



IMPORTANCE OF PAIR WORK AND GROUP WORK

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the importance and necessity of using pair and group work in language learning, particularly in speaking lessons. It explores how such collaborative methods increase student participation, enhance speaking fluency and accuracy, and foster learner independence. The teacher's role evolves from being a central figure to a facilitator and monitor. Though challenges like noise and classroom management are acknowledged, the article emphasizes that clear instructions and structured organization can mitigate these issues effectively.

Introduction. In today's educational landscape, the use of interactive teaching methods has become increasingly important, especially in language instruction. Compared to traditional lecture-based approaches, methods that actively involve students in the learning process and encourage independent thinking and open communication are considered more effective. One such method is pair and group work. This approach is particularly useful in language learning, as it provides learners with practical speaking opportunities, encourages peer-to-peer communication, and helps develop both independent thinking and collaborative skills. Working in pairs or groups allows each student to share ideas, ask and answer questions, and participate in discussions and debates. These interactions accelerate language acquisition and make the learning experience more engaging.

This article examines the role of pair and group work in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. It explores the advantages of these methods, acknowledges potential challenges, and emphasizes the crucial role of the teacher in organizing and facilitating such activities. The aim is to highlight the effectiveness of pair and group work in education and provide practical recommendations for their successful implementation in the classroom.

Pair work and group work present ways of organizing the class while teaching speaking. The teacher's responsibility is to choose a suitable communicative activity depending on what is going to be practised – either fluency or accuracy – and organize the students into pairs or groups. In some activities such as role plays and guessing games, pair work is essential. On the other hand, discussions and debates require group work and enable the students to express their opinions on a given topic within the group. After that, the spokesman of each group notifies the rest of the class about the conclusion they have reached. This may lead to a following discussion among groups and if the topic is amusing, the speaking lesson seems to be enjoyable for both students and the teacher, too.

Advantages of pair and group work. There are many reasons for pair and group work to be used in the lessons. First of all, they provide the students with a lot more practice than working as a whole class. Students also feel more comfortable to speak to one or two people rather than the whole class and the teacher. Moreover, speaking to just a few people is closer to real-life situations.

Pair and group work allows each student to work at the pace of his or her small group or pair. The teacher is no more considered the only source of information but the students learn from each other. This creates opportunities for learners' knowledge to be shared. In order to be successful, learners need to become accustomed to using English without the teacher's permanent support. Therefore, working in pairs or groups helps them to build up their independence and confidence for further conversations.

The advantages of pair and group work can be noticeable not only from the learner's but also the teacher's point of view. It provides the teacher with more time to work with weaker students and encourage them, by participating in a role play or discussion, to communicate. Teachers can also benefit from a great availability of different communicative activities being offered in bookshops and on the internet nowadays. The variety of materials for pair or group work speaking practice is praised by most of them and their use has proved to be very efficient for speaking skill improvement.

Slight disadvantages of pair and group work. However efficient and useful pair and group work is, it may sometimes cause little problems while practising speaking. According to Doff (1989, 141) the noise belongs to these obstacles the teachers have to overcome during lessons. Usually the students themselves are not disturbed by the noise, it is more noticeable to the teacher observing pairs or groups. However, the noise created by pair and group work demonstrates learners' engagement in a speaking task and gives the teacher visual evidence of students' involvement. Considering this, the success in working in pairs or groups depends mainly on the students' and the teacher's approach.

Another fact Doff (1989, 141) mentions is the difficulty to control the whole class during a communicative activity. To stop activity getting out of control, it is important to give the students clear instructions, define the speaking task clearly and set up a routine, so that students accept the idea of working in pairs or groups and know exactly what to do.

The role of a teacher in communicative activities. The teacher is a facilitator of students' learning and as such he has many roles to fulfill. Freeman (1986, 131) describes him as a *manager* of classroom activities. In this role, one of his major responsibilities is to set up activities that promote communication. During the communicative activities he acts as a *consultant* answering students' questions, offers advice and provides necessary language items. One of the most important roles is to make sure that students know what they are supposed to practise and check if they do it effectively. These roles are called a *conductor* and a *monitor*. Although there is a great number of various activities which may be used in speaking lessons, their use would be confusing and pointless if they would not be logically organised. Being a good *organiser* should be an ability possessed by every skillful teacher.

Considering the facts mentioned above we can conclude that the teacher's personality in a learning process is very important not only while participating in the activity but also while monitoring the students. The teacher's less dominant role in communicative activities offers the students the opportunity to be involved in conversation and improve their speaking skills to be able to cope with the real-life situations.

Conclusion. In conclusion, pair and group work are essential methods in modern language teaching, especially in the development of students' speaking skills. These approaches not only provide more opportunities for communication practice but also foster confidence, independence, and collaboration among learners. Through structured and well-guided activities, students are able to engage in meaningful conversations that reflect real-life communication. Although pair and group work may present some challenges, such as classroom noise and management difficulties, these can be effectively managed through clear instructions and a well-organized lesson plan.

The teacher plays a key role as a facilitator, consultant, and monitor, guiding students while giving them the freedom to express themselves. Overall, incorporating pair and group work into speaking lessons enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. When used thoughtfully, these methods make the classroom more dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered, ultimately preparing students for effective communication in real-world situations.

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