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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PAIR WORK AND GROUP WORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: This article discusses the effectiveness of pair work and group work in English language teaching. In modern language education, students need more opportunities to communicate, share ideas, and use English in meaningful situations. Pair and group activities help learners become more active in the classroom and reduce fear of speaking. These methods also support cooperation, confidence, critical thinking, and communicative competence. During pair work, students can practice dialogues, ask and answer questions, and correct each other's mistakes. In group work, learners can complete projects, discuss topics, solve problems, and prepare presentations together.

Key words: Pair work, group work, English language teaching, communicative competence, student-centered learning, interactive methods.

Introduction

In modern English language teaching, the main goal is not only to teach grammar rules and vocabulary, but also to help students use English in real communication. For this reason, teachers need to organize lessons in an interactive and student-centered way. Pair work and group work are considered effective methods because they give learners more opportunities to speak, listen, exchange ideas, and cooperate with classmates.

In traditional teacher-centered lessons, students often have limited time to practice English. Usually, the teacher explains the topic, asks questions, and only a few students answer. As a result, many learners remain passive and do not develop enough confidence in speaking. Pair work and group work help solve this problem because all students can take part in the lesson at the same time. They can discuss tasks, practice dialogues, solve problems, and support each other during learning.

Pair work is useful for short communicative activities such as asking and answering questions, role-playing dialogues, checking answers, and practicing pronunciation. Group work is more suitable for discussions, projects, problem-solving tasks, presentations, and creative activities. These forms of classroom interaction help students improve not only their speaking and listening skills, but also their cooperation, responsibility, critical thinking, and confidence.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the need to make English lessons more practical and communicative. In today's education system, students should be able to express their ideas clearly, work with others, and use English in different real-life situations. Therefore, studying the effectiveness of pair work and group work in English language teaching is important for improving the quality of language lessons and developing students' communicative competence.

Pair work is one of the most effective classroom techniques in English language teaching because it gives students more time to practise the language. Jeremy Harmer explains that pair work increases student talking time and gives learners a chance to use English in a less stressful situation [1]. This idea is important because many students feel shy when they speak in front of the whole class. When they work with one partner, they feel more comfortable and can express their ideas more freely.

For example, in a speaking lesson on the topic **"Daily routines"**, the teacher can ask students to work in pairs and interview each other:

Student A: What time do you usually wake up?

Student B: I usually wake up at 7 o'clock. What about you?

Student A: I wake up at 6:30 because I go to school early.

This simple pair activity helps students practise the present simple tense, question forms, pronunciation, and listening at the same time. It also makes the lesson more active because every student speaks, not only the strongest learners.

Pair work is also useful for grammar practice. For instance, after explaining the topic **"Past Simple Tense"**, the teacher may give students a task to ask each other about their last weekend:

Example:

"Where did you go last weekend?"

"What did you do on Sunday?"

"Did you watch a film?"

Through this activity, students do not only memorize grammar rules, but also use them in real communication. Therefore, pair work supports the development of communicative competence, confidence, and fluency.

Group work is also an important method in English language teaching. Richards and Rodgers state that communicative language teaching pays attention to interaction, meaningful communication, and learner participation [2]. Group work helps organize these principles in the classroom because students work together, exchange ideas, solve tasks, and prepare common results.

For example, in a reading lesson, students can be divided into small groups. Each group receives a short text about **environmental problems**. After reading, students discuss the main idea, find new words, and prepare a short presentation. One student may explain the problem, another student may give examples, and another student may suggest solutions.

Example task:

Topic: *How can we protect the environment?*

Group 1: Air pollution

Group 2: Water pollution

Group 3: Deforestation

Group 4: Recycling

This type of group work develops reading, speaking, vocabulary, cooperation, and critical thinking. Students learn not only from the teacher, but also from each other. In addition, group work teaches responsibility because every member has a role in completing the task.

Group work is especially effective for project-based activities. For example, students can prepare a poster on the topic **"Healthy Lifestyle"**. They may include useful vocabulary, pictures, short sentences, and recommendations. At the end of the lesson, each group presents its poster in English. Such activities make English learning more practical and creative.

Pair work and group work are effective because they change the role of students in the lesson. In traditional lessons, the teacher usually speaks more, while students listen and answer only when they are asked. In pair and group activities, students become active participants[3]. They speak, listen, ask questions, explain ideas, and help each other.

For example, if the lesson topic is **"At the restaurant"**, the teacher can organize a role-play activity in pairs:

Student A: waiter

Student B: customer

Dialogue example: Waiter: Good afternoon. What would you like to order?

Customer: I would like soup and tea, please.

Waiter: Anything else?

Customer: No, thank you.

This activity helps students use English in a real-life situation. It also develops vocabulary connected with food, polite expressions, and speaking fluency.

Group work can be used for more complex tasks. For example, in a lesson on **"Travelling"**, students can work in groups and plan a weekend trip. They should choose a place, transport, hotel, and activities. Then they present their plan to the class.

Example:

"Our group wants to visit Samarkand. We will go by train. We want to visit Registan Square and take photos. We will stay in a small hotel."

This task develops communicative competence because students use English to discuss, agree, disagree, and present information. It also connects the lesson with real life.

Another advantage of pair and group work is that they help weaker students. When a student does not understand a task, classmates can explain it in a simple way. This creates a friendly learning atmosphere. However, the teacher should carefully control the process. If the task is not clear, some students may speak in their native language or stay passive[4]. That is why the teacher should give clear instructions, divide roles, set time limits, and monitor students during the activity.

For example, in group work, the teacher may give roles:

1. **Leader** — organizes the group;
2. **Secretary** — writes ideas;
3. **Speaker** — presents the result;
4. **Timekeeper** — controls time.

This makes group work more organized and effective[5].

Conclusion

In conclusion, pair work and group work are useful and effective methods in English language teaching. They help students practise English more actively, improve speaking and listening skills, and develop confidence. Pair work is especially helpful for dialogues, short questions, grammar practice, and pronunciation activities. Group work is more effective for discussions, projects, presentations, problem-solving tasks, and creative activities.

These methods make English lessons more student-centered and communicative. They also develop cooperation, responsibility, critical thinking, and social interaction. However, the success of pair and group work depends on the teacher's organization. The teacher should prepare clear tasks, give examples, monitor students, and assess both individual and group participation.

Therefore, the use of pair work and group work in English language teaching can improve the quality of lessons and help students use English in real communication.

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