

EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF GROUP-WORK AND PAIR-WORK SPEAKING ACTIVITIES AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN İSTANBUL

¹Yamen Bondouk, ²Osman SABUNCUOĞLU

¹MA student, Istanbul Aydın University, Institute of Graduate Studies, English Language Teaching

²Assist.Prof., Istanbul Aydın University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6838864>

Published Date: 15-July-2022

Abstract: Many English language teachers find it difficult to get students speaking. Language courses usually include activities focusing on accuracy rather than activities focusing on fluency or communication. Therefore, collaborative learning through pair work and group work has been a key research topic recently. The current study aims to explore EFL instructors' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities at international schools in İstanbul. To achieve the objectives, mixed-methods research combining elements of qualitative and quantitative data was undertaken with a view to collecting and analysing them. A questionnaire in which 100 English language instructors were the participants and an interview with 10 instructors was administered by the researcher. The data of the questionnaire were analysed statistically by using SPSS while the data of the interview were analysed qualitatively by using MAXQDA. In the light of the findings, the participants exhibited positive attitudes towards using pair-work and group-work speaking activities in the classroom. They also stated that they implemented pair-work and group-work activities to develop learners' speaking skills. The findings revealed that the students preferred to adopt collaborative learning through pair-work and group-work activities due to having a high level of motivation, developing social skills, being active, and enhancing learner autonomy. The study found that English language teachers did not benefit from pair-work and group-work activities because students tended to use their first language and also teachers did not monitor learning well. Due to the significant role of pair work and group work in a successful language learning process, suggestions and recommendations for a further study to develop fluency have been made.

Keywords: Pair Work, Group Work, Speaking Activities, Speaking Skill, EFL Instructors, International Schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many teachers find it difficult to get learners speaking. Students cannot communicate meaning or express feelings in English. They generally like to focus on accuracy and teacher-fronted learning takes place. They cannot emphasise fluency-based activities, such as pair-work and group-work speaking activities which are classified as learner-centred. Therefore, fluency development has been a key research topic recently. Although there is much research into English language teachers' views of accuracy-based activities, EFL instructors' attitudes towards pair-work and group-work speaking activities are not available in the literature. They prefer to design a syllabus based on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Traditional teacher-centred instruction does not take into account learner needs, so this sort of language instruction cannot serve the purposes of language learning as teachers never involve students in learning what to learn, how to learn and how to be assessed. Students have no say about the language learning process.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Accuracy and fluency need to go hand in hand in foreign language learning and teaching. Teachers need to balance both of them as they complement one another so that learners can succeed in language learning. Language learning in Turkish context relies too much on accuracy-based practice or controlled practice. For example, many teachers choose to follow presentation, practice and production cycle (PPP). However, there is a problem with practice stage, which is based on meaningless practice and repetition. Also, while traditional grammar-first methods like Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and PPP methods are accuracy-based and teacher-centred, fluency-first methods like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are fluency-based and learner-centred. In addition, teachers do not balance both receptive and productive skills. They emphasise receptive skills, but they tend to neglect productive skills. As a result, students understand the language they hear and read, but they cannot produce or use language. To overcome this problem, group-work or pair-work speaking activities are considered as a free practice instrument that can be used to help students practise speaking English communicatively and to increase their collaboration in the classroom (Hung & Mai, 2020). They need to learn to communicate meaning as language is meaning-focused. As a matter of fact, there is no research is conducted on teachers' perceptions of pair work and group work in Turkey. This study seeks to bridge the gap in literature by investigating EFL instructors' perceptions of pair work and group work at international schools in Istanbul.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research is important to EFL instructors, researchers, syllabus designers, course book writers, and course planners. Firstly, EFL instructors need to do pair-work and group work activities to facilitate communication and interaction in the language classroom. This study will raise their awareness of the role of pair work and group work in the development of fluency in speaking English. They should avoid doing too much meaningless practice and choose to do meaningful, guided and free practice. Teachers should also emphasise four skills and balance receptive and productive skills. This research will help them to see the role of the skill development in language learning and teaching. Teachers need to be aware of getting exposed to language through reading and listening and producing or using language through speaking and writing. Meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output should be paid attention to when planning a language course. Teachers can also reflect on or evaluate their lessons. Do they have their students study in pairs or groups for developing their communication skills? This study will also be good for teachers to learn about the reasons for not using pair work and group work. This study is different from other studies because it investigates the attitudes of EFL instructors of group work and pair work speaking activities at international schools in Istanbul. Secondly, researchers who are interested in speaking can be given chances to be aware of EFL instructors' perceptions of speaking in the language classroom. Teachers' views of how people learn languages must be very important to researchers. Researchers can reach interesting results about the study because not many teachers focus on interaction or communication in the language classroom. Students cannot communicate or express meaning clearly and fluently. Researchers can make use of the results of this research. Maybe they will see teachers have a negative attitude towards fluency. The significance of the study stems from the fact that it is one of the few studies to the best of the researcher's knowledge that investigates the attitudes of EFL instructors towards pair-work and group work speaking activities in Turkey. Researchers will be able to learn whether pair work or group work is implemented in language classroom. Thirdly, syllabus designers can take into account the results of this study when they design a syllabus. Learner needs, goals and preferences for learning should be considered when course designers design a syllabus. Learners should be involved in topics, materials, activities and assessment. How will the teacher use the materials which they have developed? Materials development and the design of activities to use materials should go hand in hand. Syllabus designers should pay attention to pair work and group work through communicative activities. Moreover, course book writers should include enough pair-work and group-work speaking activities in the course books which they have published. They should balance accuracy and fluency. Finally, this study can be good for teacher trainers in helping student-teachers become aware of the importance of group work and pair work in improving speaking and increasing student engagement in the classroom.

This study aims to investigate EFL instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards group-work and pair-work speaking activities at international schools in Istanbul. It further seeks to examine the implementation of group-work and pair work speaking activities at international schools in Istanbul. It also aims to unravel the advantages and disadvantages in the implementation of group-work and pair-work speaking activities at international schools in Istanbul.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This research paper is based on a descriptive approach to exploring EFL instructors' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities conducted in English classes at international schools in Istanbul. According to Creswell (2014), the mixed-methods research design provides a stronger understanding of the problem by means of implementing two approaches. The present study used a mixed-method research design of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The researcher used both of them to achieve a better understanding of the research purpose. To be more precise, the current study adopted the design of descriptive research and employed the procedures of quantitative and qualitative in terms of data collection and data analysis. It is worth mentioning that mixed methods is utilized as a research design in the present study to have in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation.

2.2 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the overall perceptions of EFL instructors regarding

- A. pair-work and group-work speaking activities?
- B. in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities?
- C. the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work speaking activities?

RQ2: What are the EFL instructors' suggestions about pair-work and group-work speaking activities?

RQ3: What are the possible reasons for not using pair work or group work?

2.3 Research Setting, Participants and Sampling

The study was carried out at nine international schools in Istanbul, Turkey. The students in these international schools take a placement exam and according to their scores they are placed into classes; each class consists of 15 to 26 students. These schools offer students English during 2 terms and they have got school from Monday to Friday i.e. 5 days a week. Moreover, they organize extracurricular activities, such as dramas, online assignments, speaking clubs, and extensive reading activities to students. The English language programme involves two types of syllabuses: enhancing their general English proficiency skills in the first term and pay attention to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses including the development of academic English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the second term. They take skill-based tests and speaking exams that are tape-recorded.

The present study was conducted with 100 EFL instructors; 60 male and 40 female EFL instructors at nine different international schools in Istanbul. 60 of them have bachelor degrees, 30 of them have master's degrees, while 10 of them have doctoral degrees. They have teaching experience from 0 to ten years.

The instructors are randomly chosen from various international schools in Turkey. Probability sampling technique which involves random selection was chosen. Random sampling is a part of the technique in which each sample has an equal probability of being chosen. The term simple random sampling refers to a smaller section of a larger population. There is an equal chance that each member of this section will be chosen.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher adopted a mixed-methods design combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. To this end, two data collection tools including an online questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were employed. Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire and the qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview. Dörnyei (2007) feels that combining both data collection tools can help increase the strengths and decrease the weaknesses of the study. Moreover, combining both research methods provides methodological flexibility. In other words, using both research methods has great flexibility and most importantly, they are adaptable to many study designs (Sandelowski, 2003).

2.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire used to collect data from the English language teachers was identified after reviewing several articles that were published in the field and discussed the same research problem in different contexts. The questionnaire used in this research (see appendix A) was originally developed by Akin (2018) and it was used to explore English language teachers' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities. After getting the original developer researcher's permission, the questionnaire was adopted and adapted by the researcher because it was found to be the most relevant to the study in comparison to the other instruments used to investigate the pair-work and group-work practices and perspectives in the context of international private schools in Istanbul.

The first instrument used for this study is an online questionnaire prepared via (Google Forms) for EFL instructors. The researcher adopted a questionnaire from Akin (2018) and the questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to collect demographic information about the sampling. The second part of the questionnaire was categorised into five sections. Each section was made up of ten items. The first section addressed the EFL instructors' overall perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, the second section investigated the in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, the third section dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, the fourth section of the questionnaire explored the EFL instructors' suggestions about pair-work and group-work speaking activities and the fifth section of the questionnaire focused on the EFL instructors' possible reasons for not using or inadequate benefitting of pair-work and group-work speaking activities.

The researcher used a five-point Likert scale in the questionnaire. Likert scale is a type of rating scale used to measure attitudes of the participants. In this study participants were asked to rate the items on a level of agreement: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

2.4.2 The semi-structured interview

The interview used to collect data from the English language teachers was identified after reviewing several articles that were published in the field and discussed the same research problem in different contexts. The interview used in this research (see appendix B) was originally developed by Akin (2018) and it was used to investigate the English language teachers' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities in international schools in Istanbul. After getting the original developer researcher's permission, the interview was adopted and adapted by the researcher because it was found to be the most relevant to the study in comparison to the other instruments used to investigate the pair-work and group-work speaking activities in the context of international private schools in Istanbul.

The researcher conducted an interview with 10 EFL instructors and the interview involved 19 open-ended questions. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes after taking their permission. The interview consisted of two parts. The first part of the interview included some questions on academic qualifications and teaching experience. The second part of the interview included five sections: the first section was about EFL instructors' overall perceptions of pair work and group work (RQ1A), the second section was about in-class applications of pair work and group work (RQ1B), the third section was about the advantages and disadvantages of pair work and group work (RQ1C), the fourth section was about suggestions related to pair work and group work (RQ 2) and the fifth part was about possible reasons for inadequate benefitting from pair work and group work (RQ 3).

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data from EFL instructors' interviews and questionnaire were analysed by using the qualitative and quantitative methods. The data of the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively by using SPSS to analyse the items of the questionnaire according to 5-point Likert Scale: namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The researcher coded the answers into numbers before transferring them to the statistical analysis program. Then, the study gathered the frequencies and percentages.

The data of the interview were analysed qualitatively by classifying the data into themes, coding them, and then analysing them by using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. Data analysis was described as the process of identifying, classifying, and then interpreting the data, and determining the data that were selected. Considering this definition, the procedures of analysing the qualitative data included identifying the raw data, applying them into codes, interpreting the data, a comprehensive analysis was performed to the interpreted data. The researcher discussed the results of data interpretation to come to a conclusion (Bogdan&Biklen, 1982).

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Findings on Research Questions (RQ1A, RQ1B, RQ1C, RQ1D & RQ2, RQ3)

The results of the questionnaire are presented below in tables.

3.1.1 RQ1A: What are the overall perceptions of EFL instructors regarding pair-work and group-work speaking activities to practise speaking skills?

The findings of the analysis done on the quantitative data derived from the first part of instructors' questionnaires are presented here. The first part of the survey was about EFL instructors perceptions of pair-work and group work speaking activities. There were 10 four-point Likert scale items in this section. The results demonstrate that more than half of the participants had a positive attitude towards pair-work ($n=350$, 87.5%) and group-work ($n=310$, 77.5%).

Table 3.1: EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Pair-Work and Group-Work Activities to Practise Speaking Skills

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Median	Code	Std. Deviation
1	The students get bored if the speaking task takes too long.	100	3.41	3.00	3	0.621
2	The students will not be bothered by the attitude of the instructor to the pair work and group-work activities.	100	3.52	3.00	3	0.652
3	The students find it difficult to talk about topics that they are not familiar with.	100	3.50	2.00	3	0.751
4	The students like pair-work activities in speaking.	100	3.26	2.00	2	0.652
5	The students like group work speaking activities.	100	2.60	3.00	2	1.021
6	The students would like to take part in the speaking activity if the task is easy.	100	3.58	3.00	4	0.752
7	The students would prefer speaking activity when the instructor is eager for the task.	100	4.01	3.00	4	0.748
8	The students find shorter speaking activities much more fun.	100	4.08	3.00	4	0.895
9	The students would not like to take part in the speaking activity if the task is difficult.	100	4.15	2.00	4	0.902
10	The students perform better when they are familiar with the topics in the speaking task.	100	3.55	3.00	4	0.852

3.1.2 RQ1B: What are the EFL instructors' overall perceptions of in-class application of pair-work and group-work activities in practising speaking skills?

The quantitative data derived from the second section of the instructors' questionnaires are presented here. The second section of the survey was about the perceptions of EFL instructors related to the implementation of pair-work and group-work activities in practising speaking skills. There were 10 five-point Likert scale items in this section as indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 3.2: Overall EFL instructors' Perceptions of In-class Application of Pair-Work and Group-Work to Practise Speaking Activities

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Median	Code	Std. Deviation
1	The students find it easy to focus on the pair-work speaking activities.	100	3.61	3.00	4	0.562
2	The students use their mother tongues during pair-work speaking activities.	100	2.40	3.00	2	0.841
3	The students try to use English during pair-work speaking activities.	100	2.37	2.00	2	1.032
4	The students find it hard to focus on the task during pair-work speaking activities.	100	3.09	2.00	3	0.652

5	The students would like to have more pair-work speaking activities in the classroom.	100	2.31	2.00	2	1.025
6	The students try to share equal responsibilities with their partners during pair-work and group work speaking activities.	100	3.65	3.00	4	0.452
7	The students would prefer their partner to take more responsibilities than them during pair-work speaking activities.	100	3.41	3.00	4	0.509
8	There is an adequate number of pair-work speaking activities in the classroom.	100	3.28	3.00	3	0.552
9	There is adequate number of group-work speaking activities in the classroom.	100	2.46	3.00	2	0.652
10	The topics of the speaking tasks are appropriate to use previously learned grammar structures.	100	3.60	2.00	4	0.685

3.1.3 RQ 1C & D: What are the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work activities in practising speaking skills?

The findings of the analysis done on the quantitative data derived from the third section of the questionnaire are presented here. The third section of the survey was about the EFL instructors' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and

group-work speaking activities.

Table 3.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Median	Code	Std. Deviation
1	Pair work and group work are an appropriate technique used in English speaking classrooms.	100	3.61	3.00	3	0.824
2	Pair work and group work give students more opportunities to speak English in the class.	100	2.24	2.00	2	0.984
3	When students work in pairs and groups, they are more active than in other classroom setting.	100	2.19	2.00	2	1.015
4	Students who work in pairs and groups gain more than students who work individually.	100	2.01	2.00	2	1.025
5	Pair work and group work are an effective technique for dealing with mixed-ability speaking classes.	100	2.30	2.00	2	0.912
6	Through pair work and group work, students can make up for lacking of language items.	100	3.41	3.00	4	0.845
7	Pair work and group work create more chances for students to discover their own speaking ability.	100	3.51	3.00	4	0.895
8	Pair work and group work create more opportunities for students to increase their talking time as much as possible.	100	3.45	3.00	4	0.751
9	Pair work and group work maximize students' usage of language, reduces stress and requires students to think.	100	4.02	3.00	4	0.652
10	There may be ineffective communication when pair and group members seem to be misunderstanding each other.	100	4.09	3.00	4	0.548

3.2 RQ2: What are the Suggestions of EFL Instructors Regarding the Application Procedure of Pair-Work and Group-Work Activities in Practicing Speaking Skills?

The findings of the quantitative data analysis stemmed from the fourth part of EFL instructors' questionnaires are elaborated here. The fourth part of the survey revolved the suggestions of EFL instructors concerning the execution of pair and group work activities in practicing speaking skills. There were 10 four-point Likert scale items in such section.

Table 3.4.: EFL instructors' Suggestions about Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Median	Code	Std. Deviation
1	The students would like their teacher to determine the speaking topic.	100	3.68	3.00	4	0.504
2	The students would like their teacher to determine their speaking partner.	100	2.35	2.00	2	0.785
3	The students would like their teacher to pre-teach the target vocabulary about the task.	100	2.26	2.00	2	0.658
4	The students would like their teacher to guide them about the speaking task.	100	2.19	2.00	2	1.056
5	The students would like to change their speaking partner for each task.	100	2.09	2.00	2	1.021
6	The students would like to have a different-proficiency-level partner for each task.	100	3.41	3.00	4	0.756
7	The students would like to practice the task with their partners only.	100	3.50	3.00	4	0.652
8	The students would like to perform the task to all their classmates.	100	3.59	3.00	4	0.325
9	The students would like to have speaking classes in addition to the main course.	100	3.60	3.00	4	0.569
10	The students would like to have time for preparation to the task.	100	3.40	3.00	3	0.552

3.3 RQ3: What are the EFL Instructors' Possible Reasons for Inadequate Benefitting of Pair-Work and Group-Work Activities in Practising Speaking Skills?

3.3.1 Possible reasons for inadequate benefitting of pair-work and group-work speaking activities

The findings of the quantitative data analysis stemmed from the fifth part of EFL instructors' questionnaires are elaborated here. The fifth section of the survey focused on the suggestions of EFL instructors concerning the application of pair-work and group-work activities in practising speaking skills. There were 10 five-point Likert scale items in each section.

Table 3.5: EFL Instructors' Possible Reasons for inadequate Benefitting

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Median	Code	Std. Deviation
1	The lack of motivation of the instructor to conduct speaking activities.	100	2.84	3.00	3	1.012
2	The lack of motivation of the student to perform speaking activities.	100	3.64	3.00	4	0.751
3	Time constraint to implement speaking activities.	100	2.38	3.00	2	0.995
4	Overcrowded class that hinder the application of speaking tasks.	100	3.26	2.00	2	0.652
5	Loaded curriculum on a daily or weekly basis.	100	2.01	2.00	2	1.112
6	Speaking tasks that do not appeal to their interest.	100	3.54	3.00	4	0.741
7	Tasks that are above the students' proficiency level.	100	3.41	3.00	4	0.658
8	Tasks of the book that do not attract their attention	100	4.02	3.00	4	0.598
9	The students are unable to transfer their emotions by using the second language.	100	4.18	3.00	4	0.487
10	The students are not familiar with pair and group work activities in their mother tongue classes.	100	4.12	3.00	4	0.551

Table 3.6: Descriptive Statistics about Reasons for Not Using Pair-Work and Group-Work

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Means
1.	The lack of motivation of the instructor to conduct speaking activities.	44%	35%	15%	4%	2%	3.65
2.	The lack of motivation of the student to perform speaking activities.	52%	28.2%	5.8%	9%	5%	3.75
3.	Time constraint to implement speaking activities.	46%	31%	12%	5%	6%	3.26
4.	Overcrowded class that hinder the application of speaking tasks.	47%	27.5%	11%	6.9%	7.6%	3.17
5.	Loaded curriculum on a daily or weekly basis.	48%	23%	18%	3.8%	7.2%	3.25
6.	Speaking tasks that do not appeal to their interest.	60%	20%	7%	6%	5%	3.61
7.	Tasks that are above the students' proficiency level.	289	54	24	23	10	3.15
8.	Tasks of the book that do not attract the students' attention	46.5%	10.5%	20.4	15%	7.6%	3.64
9.	The students are unable to transfer the students' emotions to the second language.	50.2%	12.5%	13.55%	15.25%	8.5%	3.55
10.	The students are not familiar with pair and group work activities in the students' mother tongue classes.	55.6%	15.3%	20.3%	6.3%	2.5%	3.59

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Discussion

The main findings of the research are provided in five different sections: EFL instructors' overall perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, their perceptions of in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities in language classroom, their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work activities, their suggestions about the implementation of pair-work and group-work activities, their possible reasons why students do not adequately benefit from pair-work and group-work speaking activities.

4.1.1 EFL instructors' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities

The first research question examined EFL instructors' perceptions of pair-work and group-work activities to develop students' speaking skills. In Table 5.1 a summary of EFL instructors' views of pair-work and group-work speaking activities is available.

Table 4.1: EFL Instructors' Attitudes towards Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

EFL instructors' perceptions or attitudes towards pair-work and group-work speaking activities (Questionnaire)
• The students are not willing to participate in the speaking activity if the task is difficult.
• The students find shorter speaking activities much more fun.
• The students would prefer to participate in a speaking activity when the instructor motivates them to do the task.
• The students would like to participate in the speaking activity if the task is easy.

According to the findings of the questionnaire, nearly all of the EFL instructors stated that the students would like to participate in the speaking activity when the task is easy. The instructors also indicated that the students will do well when the teacher is a good motivator. Possibly, the teacher will motivate and engage students in pair work and group work. According to Kopinska and Azkarai (2020), pair-work and group-work speaking activities increased students' motivation and decreased their anxiety. It could also be inferred from the findings that students prefer shorter tasks and they also believed that teachers' motivation will be reflected on their good teaching.

In order to answer the first research question, an interview with the instructors was also conducted. The findings of the qualitative data provided two categories under the theme of teachers' perceptions of pair-work and group-work activities, which the researcher categorises as supporters and opponents. In Table 5.2, the overall summary of EFL instructors' perceptions of pair-work and group-work speaking activities is illustrated:

Table 4.2: EFL Instructors' Perceptions or Attitudes towards Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities (Interview)

- Pair work is more frequently applied than group work.
- Pair-work activates students' previous knowledge more than group work.
- Pair work improves students' speaking skills more than group work.
- Pair work and group work improve students' critical thinking skills and their ability to solve problems.
- Pair work or group work is a good way to construct knowledge cooperatively.
- Working in pairs and groups is loud and noisy.

Under the category of supporters, the findings show that all ten EFL instructors utilized pair-work speaking activities more than group work activities in their English language classes. They explained that pair-work speaking activities are more frequently applied than group work. They indicated that pair work increased students' previous knowledge because it enables them to elicit the information. They also stated that pair work improves students' speaking skills more than group work. These findings support what Hung and Mai (2020) think about pair work and group work. They both stated that EFL instructors had positive attitudes towards using group-work in EFL classroom to improve students' speaking skill due to its role in increasing students' engagement, enjoyment, and motivation in the classroom. Besides, the participants indicated that pair-work speaking activities improved students' speaking skills. This finding is compatible with Lin, Chen, and Yu (2022), who argued that pair work and group work improved students' speaking fluency and communicative competence because the students use their second language when speaking with their classmates. In this regard, Febyanti and Sari (2021) claimed that pair-work speaking activities enabled the students to produce more spoken language.

As for the opponents (30%) of EFL instructors stated that pair-work and group-work speaking activities discourage the students from studying individually. They are against constructing knowledge cooperatively. Besides, when students study in pairs and in groups, the classroom becomes noisy and loud. This distracts the students from learning in a nice atmosphere. Possibly, the teachers do not engage the students sufficiently before placing them into pairs or groups. According to Williams, Guy, and Shore (2019), teachers should engage and scaffold students before asking them to work in groups.

4.1.2 EFL instructors' perceptions of in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities

EFL instructors' perceptions of in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities in practicing speaking skills were explored. In Table 5.3 EFL teachers' views of in-class application of pair-work and group-work speaking activities are presented.

Table 4.3: EFL Instructors' Perceptions In-Class Application of Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

- The students try to share equal responsibilities with their partners during pair-work and group-work speaking activities.
- Speaking tasks improve students' grammatical knowledge.
- The students find it easy to focus on pair-work speaking activities.
- Pair work should be applied constantly in the classroom.
- The teacher should monitor students.
- The teacher should discover students' needs and interests.

The majority of teachers agreed that the students prefer to share equal responsibilities with their partners without dominating each other. The results are in line with the study of Ahmad and Yusuf (2014), who stated that placing international students with unequal speaking abilities should be conducted effectively by teachers by determining their learning culture and abilities to enrich the learners' language resources.

Besides, they believe that there is a strong correlation between speaking activities and grammatical knowledge. According to Storch (1999), pair work improves students' grammatical accuracy. Similarly, Rospinah et al. (2020) claimed that group-

work speaking activities improved students speaking skills, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical knowledge, fluency, and pronunciation. The students are more able to focus on pair-work speaking activities than on group-work activities. In this regard, Yulitrinisya and Narius (2018) indicated that pair-work speaking activities are more effective than group-work speaking activities.

The study found that the effectiveness of pair-work and group-work speaking activities relied heavily on good mentoring, observation, and error correction. The use of observation and monitoring in pair-work and group-work speaking activities are advocated by a variety of scholars (Yulitrinisya and Narius, 2018; Usman, 2015; Achmad and Yusuf, 2014; Truong, 2013; Otienoh, 2015). The findings showed that the implementation of pair-work and group-work speaking activities relied primarily on students by assessing learner needs, interests, and preferences.

4.1.3 EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages of Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

EFL instructors' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work activities in practicing speaking skills were discussed.

Table 4.4: EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages of Pair-Work and Group-Work Speaking Activities

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair-work and group-work speaking activities expose students to the target language, reduce their anxiety, and increase their motivation. • Pair-work and group-work speaking activities are an effective technique used in fluency-based English speaking activities. • They create more chances for students to discover their own speaking ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of misunderstanding among students might hinder their comprehension.

EFL instructors indicated that there are a variety of advantages of pair and group work speaking activities. They indicated that pair-work and group-work speaking activities improve students' speaking skills, reduce their anxiety levels, increase their motivation, and enable the students to discover their ability to speak confidently. In accordance with the present findings, the previous study of Huyen and Lan (2021) indicated that pair-work increased students' engagement, motivation, relaxation, and improved students' speaking skills. Also, Kopinska and Azkarai (2020) pointed out that pair-work speaking activities increase student motivation and decrease their anxiety. According to Hyde (1993), pair-work and group-work speaking activities improve students' fluency in speaking.

As for the disadvantages of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, lack of comprehension might hinder the students from understanding each other, which makes the students feel bored. This finding is consistent with Shrestha (2013), who claimed that students lack understanding one another, so they have to ask for clarification. This might make the other students bored in the class.

Regarding the interview questions on the advantages and disadvantages of pair-work and group-work activities, the results of the interview provided three categories under the first theme entitled 'improving students' speaking skill', namely, maximise student- talking time, enhance learner autonomy, and develop student creativity and problem-solving skills. In this respect, Crookes and Chaudron (2001) indicated that the advantages of using pair-work and group-work speaking activities are described as increasing the use of the target language, enhancing self-directed learning and enhancing student autonomy.

Two categories emanated from the second theme entitled 'increasing student collaboration', namely, pair-work increases student engagement and collaboration and group work improves student social skills. One category is provided under the theme 'improving student creativity and problem-solving skills. As for the disadvantages, 4 categories are provided under the theme 'language interference in group work,' 3 categories are provided under the theme 'students' attitudes and behaviours in group work,' 1 category is provided under the theme 'poor communication in pair work,' as illustrated in Table 5.5.

Table 4.5: EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages of Pair-Work and Group-Work Activities

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair-work and group-work speaking activities improve students' speaking skills. • Pair-work and group-work speaking activities improve student collaboration. • Pair-work and group-work speaking activities develop student creativity and problem solving skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of comprehension hinders the communication flow in pair-work and group-work speaking activities. • Students might not be engaged and feel bored. • Students switch to L1 and transfer from their L1. • Students lack knowledge of vocabulary. • Students lack grammatical knowledge. • Students lack self-esteem. • Students do not get exposed to the target language.

EFL instructors indicated that pair-work and group-work speaking activities offer a variety of advantages. They claimed that pair and group work speaking activities improve students' speaking skill, collaboration, creativity, and problem solving skills. In accordance with the present findings, pair work or group work is a good technique to develop fluency. For example, Abdullah (2016) found that group work improved students' speaking fluency. In his contrastive study, Woźniak (2017) deduced that pair work improved students' oral production while group work improved students' collaboration.

As for the disadvantages of pair-work and group-work speaking activities, the findings revealed that lack of comprehension among the group of students hinders them from communicating effectively. There is also a possibility of disengagement and boredom. Students may lack self-esteem or self-confidence. Therefore, they will not speak English confidently. Moreover, they will feel shy and embarrassed, so they will not be willing to participate in pair work and group work. Students will lack exposure to the target language. Students lack knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. As a result, they cannot use language accurately. According to Dabao (2014), pair work increased students' vocabulary knowledge and improves students' grammatical accuracy (Storch, 1999). Therefore, the researcher believes that applying pair work and group work might overcome the poor vocabulary knowledge and grammatical knowledge among the students.

4.1.4 Suggestions of EFL Students and Their Language Instructors Related to The Implementation of Pair and Group Work Activities

The second question of the study examined EFL instructors' suggestions about the application of pair-work and group-work activities in practising speaking activities. The findings of the questionnaire revealed that students preferred their speaking topic to be determined by their teacher. Also, they indicated that the speaking task should be taken along with the main course. They agreed that the students inclined to practice their speaking task with their partners. Besides, they would like to perform the task to all their classmates. What is more, they revealed that the students would like to have a different-proficiency-level partner for each task. Additionally, the students like to be fully prepared before engaging in speaking activities. In this regard, Hyde (1993) recommends that teachers prepare and do action research before placing the students in pairs or groups.

The results of the interview indicated that the speaking activities should be in line with the students' needs and preferences. They advised the teachers not to oblige the students to be engaged in the speaking activities, but rather they should be according to their tendencies and they should be objective. Therefore, the researcher believes that the teachers should diversify their teaching methods by using various speaking activities. In this respect, Shrestha (2013) indicated that applying pair work and group work might be interesting in the classroom if they are applied by using activities such as role-plays.

Moreover, EFL instructors should allocate sufficient and reasonable time for the speaking activities. Also, EFL instructors should monitor the students by observing them and writing down the errors that they have made in using the language to the last stage of the lesson to improve oral production of the students. According to Zohairy (2014), the effectiveness of pair work and pairing strategies rely on observation; the teacher should observe the students, while they are working on pairs.

4.1.5 Possible reasons why EFL students do not adequately benefit from pair-work and group-work activities

The third research question examined the possible reasons why students do not adequately benefit from pair-work and group-work activities in practicing speaking skills. Firstly, it could be inferred from the results that the students' inability to transfer their emotions by using the second language is considered one of the biggest challenges facing students.

Furthermore, students are unfamiliar with pair-work and group-work speaking activities in their mother tongue. The participants indicated that the inability of the students to understand the core of the speaking task hinders their adequate benefiting from the speaking activities. The findings further revealed that the students' lack of motivation hinders them from taking advantage of the speaking activities.

In addition to EFL instructors' views of students, EFL instructors listed the reasons why students did not participate in pair work and group work. It could be deduced that the regular use of speaking activities increases boredom, leads to the stability of the speaking performance and causes demotivation. What is more, students' proficiency levels and ages have a negative effect on the speaking activities. A possible explanation of this finding might be attributed to the fact that the speaking activities that are easy for advanced students or very difficult for intermediate students might hinder the students from taking advantage of these activities. More importantly, the respondents claimed that some of speaking activities might not attract the students' attention. It is worth mentioning that the dialectical differences among international students might weaken the communication among the students. However, Hung & Mai (2020) indicated that one of the biggest challenges in group work is manifested that not all of the students are involved in the speaking activities. Besides, some of them might speak more than other students.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications

This research has many pedagogical implications for EFL instructors, researchers, syllabus designers, course book writers, and course planners.

1. To begin with, EFL instructors should balance accuracy-based and fluency-based activities.
2. They should avoid doing too much meaningless practice. They should do meaningful and free practice.
3. They should focus on the development of fluency. To achieve this aim, they should pay attention to collaborative learning through pair-work and group-work speaking activities.
4. They should focus on meaning- focused input, i.e. reading and listening. Learners need to get exposed to language to develop their comprehensible input. They should also focus on output, i.e. speaking and writing. They need to use or produce language.
5. In addition to EFL instructors, researchers can utilise the results of this study. This study suggests that the main goals of language learning are meaningful communication and interaction. Fluency must be an essential component of a language course.
6. Moreover, syllabus designers should design a multi-strand syllabus which includes all aspects of language, learning and learners and social context.
7. Course book writers should also reflect the features of communicative language teaching (CLT), such as balancing four skills and sub-skills, including pair-work and group-work activities which aim to develop communication and fluency.
8. Finally, course planners should plan a language course, considering a learner-centred syllabus. They should assess learner needs, set course goals, identify topics, select materials, design activities, deliver teaching and assess learning.

4.3 Recommendations

The researcher gives EFL instructors some advice they should follow:

- The teacher can facilitate second language learning when learners are engaged in interaction (pair work and group work) and meaningful communication.
- The teacher should prioritise real and meaningful communication which results from students processing content (topics and materials) that is relevant, purposeful, interesting and engaging. The teacher should make use of content that connects to students' lives and interests. The teacher should use authentic stimulus material that students will see in their everyday lives, such as videos, blogs.
- The teacher should assume three main roles in a speaking class. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning. The teacher also acts as an organiser and puts students in pairs and small groups. Before setting up the activity. The teacher should have the role

of prompter and encourage students to participate in the activities by giving them prompt like key words and questions to help them speak.

- The teacher should create a positive and supportive learning environment where learners learn through collaboration and sharing. Students communicate meaning, get across a message and construct knowledge cooperatively.
- The teacher should encourage engagement and interaction involving student-student activities by using pair discussions, games, interactive activities and role-plays, puzzle solving and other collaborative tasks so that each student gets exposed to the target language and use language. Input and output should go hand in hand.
- The teacher should create specific opportunities for conversation in pairs and small groups, ensuring that they have a clear context, clear roles and an obvious purpose for doing the activity or task.
- The teacher should prioritise fluency over accuracy to build confidence. They will have the chance to develop fluency. Fluency and confidence go hand in hand.
- They create the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through the use of activities, such as problem solving, information sharing, and role play.
- They allow students to personalize learning by applying what they have learned to their own lives.
- Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning. Their motivational level is likely to increase.
- EFL instructors should engage the whole students in the speaking to increase students' motivation and engagement because the students would like to perform the task to all classmates.
- Instructors, curriculum designers, and teachers should apply short and interesting speaking activities that attract students' attention and motivate them to be engaged in these activities.
- It can be inferred from the findings of the study that poor monitoring of the students in the classroom would not achieve the desired learning objectives. Therefore, the teacher should monitor learning and give support and guidance.
- It can be elicited from the findings that poor time management hinders the students from taking advantage of the speaking activities. Therefore, the teacher should allocate particular time before engaging the students in the speaking activities. According to Hung & Mai (2020) the students who do not get the opportunity to speak or when some students speak more than others are considered as one of the biggest challenges that hinder the implementation of pair-work and group-work speaking activities.
- EFL instructors should build interest, provide a model text, pre-teach the students a number of vocabulary items before placing them into pairs and groups.
- EFL instructors should give the students clear instructions before the speaking activities to guarantee that all of them are able to understand the task; it can be achieved by modelling the speaking activities to guarantee that all of them are able to comprehend the speaking task.
- It can be recommended based on the findings of the study that the teacher should familiarize the students with the topic, some vocabulary items and functions so that learners can use language when studying in pairs and groups.
- EFL instructors who participated in this study indicated that the reasons that hinder the students from benefitting from speaking activities are attributed to the tasks in the school curriculum that do not attract students' attention. Therefore, the tasks should appeal to the students' interests to improve their motivation. According to Williams, Cera Guy, and Shore (2019), teachers should engage and scaffold students before asking them to work in groups.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdullah, A. (2016). Group work activities for improving speaking skills. *English Education Journal*, 7(3), 389-401.
- [2] Achmad, D., & Yusuf, Y. Q. (2014). Observing pair-work task in an English speaking class. *International Journal of Instruction*, 7(1).
- [3] Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1997). *Qualitative research for education*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- [4] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.
- [5] Dobao, A. F. (2014). Vocabulary learning in collaborative tasks: A comparison of pair and small group work. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(4), 497-520.
- [6] Febyanti, J. R., & Sari, D. M. M. (2021). Implementation pair work and storytelling in teaching speaking fluency in elementary school. *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Elementary Education (JTLEE)*, 5(1), 11-18.
- [7] Hung, D. M., & Mai, L. T. T. (2020). High School Teachers' Perceptions and Implementations of Group Work in English Speaking Classes. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(2), 445-462.
- [8] Huyen, P., & Lan, D. (2021). Using think-pair-share strategy to support students in speaking lessons. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(4), 01-08.
- [9] Hyde, M. (1993). Pair Work - A Blessing or a Curse?: An analysis of pair work from pedagogical, cultural, social and psychological perspectives. *System*, 21(3), 343- 348.
- [10] İlkyaz Akın, İ. N. (2018). EFL student and instructor perceptions of pair and group work speaking activities: a case study at a state university in Turkey (Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University).
- [11] Kopinska, M., & Azkarai, A. (2020). Exploring young EFL learners' motivation: Individual versus pair work on dictogloss tasks. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(3), 607-630.
- [12] Lin, M. F., Chen, Y. S., & Wu, H. J. (2022). Individual versus pair work on L2 speech acts: production and cognitive processes. *Applied Linguistics Review*.
- [13] Otienoh, R. O. (2015). Implementation of Pair Work and Group Work for Creation of Interaction Opportunities for Learners in Large Classes: The Viability of the Two Strategies. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(10), 171-179.
- [14] Rospinah, R., Ampa, A. T., & Nappu, S. (2021). The Effect of Group Work Activities to Improve Students' Speaking Skill. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 9(1).
- [15] Shrestha, P. N. (2013). English language classroom practices: Bangladeshi primary school children's perceptions. *RELC Journal*, 44(2) (147-162).
- [16] Storch, N. (1999). Are two heads better than one? Pair Work and Grammatical Accuracy. Vol. 27, 363-374.
- [17] Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning*. Vol. 52. No. 1, 119–158.
- [18] Storch, N. (2001). *An investigation into the nature of pair work in an ESL classroom and its effect on grammatical development* (Doctoral dissertation).
- [19] Truong, T. P. (2011). INFLUENCES OF PERSONALITIES ON STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN PAIRWORK AND GROUPWORK IN SPEAKING LESSONS OF FIRST-YEAR MAINSTREAM STUDENTS, FELTE, ULIS.
- [20] Usman, A. H. (2015). Using the think-pair-share strategy to improve students' speaking ability at Stain Ternate. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(10), 37-45.
- [21] Williams, J. M., Cera Guy, J. N., & Shore, B. M. (2019). High-achieving students' expectations about what happens in classroom group work: A review of contributing research. *Roeper Review*, 41(3), 156-165.
- [22] Woźniak, E. (2017). Individual work, pair work, and group work in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to first graders.
- [23] Yulitrisisya, W., & Narius, D. (2018). Using pair work technique in teaching speaking at junior high school. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 157-163.
- [24] Zohairy, S. (2014). EFFECTIVE PAIRWORK STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE SAUDI PRE-INTERMEDIATE COLLEGE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE PRODUCTION IN SPEAKING ACTIVITIES. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(2).