

**The Effect of Collaborative Learning on the Proficiency of English  
Language among Female Students in Government Secondary  
Schools, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**  
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**Abstract**

*The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of Collaborative Learning (CL) on the proficiency of English language among female students in government secondary schools, KP, Pakistan. The main objective was to determine the effect of CL on English language proficiency. The population of the study consisted of female government secondary school students in District Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The students of 10th class were taken as sample of the study. The study was experimental in nature. The sample students were divided into two groups i.e. experimental and control groups. Treatment and control groups were equated on the basis of teacher made pre-test scores. Each group consisted of 40 participants. Both groups were exposed to same experience except the style of teaching i.e. Slavin's students team achievement division (STAD) model was selected to teach English to the experimental group. Moreover, diverse activities related to listening, reading and writing skills of English were also performed by the students of the experimental group while the control group was taught by using the traditional method. At the end of treatment, a teacher made post-test was administered to experimental and control groups. SPSS version 20 and t-test was used for analysis. Data analysis revealed that the experimental group was significantly dominant over the control group on post-test showing the benefit of collaborative learning method over traditional learning method. Hence, the final result of the study indicated that collaborative learning method was more effective for teaching English as compared to the traditional learning method. The CL is recommended to all government schools and all types of classrooms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.*

***Keywords:** Collaborative Learning, English Language Proficiency and Experimental Study*

**Introduction**

Collaborative learning is explained as a technique of teaching in which groups of students perform different tasks or projects collectively to solve an issue, accomplish a project or attain a mutual aim or target (Namaziandost & Ahmadi, 2019). Collaborative learning is one of the best approach and an energetic active learning pedagogy (andragogy) to

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organize the activities, projects etc in the classroom, in order to elevate the conventional and cultural learning experiences.

This learning strategy claims to be a beneficial and successful method to work in teams to achieve a collective target (Soleimani & Khosravi, 2018). Social theorists as Namaziandost & Nasri, (2019) contend that working in groups is much more fruitful and successful result achieving approach as compared to the obsolete traditional teaching technique, which can be practically applied in the classroom setting ( teaching learning ) to obtain progressive results and goals.

Collaborative learning technique is in itself a creative, innovative and interesting process which involves cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. Many researches in past years have maintained a relevant relation between the cognitive and affective domains and collaborative learning strategies (Kandasamy & Habil, 2018). Hernández & Boero, (2018) noted that collaborative learning has improved student's achievement and their memorization level. This method makes students very competent, active and creative participants and receivers of better understanding by sharing their knowledge, information and skills in groups, as well as through mutual discussions, activities, tasks and giving responses during collaborative learning activities.

Cooperative learning requires students to work jointly, discuss collaboratively and ensure full participation in group tasks (Teshfamichael, 2017), states that collaborative learning keeps a pressure on the learners to indulge in collaborative learning activities and complete the assignments, projects and tasks collaboratively. Lenkauskaitė and Masiliauskienė, (2019) stated that the diversity of students in a class or team also positively affects the group work, they adopt varied means of strategies to achieve their targets or goals. They contend that learners in collaborative groups develop a deep and bonded interaction within team members, between learners and teacher as well as develop a better understanding about the course material.

The scenario is far too bleak in Pakistani government schools at national and provincial level. The researcher herself is confronted with such issue, being the teacher in the school in district Peshawar, KP. As a result, she opted to highlight this issue by having a look into the effect of collaborative learning on English language proficiency in female government secondary schools.

### Literature Review

Education is a social enterprise which moulds the individuals into proper forms of behavior and attitudes which make them lead a very productive, progressive and successful life in the society. A school is thus, a miniature form of society and a social institution that initiates and practically implements such programs, instructional means, methods and goals so as to bring changes in the behavior and attitudes of the students. The most vital and significant components of the educational process in any institution is the teacher and student. The teacher is the instructor as well as the evaluator of the students at best. It is the teacher who plans designs and implements instructional strategies in the class so as to make his student excel in all areas of the educational process and become ready to step into the social world. The teacher should create situations in which students are motivated and develop a sense for learning (Ahmed, 2005).

New trends and educational technology is widely in vogue now globally resulting in better education. Johnson et.al(2009) are of the opinion that studies of team formations may be carried out on certain important dimensions. There are concerns of group size, mechanics of work for distribution among the group participants and also differences and similarities of experiences of the members in a group. But in Pakistan, the teachers still make use of traditional approaches for the instructional process in the class. Traditional teaching does not incline the learners towards learning especially in overcrowded classrooms. Effective and beneficial instructional process asks for deliberate efforts on the part of the teachers and the students (Kumaran, 2017). For the best desired outcome and successful results and achievement, the desired situation is adopting the process of learning things cooperatively and collaboratively. Various studies in disciplines of science have proved over long that size of teams are growing in collaborative research and thereby the importance of results is continuously rising in subjects like English as well (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

Pakistan is a developing country, by far due to its low standard of education. M. Sohail (2015) stated that in Pakistan the prevalent situation is in coherence to the past, with very little or no change. Pakistan's educational system is very dismal when we have a glimpse at its educational structure. The teaching and learning system is the same old bookish as it used to be in the past. The instructional process in the classroom is entirely dependent on rote memorization particularly at

secondary school level the standard of education is very dismal and must be ameliorated through the implementation of modern educational innovative trends in schools (Eid Akbar, 2015).

The government of Pakistan (2009), planning commission of Pakistan introduced “Vision 2030” which suggested that educational system will be standardized to render a good opportunity to all Pakistani students to attain quality education, to use their original capabilities and participate successfully to build a developed, and progressive Pakistan. Medium of instruction is yet, another important factor for the decline or upgraded system of education in Pakistan. The policy makers are still in a state of doubt switching over from English medium to Urdu and then back to English. This has adversely affected the system of education and the tremors of this “Vacillating policy” will be felt by the future generations also.

English is said to be the official language of Pakistan and it is used extensively in almost all government’s institutions. But still Pakistani students confront many hurdles as they lack the “Proficiency in English”. Ahmad (2011) was of the opinion that the students even passing out from matric, are not proficient in English language skills, specially the students of government schools. English language is basically divided into its four components i.e. listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. These are basic foundations of English language. All the four skills play a significant role in the learning of English as a language and becoming proficient in it. The researcher has been and still is teaching at secondary school level. She is confronted with similar problem. She has observed during her instructional process that students are not confident in any of the four basic skills of English language.

Proficiency in English language can best be attained through Collaborative learning. In the past, many scholarly researches, articles, thesis and publications have been in support of its application in the English language learning classrooms. These articles and researches authenticated the view that the acquisition of a language is a complex process which is based on the assimilation of knowledge as an input and its useful application in the real life as its output. Collaborative Learning has a very constructive and great effect on all the aspects that are very vital for learning of a language. Moreover, group work helps student’s understanding of their obligation towards society. Student-centered teaching methodology is the best way to extract maximum opportunities to express oneself within the group and to the teacher as well whereas

teacher-centered conventional method in English language classroom lacks this opportunity (Mahmoud, 2014). The paradigm shift for language teachers is full of challenges for language teachers in a developing country like Pakistan (Karim 2012). Collaborative learning method is the best for communicating ideas, sharing them with peers and teachers as the most effective means of language learning technique which can be applied inside and outside the classroom to accelerate the process of learning (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). It is one of the best instructional strategy which could be applied in a Pakistani governmental school context for achieving better academic results in teaching English specifically (K. Asif & A. Mumtaz, 2017).

Cohen and Lotan (2014) stated that learners or participants in CL method actively exchange opinions, resolve issues, give answers, use diverse means of knowledge and develop expertise in collaborative projects. Each member of the group plays his role in the integrated activities for the benefit of the entire group. Members of the group work collaboratively to attain their learning targets. Even the teachers need to be well informed about the forming of groups with a range of abilities so that the children can learn from each other.

This learning approach is beneficial in complicated, diverse and difficult situations (Shantha & Mekala, 2017). As a collective effort, it emphasizes studying, understanding and improving the problems. This learning technique stresses on group discussions, assignments and accomplishment of mutual tasks. Through this learning technique, students converse, communicate, debate and thus come up with solutions and answers to the problems. There is a positive and constructive listening, questioning, answering and argumentation within the debate. "1-2-6" approach is used to discuss the situations or tasks. The Greenwood Dictionary of Education describes CL as "collaborative learning is an instructional process in which learners perform different tasks together, address a significant problem or develop a constructive project."

Cooperative learning is a technique that promotes beneficial exchange of concepts, interactive discussions and interaction between the students that is why it is formed on "constructivism" theory of social learning. Zhang & Sun, (2017) suggest that students in a collaborative learning group have the same academic intent, so they seek to complete a task together through collaborative effort. Collaborative learning groups not only accomplish a targeted task together, but also help each other to solve a problem (Johnson et.al,2009). As far as skills and expertise are

concerned, learners do not have the same skills but if they jointly work for the same tasks and support each other then they can positively improve their educational process (Ahmad,2005). It is appropriate and beneficial not only for academically high level pupils but also for learners with less level of achievement (Nasri & Biria, 2017).

The term collaborative learning (CL) is used in various walks of life (Tahmasbi & Namaziandost, 2019). Basically, there are different views about what CL is, even then some basic attributes should be established. Collaboration is now a phenomenon of the 21st century. It is a dire need in today's world to work together on important problems and solve them (Amedu & Gudi, 2017), shifting from personal tasks to collective work, from individuality to collaboration (Metruk, 2018). CL is one such instructional method that includes groups of students working jointly to answer the questions, resolve an issue, do a task or achieve the targets. The learners participate socially, intellectually, emotionally in the CL setting, as they listen to one another, discuss on one another's view points, and are intended to display and support their views. Thus, the students develop their particular concepts and patterns and don't rely only on the format of the teacher or content. In a CL situation, the students get the chance to communicate and discuss with others, propose, suggest and support concepts, information, share diverse views, challenge others concepts, and participate efficiently and interestingly (Nasri & Akbari, 2019).

In the general sense for many students, CL is undoubtedly a common practice, regardless of any effort or practice put in by the authorities to encourage these activities. However, there should be means to increase the possibility of collaboration at all levels of education to support and practically implement this kind of learning (Srinivas, 2011). Collaborative learning should be differentiated from the other word, which is known as co-operative learning, this highlights to those instructional methods in which the teacher and the learners are equally performing the tasks together, for example, formatting assignments, choosing content, and displaying the content in front of the class. Clearly, Collaborative learning is a change from traditional method which only targets towards using those techniques which improve student's memorization of content presented by the teacher (Alharby, 2015). CL encourages students to support each other in their diverse activities, see into the evaluation of the group's achievement, and utilize social skill. It's an instructional pattern that points towards small mixed groups of learners collectively working to

accomplish mutual task. Teaming up is a vital component of CL (Trans & Lewis 2012).

CL is a pedagogical approach involving learners to learn and comprehend their own learning as well as learn by helping others. CL is that type of dynamic learning which is developed to improve one's own learning through working in groups. Faryadi (2007) stated that CL is a collection of concepts and methods for strengthening learning and working towards a shared objective with others towards a common goal. It is different from cooperative learning in some regards. Opinions vary in this context.

English language is official language in Pakistan as stated above. It is the mode of interaction and conversation in many governmental organizations and institutions in Pakistan. But the status of English language in Pakistan has not improved as many students fail in examination due to lack of competency and expertise in English. The Pakistani government is trying to put in all its efforts to upgrade the level of English in the country and has regarded it a compulsory subject from class 1 in national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006). It is an unavoidable issue of the day concerning English language and should be overcome by the implementation of improved standards and solutions for this problem in Pakistan. Collaborative Learning has made authentic and strong theoretical bases and conceptions derived from the social science, cognitive science and language acquisition perspective (Slavin, 2011). CL recommends that the students, during the instructional process, are actively engaged to pick the explicit information according to the previous intellectual structures so as to make the interpretation of the present situation. In addition, group dynamics theory holds that in CL teams, when group members meet together for a mutual purpose, they collaborate, support each other, help each other and motivate each other to ensure their group's successful accomplishment (Sohail, 2015). The developmental theory also proposed that the learners when work together and interact for the proper mutual task, develop their intellectual strengths and can well promote their competencies and expertise for the said concept.

Tsay and Miranda (2010) saw that learners who appropriately engage in group tasks, assignments, display collaborative interactive and interdependent patterns, attitudes or behaviors, provide positive and meaningful output and collaborate with their group to have an increased probability of attaining good marks and course grades at the end. CL is a

positive pedagogy that inculcates good academic success (Milojevic,2010).

*Objective of the Study*

To determine the effect of collaborative learning on English language proficiency.

*Hypothesis of the Study*

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between collaborative learning and English language proficiency.

**Research Methodology**

Within the context of quantitative paradigm, this research was experimental. Educational experiments can be performed either in a laboratory or in a situation in the field. Field experiments may take place in schools, playgrounds or other natural environments. The experiment is generally seen as the most sophisticated method of research to test the hypotheses.

*Population of Study*

The population of the study was all female government secondary schools in KP which constitutes 25 districts with a number of 805 female secondary schools and a number of 64,589 students. (EMI Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools 2017-2018, KP).Whereas the target population was all the female government secondary schools in district Peshawar which constitutes 64 schools with a number of 6,144 students in total. Due to many constraints, the researcher further delimited it to one female secondary school for conducting the experiment. Table1 gives the description of the population.

Total Population	Female Government Secondary Schools in KP	No of Students
	805	64,589
Target population	Female Government Secondary Schools in District Peshawar	No of Students
	64	6,144



### *Sample and Sampling Technique*

Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the participants for the research. The participants included respondents from one female secondary school which was selected randomly from the accessible population of district Peshawar. The respondents were all female students, almost of the same age and same gender. They were students of class 10 (Matric). A total of 80 students were selected through simple random sampling technique. These students were divided into two homogenous groups. i.e experimental group and control group based on age, socio economic status and the scores on the Pretest. Each group consisted of 40 students.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

As it was experimental study so pretest–posttest instrument was used. Two groups were approached, one was experimental and the other was control group. Each group had 40 students. Pretest on general English language was administered on both the groups as well as on the individual skills such as listening, reading and writing. In the same way post-test was also administered. After studying the literature review indicators were drawn and the pretest and post-test were constructed as a tool for collection of required data.

### *Data Collection Technique*

As it was experimental study therefore, the researcher taught for a period of four months in one of the public school for the collection of data from both the groups. Pretest was administered on both the groups before the experiment, then the experimental group was taught through Collaborative Learning technique whereas the control group was taught through the traditional method by the researcher herself. To authenticate the test items, it was piloted on a group of students, other than the sample students and attained the desirable characteristics of a measuring procedure that is Validity, Reliability and Item difficulty.

### *Validity and Reliability*

Validity of the pretest and post-test was checked by three experts. Some of the items were removed as per their esteemed recommendation. The items of the tests were suitable and covered what they were supposed

to test. Reliability was authenticated by the application of Cronbach Alpha which was used to find the value of all the items, which was 0.80.

*Data Analysis*

Data analysis is the most vital and basic stage in any research. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Data was analyzed through the application of Inferential Statistics i.e t-test was applied to test the given objective and the hypothesis.

**Results**

**Table 1: Pretest Control and Post-test Control (achievement/listening/reading/writing)**

Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	S. Error Mean	t	d.f	P-value
Pre-control	79.07	40	13.87611	2.221			
Post-control	80.00	40	12.15254	1.945	1.343	38	.187

Table 1 indicates the data analysis of the grand total test results of the control group on pretest and post-test results (achievement/listening/reading/writing). There is statistically no difference between the mean of the pretest and post-test of control group. The mean of pretest is 79.0769, standard deviation is 13.876 whereas the mean of post-test is 80.0000, standard deviation is 12.152. The difference in the mean of pretest and post-test is -0.9231 and the difference in the standard deviation is 1.724s. The overall significant value is .187 which is greater than the level of significance i.e 0.05. Hence, the data is insignificant. It is concluded that there is no difference between the grand total test results (pretest and post-test) of control group. It is concluded that there is no significant difference in the overall aspects of achievement, listening, reading and writing tests of the control group.

**Table 2: Pretest Experimental and Post-test Experimental (achievement/listening/reading/writing)**

Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	S. Error Mean	t	d.f	P-value
Pretest Experimental	82.3590	40	11.05843	1.77077	4.315	38	0.000

Post-test	92.0769	40	9.67467	1.54919
Experimental				

Table 2 indicated the data analysis of the grand total test results (pretest and post-test) of the experimental group. There is statistical difference between the overall mean of experimental group before and after the test. The mean of the pretest of experimental group is 82.3590 and standard deviation is 11.05843 whereas the mean of post-test of experimental group is 92.0769, standard deviation is 1.54919. The difference in the mean of pretest and post-test of experimental group is -9.7179 and the difference in standard deviation is 1.38376. The overall significant value is 0.000 which is less than the level of significance i.e 0.05. Hence, the data is significant and there is great difference between the grand total test results (pre and post) of the experimental group. It is concluded that there is significant difference in the overall aspects of achievement, test, listening test, reading test and writing test of the experimental group.

### Discussion

Grand total result of the pretest and post-test of the control group showed that there was no drastic significant difference between the pretest and post-test means. The p-value was high than the level of significance i.e 0.05. This proved that the students of the control group remained passive listeners, uninterested and demotivated towards the instructional content. That is why no change in the pretest and post-test results showed up even when the same content was taught to both the groups. Moreover, it shows that the traditional method of teaching is a stereotype methodology which keeps the students uninterested towards the learning process Eid Akbar (2015).

Grand total result of pretest and post-test of experimental group was also taken into account. The grand total difference in the means of the pretest and post-test on the overall skills of achievement, listening, reading and writing was greatly significant. The p-value was less than the level of significance i.e 0.05. This shows that the students of the treatment group worked perfectly well on the given tasks with a lot of devotion and interest regarding the different skills. The CL approach is a success in this regard. Experimental plans facilitate small group interaction and sharing resources amongst group participants (Al-Mahrooqi, 2013). They are actively involved in learning process. Group members try to help one another for

clearance of concepts. The results of present study are consistent with previous research findings as given by Lenkauskaitė & Masiliauskiene (2020). Collaborative group learners avail inspiration and support of their high ability partners. They are present to guide them when they need a typical answer to a question. This provision of explanation leads to gain in achievement. Hence CL has proved more effective strategy for low achievers. The result supports the findings reported by Mahmoud (2014).

#### *Conclusion and Recommendations*

The use of collaborative learning technique is extremely beneficial for the enhancement of the English language proficiency of the students at secondary school level. Many researches globally share the same view regarding the CL approach. Collaborative learning approach is conducive for government school students in our country especially female students. Peer work or group learning lessens the element of shyness and hesitancy which is mostly seen in the female students.

This study shows that collaborative learning is a beneficial and interesting method for teaching English subject as compared to traditional method of teaching. Therefore, teachers of English must implement CL technique to enhance the level of proficiency of students in all skills of English i.e listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers of English should be motivated to use CL technique in the classroom situation. Teachers of English should be given training in CL method to use the basic components of CL i.e. positive interdependence, equal participation, individual accountability, peer interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing.

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