

PAPER

THE ROLE OF GROUP STUDY IN LEARNING LANGUAGES

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Abstract

In this article, I have tried to explain how a group study are crucial in learning a new language in our rapidly developing society and what role they play in improving the overall knowledge and communication skills of students. I have also attempted to highlight the importance of collaborative learning with real-life communications or active engagement. This interaction is not only beneficial for learning but also boosts the process.

Key words: Zone of proximal Development (ZPD), Collaborative learning, cooperation, collaboration.

Introduction

In our fast paced world speaking different languages has become a necessity of the era. Learning a new language is a challenging yet rewarding journey. It plays an essential role when it comes to personal growth, career opportunities, education and migration. Every person from kids to adults is trying to learn any other language on a daily basis. During my 5 year of teaching progress I met different kind of learners. Almost most of them want to take individual lessons. I also believed that individual learning is more effective. But recently I discovered something special for me. I begun teaching a small group of employers and realized how group study is powerful. Studying in a group can significantly enhance language acquisition, providing both academic and emotional benefits. As David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, who are the leading researchers on Cooperative learning, said: "Students learn more when they learn together."

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, students and researchers continually seek effective strategies to enhance their learning outcomes. Lev Vygotsky, the owner of the "Zone of proximal Development" (ZPD), argued that students learn best when they interact with others who can help them move from what they already know to what they can potentially know—this is called ZPD. Collaborative learning supports this idea, as students help each other progress through guided interaction. Among the various methods, group study and individual learning stand out as two primary approaches. Each method has its own distinct advantages, but understanding their differences and the

importance of group study can help learners make informed choices depending on their needs, goals, and circumstances.

Group study is a valuable strategy in language learning. It not only enhances communication skills but also fosters collaboration, cultural understanding, and motivation. Whether through formal study groups or casual meet ups, learning with others brings the language to life in ways that solo study often cannot. For anyone seeking to master a new language, joining or forming a study group can be a powerful step forward.

One of the main goals in language learning is communication, and group study provides a natural environment for practicing speaking and listening. Group members can engage in conversations, role-plays, or debates, allowing learners to hear different accents, speech speeds, and sentence structures. With different accents and pronunciations, learners can train their ears to understand spoken language in real-time. They also get more chances to express their ideas, answer questions, take part in discussions and can correct each other's mistakes or give suggestions, which boosts awareness of errors and better usage. This interaction builds confidence and helps learners overcome the fear of speaking in front of others. According to John Dewey, Learning is most effective when its active, social and relevant to real life. He supported learning through experience and interaction, laying early groundwork for modern collaborative learning approaches.

In group study, peer learning and support are also important. Learners can benefit from each other's strengths. Some may

have a strong vocabulary, while others may excel in grammar or pronunciation. By sharing knowledge and correcting each other's mistakes, learners develop a deeper understanding of the language. Moreover, Students can enhance understanding through discussion which allows learners to gain multiple perspectives on the same topic. When students explain concepts to one another, they reinforce their own understanding and uncover gaps in their knowledge. As Lev Vygotsky believed: "What a child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow". It means that learning happens best when students work with more capable peers or teachers. Collaboration helps them grow.

Additionally, group members can motivate each other to stay on track, creating a sense of accountability and support. Friendly competitiveness can motivate students when used carefully, and enhance engagement - as long as it remains positive and supportive. Eric Jensen, a brain based learning expert, suggests that moderate competition, when perceived as fun and non-threatening, can activate the brain, increasing focus and motivation. He also said: "Competition can be healthy and energizing if it is short-term, clearly structured and emotionally safe". This means friendly games or challenges in language class can stimulate learning if no one feels shamed and pressured. Being part of a study group can boost motivation. The collective progress of the group encourages individual members to stay consistent and complete tasks on time, fostering a sense of responsibility.

From my own experience, I watched how a friendly competition between members increases the productivity of the process. The words: "I can do better than you" are the fantastic words, which can encourage each other.

From the cultural side, learning languages represents learning the culture of the language speaking countries and it may be beneficial when the group members from different places exchanging their traditions. Cultural exchange has significant impact on acquiring a language. Language is deeply connected to culture. In a group with diverse backgrounds, learners can share cultural stories, traditions, idioms, and expressions. This enriches the learning experience and helps learners understand the language in context, which is essential for achieving fluency. Learning a language can sometimes be frustrating, but group study offers emotional benefits by connecting learners with others facing similar challenges. Sharing struggles and successes builds camaraderie and reduces feelings of isolation, especially for learners studying in a foreign country or online.

All in all, group study plays a crucial role in a student's academic development. While individual study fosters independence and concentration, group study enhances understanding through collaboration and shared effort. As education becomes increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary, the value of group study is likely to grow, preparing learners not only for exams but also for the demands of real-world teamwork and communication.

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