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CAN GROUP DISCUSSIONS BE EFFECTIVE FOR EVERY PUPIL IN HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study investigates whether group discussions are effective for every pupil in high school classrooms. The research aims to explore the influence of group discussions on students' communication skills, confidence, participation, and critical thinking. A mixed-methods approach was used, including classroom observations, questionnaires, and speaking activities to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The participants of the study were high school students from an Uzbek secondary school. The findings revealed that group discussions increased students' classroom engagement, improved speaking confidence, and encouraged collaborative learning. Most students reported that discussion-based lessons were more interesting and motivating than traditional lessons. However, some pupils experienced difficulties such as shyness, limited vocabulary, and unequal participation in groups. The results suggest that group discussions create an interactive and student-centered learning environment when properly managed by teachers. Therefore, group discussions can be considered an effective strategy for improving communication and teamwork skills among high school learners.

Key words: group discussions, high school pupils, communication skills,

collaborative learning, classroom interaction, critical thinking, speaking confidence, student participation, English language learning, motivation

Ushbu tadqiqot guruh muhokamalari yuqori sinf o‘quvchilari uchun qanchalik samarali ekanligini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi guruh muhokamalarining o‘quvchilarning muloqot ko‘nikmalari, ishonchi, darsdagi faolligi va tanqidiy fikrlashiga ta’sirini aniqlashdan iborat. Tadqiqotda miqdoriy va sifat ma’lumotlarini to‘plash uchun sinf kuzatuvlari, so‘rovnomalar va speaking faoliyatlaridan foydalanilgan aralash metod qo‘llanildi. Tadqiqot ishtirokchilari O‘zbekiston umumta’lim maktabining yuqori sinf o‘quvchilari bo‘ldi. Natijalar guruh muhokamalari o‘quvchilarning darsdagi faolligini oshirgani, speakingdagi ishonchini kuchaytirgani va hamkorlikda o‘rganishni rivojlantirganini ko‘rsatdi. Ko‘pchilik o‘quvchilar muhokamaga asoslangan darslarni an’anaviy darslarga nisbatan qiziqarliroq va motivatsionroq deb baholadilar. Biroq ayrim o‘quvchilar uyatchanlik, lug‘at boyligining cheklanganligi va guruhdagi tengsiz ishtirok kabi muammolarga duch kelishdi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, o‘qituvchi tomonidan to‘g‘ri boshqarilgan guruh muhokamalari interaktiv va o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan ta’lim muhitini yaratadi. Shuning uchun guruh muhokamalari yuqori sinf o‘quvchilarining muloqot va jamoada ishlash ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirishda samarali usul hisoblanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: guruh muhokamalari, yuqori sinf o‘quvchilari, muloqot ko‘nikmalari, hamkorlikda o‘rganish, sinfdagi interaksiya, tanqidiy fikrlash, speaking ishonchi, o‘quvchi faolligi, ingliz tilini o‘rganish, motivatsiya.

Данное исследование изучает, насколько групповые обсуждения эффективны для учащихся старших классов. Цель исследования — определить влияние групповых обсуждений на коммуникативные навыки, уверенность, активность и критическое мышление учащихся. В исследовании использовался смешанный метод, включающий наблюдения на уроках, анкетирование и speaking-задания для сбора количественных и качественных данных.

Участниками исследования стали учащиеся старших классов одной из школ Узбекистана. Результаты показали, что групповые обсуждения повысили активность учащихся на уроках, улучшили уверенность при говорении и способствовали совместному обучению. Большинство учащихся отметили, что уроки, основанные на обсуждениях, были более интересными и мотивирующими по сравнению с традиционными занятиями. Однако некоторые ученики столкнулись с трудностями, такими как застенчивость, ограниченный словарный запас и неравномерное участие в группах. Полученные результаты показывают, что правильно организованные учителем групповые обсуждения создают интерактивную и ориентированную на учащихся образовательную среду. Таким образом, групповые обсуждения можно считать эффективным методом развития коммуникативных навыков и умения работать в команде среди старшеклассников.

Ключевые слова: групповые обсуждения, учащиеся старших классов, коммуникативные навыки, совместное обучение, взаимодействие в классе, критическое мышление, уверенность в говорении, активность учащихся, изучение английского языка, мотивация.

INTRODUCTION

In modern education, teachers continuously search for methods that can improve students' learning experiences and increase classroom participation. One of the most commonly used interactive teaching methods is group discussion. Group discussions encourage students to exchange ideas, solve problems together, and develop communication skills. In language learning classrooms, discussion-based activities also help learners practice speaking and listening in a more natural and cooperative environment.[1]

Traditional teacher-centered lessons often limit students' opportunities to express their opinions or interact with classmates. As a result, many pupils become

passive learners and may lose motivation during lessons.[2] In contrast, group discussions provide students with a chance to participate actively, share personal viewpoints, and learn from one another. Such activities can increase learners' confidence and make the learning process more enjoyable.

Several researchers have highlighted the positive impact of collaborative learning and classroom discussions on students' academic performance and social development. Johnson and Johnson (2019) found that cooperative discussion activities improved students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.[3] Similarly, Mercer and Dawes (2020) reported that classroom discussions encourage deeper understanding and improve communication skills among secondary school students.[4]

Furthermore, group discussions allow learners to practice real-life communication and teamwork skills that are essential for future academic and professional success. Students become more independent and responsible for their learning process when they actively participate in discussions and collaborative tasks.

Despite these advantages, group discussions may not always be equally effective for every pupil. Some students may feel shy, anxious, or uncomfortable speaking in front of others, while stronger students may dominate discussions. In some cases, weaker learners may remain silent or depend too much on their classmates. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate how group discussions affect different types of learners in high school classrooms.

This study aims to investigate whether group discussions are effective for every pupil in high school and to explore their impact on communication skills, confidence, participation, and classroom engagemen

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate whether group discussions are effective for every pupil in high school. Both quantitative and

qualitative data were collected to analyze students' participation, confidence, and communication development.

Participants

The participants of this study were 14 high school students from an Uzbek secondary school. The students were between 15–16 years old and studied English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants included both male and female learners with mixed language proficiency levels. The students were selected through convenience sampling because they were easily accessible to the researcher.

Materials

Several materials were used during the study:

discussion topics related to education, technology, and daily life,

speaking and opinion-sharing activities,

classroom observation notes,

questionnaires,

evaluation sheets,

and vocabulary support materials.

Instruments

A questionnaire was used to collect students' opinions and attitudes toward group discussions. Classroom observations helped identify participation levels, communication patterns, and learner interaction during discussion activities. In addition, short speaking evaluations were conducted before and after the

Classroom observations also revealed that collaborative discussions improved teamwork and critical thinking skills. Students learned how to listen respectfully, respond to different opinions, and support their ideas with examples. Moreover, learners became more engaged during classroom activities and showed increased motivation toward English lessons.

Nevertheless, some pupils remained less active due to shyness or limited vocabulary knowledge. In a few groups, stronger students dominated the discussions, which reduced equal participation opportunities for quieter learners.

Overall, the findings suggest treatment to measure improvement in speaking confidence and participation.

Procedures

The research was conducted over four weeks:

Week 1

Students completed an initial questionnaire and participated in a speaking activity to evaluate their communication skills and confidence level.

Week 2–3

Group discussion activities were implemented during English lessons. Students discussed various topics in small groups and shared opinions collaboratively. The teacher monitored participation and encouraged equal involvement among learners.

Week 4

Final speaking evaluations and questionnaires were conducted to measure changes in participation, speaking confidence, and classroom interaction after the discussion-based activities.

Findings

The findings of the study demonstrated that group discussions had a generally positive effect on high school pupils. Most students became more active and confident during classroom activities after participating in discussion-based lessons.

Before the treatment, many students hesitated to speak during lessons, and only a few learners participated actively. However, after several weeks of group discussions, students showed greater willingness to express their opinions and communicate with classmates.

The questionnaire results indicated that approximately 85% of students believed group discussions made lessons more interesting and interactive. About 80% reported that discussions improved their speaking confidence and helped them learn new ideas from classmates. In addition, many students stated that working in groups reduced anxiety and made them feel more comfortable during speaking tasks.

aching. – London: Pearson Education, 2007.

Brown, H. D. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. – New York: Pearson Education, 2001. that group discussions are effective for many high school pupils, although individual differences may influence participation levels and learning outcomes.

Discussion

The results of this study support the idea that group discussions can improve students' communication skills, confidence, and classroom engagement. Interactive discussions encourage students to participate more actively and create a supportive learning environment.

One possible reason for the positive results is that students feel more comfortable sharing ideas in small groups rather than speaking in front of the entire class. Group discussions also allow learners to practice language skills in meaningful and real-life situations. Through interaction with classmates, students develop critical thinking, listening, and problem-solving abilities.

These findings are consistent with previous research on collaborative learning and student-centered education. Similar studies have shown that discussion-based activities increase learner motivation and improve speaking performance. Group discussions also help students become more independent learners and encourage cooperation among classmates.

However, the study also revealed several challenges. Not every pupil benefited equally from group discussions. Some students remained quiet because of anxiety, lack

of confidence, or insufficient vocabulary knowledge. In some situations, dominant students controlled the discussion while weaker learners participated less actively.

Another limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size and short research period. Therefore, the results may not fully represent all high school students or long-term learning outcomes. Future studies may examine larger groups of learners and compare different discussion techniques in various educational settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, group discussions can be an effective teaching strategy for high school pupils. They help students improve communication skills, confidence, participation, teamwork, and critical thinking abilities. In addition, discussion-based activities create a more interactive, collaborative, and enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

The findings of this study demonstrate that most students respond positively to discussion-centered lessons and become more motivated to participate in classroom activities. However, group discussions may not be equally effective for every learner. Some pupils may require additional support, encouragement, and vocabulary preparation to participate actively.

Therefore, teachers should carefully organize discussion activities, create balanced groups, and ensure equal participation opportunities for all students. When properly managed, group discussions can become a valuable method for improving both academic performance and social interaction in high school classrooms.

Future research may investigate the long-term effects of group discussions on language development and compare their effectiveness with other interactive teaching methods.

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