

Research Article

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DURING SOPHOMOE ENGLISH CLASSROOM: THE CASE OF SECOND YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT BULE HORA UNIVERSITY**

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**Abstract**

The main purpose of the study was to increase students' participation through collaborative learning during Sophomore English classroom in case of second year English Major Students at Bule Hora University. The study used a descriptive survey method that involves quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaire and observation were used to gather the necessary data for the study. 38 second year English Major Students and 3 English language teachers were used as the target population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select teachers. Comprehensive sampling method was also used to select students. Thus, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed in analyzing the quantitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed and reported essay form. The findings of the study showed that students haven't a good participate and interest in collaborative learning, lack of motivation, lack of self- esteem and confidence, students haven't smooth relation with the others. Based on the finding, it is recommended that create smooth relation with others, they should develop the interest of effective collaborative and to make students effectiveness in collaborative learning, teachers should design regular programs for group practice.

**1. Background of the Study**

Different scholars have their own perspective regarding the definition of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is an activity that occurs as a result of interaction between peers engaged in the completion of a common task. It promotes positive social responses to problems of fosters a supportive environment within which to manage conflict resolution. Barkley, etal (2005) states that collaborative learning is an activity when students work together to active shared learning aims. This means learning and teaching strategy will be utilized across multiple disciplines in elementary, secondary and higher education. In education, collaborative learning is technique teacher's use to group students together to impact learning in a passive way. It can occur between just two students or within a large group and it can take a variety of forms. Richard, J (2003) stated, learner is presented with tasks which require using the largest language in order to

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be cope with the demands of activity. Collaborative learning provides the teacher with many opportunities to observe students' interaction, explaining their reasoning, asking questions and discussing their ideas and concepts (Cooper, etal, 1984). Collaborative learning helps to develop learning communities with in classes of institutions. It develops students oral communication skills. When students work in pairs one person is listening while the other partner is discussing the question under investigation. In collaborative learning setting, students are actively involved in the learning process more likely to become interested in learning participating school, therefore student maintenance is increased.

Bonwell, C and Eison, J (1991) says that, collaborative learning as a strategy that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. They emphasis the active participation of learners and bring to mind the Chinese proverb. It is the learning that occurs as a result of interaction between peers engaged in the completion of a common task.

Smith (1992) stated that collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together usually, students are working in group of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or a product.

There are a several benefits that are associated with the concept of collaborative learning. Laal, M and Ghedis, S.M (2012) summarized the benefits of collaborative learning put them into four major categories of social, psychological, academic and assessment.

Collaborative learning helps to develop a social support system for learners. It is leads to build diversity understanding among students and staff. It is establishing a positive atmosphere for modeling and practicing cooperation. Collaborative learning develops learning communities.

Collaborative learning develops positive attitudes towards teachers. Students-centered instruction increases students' self-esteem cooperation reduce anxiety.

It promotes critical thinking skills. In values students actively in learning process classroom results are improved, models appreciate students' problem solving techniques, large lectures can be personalized. Collaborative learning is especially helpful in motivating students in specific curriculum.

Now a day, there are different teaching methods such as lecture method, cooperative, jigsaw, discussion, etc. Therefore, this study would focus on how to increase students' participation using collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is defined as classroom learning techniques which require students work together in groups in learning tasks. It is an educational method to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to complete task or create a product. Students are given opportunities to learn by inquiry under the guidance of a teacher and at the sometime developing community skills, leadership skills and interpersonal skills, learners will have more opportunities to interact with peers. Johnson.M(2016), and Harmer, J (1991) proposes that collaborative learning provides maximum opportunities for students to interact or cooperate with one another as they work towards a common goal by four language skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. This means students are

participating in collaborative learning; they develop language skills and understanding their activities.

The collaborative learning activities should provide students with convenient to analyze, synthesize and evaluate their ideas together (Melinda, D, 2008). This means favorable discussion and interaction so that students are forced to go beyond more statement of opinion. This study would talk about teaching. Teaching mixes the expertise of two professionals that are a general teacher and a specialist teacher whereas, the main goal in combination is to deal with the various students need within a general teaching setting (Anderson 2008). Moreover, Lindeman and Magiera (2014) defined teaching as a particular kind of collaboration Such as dedicated learning or teaching for students with special needs. This category enables the students to get a better education within traditional learning schoolrooms. In contrast to these levels of individualization there is also a considerable body of research that has argued for collaborative learning as having powerful effects on students learning, including student characteristics, group composition and task characteristics particularly for low achieving students (Lai 2011).

Thus, it becomes imperative to understand the impact of learning style on an online learning environment to accurately define different types of learners. Collaborative learning shifts some of the duty to teach onto students, since the intention is that they become researchers and self-directed learners as well as taking responsibility for their own learning (Dooly 2008, 22). Ideally, the teacher should understand the principles of collaborative learning and preferred learning style of their students and thus improve the cooperative education programmed. Also collaborative learning has many characteristics such as cooperative behavior, the acquisition of knowledge etc.to develop student trust and retention, which add value to both student and classroom (stahl,koschmann and suthers 2006,41)

On the other hand, there are many factors that affect collaborative learning activity. According to Shuangyan, L (2010), there are three main factors that affect collaborative learning. These are poor motivation, lack of individual accountability and negative interdependence.

Students can behave problematically in such discussion, indicating that they pass poor motivation for the learning activities. Some students may not participate in discussion at all and others may take part but give short and superficial responses rather than deep reflective ones. This may cause by difficulty in communication with peers, disagreement among members, lack of common learning goals among students and so on.

Students have not meeting the deadlines, not completing assigned work and lack of participation in collaborative activities, lack of time, not contributing much, lack of individual assessment in the groups.

Students have learned together decrease abilities, decrease the group abilities to reach its full potential, lack of essential group work skills, lack of sense of community, in willingness to criticize, poor group management and commitment imbalance on the task.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Collaborative learning has a significant role in helping students to improve their English language learning process. It is the system of concrete teaching and learning methods that help students to be effective at educational level, students can get ability of collaborative learning.

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Different researchers reveal that little effort have been undertaken to assess students' effective in collaborative learning. Shuangyan, (2010) conducted a research on students' effect of the factors leading to unsuccessful group collaboration. He stated that there are various factors identified. According to his study, these are poor motivation, poor performance lack of individual accountability and negative interdependence. Hilz (1998) found that students were not very satisfied with the process of group interaction and quality of group discussion. Therefore in this study, the researcher concerned on the effectiveness of collaborative learning to increase students' participation during English classroom within in a blended learning environment. Thus, researcher was try to examine how to increase students' participation through collaborative learning and investigate students awareness towards the importance of collaborative learning in case of second year English Major Students at Bule Hora University.

### **3. Research Questions**

The research seeks to answer the following question:

1. How to increase students' participation through collaborative learning during English classroom?
2. To what extent do students have awareness about the role of collaborative learning?
3. What are the factors that affect students' participation of during English classroom?

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

#### **4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to increase students' participation through collaborative learning of second year English major students at Bule Hora University.

#### **4.2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- To increase students' participation through collaborative learning.
- To investigate students' awareness towards the role of collaborative learning.
- Explore the major factors affecting students' participation.

### **5. Methodology**

This chapter presents research design, sources of data, population of the study, sampling techniques and sampling size, data gathering instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis procedures

#### **5.1. Research Design**

To conduct this study, descriptive type of research design was used. The study was also involved both qualitative and quantitative data approaches. The quantitative data was gathered through questionnaire and qualitative data was gathered through classroom observation and open-ended questionnaire.

#### **5.2. Sources of Data and Population of the study**

Primary data is a data which gathered directly from its sources by the researcher. Therefore, in this study researcher used primary data in order to get reliable, valid, clear, and enough information from second year English major students English language teacher. The target population of this study was second year English major students and English language and literature department teachers at Bule Hora University. The total number of students are 38 and teachers are 22 at Bule Hora University in 2013E.C. Researcher was focused on second year English Major Students because researcher had taught sophomore English in this class and had faced low participation in this class.

### **5.3. Sampling techniques and sampling size**

The total number of second year English Major Students are 38 at Bule Hora University in 2013E.C. Thus, the target population of the current study were all second year English Major Students. From these students, researcher had taken all students as a sample. In the sampling process, the researcher used comprehensive sampling technique to select student participants. Researcher used comprehensive sampling technique because the population of the students is very small and it is easily manageable to complete the study within available time. In addition to this, the total numbers of English language teachers are 22. From these teachers, researcher was selected two participant teachers through purposive sampling from other teachers because 2 teachers are teaching major course in this classroom.

### **5.4. Data Collection Instruments**

To collect relevant data, the researcher used two data collecting instruments. These are questionnaire and observation. Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for gathering information from respondents. The main objective of using questionnaire is to get relevant data from the large group of subjects. Both open ended and close ended questions are used in English language and administered for both teachers and students. An observation can be the best way to see things that are not explained in the questionnaire. Classroom observation was conducted to elicit information to what extent students are effective in their learning through collaborative learning. The researchers used observation checklist to observe the overall activities in the actual classroom. It gave opportunities for researcher to assess teaching learning process through collaborative learning from different perspectives.

### **5.5. Data Collection Procedure and Methods of Data Analysis**

Using two instruments, the data was collected as follows. First, Questionnaire and observation were prepared and designed. Then, classroom has been observed for three times with the help of observation checklist with the aim of students' effectiveness of collaborative learning. Finally, the researcher distributed questionnaire for students and teachers in the formal class and gave clear information for respondents to read the question carefully and to get appropriate answers which express their ideas.

Researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis to conduct this research. Classroom observation and open ended questionnaire were summarized under qualitative data. The qualitative data was analyzed in paragraph and essay form. Researchers analyzed the close ended questionnaire quantitatively using frequency and percentage.

## **6. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

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This chapter deals with the data presentation and interpretation of both close ended and open ended questions and observation checklist. The data were collected from second year English major students at Bule Hora University. To collect relevant data for the study, questionnaire and observation were used. The questionnaire was distributed to 38 students and 2 teachers.

**6.1. Analysis of students' close and open ended questionnaire.**

As it is show in table 1 question 1 15(39.47%) respondents said that they did experience of learning English in collaborative activities in their previous classes. However, 23(60.53%) of the respondents as sure that they didn't have experience of learning in collaborative activities in a previous class. From this, the researchers understand that the students of second year English major students didn't experience learning in collaborative activities in their previous classes.

As show in table 2, question 2, 12(31.57%) of respondents replied that they were ever effective in collaborative learning activities and 26(68.43%) of respondents replied that they were not ever effective in collaborative learning activities. Based on this data it can conclude that most of the respondents were ever effective in collaborative learning and also that they were not interested in collaborative learning activities.

As it show in table 3, question3, 33 (86.84%) of respondents said that collaborative learning is more effective than individual learning while 5(13.16%) of respondents replied that collaborative learning is not more effective than individual learning. Based on this data it can concluded that collaborative learning is more effective than individual learning students have active participate in collaborative learning to develop their known experience.

As table 4, question 4 indicated that, 30 (79%) of respondents were collaborative learning has advantage for learning English language while 8(21%) of respondents replied that collaborative learning has disadvantages for learning English language. Based on this data it can conclude that collaborative learning has advantages for English language.

As table 5 indicated that, 16(41.10%) of respondents replied that strong agree, 20(52.64%) of students indicated that agree, 1(2.63%) of students implied that neutral, and 1(2.63%) of respondents that disagree. Based on this information it can conclude that collaborative learning activity is important to develop their language skills.

As table 6 showed that, 13(34.21%) of respondents said that were effective collaborative learning only in the class, 2 (5.27%) of respondents were effective in collaborative learning only out of the class and 23(60.52%) of the respondents said that we are effective in collaborative learning both in the class and outside the class. Based on the above information the researchers conclude that the majority of the students were effective in the class and out of the class.

According to table 7 information, 37(97.37%) of them believed that collaborative learning has advantage for learning English language. Students have participated in collaborative learning activities to develop their experience, language skill, to increase confidence while 1(2.63%) of the respondent replied that collaborative learning has not advantage in learning English. This shows the majority of respondents were implied that collaborative learning has advantage in learning English. Based on this data it can be concluded that collaborative learning is important for students to do any activities.

8. *If your answer is yes/no for question 2, why?*

In this question most of students replied that ever effective in collaborative learning activities, No, because I haven't any effective in collaborative learning activities and not interested in collaborative learning activities.

9. *If your answer is yes/no for question 4, why?*

In this question most of students response that collaborative learning is more effective than individual learning because when we learn the collaborative learning ,uses exchanging idea, opinions and increase our knowledge, to solve any problem, to create new idea and also to create new things.

10. *If your answer is yes/no for question 6, why?*

In this question most of students replied that collaborative learning has advantage for learning English but not collaborative learning has disadvantage for learning English. Then, advantage of collaborative learning in learning English to develop our language skills and it helps to avoid frustration, it gives direction for students to use active learning strategy and to share experience from others

11. *What are your roles during collaborative learning in English classroom?*

In this question most of students replied that roles during collaborative learning in English classroom are: it develops the students' knowledge and results to develop language skills ,to improve any problem, to develop their own motivation, increases social interesting and it helps avoid farness.

12. *How can students be effective in collaborative learning?*

In this question students implied that, students have effective in collaborative learning by different methods such as doing worksheets with others, by making different activities and creates mutual understanding between them by discussing and asking the question of each other distributing course for each they use their collaborative learning with their proper time.

13. *Write any factors that affects collaborative learning activities?*

In this question most of students replied that factors that effects of collaborative learning are: negative interdependence, lack of individual accountability, poor motivation ,lack of smooth interaction between students, lack of self- esteem, lack of self-confidence, lack of awareness lack of interest other students replied that the influence of mother tang language, students negative perception towards collaborative learning time, lack of knowledge, grammar, students are don't sharing idea with others.

14. *Why some students fail to effectiveness in collaborative learning?*

In this question students have expressed that students are lack of attention for collaborative learning, lack of sufficient knowledge to understand other friends idea, lack of motivation and interest, they have not smooth relation with their classmates students, students thinking that individual learning is more important than collaborative learning and also that there is no mutual understanding between the students, the classroom environment not favorable for collaborative

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learning and the students fail to effectiveness in collaborative learning. Students haven't interest for collaborative learning in class and outside the class.

#### **4.3. Analysis of Teachers' Close and closed ended questionnaire.**

As shows in table 1 question 1, 3 (100%) of respondents replied that they were effectiveness in collaborative teaching activities. It can conclude that all of the respondents were effectiveness in collaborative teaching and also that they were interested in collaborative teaching activities.

*2. If your answer for number 1 is yes, how often are you effective in collaborative teaching activities?*

In this question teachers implied that teachers have effective in collaborative teaching by different techniques such as if the situation makes me to be collaborative deliverance of the topics and sometimes it may be difficult to group students if the class is over- crowded and then it is failed.

*3. What do you think that the advantage and disadvantage of collaborative learning?*

In this question the teacher respondents stated their ideas about advantage and disadvantage of collaborative learning as follow. They answered the advantage of collaborative learning are:it makes students sake experience ,to participate all students equally, social life experience, authentic learning create positive feelings among students, to finished a large amounts of contents within a short period of time ,to make learners confident and disadvantage of collaborative is shy students are dominated by fast learners, active students have opposed by passive students. Based on this data it can conclude that collaborative learning have many advantages and a little disadvantage for any activities.

*4. How often do you use collaborative learning in your classes?*

In this question the teacher's response that they used collaborative learning in their class. The teachers' response reveled that they used collaborative learning activities situation ally, most of the time they practiced teacher centered methods. Based on this data we could conclude that teachers have used collaborative learning, discussion situational, but they use teacher centered method usually in the classroom.

*5. What is your roles use during collaborative learning in English classroom?*

In this question Teachers' responses showed that roles uses during collaborative learning in English classroom are: facilitating the situation (facilitating the teaching and learning process), helping when it is necessary and coaching the discussion.

*6. Write any factors that affects collaborative learning activities?*

In this question Teachers' replied that factors that effects of collaborative learning /teaching are: seating problem to group, some students are not participating, students are reluctant, time shortage, lack of facilitates, learners or teachers interest and motivations other external factors are stability and so on.

#### **4.5. Analysis of observation checklist.**



The following observation checklist prepared to observe teaching and learning process in English classroom particularly student's effectiveness in collaborative learning in case of third year English Major Students.

Observation is more important than questionnaire because the researcher can get more reliable and accurate data to assess the effectiveness of collaborative learning so, the researcher observed in the following way.

First, observe the students actively participate in collaborative learning? Researcher observed the classes, students have not good actively participate in collaborative learning activities because students are depending on leaders and not interest for collaborative learning. But few students and leaders are performed any activities. Second, question says that are students group participate to help each other in the collaborative learning? Researcher observed that students are not participating in group to help each other. Most of the time students are doing any activities individually rather than groups. Each student doing activities individually not support other students inside and outside the classroom activities. The third question says that the teacher roles students effectiveness in collaborative learning? Researchers observed that most teachers played their roles for students to be effective in any activities. This means teachers have given appropriate materials, idea sharing, arranging in groups and others. In addition to this teachers advices to students are actively participate in group discussion. The fourth, is the classroom situation suitable for collaborative learning? Researcher observed that the classroom is not suitable for group discussion. Because the cafeteria is near to the class by this case the generator's sound disturbs the students' attention. The last one is Do students motivate in classroom collaborative activities? Researcher observed in the classroom motivate for group discussion because the students sharing idea, students are increased their knowledge, reduce shyness and improve our confidence and allows for problem solving cooperation and communicate each other.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This Chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the research results. After the conclusion some recommendations are given. The purpose of this study was to increase or improving the students' participation through collaborative learning. Based on the analysis and discussion, the following conclusions and recommendations are made.

### **7.1. Conclusions**

Based on the analysis of the data the following conclusions were given. Students are not effective in collaborative learning because there are lacks of smooth relation with students, students haven't a good feeling for collaborative learning and students think about individual learning is more important than collaborative learning. As a result, the following final reports were made.

1. Students do not have awareness about their participation and collaborative learning.
2. Almost all students were not participated in the classroom.
3. Different factors were identified that affect students' learning in general

### **7.2. Recommendations**

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Based upon the findings of the data and the conclusion draw above the following recommendations are made:

To make students effective in collaborative learning, teachers should design regular programs for group practices.

Teachers should build an interactive learning environment by offering frequent chances for the learners to learn collaboratively in different groups. -

Orientation for the learner on how the discussion benefits them is another important area of concern.

Teachers should arranging tutorial program for learners since it will encourage them try to speak English in the class and outside the class, because students who are participating in a tutorial class may perform better or effectiveness in a tutorial class.

The instructor should understand the students problems and make involvements through continues support in collaborative activities.

Students should develop the interest of effective collaborative discussion, group works and pair work should be implemented as the students learn from each other.

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