfa Well, for example we started learning English as of zero class. When we were in grade one we went two more grades ahead and learnt from the book prepared for grade three students in government schools. In grade two we used the text prepared for grade four students. So it is not something that has changed at once, that might have some contribution. ... When we reach grade eleven, we start taking literature courses.
> Int So did you then have time for group discussion, speaking and things like that?
> Tesfa Yes. ... of all things, I think school background is really decisive.

Another high participator, Hailu, said his high school background has helped him become one of the active participants in group discussion. He said although the focus at high school level was on the grammar part his focus was on speaking the language rather than memorising grammar rules. Fortunately, he remarked, he had the chance to improve his speaking. *When we were in grade 12 our English teacher used to tell us short stories and he used to ask us to retell the story to the class some days after he had told us the story. I used to enjoy and participate a lot in that kind of activity.*

The role of high school background has also been emphasised in the focus group interview. Dawit, for instance, has chalked his high participation in group discussion up to his good high school background. He remarked: *it is mainly the encouragement I get from my teachers. For example some teachers encourage us to use English when asking questions in class. They tell us that they would try to understand our English no matter how broken it could be.*

In another focus group interview students supported the view that students' high school background plays an important role in shaping the way they participate in group discussion. The assumption that most schools in Addis Ababa are good in this respect has also been challenged. As Girma put it,

> Let alone government schools in the regions, there are problems right here in Addis Ababa. Group discussion is used only in public schools. In government schools there is a book, students do exercises especially the

> grammar part, that is all. There is no such a thing as group discussion and speaking sort of thing.

In short, students' views suggest that their high school background plays a significant role in making them silent or talker in group discussion situations in their College English classes.

8. 6 Orientation

Two factors will be discussed under this section: 1) orientation by senior students, graduates, etc., and 2) the assumption that students from Addis Ababa talk a lot.

8.6.1 Orientation by senior students, graduates, and others

Commenting on why some students participate actively in group discussion, Azene said ... *my brother graduated from this university. One day he asked me how I was doing at university. When I told him that I would like to join the Department of English, you know what he said, he said that it would be difficult for me. When I asked him why, he told me I should have high proficiency in spoken English to be successful in that department. You know, such orientations make us lose hope right from the beginning. So we tend to devote most of our time studying other subjects.*

Tsegaye remarked that students work hard or talk a lot to score good grades in their English course. This is also based on the orientation students get from seniors.

> You know there are certain things we are told just before we join university. Senior students tell us that English language instructors value students' participation more than anything else- even more than the final examination. So it is more or less related to that. ... participation is crucial as far as the information I got before I joined university is concerned.

The issue of orientation by senior students as particularly related to grade has also been emphasised in the focus group interview. Students pointed out that those students who

come from the regions were told that no matter how hard they tried the maximum grade they earn would be a C. In relation to this Aster said...*they tell us that the maximum grade we get would be a C and they advise us not to waste much time on English. As a result of this many students lose hope and attend classes only not to miss tests and just for the sake of their attendance. They are very much discouraged.*

This kind of orientation (which students said they got from their seniors, especially second year students) applies to other subjects as well. It seems that there are certain subjects that can be well handled by students from the regions and others by students from Addis Ababa. Tesfa, who scored the top grade in English in both semesters commented: *take our section for example, there were only two A's given in geography. So how would you spend your time studying geography? You may score 90 plus something out of hundred, but you end up scoring a C. So why should I waste my time? I work harder in another subject and find a way of compensating for geography. You know exactly like I guessed I got a C.*

Students said that the orientations they got were in most cases true and in fact some of them said they would provide the same information to the next batch of first year students.

> Tesfa If I am asked I will say the same thing. When first year students come next year I will tell them that I scored ninety-something out of hundred and got a C grade- because students from the regions (specially from Gojam) got almost everything correct and the scale went up. So instead of wasting time studying geography it would be better to work harder on other subjects like economics and compensate for geography, that is what I would tell them.
>
> Saba The same thing with English. You know I have got some relatives who come from the regions learning here at university. When they come to visit us they tell me that they leave English aside for students from Addis Ababa to score high grades. Now because they lose hope right from the beginning they don't do well on the final examination.
>
> Int Okay. So, does it mean that students who come from the regions may keep silent as a result of such expectations?
>
> Aster Most of them score A's in other subjects and just score a C in English. Or they score straight A's in other subjects and score a B in English. Students who had this experience would then tell us that they had worked hard and got unsatisfactory grade in English and that we should

not waste our time repeating the same mistake. They tell us that we would rather put more effort on other subjects which are rewarding.

Another point students raised during the interview, as related to grade was concerning the distribution of grades. They are of the view that one does not really need to work hard to score the average grade- a C.

Tesfa ... students are told right from the beginning that a C grade is very common, then when students get a C and prove that the saying is true they start to lose hope. Again, there is a common 'kind of joke' among students that "you can get a C as long as you are an Ethiopian"

Saba yeah it is a common joke among students that "C is for citizenship"

Another point Azene has raised regarding the orientation he was given was about girls at university. He said *there are certain things that we were told (*students from the regions*) about girls from Addis Ababa. Some people tell us that these girls would approach us and you know deliberately make us forget about our studies. So there is most of the time some caution about our approaches.* Azene raised this issue in relation to the kind of group composition most students from the regions would like to have. The effect of such an orientation is that some students tend to be reserved in their communication in mixed sex groups.

8.6.2 The assumption that students from AA talk a lot and perform better in English

Some students, like Girma and Negasa, pointed out that there is an assumption or belief among students that most students from AA are good at spoken English and as a result participate actively in group and whole class discussions. As a result of such an assumption some students from the regions tend to leave the floor to students from AA and students from AA, who have the same assumptions at the back of their mind, may tend to participate more actively. This issue was raised during a focus group interview:

Girma it is assumed that students from Addis Ababa speak a lot.

Negasa yes, that is true

Girma so on the pretext that students from Addis Ababa may happen to talk a lot, if a student from the regions joins them
Elleni they feel that they would be different
Girma because they think they would be different they do not like to join that group

This assumption had in fact led students to form *zones* or groups of students from AA and students from the regions. Students said that they came to sit this way in the second semester when they were allowed to sit with whoever they wanted to sit with, then students started to form groups based on closeness to each other. This issue was also raised in a focus group interview:

> Girma by the way the class has itself been divided. Our class. I mean students who sit here, over there and sort of thing. So there is some kind of joking (*tereb*) outside class. Students from the regions would say "you have scored good grades therefore you don't belong to our groups leave our row *zone* and go and join the students from Addis Ababa". And when there is a student from Addis Ababa who has scored low grade he is told to go and join the students from the regions, which is on that side.

In the second semester, however, the division between students from AA and students from the regions took the form of a competition. This has happened, it seems, after students from the regions have gained some experience. Or may be they were just depending on confident students from the regions- students like Dawit. Girma commented that *students from the regions work very hard ... they do what ever they can if there is a debate between students from Addis Ababa and students from the regions – no matter how long time it might take them. When you gave us a task for a debate you divided the class into two just based on the way we sat that day. Then most of the students on one side happened to be students from the regions. They were working very hard, calling meetings in their dormitories.*

It seems that students from the regions work harder and participate more actively in group discussion situations where the task involves brainstorming and gathering ideas which could be

used in the debate against the group from AA. The effort of one group to outsmart the other may, however, apply only in situations like debate, where the whole class is involved.

8.7 The instructor

In an individual interview some students expressed their view that there must be a welcoming atmosphere from instructors if students are to take active roles in discussions. Tesfa has illustrated this with an example:

> I think there should also be a welcoming atmosphere from instructors. There was a class, for example, where a student couldn't find his class and was late for that. After the instructor had let him in he asked "where have you been so far?" and the student said "I dismissed the class". You understand what he meant... But his instructor laughed at him. Then students knew his mistake and started laughing. It is no wonder if students treated this way keep quiet. The way the instructor treated the student was very discouraging. That was not right. It was completely discouraging, and lacking responsibility.

Hailu also pointed out that in order for group discussion to be interesting and participatory, there must be some encouragement from the instructor. Instructors should, Hailu said, advise their students *not to worry much about making mistakes in grammar and sort of things. So if students have that in mind it makes them somewhat free to discuss in groups. Therefore this kind of orientation is very important or decisive.*

The encouragement students get from instructors should affect all students in the same way, theoretically, because instructors usually advise students as a class; therefore this may not be a good explanation for difference among students in verbal participation. Or it could be argued that instructors' advice may appeal only to some students who already have the motivation or the language command.

8.8 System of grading or evaluation

This factor is closely related to orientations, presented under section 8.6.1. Some students pointed out that they were given some orientations (by friends) regarding grade and the role of participation in determining students' success in passing examinations and scoring good grades.

Admas one of the low participators, said *as far as grade is concerned, there are some students who try to convince us that we will score but a C, so they say it is better to spend more time on other courses, and some students accept this view.* The implication of this is that because these students focus on other subjects, they are less prepared on assignments and less motivated to take part in discussion. As a result they tend to be silent compared to other students.

Aster had a similar view. *Some students keep silent most of the time because they are told that good grades are not given in English, and they lose hope and just don't see why they should work hard. ... Some students have good language ability, but since it is difficult to score good grade in English, they just become careless.* Tsegaye, a very silent student and low achiever, also made a similar point: *some students were advised of the advantages of actively participating in group discussion. And these students tried hard to participate in discussion as much as they could. Some of them went back to their silence when they saw that their participation had brought them nothing. They would say that they had tried hard and they gained almost nothing in terms of grade.*

8.9 Task factor – degree of preparedness

In the interview some of the high participators pointed out that they participated actively in group discussions partly because they did their assignments and came to class prepared. What Darge said could be a good example: *right from the beginning of the first semester I always do my assignment. So if I come prepared to class, doing all my assignments, I can*

always answer questions as far as my ability allows me. In fact I prefer to take part in whole class debate activities. So I have the interest to participate in discussions in class.

Abera, a very silent student, was asked why some students keep silent. He gave many reasons why they were silent, preparedness or doing assignments was among the factors he mentioned: *because many students (including myself) tend to focus on other courses it is only when we are about to come to our English class that we remember our assignments.*

8.10 Group situations or group factors

Three factors will be discussed under this section: composition of the group, cohesion, and dominating students.

8.10.1 Composition of the group

Group composition refers to the mix of members in terms of sex, language proficiency, and size. In a focus group interview Girma said: *as far as I am concerned I prefer to work with boys who talk a lot, but if we are working with girls most of us don't talk much. I prefer to work with boys.* When he was asked to choose among the different compositions i.e. all male, equal male and female, or more female groups, he said *it is better when there are more males*. The view was supported by other members of the focus group interview.

> Negasa if there is a girl in the group, one would rather keep silent than speak and make mistakes
> Girma so it is better to sit with males, whatever he is speaking about
> Int there are problems if boys are sitting with girls
> Girma if boys sit with girls they may not speak at all. If there is a boy who tends to be a talker, then he would decrease his participation

In an individual interview, Azene had the following to say regarding the sex composition of the group. *There are certain things that we are told (students from the regions) about girls from Addis Ababa. Some people tell us that these girls would approach us and you know deliberately make us forget about our studies. So there is most of the time some caution about our interaction.*

Marta, one of the very high participators, said she would rather work with boys than with girls.

> Marta I prefer to work with boys
> Int why?
> Marta I will be free that way. I find it difficult when girls don't speak.
> Int If they don't speak?
> Marta if they keep silent I find it very difficult- I would not care about boys
> Int why do you find it difficult, if they don't talk?
> Marta I mean, if you think of, if you just think of what women think, it is really hard. I know, when I keep silent I know what sort of things I think about. I mean it may not be about people but it is something very harsh- we are very difficult, really we are.
> Int kind of backbiting?
> Marta well I don't really care about that, it is not about that. It is about what they think of themselves, I don't know but I don't like the kind of self-concept we have. So I don't like it when they keep silent. I don't care much about men. They are also relatively free to express their thoughts. But women, including me, seem to view things from different angles. I don't like it. … if all of the group members are going to be females, I don't think they are going to talk at all.

Marta then said that it would be ideal if there are equal number of males and females in a group. This view indicates that an all-female or a majority-female group can be one reason for her, and may be other girls, to take a more passive role in group discussion.

Other students like Aster however did not care about the type of sex composition of the group. *I don't feel anything, I mean I do not mind about the composition. ... I see them all as students.*

Another mix or composition is regarding the language command or proficiency of students. Negasa was for example of the view that it would be better for students with good language command and students not having good command to work together, provided that the more proficient students help the others.

> If we take Tesfa as an example, from among students from Addis Ababa, if he joins the group of students from the regions, he will give them some broad idea to start them going and he keeps quiet. So if he encourages them to speak then they will speak. I mean if each and every group

> member is asked what he or she thinks about the topic under discussion, then they will speak. They will not keep quiet if they are given the chance and asked such questions. However, if he just feels that they don't speak and if he continues to fill the gap without giving them chances, then he is in fact dominating the group members.

Negasa further explained that silent students would not benefit anything from silence. It would be better for them to actively participate *instead of keeping their knowledge to themselves by keeping silent, and of course it is useless if they don't use it. So it will help to bring out their knowledge if they are to work with active participants.*

Hailu suggested that it would be better if students change their group partners every two weeks – like they were doing during the first semester. *If we were to have constant seats or places then some students could have advantages while others may be disadvantaged. If by chance for example there are four silent students in the same group or four students who are afraid of expressing themselves in English, then it means all of them are not gaining anything. But if these students are to mix with others then they may see one another and start to participate. They may, I think, develop the experience and the courage to speak in English.*

In short, it seems that some boys are a bit cautious about and reserved in their interaction in mixed-sex groups. They tend to be freer and more relaxed in all-male groups. Other students feel that variety or working with different groups is preferable. There are also some students, like Aster and Saba, who do not mind whatever the sex composition of the group. Yet, other students like Marta (a female herself) do not like to work in all-female groups. Students also seem to suggest that it is better if students of different proficiency level work together.

8.10.2 Cohesion

Cohesion, according to Shaw (1976) refers to "the degree to which the members of a group desire to remain in the group". Or "the resultant of all those forces acting upon group

members to remain in or to leave the group". In high cohesive groups students feel free, enjoy the activities and participate more actively than they do in less cohesive groups.

Interviewees commonly say that there are some divisions among students based on whether they are from Addis Ababa or not, based on the sex composition, the language command of a student, etc. Males and females seem to have differing attitude towards groups composed on the basis of sex. While males tend to participate more actively in non-female groups, females seem to suggest that they, in fact, prefer working in mixed sex groups. While some students participate more actively in groups composed of high language proficiency groups, others- like Eshetu- tend to prefer average ability groups (this has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, as well).

Knowing each other well was also one of the factors pointed out by interviewees to have effect on students' verbal participation in group discussion. Girma was of the view that boys interact more among each other than when girls are present in the group.

> Girma yes, because they [boys] know each other well and there will not be any problem.
> Int they know each other
> Girma yes, they know each other well, and they are together outside class, as well.
> Int: and what if when there are females?
> Elleni there is the tendency to be shy
> Girma we tend to be shy. Fear of making mistakes and judgement. If it is with males, well we make mistakes all the time and we do all sorts of good things and bad things together.

In the same focus group interview Elleni said *what makes students shy is the fact that they don't know each other very well. Otherwise if students from the regions get very well along with students from Addis Ababa, then they do not care much if they make mistakes in group discussion. If they are, on the other hand, working in groups or with students they don't know very well, then that could be a problem.*

8.10.3 Dominating students

Sometimes students keep quiet either because there is always someone who says something, or because they are dominated by someone in the group. Some students feel that such students should in fact help their group members take part in the discussion by giving them the chance and inviting them to say something on the issue they are discussing. Tesfa the top participator has been mentioned in relation to this:

> However, if he just feels that they don't speak and if he continues to fill the gap without giving them chances, then he would in fact be dominating the group members. But if he speaks a little and then gives them the chance to speak, encouraging them, then students from the regions can also gradually improve their speaking abilities and have the confidence to speak.

According to some of the interview participants it is usually students who have got good language command that tend to dominate others. In a group discussion situation, Saba said, *someone who has got good English language command may dominate the group, because he can express himself without any problem. I know of such students.*

What have been presented so far are students' views that are related to different factors that make students silent or talkative in group discussion situation. In the following section I shall present the results of the questionnaire prepared to get some hints on what the most significant factors are.

8.11 What are the most significant factors?

All the factors discussed so far were put in a questionnaire form. Two sets of questionnaire were designed. The first (consisting of 29 questions) was about the factors that were perceived by students in the interview (both individual and focus group interview) to have accounted for students' high participation in group work. The second set consisted of 28 questions about factors that were thought to contribute to students' silence. The questionnaire was distributed to volunteer students in four sections. Set 1 was filled in by 36 students and set 2 was filled in by 30 students.

Once the data were gathered, then two types of analyses have been carried out. The first was carried out using percentages of students who indicated clear agreement ('slight agreement' has not been included since it, together with 'slight disagreement', represented middle position in the scale). Seime (1999) used a similar type of analysis. The second one was carried out using mean average for each of the factors (this type of analysis has been used in Schmidt, et al. 1996). Results indicated that the two types of analyses have quite similar results in terms of putting the factors in increasing or decreasing order of strength. The top ten factors have been listed below in Table 8.2 and Table 8.3 in decreasing order of significance. Mean averages, instead of the percentages, have been used in both tables to arrange the factors in this order.

Table 8.2 Top ten factors that account for students' low participation in group discussion

Rank	Factors	Low participation		
		Mean (X)		%*
1	They are shy	1	5.73	90
2	Fear of making mistakes	2	5.57	93.3
3	They do not have enough experience speaking in English	3	5.37	83.3
4	They think other students in the group are better in English	4	5.07	76.7
5	They did not have good high school background	5	4.80	66.7
6	They leave the floor to students from Addis Ababa	6	4.47	60
7	The system of grading is not encouraging	7	4.43	50
8	Their family background	8	4.11	46.7
9	They do not have good English language proficiency	9	4.10	46.7
10	They are negatively influenced by orientations	10	4.07	50

* Percentage of students who indicated clear agreement

The strongest factor that contributes to students' silence, as far as the questionnaire is concerned, is shyness or lack of courage when they speak in English, fear of making

mistakes, and lack of experience speaking in English. While the first two factors (top two) are related to students' personality or psychological make up, the third one is related to students' background. The fact that some students think that other students in the group are better in English and that they leave the floor to students from Addis Ababa has also a relatively strong influence towards making students silent in group discussion situation.

In most cases however it is the interplay of different factors that in the final analysis appears to determine students' level of participation. For instance, some students who do not have confidence about their language command may keep silent- *I am shy when I speak in English*, as Abera one of the silent students said. Others could be shy just communicating despite the fact that they have good language command- like Selam.

Table 8.3 Top ten factors that account for students' high participation in group discussion

Rank	Factors perceived to account for students' high participation	High participation		
		Mean (X)		%
1	They want to improve their English	1	5.39	88.9
2	They have the interest or motivation	2	5.39	86.1
3	They are well prepared or have done their assignments	3	4.97	66.7
4	There is welcoming atmosphere from instructors	4	4.85	63.9
5	They have the ability to see ideas from different angles	5	4.83	63.9
6	They have adjusted themselves with the environment	6	4.78	61.1
7	They know each other well	7	4.65	55.6
8	They are not shy	8	4.53	58.3
9	They enjoy interacting with other students in the English class	9	4.50	55.6
10	Students are evaluated for participation in group discussion	10	4.47	52.8
11	They are positively influenced by orientations from seniors	11	4.44	52.8

The results of the analyses seem to indicate that motivation is among the main factors that contributes to students' active verbal participation in group discussion. As can be seen from

Table 8.3 the top three factors (*They want to improve their English, They have the interest or motivation, They are well prepared or have done their assignments)* are all related to learners' motivation. A welcoming atmosphere from instructors has also been mentioned, by 63.9% of the students as one of the top factors contributing to students' active participation. The fifth top factor is related to students' ability to see ideas from different angles. This factor was first mentioned in the pilot study and has not been discussed in the main study because the subjects in the main study did not mention it as a factor. Incidentally, this is an indication that there could be some other factors that have not been mentioned by the subjects of this study and are worth identifying in future research.

Among the top ten strong factors that bear a part in making students high participators in group discussion are factors related to personality (that they are not shy), the group (cohesion or knowing each other well), and concern for grade or evaluation. The ninth item in the list of factors in Table 8.3 (that some students participate actively because they enjoy interacting with other students in the English class) is also related to students' motivation.

8.12 Summary and discussion

The main concern of this chapter has been to explore the main factors, from students' point of view, that contribute to students' silence or talkativeness in group discussion situation. What this study has revealed is that it is difficult to say that students' verbal participation in group discussion – be it low or high participation - could be determined by a single factor like language command, personality, motivation or the group situation. The case of some students can be considered to illustrate the situation.

To start with Selam and Kassa can be compared in terms of their verbal output in group discussion and in terms of their English language proficiency. Selam was one of the very low participators in the class, whereas Kassa was among the high contributors. Selam was among the high achievers and scored good grades in both semesters; whereas Kassa was an average student in terms of his English proficiency, as determined by both the oral

proficiency test and the semester grades- he scored average grades in both semesters. Thus it can be said that language proficiency as a single factor may not be enough to account for students' low or high participation in group discussion.

Another example to demonstrate that a single factor may not be responsible for students' level of participation is the school background. The case of Dawit and Tsegaye can be compared. Both of them came from a rural government school with poor facility. However, Dawit turned out to be one of the most actively participating students in the class whereas Tsegaye was one of the very silent students in the class. The case of students who have come from the same high school in Addis Ababa can also be seen- Saba and Elleni. The former was much more talkative than the latter.

Gender, again as a single factor, does not seem to tell about students' level of participation. Some of the girls were more talkative than most of the boys. In fact, although girls contributed only 20% of the class, 50% of the very high participators were girls. There were, however, very silent girls at the same time.

In all such cases, thus, there could be other factors at work at the same time. Where there are two students with equally good command of English and one of them participating actively the other very passively, the other factor at work in such situations could be, for instance, their personality. The silent could be shy and the talker confident. Similarly, where two students come from a poor high school background and one of them turns out to be active the other passive, it could be the level of risk taking behaviour the students have- the high risk taker participates actively while the low risk taker keeps silent. Perhaps, alternatively, it could be the difference in motivation that might have brought the difference. It has already been presented under section 8.3.3, that some students participate actively just because they enjoy talking. What students in this study have described as *getting satisfaction out of talking* or *naturally like expressing oneself* may refer to their motivation. This is very

similar to Goldman-Eisler's hypothesis (formed nearly half a century ago, in 1951) that "each person has a characteristic level of communication congenial to himself".

This is equivalent to saying that people generally have a certain constant rate of verbal contribution which they make when they communicate in groups. Some people may have a very low rate, others average and still others a very high rate of contribution in group discussion. The same writer also observed that "this level is to some extent affected by the characteristic levels of communication of other members of the group." Borghatta and Bales (1953) took this point a little further and expressed the rate of contribution made by any member of a group as the ratio of the group member's own characteristic level of communication (CLC) to the average characteristic level of communication of other group members. This relationship can be expressed in the following formula: X= Y/Z, where X is the rate of contribution made by a member of a group; Y is the member's own characteristic level of communication (CLC); Z is the average characteristic level of communication of other group members. Thus, the higher a group member's CLC and the lower a group's average CLC, then it means that the individual group member tends to be highly voluble or talk a lot. On the other hand the lower a group member's CLC and the higher a group's average CLC, then it means the individual group member tends to be relatively silent or talk less.

This can be illustrated using one of the group discussion transcripts presented in the previous chapter, under Table 7.6, and reproduced here for easy reference.

Table 7.6 (reproduced)

GW4	Turn	%	Word count	%
Tesfa	41	46	577	55.43
Saba	38	34	274	26.32
Jemal	18	16	146	14.02
Elleni	14	12	44	4.22
Eshetu	1	0.9	5	0.5

Assuming that the number of words uttered by each group member denotes the CLC of individual group members then each group member's rate of contribution can be calculated. Tesfa's rate of contribution (RC) is thus:

$$\frac{577}{(274+146+44+5) / 4}$$

$$= 4.92$$

In an ideal distribution of turns and amount of talk as determined by the number of words uttered by the group members, the rate of contribution (RC) should be 1.0. Anything more than this indicates the individual's higher RC, and anything less than 1.0 indicates a lower RC. The second highest participator's rate of contribution is 274/(577+146+44+5)/4= 1.41; whereas the least participator's rate of contribution is 5/(577+274+146+44)/4= 0.02.

Table 8.4 An illustration of students' rate of contribution (RC) in group discusion

GW4	CLC	RC
Tesfa	577	4.92
Saba	274	1.41
Jemal	146	0.65
Elleni	44	0.18
Eshetu	5	0.02

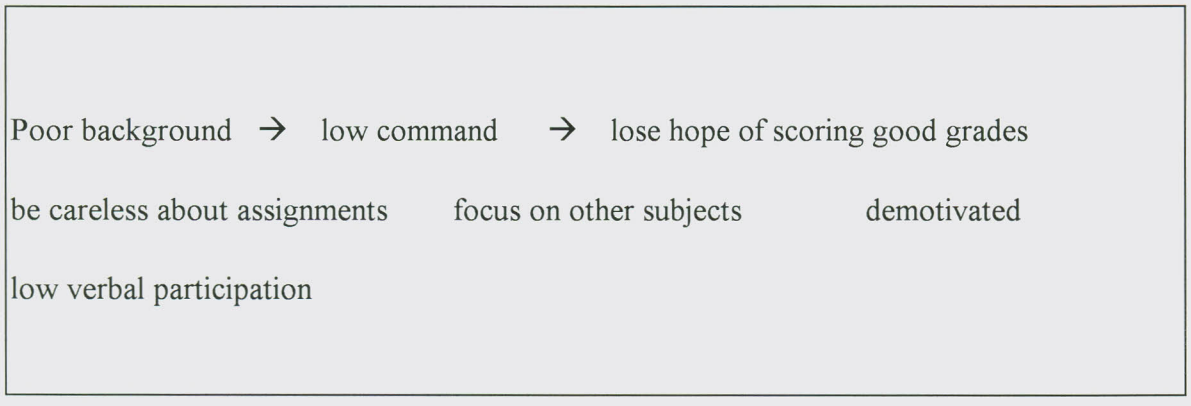
What students in this study have described as *getting satisfaction out of talking* or *naturally like expressing oneself* may thus refer to the individual student's high CLC.

The argument put forward by Goldman-Eisler is an interesting explanation as to why some students contribute a lot while others do less. The hypothesis, according to Klein (1965) has been tested using a number of students who were paired and allowed a half-hour discussion.

Certain things need to be clear, however: will the effect be the same whether the medium of discussion is L1 or L2; to what extent does students' rate of contribution be affected by task/ topic familiarity; group size and composition, purpose of discussion, presence or absence of evaluation, etc.?

Meanwhile, the findings of this study appear to indicate that verbal participation in group discussion is sometimes determined or affected by a chain of factors one leading to or affecting the other, in stead of just one factor functioning on its own. For instance, when Abera, a very silent student, was asked why some students kept silent, he said *these students keep quiet because of their language command, otherwise they would not have kept quiet. And that is as a result of their background. In addition to that they feel that no matter how hard they try they can not bring any change in their grade. Besides, because many students (including myself) tend to focus on other courses it is only when we are about to come to our English class that we remember our assignments.* Abera's view may thus represent the 'vicious chain of factors' that lead to low verbal participation. These factors may act singly or in combination. This is only one instance of the way different factors can act together and make students silent. Figure 8.1 below shows one way of looking at how different factors may work together.

Figure 8.1 The vicious chain of factors leading to low verbal participation



When seen singly, however, as students' ratings indicated, some factors appear to be more significant in making students silent. The top factor in this case is related to the personality makeup of individual students. Thus shyness, fear of making mistakes, and feeling inferior to others in the group are all rated highly by more than 75% of the students who filled in the questionnaire, as among the top four factors.

Similarly with high participators, it seems that there are a chain of factors that are more responsible for making students participate actively in group discussion. Figure 8.2 below is just one example of how different factors may come together, one leading onto another, to help students take active part in discussion.

Figure 8.2 The virtuous chain of factors leading to high verbal participation

Good background → good L2 command → hope of getting good grade
High/ active participation do assignments properly increased motivation

When seen singly, however, the strongest factor, according to the results of the questionnaire filled in by students, is motivation. The chain of factors shown here may also indicate the factors that bring about increased motivation in students.

In short, then, while personality characteristics seem to be the strongest influence in contributing to students' silence, according to the questionnaire, the interviews with individual students, especially the silent ones seem to indicate that there are more than a single factor acting together. Similarly, while motivational factors seem to be the strongest

influence in making students active participants in group discussion, the individual and focus group interviews indicate that there are a chain of factors that are acting in combination to make students active participants in group discussion.

Now that we have some idea who the low and high participators are and the major factors that contributed to the way they participate in group discussion, we need to see how students view low and high participators. That is the main issue addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9

HOW STUDENTS PERCEIVE SILENTS AND TALKERS (RQ3)

9.1 Introduction

Two methods have been used to investigate students' perceptions of silents and talkers: interview analysis (transcripts from individual and focus group interview), and questionnaire based on points taken from the interview. Students were interviewed about how they perceive silents and talkers in group discussion situation. Students' views of the silents and the talkers were analysed following the same procedure for analysing all the interviews.

In order to determine the extent to which students view silents and talkers in a certain way, again another set of questionnaire was prepared and distributed to students in two other sections. Forty-two students took part in this activity. The results of this rating may shade some light on how students perceive silents and talkers.

In this chapter I shall first present and discuss the results from the interviews. Then in the second section I shall present and discuss the results of the questionnaire filled in to determine the strength of the factors.

9.2 How do students view high participators?

Eleven different points were raised in the interviews, in the main study, about how students perceive high participators. These views are summarised in Table 9.1 below.

Table 9.1 Students' perceptions of high participators

1	They are good group members
2	I see them positively
3	They are favoured by instructors
4	They have good social skills
5	They participate actively to get good grade

6	They come from private schools
7	They just want to talk or participate
8	They cause fear or apprehension to others
9	They take others' silence for ignorance
10	Changing perceptions (I used to see them negatively)
11	They can be good group leaders

9.2.1 They are good group members

Some students said that they prefer to work with high participators. In one of the focus group interviews, for instance, Elleni said that she did not mind whether she knew her group members well or not and also whether they were males or females. She said, however, *I prefer to work with talkers, because if I am working with the silent ones I feel that I am dominating them. I feel as if I have snatched away their right to speak. If they speak, we are on equal grounds and no problem.*

9.2.2 I see them positively

When interviewees in the focus group interview were asked how they view high participators, all of them agreed that they view them positively. Similarly, in an individual interview Kassa, one of the high participators, was asked the same question and said that he viewed them very much positively. The reason he said was because *we can get something new or something we don't know from their speech. If the idea is diverse, then we learn something from that. So I admire them.* Darge, also said *I like them.*

Abera one of the very silent students was asked a similar question and he had a similar view, he sees them positively. Admas, also one of the most silent students in the class, said *I see them positively because they are trying to clearly present what they know to the group. And that is very good. …I wish I could speak English well.*

Aster, an average participator, also said *I have a positive attitude towards them. And I admire them. In fact I envy them a lot for presenting their ideas clearly, because I can not.*

Tsegaye had a similar view: *I like students who talk a lot. If you ask me why, you know, I never expected students to speak and participate this much. That is one reason why I actually admire these students. I thought all students would be like me, as far as speaking is concerned. There are about ten of us who have come from the same high school and all of them are very silent. None of them participates actively.*

Tesfa, one of the most talkative students in the class, said *the class views them* (high participators) *positively. Everybody has got to share whatever he knows and make some contributions. Therefore every one has got to speak as much as he knows. So it is positive.* Marta, a very active participator, also said *I like them. ... I see them positively.*

Hailu and Dawit, both very active participators in group discussion had a similar view. Saba, also a very high participator, said *I see them positively. ... because as long as they are able to express themselves; the main point in group discussion is being able to explain clearly the points one has. Therefore, they put on a lot of efforts and that is good.*

9.2.3 They are favoured by instructors

Some interviewees were asked about what views instructors might have of those students who participate very actively in group discussion. Some students, for instance Marta, a very high participator, said that instructors are very positive about high participators. Both high participators and low participators have also pointed out that instructors tend to favour high participators.

This is similar to the findings obtained by Hopkins (1971:72) who reported that teachers appear to be "strongly influenced by the amount of student participation when making assessment of their ability". In other words, teachers tend to assess students making frequent

contributions most favourably, while they tend to give low assessment scores to those students making less frequent contributions.

9.2.4 They have good social skills

Students generally felt that those students who participate actively in group discussion have good social skills. This issue was raised when students were asked how they choose group leaders. Kassa, for instance, said he would choose someone who is clever in his education and has got good social skills. In fact, he said, *I give more wait to the students' social skill.*

The results of the post group work questionnaire have also generally indicated that the high participators were usually selected as group leaders (see Appendix 16).

9.2.5 They participate actively to get good grades

Adane, a high participator who decreased in the second semester, was asked how he perceived high participation, he said *there is a common belief among many students that if one performs well in the speaking activities or if one participates well then one would get good grades. So it could be to get a good grade that these students are participating actively. ...They attach it to grade.* A similar finding has been reported by Klein (1965), that low participation tends to be evaluated negatively while high participation is almost universally regarded positively. Thus, it can be said that some students participate actively because they also tend to share the same perception reported by Klein as 'almost universal.'

9.2.6 They come from private schools

Abera, one of the very silent students was asked about his perceptions of students who talk a lot. He said it could be their background- the school they have come from. Students also pointed out that such students besides going to private schools, had other opportunities like watching and listening to educational videos, and attending summer classes. Such things may help them improve their language ability and know a lot about other things, compared to students who come from the regions.

9.2.7 They just want to talk or participate

It was pointed out in the interview that there were some students who talked a lot or actively participated in group discussions just because they enjoyed talking. According to Girma, *most of them talk out of their interest to express their own ideas*. The desire or eagerness to express oneself as a factor contributing to students' high participation was also mentioned in the preceding chapter, under section 8.3.3.

9.2.8 They cause fear or panic to others

Azene, one of the students who decreased participation during the second semester, was asked how he viewed high participators. He said *this depends on different factors. If, for example, the instructor always follows and accepts whatever they say, then that might create or cause some kind of fear within other students. You know we start to feel inferior and start to say 'oh these students' kind of thing. Then you know we start to feel useless because others speak fluently and dominate most of the discussion in class. Then we start to think that we will be dismissed- the main thing students fear here, in this campus, is academic dismissal. So other things come when we have the confidence and convince ourselves that we would not be dismissed. Many students feel that those students who speak very well will score top grades in all subjects and pave the way for others' dismissal- so they are seen as a source of fear.*

Interviewees however emphasised that this is a type of perception students have of the high participators in the first semester.

9.2.9 Changing perceptions – I used to see them negatively

Azene was of the view that students' perceptions of the talkers may change in the second semester. This partly depends on what or how students were oriented. *For example, in the first semester you know what we were told and what we saw in class really matched- we were told that students from Addis Ababa would dominate the class and that was what we*

saw. In the second semester, however, we came to know the facts, and started to build our confidence. Then we started to change our attitudes towards those students and started greeting and talking to them about other issues as well.

Int: So you now see them positively?
Azene Well, I see them positively.
Int: You would see them negatively in the first semester?
Azene Yes, not as human beings but because we start to link things with grades. The fear of dismissal. You know because many students are dismissed from Addis Ababa University, life is very hard.

9.2.10 High participators take others' silence for ignorance

Girma indirectly referred to such students who take silence for ignorance. He was asked how he viewed talkatives or high participators. He said he would view them positively but, he said, *I don't mean those students who talk too much and take others' silence for ignorance. I mean those students who express their ideas clearly and in detail.* In saying this he seems to suggest that there are some students who take others' silence for ignorance.

9.2.11 They are good group leaders

Another common perception students had of the talkers was that they could be good group leaders. Almost all students interviewed said that if they were to choose a group leader, then the first thing they see would be the student's spoken English proficiency. Good examples here could be Tesfa and Saba, who were the most talkative students in the class and also top ranking in terms of their performance in the final examinations, in both semesters. It is to be noted here that Tesfa and Saba usually became group leaders in group discussion. Tesfa said when both of them worked in the same group, the group would choose one of them as group leaders. All students who took part in the interviews said that they have a positive attitude towards such students and would choose them to be group leaders.

Dawit, who had good English command and scored good grades in both semesters, was asked if he knew some silent students in their class. He said *I don't remember anyone*

among those I worked with. That is because they choose me as their group leader most of the time.... and I make them all speak or say something. Dawit was among the very high participators and students' perceptions of him is an indication of the fact that they see high participators as good group leaders. The results of the post group work ratings also indicated that high participators tend to be chosen as group leaders most of the time. This is again similar to Klein's findings that students who speak often tend to be evaluated by the rest of the group in a positive way in terms of leadership and popularity.

9.3 How do students view low participators?

Eight points were raised in the interviews, as related to how students view or perceive low participators. These views are summarised in the table below.

Table 9.2 Perceptions of low participators

1	Unwelcome group members
2	They run short of ideas
3	I see them negatively
4	They are not liked by instructors
5	I don't feel free when I work with them
6	They are careless
7	They have some problems
8	Clever in other subjects

9.3.1. Silents as unwelcome group members

In a focus group interview Elleni, a high participator, appreciated the problem silent students have i.e., *they may be afraid of making mistakes,* and indicated her preference to work with talkers: *but I prefer to work with talkers, because if I am working with silent ones I feel that I am dominating them. I feel as if I have snatched away their right to speak. If they speak, we are on equal grounds and no problem.* Aster, an average participator, also said that she

would prefer to work with students who participate actively, and clearly said she did not like to work with students who did not participate actively.

9.3.2 They run short of ideas

Aster mentioned Tsegaye, the most silent student in the class, as running short of ideas most of the time. Azene, also mentioned Zeru, another very silent student in the class, as keeping silent most of the time because of lack of 'intellect'.

> Zeru keeps quiet most of the time. The reason is like I said before 'intellect'. There is a problem of producing ideas. Some students can't be clever in all areas- those who are very clever at mathematics could be weak in English. ... Another good example is Tsegaye. He is very silent in English class, but he is very good at mathematics.

Although what 'intellect' exactly meant in Azene's response above is not clear, he seems to be referring to the problem of producing ideas, as his rephrasing indicates. However, as can be seen from Abera's interview, silent students did not feel that they run short of ideas.

9.3.3 Silents perceived negatively

From the interviews, it seems that high participators see low participators somewhat negatively, while low participators tend to focus on the problems these students have or try to explain the reasons for their silence. May be it is worth comparing what some silent students and talkative students said here.

In the interview, Darge who is among the high participators and who also increased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester, said he would not see silence positively.

> As far as l am concerned, I don't see it positively. Wherever it may be silence is not a good thing. A student should participate as much as he can, like the rest of his group members. There could be some language related problems, fear of making mistakes. It doesn't mean that those who participate well are not making mistakes. In our FLEn class, especially, no one would restrict you from saying whatever you want simply because you have made mistakes. So every one should take this chance to participate and improve his language. If students want to speak but not actually say things out and instead keep quiet out of

> shyness, they become more and more silent and shy. This is the time students can make improvements, if they are not making improvements now, then they are not going to have other chances. Therefore, it would be better if silent students work harder to avoid shyness and fear and solve their problems.

Two points may be taken from Darge's speech. Firstly, he perceived silence negatively. Secondly, he seemed to understand or appreciate the problems silents have- that they could be shy and he suggested that they should overcome their fear or shyness.

Tesfa had a similar view about silent students. He saw it from the point of view of the advantage speaking in group discussion might have for students: *for them to show some improvement, I think they should participate in discussion. You know I always participate in English class and I feel that I gain something. They should not sit there silent always. It is not advisable. They should participate. When these students keep silent and I talk a lot I feel kind of dominating the group then I would say to myself why should I talk a lot and dominate others. Later I started keeping quiet, I mean if most of them speak for about two minutes then I also speak for about two minutes and stop. I don't think this is a good trend so I don't see silent students positively.*

He further added that *if students are of the position that 'silence does not get weevilly or worm-infested'* (a literal translation of a popular saying in Amharic) *and keep silent wherever they go, then well, you don't know what they think and others' attitude towards such people does not change. We could be forced to believe that they are not showing any progress at all.*

Dawit, also one of the very high participators in group discussion, said he viewed silent students somewhat negatively. *Because I feel that they should participate I see their silence as something negative.* He is, in fact, of the view that silent students themselves see it negatively.

Saba had a similar view about silent students. She said she viewed their silence negatively most of the time. *I see them negatively- most of the time. They don't gain any thing out of silence, and their presence in the group does not contribute any thing to the rest of the group members. They don't gain knowledge, either.*

Hailu was also strongly against silence. He said *as far as I am concerned, I don't like silent students. For example, outside class when we want to further discuss on some points we started in our group in class, they even tend to forget that we were in the same group. They also feel that the discussion takes their much-wanted time and I don't have a positive attitude towards the silent students. I met one of the silent students in the library and I tried to advise him to speak and to participate- because we then came to know each other better, you know. I told him that it is to his own advantage if he participates actively in discussion. I told him that there is no point in being shy, and that all of us are not native speakers and that he should try his best.*

Instead of seeing silence negatively, silent students seem to prefer to reason out why some students keep quiet. The reasons they give are pointed out under different sections - like language related problems, personality related problems, etc. discussed under 8.2 and 8.3.

9.3.4 They are not liked by instructors

Some students pointed out that instructors do not like silent students. Marta, for instance said while instructors seem to favour those students who talk and participate actively in group as well as whole class discussions, their view about the silents is *quite the opposite, they don't like them*.

9.3.5 I don't feel free when I work with silents

Marta, one of the very high participators, said that working with silent students would make her feel tense. *I don't feel free, when I think of them. I mean I keep wondering what he*

might be thinking about or what she might be thinking about. ...they frighten me. I myself simply can not speak, in their presence. Even if I try to speak, I don't feel free.

Williams et al. (1993), in their meta-analytic review of the research on social loafing effects, reported that individuals engage in social loafing when working with group members whom they expected to perform well or when working with group members for whom no performance expectations were provided. Their view also indicated that individuals did not loaf when working with group members they expected to participate poorly. What some students have reported in this study, was actually quite the opposite. With some students, like Tesfa, the social loafing effect was easily noticeable when group members tended to be low participators.

9.3.6 They are careless

Silent students are sometimes seen as careless, particularly by high participators. It is Saba and Tesfa, the two top participators, who in a group interview raised the issue of silent students' carelessness.

Int: How are these students (the silent) viewed by other students?
Saba As careless
Tesfa Or negligence
Int: Can you say how the majority of students view the silent ones?
Saba I think they take it for carelessness.

The fact that some students perceived low participation as carelessness may, as reported in Williams et al. (1993), encourage high participators to deliberately engage in social loafing. What Tesfa, a very high participator, said could be a good example here. When Tesfa noticed that some students in his group tended to be careless and participated less, he also decreased his involvement in the group discussion. He said: *later I started keeping quiet, I mean if most of them speak for about two minutes then I also speak for about two minutes and stop. I don't think this is a good trend so I don't see silent students positively.*

9.3.7 They have some problems

The fact that some students keep silent most of the time was also attributed to some problems they have – this issue was emphasised by silent students. Abera, one of the most silent students in the class, was asked how he viewed silent students. He indicated that he usually viewed them as having some problems- like shyness and poor high school background. When students with such problems join university, they are expected to take active parts in group discussion. Unfortunately, he said, *progress does not come that easily.*

Abera was also asked about how he viewed himself. He said *I have always degraded myself when it comes to language. Whatever should I do to improve it, that is my constant worry. I mean I score good grades in other subjects. So my plan is now to improve my English. One problem here at university is that you can't afford giving much time to study vocabulary and grammar, because there is a lot of competition among students. So we tend to give more time to studying other subjects. I have no problem with other subjects, as long as I study them.*

Tsegaye, also one of the very silent students in the class, was asked how he viewed those students who did not speak most of the time in group discussion. He seemed to prefer to emphasise the problems these students have: *I think these students (including myself) would have liked to participate or talk but they have problems. They know that they should be using a lot of English (writing and speaking) when they join different departments next year. Well, for many other different reasons students want or need to speak or use English, but they have got one major problem that makes them silent. It would be very nice if they somehow overcome their problems and improve their English.* One thing clear from Tsegaye's view or opinion is that silent students have got to overcome whatever problems they have and become active participants in group discussion. This view suggests that silence or low participation in group discussion is something unwanted or not supported by students.

Girma, an average participator, said *I don't see them positively simply because they have kept silent, because I can see their participation in other classes, other courses – I mean their participation. Neither do I see them negatively. I may simply conclude that they are not speaking because they don't have the courage. So I don't see them negatively.* Marta said *I sometimes feel the fact that they can not express themselves might have some burden on their real life, and I feel sorry for them.*

9.3.8 Clever in other subjects

Aster, an average participator, has a different view about silent students. She seems to say that they are in fact clever students – cleverer than those students who talk most of the time. *In my opinion, silent students are clever students. If you see students from the regions who keep silent most of the time, they score high grades in other subjects. In fact those who talk a lot do not have good grades in other subjects. It is a common knowledge among students that those who talk a lot are good at but English. So I view silent students as clever. On the other hand, I feel sorry for them because they could have shown good progress if they were to participate actively.*

In one of the focus group interviews, students were asked if they think those students who talked most of the time had better knowledge than those who were silent. All of them said they could not say the talkers were necessarily cleverer. Negasa, for example, said *never, there are some students who have good knowledge, but they don't speak. Because they are shy or have the fear.*

9.4 Students' most popular perceptions of low and high participators

Table 9.3 below shows that although students are very positive about high participators in group discussion, they still seem to be undecided about the way they view silent students. The most popular perception of low participators is that such students *have some problems* and students *pity them*. The views expressed about silent students are however very weak. As can be seen

from the table, only 36.6 % of the students indicated clear agreement with the most popular view about silent students. The mean average (3.44) also indicates that the general tendency for students is to put their views in between 3 and 4 which indicate middle positions, i.e., between slight agreement and slight disagreement.

Table 9.3 Students' perceptions of low participators

Rank	Perceptions of silents	Low participation		
		Mean (X)		% *
1	They have some problems, I pity them	1	3.44	36.6
2	Most of them are clever specially in other subjects	2	3.36	35.9
3	They run short of ideas	3	3.2	24.4
4	They are not good group partners / members	4	3.13	17.5
5	They frighten me / I don't feel free when I work with them	5	3.10	32.5
6	They are not favoured / liked by instructors	6	3.08	27.5
7	They are viewed negatively by instructors	7	2.85	19.5
8	They are careless	8	2.45	13.2
9	Most of them are incompetent or lazy	9	2.15	17.1
10	I see them negatively	10	2.12	12.2

* Percentage of students who indicated clear agreement

The next most popular perception of silent students, although expressed in a very weak way, is that *most of them are clever especially in other subjects.* Here again only 35.9 % of the students indicated clear agreement to this view. The mean average is also 3.36 indicating a mid position – between agreement and disagreement to the view.

The least popular views about silent students are the ones that put them in a somewhat negative way. In other words the view that silent students are seen negatively and that they are incompetent or lazy has got the least acceptance by students who filled in the questionnaire. Table 9.3 shows that Only 12.2 % of the students clearly agreed to the view that silent students are seen negatively. The mean average is 2.12 which, if seen on the likert scale in the questionnaire, shows that on average students *moderately disagree* to the view that silent students are seen negatively by students. The second least popular perception of silents, that most

of them are incompetent or lazy, has also not been accepted by most of the students. Only 17.1 % of the students indicated clear agreement while the majority of the students disagreed to the view. The mean average (2.15) also indicates that overall students do not perceive silent students as incompetent or lazy.

From Table 9.3 it seems that students who filled in the questionnaire were in most cases undecided or did not have strong positions as to how they view or perceive silent students, while their views about high participators, as Table 9.4 shows, have been clearly expressed. One possible explanation here could be that while both silents and talkers see high participation positively, high participators seem to view silents negatively. What is in Table 9.3 could also be a reflection of this. This indicates the need to administer the same set of questionnaire separately to low and high participators; so that the reason why students' perceptions of silents tended to be weak can be dealt with.

Table 9.4 Students' perceptions of high participators

Rank	Perceptions of high participators	High participation		
		Mean (X)		%
1	They are favoured by instructors	1	5.39	80.5
2	I see them positively	2	5.21	81.6
3	They just want to talk or participate	3	5.15	77.5
4	They are good group partners/ members	4	4.68	58.5
5	They can be good group leaders	5	4.53	52.5
6	They have good social skills	6	4.39	58.3
7	I admire them	7	4.34	48.6
8	Other students in the group accept their ideas/ views most of the time	8	4.05	43.6
9	They take others' silence for ignorance	9	3.87	34.2
10	Most of them come from private schools	10	3.85	38.5
11	They are trying to terrorise others	11	3.78	45.9
12	They are boastful	12	3.76	39.5
13	They are determined to score an 'A'	13	3.51	28.2
14	They show off	14	3.50	45.0
15	I don't respect them; I see them with contempt	15	2.42	13.2

The above table shows that students' most popular perception of high participators is that they are favoured by their instructors. Most of the students, more than 80% of them have clearly expressed their agreement to this view. The mean average (5.39) also shows that there is a very high rate of agreement among students that high participators are seen very positively by their instructors.

Of the 15 types of perceptions students were given to rate, the second most popular was that students perceive high participators positively. More than 81% of the students said they clearly view or perceive high participators positively. The mean average (5.21) also shows that on a 1 to 6 likert scale the degree of agreement for the high participators is more than five showing that most students strongly agree that they perceive high participation in group discussion positively. The third most popular perception according to the results of the questionnaire is the view that some students participate actively in group discussion just because they like to talk or participate. This could be interpreted in many ways, but what seems more plausible is that these students have the interest to take part in discussions and their participation in group discussion could be the reflection of their interest in the activity. Again their interest could be driven by many factors as students have indicated in the interviews. Some of these could be the desire to improve their English, or get good grades.

The fourth popular perception of high participators is that they are good or preferred group partners. This is followed by the view that high participators can be good group leaders. The view that some students perceive group leaders positively has already been indicated in the results of the interviews.

The least item in the order of students' perceptions of high participators reads *I don't respect them; I see them with contempt*. This is agreed on by only 13.2 % of the students. Thus, very few students have no respect for high participators, according to the rating. This can be linked to the changing perception of students. In an individual interview one of the interviewee (Azene) has clearly put how he used to see high participators negatively in the

first semester. He said that was because of the highly competitive nature of the first year course in general. This questionnaire was filled in towards the end of the first semester. Therefore, it could be the case, like Azene said in the interview, that the negative view some students have towards high participators has changed by the end of the year, or in the second semester.

That high participators are talking for the sake of showing off their speaking ability or they are participating actively because they are determined to score good grades and that they attach verbal participation to evaluation and grade has not also got popularity among the students who filled in the questionnaire.

9.5 Summary and discussion

The results of the interview and the questionnaire seem to indicate that students have varying perceptions of low participators and high participators in group discussion situation. Generally speaking it seems that students were positive or had a positive attitude towards high participation while they had in most cases a negative attitude towards low participation. There were, however, differences in the way silents and talkatives perceived low and high participation. There were also some differences in the way some students perceived high participation in the first semester and in the second semester.

How did students perceive high participation? The results of the questionnaire seem to suggest that the perceptions students have of high participators was generally positive. This can be seen from the rank order of the popular perceptions. The most popular, according to the questionnaire, are the positive aspects; and the least popular are the negative ones. This has also been supported by the views expressed by some students in the interviews. Thus it can be tentatively concluded that students have a generally positive attitude towards high participators.

How did students perceive low participation? The results of the questionnaire indicate that students who filled in the questionnaire were generally undecided or did not have clear view of the silents. Even with the most popular perception or view, according to the results of the questionnaire, the mean average was only 3.44 indicating a generally average scale – that was in between *slightly agree* and *slightly disagree*. One possible explanation here could be that most of the students who filled in the questionnaire could be low participators and these students did not like to say they viewed silence negatively. It would have been interesting if it were possible to identify the participation level of those students who filled in the questionnaire so that the views of low participators and high participators could be clear. The attempt to do so in this study however did not succeed because although students were asked to rate their own level of participation, most of them did not like to give that particular bit of information probably because they thought it might relate in some way to their grade or evaluation. Incidentally this could be one indication of the fact that doing research in one's own classroom could be advantageous in that it would be possible to first build students' confidence and also to tell where students are not telling the truth when they fill in questionnaires like this.

The main resort as far as this research question is concerned had thus to be the interview with the main subjects of the study. The interviews were very helpful in this regard, especially because there were both low participators and high participators among the interviewees. The results of the interview indicated that students were generally positive about high participators. There were however, some students who clearly indicated that they used to view high participators somewhat negatively (as they were intentionally trying to cause fear and panic to other students or the low participators who they said were most of the time students who come from the regions). This view had however changed in the second semester, according to the interviewees, because students came to know that the high participators were not in any way affecting their grade. This was so especially when

they knew that they could equally compete (or even sometimes exceed in other subjects). Therefore it seems that students came to accept that other students would perform better in English while they could do better in other subjects.

The results of the interview also indicated that students' perceptions of the low participators was generally negative. Almost all students who took part in the interview said they viewed silence negatively. In fact, some of them said they did not like working with low participators. Some of them also reported that the presence of silent students in a group would negatively affect their participation. That silent students are perceived negatively by both students and teachers has been reported in, among others, Klein (1965), Fassinger (1995), and Davies (1994b). Silent students who took part in the interview also agreed that silence should be discouraged. Having said that, they emphasised the problems silent students have and instead of viewing them negatively they preferred to appreciate their problems. They pointed out that low participators would have liked to take active parts in group discussion had they not had language and personality related problems.

If students generally have a positive attitude towards high participators, will that positively affect them to increase participation, in the second semester? Or will most students tend to increase participation in group work? The next chapter will address issues related to whether students have changed their participation behaviour, and factors that bring about change in students' participation behaviour in group work.

CHAPTER 10

FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE CHANGE IN PARTICIPATION (RQ4)

10.1 Introduction

My main aim in this chapter is to deal with the last research question: was there any change in participation, if there was what kind of change was it, and why did students change? Five different methods have been used in an attempt to answer this question: interview (individual and focus group), group discussion transcript analysis, students' ratings, instructor's ratings, and self ratings.

I shall first address the question dealing with whether there was a change in students' participation behaviour and the types of changes. Then, I shall present and discuss findings related to students who increased participation in the second semester. Finally, what students said about decreasers will be presented.

10.2 Was there a change?

There are two semesters to be attended by every student in the first year. The first semester begins towards the beginning of October and runs for four months through January and after about two weeks' break students get registered for the second semester in January. Thus, it is students' verbal participation behaviour in these two semesters that is being compared.

10.2.1 Interview

The main instrument used to investigate whether students have decreased or increased participation in the second semester was interview. The interview transcript was analysed following the system of analysis discussed under 6.2. Among the categories emerged out of the analysis was the identification of students who have increased or decreased participation.

10.2.1.1 Students who increased participation

Interviewees were asked if they knew some students who increased participation in the second semester. Most of the students mentioned few names. Azene said *now, for instance Darge. I never saw him talking in the first semester, but in the second semester he has participated very well. In fact, one day when I tried to coordinate the group, he dominated me and I had to leave the task of coordinating to him. Then he led the group. Another student who has increased participation in the second semester is Eshetu. He was very silent in the first semester.* Azene has also mentioned Chane and Yodit. The latter has also been mentioned by Saba as increasing participation.

Darge said that he noticed Debebe's increasing in verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester. He also mentioned Kassa. *I think Kassa has increased a lot in the second semester. Kassa has increased. Others, most of them who have participated actively in the first semester are still participating well.* Adane observed that *Darge and Kassa, have participated very well in the second semester.* Tsegaye, the most silent student, was asked the same question. He said there were some students who increased verbal participation

> Tsegaye Kassa has clearly increased now in the second semester. In fact he took part in a debate.
> Int: So he has increased participation in the second semester.
> Tsegaye Apart from increasing participation in the second semester, the way he presented his ideas and his English improved a lot. He used to be shy in the first semester but now he speaks with confidence.

The debate students said Kassa had taken part in was one in which one of the students assigned to argue against the motion was absent. When a volunteer was asked to join the panellists short of one person, Kassa volunteered with out any hesitation and he argued very well, without fear, although it was an unprepared speech for him.

Tesfa, the top participator was asked the same question. He said *Dawit has increased participation. I particularly remember him because we worked in the same group many times. And also Desta* and Kassa.

According to Marta, Yodit is also among the students who increased participation. She further said that she herself has increased participation, especially in the group she has worked for quite a long time- the group she described as all active participants (Girma, Hailu, Negasa, and Desta). Marta said *if it is in that group I don't feel anything. I just talk, simply talk.* Marta had earlier said that she did not like working with silent students – that would not make her feel at ease.

In the focus group interview Dawit mentioned some students who have increased participation in the second semester: *Debebe has improved in the second semester; Chane, Kassa, and Yodit have increased.* Another interviewee has also mentioned these same students and two other names: Darge and Zewdu.

In short, the interview has revealed that some students have increased participation in the second semester. Table 10.1 below summarises the results of both the individual and focus group interview by way of listing those students identified by themselves and others as increasing participation.

Table 10.1 Summary of the interview: students who have increased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester

	Name of student	Increased participation		
		Said s/he has increased	Others-individ Interview	Group interview
1	Kassa		✓	✓
2	Eshetu		✓	
3	Yodit		✓	✓
4	Darge	✓	✓	✓
5	Chane			✓
6	Debebe		✓	
7	Zewdu		✓	
8	Dawit		✓	
9	Desta		✓	
10	Debebe		✓	
11	Marta	✓		

10.2.1.2 Students who decreased participation

In the interview students were asked whether they have noticed some students who have decreased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester. Kassa mentioned some students: *Girma, Marta, Adane.*

Azene was also asked if he knew some students who have decreased participation in the second semester. He said *it could be I myself.* He also mentioned Girma and Dawit. Another student who has identified himself as decreasing participation was Adane.

Dawit's decrease in verbal participation could be attributed to his changing understanding of the ideal pattern of interaction. In one of the group discussion transcripts it can be seen that Dawit was dominating other group members. Towards the end of the first semester, however, he tended to be more of a gatekeeper than a dominating participant. This can also

be inferred from his response in the interview to one of the questions. *I try to make them all speak.*

Admas mentioned some students who decreased participation in the second semester. *Azene used to participate actively, but I think he has somewhat cooled down in the second semester.* Aster was also of the view that Azene and Marta decreased participation in the second semester.

According to Tsegaye, Adane and Azene have decreased participation in the second semester. Tesfa also mentioned some names: *I think Negasa has decreased. Marta has also decreased.* Tesfa has also mentioned himself among those who decreased participation in the second semester. This may also show the changing attitude of high participators towards the end of the year or in the second semester. Tesfa was a very high participator. His decrease, it seems has sprang out of the realisation that each student should contribute his/ her share in the discussion.

It seems that there is some difference in the motive behind Tesfa's and Dawit's decrease in verbal participation. For Dawit it could be the need to give others the chance to improve themselves through speaking. For Tesfa it seems that he was a bit dissatisfied about others' silence- may be thinking that others were deliberately engaged in social loafing.

Tesfa also mentioned Saba and Elleni as somewhat decreasing participation in the second semester. Saba in turn mentioned some names: Girma, and Marta. *I think I have also decreased my participation in the second semester.* Saba said *Elleni has also decreased a little bit.*

Table 10.2 below is presented as a summary of the results of both the individual and focus group interview. It shows those students identified by themselves and others as decreasing participation.

Table 10.2 Summary of the interview: students who have decreased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester

	Name of student	Decreased participation		
		Said s/he has decreased	Others-individ Interview	Group interview
1	Azene	✓	✓	✓
2	Adane	✓	✓	
3	Marta		✓	
4	Tesfa	✓		✓
5	Elleni		✓	✓
6	Saba	✓	✓	
7	Girma		✓	
8	Negasa		✓	
9	Dawit C		✓	

10. 2.2 Results of the end-of-year questionnaire

Students in that section were also asked to rate their classmates. Each student was required to identify three students who they thought had decreased participation, and another group of three students who they thought had increased participation in the second semester.

Tables 10.3 below shows how students in one section identified those students who have increased participation in the second semester. Thirty students filled in the questionnaire. The second column indicates the number of students who have identified the corresponding student as increasing verbal participation. Kassa has been identified by 15 students in the class or 50% of the students who have filled in the questionnaire as increasing verbal participation in group discussion. In other words, he ranks first when the proportion of students who have chosen him is considered.

Table 10.3 Results of the end-of-year questionnaire: students who have increased participation in the second semester

Name	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Kassa	15	50.0	1
Darge	8	26.7	2
Eshetu	8	26.7	2
Yodit	8	26.7	2

Three students, Darge, Eshetu, and Yodit were also among the top four students perceived by students as increasing participation in group discussion in the second semester. All of them were identified as increasing participation by eight students, or 26.7% of the students who have filled in the questionnaire. The full result of the questionnaire has been attached to the appendix. (See Appendix 20).

Table 10.4 indicates how 30 students, the same group of students mentioned above, identified those students who decreased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester. The table shows that 12 students or 40% of the students who have filled in the questionnaire agreed that Azene has decreased participation in the second semester. Thus he ranked first in the list of students who have decreased participation. Next to Azene was student Adane who was identified by six students or 20% of the students who have filled in the questionnaire. The rest three students (Desta, Negasa, and Marta) were all identified by five students or 16.7% of the students who have filled in the questionnaire. Again the full result of the questionnaire has been attached to the appendix (See Appendix 20).

Table 10.4 Results of the end-of-year questionnaire: students who have decreased participation in the second semester

Name	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Azene Baye	12	40.0%	1
Adane T.	6	20.0%	2
Desta.	5	16.7%	3
Negasa B	5	16.7%	3
Marta W	5	16.7%	3

Before moving on to discussing why some students have increased or decreased verbal participation in group discussion, let us see what these students said about themselves in the self-rating questionnaire.

10.2.3 Self rating

All students in that section rated their own verbal participation level, on a six-point scale, two times: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester. This method has been used to gather ideas about students' perception of their own level of participation, i.e., if from their own point of view they have remained the same, increased or decreased participation. Their ratings have been presented in Table 10.5 below..

10.2.4 Instructor's rating

The instructor has also rated the students twice, on a six-point scale, on participation in group discussion: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester. The ratings when compared are expected to indicate whether students have, from the instructor's point of view, generally remained the same, increased or decreased participation.

In most cases there is a match between the results of the interview, the end-of-year questionnaire, students' self-rating, and the instructor's rating. To make things clearer, how

students in the table below rated themselves and how the instructor rated them will be discussed taking sample students.

Table 10.5 Results of self-rating and instructor's ratings of those students identified as either increased or decreased verbal participation in the second semester.

		Self-ratings		Instructor's ratings	
		Sem 1	Sem 2	Sem 1	Sem 2
1	Kassa	4	5	4	6
2	Azene	5	3	5	2
3	Chane	3	4	3	4
4	Desta	4	5	5	4
5	Darge	3	5	4	4
6	Eshetu	3	4	3	4
7	Girma	4	5	5	5
8	Adane	5	2	5	4
9	Nega	4	3	3	4
10	Debebe	3	5	2	4
11	Zewdu	4	4	2	4
12	Elleni	5	4	6	5
13	Negasa	4	4	5	4
14	Tesfa	5	5	6	6
15	Marta	4	5	6	5
16	Dawit	5	5	6	6
17	Saba	5	5	6	6
18	Yodit	4	5	4	5

To start with, Kassa was identified by most students as showing a significant increase in the second semester. This has also been confirmed by the results of the self-rating and the instructor's rating. The latter has in fact rated this student as belonging to the most talkative students' category in the second semester.

Azene's self rating in the table shows that he perceived himself as decreasing participation in the second semester. This has also been supported by the instructor's rating which in fact

shows that this student used to be a *high participator* in the first semester but has later joined the *silent* students. Results of the interview show the same thing.

Darge perceived himself as clearly increasing participation in the second semester. He put himself *on the silent side* in the first semester, and he perceived himself as a *high participator* in the second semester. The instructor has put this student *on the talker side* in both semesters and has not noticed any change in the verbal participation behaviour of this student.

Eshetu has noticed a slight increase (from 3 to 4- *on the silent side* to *on the talker side*) in his verbal participation behaviour in group discussion, matching exactly with the instructors rating.

Adane perceived himself as clearly decreasing participation in group discussion in the second semester. He put himself as a high participator in the first semester. But he put himself as *silent* student in the second semester. The instructor has also noticed but a slight decrease.

10.2.5 Students' overall participation in group discussion

Table 10.6 below shows whether students have overall changed their participation behaviour in group discussion in the second semester.

Table 10.6 Summary of students' self ratings and instructor's ratings

Ratings	Students' ratings in the 1st sem.		Students' ratings in the 2nd sem.		Instructor's rating in the 1st sem.		Instructor's rating in the 2nd sem	
		%		%		%		%
Very silent	0	0	0	0	5	14.3	2	5.7
Silent	5	14.3	6	17.1	7	20.0	8	22.9
On the silent side	11	31.4	6	17.1	6	17.1	3	8.6
On the talker side	12	34.3	12	34.3	5	14.3	13	37.1
High participators	7	20.0	11	31.4	6	17.1	4	11.4
V. high participators	0	0	0	0	6	17.1	5	14.3

As far as students' self ratings are concerned, there is no difference in the number of *very silent* students. That is to say the figure remained zero throughout. The number of *silent* students increased very slightly, i.e., there were 5 students in this category in the first semester. The figure increased by one and there were 6 silent students in the second semester. A significant decrease can be seen in the number of students who used to be *on the silent side* group. The figure shows a decrease from 31.4% to 17.1%. There is a somewhat proportional increase in the *high participators* group, i.e. there is an increase from 20% in the first semester to 31.4% in the second semester.

The instructor's ratings, in the same table, also indicate an overall increase in verbal participation in group discussion. The number of *very silent* students decreased from 14.3% in the first semester to 5.7% in the second semester. The number of students who were *on the talker side* has however increased significantly. In other words it increased from 14.3% in the first semester to 37.1% in the second semester, that is more than double the figure in the first semester.

To summarise the findings in this section, it is possible now (after using various methods to study students' verbal participation behaviour in two semesters or one academic year) to say that there was a change in students' verbal participation behaviour in the second semester. Of the 35 students who had been attending class until the end of the study time or the academic year, almost half of the students have been identified as increasing or decreasing participation in group discussion. The other half can, however, be said to have remained somewhat constant or have made only slight changes. Comparing the number of increasers and decreasers, it seems that there were more students by the end of the year who increased participation. It can also be observed from the self-rating and instructor's rating that students' participation in group discussion has overall increased in the second semester.

Most of the students who were interviewed did not seem to find it difficult to identify those students who have shown some change. The different methods used in this regard have also

shown more or less consistent results. (This indicates the fact that there is some advantage in doing research in one's own class, i.e., students are more likely to be frank about their behaviour may be for fear that the instructor can easily tell if they do not respond honestly.)

The end-of-year questionnaire was, in this case, particularly important since it made quantification possible. Future research dealing with similar type of research may even gain better results if each student in a section is to be rated on a likert scale. Thus making it possible to compare all students in a class instead of only the outstanding ones (in their participation behaviour).

Since it is clear that there was a change in students' participation behaviour, I will now move on to discussing what students said about why some students decreased participation and why others increased.

10.3 Why decreased

The findings and discussions in this section are based on the results of the interview. Five factors will be discussed under this section.

10.3.1 Orientation by seniors

In a focus group interview Tesfa said that *students are told right from the beginning that a C grade is very common, then when students get a C and prove that the saying is true they start to lose hope. Again, there is a common kind of joking among students that 'you can get a C as long as you are a citizen of Ethiopia'.* At this point Saba said *"C is for citizenship" there is this common joking, among students.* Then Tesfa added, i*f that is the case, if I end up getting a C, then why should I bother- they would say.*

10.3.2 Disappointed by the grade they got in the first semester

A similar but slightly different factor mentioned by the interview participants was the issue of grade. Some students said they decreased participation in group discussion in the second semester because they were not satisfied with the grade they got in the first semester.

The interview with Kassa clearly shows this:

> Int: Why did these students decrease participation, what is your assumption?
> Kassa They were not satisfied with their first semester grade. That is the reason, I think.
> Int: Do you hear them saying this, sometimes?
> Kassa Yes, they get angry sometimes and say they would not score anything better than a C, no matter how hard they try. Therefore, they say there is no reason they should work hard.

Azene, one of the students who clearly decreased in the second semester, had a similar reason. Following is what he said when he admitted that he decreased participation.

> Azene There could be many reasons. For example many students want to work hard but they get low grades. They may do well in the mid-semester examination and when they expect good grade, they may score low mark in the final examination and end up getting low grade. Then they start to lose hope and feel hopeless. On the other hand, there were some students who scored high grades we never expected them to get. For instance there are some students in our class who tell us that they got B's. Such things affect our moral. We feel it. … Well, for instance Erku got low mark in the mid-semester examination. We don't know his ability but when we externally judge his performance, he does not deserve a B.
> Int: He got a B?
> Azene Yeah, he told me that he got a B. When we see such things you know we start to decrease participation and things like that. ---
> Int: Grade is a big factor?
> Azene Yes, grade has got big influence. We start to say that we are toiling for nothing. We lose hope. Secondly, when we see that we have scored good grades in other subjects, then we start to say that that is our area. …we tend to concentrate on other subjects and devote most of our time studying them.

Adane, also one of the students who has clearly decreased participation, has also attributed his decrease to the grade he got by the end of the first semester. *Well, I decreased participation because the grade I got in the first semester made me lose hope.… I got a C which I never expected. I had good potential in English when I was in high school and I thought I would get good grade here as well. Unfortunately, I haven't. I don't know.* Adane added:

> Well, in fact some students who were discouraged like I was told me that we even didn't need to attend classes regularly if we get only a C after a

> lot of hard work. I was not totally discouraged and I kept on attending classes and also participating... Well, most of the students from the regions would attach it to the grades they got. I have close relation with some of the students, and they tell me that they should not bother much if they are to get a C grade, they said that they could get a C without any problem, without any need to work hard. That is the main reason, I think.

Adane has also indicated that there were some students who undeservedly got a better grade than he did and that had negatively affected him. *There were some students who got a B, like Erku, and Negasa. To be honest these students did not deserve a B. Both of them cheated in the final examination; they copied everything from Tesfa. Honestly speaking, many students got B's because they copied answers from Tesfa. You would have seen it yourself, if you had invigilated us. Only Tesfa should have been given an A. If others were to work by themselves, they would be 'lost or precipitated'.* Luckily, he said, this was not repeated in the second semester.

Another student who commented on the same topic was Admas, one of the very silent students in the class. He said some students cooled down in the second semester. He was asked why they did. *May be it is related to their grade. Some students relate class participation to their grade.*

Aster, an average participator, has also expressed her view why some students decreased verbal participation in group discussion. She said *most students work hard to get good grades. So when they see that they have not got the grades they were expecting then they lose hope and feel that their participation has brought them nothing.*

10.3.3 Personal problems

Some students attributed their decrease in verbal participation in group discussion to health problems. Azene, who many students said has decreased participation in group discussion and himself has admitted that he has decreased, said that besides other reasons he mentioned (and presented earlier) he had also health problem. *I have the interest but the reason why I decreased could be because first of all I had heart failure – I am getting better now. The*

other reason is that --- I had financial problem and ---. When he was asked what his main reason for decreasing participation was he said *I decreased participation because I had health problem, but there are other students who decreased because of confusion and that sort of things*.

Tesfa also mentioned Elleni as one of the students who decreased participation in the second semester. She decreased participation, he said, *probably because at some point she missed three consecutive classes. She had some problems at home. And she was silent for some time then.*

10.3.4 The topics are not interesting

Some students attributed their decrease in participation in group discussion to the topics or the nature of the task. Aster said, besides the dissatisfaction with the grade they got, *some students find the topics somewhat boring or not suitable for discussion*.

This idea has also been supported by Saba, one of the very high participators. She pointed out that the decrease in verbal participation *could be out of boredom – they got bored with the study. After working hard for almost a year, I think they get bored with things. I cannot think of any other reason why they should decrease participation.*

Saba said she herself has decreased participation in the second semester and assumed that it could be the nature of the subject. *I don't know. I don't know it myself. Well, it could be the nature of the subject. The topics were very boring. Other things were good, but the book was not interesting – most of it. College English of the first semester was better. The articles or the passages in Volume Two (second semester) were not that interesting. The tasks were also very boring. Therefore ---*

The same point was made in one of the focus group interviews during which Tesfa disagreed with the other interviewees. He was of the view that the text book can be of interest to most of the students.

> Tesfa Yet it is still something, you know like I said earlier the majority of the students come from the regions and if there are to be other

> topics then it would be the students from Addis Ababa who are going to have the chance to know more about the topics. As a result students from Addis Ababa may participate more. So I think it is good the way it is now, you know, of the forty students most of them come from the regions. The subject matter should help these students participate actively.

In another focus group interview, Girma said *the main factor could be the fact that the topics, the discussion topics in the text book are not as interesting as the ones we had in the first semester. It is not something we can talk about widely. It is not interesting.* The group was asked to cite an example and Girma gave the following example: *for example there is a topic about family planning in which we were required to argue for and against family planning. So you know some of us were forced to argue against family planning and arguing in support of something we in reality don't support is difficult. I mean why when there are a number of topics to have discussion or debate on? I was among the group who had to argue against family planning and that was really difficult.* Then Negasa suggested that *it would be better if it is something really debatable – good topic, good also for those who argue against the motion. ...if there are good topics that would make our minds work, and those who listen would also enjoy it.*

10.3.5 Group composition

Another reason for some students' decreasing in participation in group discussion is, according to Adane (one of the students who has clearly decreased verbal participation in the second semester), the fact that some students start to dominate the group. Adane said, *when we sometimes work in groups some students want others only to listen. And you would ask us to put group members in ascending or descending order of participation. Well, then some students dominate the group. I don't know I prefer to work by myself. Most students from the regions don't like working in groups because they come from environments where ranking is regarded important and there is a very tough competition among students. Most of them don't like each other because of the competition they had when they were in high school.*

According to Negasa and Girma the composition of the group may also have effect on the verbal participation behaviour of the group. Negasa said, *if there is a girl in the group, one would rather keep silent than speak and make mistakes.* Therefore, Girma said, *it is better to sit with males,... if boys sit with girls they may not speak at all. If there is a boy who tends to be a talker, then he would decrease his participation.*

To summarise, students have given various reasons why they or other students in that class have decreased participation. Let us consider what the two students who have dramatically decreased verbal participation in group discussion (Azene and Adane) have said. These students were among the active participants in the first semester. The reasons for the dramatic decline in verbal participation of these students have been mentioned by the students themselves and by other students as well.

Azene has admitted that he had decreased participation in the second semester. 40% of the students also agreed that he has decreased participation. Most interviewees also mentioned him as a decreaser. What Azene emphasised as reasons for his decreasing in participation were his disappointment with the grade he got and personal problem, which he appeared to mention only as a mere pretext for decreasing participation. This was however a genuine reason for some students like Elleni.

The issue of grade as a factor for decreasing verbal participation has also been emphasised by Adane, the second highest decreaser. It would have been interesting to see how this student might have behaved if there had been a third semester, since by the end of the second semester he expressed his satisfaction by the way they were invigilated and since he scored a better grade in the second semester.

10.4 Why increased

Different reasons were given why some students increased participation in group discussion. In the following section I will discuss five points.

10.4.1 Feeling more comfortable as a result of developing confidence and gaining experience

Kassa, who has dramatically increased participation in the second semester, said *I was very happy about most of the things I do*. He said that he has developed experience and confidence in the second semester and he felt that could be the reason why he increased participation.

Int: Has that helped you increase participation?
Kassa I have liked the very place.
Int: You mean Addis Ababa?
Kassa Yes, because I have got used to it.
Int: Where did you come from?
Kassa It is quite near, Selale.
Int: What is the place called?
Kassa Gerbeguracha
Int: So you like Addis Ababa?
Kassa Yes, specially in the second semester. I had problem understanding the subjects I study, because it was a new environment, and kind of thing

Darge, also one of the students who has clearly increased participation in the second semester, had his view about why some students increased participation. *My assumption is that these students had the interest right from the beginning. Thus, because they have managed to gradually reduce their fear, they increased their participation. ... they also became used to the way they do things in class. The other reason could be that students see or envy those who speak very well, and ask themselves 'why should I not speak like those students, they are speaking not because they are more knowledgeable, but because they have the courage, why should I then not try?'. This kind of feeling.*

Abera, one of the very silent students in the class, was asked why some students have increased verbal participation in group discussion. He seemed rather to defend the reason why some students did not participate actively in group discussion. *Well, it is not a matter of increasing, as I see it. It is because they have the courage to speak and they come prepared to class and they feel that they can speak and convince others. It is not just because they*

want to score good grades. Those who keep silent, including myself, as well are not keeping quiet because they have lost hope about their grade, as I see it. You know we try to answer questions and participate actively, but we then feel that what we are suggesting would be unconvincing and you know we feel it. That could be the reason otherwise, ...

Aster said she increased participation in group discussion in the second semester. When she was asked why, she said it could be that *I have got used to the situation and the students. Secondly, I understand things better now – the content of the course. ... and I feel more confident.*

Tsegaye, one of the very silent students in the class, said *there are some students who regretted their silence or very low participation. They compare themselves with other students who participate actively and convince themselves that they are after all students like us except that they have the courage and talk. So some students who have developed such attitudes have increased participation.*

The fact that some students have decreased participation in the second semester was not convincing to Dawit. He was of the view that, in fact most students have increased participation and he said he reached the conclusion that *it could be because of the experience they have gained that they have increased participation.*

Similar points were raised in the focus group interview. Saba, for example, said it could probably be because students have adapted themselves to the environment and have got used to the situations. Elleni is also of the view that some students have increased participation *because their confidence has increased.*

10.4.2 Developed the interest

Darge, one of the students who has dramatically increased participation in the second semester, said the increase in participation is mainly due to the increase in students' interest in the second semester. *Their interest was inspired or instigated ... I have the interest, for*

example to take part in group discussion and debates. I am very interested in the things we do in class. Other students, Darge said, must have also increased because *they have the interest and when they see others participating actively, they sort of envy them. Then they try to overcome their problems by getting rid of their fear.*

What Darge said suggests that the increase in participation could be the result of one factor leading to another, instead of just one factor working alone. In this case it seems that the interest he has developed helped him take some risks or the courage to say something even if he knew he could be wrong. He said *I may be incorrect sometimes but I keep on speaking with courage, out of the interest I have.*

Darge also seems to suggest that once students have the interest they could be convinced that what matters most in group discussion is the sharing of ideas with other group members. He said, *I participate most of the time out of the interest I have to speak. ...It is the interest I have had for the subject. When I take part in group discussion, I gradually improve, you know, getting rid of my weaknesses specially in the second semester.*

10.4.3 Knowing each other better

Some students have attributed the increase in participation to the fact that students came to know each other better in the second semester. Marta, for example, said *we have come to know each other very well. We share many things outside class. We tell jokes and things like that so there is nothing I am afraid of. There is nothing I care about. It is simply talking over the issue raised. I would not care.*

Darge has also said that one reason for his increasing in participation in group discussion could be that they got used to know each other better in the second semester. This same issue was also raised in the focus group interview. Negasa said some students increased participation because *they have come to know each other better in the second semester.*

10.4.4 Sense of competition

Another reason given for some students' increasing in participation in group discussion is the fact that there was some kind of competition between students from Addis Ababa and students from the regions. The competition took clear shape when a few students from Addis Ababa scored good grades and only few students from the regions scored good grades. Here is how one of the interview participants (Girma) explained the situation: *by the way the class has itself been divided. Our class. I mean students who sit here, over there and sort of thing. So there is some kind of joking (tereb) outside class. Students from the regions would say "you have scored good grade therefore you don't belong to our groups leave our row/ side and go and join the students from Addis Ababa". And when there is a student from Addis Ababa who has scored low grade he would be told to go and join the students from the regions, which is on that side.*

When they were asked how they arranged their seats that way, they said *it was not intentional, it just happened that way... in the second semester when we were allowed to sit with whoever we wanted to sit with, then students started --- it is out of closeness to each other...so, the class has itself sort of divided.* Girma said *it is assumed that students from Addis Ababa speak a lot.*

Negasa said *when there is a debate between us* (students from the regions) *and students from Addis Ababa, students from the regions work very hard just on the pretext that students from Addis Ababa will happen to speak a lot.* Girma added that *students from the regions do what ever they can if there is a debate between students from Addis Ababa and students from the regions – no matter how long time it might take them.* (Usually students have group discussions on some topics which will lead onto whole class debate activity). *Some thing happened last time. You see when you gave us a task for a debate you divided the class into two just based on the way we sat that day. Then most of the students on one side happened to be students from the regions. They were working very hard, even calling*

meetings in their dormitories. Interviewees said that was to outsmart students from Addis Ababa.

10.4.5 Grade or mark

The desire to score good grades or the need to improve grade has also been mentioned as one of the reasons, on the part of some students, for increasing participation in group discussion. This can be clearly seen from what Adane said. This student pointed out that *there is a common belief among many students that if one performs well in the speaking activities or if one participates well then one would get good grades. So it could be to get a good grade that these students are participating actively...they attach it to grade.*

This issue was also raised in one of the focus group interviews. Dawit said *I know some students who would worry when there was going to be a debate. ...But in the second semester most of them were happy to take part in debates because there was a one mark bonus for those who participated in debates.* Dawit said their interest to participate in debates was to get that one mark. Then he mentioned what he thought would be a good example. *Whenever we asked him to be a group leader Chane would say no, in the first semester. But in the second semester he would lead our group discussion, without being asked to be a leader. That could actually be related to grade.*

In another focus group interview, Girma pointed out that *it could be because some mark is given for active participation* that some students have increased participation in the second semester.

The view that some students increased because they think showing active participation in group discussion would positively affect their grade, has however been challenged by some students. Abera, one of the very silent students, is for example, of the view that i*t is because they have the courage to speak and they come prepared to class and they feel that they can speak and convince others. It is not just because they want to score good grades. Those*

who keep silent (including myself) as well are not keeping quiet because they have lost hope about their grade, as I see it. You know we try to answer questions and participate actively, but we then feel that what we are suggesting would be unconvincing and you know we feel it. That could be the reason. It can be said that the need to score good grades may be a reason for increasing participation, but Abera's view seems to suggest that there are other stronger reasons.

Darge, one of the students who has shown a marked increase in the second semester, is in fact of the view that his (and probably others) increase in verbal participation in the second semester has got nothing to do with grade. He was asked whether increase in participation has any relation with the desire to improve grade. *To improve grade? What has our participation got to do with grade? We participate to improve our English, to know how others react to our ideas. Also to be able to get rid of fear and give detailed information on a particular topic, to be efficient in our speaking skill. That is why I have increased participation, as well.*

In short, students have given various reasons as to why they increased participation in the second semester. The main points they raised will be reviewed in the following section.

10.5 Summary and discussion

All in all, the longitudinal dimension in this study has made visible a number of types of participators in group work. Thus it becomes clear now, by the end of this study, that talking simply of low and high participation is no longer sufficient. The findings reported in this study indicate the following general types of participation:

a) students who remained silent through out the year

b) students who started as (somewhat) talkers and became silent in the second semester

c) students who started as average participants and decreased participation in the second semester

d) students who started as average participants and remained average throughout the year

e) students who started as average participants and increased participation in the second semester

f) students who started as (somewhat) low participators and increased participation in the second semester

g) students who started as (somewhat) high participators and remained high participators in the second semester

The very identification of students in the different groups has, however, not been an easy task. Interviews were found to be very useful, but if not supported by other methods they may not reveal the required information or they may sometimes hide some facts. Some students may tend to hide their decrease or why they decreased. The fact that the interviewer was their instructor and that some useful information had already been obtained by other methods before the interview took place was very useful in getting students frankly tell about their experiences. Future research to be carried out in the same area may thus benefit from this experience. In an attempt to reliably identify students who have changed their participation behaviour, different methods have been used, interview, self-rating, instructor's rating, and end-of-year questionnaire. Once students have been identified as changing their participation behaviour, as decreasers or increasers, then it is possible to discuss the reasons or the factors that accounted for the difference.

Let us, then, come to this question once again- why did some students decrease participation in group discussion? A number of different explanations have been given. I would like to use results of the interviews with the top decreasers, Azene and Adane. Interview extracts with these students have indicated that both of them decreased because they were utterly disappointed by the grade they got in the first semester. Most interviewees mentioned that there is a commonly held belief among students that if one participates actively in group and whole class discussions then one will mostly likely score good grades. These two students

had that expectation in mind and when they came to learn that they got only average grades, they started to lose hope, got disappointed and became careless. Some students can be utterly disappointed when they get an average grade, although they are clearly told how they performed on every test they were given. This could be because such students may have high extrinsic motivation – which they later found was not rewarded.

Why, on the other hand, did some students increase participation in the second semester? Here again students have given various reasons for increasing participation. Particularly important here could be the views of Kassa and Darge who have dramatically increased participation in the second semester. What seems important to be emphasised here is that it is usually a combination of some factors that makes students increase verbal participation rather than a single factor acting alone. In the following extract from the interview with Darge, for example, four factors seem to have come together.

> We have got used to know each other. We have also adapted ourselves to the way the course is taught. In addition to that I have had the interest right from the beginning. The amount of time given for group discussion has also increased in the second semester. ... All these things added to the interest and the enthusiasm we have had to improve our English helped us to increase our participation. That is why I have increased participation.

Darge has not raised the issue of grade at all. In fact, in the interview when he was asked whether there were some students who increased participation because they wanted to improve their grade, he asked *what has our participation got to do with grade?*- indicating the fact that he was at least equally (in fact here more) interested in other things like improving his English language proficiency than just scoring good grades.

The findings thus show that a consideration of two forms of silent experience would be useful. Extracts of student descriptions of those silents belonging to group (a) above or the persistent silents are likely to fit traditional discussion group theorists' ideas of them as shy, lacking in confidence, introverted, anxious, or low risk takers (notably Shaw, 1976; Davies, 1994b; Abercrombie and Terry, 1978; and Rudduck, 1978). Tsegaye, Abera, Selam, and Admas (who remained in a persistently silent position, albeit in some cases with slight movement away from

extreme silence), used expressions like *others say the very thing I had in my mind, but because I am fearful.... I am shy about it ..., I intend to say something but then I feel I make mistakes, etc.*

In contrast decreasing participators, such as Azene and Adane, starting out as much more willing talkers in the first semester, but with sudden decrease in the second semester have to be seen as undergoing a qualitatively different participatory experience. These students described their experiences in terms suggesting dissatisfaction and disappointment. This indicates that their growing silence is less to do with personality characteristics or personal predisposition, as might be the case for persistent silents, but instead is much more to do with aspects of the discussion experience itself- growing feelings of being unable to compete and express themselves to their satisfaction, a disillusion with the course and with the whole failure of verbal participation to measure up to their early expectations, the orientations they get from senior students or those students who passed through a similar experience, etc.

Similarly, descriptions suggest that students who were persistently high participators (g) in both semesters or throughout the academic year would be likely to fit the traditional discussion group theorists' ideas of them as extroverts, assertive, authoritarian and high risk-takers (Shaw, 1976; Davies, 1994b). Very high participators such as Tesfa and Hailu, for instance, use descriptions of being talkative which suggest extroversion and high risk taking: *I am not shy, I don't worry about making mistakes*, etc.

On the other hand, those students who started out as (somewhat) silents or low participators in the first semester and significantly increased in the second semester should also be seen as undergoing a different experience. Their increase in verbal participation could be interpreted at least in two ways. First, it could be the case that these students had had high personal predisposition to take active part in group discussion (or to use Eisler's term high "characteristic level of communication" – CLC), but they might have been dominated by the new university environment and other external factors to the point of keeping quiet or being low participators. Then when the situation allowed they went back to their 'normal self'.

Secondly, it could be the case that these students had low internal predisposition to participate in discussions at the start of the academic year and managed to develop those personality traits believed to contribute to high participation (whether this is possible or not has not yet been proven, to my knowledge). One thing clear, however, is that there could be factors other than personality traits that are responsible for students' high participation. Had it been purely predispositional these students would have shown high level of participation right from the beginning.

The concept of *becoming* low participator or high participator can also be understood within a framework of willingness – unwillingness to participate. Students who have decreased participation (Azene and Adane, for example) in the main describe a developing unwillingness to participate which is something that has sprung mainly from early expectations and later disappointments, mostly in terms of grade or evaluation. The disappointments have, it seems, replaced an earlier willingness to actively participate in group discussions. Students who have increased participation, similarly, have become more willing to participate because of satisfactions with their interactional experiences in group discussions, like Kassa and Darge, who have markedly increased participation, have clearly put it.

By way of summarising the main issues raised in this study, the next chapter presents the main findings, pedagogical and research implications, and some final comments by way of conclusion.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, PEDAGOGICAL AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

11.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the verbal participation behaviour of first year college students as they took part in group discussion in their College English classes. I shall start this concluding chapter by listing each of the research questions which I introduced in the first chapter, and commenting briefly on the results. I shall then discuss their implications for practice, and relate them to the broader issues of classroom interaction. Next, I shall briefly describe the areas in which I think more research is needed. I shall conclude by making brief final comments by way of conclusion.

11.2 The research questions and summary of the main findings

11.2.1 Research Question 1

> To what extent do students differ in their amount of verbal participation in group discussion?

Based on various measures or instruments like interviews, self-rating, post group work rating, the end-of-year questionnaire, and the instructor's rating, the main subjects of the study (students in one College English class) could be put as belonging to one of the following five categories: very silent (17.1%), silent (8.5%), average participators (42.9%), high participators (14.3%), and very high participators (17.1%). This shows the fact that there is a huge difference in the amount of verbal participation in group discussion among students in one section of college English class at AAU. Some are extremely silent and others are very active participators – to the extent of dominating others in the group, sometimes.

11.2.2 Research Question 2

> What factors account for the differences in the amount of verbal participation in group discussion? In other words, why are some students very silent and others very high participators, sometimes to the point of dominating the silent ones?

Findings in this study seem to indicate that it is difficult to put students' verbal participation behaviour down to a single factor like language command, personality type or motivation, to mention but few. The results of the interview indicate that more than one factors are usually working together, or one factor leads onto another to make students silent or talkative. Interview with the very silent students has indicated, for instance, that students may tend to be silent as a result of the following factors, one leading to another: poor high school background → low L2 command → lose hope of scoring good grades → demotivated → focus on other subjects → be careless about doing assignments → low participation. This is what I have called 'the vicious chain of factors', one leading onto another and singly and in combination affecting students' verbal participation behaviour negatively.

Similarly, interview with very high participators indicated that it is usually a combination of factors, rather than just a single factor, that leads or contributes to students' active participation in group discussion. The following chain of factors, for instance, may lead to students' high participation: good high school background → good English language command → hope of getting good grade → increased motivation → high participation. This is what I have earlier, in Chapter 8, called "the virtuous chain of factors" contributing to students' high verbal participation in group discussion.

An attempt has also been made in this study to rank order the factors identified from the interviews. This was made possible by putting the factors in a questionnaire form and

having them rated by another group of students. Presented next are the main factors that were perceived by students to be responsible for students' silence and talkativeness.

11.2.2.1 Why do some students keep silent most of the time in group discussion?

In the interview 28 factors (some of the factors are interrelated) were identified by students. These factors were put in the form of a questionnaire and were rank-ordered, according to degree of students' agreement or strength of influence, by another group of students. The results of the questionnaire indicated that *shyness, fear of making mistakes, lack of enough experience in speaking in English, thinking that others in the group are better in English, high school background, and the orientations students have regarding the system of grading* are among the top seven factors. (For the rank order of all the 28 items, see Appendix 8.)

11.2.2.2 Why do some students participate very actively most of the time in group discussion?

Here again 29 factors that were perceived by students to bear a part in making students active participators in group discussion were identified. The factors were rank-ordered by another group of students. The results of the analysis show that motivation was among the main factors that contributed towards students' active participation in group discussion. The top three factors (*They want to improve their English, They have the interest or motivation, They are well prepared or do their assignments*) - are all related to learners' motivation. (For more about other factors, see Section 8.11, and Appendix 8.10 for the rank order of all the 29 items.)

11.2.3 Research Question 3

> How do low and high participators view themselves and others, and how are they viewed by others? In other words, what are students' perceptions of silents and talkers in group discussion?

The interview with students has revealed that students have different perceptions of silents and talkers in group discussion. There is also some difference in the way silent students see other silents, and in the way talkers perceive silents.

11.2.3.1 Students' perceptions of silents

Findings from both the individual and focus group interview appear to indicate that students, especially high participators, generally have negative attitudes towards silent students. They view them negatively, as unwelcome group members, careless, obstructive to others' participation in group discussion, making the group discussion atmosphere tense, and running short of ideas. Silent students, although not positive about silence, tend to emphasise the reasons why they are silent and try to put the blame somewhere, on external factors- like poor high school background and composition of groups.

11.2.3.2 Students' perceptions of talkers

Results of both the interview and the questionnaire indicate that students generally have a positive attitude towards high participators. The most popular perception of high participators among students is that *they are favoured by their instructors*. Most of the students, more than 80% of them have clearly expressed their agreement. The mean average (5.39) also shows that there is a very high rate of agreement among students that high participators are seen very positively by their instructors.

Of the 15 types of perceptions students were given to rate, the second most popular is that students perceive high participators positively. More than 81% of the students said they undoubtedly view high participators positively. The mean average (5.21) also shows that most students strongly agree that they perceive high participation in group discussion positively. The third most popular perception according to the results of the questionnaire is the view that some students participate actively in group discussion just because they like or want to participate.

It is necessary to mention here that there were also some students who indicated that they had a somewhat negative attitude towards high participators in the first semester but their perceptions of such students changed in the second semester. This was mainly as a result of gaining some confidence, after making sure that they did not face academic dismissal, and that they could equally compete with the talkers, especially in other subjects.

11.2.4 Research Question 4

> Do students change their verbal participation behaviour over a period of time? What kind of change- increase or decrease in participation? Are there any possible reasons for this?

Findings from the interviews, self-rating, instructor's rating, and the end-of-year questionnaire indicated that there were clear shifts in the verbal participation behaviour of students in the second semester or by the end of the academic year. Some students dramatically decreased participation. Others who used to be *on the silent side* in the first semester gradually increased and by the end of the second semester became among the high participators.

4.1 Why did some students increase verbal participation in group discussion?

Various reasons have been given why some students have increased verbal participation in group discussion in the second semester. What the increasers themselves have said about it may be worth mentioning here.

1. Some students increased verbal participation because they felt more comfortable as a result of developing experience and confidence,

2. Some students increased participation because they developed the interest.

3. Sometimes students increased verbal participation because they came to know each other better in the second semester,

4. Increase in verbal participation could also be as a result of the task which developed in students a sense of competition,

5. Some students also reported that they increased participation because they needed the mark given for active participation in group discussion. So this has mainly got to do with grade.

4.2 Why did some students decrease verbal participation in group discussion?

1. The main reason for the decreasers was that they were disappointed with the grade they got in the first semester. Students who decreased participation also said they were disappointed when some students who did not perform better than they did in the first semester mid semester examination scored better grades. They said these students were cheating in the final examination. Such things disappointed students.

2 Orientation by senior students has also been reported to have had serious negative impact on the way students perceive the system of grading. Most of the students who came from private schools scored good grades. This matched with the orientation students were given that 'the best grades are all given to students who come from private schools in Addis Ababa and those students who come from the regions are toiling in vain.'

3 Some students pointed out that they declined in verbal participation because they faced personal problems – like family problems, financial problems, health problems, etc.,

4 Some students said they decreased verbal participation in group discussion because the tasks in the text book were not as interesting as the ones they had in the first semester.

5 Group composition was also among the factors reported by some students to have accounted for their decrease in participation in the second semester. More specifically students said they decreased participation because there were some students who would like to talk most of the time in the group. Some students, males in particular, also disclosed that they talked or participated less when groups consisted of females.

11.3 Pedagogical implication

One of the objectives of group work is to provide learners with the necessary practice opportunity, in both listening and speaking. It has partly achieved its aim in that quite many students participate actively in group discussion. It is also very encouraging that the majority of students enjoy working in groups. However seeing the number of low participators (more than 25% of the students in one section), it seems that a lot needs to be done to achieve a more or less equitable discussion or participation in group work. Low participation is not seen positively; low participators would like to participate more actively; low participation negatively affects others; and low participators do not seem to be satisfied with their level of participation. For all these reasons low participators should be helped to take a more active role. First, although no group achieves total equality of participation among its members, students should develop certain skills and strategies that help in bringing about a more or less equitable participation in group discussion. Gatekeeping could be a very useful skill in this regard. This is behaviour that helps all members of the group to participate more or less equally or to achieve a fairly equitable distribution of participation among all members by limiting those members who monopolise the discussion and by encouraging low participators. In other words, learners need to practise how to hold back the more talkative members and draw out the shy or self-conscious ones. They need to learn how to request clarifications, how to slow down, and how to explain. In addition, students need to practise how to gain time to think, change the topic, etc.

Secondly, learners should be encouraged to help and encourage each other in their attempt to use L2 to the best of their ability, and make use of whatever knowledge and abilities they have acquired so far. They must not think of the errors they make, other learners make errors, too! Some students in this study have already indicated that they try their best to have every group member actively participate in group discussion – such behaviour should be encouraged.

Thirdly, simply urging students to take more risks and participate more may not be effective. Apparently, before some students can be expected to take linguistic risks, they must be made

to feel more psychologically comfortable and safe in their learning environment. To this end, classroom teachers may wish to try out various strategies for lessening language class discomfort. As students come to feel more secure, they can then be encouraged to assume a more active role in discussion.

In addition although one of the main objectives of group work is to motivate learners to learn the language, it seems that some learners are negatively affected and demotivated by the group discussion situation. This can be seen from high participators who later decreased their participation to the point of becoming silent. This is sometimes the result of losing confidence in their ability. This also suggests that developing student confidence could be an instructor's first step in promoting class participation. Because confidence seems most affected by evaluation and orientations from students who passed through the same experience, instructors might consider starting a semester with discussions and exercises that encourage students to build confidence and help strengthen their peers' confidence. The experience of low participators who in the second semester have shown a significant increase in their participation could also be a good indication that developing confidence can help improve participation.

Most of the low participators attributed their silence to lack of experience in the method and to their high school background. The situation in the high schools in Ethiopia seems to be undergoing a major change in this aspect. The new text books, now in use in grades 9 and 10, have some pair work and group activities. While this is a major improvement in helping students to develop their spoken English ability, both teachers and students need to be well oriented about the use and application of group work in education in general and in language teaching in particular. Group work is not general across institutions. It is a mistake to assume that staff and students have a common understanding of what group work implies. As Long and Porter (1985) put it "without appropriate guidance and training for both teachers and students, the potential for group work as an effective context for learning will not be fully realised". This involves training

of staff in all aspects of group work, and learners in gatekeeping strategies. The improvement at high school level may thus improve the situation at university level.

Furthermore, teachers should be flexible in their approach to teaching and must try to develop warm and sincere relationships with their learners. They should not discriminate against low participators and in favour of high participators. On the contrary, they should try hard to create a warm and comfortable atmosphere for everyone so that low participators will not hesitate to participate actively in group discussion and other class activities.

So far I have tried to summarise the main findings and suggest what could be done in order to solve some of the problems. In the next section I will try to put some of the issues that need further investigation as research recommendations.

11.4 Suggestions for further research

In this section I will identify some other related studies which 'suggested themselves' during the course of my study. The following is thus best read as a personal list of suggestions, informed by my experience while carrying out this study in college English classes at AAU.

1. The population addressed in this study was that of university foreign language students in Ethiopia. Research should be carried out to assess the applicability of the findings to other groups of language learners, especially students in the high schools as there is an indication in this study that students' high school background has impact on learners' behaviour when they join university. There may be differences between university and secondary school students. In certain secondary school settings peer approval may be extremely important, resulting in levels and effects of language class discomfort, risk taking, and motivation that differ from those among college students.

2. Does strategy training help low participators? Two types of low participators may be considered here, the 'naturally' silent and those who are unable to make full participation because of lack of certain skills.

3. How exactly does grade affect most students' verbal participation behaviour? Does it affect all students in a similar way? Or does it affect only those who have high achievement expectations when they start and get disappointed by the 'below-expected' grade? If this is the case what should be done to improve the situation?

4. It would have been interesting in this present study to classify students who filled in the rating questionnaire according to their participation level and to compare the views or perceptions of these students. This would tell in a quite quantifiable way how silents and talkers view the group discussion situation and the participants. Future research may consider following some of the procedures followed in this study.

11.5 Conclusion

In this study I began with an interest in the verbal participation behaviour of college students and by saying something of the prevailing notion in popular thinking about participation in discussion, that low and high participation are readily explained as shyness or extroversion; lack of ability or possession of ability. The unravelling of detailed comments here has shown this to be very much an over simplification, particularly when looking at students' participation behaviour longitudinally.

I feel the most important finding has been identifying the tendency towards decreasing participation i.e. becoming silent, and in seeing this as qualitatively different experience to that of persistent, extreme silence. For my purposes this has clearly shown that significant factors other than shyness or laziness, introversion or lack of confidence come into the explanatory framework when looking at low participation in group discussion in particular.

In addition though, focusing on the contrasting experience of talkativeness and becoming talkative has also been revealing in showing that students can make use of discussion and profit over time. Further however, looking at both silence and talkativeness, and developing this longitudinally around the notion of 'being' and 'becoming' low

participator and high participator, has enabled theorising to evolve in a way which would not have happened if one or the other form of verbal participation had been explored in isolation. Looking at verbal participation as a continuum both in itself and across time has made visible the experience, and brought into focus the explanatory framework of alienation and integration.

This has been a small study in which I have tried to bring into focus the possibility that verbal participatory tendencies may be underpinned by broader internal and external influences. These would represent significantly different shaping influences to those traditionally cited in explanations of student behaviour in group work.

However, as a micro, in-depth study of verbal participation, it must be stated that findings here may be representative only of the students involved. To see how far wider claims could be made would take a larger sample than was used in this case. What can be said, however, is that findings here can be seen as a starting point for further analysis, for a larger study combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to undertake an examination of student discussion orientations.

Overall, in terms of strengths, I feel this research has been successful in exploring an alternative framework within which to understand the discussion experience. Using a longitudinal in-depth approach, I have gained access to student thinking and behaviour across time, and in this have broadened the framework of analysis. I have looked closely at the changing orientations of a small group of students defined in their own, group mates', classmates', and instructor's terms as either silent or talkative. In theorising I have allowed for the structuring of the discussion event in terms of a conflict rather than the more traditional cooperative framework, and in terms suggesting a broader social influence. Future research should attempt to build on the tentative suggestions made here by examining the nature of broader internal and external influences.

Finally, the kind of research that has been carried out in the present study can be replicated/ extended by practising teachers in their own classrooms. Improvement in teaching and action research are closely bound. As Banatwala (1989: 475) puts it "if teachers take on the mantle of researchers, the classrooms may sooner or later cease to be a *black box*."

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Appendix I

Interview guide for individual and focus group interviews

1. Do you enjoy working in groups?

2. What do you think makes group work interesting or boring?

3. Do some students take a more active role than others in group work? Who are they?

4. Why do you think some students take a more active role than others?

5. Do some students take a less active role than others in group work? Who are they?

6. Why do you think some students take a less active role than others?

7. How do students view those students who take active roles?

8. How do students view those students who take passive roles?

9. How do you think instructors view (treat) students who take active roles? And those who take less active/ passive roles?

10. Do you know of some students who have changed their participation behaviour in the second semester – increasing or decreasing participation? Who are the increasers and who are the decreasers?

Appendix 2

Transcripts of individual interviews

Individual interview 1 -	Kassa
Individual interview 2 -	Azene
Individual interview 3 -	Darge
Individual interview 4 -	Abera
Individual interview 5 -	Adane
Individual interview 6 -	Admas
Individual interview 7 -	Aster
Individual interview 8 -	Tsegaye
Individual interview 9 -	Tesfa
Individual interview 10	Marta
Individual interview 11 -	Saba
Individual interview 12 -	Hailu
Individual interview 13 -	Dawit

Individual interview 1 - Kassa

Int. = Interviewer

Int Do you enjoy working in groups?
Kassa Yes, I enjoy it.
Int Sometimes when you say to yourself that you had a very good group discussion, what situation would that discussion fulfil?
Kassa When all group members organise their ideas and when we discuss over those points, I would enjoy it.
Int You mean when every one speaks his view and participates in the discussion?
Kassa When all members participate and we discuss over those points then the idea would be enriched and diversified and would be very interesting.
Int You mean some students should not talk too much and other should not keep silent?
Kassa Turns should be almost equally distributed. It would be nice if all have equal share.
Int And other points or factors? For example the size of the group?
Kassa The maximum number of students in one group should be five.
Int What number would make it ideal?
Kassa Five is average and that is excellent.
Int How about the sex composition of the group? I mean would it be good it there are more boys, or more girls or you do not mind that?
Kassa Well, actually it would be nice if there are equal number of boys and girls. But if there are more girls the quality of the group discussion may decrease because girls have some cultural domination /imposition.
Int They don't talk much?
Kassa Yes, some of them don't talk much. It would be nice if there are equal boys and girls in group or there should be more boys in the group.
Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group?
Kassa Oh, yes, indeed.
Int Who or which students come to your mind?
Kassa Azene for example, I worked with him in the first semester. He would participate very much. And Adane.
Int How do you view these students who participate very actively?
Kassa I say that is excellent.
Int You see them positively?
Kassa Yes, very much. Because we can get something new or something we don't know from their speech. If the idea is diverse, then we learn something from that. So I admire them.
Int Why do these students speak or participate a lot?
Kassa If we see each and every student, it is not only because they have good language command that they speak a lot, there are some students who like talking and get satisfaction by talking.
Int They feel happy speaking?
Kassa Yes, there are many students who enjoy speaking. I, for instance, although I may not get good grades I just enjoy talking or speaking in English. I get satisfaction. I enjoy taking part in debate.
Int Right. Now again of those students you have worked with in groups, were there some very silent students? Students who you think keep quiet most of the time?
Kassa Yes, for example, Tsegaye.
Int Do you know of some students who used to keep quiet most of the time or just participate only from time to time, but in the second semester increased they participation?

Kassa You mean students who decreased participation?
Int Okay. Tell me about them.
Kassa Girma, Marta, Adane Teshome, - these are among the ones I remember.
Int Why did these students decrease participation, what is your assumption?
Kassa They were not satisfied with their first semester grade. That is the reason, I think.
Int Do you hear them saying this, sometimes?
Kassa Yes, they get angry sometimes and say they would not score anything better than a C, no matter how hard they try. Therefore, they say that there is no reason that they should work hard.
Int How do you see or view yourself, are you among those who increased or decreased participation?
Kassa I think I have been constant. But I feel I have become more and more happy.
Int Some students tell me that you have improved a lot.
Kassa Well, I don't actually recognise that.
Int You don't recognise that. Were there some different situations in the second semester?
Kassa Yes, I mean I was very happy about many of the things I do.
Int Has that helped you increase participation?
Kassa I have liked the very place.
Int You mean Addis Ababa?
Kassa Yes, because I have got used to it.
Int Where did you come from?
Kassa It is quite near, Selale.
Int What is the place called?
Kassa Gebreguracha
Int So you like Addis Ababa?
Kassa Yes, specially in the second semester. I had problem understanding the subjects I study, because it was a new environment, and kind of thing
Int When you were in high school were you working hard?
Kassa Yes, I had to work very hard. I didn't have much time to study because I had to walk very long distance from home to school and in addition to that I had to help my parents when I was back from school. I would follow my teachers attentively when they taught.
Int What do your parents do?
Kassa They are farmers.
Int Do you help them with the field work?
Kassa Yes, indeed.
Int When there are guests, elderly people, or grown-up people around would your parents allow you to talk to the people or would they forbid you to do that?
Kassa No, not at all, I don't have that sort of problem. And well of course I know the limit.
Int Has it got a limit?
Kassa Yes, it has got a limit and I know the limit how much and how I should talk to guests or my elders. But most of the time I respect my parents very much.
Int And do they impose you in any way?
Kassa No, never.
Int Did you have good class participation when you were in high school?
Kassa Yes I used to participate very actively.
Int Would your high school teachers like your participation?
Kassa Yes. I had always liked speaking in class. In our geography classes especially. I would always ask question almost every time we had geography class.
Int Do you like asking questions?
Kassa I ask questions very often. If things are not clear I would always ask for clarification.
Int Why is yours different or do others also ask questions?

Kassa In our maths classes, for example, art students do not attend classes actively. And only I would do my assignment and when it came to discussion only I would participate actively.

Int Why do you think you are different from other students?

Kassa I have had interest in mathematics.

Int Finally, how do you view students who most of the time act as group leaders and students who participate a lot?

Kassa I admire them very much.

Int When you choose someone as a group leader, are you in essence choosing a clever student?

Kassa Yes, in his education?

Int I mean when you work in groups and if you have to choose a group leader, do you choose the clever ones?

Kassa I will also consider students social skill. In fact, I give more wait to the students' social skill.

Int Thank you very much, Kassa.

Individual interview 2 - Azene

Int Do you enjoy working in groups?

Azene Yes, I enjoy it very much.

Int Sometimes when you say to yourself that you had a very good group discussion, what situation would that discussion fulfil?

Azene First of the subject matter should be inviting for discussion. I mean it is the topic. If for example it is interesting because students would like it they would discuss it. There are topics that enhance d and hinder d. Secondly, the students you are working with, if for example you have close relationship with the group members then you can say or talk a lot, but if you are shy and afraid of them then you don't talk.

Int If you like the students you are working with then you discuss or participate well?

Azene Yes.

Int What kind of students do you like to work with?

Azene I like to work with students who are talented, have good conversation skills, are fluent and can speak without any hesitation.

Int You mean students who participate a lot?

Azene Yeah, students who participate a lot.

Int You enjoy working with students who talk a lot?

Azene Yes, in addition the students I want to work with students who are not fault-finders and do not criticise others. Most students from Addis Ababa are, for example, endowed with this quality. They are not fault-finders. They don't criticise others.

Int They don't criticise.

Azene I mean they don't reject your ideas.

Int So you like them.

Azene They don't give veiled criticisms. Say whatever you want to say they try to learn something from that. We can take Tesfa as an example; he is a very matured boy, he is comparable to adults and one can learn a lot from him. So if you discuss an issue with such a student you would feel very happy, you can also develop your intellect.

Int How about students from the regions?

Azene They are problematic in many aspects. They don't have cooperation and coordination. If, for instance, you forward a point for discussion and ask them about they think of the issue, they don't have speaking ability. Secondly, they are not open about many things. For example one day a student from Addis Ababa (who scored 4.0) asked me if I was in the same section as Tesfa and I told him I was then he told me many things – about which department would be good to join, kind of things. Another day I wanted to share the idea to another student from one of the regions but he refused to tell me his grade. Well, I can't snatch him his grade, but you know they are like that, they lack sincerity. Students from Addis Ababa, on the other hand, help each other. If one of them gets something to read then he would pass it on to others to read. I naturally like discussing things openly. For these reason I like discussing things with students from Addis Ababa – they don't rush to point out your mistakes. That is why.

Int You would like to work with students from Addis Ababa because they are sincere enough to work with. Other reasons?

Azene I have also other reasons for preferring to work with students from Addis Ababa: I learn lots of things from them. For instance, they speak English very well and that may initiate me to work hard so that I can also speak like they do. The fact that they read fictions and other writings may also encourage me to read a lot. They listen to radio broadcasts in English. So working with these students would help me to develop my reading speaking and listening skills.

Int How about the sex composition of your group members? Do you prefer to work with boys, or with girls, or in mixed sex groups, or do you say you would not mind whatever the sex composition?

Azene Well, you know there are certain things that we are told (students from the regions) about girls from Addis Ababa. Some people tell us that these girls would approach us and you know make us forget about our studies. So there is most of the time some caution about our approaches. But as far I am concerned, I would talk to them even when I meet them outside class. In fact I would raise some political issues and discuss with them.

Int With the girls?

Azene Yes, for example one day we had a group discussion task on gender issues, then I asked Marta some questions about the effects of using Prudence (birth control pills). I pointed out to her the effects, on the uterus and the face, of the pills. And you know we had an open and good discussion.

Int You discuss with them openly on different issues.

Azene Yes, I like talking to them, but the girls in our section are very few in number.

Int Regarding the number of students in one group, what is an ideal size of a group if there is to be a good group discussion? How many students in one group?

Azene Most of the time we work in a group of five. And I think that is a very good size because all of us can have turns an time is important because we are usually given limited time and within that time limit every one has to say something. So five is good, more than five it is not good.

Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group?

Azene Yes, indeed.

Int Can you mention them in name for me?

Azene Definitely. For example, Tesfa participates a lot and he is very critical about the things he says. I always listen to him very attentively because in addition to his good language command, he knows well about international issues because he has read a lot. There are some girls as well, Marta for example.

Int Does Marta participate well?

Azene Yes, very well, and she is clever as well. And Saba, also Elleni.

Int You mean these students participate very well?

Azene Yes, and also they have the interest to learn.

Int Why do these students participate or talk a lot? What is your assumption?

Azene To be honest, they participate very well. To your surprise, for example, well I could have shown you my high school result in English, I had always never less than 95. You know my brother graduated from this university and he would sometimes ask me how I am doing at university. When I tell him that I would like to join the Department of English, you know what he said, he said that that would be difficult for me. When I asked him why he told me that I am very good only at the grammar and not the spoken language. He would tell me that I should have good ability in spoken language to be successful in that department. You know, such orientations make us lose hope right from the beginning. So we tend to devote most of our time studying other subjects – we don't use our time to read fictions with the intention of improving our English. So those students from Addis Ababa are good at writing clearly , I can also write, but the motivation these students have is really exceptional. Secondly, these students have hopes. Some of them want to join the Department of Foreign Languages because they feel that they would score good grades and hope that they would be, one day, make their dreams come true. So because they think that they would get good grade if they worked hard, they are full of hopes. That is why I think.

Int How do you view these students, I mean those students who participate very actively, do you view them positively or negatively?

Azene Well, this depends on different factors. If, for example, the instructor always follows and accepts whatever they, then that might create some kind of conflict within other students. You know you start to feel inferior and start to say "oh these students kind of thing". But the attitude you have towards these students might change later. For example, in the first semester you know what we were told and what we saw in class really matched- we were told that students from Addis Ababa would dominate the class and that was what we saw. Then you know you start to feel useless because others speak fluently and dominate most of the discussion in class. Then you start to think that you would be dismissed- the main thing students fear here is academic dismissal. So other things come when you have the confidence and convince yourself that you would not be dismissed. Many students feel that those students who speak very well would score top grades in all subjects and path the way for others' dismissal- that is one source of fear. In the second semester, however, you come to know the facts, and start to build your confidence. Then you start to forget your negative views about those students and start greeting and talking to them about other issues as well.

Int So you start to see them positively?

Azene Well, I see them positively.

Int You would see them negatively in the first semester?

Azene Yes, not as human beings but because you start to link things with grades. The fear of dismissal. You know because many students are dismissed from Addis Ababa University, life if very hard.

Int The other thing I would like to ask you is about silent students. Have you come across some students who would keep quiet most of the time in group discussion?

Azene Yes.

Int Can you mention some names?

Azene Zeru, he keeps quiet most of the time. The reason is like I said before intellect. There is a problem of producing ideas. Some students can't be clever in all areas- those who are very clever at mathematics could be weak in English. I was not doing well in maths in high school, but in grade 11, I was given a prize because I stood first- my teacher then was Ato Mulat. Another good example for this is Belay in our section. He is very silent in English class, but he is very good at mathematics.

Int Is that Tsegaye?

Azene Yes. He scored good grades in all other subjects, but he would always tell us to pray for him that he would not be given an "F" in English. And he would tell me that I would get good grade in English. Well, you know he had his own inclinations. Some students like English others prefer mathematics. Most of the students from Addis Ababa like English. But students from the regions don't speak in English, even in English class they speak in Amharic. Therefore because they don't have the ability they keep quiet and they feel that they are dominated. They worry most of the time, and that is why they keep quiet.

Int So how do you view silent students, very silent students?

Azene Well, like I said these students keep quiet because they feel that they don't have the ability and that is why they are shy and silent. Otherwise you know everyone wants to participate.

Int How about language ability

Azene It is because they are poor in the language. They tend to focus on other subjects. If you do calculations most of the time then you learn it; once you learn certain steps then it is a matter only of applying them. Unlike mathematics English is very difficult. I think it is not some thing you can develop within a very short period of time. The same is true with language

Int Right. Now again of those students you have worked with in groups, were there some students who used to participate actively but decreased participation in the second semester?

Azene It could be I myself.

Int Have you decreased participation? Can you be a good example?

Azene Yes, well, I have told you may be I had also told you my problem in the first semester. I have keen interest in the subject, but I just could not improve my writing. Haven't I done well on the grammar part in our final examination?

Int We can see that one later if you like.

Azene I do well on the grammar. I once got low mark in my writing test. I used to believe that I write well, but I failed in essay writing. So I would participate in group discussion, I mean I have the interest, but when it came to essay writing, I don't know why I get low marks. So I have the interest but the reason why I decreased could be because first of all I had heart failure – I am getting better now. The other reason is that --- yes I had financial problem and ---

Int So one reason for your decreasing in participation is because you were not feeling well, and also because you could not score good grade as you get less mark on the writing part of the exam, although you are good at speaking, so kind of losing hope?

Azene No, I just wanted to assure you that I have had the interest.

Int So what is the main reason for your decrease?

Azene I decreased participation because I had health problem, but there are other students who decreased because of confusion and that sort of things.

Int Confusion?

Azene Yes

Int What does that mean?

Azene For example, they get confused when they are asked some question. I ask my friend, Berihun, why he does not participate.

Int The question is about students who would participate well in the first semester and decreased participation in the second semester. So are you saying that he also decreased participation?

Azene Yes, when I asked him why he decreased participation, he would tell me that he would get confused when the teacher asked him questions when he did not expect it.

Int You mean in group work when you work in groups of four or five?

Azene Well, Girma has decreased.

Int Has Girma decreased?

Azene Yes, he has decreased but I don't know why he has decreased.

Int Do you know of other students who have decreased participation?

Azene Dawit

Int What is their reason for decreasing participation? What is your assumption?

Azene There could be many reasons. For example many students want to work hard but they get low grades. They may do well in the mid-semester examination and when they expect good grade, they may score low mark in the final examination and end up getting low grade. Then they start to lose hope and feel hopeless. On the other hand, there were some students who scored high grades we never expected them to get. For instance there are some students in our class who tell us that they got B's. Such things affect our moral. We feel it.

Int Who are these students?

Azene Well, for instance Desta Negasa got low mark in the mid-semester examination. We don't know his ability but when we externally judge his performance, he does not deserve a Int.

Int He got a Int?

Azene Yeah, he told me that he got a Int. When we see such things you know we start to decrease participation and things like that. ---

Int Grade is a big factor?

Azene Yes, grade has got big influence. We start to say that we are toiling for nothing. We lose hope. Secondly, when we see that we have scored good grades in other subjects, then we start to say that that is our area.

Int So you would come to the conclusion that you are better at other subjects, and you start to concentrate on other subjects?

Azene Yes, we tend to concentrate on other subjects and devote most of our time studying them.

Int Do you know of some students who used to keep quiet most of the time or just participate only from time to time, but in the second semester increased their participation?

Azene Now, for instance Darge Tesfaye. I never saw him talking in the first semester, but in the second semester he participates very well. In fact, when one day when I tried to coordinate the group discussion, he dominated me and I had to leave the task of coordinating for him. Then he would lead the group. Another student who has increased participation in the second semester is Eshetu. He was very silent in the first semester.

Int Other students who have increased participation?

Azene Also Chane

Int Is that Chane Tadesse?

Azene Yes, he was silent in the first semester but now he talks. Another student who has increased participation is Yodit. She participates quite well, now.

Int How about Kassa?

Azene He is the same- constant. In fact, I think he has decreased. He was active in the first semester like I was.

Int How do you view group leaders?

Azene You mean how do they lead groups? Well, it depends on the interest students have. When we are given a group discussion task I immediately start raising the issue then others would follow me.

Int So you have a positive attitude towards group leaders.

Azene Yes.

Int Azene Baye, thank you very much.

Individual interview 3 - Darge

Int Do you enjoy working in groups?

Darge Yes.

Int Working in groups?

Darge Yes, particularly in class when the task involves some kind of debate, I like that very much

Int How about when you are working in groups of four or five?

Darge I like group work and every thing that involves discussion

Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group? Have you come across such students?

Darge There are. We discuss. And there are some students who give their opinions based on the topic given. In our class, particularly, well I don't know, I have not seen other classes, but it is encouraging for students. Students like group discussion and panel discussion very much because they have got used to the instructor, and all of us learn with interest. I like it very much.

Int Do you have someone in mind who participates more actively when you work in groups of four or five? I mean who comes to your mind first?

Darge When we work four or five together I think Eshetu participates more actively.

Int Eshetu participates well?

Darge Yes, even if he does not say or speak much, the ideas he forwards or his suggestions are usually very tangible. Adane also participates well.

Int How about silent students? Have you come across silent students?

Darge Yes, among those I have worked with, yeah

Int Who do you think is silent most of the time?

Darge I don't know them by name but I remember some students who keep silent when the rest of us discuss, they speak rarely.

Int Why do you think these students keep silent?

Darge Well, this could be a common problem. All of us may have this problem. Sometimes the task or the topic itself may not be very clear. It could be shyness or could be problem of explanation.

Int What does explanation mean?

Darge I mean some students may understand the question but they suspect they may not have the language to express their views. We participate not because we feel we know the language well, but it is out of courage. Some of us try to improve our speaking and listening abilities by participating actively while others keep quiet because they are shy.

Int How do you view those students who keep quiet most of the time? Do you see them positively or negatively?

Darge As far as l am concerned, I don't see it positively. Wherever it may be silence is not a good thing. A student should participate as much as he can, like the rest of his group members. There could be some language related problems, fear of making mistakes. It doesn't mean that those who participate well are not making mistakes. All of them should participate as much as they can. In our FLEn class, especially, no one would restrict you from saying whatever you want simply because you have made mistakes. So every one should take this chance to participate and improve his language. If students want to speak but not actually say things out and instead keep quiet out of shyness, they become more and more silent and shy. This is the time students can make improvements, if they are not making improvements now, then they are not going to have other chances. Therefore, it would be better if silent students work harder to avoid shyness and fear and solve their problems.

Int How about those students who participate actively, how do you view them?

Darge I like them.

Int Do you remember of students who used to participate actively in the first semester but decreased in the second semester?

Darge Yes, for example on the video we saw yesterday, well of course we work in groups- and most of the time group members are the same. So it could be difficult to guess but based on the video I can say Hailu would participate very actively in different groups. On the video, I don't see him very frequently in the second semester. I know that he participates very well. His decrease in participation in the second semester is not because he has become indolent or lazy, it could be because he was not *recorded.*

Int He has decreased participation?

Darge Yes, that is what I feel

Int Do you know of some students who used to keep quiet most of the time or just participate only from time to time, but in the second semester increased their participation?

Darge There is a student, Debebe., who in the first semester used to be very shy in group discussion. In the second semester he raised his hand to voluntarily speak and he participated in one of the debates. You know it is quite a progress to voluntarily take part in a debate.

Int Who else has increased participation?

Darge I think Kassa has increased a lot in the second semester. Kassa has increased. Others, most of them who have participated actively in the first semester are still participating well.

Int Why have some students increased participation in the second semester? What is your assumption?

Darge My assumption is that these students had the feeling or the interest right from the beginning and the process I mean because they have managed to gradually reduce their fear then they increase their participation.

Int Why have they increased, your assumption is

Darge Their interest was inspired or instigated and they also became used to the way they do things in class and have known the students better. The other reason could be that students see or envy those who speak very well, and ask themselves "why should I not speak like those students, they are speaking not because they are more knowledgeable, but because they have the courage, why should I then not try?". These kind of feeling. I have the interest, for example to take part in group discussion and debates. I am very interested on such things we do in class.

Int Sorry, I'll ask you about your experience after a while, tell me now if you have anything to say about others.

Darge Well, they have the interest and when they see others participating actively, they sort of envy them. Then they try to overcome their problems by getting rid of their fear. That could be the reason, I think.

Int You remember kind of questionnaire you filled in for me some three days ago. In one of the questions that asked about students who have increased participation, many students agreed that you are among those who have increased participation. Why could it be that you have increased participation?

Darge As far as I am concerned, like I told you, I have my own feeling. I try to speak in English. We never had this kind of opportunity in lower grades, no never. If we had the opportunity right from high school we would not have problem speaking now. When I came here and knew that we had the opportunity to speak in English, discussing in groups- I feel very happy. I particularly like it when we first discuss in groups and later have a kind of debate. In fact, I prefer to have a debate where we can stand up in front of our classmates and talk. There, by the blackboard. Well, right from the beginning of the first semester I always do my assignment. I also try to make my relation with my instructors as smooth as I can. So if I come prepared to class, doing all my

assignments, I can always raise my hand and speak and answer questions as far as my ability allows me. In fact I prefer to take part in whole class debate activities. So I have the interest to participate in discussions in class. Well, I may be incorrect sometimes but I keep on speaking with courage, out of the interest I have.

Int You have shown a marked improvement or progress in participation in the second semester.

Darge I try my best in the second semester, but I did not take part in any of the debates

Int I mean when you work in groups, group of four or five students

Darge Yes, I speak out my feelings, I participate.

Int Why could it be that you have increased in the second semester?

Darge Well, when we discuss in groups different students raise different ideas, we collect different ideas. Then afterwards I like to round up our discussion, I give kind of summary or conclusion of our discussion – in a way I feel it should be put. That could be the reason.

Int You mean your interest in group discussion has increased

Darge My interest has increased. Interest ---

Int Okay, first your interest has increased. What other reasons do you have?

Darge Out of the interest I have to speak, I participate most of the time- this is also interest. The main point is that I have the interest to speak. When we discuss over the given issue when sometimes I find others' ideas not very convincing or satisfactory, I would then say "how about seeing it from this perspective or that angle kind of thing. If others are convinced then they may take my ideas or they may give some comments. That is why I give suggestions on a given topic. What matters most is I think sharing views, giving suggestions and opinions.

Int Well, the reason why you have increased participation in the second semester is-

Darge In the first semester we had only one debate session

Int Our discussion now is about small group work, where you work in groups of four or five

Darge There was more group discussion in the second semester, and I would always participate by answering the questions in the tasks and giving my opinions.

Int Could it be because you have worked in one group with certain students for quite some time?

Darge I have worked with many students. In fact in the second semester I sat over there, then I changed to that corner, and towards the end over there near the door with Adane and others.

Int They also told me that you have increased participation. That is actually why I wanted to talk to you. To know what factors contributed to your increase in your participation. Many students told me that you, Kassa and Yodit have increased participation.

Darge Well, like I told you, the main factor is interest. It is the interest I have had for the subject. When I take part in group discussion, I gradually improve, you know, getting rid of my weaknesses specially in the second semester. We have also got used to know each other. We have also adapted ourselves to the way the course is taught. In addition to that I have had the interest right from the beginning. The amount of time given for group discussion has also increased in the second semester. That may also have some effect on the increase on participation. All these things added to the interest and the enthusiasm we have had to improve our English have helped us to increase our participation. That is why I have increased participation.

Int Has it got any thing to do with grade, I mean the desire to improve grade?

Darge To improve grade- what has our participation got to do with grade? We participate to improve our English, to know how others react to our ideas. Also to be able to get rid of fear and give detailed information on a particular topic. To be efficient in our speaking skill, and to go side by side with the time. That is why I have increased participation, as well.

Individual interview 4 - Abera

Int Do you enjoy working in groups in College English classes?
Abera Yes.
Int You like it.
Abera Yes.
Int What are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion? Sometimes when you say to yourself that you had a very good group discussion, what situation would that discussion fulfil?
Abera When we ask questions in the group, I like it when some students support your view and others criticise it and when we have discussions to resolve anomalies, I support that.
Int You enjoy it that way?
Abera Yes.
Int You mean when everyone takes part in the discussion?
Abera Yes, I like it when everyone participates.
Int What sort of students do like to work with, in group discussion?
Abera With boys and girls.
Int You have no problem discussing with both?
Abera I have no problems.
Int What about their language ability? Do you prefer to work with those who speak very well, or have average command, or poor English language command.
Abera I prefer to work with those who have average command, like myself.
Int You prefer if they have the same or similar proficiency as you?
Abera Well, not actually just like me but even better than me, because there are lots of things I learn from them.
Int So your preference is to work with those students who have better language command than you, not with those who speak it less than you do?
Abera Yes.
Int Do you have any preferences as far as students coming from the regions and students from Addis Ababa are concerned?
Abera No.
Int You don't mind?
Abera Yes.
Int Do some students take a more active role or talk more than others in group discussion?
Abera Yes, some of them talk a lot, but there are some who decreased in the second semester.
Int First, can you tell me about those students who you think talk a lot? Are there some?
Abera Yes.
Int Among those students you have worked with many times, can you mention some names or students that come to your mind, first?
Abera Marta, the girl, Girma, Kassa
Int Others?
Abera Adane, sometimes and Darge. They are clever.
Int How about the other group you have worked with?
Abera Oh yes, they are all clever.
Int Who comes to your mind first?
Abera Tesfa speaks a lot.
Int He talks a lot?
Abera Yes, he has got ideas, and Kidney as well.
Int Does Kidney as well talk a lot?
Abera Yes. And Saba as well.
Int Who is the most silent student in that group?
Abera It is I myself. And probably relatively speaking Yodit

Int Yodit?
Abera Yes.
Int Who is the most silent?
Abera It is I.
Int And the most talkative?
Abera That is Tesfa.
Int Why does Tesfa talk a lot, what is your assumption?
Abera Well, it could be his background- the school he has come form. They had also other opportunities like watching and listening to video cassettes and also they can attend summer classes. Such things may help them improve their language ability and know a lot about things- more than we do.
Int How do you view him and other students who talk a lot? Positively, or negatively?
Abera Well, I like him
Int You like him.
Abera Yes, I would be happy if I could speak like him. In fact my effort is to speak as well as he does.
Int How do you view silent students?
Abera Well, I am silent myself. That could be because of number one shyness, and secondly it could be because we come from the regions and at high school level when we were taught English, the nature of the course was not participatory. The very idea of group discussion is something we have stated here at university. That was something new for me. When we were at high school, our main aim was to pass the ESLCE and join university. So when we see their background they try hard, but progress would not come that easily. All students would be happy to speak well, but background is really decisive.
Int You said you are among the quiet?
Abera Yes
Int Why do you keep silent?
Abera Well, I intend to say something but then I feel I make mistakes
Int Is that at the level of language or idea?
Abera I have ideas, my problem is with the language. Others speak out the very thing I had thought of speaking. When you see the background I have come from, I did not give attention to the English course because our focus was on subjects that involve a lot of calculation. And here at university the textbook quite different and it does not encourage you to read much.
Int Different from the high school?
Abera Yes, it is quite different from the one we used to have at high school level. In fact, I sometimes feel that I have forgotten most of the things I learnt at high school. There is almost nothing I have learnt here at university, I can say. We could have benefited from his kind of teaching if had started from lower grades. Now, in the new policy, students take it as of grade 8. I have seen the textbook prepared for grade 8 and I think it is useful. The grammar and vocabulary we learned would appear in the ESLCE and group discussion was not practised there, at high school level. So I think it is more difficult here. Besides it is only those students from Addis Ababa who get good grades, most of the time. Most of the students from the regions worry about their English course, because considering the background we had and the way the course is offered here I can say it is beyond our level.
Int Is it difficult?
Abera Yes, it is difficult. They idea of working in groups is good, actually, but some of us had no experience in the method.
Int Is that your problem as well?
Abera That is my problem.
Int Any other thing you consider as a problem?

Abera The other main problem is my spoken English, I don't really know how to improve it.

Int Do you mean your English language speaking ability?

Abera Yes, I want to develop that. Actually I was planning to attend summer language courses. I also had thought of talking to you about what I should do in order to improve my English.

Int Well, we can arrange some time for that and discuss it if you like.

Abera That is my plan. And I think this is my main problem. Others courses are okay. What brings the main difference among students is this course- English. As far as other subjects are concerned, students from the regions perform no less than students from Addis Ababa. What makes the difference is College English- as far as my case (in fact the majority of the students) is concerned, I think.

Int How do you view those students who talk a lot?

Abera I like them.

Int You like them.

Abera Yes.

Int How about silent students?

Abera Well, you know these students keep quiet because of their language ability, otherwise these students would not have kept quiet. And that is as a result of their background. In addition to that they feel that no matter how hard they try they would not bring any change in their grade. Besides, because many students (including myself) tend to focus on other courses it is only when we are about to come to our English class that we remember our assignments.

Int Just because you feel it can not be any better than a C.

Abera Yes, that is how they feel, and it is actually quite difficult here.

Int Do you know of some students who used to keep quiet most of the time or just participate only from time to time, but in the second semester increased they participation?

Abera I am not sure, but I know of students who decreased participation.

Int Hasn't anyone increased participation?

Abera I think students in our class participate very well, generally speaking.

Int Can you think of some students who showed significant increase in the second semester?

Abera Eshetu

Int Has he increased?

Abera Yes, and Kassa.

Int Why did they increase, what is your assumption?

Abera Well, it is not a matter of increasing, as I see it. It is because they have the courage to speak and they come prepared to class and they feel that they can speak and convince others. It is not just because they want to score good grades. Those who keep silent (including myself) as well are not keeping quiet because they have lost hope about their grade, as I see it. You know we try to answer questions and participate actively, but we then feel that what we are suggesting would be unconvincing and you know we feel it. That could be the reason otherwise, …

Int Do you know of students who have decreased participation?

Abera No, I don't know of students who have decreased participation.

Int How do you choose group leaders?

Abera When we choose a group leader the first thing we see is the student's speaking ability. For example when we work in a group of let's say four or five, we choose the one who is the best in his spoken English ability.

Int How do you see yourself as a group leader?

Abera I don't know, I have always degraded myself when it comes to language. Whatever should I do to improve it, that is my constant worry. I mean I score good grades in other

subjects. So my plan is now to improve my English. One problem here at university is that you can't afford giving much time to study vocabulary and grammar, because there is a lot of competition among students. So we tend to give more time to studying other subjects. I have no problem with other subjects, as long as I study them.

Int We have finished our discussion. Thank you very much, Abera.

Individual interview 5 - Adane

Int Do you like working in groups in English classes?
Adane I prefer to work on my own.
Int You prefer to work on your own.
Adane Yes.
Int You prefer individual work to group work
Adane When we work in groups what somebody knows others may not know, therefore there could be information sharing; but students have varied characters and interests and I prefer to work by myself.
Int Do you remember of students who used to participate actively in the first semester but decreased in the second semester? Or vice versa- students who used to be some what quiet or not very active but later increased their participation?
Adane Darge and Kassa Detti, they have participated very well.
Int You mean in the second semester?
Adane Yes
Int Why do you think this students have increased participation? What is your assumption?
Adane Well, there is a common belief among many students that if one performs well in the speaking activities or if one participates well then one would get good grades. So it could be to get a good grade that these students are participating actively.
Int So it has got a lot to do with mark or grade?
Adane Yes, they attach it to grade
Int of How about students who used to participate actively in the first semester but decreased in the second semester? Do you remember such students?
Adane I don't.
Int You know what I mean, I mean students who would participate actively or take active parts in group discussion in the first semester but later in the second semester tended to participate less-
Adane I can not think of anyone.
Int There was a kind of questionnaire you filled in for me some days ago, remember that? That was on the same day you took personality test.
Adane Yes
Int The questionnaire has given me some rough idea about
Adane Oh, yes. You asked us to give you names of three students sort of thing
Int Did you write then?
Adane I did.
Int Who would you include in this group?
Adane Silent students?
Int I mean students slightly decreased participation, ------- or would you like me to tell, based on the results of the questionnaire?
Adane Okay
Int Azene, Marta, Elleni, Adane (yourself) and Desta are among the students in the group. You are also among the students in this category.
Adane Well, I decreased participation because the grade I got in the first semester made me lose hope.
Int You lost hope?
Adane Yeah, you know I got a C which I never expected. I had good potential in English when I was in high school and I thought I would get good grade here as well. Unfortunately, I haven't. I don't know ---
Int You expected a minimum of B?
Adane Yes, at least a B.
Int You had an A grade in mind and – if not an A

Adane Yeah, no I didn't expect an A because I knew I did not work very well in the final examination, but I hoped to get a B.

Int And when you got a C, that discouraged you?

Adane Well, in fact some students who were discouraged like I was would tell me that we even don't need to attend class regularly if we get only a C after a lot of hard work. I was not totally discouraged and I kept on attending classes and also participating.

Int Who are the students who would ask you not to attend classes?

Adane No, no.

Int This has got nothing to do with your grades, every thing has now passed and your grade has already been recorded. That is why I wanted to interview you after we have finished everything.

Adane No, teacher. I would not like to tell you that.

Int Okay, have those students who would ask you to join them to sometimes forfeit classes decreased participation?

Adane Yes, they decreased participation.

Int They did not participate very actively because they were disappointed by the grade they got. Could there be other reasons?

Adane Well, most of the students from the regions would attach it the grades they got. I have close relation with some of the students, and they tell me that they should not bother much if they are to get a C grade, they would say that they could get a C without any problem, without any need to work hard. That is the main reason, I think.

Int So, it has mostly got to do with grade?

Adane Yeah, what is also disappointing is the mark given to the speaking and writing sections. Many students say that they get only six or seven out of ten.

Int How about other students, I mean were there some other students who scored B's?

Adane Yeah, there were some students who got a B, like Erku, and Negasa. To be honest these students did not deserve a Int. Both of them cheated in the final examination; they copied everything from Tesfa. Honestly speaking, many students got B's because they copied answers from Tesfa. You would have seen it yourself, if you had invigilated us. Only Tesfa should have been given an A. If others were to work by themselves, they would be lost or precipitated.

Int Do you think this was repeated in the second semester?

Adane No, they did not sit near Tesfa. They sat far away from him.

Int What other reasons would you have for decreasing participation? I mean from your point of view?

Adane Well, when we sometimes work in groups some students want others only to listen. And you would ask us to put group members in ascending or descending order according to participation. Well, then some students dominate the group. I don't know I prefer to work by myself. Most students from the regions don't like working in groups because they come from environments where ranking is regarded important and there is a very tough competition among students. Most of them don't like each other because of the competition they had when they were in high school.

Int Which place do you come from?

Adane From West Shoa- Ghedo. My parents actually live near Fincha.

Int How is it like in Ghedo? I mean do teachers encourage or motivate students to participate or speak in English?

Adane Yes, very much. Our English teacher for example would very much like us to speak. He taught us starting from grade ten right through grade twelve. He is very –

Int Clever?

Adane He is very clever.

Int He encourages students?

Adane Yeah, there were other teachers as well, they would not get along with students. But he was very nice.

Individual interview 6 - Admas

Int Do you enjoy working in groups?
Admas It is good.
Int Would you rather work in groups only sometimes?
Admas Working in groups is not bad.
Int Do you like it?
Admas Well, I prefer to work in groups in stead of alone. (hesitating)
Int Which one do you like most: working alone, or working in pairs or working in a larger group?
Admas Working in a larger group – but with students I am close to, my friends.
Int What are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion? What makes group work interesting? In your view?
Admas Good group discussion for me is a discussion where all members contribute their share.
Int When all students participate?
Admas Yes, when all of them participate.
Int And when you say to yourself that you have had a good group discussion, an interesting one, what conditions would make that?
Admas When all students or group members know something about the topic and when one adds onto what others have said and lots of ideas would be entertained.
Int When all of them take part in the discussion, you mean?
Admas It would be interesting when all of them come up with different ideas, and build upon what others have said.
Int What are the situations that should be fulfilled in order to have a good group discussion, from your experience in the first and second semester?
Admas First of all, friends- there are close friends and friends you are not very close to.
Int Do you like it when you work with close friends?
Admas Yes, if we work with close friends then students would not be that shy, or fear each other. It is good if students are not shy in group discussion.
Int There are many students from Gojam.
Admas Yes
Int Do you prefer to work with these students?
Admas Not necessarily, there are other students who are close to me as classmates.
Int Do you prefer to work with students from the regions? Or students from Addis Ababa?
Admas Not necessarily that way, you know, there are some students who just become friends at the beginning of classes in the first semester.
Int Would that be with students from Addis Ababa or students from the regions?
Admas Most of the time students from the regions befriend students from the regions and students from Addis Ababa befriend students from Addis Ababa. For some of them friendship might have started when they were in high school.
Int So it would be good if group members are friends? Would you prefer to discuss with friends?
Admas Friends, meaning students I know better it could be because we are in the same or nearby dormitories.
Int What is your preference as far as the language ability of your group members is concerned?
Admas In English?
Int Yes, I mean their ability in spoken English?
Admas Yes, I would be very happy if all of them speak very well.
Int Would you be happy if they speak better than you do?

Admas That would be better. I mean when we discuss about something, if they use difficult words I can ask them and when they define the words for me I can get some additional knowledge. It would be better if they speak better English than I do.

Int How about the sex composition of your group members?

Admas I don't like to work with girls, there are some boys who are close to them. Who approach girls.

Int You prefer to work with boys?

Admas Yes.

Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group?

Admas Dawit, I have worked with him and he speaks a lot.

Int Is that Dawit?

Admas Yes.

Int Others?

Admas No, others are not that excelling.

Int Their level of participation is almost similar.

Admas Yes.

Int If there are some clever

Admas Some of them may have ideas but because they don't have the language to express their ideas in English, either they try to use Amharic or they keep quiet, just because they are not good at spoken English.

Int Now, students like Dawit who participate very actively in group discussion,

Admas You mean from our group?

Int Okay, from your group. How do you see those students who talk a lot? Do you see them positively or negatively?

Admas I see them positively.

Int You don't take them for talkative or chatterbox?

Admas I don't mean those students who talk too much and take others' silence for ignorance. I mean those students who express their ideas clearly and in detail.

Int Do students who talk a lot mean to dominate others or do they talk out of the need for participation?

Admas I think they talk a lot because they want to participate.

Int Haven't you come across students who overdo it ?

Admas You mean?

Int I mean, those students who tend to take others' silence for ignorance?

Admas No, most of them talk out of their interest to express their own ideas.

Int Right. Now again of those students you have worked with in groups, were there some very silent students? Students who you think keep quiet most of the time?

Admas Yes, there are.

Int Can you tell me by name?

Admas For instance, I myself. I keep quiet most of the time.

Int Are you silent?

Admas Yes, I think I am silent. That is the way I have got used to. Although I may know the answer I prefer to keep quiet.

Int Why do you prefer to keep silent?

Admas Well, some students may have the habit of answering questions starting right from lower grades, others keep quiet even if they know the answer.

Int And in your case?

Admas Well, it is because I don't have the experience – of speaking in English.

Int You don't have the habit of speaking in English in class?

Admas I use Amharic for discussion.

Int Do you discuss things openly with your family members?

Admas No, we don't use English.

Int I mean in Amharic. You know when there are some elderly people and guests around?
Admas We can speak but with a limit.
Int Are you not allowed to take part in a discussion where full-grown or elderly people are present?
Admas No, no problem as such.
Int What was the situation in high school?
Admas I think there was some problem there. There are some students who want to answer whatever kind of questions asked in class – very simple and challenging questions. It could be, I don't know, shyness or lack of experience
Int Were you not used to participating in class discussion in high school?
Admas I was not.
Int Would you rather keep quiet most of the time?
Admas I keep quiet.
Int Why do you think that was?
Admas If it is in English, I tend to be shy.
Int You would be shy if it is in English?
Admas Yes, if there is in case something I don't know and if I have to stop in the middle of my speech. Even when we are asked simple questions in biology, I would keep quiet may be because I had not developed the experience.
Int You would not speak even then?
Admas Well, yes. I tend to prefer silence because I sometimes feel that all the students know the answer.
Int So you think silence would be better.
Admas I participate very rarely, probably.
Int What is the attitude of students towards very silent students? I mean in the high school you have come from how are silent students viewed?
Admas Some teachers ask students who raise their hands, others try to participate all by asking different students to answer questions
Int What is the attitude towards silent students? One is clever although one keeps silent. Or, one is silent because one is – kind of thing?
Admas Well, teachers see students' results first. If a student has good results and keeps quiet some teachers ask them to answer questions. Others ask just randomly.
Int Do you consider yourself to be silent in College English classes?
Admas Yes.
Int You've said it is because you are shy and had no experience.
Admas I mean there is no such a thing as group work at high school level.
Int Who are you afraid of when you work in small groups of four or five?
Admas It is not the group members, the problem comes when I try to report my answers to the group
Int Do you think it is the problem of language?
Admas Generally speaking it is the language problem and the experience and, well, you know ----
Int Is shyness another factor?
Admas Yes
Int You said there are some students in your class who talk a lot, right?
Admas Yes, Tesfa for example.
Int And another student who talks a lot?
Admas Dawit from our section
Int What is your view about or attitude towards these students? Do you view them positively or negatively?
Admas Well, I see them positively, because they are trying to clearly present what they know to the group. And that is very good.
Int Do you sometimes envy them?

Admas Yes.

Int Do you most of the time wish to be like them?

Admas Yes, I particularly wish I could speak English well.

Int Do you know of students who used to participate well in the first semester but decreased in the second semester?

Admas I don't remember one.

Int Among the students you have worked with in groups, do you know of students who used to keep quiet most of the time or participate only from time to time, but later in the second semester clearly increased their participation?

Admas No.

Int Or, students who used to participate quite actively and later decreased their participation in the second semester?

Admas Azene used to participate actively, but I think he has somewhat cooled down in the second semester.

Int Why do they cool down, what is your own assumption?

Admas May be it is related to their grade.

Int Could that be the case?

Admas Some students relate class participation with grade, and probably, ---

Int That is your assumption. Okay, there are sometimes group leaders when you work in groups

Admas Yes

Int How do you view them?

Admas You mean those who report the results of our discussion to the rest of the class?

Int It could be those who report or those who lead the group discussion itself. If you were to choose a group leader how would you choose them?

Admas I would choose those who have good speaking ability and see or view or treat other students on equal basis.

Int So if you choose someone as a group leader you think that student should be good.

Admas Yes

Int It could be his language or it could be the way he treats his group members

Admas Yes

Int Okay, Admas, thank you very much.

Int Any other thing you would like to comment on?

Admas As far as grade is concerned, there are some students who would try to convince us that we would score but a C, so they say it is better to spend more time on other courses, and some students also accept this view.

Int So, students would say why toil if it is going to be a C?

Admas Yes.

Individual interview 7 - Aster

Int Do you enjoy working in groups in your English classes?

Aster Well, I have to first get acquainted with the students, other wise I don't enjoy it.

Int You mean first time you meet students?

Aster Yes, once I become accustomed to the situation then I have no problems.

Int What are the situations that should be fulfilled for a group discussion to be interesting?

Aster A group discussion would be interesting when students who are shy work with students they know and get along with very well, because they can speak without any feeling of shyness. But if they are simply put randomly, I think students from Addis Ababa and students from the regions do not get very well along with each other, they fear each other, and as a result they may not have a good discussion.

Int Are you suggesting that it would be better if groups are formed on friendship basis?

Aster Yes, if they form groups in a way they like they would participate without any inhibition, or fear. On the other hand, if they don't know each other well, they may feel that what the ideas they bring forward in the discussion would be rejected. Well, there could be lots of criticisms so students to prefer to keep silent

Int Do some students participate more actively than others in the group discussion activities you have had since the first semester?

Aster Yes.

Int Who comes to your mind first?

Aster Tesfa and Dawit.

Int Why do you think these students take a more active role than others?

Aster Well, it is because they have the courage and the ability. Specially because they have the courage and they are not fearful others in the group.

Int Why do other students keep silent most of the time?

Aster They keep quiet most of the time because they are told that good grades are not given in English, and they lose hope and just don't see why they should work hard. That is as far as I know about many students, and also I have seen it, heard students saying it. Some students have good language ability, but since it is difficult to score good grade in English, they just become careless. In addition to that, some students may not be courageous enough to speak in the presence of others, specially towards the beginning of the year when most of the students are new to them.

Int How do you view students who don't talk or keep silent most of the time? Positively or negatively?

Aster In my opinion, I think silent students are clever students. Because most of the students from AA speak or talk a lot.

Int They talk.

Aster Yes, but if you see students from the regions who keep silent most of the time, they score high grades in other subjects. In fact those who talk a lot do not have good grades in other subjects. It is a common knowledge among students that those who talk a lot are good at but English. So I view silent students as clever. On the other hand, I feel sorry for them because they could have shown good progress if they were to participate actively.

Int How about those who participate a lot, those who speak a lot, how do you view them?

Aster I have also a positive attitude towards them. And I admire them. In fact I envy them a lot for presenting their ideas clearly, because I can not.

Int Do you know of students who used to be silent in the first semester and later in the second semester have increased their participation?

Aster I don't remember students who have increased.

Int How about students who have decreased participation?

Aster Marta and Azene

Int Why do you think these students have decreased participation?

Aster First of all, you know most students work hard to get good grades. So when they see that they have not got the grades they were expecting then they lose hope and would feel that their participation would not bring them anything. Secondly, it could be because they find the topics somewhat boring or not suitable for discussion.

Int In your English class, who is the most active participator in group discussion?

Aster It is Tesfa

Int And a very silent or quiet student?

Aster Tsegaye

Int How about you, are you from among those who keep quiet most of the time or are you among those who talk?

Aster I think I am among those who are silent.

Int Among the silent?

Aster Yes

Int Why could that be?

Aster Because I am fearful.

Int Have you got other reasons? Who are you afraid of – the three, four or five students you are working with?

Aster I mean I am fearful to speak in whole class discussions, otherwise-well, when we work in small groups I participate a lot.

Int So are you among those who participate actively in group discussion?

Aster Yes.

Int You are not shy then?

Aster I am not shy if it is a small group discussion. It is only when it is whole class discussion that I become shy.

Int Most of my questions are about the small group discussion situation. So you said Belay is silent most of the time?

Aster Yes, in our group.

Int Why doesn't he participate actively, what is your assumption?

Aster It could be the nature of the task. The task does not allow you to talk a lot.

Int How do you view students who are silent?

Aster It could be because they run short of ideas.

Int Does Tsegaye run short of ideas, most of the time, for example?

Aster Yes

Int Could language ability be a factor?

Aster Yes.

Int Do you think you have problems as far as the language is concerned?

Aster Yes, to some extent, but not much.

Int How about the sex composition of a group, would that have any effect?

Aster I don't feel any thing, I mean I would not mind about the composition.

Int Do you have your own preferences – mixed or only-female, kind of thing?

Aster No, I don't care whatever the composition. I see them all as students.

Int What are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion, do you think?

Aster It would be good if the group comprises of both boys and girls. Also it would be good if students of different language ability level work together.

Int Some students feel that if students of varying language ability level work together then those who are good at the language may dominate those who are not.

Aster Well, as far as I am concerned, I prefer to sit with those who have good command of English and participate well, because they initiate or motivate me to speak. If on the other hand I work with silent students, then I also tend to keep silent or participate less.

Int So what is your preference, to sit or work with those who speak well?

Aster Yeah. To work together with those who speak well.

Int You don't like it when they don't speak well?

Aster I don't like it.

Int When you compare your participation in the first semester and in the second semester do you think you have increased or decreased participation?

Aster I have increased.

Int Why could it be that you have increased participation?

Aster First of all, I have got used to the situation and the students. Secondly, I understand things better now – the content of the course.

Int Other reasons?

Aster I feel more confident.

Int So generally speaking you have increased participation in the second semester?

Aster Yes

Int Thank you.

Individual interview 8 - Tsegaye

Int Do you enjoy working in groups in English classes?

Tsegaye Yes.

Int Do you like it when you work in a group of three, four or five?

Tsegaye Yes, I like it. But if it is a large group I may not like it because I don't have good language command. As the group grows larger, I participate less, so I would be happy if the group comprises three or four students.

Int Don't you like it when it is larger than that?

Tsegaye I don't like it when it is bigger than that.

Int Do some students take a more active role than others in group discussion?

Tsegaye Yes.

Int I mean do they talk a lot?

Tsegaye Yes, some of them talk a lot. Like I said, some other students may have some problems like I have so others would try to speak because someone has always to talk. Besides some students may feel that speaking English would be important for them- to get some practice for whole class discussion. Therefore some students participate actively while others pass their time without speaking at all, just listening.

Int Why do some students take a more active role than others? Why do they talk a lot?

Tsegaye I think there could be two reasons for that. First they want to develop their English language ability, their speaking ability, because there could be a lot of discussion in English in the coming years – in other words it is obligatory to speak English as long as students are in university. Secondly, students might feel that they would get good grades if they show that they have good speaking ability.

Int Are you saying that students work harder or talk a lot to score good grade?

Tsegaye Yes, you know there are certain things we are told just before we join university. Senior students tell us that English language instructors value students' participation more than anything else- even more than the final examination. So it is more or less related to that.

Int Do they mean in College English classes?

Tsegaye Yes, in this university.

Int You mean they value students' participation, not their actual language ability?

Tsegaye Yes, participation is crucial as far as the information I got before I joined university is concerned.

Int Why do other students take a less active role than others? Why do they prefer to keep silent most of the time?

Tsegaye Yes, the silent ones pass their time just listening.

Int Are there silent students, by the way?

Tsegaye Yes, there are some five to six students who are very quiet. I am among these students, myself. Of course some of them try to say something from time to time.

Int Are you also among the silent?

Tsegaye Yes, I am. You know it is a matter of confidence. The main problem is lacking self-confidence. I would be happy if I were able to speak as well as others do. Unfortunately we don't have the ability to speak well or we feel that we may break language rules or things like that then we keep silent and pass the time that way. Secondly, we convince our selves that the subject is difficult and that we may not show improvements, and things of that sort make us keep silent or participate only from time to time.

Int Is that kind of losing hope?

Tsegaye Yes, it is sort of. I mean we have not had the experience right from lower levels. Now that we have reached this stage, it is very difficult to change things, in fact it is unthinkable.

Int Can you tell me some students by name –those you think are silent?

Tsegaye Yes, there are, for example Zeru.

Int Is Zeru silent?

Tsegaye He is. And also Darge, Firew and myself. They are silent most of the time.

Int Why do they keep quiet – you said it is number one because they think they may not be able to get good grades any way, losing hope, you said.

Tsegaye Yes, I mean no matter how hard we try to participate, there are always students who perform better than we, that could be one. The other thing is that I don't have self-confidence, I assume that I don't speak well. I feel that I am less able compared to other students. I feel inferior. That could actually be the case, we are criticised.

Int Are you afraid of criticisms?

Tsegaye Yes, I am afraid of criticism.

Int How do you view those students who participate a lot? Those who speak a lot?

Tsegaye Well, I like students who talk a lot. If you ask me why, you know, I never expected students to speak and participate this much. That is one reason why I actually admire these students. I thought all students would be like me, as far speaking is concerned. There are about ten of us who came the same high school and all of them are very silent. None of them participates actively.

Int Do they keep quiet?

Tsegaye Yes.

Int Which high school did you come from?

Tsegaye It is Adet.

Int Are all the students who have come from Adet silent?

Tsegaye Yes, but probably few of them (those who are not shy) try to participate using whatever English they have. Actually English is a very difficult subject to us and they use broken and incoherent English – because we don't have the experience. I thought all students would have the same problems we had. But after I have joined this university I could see that many students speak good English. Therefore I admire and appreciate those students who express their ideas clearly and fluently. I have the desire to speak like they do.

Int How do you view those students who don't speak most of the time in group discussion?

Tsegaye Well, I think these students (including myself) would have liked to participate or talk but they have problems. They know that they should be using a lot of English (writing and speaking) when they join different departments next year. Well, for many other different reasons students want or need to speak or use English, but they have got one major problem that makes them silent. It would be very nice if they somehow overcome their problems and improve their English.

Int When you see the participation of your classmates or your group members, do you think there are some students who have increased participation?

Tsegaye Yes, there are some students. Some students were advised of the advantages of actively participating in group discussion. And these students tried hard to participate in discussion as much as they can. Some of them might go back to their silence when they see that they are not satisfied with their participation. They would say that they had tried hard and they gained almost nothing in terms of grade. There are some other students who, on the other hand, regretted their silence or very low participation. They compare themselves with other students who participate actively and convince themselves that they are after all students like us except that they have the courage and talk. So some students who have developed such attitudes have increased participation.

Int Can you give some examples of students who have increased participation in the second semester, mention some names?

Tsegaye Among those who have decreased participation, I can mention Adane, and Azene has also decreased.

Int How about students who have increased participation, I mean students who would talk or participate only from time to time, or participate to some degree and later in the second semester increased their participation?

Tsegaye Among the students who have increased participation, Yodit from girls, and Eshetu Girma.

Int Has Eshetu increased participation?

Tsegaye Yes, and Nega.

Int Have you been in the same group with Kassa?

Tsegaye He has clearly increased now in the second semester. In fact he took part in a debate.

Int So he has increased participation in the second semester.

Tsegaye Apart from increasing participation in the second semester, the way he presented his ideas and his English improved a lot. He used to be shy in the first semester but now he speaks with confidence.

Int Tsegaye, thank you very much.

Individual interview 9 - Tesfa

Int Do you enjoy working in groups, in English classes?

Tesfa Yes

Int What are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion? What are the things that make group work interesting?

Tesfa For example the topic matters- the topic we are discussing on. If it is a kind of topic all of us can participate on, … well, most of the topics in the textbook tend to participate students from the regions

Int Would students from the regions know more about the topics than students from Addis Ababa?

Tesfa If you take the chapter on fuel wood carriers, for instance, I don't know that much idea about it. That is because I am living in Addis Ababa. But the majority of the students in our class come from the regions, and the topic matters.

Int Other things that would make group discussion interesting?

Tesfa Well, we normally work in a group of five, don't we?

Int Yes, you work in a group of five.

Tesfa But if it is possible to reduce it down to three

Int Would three be better?

Tesfa Yes. And if there is nobody --- If we work in a group of five then one of us may dominate the group. But if we work in a group of three, I think all of members can have the chance to participate.

Int How about the sex composition of your group – do you prefer to work in a single sex group or mixed sex group, or do you think that does not matter?

Tesfa Well, it matters because like we would do in our groups it is good that there were four boys and a girl. You know somewhere in the book there is a topic about gender issues. If in that kind of discussion the group is composed of all boys, all of them are going to speak in favour of men, that is because they have not experienced the problems of women. So I think it is good that there are some girls in the group.

Int Do some students take a more active role than others in group discussion?

Tesfa Yes.

Int You have worked with different groups, haven't you?

Tesfa Yes, I have.

Int Have you come across a situation where the participation of one student is very clearly noticed?

Tesfa Yes

Int When you think of such students who would come to your mind first?

Tesfa When I, Saba, Yodit, Dawit, and Abera work together, and may be because I feel I might have dominated the group I try to keep quiet. But I have worked with different groups and Kassa is clever, he participates actively, Dawit also speaks a lot, Saba, and Elleni as well.

Int How about Abera?

Tesfa Well, not because he is silent. Well yes he is sort of silent. You know he smiles.

Int Only smiling?

Tesfa Yes, most of the time.

Int He does not speak most of the time?

Tesfa No, he doesn't- most of the time.

Int How do you view students who participate very actively? Positively or negatively?

Tesfa The class views them positively. Everybody has got to share whatever he knows and make some contributions. Therefore every one has got to speak as much as he knows. Therefore it is positive. But you know sometimes when we work in groups we take turns and when I feel that others are not contributing enough then I keep my turns very

short – that is I don't say out all I want to say. That is because I don't want to look sort of superior. So what I would is that if they speak for about two minutes then I will also try to discuss my points in just two minutes. I don't want to go beyond that because as long as we are there working in groups I don't think it is necessary to have group leaders. All of us have got to contribute equally.

Int How do you choose group leaders whenever and if you have them?

Tesfa Chairman?

Int Who is choosing them?

Tesfa They choose them.

Int You mean students?

Tesfa Yes

Int I mean when you are working in groups do you just tell one student to be your group leader?

Tesfa Yes.

Int Who is the group leader in your group most of the time?

Tesfa It is me, or Saba.

Int How do you view group leaders, positively or negatively?

Tesfa I see them positively.

Int I had this kind of discussion with a student and he told me that he would enjoy working in a group you are present. He said you (Tesfa) could produce good ideas and you have excellent language command. In fact he said he would feel that he learnt a lot. Well, many students tell me that you participate very actively. Why could it be that you have such a nice participation in group discussion?

Tesfa Probably my background matters

Int Background?

Tesfa I mean the school I was at previously.

Int Which school was it?

Tesfa Saint Joseph

Int What was the situation there?

Tesfa Well, for example we start learning English as of zero class. When we were in grade one we would go two more grades ahead and learn from the book prepared for grade three students in government schools. In grade two we use the text prepared for grade four students. So it is not something that has changed at once, that might have some contribution.

Int Did you have the chance to speak a lot there?

Tesfa Yes, and also --

Int Was your text a different one?

Tesfa It was not. When we were in elementary school, we would use a textbook prepared for government schools, but we would go two steps ahead. When were in grade five for example we use the textbook prepared for grade seven.

Int And when you were in high schools?

Tesfa In grade nine we use the text prepared for grade eleven, in grade ten we use the grade-twelve textbook. When we reach grade eleven, we start taking literature courses.

Int So would you then have time for group discussion, speaking and things like that?

Tesfa Yes. The other thing probably is that, I mean that is my personal background. My father is in Cairo. He works there. So during the summer, when schools are closed, I go to Cairo to visit my father. He was in Tanzania before he moved to Cairo. So I used to go to Tanzania, as well. There I had to use English as a medium of communication, whether I like it or not, and it was a must. Things like that --

Int Others speak to you in English?

Tesfa Yes. Therefore I had to use English whether I make mistakes in grammar or not because I had to communicate.

Int As far as your parents are concerned, were you free to speak out whatever you wanted?

Tesfa Yes, my elder brother, for example lives in America, he still lives there, and when he comes to visit us he speaks in English. So if I had to speak with him I have to use English. We communicate in English.

Int Can't he speak Amharic?

Tesfa He can but he prefers to use English most of the time.

Int And you communicate with him in English?

Tesfa Yes.

Int How about at home when you are communicating in Amharic, can you speak to anyone, for example when there are some guests or elderly people, would your parents tell you to shut up?

Tesfa No, no. I mean like I said my father is in Cairo, most of the time. It is my mother who is always present at home and she is very lenient on such matters.

Int When I ask some students why they are silent most of the time, they tell me that it could be because they are not allowed to speak or discuss with full-grown or elderly guests. So you don't have such restrictions?

Tesfa No.

Int Other things?

Tesfa Other things that contribute?

Int Yes. What are other things that helped or made you contribute better than others.

Tesfa Well, like I said because I had that background I read books and magazines and that helps not only when you speak but – for example in the reading comprehension part of our first semester final examination there was an article taken from Newsweek which I had read. It was only two weeks since I had read it. So you see reading has also got different contributions .

Int Have you come across students who are very silent in group discussion?

Tesfa Yes

Int There are some very silent students.

Tesfa Yes, there are.

Int Who comes to your mind when you think of silent students?

Tesfa Eshetu

Int Others?

Tesfa May be, Adane is silent.

Int And others?

Tesfa Abera

Int Why do they keep silent, what is your assumption?

Tesfa As far as Abera is concerned, when the five of us (Abera, Yodit, Saba, Dawit and Tesfa) work together, I think he feels sort of inferior to the rest of us. He would probably imagine that we would not take or accept his ideas or laugh at him- kind of feeling. So he would not express himself freely because he feels that the rest of us are better than he is and probably reject his ideas, -- he may feel that way.

Int How do you view students who are most of the time silent? I mean students who would prefer to be listeners than speakers? Not necessarily in your group only.

Tesfa Well, for them to show some improvement, I think they should participate in discussion. You know I always participate in English class and I fee that I gain something. They should not sit there silent always, they should participate. It is not advisable. So when these students keep silent and I talk a lot I feel kind of dominating the group then I would say to myself why should I talk a lot and dominate others. Later I started keeping quiet, I mean if most of them speak for about two minutes then I also speak for about two minutes and stop. I don't think this is a good trend so I don't see silent students positively.

Int You don't take it positively.

Tesfa No matter how much potential they might have they should participate, because otherwise it doesn't develop.

Int How about those who participate actively, do you view them positively?

Tesfa Yes.

Int My next question is related to students who have changed their participation behaviour. Do you know of students who used to be silent or participate only from time to time or participate to some degree and during the second semester became active participants in group discussion?

Tesfa Yes, Dawit has increased participation. I particularly remember him because we worked in the same group many times. And also Desta.

Int Has he also increased participation?

Tesfa Yes, he has. And also Kassa.

Int Has Kassa also increased?

Tesfa He has.

Int Why have these students increased participation, what is your assumption?

Tesfa These students were not silent even in the first semester, but they have clearly shown progress in the second semester. But the very silent ones kept on keeping silent and passed the whole year that way. If these students were to follow Kassa's strategy and try different ways to express themselves, they would have shown progress. -----

Int Okay, then ---

Tesfa Well, they should also, like Kassa, Dawit, and Desta, contribute some thing in group discussion. When they contribute and see that they ideas are accepted by other group members they start to feel good inside, you know. But if students are of the position that "silence would not get weevilly or worm-infested" and keep silent wherever they go, then well, you don't know what they think and others attitude towards such people would not change. We would be forced to believe that they are not showing any progress at all.

Int On the contrary, have you come across students who used to somewhat actively participate in the first semester and gradually decreased their participation in the second semester?

Tesfa Yes, I think Negasa has decreased. Marta has also decreased. I said Negasa may be because he has missed classes many days.

Int Others? How about from the group you worked with for quite a long time?

Tesfa May be I have decreased.

Int No one has told me that you have decreased.

Tesfa But I feel it. I have reason for saying that. I convinced myself that I should not dominate my group members. Even in whole class discussion I decreased my participation, that is I would not raise my hand if there are some other students who want to answer questions. Or I would say something when others have finished discussing their ideas. And Saba as well.

Int Again no one mentioned Saba, although she says she has decreased.

Tesfa I know that I have decreased but I did that purposely and I have reason for that. May be students don't feel my decreasing in participation because my participation was even then better than other students', so they might not feel it.

Int Others?

Tesfa Elleni, probably because at some point she missed three consecutive classes. She had some problems at home. And she was silent for some time then. But then she continued normally.

Int Tesfa, thank you very much.

Individual interview 10 - Marta

Int do you enjoy working in groups?

Marta yes

Int sometimes when you say to yourself that you had a very good group discussion, what situations would that discussion fulfil?

Marta first of all the title, or the topic should be interesting. Secondly, when points are not missed. Third, when there are interesting ideas raised in the discussion, I like that. When I feel that I gain something or when there is some point that would interest one of our group members, I like it.

Int sometimes when you work in groups of four or five, do you come across students who talk a lot?

Marta yes

Int you have worked with many students in different groups, haven't you?

Marta yes, I think so

Int have you come across some students who would talk a lot?

Marta yes

Int and silent students sometimes?

Marta yes, there are students who are very silent, I have come across such students.

Int why could it be that some of the students talk a lot?

Marta when a student talks a lot, it could be the self-concept he/she has. There could be a student who has been brought up in such a way that he/she could be influential. So they may have that characteristic. Or it could be because they have the ability to express their ideas very well. And secondly, they don't worry. They don't worry about what the silent students might think of them. But if they were to think what others might think of them, or if they were to say "what would others say or think about me, how would others evaluate me, they view me this way or that way" sort of things, then that would really be hard.

Int how do you view them? I mean those students who participate very actively, what is your view of such students?

Marta I like them

Int you see them positively?

Marta yes

Int on the other hand, you said there are some silent students as well, how do you view them?

Marta I don't feel free, when I think of them. I mean I keep wondering what he might be thinking about or what she might be thinking about. I sometimes feel that the fact that they can not express themselves might sometimes have some burden on their real life, and I feel sorry for them. And secondly, they frighten me. I myself simply can not speak, in their presence. Even if I try to speak, I don't feel free.

Int why could it be that they keep silent?

Marta it could be upbringing. Secondly, it could be the way they see others and lack or self-confidence. Because they are depressed and think others are superior to them.

Int when you compare your participation in group discussion in the first semester and in the second semester, do you think that there are some students who would participate well in the first semester but decreased in the second semester?

Marta I don't think so. I noticed students who increased participation, not students who decreased.

Int have you come across students who would used to be silent, or participate only from time to time but later in the second semester increased noticeably?

Marta yes, there are.

Int can you tell me by name?

Marta I think Yodit has increased
Int has she increased?
Marta yes, she has increased
Int who else?
Marta I don't remember others
Int why could it be that Yodit has increased?
Marta I mean she has changed her view about education, in general, I think. She is performing better in the second semester. She started working harder. I can see that she has made this kind of progress.
Int how do you view yours?
Marta mine?
Int yes, do you think you have increased or decreased participation in the second semester?
Marta I think I have slightly decreased
Int I had some questionnaires and your classmates rated you as among the top three participators. But you are saying that you have decreased
Marta I think so
Int why could it be that you have decreased participation?
Marta I have not thought of it. Well ---
Int you know I mean when you are working in groups. When you work four or five together. You work five together most of the time?
Marta yes
Int you know them very well, Girma, Hailu, Negasa, and Desta?
Marta yes, well if it is in that group I don't feel anything. I just talk simply talk.
Int so you have not decreased?
Marta yes, I think if it is in that group, I have in fact increased participation
Int you have in fact increased?
Marta yes, I think so
Int why could it be that you have increased participation?
Marta we have come to know each other very well. We share many things outside class. We tell jokes and things like that so there is nothing I am afraid of. There is nothing I care. It is simply talking over the issue raised. I would not care.
Int was there a silent student in your group?
Marta the five of us- myself, Negasa, Hailu, Desta, Girma- no, no there is no one silent
Int all of them are talkers?
Marta yes
Int do you like the group?
Marta yes
Int is it because they participate very well that you like them?
Marta yes
Int how do you think instructors view those students who participate very actively? What views do instructors have of those students who participate very well?
Marta I think they like them
Int they see them positively?
Marta yes, they see them positively
Int how about those students who keep silent most of the time?
Marta well, I don't think they like them – well, it would be the opposite.
Int would you prefer to work with boys or girls?
Marta I prefer to work with boys
Int why?
Marta I will be free that way. I find if difficult when girls don't speak.
Int If they don't speak?
Marta if they keep silent I find it very difficult- I would not care about boys
Int why do you find it difficult, if they don't talk?

Marta I mean, if you think of, if you just think of what women think, it is really hard. I know, when I keep silent I know what sort of things I think about. I mean it may not be about people but it is something very harsh- we are very difficult really we are.

Int kind of backbiting?

Marta well I don't really care about that, it is not about that. It is about what they think of themselves, I don't know but I don't like the kind of self-concept we have. So I don't like it when they keep silent. I don't care much about men. They are also relatively free to express their thoughts. But women, including me, seem to view things from many/ different aspects. I don't like it.

Int so in your view

Marta specially if all of the group members are going to be females, I don't think they are going to talk at all

Int equal men and women?

Marta that is better

Int or else more men in the group, than women

Marta that is not good

Int why

Marta I mean, it would be better if it is balanced

Int equal number of men and women

Marta yes

Int Marta, thank you very much.

Individual interview 11 - Saba

Int Do you enjoy working in groups in English classes?

Saba I would not mind – I don't mind working alone.

Int What makes group discussion interesting, do you think?

Saba First of all it would be nice if all of us are able to forward ideas, give suggestions when are able to reach agreement, when we are able to bring about the desired result. It would be a good group when we co-operate; when we discuss.

Int When all the group members participate?

Saba Yeah, because it is not good when one or some of the group members keep quiet.

Int And any thing else you think would facilitate group discussion? Like group size for example?

Saba The size of the group depends on the ability of students.

Int Three, four or five?

Saba If it is possible to do some thing good in small groups, that is fine. And if we are working in a large group, then different ideas would be forwarded therefore that is good as well.

Int What do you think is the ideal group size?

Saba Four

Int And what about the sex composition of the group? Do you prefer to work with boys or girls?

Saba Mixed, well I would not mind whichever.

Int Have any preference?

Saba I think it is preferable to work in mixed sex groups. That is preferable.

Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group?

Saba Yes, because the language is English some students may have problems expressing themselves although they may have the idea to talk on. Therefore someone who has got good English language command may dominate the group, because he can express himself without any problem. I know of such students.

Int You have worked with many students in different groups?

Saba Yes.

Int Can you say so-and-so would speak a lot, kind of thing?

Saba Can I mention names?

Int Sure.

Saba I have worked with Tesfa a number of times, he dominates other group members very much. Most of the time. There are other students also I don't know them by name. Hailu, for example tries hard to express himself very well.

Int Okay, why do they participate very well? What is your assumption?

Saba Probably because they concentrate on the message they are trying to transmit and they do not worry about making mistakes in grammar. Therefore they talk a lot. Or probably they naturally like expressing themselves or speaking out their thoughts, I think.

Int Other reasons or explanations?

Saba I don't have.

Int Okay, how do you view these students who participate very actively, positively or negatively?

Saba I see them positively.

Int Always?

Saba Yes, always.

Int Do you think it is because they are clever students?

Saba Yeah, as long as they are able to express themselves; the main point in group discussion is being able to explain clearly the points one has. Therefore, they put on a lot of efforts and that is good.

Int How about silent students? I mean have you come across very silent students, in the first and second semester?

Saba Yes, of course.

Int Can you tell me about these students, who comes to your mind first?

Saba There is a student who sits over there most of the time. I don't know his name.

Int Dawit?

Saba No, no, no. Dawit speaks a lot. In fact he overdoes it sometimes, he talks too much. He likes arguing on almost all issues. All the time.

Int Why do the silent students keep quiet, what is your assumption?

Saba It could be their nature.

Int Nature?

Saba I mean they could be naturally silent. Sometimes you know some students are shy. I saw a student shaking with fear one day when we had a debate session. He was shaking like this (shaking her hands). He was almost unable to speak out of fear. May be they lack the necessary language skill to express themselves. So many students retreat when they feel they have problem expressing themselves. For fear that they may not speak correctly.

Int How do you view these students, positively or negatively?

Saba Negatively, I see them negatively- most of the time. They don't gain any thing out of silence and their presence in the group does not contribute any thing to the rest of the group members. They don't gain knowledge, either.

Int Have you come across some students who used to participate actively most of the time in the first semester but later in the second semester decreased their participation?

Saba Girma, and Marta.

Int Why have they decreased, do you think?

Saba I don't know; it could be out of boredom – they got bored with the study. You know after working hard for almost a year, I think they get bored with things. I cannot think of any other reason why they should decrease participation.

Int On the contrary, have you come across some students who used to keep quiet most of the time or just participate only from time to time, but in the second semester increased they participation?

Saba Yodit has increased. She has.

Int Others?

Saba Who else? ---

Int Why has she increased, do you think?

Saba I don't know, may be it could be her grade. May be she wanted to improve her participation. Or because she wanted to score a better grade. I think I have also decreased my participation in the second semester.

Int Why was that, do you think?

Saba I don't know. I don't know it myself. Well, it could be the nature of the subject. The topics were very boring. Other things were good, but the book was not interesting – most of it.

Int You mean College English?

Saba Yeah, College English of the first semester was better. The articles or the passages in Volume Two (second semester) were not that interesting. The tasks were also very boring. Therefore ---

Int No one has actually noticed your decreasing in participation.

Saba No one has noticed it?

Int Yeah.

Saba Okay, Elleni has also decreased a little bit.

Individual interview 12 - Hailu

Int All the questions are regarding group work in your college English class.

Hailu okay, so am I talking about those students who worked with me in the same group?

Int yes, and that includes you experience and observation both in the first and the second semester.

Hailu how many different groups did I join in the first semester, at least three different places?

Int it could be more than that because you were changing place and groups every two weeks.

Hailu yes, yes

Int so you know at least four or five different groups

Hailu yeah, yeah

Int Do you like working in groups?

Hailu yes, I like it.

Int you like it

Hailu yeah

Int what do you think makes a group discussion interesting?

Hailu well, to have a good group discussion, first of all the instructor- I mean you for example give us the chance. In addition to that right at the beginning when we formed groups you told us not to worry much about making mistakes in grammar and sort of things. So students have that in mind and that makes them somewhat free to discuss in groups. Therefore this kind of orientation is very important or decisive. So it would be good if group work is arranged that way. In addition to that the way things went in the first semester was also good. I mean it was possible to know different ideas, it was possible to get many explanations – that is when we change place and group partners every two weeks. If we were to have constant seats or places then some students could have had advantages while others would be disadvantaged. If by chance for example there are four silent students in the same group or four students who are afraid of expressing themselves in English, then it means all of them are not gaining anything. But if these students are to mix with others then they may see one another and start to participate themselves. They may, I think, develop the experience and the courage to speak in English.

Int What else are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion?

Hailu what, in FLEn class?

Int yes, for example, what kind of students would you prefer to work with, the group size, sex composition of the group sort of things, if you have any particular choice?

Hailu regarding sex composition, it would be good if females are not allowed to sit together- better if they mix with males. In addition, it would be better if students from the regions mix with others- they should not be isolated.

Int why?

Hailu because, first of when we discuss on a certain topic I remember, for example, when we were doing the unit on tourism students from the regions have more experience they know places more than we do. That is about the country side of Ethiopia. So they have a lot to tell us and we can also tell them a lot about life in the city. So we can exchange ideas. Furthermore they have (students from the regions) they have something but the fear and shyness- I think we (students from Addis Ababa) have the courage –not necessarily the knowledge.

Int you mean students from Addis Ababa?

Hailu yes, I think so

Int are there some students who participate more actively than others when you work in groups?

Hailu yes, there are

Int do you remember some of the students who you think are active participants in a group discussion?

Hailu when we work in groups together?

Int yeah

Hailu in our first group all of us were active participants- myself (Hailu), Tesfa, Marta, Saba, and Elleni. Later when we changed groups there were Girma, Marta, Yodit, and Desta –we were in the same group. Of the students who have come from the regions Desta is free when he expresses himself.- he does not like keeping silent, he talks.

Int why do you think some students talk or participate a lot?

Hailu in my view it is mainly because they have the interest. If we see our experience in high school what mattered most was studying grammar rules and scoring good grades. There is also motivation from parents. What my parents were advising me was for example to read fictions in English. So to improve your language you have got to read and speak a lot. In addition to that we watch films, movies and we even try to improve our pronunciation. So for this reason we are curious about speaking. That is the reason, I think. Therefore students who have this kind of attitude try their best even if they may not have the ability. That could be the reason.

Int you mean the motivation?

Hailu yes, the motivation. For example, I sometimes borrow audio and video cassettes from the British Council Library. I mean I try different ways to improve my English. In fact, I have now got the right way of doings things - the guidance which I did not have enough of at high school level.

Int would you put yourself among the talkers or among the silent?

Hailu I, I don't know, teacher.

Int you are not aware of it?

Hailu I am not aware of it. But some students told me that I speak a lot. I am not aware of it, however. I have the interest. I have the interest to speak.

Int okay, on the contrary, do you know of students who keep silent most of the time in group discussion?

Hailu yes, there are some students who are very quiet.

Int can you mention some names for me?

Hailu for example Tsegaye. Another silent student is, does that include the first semester as well?

Int yes, including the first semester.

Hailu I think x has also decreased a lot.

Int why do you think these students keep silent most of the time?

Hailu I don't know but I think they are shy or fearful. But they must have overcome their fear by the second semester. I think it could also be because they don't have the motivation and the interest to speak. On the contrary, they want to they would like to do very well in examinations, they would be happy to score good grade. I don't think they have the interest in the speaking activity. They think they gain nothing out of it. That is the reason, I think.

Int how do you treat or view those students who actively participate and those students who are very passive participants?

Hailu you mean their difference?

Int I mean positively or negatively, that sort of thing.

Hailu as far as I am concerned, I don't like silent students. For example, outside class when we want to further discuss on some points we started in our group in class, they even tend to forget that we were in the same group. They also feel that the discussion would take their much-wanted time and I don't have a positive attitude towards the silent students. I met one of the silent students in the library and I tried to advise him to speak and to participate- because we then came to know each other better, you know. I told him that it would be to his own advantage if he participates actively in discussion. I told

him that there is no point in being shy, and that all of us are not native speakers and that he should try his best.

Int okay, how do you see those students who participate actively? Do you like them?

Hailu yes

Int you see them positively?

Hailu yes, of course

Int do you know of some students who used to be very quiet or participate only from time to time but later in the second semester have increased participation to an observable degree?

Hailu who were silent in the first semester and increased participation in the second semester?

Int yes

Hailu I am not sure

Int or students who have decreased participation in the second semester?

Hailu students who have decreased ----

Int you have not noticed them?

Hailu I am not sure

Int which group do you belong to you said? The talkers or the silents?

Hailu the talkers, I think

Int you remember the questionnaire you filled in for me last week? One of the questions in the questionnaire was about students who talk the most in group discussion, can you guess who rated first

Hailu Tesfa

Int yes, you are right, and second?

Hailu Saba

Int yes, again very good guess and you are third

Hailu okay

Int so, can you tell me what helped you participate very actively?

Hailu I have the interest. A lot of interest. I also am very eager to improve my English. Sometimes I try to retell my father what I watched on videos, in English.

Int Does your father speak English?

Hailu yes, he does. He also encourages me to speak in English. He is member of the British Council Library, as well.

Int which high school did you go to before you joined university?

Hailu that is government school, Medhanialem Comprehensive High School.

Int what was your background like, when you were there?

Hailu the focus there was more or less on grammar. When we were in grade 12 our English teacher used to tell us short stories and he would ask as to retell the story to the class some days after he had told us the story. I used to enjoy and participate in that kind of activity. Because my focus was not on the grammar part I would some times score less mark than my friends do.

Int but you are better in the speaking skill

Hailu yes, I can say that for sure.

Int was your focus mainly on speaking?

Hailu yes, it was on speaking

Int okay, any other reason?—are you shy?

Hailu no, not at all, I have no shyness at all

Int no fear at all

Hailu no fear, I may make some mistakes but I take that as normal. Sometimes I think of the silly grammar mistakes I make and that makes me laugh. I would not make such mistakes when writing.

Int can you talk and discuss things freely when you are with your parents?

Hailu yes, specially with my father.

Int when there are guests or grown-up people around, are you expected to keep quiet?

Hailu no no, there is no such a thing. In fact, I sometimes discuss lots of things specially with my uncle.

Int okay, what else has helped you become good participator? If there are some points you would like to add to what you have said.

Hailu I don't know.

Int what you have told me so far is courage, motivation and interest

Hailu I also like the subject. I would be happy if the course continues to be offered throughout our stay in the university. Because I would like to be a fluent speaker by the time I graduate from university.

Int why do some students keep silent , what is your assumption?

Hailu well, mainly because they don't have the interest, I think

Int can family background be a factor?

Hailu yes, for those who come from remote areas. In addition, as far as our informal discussion in the café is concerned, they are not satisfied with the way the course is given here at university level. They were used to studying grammar rules and getting satisfaction out of scoring top marks. That is what they count as knowledge of language.

Int thank you very much, Hailu.

Individual interview 13 - Dawit

Int Do you enjoy working in groups in English classes?

Dawit Yes.

Int What are the favourable conditions for a good group discussion? What makes group work interesting?

Dawit When we work together in groups we get to know each other and when there are students with different experiences and that is good opportunity to learn.

Int I mean, what are the conditions that should be present in the group to make it interesting?

Dawit There would be good discussion if all members of the group participate actively. Students should participate without any fear. Students usually have ideas to share with their group members but they don't share it sometimes because first they may not simply want to share their ideas. Secondly, they keep quiet because they don't have the confidence and they are shy. If there is good discussion not only do we learn from it but also we take as enjoyment. If, on the other hand, few students dominate the group we don't gain anything from it – only few students talk a lot.

Int Well, you have now worked in different groups with different students since the first semester. Are there some students who have been very silent? Who comes to your mind, first?

Dawit There are some students I have not worked with.

Int I mean, among those you have worked with.

Dawit I don't remember anyone among those I worked with. That is because they choose me as their group leader most of the time.

Int Are you a group leader most of the time?

Dawit Yes, they choose me as a group leader most of the time, and I make them all speak or say something. When they run short of words to express their ideas they use Amharic. That is why I have never come across students who just sit silent.

Int What about students with relatively low participation?

Dawit Zeru, and Nega.

Int Who else?

Dawit Abera.

Int Does he keep quiet most of the time?

Dawit Yes.

Int Why do these students keep quiet most of the time? What is your assumption?

Dawit Well, they tell me what their problem is when I ask them.

Int What is their problem?

Dawit They say that they did not have enough experience at high school level. They would give more attention and worry more about grammar and construction. They some times regret that they did not learn the grammar of the language, because if they had learnt the grammar effectively, they would not have faced problems to express their ideas. They say it could be because they would use Amharic in class even to ask questions. They regret it.

Int How do you personally view those students who keep quiet most of the time?

Dawit Well, I tell them to participate actively like I do, if not like others (more talkative ones) without any fear.

Int So you feel that they should talk.

Dawit Yes.

Int Do you see them positively or negatively?

Dawit Well, because I feel that they should participate I see their silence as something negative. They themselves see it negatively. I don't know why but they approach me

and talk to me and tell me certain things they would not tell other students from Addis Ababa. So they tell me many things about their problems and the situation in our class.

Int Many students approach you.

Dawit Yes. Therefore those students who keep silent in group discussion most of the time tell me about their problems and I tell them about my own experience. I tell them that I would not hesitate to express my ideas – not because I think my English is good but because I feel it should not be a big problem. I advise them to speak even if their English is broken, if they want to improve their English.

Int Now that you have worked with many students in different groups, can you say that some students talk much more than others in the group? Students who would be happy talking instead of listening?

Dawit No, I have not come across such students.

Int When you have group discussion with your usual group members, do you think there could be someone who speaks a lot?

Dawit Yes.

Int Who is that?

Dawit Saba speaks a lot.

Int Who else?

Dawit Tesfa also speaks a lot, Yodit as well.

Int Why do these students speak a lot?

Dawit Well, because they are from Addis Ababa they had the chance to go to private schools. It could also be because they had good language ability, they are not afraid of using English to express their ideas.

Int Where do you put yourself, among those who speak a lot or those who are silent?

Dawit Well, if I have something to say then I don't keep quiet or I don't hesitate to express my thought.

Int Actually many students tell me that you participate very actively, what are the reasons for that? I mean the reasons why you participate very actively?

Dawit Well, I told you it is because I had some experience at high school, so I convinced myself that I should keep the same pace.

Int I would like you to tell me that in some detail.

Dawit When I was at high school I would always ask questions in English. Teachers would also encourage us to use English to ask questions. My grade ten English teacher (I saw him here in university in the first semester and he now teaches in Debre Zeit, my friend told me) would specially advise us to use English in class and even outside class- when we meet our friends who might also like to improve their English. He would also advise us to discuss other subjects English, to speak to teachers in English, and use every opportunity to improve our English. One of my friends who wanted to use the advice of our teacher asked me to speak to each other in English. That was to improve our English.

Int So has that helped you improve your English?

Dawit Yes, it has also helped me express my ideas with confidence without any fear.

Int It has helped you express your ideas without any fear.

Dawit Yes, the other thing is I read books and when I come across some difficult words I look them up in a dictionary. That is my way.

Int Your language ability can be clearly seen, I mean the standard of your English is really good. So because you are good at language you are not afraid of expressing your ideas in English. Therefore you speak.

Dawit Even if I am not very good at the language, even when I mistakes, I would not worry.

Int Well, you're very good at the language, that can also be seen from the grade you have. So are you saying that your confidence, the fact that you are not afraid of making mistakes, could be the main factor?

Dawit Yes, that is it, specially from the moral and encouragement I have from teachers I can say I have no fear.

Int How do you view those students who participate very actively, or those students who speak a lot?

Dawit Well, I like it very much. I mean I would be very happy if I could speak like Tesfa does. That is very encouraging and gives me the moral to participate.

Int So do you see them positively? Do you view students like Tesfa positively? Do you say it would be better to be talkative than to be silent?

Dawit Yes, very much, as far as I am concerned.

Int When you compare students participation in the first semester and in the second semester, do you think there are some students who decreased participation?

Dawit No, I mean not from among the students I have worked with.

Int Are you saying most of them have increased participation?

Dawit Well, I heard students say that some students have decreased participation, but that is still unconvincing for me.

Int You have not noticed it at all.

Dawit Almost all the students I have come across in the second semester participate well in group discussion. In fact I reached the conclusion that it is because of the experience they have gained that they have increased participation.

Int That is why they increased participation.?

Dawit Yes.

Int Have the students increased participation because they have got used to the situation?

Dawit That could be one, the other is may be because the instructor has not been changed.

Int Thank you very much Dawit.

Appendix 3
Focus group interview

Group 1

Int	our discussion is based on the video you saw a moment ago and on your group discussion experience in the first and second semester. Right, have you noticed - in some groups- students who participate a lot?
x	The question, again please
Int	When you work in groups, that is four or five students together, have you come across students whose participation or talk is outstanding/ you could identify quite easily?
all	Yes
Int	It would not be a problem if you identify / mention names because whenever I refer to the names in my writing I would use pseudonyms. So it would be helpful if you mention names. Its regarding FLEn 101 and FLEn 102 .
Dawit	Well, for example from the video we saw, I think Hailu's p is seen very clearly- he was dominating groups.
Int	Does Hailu speak a lot?
Dawit	Yes
Int	And other students who speak a lot
x	Tesfa
Int	Tesfa speaks a lot. Who else?
x	Saba as well
Int	Okay Saba, who else?
x	Elleni and also Marta
Int	Okay, they speak a lot? Who else?
x	yeah
Int	Okay. Why do these students speak or participate more than other students do?
Aster	May be when they were in high school their teachers would probably encourage them to speak in front of their classmates, because they had this experience.
Int	Are you saying it is the experience?
Aster	yes
Int	Other reasons?
Tesfa	Not only that. I mean not only in high school but also the schools they went to first, the place, their families, their peers --. If they speak English and if they can help you with your English, and other opportunities, like for example students from Addis Ababa can watch films, they have access to magazines, and so on. But of all things, I think they school background is really decisive.
Int	What do you mean by background?
Tesfa	and the way they view themselves, for example I convince myself. I want to express myself as far as I can, and in as far as my brain would allow me. So I would not care about whatever students might say about me. If I don't do this then I am not going to improve or develop. I don't care about others comments and criticisms. In fact that should develop my critical abilities, it should not hurt my feelings or moral. That is how I can convince myself.
Saba	We can see that many students have fears. They may go wrong. Their ideas may not be clearly expressed, so students may, you know, retreat --
Int	That is as far as silent students are concerned. Those students who actively participate, why could it be that they speak a lot, in group discussion?
Saba	Yes, they convince themselves that they should express themselves no matter how they make mistakes. And they have the confidence, as well.

Int Have you come across students who have come from good schools (private and public schools) and don't participate a lot?

Dawit Well, it could be their own natural behaviour. There are some students who have the information but can't express themselves. When it comes to writing they can write as nicely and confidently as any student. They may have such behaviour.

Int On the contrary, have you come across students who have come from rural schools or schools that don't have enough or good facilities and speak or participate actively?

Tesfa There are. For example there is a student who has come from Gondar, well he is in another section.

Saba Well, he speaks perfect American English- he must not have been educated in Gondar.

Dawit There are. For example there are some students who had gone to good schools for some years, or were taught by expatriate teachers

Int These students who participate very actively, how are they viewed by other students? In other words, how do other students view them, is it positively or negatively? What is their opinion about the students?

Aster I see them positively.

Dawit I, too

Abera yes

Int Have you come across in group discussion, students who don't participate actively or don't speak?

Tesfa Eshetu, for example

Dawit Eshetu speaks, sometimes

Abera Who did you say?

Tesfa Eshetu, who scored an A in Geography

Dawit Well, he speaks

Abera Yes, he speaks

Tesfa And Debebe

Dawit Belayneh has also improved in the second semester

Int Okay, the students you have mentioned and other silent students, why could it be that they are silent most of the time?

Dawit Well, some students have talked to me. They say they didn't have the experience at high school. They said they would memorise grammar rules because they never had the chance for a group discussion like this. This was their reason, they told me.

Int By the way, is Dawit among those who speak a lot or don't speak?

All Among the speakers/ active participants.

Int You all agree?

Saba Yes, we do.

Int Okay, what sort of school have you come from?

Dawit Boditi

Int Boditi High School?

Dawit Yeah

Int Did you complete your high school there?

Dawit Yes, it is not as big as Sodo Comprehensive. But teachers work very hard. Therefore the school is among the best. That is why students also pass in great numbers. Seeing teachers commitments, there are some students who come from other schools and other places.

Int Well, you participate very actively in group discussion, what has helped you speak or participate actively, unlike other students?

Dawit I can say it is mainly the encouragement I get from my teachers. For example some teachers

Dawit some teachers for example encourage us to use English when asking questions in class. They tell us that they would try to understand our English no matter how broken it could be. So because I am very eager to learn the language, I use it frequently although

I might make mistakes. In fact even when my English is not understandable I won't stop trying in English unless I am told to speak in Amharic. In addition to that there was an English language teacher who used to tell us that we "should try in English as far as possible wherever we go". And he would tell us that we should use English without fear of making mistakes – after all no one has learnt the language in his mother's womb. When we make mistakes, we correct them and learn from our mistakes. So a friend of mine who listened to the advice told me to speak to him but in English.

Int Okay Dawit I will ask you later about your own experience. Let us now talk about the things we can discuss as a group. Okay?

Tesfa About the issue you raised regarding students who come from good schools and don't participate actively, I think Selam is a good example.

Int Selam?

Tesfa Yes, now for example she learnt at Cathedral. But because she is naturally shy, she does not speak a lot even outside class. She keeps quiet most of the time. I think it is because she is very shy. She has a good potential but she is very shy.

Int Okay, we have been discussing about why some students are silent. Shyness is one of the points raised. Have you got other points to add?

Aster In addition to that those of us who come from the regions are told that no matter how hard we try the maximum grade we earn would be a "C"

Int Not more than a C?

Aster Yes, they tell us that because the maximum grade we earn would be a C they advise us not to waste much time on English. As a result of this many students lose hope and attend classes only not to miss tests and just for the sake of their attendance. They are very much discouraged.

Dawit It is not that exaggerated, actually.

Aster My feeling is however that students from the regions are not unable to speak and write.

Int Any thing you would like to add?

Tesfa Take our section for example, there were only two A's given in geography. So how would you spend your time studying geography? You may score 90 plus something out of hundred, but you end up scoring a C. So "why should I waste my time? I work harder in another subject and find a way of compensating for geography. You know exactly like I guessed I got a C.

Int Is it the same thing with English?

Saba It is the same thing with English. I think this is all so because students are misinformed.

Int Are you telling me that there are such divisions?

Dawit Oh, yes.

Abera Oh, yes, very clearly.

Aster Yes there is.

Saba Yes, there is.

Int Who do you get such information from?

All From our seniors. It is from them.

Abera From second year students.

Tesfa I too, if I am asked I would say the same thing. When first year students come next year I would tell them that I scored ninety-something out of hundred and got a C grade- because students from the regions (specially from Gojam) got almost everything correct and the scale goes up. So instead of wasting time studying geography it would be better to work harder on other subjects like economics and compensate for geography, that is what I would tell them.

Saba The same thing with English.

Int Is it the same thing with English?

All Yes.

Saba You know I have got some relatives who come from the regions learning here at university. When they come to visit as they tell that they leave English aside for

students from Addis Ababa to score high grades. Now because they lose hope right from the beginning they don't do well on the final examination.

Int Do you come across such a thing frequently, is it common?

Saba yes

Abera yes

Aster yes

Dawit But not always

Saba It happens.

Abera It happens, most of the time

Tesfa It happens

Int What did you score in the first semester, for instance --- I think it was a B, Dawit yours as well.

Aster Yes

Dawit Yes. Actually I have never heard of students saying this.

Int So you have never heard them saying these things?

Dawit Yeah, that is why I decided to work hard and get good grade.

Int Okay. So, does it mean that students who come from the regions may keep silent as a result of such expectations?

Aster Most of them score A's in other subjects and just score a C in English. Or they score straight A's in other subjects and score a B in English. Students who had this experience would then tell us that they had worked hard and got unsatisfactory grade in English and that we should not waste our time repeating the same mistake. They tell us that we would rather put more effort on other subjects which are rewarding.

Int By the way what do you think should be done to change this unfortunate situation? Do you think it is possible to change it?

Tesfa There is nothing that cannot be changed. It can be changed.

Dawit I think it is possible to change that.

Int What can be done about it, do you think?

Saba Well, when students are first given orientations it would be good to raise such issues or beliefs and point out that they just are wrong impressions.

Aster Students are told that grades are decided on percentage basis. That is only certain percentage of students get A's and the great majority of them get C's – it is this particular bit of information that convinces us, because instructors are also sometimes heard repeating this. Then students lose hope.

Int So what must be done to curb the situation or improve the situation?

Aster It would be better if students are not told of the percentages- of students who should score A's and C's. And as far as the group discussion is concerned, it is difficult for students from the regions to work together before they get to know each other because they tend to be fearful towards the beginning. There are some students in other sections who are told by their instructors that speaking is given some points and that students would lose some points if they don't speak in front of their classmates. Thus students go as far as crying when they speak in front of their classmates, you know we sometimes discuss such things in our dormitories. In fact I know students who undergo tensions all the week when they are ordered to make presentations. They worry about how they would face their classmates. So, you know such things. In stead of forcing students right from the beginning to stand and speak in front of their classmates --- and also it would be better if presentations are given only few marks.

Int Have you got any other suggestions?

Saba So that silent students can show some improvements, I think some kind of programme should be planned- in order that they can compose, read in front of their audience, and talk. They might not undergo much tension when they are together. What happens when students mix and work together is that some of them keep quiet because they feel that

other students speak much better than them. So it is better to let them work together for some time.

Int You mean the silent ones?

Saba Yeah, I mean those students who keep quiet most of the time.

Int So do you have the feeling that in silent students in group discussion should work together?

Saba It would be better if they mix during group discussion. What I mean is that there should be some extra time and to help these students , so that they can improve their speaking abilities.

Dawit If for instance some sort of simple compositions are prepared and given to these students so that they can take their time to get prepared and later present and discuss it to the class, you know sort of things.

Tesfa I think there should also be a welcoming atmosphere from instructors. There was a class, for example, where a student couldn't find his class and was late for that. After the instructor had let him in he asked "where have you been so far?" and the student said "I dismissed the class". Do you understand what he meant?

Int Yes.

Tesfa But his instructor laughed at him. Then students knew his mistake and started laughing. It is no wonder if students treated this way keep quiet. The way the instructor treated the student was very discouraging. That was not right. It was completely discouraging, and lacking responsibility.

Int So there are certain things on the part of instructors that need improvement.

Dawit Yes.

Abera Yes

Int Any thing else you would like to say? --- Okay. My next question is How are these students (the silent) viewed by other students?

Saba As careless

Tesfa Or negligence

Int I mean students who most of the time keep quiet

Dawit It is mainly because of their behaviour.

Int Behaviour?

Dawit I mean, there are some students who cannot express something as clearly as others.

Int In this section?

Dawit Well, he was together with me in one section.

Int Where?

Dawit It was in Boditi. He is very clever in every aspect; he can even correct his teachers' English- he would tell me the kind of mistake teachers had made. But he was very silent. I don't think he has the courage to give response to such simple questions as "what is your name?"

Int Are you saying that he has the ability, but doesn't speak?

Dawit Yes, he is very clever. If you ask him to give it to you in writing he is very automatic.

Int How do you view such students?

Dawit I mean he is clever.

Int You see it as a sign of cleverness?

Dawit Yes, that is his behaviour.

Int How do many students view the silent ones?

Dawit I don't think I can answer this question, unless from my own point of view.

Int Can you guess how the majority of students view the silent ones?

Tesfa Yes, may be, ---(10 words)

Int Saba

Saba I think they take it for carelessness.

Int My next question is – Do you know of students who actively participated in group discussion in the first semester but decreased their participation in the second semester?

Tesfa Marta has decreased.

Aster Azene has decreased.

Int I asked Azene and he also told me that he had decreased participation. Why did these students decrease their participation, what is your assumption? Why could it be?

Tesfa Well, for example I asked Marta and she told me that it was because she found the topics or the subject matter a bit boring in the second semester.

Saba That is the passages were boring.

Int Are you saying the textbook (Volume 2) is boring?

Aster Yes.

Int Is volume 1 (of the first semester) better?

X Yes.

Aster Volume two doesn't help to produce ideas.

Tesfa Yet it is still something, you know like I said earlier the majority of the students come from the regions and if there are to be other topics then it would be students from Addis Ababa who are going to have the chance to know more about the topics. As a result students from Addis Ababa may participate more. So I think it is good the way it is now, because of the forty students most of them come from the regions. The subject matter should help these students participate actively.

Int Have you got other things to add here?

Tesfa Another point here is (some thing I heard before) students are told right from the beginning that a C grade is very common, then when students get a C and prove that the saying is true they start to lose hope. Again, there is a common kind of belief among students that "you can get a C as long as you are an Ethiopian"

Saba "C is for citizenship" there is this common saying, among students.

Tesfa If that is the case, if I end up getting a C, then why should I bother- they would say.

Int Any thing you would like to add or say? Well, then lets move on to the last question. Have you come across students who in the first semester were silent or were not very active or tended to be listeners most of the time but in the second semester increased their participation in group discussion?

Dawit X

Int And others?

X Chane

Int And others?

Tesfa Kassa

Saba Yodit

Int And others? ....Why did these students increase their participation in the second semester? What is your assumption?

Saba It could probably be because they have adapted themselves to the environment. Because they have got used to the situations. And mainly it could be because instructor was not changed for the course. So because they know him well – his behaviour.

Int Could there be any other reason?

Tesfa Probably the effect of participation on students' grade, that depends on the attitude of the instructor towards participation.

Int Have you got other assumptions why some students have increased participation?

Dawit I know some students who would worry when there was going to be a debate.

Int You mean they don't want to take part in debates?

Dawit But in the second semester most of them were happy to take part in debates because there was a one mark bonus for those who participated in debates.

Int So was their interest to participate in debates to get that one mark?

Dawit Yes

Int How about when you work in groups of four or five, has participation increased or decreased?

Dawit Debebe and Chane are among those who increased participation in the second semester. Whenever we asked him to be a group leader Chane would say no, in the first semester. But in the second semester he would lead our group discussion, without being asked to be a leader. That could actually be related to grade.

Int How would you choose group leaders?

X Well, it depends on whether one is voluntary and has good language command to lead groups.

Int Okay, we have finished our discussion. Thank you very much.

Focus group interview
Group 2

Int	Were you required to do some activities in groups in English language class when you were at high school?
Elleni	I don't think it is there in the schools in the regions. Because there is no such group discussion, they find it difficult when they come here --- to a new situation.
Girma	Let alone government schools in the regions, there are problems right here in Addis Ababa. Group discussion is used only in public schools. In government schools there is a book, students do exercises especially the grammar part, that is all. There is no such a thing as group discussion and speaking sort of thing.
Int	Okay, on the contrary have you come across students who keep quiet most of the time? You know, when you work in groups of four or five, like that?
Negasa	yes
Int	well, among the students you have worked with who comes to your mind first?
Elleni	of the students I have worked with Aster keeps quiet most of the time.
Int	Selam?
Elleni	yes, well she wants to speak, she has the interest. In fact I know that she has the ability as well. But, when she speaks even her voice changes, that is out of fear. Even when we are working in group of four she does not speak, she is afraid of speaking. Her problem is fear not lack of ability. So she most of the time prefers to keep silent.
Negasa	the reason why most students don't speak is because they are shy.
Int	because they are shy, can you mention some of them for me?
Negasa	for example Zeru is very quiet, and some of the students sitting over there.
Girma	by the way the class has itself been divided. Our class. I mean students who sit here, over there and sort of thing. So there is some kind of joking (*tereb*) outside class. Students from the regions would say "you have scored good grades therefore you don't belong to our groups leave our row/ side and go and join the students from Addis Ababa". And when there is a student from Addis Ababa who has scored low grade he would be told to go and join the students from the regions, which is on that side.
Int	how come that you have arranged the way you sit that way?
Girma	it was not intentional, it is it just happened that way
Int	was it just by chance or by choice?
Girma	in the second semester when we were allowed to sit with whoever we wanted to sit with, then students started ---
Int	when you were allowed to sit with whoever you wanted to
Negasa	yes, it is out of closeness to each other
Girma	because they are close to each other
Elleni	when they are close to each other
Int	so it was based on closeness to each other
Girma	yeah, that is right. Well, Negasa has joined our group. Negasa also sometimes goes there, joins their groups. That sort of thing
Int	okay, I understand
Girma	so, the class has itself sort of divided
Elleni	there on our side
Girma	it is assumed that students from Addis Ababa speak a lot.
Negasa	yes, that is true
Girma	because it is assumed that well, on the pretext that students from Addis Ababa will happen to talk a lot, if a student from the regions joins them
Elleni	they would think that they would be different
Girma	because they think they would be different they would not like to join that group
Int	but I remember some students from the regions who sit on that side, like Tsegaye, Aster
Girma	yes, there are Desta himself

Negasa Desta is on our side
Int is it Erku or Desta?
Negasa Desta
Girma they have sent him a letter, haven't they?
Negasa yes
Girma and he has gone back to his place
Int okay
Negasa so when there is a debate between us and students from Addis Ababa, students from the regions work very hard just on the pretext that students from Addis Ababa will happen to speak a lot.
Int pardon?
Girma they do what ever they can if there is a debate between students from Addis Ababa and students from the regions – no matter how long time it might take them. There was -- some thing happened last time. You see when you gave us a task for a debate you divided the class into two just based on the way we sat that day. Then most of the students on one side happened to be students from the regions. They were working very hard, calling meetings in their dormitories
Int was that to outsmart students from Addis Ababa?
All yes
Girma there are things like this. Trying to outsmart other groups.
Int well, now can you tell me who some of the silent students are?
Negasa Tsegaye
Int others
Negasa the two students sitting by the door
Girma Zewdu, the youngest one
Int why could it be that they don't talk enough?
Girma well, it is fear
Int it is mainly because of fear?
All yes
Girma they compare themselves with others. They are not trying to express themselves, they rather worry about making mistakes and being laughed at if they make mistakes.
Int feel that others might laugh at them?
Girma yes
Elleni yes, there are some students who keep silent deliberately
Int deliberately keep silent?
Elleni yes. Let alone students who come from the regions, we, those of us who learn in the same school have varying natures – I know students who have the ability the language but keep silent most of the time because it is their nature.
Int they are naturally silent?
Elleni yes, that sort of thing. Just silent.
Negasa for example, Zeru is naturally silent. Whichever class it may be, whenever we have informal gatherings, or just come together, he is always silent.
Elleni even Tesfa, well we say he talks a lot but compared to what he knows he I can say he does not talk much. He does not.
Negasa Tesfa is very very clever.
Girma I don't admire him because he speaks a lot. Every one can talk as long as one has the courage. The main thing is the courage. When Tesfa speaks the ideas or the issues he raises are very matured. All the examples he uses are related to what he has read, and he has the ability to relate things.
Int do you think that those students who talk most of the time have better knowledge than those who are silent?
Elleni no
Girma I don't

Negasa never, there are some students who have good knowledge, but they don't speak. Because they are shy or have the fear.

Int right, on the contrary, do you think that students who keep silent most of the time have better knowledge than those who talk a lot?

Girma that could be said. There are some students who know a lot but don't talk a lot, for example Mulugeta he has very good knowledge but he speaks little.

Elleni I think it would be better to make the medium of discussion in the language students' are very good at, like Amharic for example, and see the outcome

Int you mean giving them the chance to speak in their own language?

Negasa yes

Elleni it could be possible to see the effect then.

Int how are silent students viewed by most of the students? Is it positively or negatively? How do students see them?

Girma I don't see them positively simply because they have kept silent, because I can see their participation in other classes, other courses – I mean their participation. Neither do I see them negatively. I may simply conclude that they are not speaking because they don't have the courage. So I don't see them negatively.

Int who do you like or prefer to work with, the silent or the talkers?

Girma with those who talk.

Int is it preferable to work with talkers?

Elleni yes

Girma as far as I am concerned I prefer to work with boys who talk a lot, but if we are working with girls most of us don't talk much. I prefer to work with boys.

Int okay, if you have brought forth this issue of sex composition of groups, how do most students see the composition of their groups? I mean what kind of sex composition would most of them like to have in their groups? Equal male and female, or more males, or all males and all females sort of thing?

Girma it is better when there are more males

Int more males?

Girma yes, because they know each other well and there will not be any problem.

Int they know each other

Girma yes, they know each other well, and they are together outside class, as well.

Int and what if when there are females?

Elleni there is the tendency to be shy

Girma we tend to be shy. Fear of making mistakes and judgement. If it is with males, well he makes mistakes all the time and they do all sorts of good things and bad things together.

Negasa if there is a girl in the group, one would rather keep silent than speak and make mistakes

Girma so it is better to sit with males, whatever he is speaking about

Int there are problems if boys are sitting with girls

Girma if boys sit with girls they may not speak at all. If there is a boy who tends to be a talker, then he would decrease his participation

Elleni they may be afraid of making mistakes

Int how do girls see this?

Elleni as far as I am concerned I have no problem at all. As long as we can understand each other, I mean if all of us participate, I don't mind. But I prefer to work with talkers, because if I am working with silent ones I feel that I am dominating them. I feel as if I have snatched away their right to speak. If they speak, we are on equal grounds and no problem.

Negasa if situations allowed I think it would be better to group the silent with the talkers.

Elleni it is possible to encourage them to speak.

Negasa yes, instead of keeping their k to themselves by keeping silent, and of course it would be useless if they don't use it. So it would help bring out their k if they are to work with

active participants. The situation, however, doesn't allow to do this in FLEn classes for one thing the time is short. If situations allowed it would be better to mix the silent and the talkers.

Girma when they are mixed, you know if Tesfa joins those from the regions—

Int why Tesfa?

Girma well, they know Tesfa very well, that he speaks a lot and very well. Because they know that he speaks very well, they start to compare themselves with him. When students first joined university there is the orientation they have come with- that students from private schools in Addis Ababa speak very well. But take someone a student like us – Kassa for example. When students recognise that he is from the region and that he speaks a lot- they start to question their position, "why don't I participate actively when Kassa who also has come from the same background is that active?" sort of thing.

Elleni "if he is able why should I not" kind of feeling.

Girma if he participates very actively, why don't I? It is sort of each other. If for example Dawit is to work with them then it would be easy to see the effect- there would be good participation.

Negasa if we take Tesfa as an example, from among students from Addis Ababa, if he joins the group of students from the regions, he would say or give them something broad idea to start them going and he would keep quiet. So if he encourages them to speak then they would speak. I mean if each and every group member is asked what he or she thinks about the topic under discussion, then they would speak. They would not keep quiet if they are given the chance and asked such questions. However, if he just feels that they don't speak and if he continues to fill the gap without giving them chances, then he would in fact be dominating the group members. But if he speaks a little and then give them the chance to speak, encouraging them, then students from the regions would also gradually improve their speaking abilities and have the courage to speak.

Elleni what makes students shy is I think the fact that they don't know each other very well. Otherwise if students from the regions get very well along with students from Addis Ababa, then they would not care much if they make mistakes in group discussion. If they are, on the other hand, working in groups or with students they don't know very well, then that could have some problem.

Int so do you think that changing group partners every two weeks (like we used to do in the first semester) is good?

Negasa yes

Girma yes

Elleni yes, it makes them know each other better.

Int and does it help them become courageous- participate more actively?

Elleni yes

Negasa yes

Girma yes, we can take an example. Desta was assigned to our group one day and when we started class in the second semester he has come and joined our group, he has not joined his friends from the regions.

Elleni who is it?

Girma Desta, the taller one. And from that time on he has been working with us and actually he is clever. So it would be better if students mix.

Elleni it would also be better if the activities we do in classes are geared towards making students know each other better.

Int my next question is – do you know of students who used to be silent or on the silent side and later have increased their participation in the second semester? To an observable degree?

Elleni yes, for example Yodit

Int Yodit?

Elleni yes

Negasa Darge
Girma Kassa
Int is he the one you call 'doctor'?
Girma yes
Negasa Zewdu has also increased, compared to his performance in the first semester
Int why have these students increased participation? What is your assumption?
Elleni because their confidence has increased
Negasa and they have come to know each other better in the second semester.
Girma it could also be because some mark is given for active participation
Int out of thought for grade
Elleni yes
Int okay, on the contrary, do you know of students who used to be active or on the talker side but later in the second semester have decreased participation?
Negasa Erku, the short one
Elleni the short one
Int who else?
Elleni Dawit has also decreased
Int why could it be that these students have decreased participation? What is your assumption?
Girma the main factor could be the fact that the topics the discussion topics in the text book are not as interesting as the ones we had in the first semester.
Int it is not something you can talk about widely. It is not interesting.
Int can you give one example of a topic which you found to be boring, or could not talk a lot on?
Girma well, for example there is a topic about family planning in which we were required to argue for and against family planning. So you know we some of us may be forced to argue against family planning and arguing in support of something we in reality don't support is difficult. I mean why when there are a number of topics to have discussion or debate on? I was among the group who should argue against family planning and that is really difficult.
Negasa it would be better if it is something really debatable – good topic, good also for those who argue against the point.
Elleni yes, that is right
Negasa if there are good topics that would make our minds work, and those who listen would also enjoy it.
Int okay, Firew have you got any idea, any thing to add?
Firew nods (no)
Int is Firew among the silent or the talkers?
Elleni I put him not in the silents group but in fact among the very shy.
Int how would you categorise yourself – among the silents or the talkers?
Firew among the silent
Int why do you think that is?
Firew x x x x x
Int can you speak up a bit?
Firew because I did not have the experience- I have been silent always, right from the start.
Int would you participate in the first semester?
Firew no
Int why could it be that you have been quiet?
Firew experience
Int you did not have the experience?
Firew not in class
Int and in high school, --- were you silent there as well?
Firew yes

Int which high school were at?
Firew Nazareth
Int which one in Nazareth?
Firew Adama high school
Int other reasons?
Firew fear
Int are you fearful?
Firew yes
Int okay, I have finished. Thank you very much.

Appendix 4
Group discussion transcripts

GW-1

Date November 23, 1998
Topic Task 19, Unit 1
Group members
Saba
Tesfa
Elleni
Jemal

Saba Okay, what are the main mechanisms on which we can raise the awareness of AIDS?
Tesfa To raise? This is a kind of introductory?
Saba I know but
Tesfa This is the ways we raise awareness about the dangers of AIDS?
Saba What what are they doing? By organising ourselves into groups?
Elleni Yes.
Jemal if this is a group it is believed that group discussion could raise awareness by printing out fliers.
Saba fliers, okay
Tesfa fliers and making them circulate among people
Saba circulate among people if possible, by organising ourselves into groups of literature which includes poetry and music
Tesfa everything would be x along the way which is believed to entertain and at the same time and raise awareness of or the people about its dangers
Saba if possible it is also advisable to use the mass media
Tesfa the mass media
Saba in order to raise awareness of the dangers of the disease, yes Jemal
Jemal the mass media is not positive
Saba not positive?
Jemal yeah, I mean people think about mass media in the first place it is not possible x x if they are always dramatic x x x about the disease x x x no no, I am sorry
Elleni why not?
Saba why not?
Jemal because, because
Saba it kills people
Jemal I know but first it scares people
Saba scares people?
Jemal uhm
Saba it it has to scarce them otherwise they would not be careful
Elleni it is a disease
Jemal no no no, I am sorry, the thing is they have to be aware of but they don't have to be scared of I mean they have to
Saba don't you think awareness comes after being scared, get scared and then they are aware
Jemal I don't think so
Tesfa well, Jemal it is because you are from Djibouti but in Ethiopia they say that it does not even exist. We eat berbere and we can not catch it. Whatever that is superstitious.
Saba yeah, there are some part of the world or some part of the country
Jemal where do you say that?

Saba in some parts of the country that is what they say thy say that that the disease does not even exist, okay? They don't even believe in it. So

Jemal ah that is bad

Tesfa so if you eat berbere it wont catch?

Saba yeah that is what they say, ISN'T IT?

Tesfa x x pardon me

Saba if you eat berbere it wont catch you

Tesfa x x x

Elleni education, education not

Saba yeah, education awareness

Jemal you want to tell me that people in this country are not educated?

Elleni not all of them in some parts of the country

Tesfa you know Jemal we stood third in the world?

Jemal my friend

Tesfa it stood third

Saba third, yeah – was third

Jemal let me tell you Zimbabwe is number one

Saba Uganda I thought is the number one

Jemal Zimbabwe is the number one

Tesfa okay which is second?

Jemal I don't know but Zimbabwe is number one x x x x but people from Zimbabwe I don't know whether they are informed about or not people from Zimbabwe most of them are educated. But I mean that they are not informed about x x but now over 5% of the population

Saba how come that they can be educated and not informed about the dangers?

Jemal its technology is not that much advanced and that people you know God punish you you know they think that way

Saba I think it is against our religion and culture so

Tesfa what are you talking about

Saba AIDS the topic is

Tesfa I know we are talking about AIDS what was he talking about anyway?

Saba he was talking about Zimbabwe people and

Tesfa I heard that what was the point What was the high light

Saba the point was that Zimbabwean people are mostly educated but they are not informed about the disease. Well informed about the disease.

Tesfa okay

Jemal in comparison people in my country are not educated you see what I mean

Tesfa where is x from

Jemal Zimbabwe people are not educated in my country people are not educated but the fact that they have the information about it....

GW-2

Date November 23, 1999
Topic Task 19 of Unit 2 in College English One
Participants
1. Hailu
2. Yodit
3. Haggos
4. Selam
5. Ketema

Hailu okay what the instruction says is imagine that you are going to represent one of these groups of people what will x x x x short talk for one of your members to give in which he will say what he can do to raise awareness of the dangers of AIDS to change the way some people behave sexually to help change attitudes and behaviour of people towards AIDS sufferers. Our group represented the third one that is religious leaders Christians and Muslims. Okay one of our member wrote like this religious leaders Christians and Muslims as a religious leader Christian and Muslim I believe people have more attention towards these leaders because they are more attached to their faith or God than the other the modern science especially to the Ethiopians the error of this is she is saying something about the religious workers

Yodit okay

Hailu she totally did not represent them if you represent them if you have to become them you have to behave like them just you became them okay

Yodit yes

Hailu for example you are the religious men and just act like them okay people follow me please okay just like that for example let me read what I wrote my people you must take for you for anything you do now there is one disease which does not choose age sex occupation and religion at least your accent the way you speak must be seem to them let me say it again my people you must take for you for anything you do now there is one disease which does not choose time age sex occupation and religion. We are loosing our brothers sisters fathers children this x and dangerous virus is HIV which brings the x called aids it is expanding in an alarming rate. The main cause to aids is unsafe sex mother to baby during pregnancy and using contaminated materials but the major one is unsafe sex. So people my followers avoid unsafe sex. That is it

Int: sorry, who is going to be the speaker on Wednesday?

Hailu it is me

Int: it is you on Wednesday

Hailu yes okay

Yodit okay

Hailu so all of you be ready to behave like them, okay, like the religious leaders the way they speak for example my sister you gather people and say x x x x x it is telling about religious leaders at least I will do that is you are saying something about the religious leaders you don't represent them like that okay if you want to represent them you have to behave like them just like drama or just like an artist you have to be like them you can also dress like them your way must be like them so for example can you read something like a religious leader? Can you

Yodit ask her

Hailu okay can you

Hagos I can not

Hailu you can not, can you try to read it

Hagos ENDEZA AYDELEM YETEZEGAJEHUT

Hailu MIN ALK
Hagos ENDEZA AYDELEM YETEZEGAJEHUT
Hailu just like x x,
Yodit x x x x
Hailu okay if you have any comment or any suggestion about the way we are going to represent is it better to represent like x or like me? Which one is the best?
Ketema like you
Hailu every body accept this?
Yodit yes
Hailu every body accept this?
All yes
Hailu all of you accept this?
All yes
Hailu so you don't be angry
Yodit if it is not going to be good I am I am angry, I speak like them x x x x there are young people who are x x religious leaders who x x x x x dress like them
Hailu okay
Yodit you just x your idea
Hailu okay is that your comment, have you got any comment
Yodit no because I am x x
Hailu why why why you are mistaken
Ketema x x x x
Yodit LIK ENDE OLD MEHON YELEBETIM
Ketema BIHONIM ENDENESU HONEN EKO NEW MEKREB YALEBIN
Yodit just BEKA LIK ENDENESU MEHON YALEBET YIMESLISHALL?
Ketema yes
Yodit present MADREG YALEBISHEN INDEZIH INADERGALEN INDEZIH INADERGALEN, we have to do this we have to do that MINAMIN EYALISH
Ketema we have to do this MINAMIN
Yodit AWON INDEZIA NEGER
Ketema okay
Yodit people must behave x x EYALISH NEW preach YEMITADERGIW ENJI ENDENESU act MADREGU ENE INJA
Ketema YEDIMTSU ENKUAN AWON
Hailu okay now I think all of us agreed okay now
Hagos what you are saying
Hailu it is not necessary to behave like an old man or an old girl or an old woman because religious man or woman can be a young or middle age you see
Hagos but the best is an old man
Hailu an old man
Hagos yes
Hailu that means in our culture most of the religious leaders have acceptance I think yeah an acceptance most of the old religious leaders but the young not that much, I think
Hagos x x x x
Hailu why
Yodit it is their word not their age that is not acceptable
Selam x x x x x
Hailu okay I will speak it like a young religious leader that is better
Yodit yes
Hailu okay any comment
Yodit on what
Hailu about this why we are doing a group work
Yodit yes I know

Hailu do you have any other extra suggestion
Yodit we have just given you a comment x x
Hailu what x x
Yodit no I am not a group leader
Selam ERE X X X X
Yodit okay tell us what to do and
Hailu a group leader does not mean I have a responsibility for everything else, okay I don't have responsibility for anything else my responsibility is only gathering information from all of you and just
Yodit but you are not gathering any information
Hailu I am gathering I am asking you I am asking about x from each of you I think so gathering information
Yodit x x x x
Hailu and how the grouping works the way we represent okay so
Yodit x x x x
Hailu Yodit let me tell you x x x x
Yodit ENBI, ENBI, ENBI, ENBI, ENBI

GW-3

Topic Task 19 Unit 2
Duration ~ 10 minutes
Participants
1. Dawit
2. Nega
3. Admas
4. Chane

Dawit and someone who feels this that means the basic needs of these children the parents or the family can produce especially can produce childrens who are mentally and physically being conscious and well being. So these children can help themselves their family and their country in one way or another, this is the main aim of family planning organisation
Chane okay what is about
Dawit but to do so this organisation advice people by using the abc principle as he said.
Chane yes
Dawit This is be abstain or be abstain or
Nega a a
Dawit a stands for abstain b stands for be correspondence to one to one
Chane yes
Dawit and c stands for if these two principle are not favourable for someone use condom
Chane the last choice is x x x
Dawit yes the last choice is based on three principles this organisation advises people but these three organisations have a good relation with the today's killer and dangerous disease called aids
Chane okay
Dawit this dangerous disease aids transmits having sex with more than one people person this is unsafe sex
Chane x x x x
Dawit for this be abstain or be one to one or being correspondence with one to one is very important and the last choice is using condom if someone is forced to have sex with one to one that means he is addicted to sex to unsafe sex he should use condom condom which has a dual function to prevent unwanted pregnancy and to prevent also the dangerous sexually transmitted disease. From which we are interested for interested in protecting the dangerous disease which is untreated untreatable and the most killing disease now a days is aids.
Chane okay what about being you are the representative of family planning organisation how to change the attitude of people about the aids sufferers
Dawit okay you are right especially to change the attitudes of people some people towards to the sufferers of aids this family organisation family planning organisation teaches people the ways of this sexually transmitted disease the ways of how this sexually transmitted disease transfer from one to one especially if we take aids it transmits from one to one by three more than three but the basic are having an sex having unsafe sex and the main thing is having unsafe sex
Chane unsafe sex yes
Dawit so but most people consider that this disease can be transmitted by from one to one from the sufferer to the healthy one by greeting by talking with him and by eating with him by sleeping with him and especially using his clothes by this things
Chane yes
Dawit they assume like this

Chane yes they think
Dawit but this is not the
Chane x x x x
Dawit the main x x x x the main transmitting way of the aids so to change this attitude this organisation teaches people especially this disease how this disease transmits the main transmitting way is the unsafe sex the other is being touched with the
Chane contaminated
Dawit contaminated
Chane sharp objects
Dawit sharp objects
Chane like razor blade and needles
Dawit like needles and any other which have contaminated with
Chane the virus
Dawit the blood of the sufferer
Chane okay
Dawit and the other thing is this disease is transmitted from mother to child
Chane child through
Dawit the mother who is pregnant can transfer this disease through the blood stream to the to the
Chane embryo
Dawit her child or embryo
Nega to the foetus
Dawit in the uterus
Chane okay
Admas to the foetus
Dawit yeah to the foetus in the uterus through blood stream this is the main thing and don't consider it says or it teaches people don't consider that shaking or eating or x or playing with this people

GW-4

Date November 23, 1998
Topic Task 19 Unit 2
Duration
Participants
1. Tesfa
2. Saba
3. Jemal
4. Elleni
5. Eshetu

Tesfa okay SILEZIH so we will be discussing about our presentation which is going to be held the coming Wednesday and and so lets talk so let us decide who will be presenting let us flip a coin
Jemal have you got a coin
Tesfa yes
Saba flip a coin on what
Tesfa we have got flip a coin on who is going to present the speech
Saba okay
Tesfa Elleni should we do it that way should we flip a coin or should we decide it ourselves
Elleni we decide ourselves
Tesfa who will be presenting the speech will you do it? We want someone nice you know what I am saying
Saba with the smile the smile
Tesfa SILEZIH will you do it? Will you do it?
Eshetu No, I don't x x

Tesfa Jemal will you do it?
Jemal no no
Tesfa then let us decide who should do it
Saba okay I will do it.
Tesfa are you serious
Saba yes
Tesfa thank God
Saba so I am going to present the speech next week
Tesfa YEMIGERMACHIHU NEGER KAMERAW EYEAYEN NEW
Elleni EGZIABHERIN BEL KAMERAW EYAYEN NEW ENANTE SEWOCH
Tesfa EGZIABHERIN
Saba ESHI
Tesfa okay what should we you tell us what are doing you read all of it and x x will be over
Saba okay as we know every one is concerned about this disease
Elleni CHOK BEY
Saba and mostly people between the ages of fifteen to forty are
Tesfa are the ones which are normally affected by the virus HIV aids
Elleni right
Tesfa and as long as we all know again
Saba yeah
Tesfa between the age of fifteen and to whatever year it is the for going to school I mean most the majority of people between fifteen and what ever year they are going to school so as long as we are going to be presenting on the title being a student and teacher so let us talk about it .
Elleni okay

Tesfa X you know what I have not written about the methods of transmission whatever and whatever it is not going to be what we are going to present this is just
Saba I know just a draft
Tesfa you know what I am saying Jemal
Jemal I know
Tesfa this is just
Saba students come to school to learn
Elleni so
Saba teachers come to school to teach
Elleni and
Saba and Tesfa
Tesfa ENE GEN I do not I do not get the point
Elleni what
Tesfa how are we going to present it whose is going to be a student who is going to be the teacher whatever
Saba no no no ESU generally generally EKO the question is what is the relationship between teachers and students
Elleni yes
Tesfa no
Elleni if there is close relationship
Saba yes if there is close relationship
Jemal who can be the teacher
Saba that is not the point that is not the point EKO
Elleni x x x x
Tesfa what he is saying here is
Saba no we are just generally talking about the connection between the x x
Jemal this will be a work x x x, I think that
Tesfa Jemal you know what it is saying here Jemal
Jemal yes
Tesfa you know what it says imagine that you are going to represent one of these groups of people among the eight groups work with your group and prepare a short talk for one of your group members to give in which he will say what he can do about to raise the awareness of the dangers of the disease
Saba x x x x x
Tesfa we are going to be representing being a teacher and students as well
Saba what do you have to say?
Bay yeah the same thing
Tesfa so okay my point is we will be pretending like students and a teacher as well okay what are you saying?
Jemal nothing
Tesfa nothing? You know what forget it.
Saba the point is the relationship between teachers and students in a school okay
Tesfa objection
Saba okay what is your objection?
Tesfa it is not about the relationship
Saba okay the relationship of what aids?
Tesfa what it is saying here is we will be representing a group of people we are x to be students and teachers in schools SILEZIH we will be acting like a teacher and students
Saba to raise the awareness of the dangers of aids
Jemal I think we are acting like social organisation
Saba what do teachers have to do to x x
Jemal to inform the students
Saba to inform the students

Tesfa and you know that
Jemal to inform
Saba to inform the students
Jemal to organise some meetings with specialists
Saba organise meetings
Jemal with specialists and to
Tesfa and being a student to make a kind of a group in order to entertain and at the mean time address the people the students in the school
Elleni x x x x x
Jemal x x x x x x
Tesfa this is FLEn 101 not French 101
Saba okay
Tesfa you translate what he said
Saba Elleni do that please
Elleni no you do it
Saba what he is saying is they have to openly discuss the use of condom and other precautions
Tesfa who are they who are they?
Saba teachers and students
Jemal because you know x x x x x
Saba they have to be open to each other no restraints
Jemal x x x x you where is that guy you know x x x x x x the girl from my town from my village whatever whatever so you want to be x x
Saba they have to be open to each other teachers the relationship between teachers and students okay
Tesfa you know what we are at least lucky
Saba what
Tesfa I mean lucky with the title being students and teachers at school
Jemal x x x x it is always about this tradition and whatever how can you the meaning of aids if you contract the disease or not x x x what is the symptom and how is whatever so you got to be informed
Saba let alone the schools in Addis Ababa you can go out of the city they just don't talk about this kind of things at all it is like against the culture NEGER.
Jemal I know
Tesfa but do you know what we have to do? We do have to get together the sooner the better and we will have to rehearse on this draft, we will have another x x
Saba I know ESUMA AWON
Tesfa I mean having a cumulative is that will be better and she said she will present it
Jemal I know
Tesfa good for you

GW-5

Date March 15, 1999
Topic Task 13, Unit 1 of College English 2
Group members
Saba
Tesfa
Elleni
Dawit

Tesfa you do number five, you are speaking on how to improve her life
Dawit okay, so we should start
Saba what about me?
Elleni *you see because she is kind of you know I should be given number four*
Saba what about me? Then what about me, I 'll have number two?
Tesfa you work on number one
Saba what do I say about number two? I guess it is the most difficult of all
Tesfa *it is not* difficult, you have points
Saba it is
Tesfa we have classified it already, so it is not difficult
Saba it is
Tesfa so you want to take number five
Saba no, no
Tesfa *therefore* you have got no choice, this one is already taken. So you report on number four, you are on number two, you are on number one or you want to take number five?
Dawit no, I 'll take number one
Tesfa okay, so I'll take number five and you will have to give me some ideas on number five
Dawit shall I start
Tesfa the only mechanism in which I can improve my mothers life is by keeping me away from home because I am a trouble maker if I stay at home, if I am away she gets
Saba she is she gets rest and that is peace
Tesfa I am serious,
Dawit is there other idea
Tesfa in my case there is no other... anything
Saba okay, that is only in your case
Tesfa how about you?
Saba how about other cases, too?
Tesfa how about in your case?
Dawit what is, what is
Saba what is the question again?
Tesfa how can your mum's life be improved?
Dawit in my case, I have two points sharing the load of house works
Tesfa two what?
Dawit two points about the improvement of the life of my mother, sharing the load of house work, and the other is making another means of income generating ways, erm making income generating means
Saba or helping her financially and
Dawit yes
Saba okay. ... what about you? Young lady?
Elleni her children became independent and they start living by their own,
Saba uhhm
Elleni *then I think she would be relieved*
Dawit that is what Tesfa said

Tesfa Yeah
Saba what?
Dawit that is what Tesfa said.
Saba okay
Int: you can gather ideas from other students in your group
Elleni number four *you know* because of early marriage life is difficult for people living in the country than in the town
Saba *what is it* country?! What is the difference between country and town, by the way?
Elleni country, country side
Saba *why don't you say* country side, *then*?
Dawit in rural
Tesfa I need some more ideas about number five
Saba yeah, I need
Elleni *have you finished Tesfa*?
Tesfa I have x x x x
Elleni from ten interviewed students some of one of them have said when the house work became less and the modern technology improved working materials that is one
Tesfa how about you others? Do you have any more idea, from one of the five students you have interviewed?
Dawit let me give you some ideas about number five from my own point of view
Tesfa but you have interviewed some students based on number five
Dawit no, I haven't
Tesfa give me some time to write
Dawit it is impossible to write, I think
Saba but you can write and then glance at the
Dawit could I borrow your pen
Saba sure, shall we have a look at number four?
Dawit in the case of table shall we put it simply numerically or
Tesfa in the case of what?
Dawit the table
Tesfa you see that we don't need to do it in table just in graphs and pie charts
Dawit sorry, graphs and charts I mean
Tesfa in the case of the graph?
Dawit yes, how can we report? Telling the numbers? The numbers of
Tesfa yeah almost the same thing because you have drawn the graph based on the table right? So assume that this is the table and this is the graph so the report, while you are reporting it is not going to make any difference, but in the case of the pie chart it will make a difference because it is based on percentage.
Saba I need your paper because I need to have the questions
Elleni the answers
Saba I want the paper
Elleni *I have not understood this because ninety percent of the students interviewed are, you know I thought you know*
Dawit and here of the fifteen students I have interviewed six students said
Saba Tesfa that one is mine, that is mine
Dawit six students said mothers look after children and five said x x x x x x x.
X may be some
Saba what,
X x x
Saba and what about the other one? Mine is number two which is what jobs outside home does your mother do. So we have fifteen students here. *Tesfa, we are presenting the numerical figures, aren't we?*
Tesfa we need to have the graph, first you are going to say you are reporting on number two

Saba yes

Tesfa so you will say I am reporting on number two which says jobs and the x, what sorts of jobs does your mother do? You see we have classified the question into five groups, so we have interviewed about fifteen students so the figures look like this, in the case of merchants they have said that three students have

Saba so we are presenting numerical figures, that is what I am saying.

Tesfa but in the case of the pie chart we are going to report based on the

Saba percentage

Tesfa percentage that is the only difference

Int: please, stop writing okay you have got to practise reporting to your group members first and after about fifteen minutes you'll start reporting your results to the rest of the class, okay

Dawit shall I start to practice reporting?

Saba I think it x x you can practice

Dawit well, I am going to report on number one which says who looks after children in your family. From fifteen students I interviewed six of them said mother five of them say servant and four of them said sister

Saba okay

Dawit and if you put this in percent forty percent said mother thirty-three point three percent says servant twenty-six point six percent said sister, twenty-six point seven it should be said sister. From this we can conclude that most of the job of child care was concentrated on mothers.

Saba alright, who wants to proceed?

Elleni from the fifteen students I have interviewed on the subject whether they like maid woman in the country side is harder than into whether the level of married women is harder in the country or the town, four have said country side, one suggested that x x x x x x.

Saba we have classified

Tesfa we have categorised the kind of jobs our mothers do x x x x

Elleni and it seems that seven of them are housewives and three of them appears to have x x x and three of them are civil servant mothers *which means* so which work in government offices

Tesfa it is not going to be enough

Elleni okay, I know

Tesfa it is more general

Elleni we asked we have two students that said they have said that they field work, field working

Tesfa they are students whose mothers are working in field work

Elleni they are engaged

Dawit have you finished?

Elleni yeah

Dawit I am going to question number one. It says who looks after in the family? From fifteen students I interviewed six of them said that mother looks after children five of them said that their mothers look after children. Four of them said that sister looks after children. And from the pie chart it seems to appear that forty percent of the interviews the respondents said mother looks after and thirty-three point three percent said that servants looks after children and twenty-six point seven percent say that sister looks after children.

Tesfa and question number two

Dawit from the pie chart

Saba from the pie chart fifty percent of them said

Tesfa not only based on the x x but also on the pie chart

GW-6

Date Monday March 15, 1999
Topic of discussion Task 1 in unit 1 of College English Two
Duration Approximately 20 minutes
Tesfa
Saba
Dawit
Yodit

Saba ENE I didn't work I was not here last time SILEZIH x x x x help me out
Tesfa shall I start?
Saba please do
Tesfa okay, I have interviewed five students Belayneh, Hailu, Belew, Kassa, and Adane and the answer they gave for the first question about child care is Belayneh believed that mother is the one who looks after children Hailu said servant Belew sister, Kassa sister again and Adane said his mother in the case of number two I have categorised them five of them A is Belayneh B Hailu and so on. So according to A the question is what jobs outside home does your mother do. According to A he said nothing else other than staying at home and doing the household activities B said she is a civil servant C said again nothing else D said she is a merchant and finally again E said nothing else in case of number three concerning house work the question is how many hours per day does your mother work at home? A said about twelve hours per day B said six hours per day C said twelve hours per day again D said about two hours and E said eight hours and in case of number four concerning marriage the question is do you think that life is more difficult for women living in the town or in the country side? So A , B, D, E said country and the only student who said town is C that is Belew. In case of number five, improving her life, how could the life of your mother be made easier in the future? B and C they did not say anything. They did not have any personal point of view. A said by helping her in the future after I have grown up and got my own job. D said by substituting the things she does at home by work facilitating things like machines and more easier tools and finally E said by getting additional labour from any member of the family like the daughter the son or even the husband. So this is my report.
Dawit shall I continue?
Saba yeah, please do
Dawit I write my report as group work and from the data that we have collected from interviewing more than ten different students we can see the following points. Forty per cent of the interviews said that in their families sister are looking after their children, looking after children forty per cent also said mothers and twenty per cent said servants and concerning the second question concerning job outside the home seventy-nine per cent said helping my father and boys in field works and ten percent said no other job outside the home and one percent said serving as a deputy of parliament. And ten percent said marketing as a merchant. And concerning the third question for hours they spend on household works forty percent said nine hours a day and forty percent said seven hours per day and twenty percent said five hours per day. And for the last question concerning on the x x married life for women hundred percent of the interviewers said it is difficult especially for women in the country.
Saba okay
Yodit I interviewed five students and I would try x x x x x interview into five and the first one who looks after the children, on the five x x it was the mother with the servant that do care about children and forty percent was taken care by servant while sixty percent is given to the mother and the data on the mother job was mothers job outside was this one

x percent that is sixty percent and x percent data on whether life is difficult for women in the country and in the town five of them said that life is difficult for women in the country than the town, that is hundred percent and conclusion the result is almost all my classmates mothers' living condition is much more better than what I have learned from the fuel wood carriers x x living conditions. That is it.

Dawit sorry I forgot my conclusion

Saba okay

Dawit it would appear from the x the role of women especially in the x is very significant that was the conclusion

Tesfa and in my case what I would like to add is I have done the percentage for number one number three and number four and it goes on like this the mother is forty percent sister forty percent again and the servant is twenty percent. In the case of number three how many hours they spend per a day working on household activities two hours twenty percent twelve hours is forty percent eight hours twenty percent and six hours twenty percent again and in the case of numbers four the town is just only twenty percent while the town is just only twenty percent while the country is eighty percent so this is it.

Yodit x x x x

Saba KEMETA ANAGIREWALEHU, KETEYEKEGN?

Dawit ANCHI ALNBERSHIM, last time

Saba I was not here last time.

Tesfa YIHEWUNA DATAW, organise ADIRGIWNA

Saba aha okay

Int: have any question?

Saba sorry I was not here last time and I did not collect the data

Int: and you could not do this

Saba yes, I did not interview any

Int: you did not come last time?

Saba yes

Tesfa classification according to the book NEW AIDEL?

Yodit MINDINEW YALKEW

Tesfa ENE YALKUT SOSTU MINM X X

Dawit it should be mentioned simply

Yodit house wife

Tesfa INDESU AIDELEM

Yodit house wife INA merchant AIDELEM?

Tesfa merchant AIDELEM

Yodit INA house job

Tesfa merchant AIDELEM civil servant NEW.

Dawit INA LELA DEGMO

Saba merchant, civil service LELAS DEGMO MIN ALE?

Dawit it should be different

Saba BEATEKALAY, MIN?

Dawit INDEZIH KEHONE LIYU LIYU ALE

Tesfa ANTE MIN MINDINEW YALEH?

Dawit AHUN INEGA house work house wife, no other job, deputy in the parliament, merchant, field work

Saba BEKAH X X

Tesfa SOSTU civil servant NACHEW

Saba civil service NEWA

Tesfa civil servant NEW ISU

Dawit YEMENGIST SERATENGA MALET NEW?

Tesfa x x KEHONE AWON

Saba x NEBER AIDEL?

Tesfa servant, a-n-t, a-r-a-n-t
Saba LIN AIDELEMA YETSAFKUT any way ISHI SINT ALE ANTEGA?
Tesfa x x
Saba servant
Dawit house work x x
Tesfa x x x x x
Dawit sorry field work
Saba okay field work WEY GUD ZARE MIN NEKTOGNAL? E- NEW AIDEL?
Tesfa f-i-e-l-d
Saba ISHI OKAY, merchants
Dawit one
Tesfa one
Yodit three
Saba field work
Tesfa two
Dawit two
Yodit one, AND GIZE,
Tesfa ISHI
Yodit AI TEWUT
Tesfa x it should be fifteen, second three ten plus three thirteen, so this must be two
Dawit two
Saba ISUN ANCHI YELESHIM
Yodit no
Saba EKO, this must be x x
Yodit okay
Saba house work ALBEZAM?
Tesfa number three
Dawit number three is left
Saba marriage
Dawit yes or no question, it is
Tesfa country x x there are only two choices for house for for marriage
Saba for marriage, MIN MALET NEW?
Yodit country and town
Tesfa country and town
Dawit I think it is yes or no question, yes or no question x
Tesfa which one?
Yodit number four
Dawit number four do you think do you think that
Tesfa country in my case is four
Saba no MIN MESELEH EKO YEMILEW, do you think that life is more difficult in town or in country?
Tesfa because if we say yes or no we are not going to be able to classify it in a pie chart
Saba okay, marriage is difficult in the country YEMILEW
Tesfa yeah
Yodit ANTE GA ARAT INEGA AMIST
Dawit AMIST
Tesfa KEZIA BEHUALA
Saba AMISTENGAW YISERAL?
Tesfa AYISERAM
Dawit no, ALKUAL BEKA
Saba ANID HULET ARAT BICHA?
Dawit yes
Yodit x x MIN LAY NEW BE pie chart

Tesfa BE pie chart
Dawit pie chart and graph
Tesfa LEYANDANDU X X
Saba LEYANDANDU ANDAND pie chart?
Yodit x x x x on pie chart MEJEMERIA TEBLU YISERA, X X X X
Tesfa KEZIA GRAPHU
Saba EKO INDIH AYNET
Saba LEYANDANDU?
Tesfa x x x x FETENA LAY YESERANEW AYNET KUTIR BEZIH BEKUL KETSAFIN KESIR DEGMO classification
Saba EKO LEYANDANDU MALET NEW
Tesfa yes
Dawit yes

GW-7

Date Monday March 15, 1999
Topic Task I of Unit 1 in College English 2
Duration ~20 minutes
Participants
1. Hailu
2. Elleni
3. Negasa
4. Selam

Int:	is this group one
Elleni	yes . . . and the last one is sharing the house work with others and to x x x x x
Hailu	okay, you are not right you are not right
Tesfa	why?
Negasa	why not?
Hailu	why not, it is too far
Elleni	three years
Hailu	after three years you may x x x x we don't know, you may die simply
Selam	till you grow up your mum might x just waiting
Negasa	okay this is like LAM ALEGN BESEMAY
Elleni	x x x x
Hailu	what
Elleni	I did not say x x
Negasa	or you send your girl friend to your mum's home
Hailu	I don't care
Elleni	okay, ISHI AHUN KETILU
Hailu	this report is from group one
Selam	well I said that when I grow up and x x x x the other by employing a servant and the rest are no improvement is needed
Negasa	okay
Elleni	sure yeah
Negasa	two said nothing one two students said x x this is Saba and this is
Elleni	Saba, is it?
Negasa	yes, Saba and
Hailu	that means they are living a better condition
Negasa	yes her mother is living in good condition
Elleni	she does not need any improvement
Hailu	no it is x x x x some works nothing in day time
Elleni	sorry
Hailu	so that means they work in house in home for one hour or half hour or
Elleni	so there wont be any improvements
Hailu	they must work
Elleni	they must work okay
Negasa	one guy said my mother x x x x x this thing
Hailu	what we propose is it is better to x them to work not only home but also outside just like income generating work
Elleni	yeah but do you know what the question is the question is how can the life of your mother can be improved may be to improve the burden
Hailu	okay if there is okay not only burden
Elleni	those if they are not working there is not probably more burden so it may x x x what they should is well
Selam	drinking coffee

Elleni and they do the talking
Hailu some mothers spend three or four hours a day in talk drinking coffee and talking about others just it is meaningless, meaningless talking
Elleni yes, gossiping
Negasa wait wait in chart or in graph you know we can
Hailu no I am serious, the chart or the graph shows how their mother, how mothers are free to do other work, so still you know they have burden but they have also time to do other works for example they can work just sitting home like making
Selam x x like handicrafts
Negasa x oil x
Elleni yeah
Hailu yeah that is good, do you think it is a good solution for her x x x x
Elleni if they were able to be x in the first place they would not do it themselves, MEJEMERIA
Negasa okay
Elleni they would hire a servant they would have a servant
Hailu yes
Elleni for x x x house hold x x x x , that is the amount of
Hailu x x x x
Elleni that can be a solution
Hailu look Elleni you are right , ninety percent you are right but there are also some husbands who do not like to eat a food that made by
Negasa by servants
Hailu by servants
Elleni okay, okay
Negasa just just like my father
Elleni okay so that what you have to x x x
Hailu the other thing husbands husbands work not
Hailu this is a cultural problem the other thing is the one barrier for question number five simply being husbands
Negasa suspicious AYHONIM?
Hailu what
Negasa suspicious
Elleni suspicious
Hailu why?
Elleni some fathers
Selam no mothers
Elleni no fathers
Negasa no mothers,
Hailu they must cook at least one hour in the kitchen, they must work
Elleni mothers?
Hailu no fathers
Elleni yes we see this in foreign countries for example they work equally in the US,
Hailu what
Elleni they don't have someone else
Hailu your are not x x x x
Elleni sorry
Hailu you are not x x x x
Elleni okay
Hailu x x you marry a man who do not have x x you can not simply that you have to work
Elleni yes
Hailu so in this way do you
Elleni do you think Ethiopians have to accept this

Selam x x number two
Hailu of course I saw some agents who work for their wives, or x x x x x x especially breakfast
Elleni those are you know few exceptions
Negasa yes
Hailu for example
Negasa x x x x I don't like the idea
Hailu for example they x x x x x
Elleni okay why?
Selam x x x x
Negasa I would like to do with my wife the work in the kitchen
Elleni okay, x x x
Hailu also find other income generating works
Elleni x x
Hailu yes… okay, for example when you come to when you x x x x x what do you feel?
Elleni I never saw her working x x x x so I don't know how ENA SILEZIH
Hailu no no no no not your family just like Bety's, let us assume that you have other mother x x x x who work fourteen hours
Elleni x x some one else
Negasa okay
Elleni well I don't know
Negasa so you have to work
Hailu x x x must not work
Elleni oh really
Hailu yeah
Elleni aha, so you sit and order the females to work
Hailu it is women's work
Elleni x x x them to work
Selam do you work
Hailu what
Selam what about you?
Elleni do you work at home?
Hailu just I love work
Selam x x x x
Hailu what I work is I x x
Elleni you are x x a burden on them
Hailu what x x x x
Selam I am not
Hailu why not
Selam because
Elleni BATIREGTEGN DEGMO DES YILEGNAL
Negasa this became a personal discussion
Elleni AIDELEM personal discussion EKO NEW
Hailu any way to sum up the whole to sum up the whole comments problems must be solved by ours especially by the new generation and you must not pass this problem to the next generation so we have to find the best solution for this. Yes we have to discuss it. This is this must be done by the students like college students or university students because we know lots of things about their problems in our home. So this income generating work and other solutions must be you know must be found by us. I think for the next generation this will be easy and we help our mothers that is all.
Elleni okay
Hailu and we must not expect all things from the government we are the first to do this things.
Negasa you have said you have not

GW-8

Date April 5, 1999
Topic Task 1 Unit 2 (Sharing what you know and think about tourism)
Duration ~ 20 minutes
Participants
1. Hailu
2. Marta
3. Negasa
4. Girma
5. Desta

Marta question number six, advantages and disadvantages of tourism
Hailu yes
Marta disadvantages, pollution,
Hailu pollution, in what way pollution?
Negasa collision?
Marta pollution
Hailu no pollution
Girma no, pollution- how can it be
Marta I don't know, I don't know- wait me a second
Negasa Tourism, pollution?
Marta Wait me a second
Desta we have only one advantage, generating income
Girma generating income for the country's economy
Hailu no, not only that
Marta that means it does not have any disadvantages
Negasa we have it has its own disadvantage
Marta what kind?
Girma meaning, for example, by killing some peculiar animals
Marta okay
Hailu you know some tourist steal these important things
Negasa first, the advantage,
Girma one advantage is that it introduces new technology
Negasa yeah,
Desta yes
Marta yes, absolutely, yeah
Hailu new technology and
Marta that has got to do with sharing experience, it means
Hailu experience yes
Girma yes
Hailu and the other is, for example, for example look one peasant may hunt one animal using
Marta using very primitive tools
Hailu yes, using very primitive tools but when the tourist....
Girma IT IS RECORDING , IT IS RECORDING
Girma that is advantages
Marta where do they come from?
Hailu mostly from outside of the country
Marta to be specific ?
Desta to be specific from Europe
Hailu and America

Negasa Europe why
Girma no it is not from developed countries
Negasa China and Japan the most
Marta how do you know that?
Negasa YEMIR
Marta where did you see, where did you get from where did you get the information
Hailu I saw them several times
BB have you started number two?
Hailu number two?
Girma but it is better to do number six
Int: number six, but you have to report on number two
Hailu only one question for the group
Int: yeah, discuss it first
Hailu okay
Int: discuss it orally first, you don't have to really write something very long, discuss it orally, and what you have discussed orally you'll report it.
Marta orally?
Int: orally, yeah
Marta the report will be orally?
Int: yeah
Marta okay
Hailu we have to start with number two
Marta number two okay
Girma for Desta
Hailu number three
Negasa number four
Girma number six
Marta how about you?
Desta number two
Marta let's start from the second question
Negasa okay
Marta how does a tourist differ from a traveller or temporary resident in a place? Temporary resident is I think for the country
Negasa or it is for the place
Marta yes, okay, yea tourist
Girma temporary
Marta yeah, and tourist
Desta is a traveller
Marta a tourist travels to see to watch precious things, a tourist travels to see places of special natural beauty, historical sites, wild life conservation areas, and the like
Negasa on purposely?
Marta purposely travels, yeah
Desta also the travellers come to that place to watch
Marta yes they purposely travel to see places of special natural beauty, historical sites, wild life conservation areas and … that is the difference. Why, what did we say about the first one- where do tourists eh mostly
Girma is that your question, is that your question? Okay, it is enough for you.
Marta sorry the second question, the second
Girma okay it is enough
Int: I think you should not write anything, because most of the students are at the moment getting very busy writing, instead of discussing. So stop writing and discuss it orally. (instruction for the whole class)
Girma well, you too

Hailu no no no
Marta let's continue
Negasa continue where?
Marta have you already completed your answer?
Desta no
Marta no?
Desta what is resident, what does it mean?
Marta NEWARI NEW
Desta temporary YEHONE
Marta HOTEL TEKERAYTO YEHEDE MINAMIN MALET NEW
Desta it means it is LEBIZU GIZE YEMAYKOY MALET
Marta yeah, something like that
Hailu a person who has that mission which is not for a long time
Marta a tourist travels, a tourist travels, a tourist travels
Desta it may be a tourist or a traveller
Marta INEZIH NEGEROCH for especial visit to a place of natural beauty
Hailu any body who come as a guest x x x x x
Girma okay
Marta why do tourists
Girma for example you may go to x x Asmara, but the bus may not enable you to reach on that place, you may be
Marta a traveller, okay okay , travellers
Negasa it is four or ten just not for a long time
Girma just you reside on that place and you go to whatever you like
Negasa those travel
Girma meaning
Negasa travellers and tourists both travel but the difference is that it is not the travellers
Hailu to see on the place
Marta it is x x topic
Negasa travel to reach other x place
Hailu they have their own destination
Negasa but tourists when they see attractive place they stop their car and
Girma YIHE YEHONE X X X X X X
Marta yeah
Hailu please, please
Marta the third question
Hailu BEAMARINGA TEWUNA BENGLIZGNA AWRU
Negasa you yourself where are you, where are you?
Hailu question numbers three
Negasa your are busy writing
Marta where do tourists come from?
Negasa sorry
Marta who do tourists mostly come from- from developed countries we said
Negasa abroad
Marta abroad means developed countries
Girma yeah
Desta mostly okay. What motivate them to visit places?
Hailu what motivates them to visit places?
Marta what motivation? The desire to know NEWA the desire
Negasa no no why?
Marta the desire for recreation
Desta to know but also to see

Hailu not only to know to see different things other than their country places to see different environment, you know
Marta to to for recreation to admire nature
Hailu it may be this things may be may be famous and different from other countries
Girma ISHI
Hailu it is may be the only one the only place
Girma can you get other
Marta MEKSEM MALET MIN MALET NEW?
Hailu what
Girma grasp
Marta grasp MINDNEW X X X X
Hailu okay, ISHI let's now do question number six
Negasa why it is number four
Hailu who do question number four, you?
Desta some of the tourist attraction YEMILEW NEWA
Girma what are the tourist attraction in our country?
Desta tourist attraction Axum
Negasa no in your group discussion mention tourist attraction YEMILEW NEW ETHIOPIA
Girma it does not say
Desta rift valley, the lake area, what about the lake area? Lake Tana MINAMIN
Negasa lake Langano, Shala, Abiyata
Hailu MIN YASKHAL TADIA, why you laugh?
Negasa ATASFOGIREGN
Hailu I am serious, why you laugh?
Girma I am serious
Negasa EREH YEMIKETILEWIN
YY x x x x x
Hailu come on
Girma this is foolish
Desta yes
Hailu who is foolish?
Negasa you, yourself
Hailu come on, come on let's go to number six immediately
Girma under the heading special places of natural beauty
Negasa special place of natural beauty?
Girma yes
Desta Axum
Negasa Lalibela
Girma and Fasilades
Negasa Bete Giorgis
Girma Bete Giorgis ELLENI, Betemariam
Desta Adadi Mariam
Girma okay, okay it is enough, historical sites
Negasa this is natural
Desta historical Axum
Negasa Axum, Lalibela also historical, Fasilades also Bete Giorgis also
Hailu no it is natural
Negasa natural means
Girma lakes
Negasa yes, lakes
Desta Abiyata
Negasa Ras Dashen
Hailu organise your notes

Girma just forget it, what about the third?
Desta wild life
Negasa wild life conservation
Marta X X X X X X MIN ENDEHONE TIZ AYILEGNM
Desta Gambela
Girma Nech Sar
Desta Semein Mountain
Negasa Bale , Arsi- Bale
Desta what about the Denakil area
Negasa it is now Eritrea's, it is not ours
Hailu it is not ours, now number six
Marta feel HULU ALADERGIM YENBERE NEW YENEBERE NEW MALETE
Negasa KEY BAHIR LAY NEW WESENU
Hailu what about question number six
Marta KES ELLENI
Negasa what about?
Hailu question number six
Marta what
Hailu what advantages and disadvantages …
Hailu okay I will tell you something about the places that I visited and then you will be attracted to come back to our country
Girma our country
Hailu to this country and to investment to investment to invest your to invest your to invest your
Girma to invest?
Hailu yeah, you are a rich guy and so
Marta what are you talking about, advantages?
Hailu this is an advantage, am I wrong, am I wrong?
Girma yeah
Marta nothing
Hailu why
Girma be slow
Desta introduction of good culture is also one of the advantages
Hailu introduction of good culture is sometimes bad
Negasa by the way is there some thing like bad culture, do you think?
Hailu yes, there are there are x x x x
Marta yes, there are, there are
Girma for you
Marta for me, even for those people who are x x x x x
Negasa okay, what about the disadvantages?
Hailu hunting the animals is illegal, hunting wild life animals the other thing is stealing things like TSIWA
Girma x x x x
Desta there is also introduction of some bad habits
Marta no way there are
Hailu for example, some tourists come here came here to visit some places for sexual, necessity, to satisfy their sexual desire
Marta what are you talking about?
Hailu when they come to here, when they come here they come with their venereal diseases
Negasa yeah, they spread viruses, for example, HIV virus
Girma CHEBT,
Hailu CHEBT, it comes from other countries
Int: at this point sub-groups are created and that has made it very difficult to transcribe

GW-9

Date April 5, 1999
Topic Task 1 Unit 2 (Sharing what you know and think about tourism)
Participants
1. Chane
2. Abera
3. Debebe
4. Dawit

Chane places, animals and the like tourism is the activity x x that engage a country
Abera by the way a person can be a tourist after twenty four hour visiting a place, no after, x x x x
Dawit what what?
Abera a person can be tourist MALET AWKO YADERE ENDEHON after twenty-four hours, KE HAYA ARAT SE'AT BELAY MEKOYET ALEBET MALET NEW EWITCH
Chane a person can be a tourist if and only if he visits a place for more than twenty-four hours
Abera twenty-four hours
Chane if it is less than twenty-four hours, he can not be a tourist
Abera yeah
Chane then, the visit
Dawit I may go somewhere and I simply want to see the place
Abera less than twenty-four hour?
Dawit yeah, the place is
Abera if you are visit less than twenty-four hours no
Debebe you should go away from your permanent place for more than twenty-four hours if you are going to be a tourist
Abera yes
Dawit otherwise?
Chane you are not a tourist
Dawit do you have any reference, do you refer to a book
Debebe what about visitors who visit in less than twenty-four hours?
Abera I don't know
Dawit simply visitors
Chane yeah, visitors
Debebe he is right, because if you go and look at the Haile Sellasie Palace, you are not a tourist, you can not be a tourist, but you are a visitor
Dawit to say that most of the tourists are coming from somewhere x x x x x x, since they start from there the journey may take more than twenty-four hours
Chane x x x x x a tourist x x x x a temporary residence in a place, therefore a tourist differ from a traveller
Dawit a tourist to tour means it should be as a plan designed planned and designed tour like touring somewhere x x x x x it is a temporary x place, temporary residence in a place without x x x x x for the sake of visiting these places, that is for the temporary resident, but to be a tourist travels, tourists differ from travellers where tourist is mostly aim, the aim of the tourist is to reach that place
Chane what about the traveller
Dawit a traveller may may not x to the original place, x x x x x x,
Chane okay Belayneh
Debebe a tourist x x x x aimed at visiting but a traveller may be x x x x it can be from x x x x x x

Dawit make your idea clear, somewhat it is clear

Debebe x x x x x x they write about some places, but tourist

Chane return back to his place

Dawit most of the time tourists can move from visiting different places and what they visited should be reported to someone about something and

Debebe most of the time their aim is not like that but a traveller x x x x x country about what he saw

Dawit yes, if they x x x x x x x x

Chane for the future time for the sake of x x x x political ideas in order to colonise

Abera the country

Chane yes, politically or religion or missionaries, travellers, but tourists one of the aim of

Dawit mostly it is to refresh their minds

Chane yes, what x x they come to that place

Dawit out of the cultural or economical interest of

Chane they interested in studying about the cultural origin and political types of that area they document to their government or various x x. if they have a religious mission

Dawit they try to introduce some major religions

Chane and politically

Dawit as colonisation kind of x x

Debebe the tourist is a person who plan to see some peculiar or strange things in some where far apart from his original place. Where as the traveller is some one who just want to reach some place with his aim or his goal is just to reach some place. On the way of his going his travel may visit some places. But visiting some places is not his primary aim his primary aim is just to reach some places

Dawit to read or what?

Debebe to reach

Dawit reach

Debebe to reach some places

Chane some new areas

Debebe may not be new or , but for example a person who starts from Addis wants to reach Harar by bicycle then he is a traveller, on way of his travelling can visit some places, but his aim his primary aim is just to reach some place, that planned place but in the case of tourist, those tourists primary aim is to visit some strange things so this is a little bit difference

Dawit do you think the aim of reaching there to the new places x x x x

Debebe just their ambition, just their interest to reach some that places, for example peace travellers – YE SELAM TEGUAZHOCH YEMINLACHEW ALU AYDEL, then they just start from one place and announce what they want to reach, then they going day and night then after reaching that place they again announce what they done

Dawit how much from some where else they go how much it is far? The aim may be like

Debebe that is personal, personal aim but their aim is to reach some places, for example it may be on foot for example if a person starts from Addis and go to Nazareth on foot he is a traveller, on his way he may visit some places, but visiting places may not by his primary aim

Dawit it may not be his aim the journey may not be more very mechanised kind of transport, you are saying like this?

Debebe yeah. On foot may be bicycle

Dawit or bicycle

Debebe yeah it is personal

Abera it can be aeroplane

Debebe the traveller, it is not usual to travel with plane or parachute, because if you go by plane it takes very short period of time, but travellers usually want to take large period of time and with in that period they face many difficulties

Dawit difficulties of what kind, how

Abera BEMIN MELK?

Debebe environmental conditions and they want to adapt this environmental varieties so this is one of their

Dawit in such a way that they are able to see so many things?

Debebe yeah

Dawit which means enable them to write something new

Debebe yeah, records

Dawit records or on documents

Debebe yeah, so in this way they may be different

Abera my idea is not more than a few, a traveller and a tourist simply go in the way simply go to some place where there is flood, simply go from x x this means no go or diverse direction to see something, historical, simply go

GW-10

Date May 3, 1999
Topic Task 1 Unit 3
Participants
1. Elleni
2. Aster
3. Negasa
4. Tsegaye

Elleni I accept that people the male children even though I don't agree with it. And this is because they believe that men are stronger than women and so the male can help his father with tilling of the land and prepare the land for producing crops and that is why I think the family prefer male children, what do you think? Does it have effect on children?
Aster the effect especially girls feel inferiorities and males feel superiority and by any field especially school and every where girls always affected by males and the society also have very strong belief
Elleni yes
Aster in this inferiority, this is the effect
Elleni what about you? The woman feels less important in the family. She feels less important in the family, do you agree with it?
Aster I am not agree because I am also the victim
Elleni let us look at the one which says - how is male dominance reflected in your x
Aster how is male dominance reflected in your x x x x is the topic of our discussion
Elleni consider education, social relations
Negasa this is the male dominant as you see if you take engineers, take Arat Kilo, if you go Arat Kilo you can not find girls
Elleni there only seventy girls out of thousand
Aster in our campus most of them
Elleni are women
Aster yes
Negasa EDIME YELACHEWM TADIA
Aster in social relations
Negasa males feel superiority and x x x x x x , I think so
Elleni okay that is good, … say something
Aster in economic activities, for example in rural areas males
Elleni almost all are allowed to go to school
Aster yes
Elleni but women are supposed to assist their mothers in the household activities which is very bad indeed
Aster especially in the field in field works males are supposed to do more than females and produced more than females always females are supposed to do in house after that they do bad things
Negasa x x x x x manager is female do you think that the workers the employees approach you equally as much as the male manager
Elleni no I don't think so
Negasa if the manager is female they don't accept her or
Aster if the teacher is male or female, which one would you prefer?
Negasa teachers who are x x x x x
Aster especially the majority of the society
Negasa it is not my x x x x x , if you take for example maths
Aster of course

Negasa do you think they want to teach you not for the sake of their salary, wage some thing just for the welfare of her feeling

Aster this is your opinion but in this discussion the majority of this society or the Ethiopian people how do they consider this?

Negasa after four years when you those who x x x x change the behaviour of

Aster until that

Negasa until that before you came here there was students who are taught like this

Aster such kind

Negasa taught like this they were went to the society

Elleni let me ask you a question do you think this dominance of the male is only observed in our country? Or in all developing countries?

Negasa in developing countries

Aster especially in our country in developing country, developed countries don't

Elleni you know this dominance exists

Negasa not in the US

Elleni in the US too,

Negasa US?

Elleni yes, you know they started this organisation they started they have the new rule for women to be employed in different organisations in they are giving priorities to women to apply to x x

Aster in US females took especial authority

Elleni yes

Aster for example, the WUCH GUDAY MINISTER Marline Allbright, prime minister

Negasa no not prime minister

Aster foreign minister,

Elleni yeah, yeah

Aster foreign minister and other branches of ministers females took good position

Elleni they are trying to eliminate this dominance

Aster the dominance yes

Elleni they are x the chance for women to

Aster and if you as you see it on TV especially in film programme females are over their husband if they don't agree by something they can they leave it. And they can disagree with her husbands. In our country males are dominant over females or

Elleni I x x here, their positions

Negasa our country also has female ministers, for example Genet Zewdie the administration of education, of course and the health administration I don't know her name.

Elleni the other difference between us and the other people is that the other countries are trying to eliminate I mean the women they are acting x x x x x x , but in Ethiopia here every body is complaining and no one is reacting

Aster yeah

Elleni and they are not x they just complain x x x x x just keep it to themselves

Aster every body

Elleni we should react

Aster we should start

Negasa yes you may x x x they take themselves as inferior all girls

Aster not themselves but also the society

Elleni they are x x

Negasa no x x , but they always feel inferior

Elleni suppose that you are sick and to choose a male doctor and a female doctor which one would you prefer to go to? To the male or to the female doctor?

Aster male NEWA

Negasa x x x x

Elleni would do that

Negasa yeah
Aster most people, but
Elleni now you just say it does not matter
Negasa I prefer a female doctor
Elleni you do?
Negasa yeah
Elleni I don't think so, you just say it x x x x
Aster why do you prefer?
Elleni well I doubt
Negasa and you
Tsegaye may be
Aster may be, this also shows doubt
Elleni would you prefer male doctor or female doctor?
Tsegaye male doctor
Elleni male doctor, yes x x x
Aster okay how culture is always determine what x x x
Elleni women of Ethiopia should react, fight for their x x
Aster we have to struggle for our rights
Elleni we should start tomorrow
Aster yeah, today
Negasa now
Aster now
Negasa x x x x
Aster let us conclude
Elleni do you know a culture a country where people cry when a woman has a girl
Tsegaye yes
Elleni have you heard that?
Tsegaye yes I heard it
Elleni oh how bad it is
Elleni I think it is in Asia, somewhere in India or somewhere around, I don't know
Aster in our country also if some body gets male first everybody says congratulations but if he gets female or every body is dis, dis
Elleni disappointed
Aster disappointed, disagrees
Elleni it is okay x x x x we use the data for next time
Negasa x x x x
Elleni let's x x x for the time when women are leader of everything and leader of the world
Aster yeah
Elleni instead of staying in the house
Negasa that is ridiculous
Elleni you will see
Aster you will see it x x , AIDEL?
Elleni yeah
Negasa you started by equality, equality, equality always
Elleni yes, ENDE
Negasa not equality
Elleni why not, x x x x x but it is not practical
Aster it is theoretical

Appendix 5
Students' questionnaire: about high participators

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages & Literature
December 1999

Below are factors that students reported to have accounted for the difference in the amount of verbal participation in small group discussion in College English classes. Please, indicate the extent to which each factor would exert an influence on students' verbal participation behaviour using the following six-point scale. For each factor choose only one alternative from among the six choices given in the scale. Indicate your response by circling the alternative you have chosen. ** Note that this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Follow the example:

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

In small group discussion some students **participate actively/ talk a lot because (of):**

	Factors	Degree of agreement					
1	They know each other well	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	They are not shy (they feel confident / have the courage when they speak in English)	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	They are not afraid of making mistakes	6	5	4	3	2	1
4	They hope to improve their English	6	5	4	3	2	1
5	They enjoy interacting with other students in the English class	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	They feel that they are positively evaluated by their group members	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	They think that they are better in English than other students in the group	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	The topic is relevant or related to their personal life	6	5	4	3	2	1
9	They are well prepared or have done their assignments	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	They have good English language ability	6	5	4	3	2	1
11	They have the ability to see ideas from different angles	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	They have enough experience speaking in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
13	They organise ideas in a detailed way (not in a summarised way)	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	They have good family background that encouraged them to express their views freely	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	The society they have come from shaped them to be talkers	6	5	4	3	2	1
16	Their high school background, they were encouraged to speak in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
17	They are not influenced by the presence of members of the opposite sex	6	5	4	3	2	1
18	They are familiar with the topic of discussion	6	5	4	3	2	1

19	Group members are close to each other	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	They think other students in the group are not participating actively	6	5	4	3	2	1
21	They have adjusted themselves with the new environment	6	5	4	3	2	1
22	They are positively influenced by the orientations from senior students (2nd year and above students)	6	5	4	3	2	1
23	They come from private schools	6	5	4	3	2	1
24	Students are evaluated for participation in group discussion	6	5	4	3	2	1
25	There is welcoming atmosphere from instructors	6	5	4	3	2	1
26	If they are from Addis Ababa, other students leave the floor to them, assuming that they speak well and a lot	6	5	4	3	2	1
27	They have the interest or motivation	6	5	4	3	2	1
28	The system of grading is encouraging	6	5	4	3	2	1
29	There are few students in the group / the group is small	6	5	4	3	2	1

Sex a) male b) female

Name of high school you have come from _____

Thank you very much for your co-operation!

Appendix 6
Summary of results of students' questionnaire: high participators

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

In small group discussion some students **participate actively/ talk a lot because (of):**

	Factors	%	X	Rank
1	They want to improve their English	88.90	5.39	1
2	They have the interest or motivation	86.11	5.39	1
3	They are well prepared or have done their assignments	66.70	4.97	3
4	There is welcoming atmosphere from instructors	69.69	4.85	4
5	They have the ability to see ideas from different angles	65.71	4.83	5
6	They have adjusted themselves with the new environment	61.11	4.78	6
7	They know each other well	55.60	4.65	7
8	They feel that they are positively evaluated by their group members	67.64	4.59	8
9	They are not shy (they feel confident / have the courage when they speak in English)	58.30	4.53	9
10	They enjoy interacting with other students in the English class	55.60	4.50	10
11	Students are evaluated for participation in group discussion	52.78	4.47	11
12	They are positively influenced by the orientations from senior students (2nd year and above students)	52.78	4.44	12
13	The topic is relevant or related to their personal life	54.29	4.43	13
14	There are few students in the group / the group is small	47.22	4.42	14
15	They are not afraid of making mistakes	60.00	4.34	15
16	They organise ideas in a detailed way (not in a summarised way)	48.57	4.31	16
17	They have good English language ability	48.57	4.28	17
18	If they are from Addis Ababa, other students leave the floor to them, assuming that they speak well and a lot	63.89	4.28	17
19	Their high school background, they were encouraged to speak in English	51.43	4.14	19
20	They are familiar with the topic of discussion	50.00	4.08	20
21	They are not influenced by the presence of members of the opposite sex	45.71	4.06	21
22	They have enough experience speaking in English	38.89	3.97	22
23	The system of grading is encouraging	44.44	3.92	23
24	Group members are close to each other	31.43	3.86	24
25	They think that they are better in English than other students in the group	44.44	3.81	25
26	They have good family background that encouraged	42.86	3.77	26

	them to express their views freely			
27	They think other students in the group are not participating actively	33.33	3.44	27
28	They come from private schools	31.43	3.26	28
29	The society they have come from shaped them to be talkers	19.44	2.67	29

Appendix 7
Students' questionnaire: about low participators

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages & Literature
December 1999

Below are factors that students reported to have accounted for the difference in the amount of verbal participation in small group discussion in College English classes. Please, indicate the extent to which each factor would exert an influence on students' verbal participation behaviour using the following six-point scale. For each factor choose only one alternative from among the six choices given in the scale. Indicate your response by circling the alternative you have chosen. ** Note that this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Follow the example:

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

In **small group discussion** in College English classes some students **do not participate actively because (of):**

	Factors	Degree of agreement					
1	They do not know each other well	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	They are shy (do not feel confident / lack courage) when they speak in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	Fear of making mistakes	6	5	4	3	2	1
4	They lose hope of improving their English	6	5	4	3	2	1
5	They don't enjoy or like interacting with other students in the English class	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	They feel that they are negatively evaluated by their group members	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	They think that the other students in the group are better in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	The topic is not relevant or related to their personal life	6	5	4	3	2	1
9	They are not well prepared or have not done their assignments	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	They do not have good English language ability	6	5	4	3	2	1
11	They lack the ability to see ideas/ things from different angles	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	They do not have enough experience speaking in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
13	They organise ideas in a summarised way (not in a detailed way)	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	Their family background, they were not encouraged to express their views freely	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	The society they have come from shaped them to be silent	6	5	4	3	2	1
16	Their high school background, they were not encouraged to speak in English	6	5	4	3	2	1
17	They do not feel free when there are members of the opposite sex	6	5	4	3	2	1

18	They are not familiar with the topic of discussion	6	5	4	3	2	1
19	Group members are not close to each other	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	They are dominated by some students in the group	6	5	4	3	2	1
21	They have not adjusted themselves with the new environment	6	5	4	3	2	1
22	They are negatively influenced by the orientations from senior students (2nd year and above students)	6	5	4	3	2	1
23	There are many students in the group/ the group is large	6	5	4	3	2	1
24	There is not enough mark for group participation	6	5	4	3	2	1
25	There is no welcoming atmosphere from instructors	6	5	4	3	2	1
26	They leave the floor for students from Addis Ababa , assuming that they speak well and a lot	6	5	4	3	2	1
27	Lack of interest or motivation	6	5	4	3	2	1
28	The system of grading is not encouraging	6	5	4	3	2	1

Sex a) male b) female

Name or place of high school you have come from _____

Thank you very much for your co-operation!

Appendix 8 Summary of results of students' questionnaire: low participators

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

In **small group discussion** in College English classes some students **do not participate actively because (of):**

	Factors	%	X	Rank
1	They are shy (do not feel confident / lack courage) when they speak in English	90.00	5.73	1
2	Fear of making mistakes	93.30	5.57	2
3	They do not have enough experience speaking in English	83.30	5.37	3
4	They think that the other students in the group are better in English	76.70	5.07	4
5	Their high school background, they were not encouraged to speak in English	66.70	4.80	5
6	They leave the floor for students from Addis Ababa , assuming that they speak well and a lot	60.00	4.47	6
7	The system of grading is not encouraging	50.00	4.43	7
8	Their family background, they were not encouraged to express their views freely	46.70	4.11	8
9	They do not have good English language ability	46.70	4.1	9
10	They are dominated by some students in the group	48.28	4.07	10
11	They feel that they are negatively evaluated by their group members	48.28	4.03	11
12	They are negatively influenced by the orientations from senior students (2nd year and above students)	50.00	4.03	11
13	They do not know each other well	51.70	4.00	12
14	They lack the ability to see ideas/ things from different angles	43.30	3.9	14
15	They do not feel free when there are members of the opposite sex	33.33	3.80	15
16	They are not familiar with the topic of discussion	34.48	3.79	16
17	Group members are not close to each other	34.48	3.79	16
18	They organise ideas in a summarised way (not in a detailed way)	32.14	3.75	18
19	They have not adjusted themselves with the new environment	40.00	3.73	19
20	The society they have come from shaped them to be silent	46.70	3.67	20
21	There is not enough mark for group participation	30.00	3.37	21
22	They lose hope of improving their English	27.60	3.31	22
23	Lack of interest or motivation	31.03	3.31	22
24	They are not well prepared or have not done their	26.70	3.23	24

	assignments			
25	They don't enjoy or like interacting with other students in the English class	36.70	3.20	25
26	There is no welcoming atmosphere from instructors	23.33	3.17	26
27	There are many students in the group/ the group is large	7.14	2.50	27
28	The topic is not relevant or related to their personal life	16.70	2.2	28

Appendix 9
Students' questionnaire: perceptions of high participators and low participators

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages & Literature
December 1999

Below are extracts from first year students' perceptions of silents and talkers in small group discussion in College English classes. Please, indicate your level of agreement by using the following six-point scale. For each view or perception choose only one alternative from among the six choices given in the scale. Indicate your response by circling the alternative you have chosen. ** Note that this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Follow the example:

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

I. About students who **talk a lot/ participate actively** in small group discussion

	View/ opinion or perception	Degree of agreement					
1	They are favoured or encouraged by instructors	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	They can be good group partners/ members	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	Other students accept their views most of the time	6	5	4	3	2	1
4	They are boastful	6	5	4	3	2	1
5	I see them positively	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	They just want/ like to talk or participate	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	They can be good group leaders	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	They take others' silence for ignorance	6	5	4	3	2	1
9	They are determined to score an 'A' grade	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	Most of them come from private schools	6	5	4	3	2	1
11	I admire them	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	They are trying to terrorise (cause fear or panic to) others	6	5	4	3	2	1
13	They have good social skill	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	I don't respect them, I see them with contempt	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	They show off (try to get attention and admiration for their ability)	6	5	4	3	2	1

II. About students **who keep silent most of the time** in small group discussion

	View/ opinion or perception	Degree of agreement					
1	They are not favoured or liked by instructors	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	They are not good group partners/ members	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	Most of them are incompetent or lazy	6	5	4	3	2	1

4	I see them negatively	6	5	4	3	2	1
5	They are careless	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	Most of them are clever, specially in other subjects (than English)	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	They run short of ideas	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	They frighten me or I don't feel free when I work with them	6	5	4	3	2	1
9	They are viewed negatively by their instructors	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	They have some problems, I pity them	6	5	4	3	2	1

III. About yourself

Sex a) male b) female

Name of high school you have come from _____

How do you rate your own level of participation in small group discussion? Please, circle one of the alternatives:

I participate/ talk a lot 6----5-----4-----3-----2-----1 I am silent most of the time

Thank you very much for your co-operation!

Appendix 10
Summary of results of students' questionnaire: perceptions of low and high participators

6 Strongly Agree	5 Moderately Agree	4 Slightly Agree	3 Slightly Disagree	2 Moderately Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

1	I like to study grammar rules	6	5	4	3	2	1

(C) About students who **talk a lot/ participate actively** in small group discussion

(D)

	View/ opinion or perception	%	X	Rank
1	They are favoured or encouraged by instructors	80.5	5.39	1
2	I see them positively	81.6	5.21	2
3	They just want/ like to talk or participate	77.5	5.15	3
4	They can be good group partners/ members	58.5	4.68	4
5	They can be good group leaders	52.5	4.53	5
6	They have good social skill	58.3	4.39	6
7	I admire them	48.6	4.34	7
8	Other students accept their views most of the time	43.6	4.05	8
9	They take others' silence for ignorance	34.2	3.87	9
10	Most of them come from private schools	38.5	3.85	10
11	They are trying to terrorise (cause fear or panic to) others	45.9	3.78	11
12	They are boastful	39.5	3.76	12
13	They are determined to score an 'A' grade	28.2	3.51	13
14	They show off (try to get attention and admiration for their ability)	45.0	3.50	14
15	I don't respect them, I see them with contempt	13.2	2.42	15

II. About students **who keep silent most of the time** in small group discussion

	View/ opinion or perception	%	X	Rank
1	They have some problems, I pity them	36.6	3.44	1
2	Most of them are clever, specially in other subjects (than English)	35.9	3.36	2
3	They run short of ideas	24.4	3.20	3
4	They are not good group partners/ members	17.5	3.13	4
5	They frighten me or I don't feel free when I work with them	32.5	3.10	5
6	They are not favoured or liked by instructors	27.5	3.08	6
7	They are viewed negatively by their instructors	19.5	2.85	7
8	They are careless	13.2	2.45	8
9	Most of them are incompetent or lazy	17.1	2.15	9
10	I see them negatively	12.2	2.12	10

Appendix 11
Post group work questionnaire/ ratings: Stage 1

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
November 1999

Dear student,
I would very much value your cooperation in establishing the extent to which students participate in group discussions. On the basis of your replies to the following questionnaire I hope to find out the patterns and forms of interaction among language learners. Thank you very much for your help.

PART I The following questions are based on the group discussion task you have just accomplished.

Please, indicate your selection by circling the letter/ number of your choice.

1. Did you enjoy working with a group?
   a) Yes b) No

2. Did you find that you learnt more working with a group?
   a) Yes b) No

3. Would you like to work this way again?
   a) Yes b) No

4. In language classroom do you prefer to work alone?
   a) Yes b) No
5. How difficult did you find the discussion task? (*please circle a number*)
   'too difficult' 1..2..3..4..5..6. 'child's play'

6. How was the performance of your group? (*Circle one number*)
   'excellent' 1...2...3...4...5....6. 'bad'

7. How hard did you work?
   'very hard' 1...2...3...4...5...6. 'I took it easy'

CONSIDER ALL GROUP MEMBERS, YOURSELF INCLUDED

8. Do you feel that one group member dominated the group?
   a) Yes b) No
   If 'yes' which member? (*please circle his/ her code no.*) 1....2....3....4....5....6
9. Did one of the members surpass/ exceed the others in making suggestions?
   a) Yes b) No
   If 'yes' which member? (*please circle his/ her code no.*) 1....2....3....4....5....6

10. Which member had most insight/ understanding? (*please circle his/ her code no.*)
1....2....3....4....5....6..../ all members were about equal)

11. How important do you consider the contribution of member
No.1? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'
No.2? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'
NO.3? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'
No.4? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'
No.5? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'
No.6? 'very important' 1..2..3..4..5..6 'not very important'

12. Rate each member of your group (coded '1' to '6') on participation in *the group discussion task you have just completed* according to the following 9-point scale (*please tick* [ ]):

		1	2	3	4	5	6
a	Talked constantly (9)						
b	Talked almost all of the time (8)						
c	Talked most of the time (7)						
d	Talked a lot (6)						
E	Talked a moderate amount (5)						
f	Talked some (4)						
g	Talked a little (3)						
h	Talked very little (2)						
I	Did not talk at all (1)						

13. Rate each member of your group (coded '1' to '6') on participation in *the group discussion task you have just completed* according to the following 7-point scale (the first one has been done to serve as an example):

6= Always
5= Almost always
4= Fairly often
3= Not too often
2= Almost never
1= Never

		1	2	3	4	5	6
e.g.	(Tells jokes.)	4	2	6	1	1	5
a.	Expresses him/ herself clearly.						
b.	Tends to be silent.						
c.	Participates actively.						
d.	Dominates and imposes his/ her desire on the group.						
e.	Is warm and friendly.						

14. Were you open with the group? That is, did you feel free to say what you really thought and felt at the time you felt it was necessary, or did you find it impossible to express your true feelings?

I felt (	write the number of your choice here) _____
1.	Completely free and expressive
2.	Almost completely open
3.	Somewhat open
4.	Slightly more open than closed
5.	Neither open nor closed

6.	Slightly more closed than open
7.	Somewhat closed
8.	Almost completely closed
9.	Completely under wraps, closed, and hidden

PART II General Information

1. Group A....B....C
   Your code 1....2.....3....4....5....6
2. Age
3. Sex (*please underline)* Male Female
4. Type of school you attended in high school (*you may circle more than one letter, if applicable*)
   a. Government day school
   b. Government evening school
   c. Private day school
   d. Private evening school
   e. Other _____

That is the end.
Thank you very much!

Appendix 12
Summary of post group work questionnaire: Stage 1

Item no. 8	Yes	%	who	No	%
Do you feel that one group member dominated the group?	///		2a,3a,2a,	///	

Item no. 9	Yes	%	who	No	%
Did one of the member surpass/ exceed the others in making suggestions?	////		1a,4a,2a,2a	//	

Item no.10	Student (s)	All members were about equal
Which member had most insight/ understanding?	3a,3a,3a	///

Item no. 11			6 very important	5	4	3	2	1 not very important	
How important do you consider the contribution of member----?	A1	Dawit	////	//					34
	A2	Tesfa	////	//					34
	A3	Saba	///	//	/				32
	A4	Ketema			////	//			22
	A5	Yodit	///	//	/				32
	A6	Abera	/	/	//	/		/	23

	Item no. 12 *minus two	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
9	Talked constantly						
8	Talked almost all of the time		//	/			
7	Talked most of the time			/	/		

6	Talked a lot					/	
5	Talked a moderate amount	////	//	//		///	//
4	Talked some				//		//
3	Talked a little				/		
2	Talked very little						
1	Did not talk at all						
	TOTAL (rating X frequency	20	26	25	18	21	18

Appendix 13

Post group work ratings: Stage 2

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
March 1999

Dear participant,
I would very much value your cooperation in establishing the extent to which students participate in group discussions. On the basis of your replies to the following questionnaire I hope to find out the patterns and forms of interaction among language learners. Thank you very much for your help.

The following questions are based on the group discussion task you have just accomplished.

1. How important do you consider the contribution of member:
   1 ? `not very important.1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very important
   2 ? `not very important.1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very important
   3 ? `not very important.1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very important
   4 ? `not very important.1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very important
   5 ? `not very important.1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very important

2. Rate each member of your group (coded no. `1' to `5') on participation in ***this meeting*** according to the following 9-point scale:

		1	2	3	4	5
9	Talked constantly					
8	Talked almost all of the time					
7	Talked most of the time					
6	Talked a lot					
5	Talked a moderate amount					
4	Talked some					
3	Talked a little					
2	Talked very little					
1	Did not talk at all					

Thank you very much!

Appendix 14
Summary of post group work ratings: Stage 2

The Second Stage

Item no. 1			6 very important	5	4	3	2	1 not very imp.	
How important Do you consider The contribution Of member----?	A1	Saba	/	//	//				24
	A2	Yodit	/	/	//	/			22
	A3	Tesfa	//	//	/				26
	A4	Abera		/	///	/			20
	A5	Dawit	/	//	//				24

Item no. 1		6 very important	5	4	3	2	1 not very imp.	
How important do you consider the contribution of member----?	D1	//	//	/				26
	D2	/////						30
	D3		//	//	/			21
	D4	//	//	/				26
	D5	//	///					27

	Item no. 2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
9	Talked constantly	/	/	//		/
8	Talked almost all of the time		/			/
7	Talked most of the time	//				/
6	Talked a lot	/		/	/	
5	Talked a moderate amount	/	//	//	/	//
4	Talked some		/		//	
3	Talked a little				/	
2	Talked very little					
1	Did not talk at all					
	TOTAL (rating X frequency	34	31	31	22	34

	Item no. 2	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
9	Talked constantly			/		

8	Talked almost all of the time		/	/		
7	Talked most of the time		/	//		
6	Talked a lot	/	/		/	
5	Talked a moderate amount	/	/		/	
4	Talked some	/			/	
3	Talked a little					
2	Talked very little	/				
1	Did not talk at all				/	
	TOTAL (rating X frequency	17	26	31	16	

	Item no. 2	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
9	Talked constantly	/	////		/	//
8	Talked almost all of the time	/	/		/	//
7	Talked most of the time	///			/	/
6	Talked a lot			//	//	
5	Talked a moderate amount			///		
4	Talked some					
3	Talked a little					
2	Talked very little					
1	Did not talk at all					
	TOTAL (rating X frequency	38	44	27	36	41

Appendix 15
Post group work ratings: Stage 3

Addis Ababa University
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Dear participant,
I would very much value your cooperation in establishing the extent to which students participate in group discussions. On the basis of your replies to the following questionnaire I hope to find out the patterns and forms of interaction among language learners. Thank you very much for your help.

The following questions are based on the group discussion task you have just accomplished.

1. Write your group members' codes, in the boxes below, in decreasing order of the amount of talk in today's session.

Talked most Talked least

2. If you were to assign someone as your group leader, who would you like it be? Please circle his/ her number.

1 2 3 4 5

Thank you very much

Appendix 16
Summary of post group work ratings: Stage 3

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Kidane	3	2	1	4	7		2	5	2
2	Hunde	2	3	4	1	13		2	15	1
3	Semu	2	3	4	1	14		2	0	
4	Abate	3	1	2	4	6		1	0	

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Zeru	3	2	1	4	9		3	0	
2	Haggos	1	2	3	4	12		3	5	
3	Mulugeta	2	4	1	3	11		2	15	
4	Bane	3	4	2	1	8		3	0	

C

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Tesfa	2	1	3	4	10*		2	15	1
2	Saba	1	2	4	3	11		1	5	2
3	Dawit	all				5		1	0	
4	Yodit	2	1	3	4	4		1	0	

* only 3 students' ratings

D

No	Name	points				Total		Group leader		
A	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Hailu	2	1	4	3	17		3	5	2
2	Elleni	2	1	3	4	19		2	10	1
3	Negasa	2	1	3	4	11		2	5	2
4	Selam	1	2	3	4	9		1	0	4

E

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Aster	2	3	4	(1)	6		3	0	
2	Desta	1	3	4		9		2	15	1

3	Adane	2	1	4		6		2	5	2
4	Teferi or A	2	3	1		3		2	0	

F

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Abera	4	3	2	1	5		4	0	
2	Azene	4	3	1	2	8		2	5	2
3	Zewdu	4	3	2	1	11		4	0	
4	Darge Tesfaye	4	2	3	1	16		4	15	1

G

No. A	Name	Points					Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		I	J	K
1	Admas	2	1	4	3	5	17	2	4	0	
2	Chane	1	2	3	5	4	20	1	4	5	
3	Eshetu	1	2	3	4	5	15	3	4	5	
4	Debebe	4	2	5	3	1	12	4	2	15	1
5	Nega	3	5	2	1	4	11	5	3	0	

H

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Kassa	1	2	3	4	12	1	1	20	1
2	Gugsa D	1	4	3	2	10	2	1	0	
3	Tsegaye	1	2	4	3	6	4	1	0	
4	Firew	1	2	4	3	8	3	1	0	

1

No. A	Name	Points					Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		I	J	K
1	Desta/H	5	2	1	4	3	10	4	5	5	
2	Hailu	4	5	2	1	3	16	1	1	0	
3	Negasa	?	?	?	?	?	6	5	5	0	
4	Girma	5	2	3	1	4	12	3	5	5	
5	Marta W.	2	4	1	5	3	16	1	4	15	1

2

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Tesfa	2	1	3	4	15	1	2	15	1
2	Elleni	1	2	3	4	13	2	1	5	
3	Saba Hailu	1	2	3	4	8	3	1	0	
4	Erku	1	2	3	4	4	4	1	0	

3.

No. A	Name	Points					Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		I	J	K
1	Hunde	3	5	1	4	2	23	1	3	15	1
2	Beth N	1	2	3	5	4	15	3	1	0	
3	Selam	1	2	3	4	5	18	2	1	5	
4	Bane	1	2	3	4	5	9	5	5	0	
5	Zeru	1	3	5	4	2	11	4	1	5	

4

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Abera	2	1	3	4	7	3	3	5	
2	Zewdu	3	2	1	4	12	2	3	0	
3	Darge	3	2	4	1	14	1	3	15	1
4	Molla	3	4	2	1	7	3	1	0	

5

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Belay Alemu	2	4	3		9	1	4	5	
2	Nega	1	4	3		6	2	4	5	
3	Tsegaye	1	4	2	3	3	4	2	0	
4	Aster	1	2	3		6	2	1	10	1

6

No. A	Name	Points				Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J
1	Firew	2	1	3	4	8		2	0	
2	Kassa	2	3	1	4	14		2	20	1
3	Gugsa D	2	4	1	3	10		2	0	
4	Dawit G	3	2	4	1			2	0	

7

No. A	Name	Points					Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		I	J	K
1	Dawit	1	4	2	5	3	25		2	15	1
2	Chane T	1	2	4	5	3	16		2	10	2
3	Admas	1	4	2	3	5	8		1	0	
4	Tesfa M	1	2	3	5	4	16		1	0	
5	Debebe	1	4	5	2	3	10		1	0	

8

No. A	Name	Points					Total		Group leader		
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		I	J	K
1	Eshetu	4	1	3	5	2	16	2	4	0	
2	Adane	4	5	2	1	3	12	4	4	0	
3	Berihun	4	1	5	3	2	11	5	4	0	
4	Azene	1	2	3	5	4	21	1	5	20	1
5	Kidane	4	5	2	3	1	15	3	4	5	

Appendix 17
Summary of group work turn and word count

GW-1	Turn	%	Word count	%
Saba	25	38.5	248	37.6
Tesfa D	17	26.1	156	23.6
Jemal	18	27.7	236	35.8
Elleni	5	7.7	20	3.0

GW-2	Turn	%	Word count	%
Hailu	32	42	720	74.5
Yodit	25	32	170	17.6
Hagos	7	9.1	25	2.58
Selam	2	2.6	24	2.48
Ketema	7	9.1	10	1.0

GW-3	Turn	%	Word count	%
Dawit C	22	50	525	87.5
Belayneh G	2	4.5	5	0.8
Admas M	1	2.3	3	0.3
Chane T	19	43	67	11.3

GW-4	Turn	%	Word count	%
Tesfa D	41	46	577	55.43
Saba	38	34	274	26.32
Jemal	18	16	146	14.02
Elleni	14	12	44	4.22
Eshetu	1	0.9	5	0.5

GW-5	Turn	%	Word count	%
Saba	34	30	238	18.1
Elleni	17	15	224	17.0
Tesfa	34	30	448	34.1
Dawit C	27	24	362	27.6

GW6	Turn	%	Word count	%
Tesfa D	35	31	597	46.8
Saba H	34	30	163	12.8
Dawit C	25	22	296	23.2
Bethlehem N	16	14	205	16.1

Appendix 18
Students' self-ratings

1. Very silent
2. Silent
3. On the silent side
4. On the talker side
5. High participator
6. Very high participator

		Students' Self-ratings		
		1st sem.	2nd sem.	Average
1	Kassa	4	5	4.5
2	Azene	5	3	4
3	Chane	3	4	3.5
4	Desta	4	5	4.5
5	Erku	4	4	4
6	Darge	3	5	4
7	Firew	2	2	2
8	Eshetu	3	4	3.5
9	Girma	4	5	4.5
10	Abera	2	2	2
11	Adane	5	2	3.5
12	Admas	2	2	2
13	Gugsa	3	3	3
14	Aster	4	4	4
15	Tsegaye	2	2	2
16	Teferi	2	2	2
17	Nega	4	3	3.5
18	Debebe	3	5	4
19	Zewdu	4	4	4
20	Selam	3	3	3
21	Elleni	5	4	4.5
22	Negasa	4	4	4
23	Tesfa	5	5	5
24	Marta	4	5	4.5
25	Kidane	3	3	3
26	Molla	4	4	4
27	Haggos	3	4	3.5
28	Semu	4	4	4
29	Abate	3	3	3
30	Dawit	5	5	5
31	Hunde	3	4	3.5
32	Saba	5	5	5
33	Yodit	4	5	4.5
34	Zeru	3	4	3.5
35	Hailu	5	5	5
		3.7	**!Zero**	3.65

Appendix 19
Instructor's ratings

1. Very silent
2. Silent
3. On the silent side
4. On the talker side
5. High participator
6. Very high participator

		Instructors ratings		
		1st sem.	2nd sem.	Average
1	Kassa	4	6	5
2	Azene	5	2	3.5
3	Chane	3	4	3.5
4	Desta	5	4	4.5
5	Erku	5	4	4.5
6	Darge	4	4	4
7	Firew	1	1	1
8	Eshetu	3	4	3.5
9	Girma	5	5	5
10	Abera	2	2	2
11	Adane	5	4	4.5
12	Admas	2	2	2
13	Gugsa	2	3	2.5
14	Aster	4	4	4
15	Tsegaye	1	1	1
16	Teferi	1	2	1.5
17	Nega	3	4	3.5
18	Debebe	2	4	3
19	Zewdu	2	4	3
20	Selam.	3	3	3
21	Elleni	6	5	5.5
22	Negasa	5	4	4.5
23	Tesfa	6	6	6
24	Marta	6	5	5.5
25	Kidane	4	4	4
26	Molla	2	2	2
27	Haggos	1	2	1.5
28	Semu	2	2	2
29	Abate	1	2	1.5
30	Dawit	6	6	6
31	Hunde	3	4	3.5
32	Saba	6	6	6
33	Yodit	4	5	4.5
34	Zeru	3	3	3
35	Hailu	6	6	6
		!Zero	**!Zero**	3.54

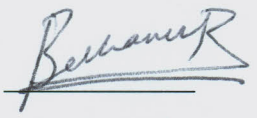
Appendix 20
End-of-year questionnaire

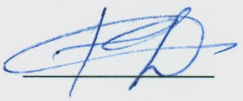
Participation in group discussion of students as rated by their classmates

		tal	Sil	inc	dec
1	Kassa	4	2	15	1
2	Azene	1	-	2	12
3	Chane	0	1	3	0
4	Desta	2	0	3	5
5	Erku	1	1	0	4
6	Darge	1	0	8	3
7	Firew	0	5	3	0
8	Eshetu	0	3	8	2
9	Girma	2	0	2	3
10	Abera	1	0	1	2
11	Adane	1	3	5	6
12	Admas	0	7	0	2
13	Gugsa	0	8	0	3
14	Aster	1	0	1	1
15	Belay				
16	Tsegaye	0	13	2	2
17	Teferi	1	4	0	1
18	Nega	0	0	1	3
19	Debebe	0	5	1	2
20	Zewdu	0	2	2	1
21	Selam.	0	3	1	3
22	Elleni	8	1	2	5
23	Negasa	0	0	1	5
24	Tesfa	22	3	2	0
25	Marta	10	0	1	5
26	Kidane	0	2	3	0
27	Molla				
28	Haggos	0	4	2	1
29	Semu	1	4	1	2
30	Abate	1	3	2	1
31	Dawit	8	2	3	2
32	Hunde	1	1	1	1
33	Saba	13	0	1	0
34	Saba	5	3	8	1
35	Zeru	0	6	1	0
36	Hailu	6	0	4	1

Declaration

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

Name of candidate: Berhanu Bogale Signature: 

Supervisor: Dr Teshome Demissie Signature: 

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