

**A Thesis Report on**  
**“Teacher’s challenges in organizing Collaborative learning with the**  
**University students in Bangladesh”**

**Submitted to**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to explore the challenges teachers face in organizing Collaborative learning in the English classes at tertiary level in Bangladesh. The study also focuses on the areas like “Content areas” which are difficult in CL classes and also which “Skill” becomes difficult in conducting CL. Teachers responses were collected through interview for this study. Furthermore, it provides a brief outline about the thesis, including the background of the topic, the specific research problem, and associated research questions, also my personal attachment and the value of the research is included. Next, it explores the relevant materials from the general bodies of literature on the Collaborative Learning and thus it helps to determine the significance of the CL in the present practice of learning. It also outlines the research methods for this study by using qualitative method. Lastly it provides a detail account of the research findings based on the teacher’s interviews. Finally, it explores the research questions by discussing them from the theme based perspectives and then reports on the brief summary of this study with the final explanation and suggestions.

## **Keywords**

**CLT** - Communicative Language Teaching is basically an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study.

**CL**- Collaborative learning is a technique teacher's use to group students together to impact learning in a positive way.

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## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to convey my appreciation to my supervisor Md. Golam Jamil, PhD, Assistant Professor, BRAC Institute of Languages, for the useful feedbacks, remarks and engagement throughout the whole process of my thesis. Next I would like to thank Dr. Sayeedur Rahman Sir, Associate Professor and coordinator of TESOL Programme, BRAC University for his support. I am also thankful to the honorable director of BRAC Institute of Languages, Lady Syeda Sarwat Abed Madam for giving me the academic permissions and encouragements. I would also like to thank the participants of my interviews, who have willingly shared their precious time and valuable opinions during the process of interviewing. I would like to thank my TESOL friends, who have supported and encouraged me throughout the entire journey.

## Statement of Original Authorship

I declare that the materials contained in this thesis are my own work. Where the works of others have been drawn upon, whether published or unpublished (such as books, articles, audio recordings, and the internet) due acknowledgements according to appropriate academic conventions have been given. I also hereby declare that the materials contained in this thesis have not been published before or presented for another program or degree in any university. In addition, I took reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and has not been taken from other sources except where such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text.

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  - Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the research**

In our education system, collaborative learning is basically a technique which teachers use to group students together to impact learning in a positive way. Moreover, it is believed that proponents of collaborative learning believe that it helps students in many ways and furthermore working together increases learning outcomes. However, Collaborative learning can occur between just two students or within a larger group, and it can take a variety of forms. In this particular section I have six parts which consists of Introduction, and it mentions the importance of Collaborative learning according to some of the researchers and then there is a part which talks about the Collaborative learning in Bangladesh context. In the third part problem statement is mentioned. Fourthly, there are the research questions of my study. In the fifth part my personal attachment for choosing this particular topic is mentioned and lastly the value of the research and its mentions how my research will be helpful to the overall teaching process and also the teachers.

The term Collaborative learning is basically an educational approach to teaching and learning which involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. In addition the term CL also refers to an instructional method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small groups towards a common goal. We can also say that Collaboration has become a twenty-first-century trend because it seems to make teaching and learning more interesting. Researchers like (Austin, 2000; Welch, 1998) feel that the need in our society to think and work together on issues of critical concern has increased shifting the emphasis from individual efforts to group work, from independence to community (Leonard and Leonard, 2001). Moreover, in collaborative classrooms, the lecturing, listening, note-taking process may not disappear entirely, but it lives alongside other processes that are based in students' discussion and active work with the course material. However, CL occurs when small groups of learners help each other to learn.

Forming positive relationships with peers and developing socially are extremely important for all learners. Children having difficulties in these areas are more likely to suffer from problems in areas like they may have low sense of self esteem and also can be fruitless in their academic work. According to researchers, when a child get well along other or peers then it promotes positive feelings toward self and others (Cowie et al., 1994).

Social interactions can be difficult for second language learners. However, when the learners are surrounded by a new language and culture, it makes interaction with adults and peers more challenging. It also becomes challenging for the instructor when learners are not able to adjust or cooperate in a group work or collaborative work. Researchers like (Chickering and Gamson, 1987) feel that learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. In addition Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. However, working with others often increases involvement in learning and sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.

Academic learning with the help of others is supported by Vygotsky's theory of a Zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development basically means the distance between the child's actual development level and his or her potential level of development with the help of adults or in collaboration with more competent peers (Cowie et al., 1994). It is also believed that the child learns by working with others to form his or her understanding of issues and events in the world. Furthermore, Vygotsky explains that children learn from other people who are more knowledgeable than themselves. The process of collaborating with other people not only gives the child more information about a topic but also verifies the parts of the topic that child don't understand. Lastly, Group work is most effective when it builds on the child's previous knowledge and stays within the child's proximal development.

## **1.2 Collaborative learning in Bangladesh**

According to the Bangladeshi context, from the previous years it is seen that most of the lessons were taught in Grammar translation methods. On the other hand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century CLT approaches have been applied to our teaching methods. Most of the students may not be comfortable about the idea of collaboration. Considering the fact that each learner has their own way of learning so, in that case we can assume that some learners are very shy, reluctant, and in some cases they are not comfortable with their peers. These are the major issues which are also problematic in case of the instructors.

Numerous studies show the evidence of increased achievement for all types of learners when they work together in small groups to solve a problem or reach a common goal (Dr. Spencer Kagan). Furthermore, CLT approach is in use in order to initiate the students to interact with their mates to solve a task or a project or to achieve a goal also to overcome their fear rather than working individually.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Bangladesh is basically a monolingual country. However its education policy and curriculum mandate English as a compulsory second language because of its global nature, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh or MoE (2010). Thus for students who study at least to graduation level, English is taught as an essential subject for more than fourteen years of their educational life. In addition for nearly two decades, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has been used to teach and learn English in Bangladesh. Moreover, CLT has the reputation of being one of the best approaches for second or foreign language learning (Savignon, 2003; TQI-SEP, 2006).

Although, CLT has become popular in the syllabuses today but I assume that teachers till now faces problems or challenges while asking the learners to work collaboratively. In Bangladesh most of the instructors try to make the classes students centered in the tertiary level so that learners get the opportunity to participate. Even in such cases students are reluctant to perform in such case teachers have difficulties in following this particular approach. However in my study I will explore the challenges of collaboration that the English language teachers face in teaching English in the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

### **1.4 Research Questions:**

Overarching research question of my thesis is given below:

- ❖ What types of challenges do the teachers face in conducting collaborative English classes?

Specific Questions:

- ❖ What content areas are difficult to conduct in Collaborative English classes?
- ❖ What skill areas are difficult to conduct in collaborative English classes?

In the above research questions the term “content” means reading text, case study, paraphrasing, etc. In addition, “Skill” refers to reading, writing, speaking & listening.

### **1.5 Personal attachment**

When I was an undergraduate student, I had a feeling that through collaborative learning I was benefited during my examinations and also quizzes. I personally feel that when we discuss with our pairs or groups we get more information about the topic. In addition, it is seen that in a group few people are more knowledgeable than the rest which becomes a plus point during the discussion. In comparison when we have groups formed by the instructors in the class the case is quite different. At times it is difficult to adjust with a new member and work mutually. These situations are also challenging for the teachers. Therefore, in my study I will be exploring the problems teachers face in such cases in conducting collaborative learning.

### **1.6 Value of the research**

Through my findings I explored most of the challenges that the tertiary level teachers face in collaborating the learners.

Earlier in Bangladesh, the medium of instruction was Bengali but gradually English have been given more preferences. It is seen that it has become obligatory to pass in English along with the other subjects to pass the examinations. For my study I have interviewed the teachers of two well-known Private Universities of Bangladesh. However I have also explored the challenges teachers come across in collaborating the learners.

By exploring the research questions I got to know the teachers perception. Moreover, these information's will help the teachers as well as the overall teaching process to come up with solutions and also better ideas to make the learners comfortable while working in a group with their peers.

## **1.7 Structure of this thesis**

This thesis has five sections overall. Firstly, section 1 provides a brief background of the study, Collaborative learning in Bangladesh, problem statement, research questions, my personal attachment and the value of the research. Secondly, section 2 comprises of Literature review and it also has some sub sections like: definition of Collaborative learning, key features of Collaborative learning, advantages of Collaborative learning and also challenges of Collaborative learning, English language teachers' roles and the importance of Collaborative learning, Collaborative learning in Bangladesh context- a)background of higher education Bangladesh b) the practice with Collaborative learning at Private Universities, and lastly findings from the review and the gap. In the third section there is Methodology part and it includes introduction, planning of literature review, Data collection approach, methods of educational research, the features of the interviews in the study, reporting and analysis of results and lastly the ethical consideration. Fourth section comprises of the findings and the fifth section consists of analysis and conclusion.

## **Section 2: Literature review**

This section of the thesis studies various definitions, challenges, advantages and lastly the teachers' role in collaborative learning. The background of the higher education in Bangladesh is also mentioned here. In order to get a clear idea about the topic I have read books, articles and relevant websites for my study.

In my study I have found three key areas: one key aspect is I have tried to define CL and the second aspect is challenges and advantages and lastly the present practices of CL in private Universities in Bangladesh.

### **2.1 Definition of Collaborative learning**

Collaborative Learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or the learners and teacher together. Usually learners work in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings.

Moreover, CL activities vary widely, but it mostly focuses on student's exploration or application of the course material, rather than the teacher's presentation or explication of it (Smith and MacGregor, 1992). As I have mentioned earlier it is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem.

Collaborative learning provides an environment to enliven and enrich the learning process. However, introducing interactive partners into an educational system creates more realistic social contexts, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the system. Such an environment would help sustain the learner's interests and would provide a more natural learning habitat. As Piaget (Piaget, 1928 and 1932) pointed out, collaborative learning has a major role in constructive cognitive development. His theory is consistent with other popular learning theories [Vygotsky, 1978; Fox and Karen, Thomas and Funaro 1990] in emphasizing the importance of collaboration. Piaget felt that interaction between peers is equally shared. This contrasts adult-child or teacher-student interactions, where usually the former is in control and the latter characteristically follows what the former professes.

The backbone of collaborative learning is the willingness of the peers to participate and collaborate in a constructive sense. This has been studied by a number of educational psychology researchers [Madden and Slavin1983, Slavin1978] who confirm that peers in collaborating classes felt that their collaborators wanted them to learn. Slavin [Slavin, 1990] reports, studies that confirm the willingness of peers to make the collaborative learning efforts succeed and the improvement in social status of the collaborators who achieved better than other peers. Effective collaboration requires appropriate pairing of collaborating peers. There have been studies to identify the factors involved in combining peers. Slavin [Slavin, 1990] reports a study by Kuhn [Kuhn, 1972] who found that a small difference in cognitive level between collaborating peers was more conducive to cognitive growth than a larger difference. This supports the view that the collaborative peers should have almost equal knowledge levels to make the collaboration constructive.

(Crookall and Oxford, 1990) has found that a variety of activities are frequently found in the L2 classroom such as games, role plays and drama activities. (Scarcella and Crookall, 1990) says that these kinds of tasks generate vast amounts of authentic language, because active student involvement, engage student's motivation and interest, help student think and enable learners to practice L2 communication skills.

Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, and Russ, 1991). Moreover, Collaborative learning is not one single mechanism: if one talks about "learning from collaboration", one should also talk about "learning from being alone". Individual cognitive systems do not learn because they are individual, but because they perform some activities (reading, building, predicting,) which trigger some learning mechanisms (induction, deduction, compilation,). Similarly, peers do not learn because they are two, but because they perform some activities which trigger specific learning mechanisms.

This includes the activities/mechanisms performed individually, since individual cognition is not suppressed in peer interaction. However, the interaction among subjects generates extra activities (explanation, disagreement, mutual regulation,) which trigger extra cognitive mechanisms (knowledge elicitation, internalization, reduced cognitive load,). The field of collaborative learning is precisely about these activities and mechanisms. These may occur more frequently in collaborative learning than in individual condition.

The effects of collaborative learning are often assessed by individual task performance measures. It has been objected that a more valid assessment would be to measure group performance. This 'validity' can be understood in practical terms: more and more professionals have to collaborate and it is an important goal for any educational institution to improve the student's performance in collaborative situations. The validity issue has also a theoretical side: from the distributed cognition viewpoint, assessing group work through individual performance would be as meaningless as assessing a painter without his brush (Perkins, 1993). Within the group evaluation approach, one may verify whether the performance of a specific group has increased or assess if group members developed some generic ability to collaborate that they could reuse in other groups.

The other name of Collaborative Learning is known as cooperative learning. Effandi Zakaria and Zanaton Iksan in their research have found few challenges in incorporating cooperative learning and those are:

The need for preparation of extra material that are used in classes- the need to prepare materials require a lot of work by the teachers, therefore, it is burden for them to prepare new materials.

Panic for the failure of content coverage- cooperative learning methods often take longer than lectures. Teachers conclude that it's a waste of time.

Students are least trust worthy in acquiring knowledge by themselves- teachers think they must tell their students what and how to learn. Only the teachers have the knowledge and expertise.

Need for expertise in cooperative learning methods- cooperative learning is new to some teachers so they need times to get familiar with the new method. Intensive in-service course can be implemented to overcome the problem.



Lacking the skills to work in group- teachers are often concerned with students' participation in group activities. They think that students lack the necessary skills to work in group. However, according to Ong and Yeam (2000) teachers should teach the missing skills and/or review and reinforce the skills that students need.

## **2.2 Key features of Collaborative learning**

Johnson et al. (1990) pointed out five fundamental elements involved in CL and those are:

Depends on each other positively- team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve a goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences. However, members need to believe that they are linked with others in a way that ensures that they all succeed together.

Both Individual and group must be liable for the activity-all students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned.

Development of Interpersonal and small group skills- students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills.

Encourage Face-to-face interaction- member's help and encourage each other to learn. They do this by gathering and sharing knowledge. Group members must do their task interactively providing one another with feedback, challenging one another's conclusions and reasoning, and perhaps most importantly, teaching and encouraging one another.

Group processing- team members set group goals, periodically assess what they are doing as well as a team, and identify changes they will make to function more effectively in the future.

In the CL environment, the learners are challenged both socially and emotionally as they listen to different perspectives, and are required to articulate and defend their ideas. However, in doing so, the learners begin to create their own unique conceptual frameworks and do not solely rely on an expert's or a text's framework.

The need in society to think and work together on issues of critical concern has increased (Austin, 2000; Welch, 1998) shifting the emphasis from individual efforts to group work, from independence to community (Leonard and Leonard, 2001). Furthermore, in this setting, the learners have the opportunity to converse frameworks, and are actively engaged (Srinivas, 2011). The concept of CL basically represents a shift away from the typical teacher-centered or lecture-centered milieu in classrooms. In collaborative classrooms, the lecturing, listening, note-taking process may not disappear entirely, but it lives alongside other processes that are based in students' discussion and active work with the course material. According to (Smith and MacGregor 1992), teachers who use CL approaches tend to think of themselves less as expert transmitters of knowledge to students and more as expert designers of intellectual experiences for students-as coaches or midwives of a more emergent learning process.

Collaborative Learning occurs when small groups of students help each other to learn but sometimes it is also misunderstood. It is not having students talk to each other, either face-to-face or in a computer conference, while they do their individual assignments. It is not having them do the task individually and then have those who finish first help those who have not yet finished. And it is certainly not having one or a few students do all the work, while the others add on their names to the report (Klemm, 1994). There is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than learners who work quietly as individuals (Johnson and Johnson, 1986). Further evidence comes from Samuel Totten (1991), who feels that the shared learning gives learners an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers.

In addition, proponents of CL claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. The success of one learner helps other students to be successful (Gokhale, 1995). The underlying premise of collaborative learning is based upon consensus building through cooperation by group members, in contrast to competition in which individuals best other group members. CL practitioners apply this philosophy in the classroom, at committee meetings, with community groups, within their families and generally as a way of living with and dealing with other people (Panitz, 1996).

According to (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Jehn and Mannix, 2001) socio-emotional conflict is characterized as an interaction that involves frustration and personality clashes within the group and which is negatively related to group cohesion, commitment, satisfaction and performance

### **2.3 Advantages of Collaborative learning**

There are several advantages of Collaborative Learning. First of all Collaborative learning develops higher level thinking skills among the learners and also helps to promote a positive attitude toward the subject matter and develops oral communication skills. When tackling difficult concepts, group learning may provide a source of support. Groups often use humor and create a more relaxed learning atmosphere that allow for positive learning experiences. Allow groups to use some stress-reducing strategies as long as they stay on task. Furthermore it uses a team approach to problem solving while maintaining an individual accountability. Some of the other advantages are it stimulates critical thinking and helps students clarify ideas through discussion and debate. Moreover, CL fosters and develops interpersonal relationships and while doing so students stay on task more and are less disruptive. Lastly, it helps in greater ability of students to view situations from others' perspectives (development of empathy) and also promotes innovation in teaching and classroom technique. Furthermore, CL is mostly synergistic with writing across the curriculum.

### **2.4 Challenges of Collaborative learning**

Although working in groups has its advantages, there are also times when problems arise. Beebe and Masterson (2003) list four disadvantages.

1. There can be pressure from the group to conform to the majority opinion. Most people do not like conflict and attempt to avoid it when possible. By readily agreeing to the majority opinion, the individual may agree to a bad solution just to avoid conflict.
2. An individual may dominate the discussion. This leads to members not gaining satisfaction from the group because they feel too alienated in the decision making process.

3. Some members may rely too heavily on others to do the work. This is one of the most prominent problems that groups face. Some members do not pitch in and help and do not adequately contribute to the group (Freeman and Greenacre, 2011). One solution to this problem is to make every group member aware of the goals and objectives of the group and assign specific tasks or responsibilities to each member.
4. It takes more time to work in a group than to work alone. It takes longer to accomplish tasks when working with others. However, the time spent taking and analyzing problems usually results in better solutions.

### **2.5 English language teachers' roles and the importance of collaborative learning**

In our country ELT teachers are expected to organize group work and also allow the students to engage into tasks collaboratively. In English courses where there are demonstration, act out, role play, etc. can incorporate collaborative learning. Basically, learners become more independent while working in groups. However, a teacher who lacks self-esteem will find it difficult to make self-esteem of his learners and also if the instructor does not lead a warm atmosphere at class will find low spirits of learners to learn. According to Yan and Zhang (2000), there are three basic roles of teachers and those are: "lecturer", "teacher", and "facilitator". "Lecturers" are those who solely consider their professional skills but neglect teaching methodology. "Teachers" refers to those who possess professional skills and teaching methodology but seldom care learner's affective experience. "Facilitators" are like those who not only take characters of the former two but also care student's affective state and learning process to help them in language learning by self-consciousness-rising. Dornyei (1998) mentioned that motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second foreign language learning. A harmonious and pleasant climate in classroom can help to reduce the anxiety of learners, and also grab the focus of the learners when learning English.

## **2.6 Collaborative learning in Bangladesh context**

Language plays an important role in the negotiation of power relationships both at an interpersonal level and at a wider societal level. Increasingly it also plays this role at the global level. Since English has become a global language, competency in English is not only instrumental but also status related. Bangladesh is basically a monolingual country. However its education policy and curriculum mandate English as a compulsory second language because of its global nature. English is known for its global image and demands, and Bangla, for its national and first language, are the staple mediums of instruction in educational institutions in Bangladesh. As English has already taken the driving seat among all other languages, its impact on the socio-economic development of the countries is worth-noting. Since it acts as a medium for people of different nations, English is used widely as a vehicle language for the transactions of international trade. Besides, a good command in English is essential for those who want to enhance their knowledge and maintain global communications

### **a) Background of Higher Education in Bangladesh**

Private universities in Bangladesh were initiated after the institution of the *“Private University Act 1992.”* At present there are 92 private universities in Bangladesh. In early 1990s, private sector came forward to establish universities. Since then country experienced a spectacular growth in private universities, they were mostly in and around Dhaka. The Emergence and the growth of the private universities in Bangladesh have taken a phenomenal shape in recent years. However, the private universities are playing an important role in spreading the opportunities of higher education in our country. In addition, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh was established under the President’s Order (P.O.) No. 10 of 1973 which was deemed to have come into force with effect from 16 December 1972. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is the statutory apex body in the field of higher education in Bangladesh. The primary objectives of the UGC are to supervise, maintain, promote and coordinate university education. It is also responsible for maintaining standard and quality in all the public and private universities in Bangladesh. The UGC assesses the needs of the public universities in terms of funding and advice Government in various issues related to higher education in Bangladesh.

Private university emerged as an alternative to cope up with the expanded demand of higher education. According to UGC report 2008, the number of students in tertiary level is 12lac (more than 1.2 million). There were 1lac 65 thousand students studying in 28 public universities (excluding National University and Open University) in 2008. In the same year 1lac 83 thousand students were studying in 51 private universities.

#### **b) The practice with Collaborative learning at Private Universities**

Andaleeb (2003) says that, higher education is of planned importance not only as an engine for human resource development and as a facilitator of growth through forward and backward linkages, however, it also serves as an incubator and repository of knowledge with untold potential.

In a study titled private higher education in Bangladesh, Alam et. al. (2007) emphasized on two main issues related to quality of higher education. Issues are; quality of Inputs: selection of students and quality of processing of inputs to final products. Accordingly, Andaleeb (2007), in his study focused nine critical factors to revitalize quality of higher education. Factors are; teacher quality, method and content, peer quality, direct facilities, indirect facilities, administrative efficacy, political climate, gender effects and expected satisfaction with higher education. In his research, he revealed these areas seem to need greatest attention. In every area he pointed out some indicators or issues to explore the reality.

The need for Collaborative learning is essential in order to engage learners in different tasks in the classrooms. When learners are given a task which is to be done collaboratively they become more responsible. Moreover, collaborative learning is important in order to merge the learners so that there can be an excellent output. According to Vygotsky (1978), students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. Group diversity in terms of knowledge and experience contributes positively to the learning process. Bruner (1985) contends that cooperative learning methods improve problem- solving strategies because the students are confronted with different interpretations of the given situation. The peer support system makes it possible for the learner to internalize both external knowledge and critical thinking skills and to convert them into tools for intellectual functioning.

At present Universities do conduct collaborative learning with their students in order to make their learners more expressive and also for critical thinking. However, it is seen that learners hesitate to share their ideas with their instructor but when they are merged together they feel comfortable to express their ideas with their peers. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals.

The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, and Russ, 1991). Researchers also feel that CL builds more positive heterogeneous relationships and encourages diversity understanding. Johnsons (1990) claims that collaborative learning promotes positive societal responses to problems and fosters a supportive environment within which to manage conflict resolution. There are numerous activities which are performed collaboratively by the learners and those are: role play, debates, group projects, summary writing, case studies, preparation of a group or pair presentation, etc. The main aim of this collaborative learning is to make the students involved in classroom activities and if this is done well, then these activities can create a valuable source of motivation, critical thinking skills, and active learning while the students learn to manipulate classroom information into their own working knowledge. In conducting such activities in the classrooms the instructor's faces many challenges and the aim of this research is to identify those challenges faced by the instructors.

According to a research by Richard Donato two features of assistance appear repeatedly in second language (L2) acquisition literature. The first feature, and perhaps the most common, is repetition. While repetition appears in each, it seems to serve a wider variety of purposes in peer scaffolding. Within peer scaffolding, in addition to signaling an error, repetition may also be used to create a shared understanding, encourage, or distribute help. A second common feature of peer assistance is the use of students' first language (L1). Communication in L1 can help establish the tone and nature of small-group work and can serve as a mediational tool to support and sustain interaction. The L1 is often used to move the task along and focus attention and for interpersonal interaction (Swain and Lapkin, 2000). During small-group work students often create social worlds using their L1. It is said that the way that students approach a task cannot be externally defined, and different groups may construct the task in different ways, depending on how they orient themselves. Students may use the L1 to "reformulate the task goals" or when they encounter difficulty in the target language.

## **2.7 Findings from the review and the gap**

Literature review on Collaboration can help English language teaching effectively. Moreover, the advantages can also help the teaching process whereas the challenges can hamper Collaborative Learning if not done successfully. In almost all the classrooms there is a new trend of incorporating Collaborative practices in English classes. However, we do not know what challenges teachers face in English classes as we have no evidence. Therefore, this research paper can help understand the challenges teachers face in Collaborative English classes.



## **Section 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

According to researchers educational research basically means a repeated process of steps that typically begins with identifying a research problem or issue of a study. It then involves reviewing the literature, specifying a purpose for the study, collecting and analyzing data, and forming an interpretation of information. This process terminates in a report, disseminated to audiences that is evaluated and used in the educational community (Creswell, 2002). The overall aim of educational research is to provide teachers and learners with systematically obtained information that helps to improve the quality of the learning process. According to (Bordage and Dawson, 2003) education research is often carried out in naturalistic settings that may carry threats to the validity of the study such as loss of subjects, selection bias, historical events or maturation.

Sometimes educational research is used to propose new theories. For example, in 1983 Gardner first proposed his theory of Multiple Intelligences. Besides accommodating different learning styles when teaching, Gardner recommended teachers should also be concerned with the strengths and weaknesses of students' intelligences so that once new theories are published, other researchers can test them. Do the ideas seem to hold true under some circumstances better than others? Do they need to be adjusted to accommodate different settings or students? In reference to multiple intelligences, thousands of studies have been completed by educational researchers to expand on Gardner's original ideas. Many of these studies were completed by classroom teachers trying to better understand how the more global theory actually works in the real world of schools and classrooms. After further research, Gardner himself added the multiple intelligence of "naturalist" (Gardner, 1999) to the list.

Perhaps most importantly, educational research is an important tool in helping us to improve our own teaching and learning. By being an informed reader, we are in a better position to make educated decisions about curriculum adoption, new teaching strategies, management ideas, and other pedagogical choices. By conducting research in our own classrooms or school, our opinions, suggestions, and ideas will be taken more seriously by teaching colleagues, administrators, parents, and school board members.

Conducting educational research involves the exploration, description, explanation, or prediction of educational phenomenon using systematic data collection and analysis procedures.

All educational research studies should follow a planning, data gathering, and analysis and reporting process consisting of the following steps:

### **3.2 Planning of the literature review**

Firstly, the literature review helps to gain an understanding of the current state of knowledge pertaining to the research idea. It informs if the research problem or topic has already been explored (and if a revision or replication is needed), how to design the study, what data collection methods to use, and help make sense of the findings of study once data analysis is complete.

Bordage and Dawson (2003, p. 378) emphasized that “the single most important component of a study is the research questions; it is the keystone of the entire exercise”. Defining the aims of the study clearly determines all other aspects of the design. This involves selecting an appropriate topic and defining a timely and appropriate research question. In the same way that clearly defining learning outcomes or objectives help to plan learning and teaching activities, lastly, defining research question or project aims provides a clear focus for the whole research process.

Furthermore determine the purpose, research questions, or hypotheses: Identifying a clear purpose helps determine how the research should be conducted, what research design will be used, and the research question(s) or hypothesis of the study. Four general purposes for conducting educational research are to explore, describe, predict, or explain.

Consider research implications: thirdly, implications are the practical ways where research will affect the field of education. These are the underlying goals, the rationales for, or the importance of your study.

Construct a research proposal: the research proposal is a detailed description of how the study will be conducted that includes the title and researchers of the study, statement of the research problem and research purpose, review of relevant literature, research questions or hypothesis.

### **3.2 Data collection approach**

Gathering data focuses on information acquisition that will attempt to answer the research questions or support the hypotheses. Data gathering includes consideration about what variables to investigate, the unit of analysis or participants of the study (population and sample).

Research approaches are generally categorized into quantitative and qualitative designs based upon the primary research purpose for each design. There are four different research purposes: to explore (an attempt to generate ideas about educational phenomenon), describe (an attempt to describe the characteristics of educational phenomenon), predict (an attempt to forecast an educational phenomenon), and explain (an attempt to show why and how an educational phenomenon operates). Three commonly used research types or designs are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research.

Quantitative research follows a deductive research process and involves the collection and analysis of quantitative (i.e., numerical) data to identify statistical relations of variables. Common quantitative research methods include: content (relational) analysis, experiments, observations (scaled ratings, checklists), and surveys (closed-ended, validated scales).

A mixed methods study is usually challenging; the researchers must be able to utilize multiple designs appropriately. Some mixed methods studies involve two or more methodologies being carried out simultaneously, whereas others involve a succession of different studies, all designed to answer one general research question. Mixed research combines or mixes quantitative and—using qualitative and quantitative approaches for different phases of the study—and mixed qualitative research techniques in a single study. Two sub-types of mixed research include mixed method research model research—using quantitative and qualitative approaches within or across phases of the study.

I have chosen qualitative approach for my study because it gives more in depth explanation. I wanted to work in small quantity of people but explore it thoroughly, so I have chosen qualitative approach. Since my target populations are small quantity of teachers so I avoided quantitative approach.

However, Qualitative research follows an inductive research process and involves the collection and analysis of qualitative (i.e., non-numerical) data to search for patterns, themes, and holistic features. Common qualitative research methods include: content (conceptual) analysis, focus groups, observations (narrative, comments), interviews, and surveys (open-ended).

Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) describe five general characteristics of qualitative research studies. These include:

1. Data is collected in naturalistic settings (e.g., classrooms), by observing and participating in regular activities.
2. Researchers collect data through words or pictures (not via numerical or quantifiable indicators).
3. Procedure (i.e., how individuals communicate with each other about a lesson) are as important as outputs (i.e., whether or not students obtain the correct answers to a problem).
4. Most qualitative researchers do not start out with specific hypotheses; rather, they use inductive methods to generate conclusions regarding their observations.
5. Qualitative researchers care about participants' perceptions; investigators are likely to question participants in depth about their beliefs, attitudes, and thought processes.

### **3.3 Methods of educational research**

Surveys are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. No other research method can provide this in broad capacity, which ensures a more accurate sample to gather targeted results in which to draw conclusions and make important decisions. When participants are stimulated to discuss, the group dynamics can generate new thinking about a topic which will result in a much more in-depth discussion. Due to the dynamic environment the moderator can modify the topics, which are prepared before the session to make the topic more suitable for the purpose.

Focus groups do not produce reliable data on topics that produce extremely strong feelings (Krueger and Casey, 2000) because conversation which is of a sensitive nature will not be discussed thoroughly. Focus groups rely upon words spoken by participants. A report based on focus groups will feature patterns formed by words, called themes or perspectives. Researchers must use specific methods to analyze patterns in spoken language (Creswell, 1998). A focus group method isn't meant to create generalizations of this type and its procedures offer none of the protections that would permit them to do so (Fern, 2001).

The most common method used for getting information about the various things around us, is to observe those things and also the various processes related to those things. Hence, it can be said that observation acts as a fundamental and the basic method of getting information about anything. But it must be kept in mind that observation is not just seeing things but it is carefully watching the things and trying to understand them in depth, in order to get some information about them. Observations sometimes act scientifically, when used by the researchers in various research works but it should be noted that all observations are not scientific in nature.

According to Oxford Concise Dictionary, observation means 'accurate watching, noting the phenomenon by which they occur in the nature with regard to the cause and effect of mutual relations.'

I have chosen interview as my tool because interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences and the interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Moreover, interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses (McNamara, 1999). The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. (Kvale, 1996). Qualitative interviewing techniques help researchers to observe and record a subject's unique perspective or experience as it relates to a particular issue because Questions are open-ended and the discussion is conversational in nature. The approach allows the subject to provide a firsthand, first-person account. This gives the interviewer insight into where a subject is coming from, rather than getting "yes" or "no" answers that provide incomplete feedback.

A qualitative interviewing approach allows an interviewer to gather not only hard, factual data, but to collect emotional data, as well. For example, asking a subject to describe the way he felt in a particular situation provides more complete feedback than asking a subject to explain a process.

### **3.3.1 The features of the interviews in the study**

My interview questions were open ended and it allowed them to engage their perceptions and those were related to the overarching aim of the research. Questions were self explanatory so that the teachers can express their view over the challenges of the pedagogy. It was quite tough to get permission to gather accessible data from the teachers because they were busy with their own schedule, for that I had to visit them several times. During my data collection procedure I felt that most of the teachers were reluctant to record rather they preferred orally saying it and I had to write it down.

### **3.4 Reporting and analysis of Results**

Thirdly, the data or statistical analysis depends on whether the information collected is quantitative data, qualitative data, or both. For quantitative data, there are a variety of statistical analysis tools you can use to identify statistical relationships between variables. For qualitative data, data analysis generally involves holistically identifying patterns, categories, and themes.

Determine findings: For quantitative data, we determine statistical information and general findings. For qualitative data, we are primarily more interested in detailed and specific findings.

Report conclusions, implications, and limitations: Conclusions are statements that interpret and evaluate the results found from the study. We must make sure to give primary emphasis to the results that relate to the hypotheses or research questions of our study.

In this study I am trying to understand the challenges and the strategies they use. So, it is basically an exploratory research because exploratory research means to investigate a problem or situation which provides insights to the researcher.

Moreover, the research is meant to provide details where a small amount of information exists. It may use a variety of methods such as trial studies, interviews, group discussions, experiments, or other tactics for the purpose of gaining information. Exploratory research studies have three main purposes: to fulfill the researcher's curiosity and need greater understanding, to test the feasibility of starting a more in depth study, and also to develop the methods to be used in any following research projects. "Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done" (Brown, 2006, p.43). Moreover, it has to be noted that "exploratory research is the initial research, which forms the basis of more conclusive research. It can even help in determining the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method" (Singh, 2007, p.64). Sandhusen (2000) draw the difference between exploratory and conclusive research by stating that in exploratory research will result in a range of causes and alternative options for a solution of a specific problem, whereas, conclusive research will identify the final information that is the only solution to an existing research problem.

The experimental method is a systematic and scientific approach to research in which the researcher manipulates one or more variables, and controls and measures any change in other variables. Experimental research is when a researcher is able to manipulate the predictor variable and subjects to identify a cause-and-effect relationship. This typically requires the research to be conducted in a lab, with one group being placed in an experimental group, or the ones being manipulated, while the other is placed in a placebo group, or inert condition or non-manipulated group. A laboratory-based experiment gives a high level of control and reliability.

### **3.5 Ethical consideration**

All social research involves ethical issues. While doing this research the ethical issues will always be given the highest priority. The data was collected from the real field. While recording any audio, I made sure that; participants name is not stated. I also did not use institutions names. In order to collect the data I had taken teachers and also the head of the departments' permission to build sufficient rapport. Moreover, without teacher's permission, no audios were recorded. However, I will make sure that, through my research any individual, institution or any public figure will not be affected; both personally and socially.

## **Section 4: Findings**

The following descriptions are the findings of my study. I had selected two Private Universities of Dhaka city for my study. I had basically taken interviews from ten teachers, five from each University. There are eight key themes mentioned here namely: Definition of Collaborative learning, Organization of Collaborative learning in English teaching and the procedure, Benefits of students working collaboratively, Problems of conducting CL & Manner of dealing it, Content areas which are difficult and also content areas which are easier, Preferred activities of students in Collaborative learning, Skill that works better in Collaborative Learning and also skills that are difficult and lastly Suggestions for the improvement of CL. Some key words are used here like CL which means (Collaborative Learning) & T means (Teacher).

### **4.1 Definition of Collaborative learning in Bangladesh private university context**

According to the findings most of the participants mentioned that Collaborative learning is a process where two or more people learn something together. Some also said that it is a particular kind of learning where the development takes place in collaboration of teacher-student and mostly student-student. This is an eclectic version of many educational approaches. There were also feedbacks like CL is when students work together in groups or pairs to learn something by sharing each other's ideas. One of them said that it is similar to cooperative learning in a group, sharing ideas and exchanging information. Few participants also mentioned that CL is basically a task-based learning for example pair work, group work, participation in class and most importantly the content based activities which are important for students. Lastly, they also mentioned that CL is when students of class learn together. Most of the times they are divided in few groups and pairs and they learn through discussions and sharing their ideas and not only their groups but other groups as well. If they are set for pair work and when their ideas are shared with other groups and teacher, the whole process is CL. One of the examples of what the participants actually mentioned:

T8 claimed "CL means learning in groups and also learning from group work where students can share their opinions, experiences etc. and when the learning is collaborated, always it is enriched than individual learning because students can actually exchange ideas and opinions. Moreover, when sharing is there learning is facilitated."



## **4.2 Organization of Collaborative learning in English teaching and the procedure**

In this part all most all the teachers agreed that they organizes CL in their classes by conducting pair or group work with a common task or by giving pair task, group task etc. along with instruction (from teacher) and a problem. Some of them also mentioned that they usually conduct CL by putting the students in groups or pair depending on the task at hand and the one that is most suitable for the task. One of them mentioned that she conducts CL in her classes and she appreciates group activities in class where students actually exchange their own opinion and they do the activities together so, they feel more anxious when they do these activities in groups because they feel that they are actually supported by someone. So, that's why CL is important in English classes. There were also answers like there are some set activities and the activities are designed in such manner that they can work in groups or pairs and it is also a scope for collaborating.

T10 expressed that she usually conducts CL in English classes. She asks them to discuss and try to generate ideas and then write in their course pack. Then the learners share ideas with other groups and other groups also provide responses. In a way they get engaged to extensive discussions on a topic.

## **4.3 Collaborative learning: benefits for students**

In this section participants talked about the benefits they have seen when students work collaboratively. Most of them mentioned that the task at hand is easier for them to comprehend because they work together at their own comfort zone and it also helps them to diversify their knowledge and also they participate very enthusiastically and there is competitive manner to do well than other groups. Some of them said that students get engaged in interactive work and can do it effectively furthermore, they can understand issues, solve problems, find meaning and create products in pair and group and thus develop. One of them also mentioned that the content is enriched, the individual answers are always less or not that efficient compared to the collaborated answers because when the students share their ideas their content is enriched, their answers are enriched and when they share ideas the understanding among them is facilitated. So, there is a better output in CL. T5 declared that CL is fun for most students thus less boring. It also helps students to open up more quickly in learning, particularly language.

There were also answers like students feel more enthusiastic and can also interact in academic discussion and it gives less pressure to the teacher and students themselves can solve problems by helping each other and the student's gets better conception of the task in CL.

One of the participants mentioned that when students work collaboratively it becomes easier to maintain the class because the students remain busy with their tasks (T10). He also added that when they are in groups, problems of four or five students can be solved at the same time because they are in the same group but in individual work giving instant feedback is difficult and it also consumes time (T10). Moreover, in CL the weaker students get help from their friends who are more advanced from the rest (T10).

#### **4.4 Collaborative learning: challenges for teachers**

In this part most of the participants provided answers like students sometimes get distracted and lose concentration or the attention gets diverted from academic discussions. In such case teacher should monitor strictly to overcome it and if possible interesting and relevant issues can be given to the learners to solve. Some of the participants also mentioned that since there are mixed ability student group domination of better students are seen and also inferiority of struggling ones. They also mentioned that as there is mix category of students or heterogeneous group of students in this case some students contribute and some cannot progress in the same pace. It is the teacher's responsibility to identify weak students and distribute them among such students where other capable students can scaffold them. They also had a feeling that the common problem is when students do not want to work together for any particular reason or they prefer to work alone. What usually works is by giving each member a specific task to perform. Participants also said that the class becomes very chaotic when they discuss with each other they also says that there is no proper solution but teacher can usually asks the students to keep quite.

Some of them also mentioned that a few students are there who do not find CL as effective, comforting as other students. In such case it is the teachers' responsibility to find out these students and help them out individually.

They also said when the students work in groups sometimes they chat unnecessary things that is totally not connected with their activities. So, in that case T can provide time limit and announce that every group member must participate. It works because students become more attentive and alert or can randomly select any student and asks them to answer the question and if they are unable to answer then it is clear that they were not participating in the group.

T10 feels that the physical environment or the size of the classroom matters in CL. If the teacher cannot reach the students who are sitting at the back the students involve in gossiping. In those cases the teacher focuses on those groups and asks questions to them. She also prefers giving incentives by giving bonus according to the class performances of the students and she feel it motivates the learners

#### **4.5 Difficult content areas**

In this section there were different views from the participants like some felt reading is a bit difficult in Collaborative learning method and easier would be analysis, answering questions and finding ideas etc. Others said descriptive ones are difficult as they individually describes in different way. Cause and effect or process learning is easier. Some said group presentations on a topic are sometimes difficult whereas working on a text to deconstruct is easier and sometimes even fun for them.. In case of presentation we can see a good outcome. Furthermore, vocabulary solving consumes less time. Objective questions are easier for them to complete. One of them Most of them mentioned summarizing, paraphrasing, essay writing they have difficulties, when done on spot. Everyone have different ideas and it can turn to conflict. Ultimately, there is no perfection and the person who is efficient, everyone depends on him. Act play is easier and also synonyms and antonyms said that essay writing is difficult because each individual have their own perspectives whereas summary writing is easier because students' can contribute together in their write up.

T8 said that when learners deal with activities or topics that are not familiar they have difficulties. So, in that case it becomes easier if the topics are personalized like asking about their previous experiences like their own opinions but if cliché topic or textual topic is given then it becomes difficult for them.

#### **4.6 Collaborative learning activities: student preferences**

Participants mentioned that students prefer activities that require lots of analysis, discussion and then finding a solution also essay writing and summary writings are preferred by the learners. Some said that learners prefer group based learning and tasks that require them to evaluate or critique. They also mentioned that learners prefer presentations because it can be done both inside and outside the classroom and they also feel relaxed. One of them said that learners prefer listening and speaking activities.

They also said that learners prefer case studies and also discussions and conversation on any topic is preferred by the learners. Participants also felt sharing students own opinions, their views about something they find these things interesting. Something that is connected with them like views about their university life in such cases they can create a debate instantly and they feel good when they work together. However, they feel that writing tasks are difficult.

T10 said that group presentations are comfortable for them and also discussions over familiar topic.

#### **4.7 Collaborative learning activities: difficult skill**

In this section some of the participants think that writing and speaking works better and sometimes reading get easier but rarely. One of them felt reading and writing is easier whereas listening and speaking is difficult. Another participant answered that it usually varies from group to group but usually verbal communication becomes better whereas listening skills are difficult to improve through Collaborative learning. Some other participants felt listening and speaking are easily handled whereas reading is challenging to accomplish collaboratively for students. Most of them feel that speaking for example presentation and debates works well when T conducts debates in the class the students provide instant feedback by protesting or supporting the statement. In listening students cannot do such things because listening is individual work and in writing CL is difficult because writing is individual product. Limiting the number of members in summarizing and paraphrasing CL becomes more effective in writing.

T4 said in case of reading and writing CL works well whereas speaking becomes difficult because in a group some of them are mum due to anxiety but they may be doing well in reading and writing. Listening is also difficult sometimes.

#### **4.8 Suggestions for the improvement of CL**

This section provides the suggestions participants gave during the interview most suggests that learners need a lot of monitoring, motivation and enthusiasm among themselves continuous scaffolding; and lastly supervision from facilitators will be valuable. One of them recommends that if there is positive peer feedback then the learning become rich, as they are conscious about how their peers react. Another participant also advises to monitor the Collaborative learning tasks vigorously and also set particular time limit to finish the tasks. Lastly, remind them about the remaining time during such activity. Most of them feel that learners do not understand the significance of academic collaboration so the teachers should instruct learners the attitude they should have while working collaboratively and also feels that there are some clashes in CL. The students should learn to share ideas and they should respect each other's opinions and capabilities and lastly students need to be cooperative to each other and avoid clashes. Participants also suggested that the use of technology might be incorporated in their CL and the teachers need to give some scope of incentives like marks, points which can motivate learners.

T10 advised that students have to be attentive and also sincere to the task and the shy students have to utilize these opportunities. Learners also need to utilize the time and materials.

#### **4.9 Summary of findings**

The finding covered the definition of Collaborative Learning in Bangladesh University context, it also have provided contextual information's like the procedure of organizing CL, benefits students get through CL, the challenges teachers face in organizing CL, skill and content areas which are difficult in Collaborative classes, students preferences and lastly suggestions for CL. The findings of this study have helped me answer my research questions because I have set the interview questions based on my research questions. However, the information that I received through the interview session shall facilitate me to answer the research questions.

## Section 5: Analysis and Conclusion

Based on the findings and literature review the research question of this thesis can be answered in several ways.

### 5.1 Analysis

My first research question was the content areas which are difficult in Collaborative classes. According to my findings descriptive ones are difficult as they individually describes in different way. It was also mentioned that in case of summarizing, paraphrasing, essay writing students have difficulties, when it is done on spot. Everyone have different ideas and it can turn to conflict. Ultimately, there is no perfection and the person who is efficient, everyone depends on him. Act play is easier and also synonyms and antonyms. (Crookall and Oxford, 1990) has also found that a variety of activities that are frequently found in the L2 classroom such as games, role plays and drama activities. (Scarcella and Crookall, 1990) says that these kinds of tasks generate vast amounts of authentic language, because active student involvement, engage student's motivation and interest, help student think and enable learners to practice L2 communication skills.

The second research question of my thesis was skills which are difficult in conducting CL. According to my findings participants answered that it usually varies from group to group but usually verbal communication becomes better whereas listening skills are difficult to improve through Collaborative learning. One of the participants also said that in case of reading and writing CL works well whereas speaking becomes difficult because in a group some of them are mum due to anxiety but they may be doing well in reading and writing. Listening is also difficult sometimes.

In Dewey's view learners do not learn in isolation; the individual learns by being part of the surrounding community and the world as a whole. Like Dewey, Vygotsky recognized that ideas have social origins; they are constructed through communication with others. However, an individual's cognitive system is a result of communication in social groups and cannot be separated from social life (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). For Vygotsky, the teacher acts as a facilitator or guide and the provider of assistance.

One of my interview question talked about the suggestions for improvement of CL. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994) proposed some essential elements of cooperative learning out of those two of them has matched with my findings and that is “Individual accountability” which means teachers should assess the amount of effort that each member is contributing. These can be done by giving an individual test to each student and randomly calling students to present their groups’ work and the other one is “Group processing” which means teachers must also provide opportunities for the class to assess group progress. Group processing enables group to focus on good working relationship, facilitates the learning of cooperative skills and ensures that members receive feedback. These feedbacks have matched with the responses from the participants.

My overarching research question was the challenges teachers face in conducting Collaborative English classes. According to my findings some of the challenges have matched with some of the researchers view like: One of the challenge teacher’s faces is that they feel that students lack the skills to work in group. Teachers are often concerned with student’s participation in group activities. They think that students lack necessary skills to work in group. However, Ong and Yeam (2000) recommend that teachers should teach the missing skills and review and reinforce the skills that students need. In findings some of my participants also talked about this particular challenge and I also agree with Ong and Yeam (2000) recommendation that teachers should first teach the students how to work in group and also the significance of group work.

According to researchers like (Patterson et al., 1979; Loughlin, 1992) the classroom’s physical environment greatly affects the interactions taking place within it. The traditional classrooms arrangements, with its rows of desks and the teacher at the front. These researchers feel that such an arrangement hinders communication. One of my participant has also mentioned this challenge that physical environment affects learning in groups. Sometimes even when the classroom size is small the teacher cannot reach the students at the back therefore students tend to fool their teacher involving in talks which are not connected to academic work.

According to Beebe and Masterson (2003) an individual may dominate the discussion. This leads to members not gaining satisfaction from the group because they feel too alienated in the decision making process. Furthermore, I have also got these kinds of responses from my participants that in some cases it is seen that one person dominates the overall discussion and others remain mum in such cases teachers can come up with incentives like bonus. Some members may rely too heavily on others to do the work.

This is one of the most salient problems that face groups. Some members do not pitch in and help and do not adequately contribute to the group (Freeman and Greenacre, 2011). One solution to this problem is to make every group member aware of the goals and objectives of the group and assign specific tasks or responsibilities to each member.

According to (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Jehn and Mannix, 2001) socio-emotional conflict is characterized as an interaction that involves frustration and personality clashes within the group and which is negatively related to group cohesion, commitment, satisfaction and performance. My participants have also informed that the learners have clashes while working in groups.

Collaborative Learning is an essential technique to engage students in today's classroom. Many studies such as those by Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins have considered how cooperative learning helps children develop social and interpersonal skills. Many experts have argued that the social and psychological effect on self-esteem and personal development are just as important as the learning itself. In terms of assessment, it may be beneficial to grade students on the quality of discussion, engagement, and adherence to group norms. However, assessing the process itself provides motivation for students to learn how to behave in groups. It shows students that their teacher value meaningful group interactions and adhering to norms. When tackling difficult concepts, group learning may provide a source of support. Groups often use humor and create a more relaxed learning atmosphere that allow for positive learning experiences. Allow groups to use some stress-reducing strategies as long as they stay on task. So, lastly I would like to conclude that CL is important in classes to have a positive environment.



### **5.3 My own experiences**

By conducting this thesis I have gained a lot of experiences like I have learned that in order to write a research paper we have to read a bunch of articles & related books, browse the websites, so that we can gather information for writing our paper. In order to get along with our participants rapport building session is very important. I have also understood that whatever we plan for our study, everything becomes very tough if the plans are not executed properly. It becomes very hard-hitting when the participants don't cooperate with the interviewer. Overall, it was a wonderful journey as I have learned many things through this journey.

### **5.4 Future direction of this research**

In this research I could have class observations, and since my participants were few I did not make any questionnaire. Due to time limitations I had to withdraw these activities from my research. Unfortunately, when I went for the data collection both the universities were having their semester finals so I got less opportunity to talk to teachers. Therefore, if I get a chance to conduct the research in future I would like to increase my participants' quantity and I would also like to collect data from some of the Government universities of Bangladesh in order to get a better output. I would also love to observe classes to see in what manner teachers conduct Collaborative learning in their classes in both Government and Private Universities, so that I can compare the results.

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**Appendix- A**

**Teacher's Interview Questions**

**1. What do you mean by Collaborative Learning?**

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**2. Do you organize collaborative learning in your English teaching? How do you do so?**

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**3. What are the benefits you get when your students work collaboratively?**

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**4. What are the problems you face when you organize collaborative learning? How do you solve those problems?**

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**5. What types of content areas are difficult for your students to work collaboratively?  
Can you also mention some of the content areas which are easier for your learners to work collaboratively?**

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**6. What activities do they prefer to work together?**

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**7. In what language skill, collaboration among learners works better and also what skill areas are difficult to conduct collaborative learning?**

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**8. Do you have any suggestions regarding improving collaboration among your learners?**

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## **Appendix-B**

### **Feedback from the participants**

#### **1. Definition of Collaborative learning**

T1 says that “Collaborative learning is a process where two or more people learn something together.”

T2 claims that “The particular kind of learning where the development takes place in collaboration of teacher-student and mostly student-student. This is an eclectic version of many educational approaches.”

T3 says “This is when students work together in groups or pairs to learn something by sharing each other’s ideas.”

T4 states “to me when students learn together or study in group this is Collaborative learning.”

T5 declares “Collaborative learning is an approach in which students learn together and from each other.”

T6 says “It is similar to cooperative learning in a group, sharing ideas and exchanging information.”

T7 states “It means initially learning together in collaboration by helping each other.”

#### **2. Organization of Collaborative learning in English teaching and the procedure**

T1 mentioned that he organizes CL in the classroom. He also says that he organizes pair or group work with a common task.

T2 organizes CL by giving pair task, group task etc. along with instruction (from teacher) and a problem.

T3 says that he usually conducts CL by putting the students in groups or pair depending on the task at hand and the one that is most suitable for the task.

T4 mentioned that he conducts CL sometimes by giving them group work.

T5 said that he conducts CL. Moreover, he enables such type of learning through group work and pair work.



T6 says “Yes” he conducts CL in the form of pair work, group study and peer checking.

T7 states that he organizes CL in English classes. He also claims that there are some set activities and the activities are designed in such manner that they can work in groups or pairs and it is also a scope for collaborating.

### **3. Benefits of students working Collaboratively**

T1 mentioned that students get engaged in interactive work and can do it effectively.

T2 says that they can understand issues, solve problems, find meaning and create products in pair and group and thus develop.

T3 states that the task at hand is easier for them to comprehend because they work together at their own comfort zone and it also helps them to diversify their knowledge.

T4 said that they participate very enthusiastically and there is competitive manner to do well than other groups.

T5 declares that CL is fun for most students thus less boring. It also helps students to open up more quickly in learning, particularly language.

T6 said that Students feel more enthusiastic and can also interact in academic discussion.

T7 says that it gives less pressure to the teacher and students themselves can solve problems by helping each other.

### **4. Problems of conducting CL. Manner of dealing it.**

T1 says that students sometimes get distracted and lose concentration. Teachers monitoring can really overcome it.

T2 said that there are mixed ability student group. Furthermore, domination of better students are seen and also inferiority of struggling ones.

T3 claims that the common problem is when students do not want to work together for any particular reason or they prefer to work alone. What usually works is by giving each member a specific task to perform.

T4 said that the class becomes very chaotic when they discuss with each other. He also says that there is no proper solution but teacher usually asks the students to keep quite.

T5 mentioned that a few students are there who do not find CL as effective, comforting as other students. In such case it is the teachers’ responsibility to find out these students and help them out individually.

T6 said students get distracted and the attention gets diverted from academic discussions. In such case teacher should monitor strictly and if possible interesting and relevant issues can be given to the learners to solve.

T7 declares that there is mix category of students or heterogeneous group of students. In this case some students contribute and some cannot progress in the same pace. As a teacher we identify weak students and distribute them among such students where other capable students can scaffold them.

##### **5. Content areas which are difficult for conducting CL.**

T1 thinks reading is a bit difficult in Collaborative learning method and easier would be analysis, answering questions and finding ideas etc.

T2 says Descriptive ones are difficult as they individually describes in different way. Cause and effect or process learning is easier.

T3 said group presentations on a topic are sometimes difficult whereas working on a text to deconstruct is easier and sometimes even fun for them.

T4 claims in case of summarizing, paraphrasing, essay writing they have difficulties, when done on spot. Everyone have different ideas and it can turn to conflict. Ultimately, there is no perfection and the person who is efficient, everyone depends on him. Act play is easier and also synonyms and antonyms. In case of presentation we can see a good outcome. Furthermore, vocabulary solving consumes less time.

T5 said it is difficult to generalize and spot particular content areas which students find difficult to learn collaboratively. But T5 have found that maintaining a proper equal pace in writing something together is an area of difficulty for many learners.

T6 says that summarizing tasks can be difficult because they have ideas but less scope of sharing. Objective questions are easier for them to complete.

T7 says that essay writing is difficult because each individual have their own perspectives. Whereas, summary writing is easier because students' can contribute together.

## **6. Preferred activities of students in Collaborative learning**

T1 says that students prefer activities that require lots of analysis, discussion and then finding a solution.

T2 states that essay writing and summary writings are preferred by the learners.

T3 claims that learners prefer group based learning and tasks that require them to evaluate or critique.

T4 said that learners prefer presentations because it can be done both inside and outside the classroom and they also feel relaxed.

T5 declares that learners prefer listening and speaking activities.

T6 states that learners prefer case studies.

T7 said discussions and conversation on any topic is preferred by the learners.

T8 thinks sharing students own opinions, their views about something they find these things interesting. Something that is connected with them like views about their university life in such cases they can create a debate instantly and they feel good when they work together. However, she feels that writing tasks are difficult.

T10 said group presentations are comfortable for them and also discussions over familiar topic.

## **7. Skill that are difficult in conducting Collaborative Learning**

T1 thinks writing and speaking works better and sometimes reading get easier but rarely.

T2 feels reading and writing is easier whereas listening and speaking is difficult.

T3 claimed that it usually varies from group to group but usually verbal communication becomes better whereas listening skills are difficult to improve through Collaborative learning.

T4 said in case of reading and writing CL works well whereas speaking becomes difficult because in a group some of them are mum due to anxiety but they may be doing well in reading and writing. Listening is also difficult sometimes.

T5 feels listening and speaking are easily handled whereas reading is challenging to accomplish collaboratively for students.

T6 thinks in case of speaking for example presentation purposes in CL works better. While in case of writing it becomes difficult. Limiting the number of members in summarizing and paraphrasing CL becomes more effective in writing.

T7 said reading is difficult while speaking skills work better in Collaborative learning.

T8 says speaking is very easy like presentation and debates, when she conducts debates in the class the students provide instant feedback by protesting or supporting the statement. In listening students cannot do such things because listening is individual work and in writing CL is difficult because writing is individual product? Finally, reading to some extent it is possible to conduct CL because there are some objective types of questions which they can discuss.

T9 feels in case of reading CL is helpful but in writing part students should focus on individual work.

T10 says writing is difficult to work in CL and speaking is easier because it helps them to improve their speaking skill.

#### **8. Suggestions for the improvement of CL**

T1 suggests that learners need a lot of monitoring, motivation and enthusiasm among themselves to make it effective.

T2 feels continuous scaffolding; motivation and supervision from facilitators will be valuable.

T3 says the use of technology might be incorporated in their CL.

T4 recommends that if there is positive peer feedback then the learning become rich, as they are conscious about how their peers react.

T5 advises to monitor the Collaborative learning tasks vigorously and also set particular time limit to finish the tasks. Lastly, remind them about the remaining time during such activity.

T6 feels that learners do not understand the significance of academic collaboration so the teachers should instruct learners the attitude they should have while working collaboratively.

T7 suggests that teachers need to give some scope of incentives like marks, points which can motivate learners.

T8 recommends that there are some clashes in CL. The students should learn to share ideas and they should respect each other's opinions and capabilities and lastly students need to be cooperative to each other and avoid clashes.

T9 suggests that all the members in group should take notes.

T10 advises that students have to be attentive and also sincere to the task and the shy students have to utilize these opportunities. Learners also need to utilize the time and materials.