

# **Classroom Interaction in ESL Classrooms: A Comparative Study between Group work and Individual work**

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## Chapter One – Introduction

### Introduction:

Interaction and teacher communicate with each other. Through interaction learners can develop their language proficiency. To increase interaction in class, it is essential to give interactive activities to the students. Activities are the key to an effective ESL class. Interaction in a classroom happens when learners like group work and pair work provide opportunity for interaction between teacher and learner and also among learners. According to Joe Landsberger, the philosophy of working in groups involves shared and/or learned values, resources, and ways of doing things. However, each group, and each individual, will only be as effective as they are willing to embrace and/or respect differences within the group. Donelson R. Forsyth's (2006) definition of a group as '*two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships*' [emphasis in original]

A reading can be assigned as individual class work. Questions can be asked to the learners in class based on the reading. This is one kind of activities. We can call it individual work. This same task can be done in a different way. The learners will sit in circles; they will read it together, share ideas, brainstorm together and the teacher will act as a facilitator. This is another kind of activity. We can call it group work. I have tried to find out which activity is more effective for an interactive language class; group work or individual work.

Most of the Bengali medium schools follow the traditional pattern of teaching. Learners always do individual work. As a learner I always did individual work in elementary, secondary and higher secondary level. In the tertiary level, I got a lot of opportunities to do group or pair work. The proportion of group and pair work was more than the individual work in my university. I have also observed various language classes in and outside Dhaka and found the teachers following group as well as individual activities in language classes. Since both as a student and as an observer I have had experiences of individual and group activities, I can easily find out the differences between these two. In individual work, I got the opportunity to do any kind of activities of my own. On the other hand in group works I got the opportunity to share my ideas with other and also receive their feedback. This experience motivated me to do my thesis on this topic.

I have tried to find out the answer of my research question through this paper. I have structured the paper in different chapters. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, I have included what the ELT practitioners have already found out about classroom interaction, group work and individual work. The next chapter contains the methods in detail that I have used to collect data. In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, I have described how I conducted the test with my target group of students in classroom. The 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> chapters contain the analysis of the obtained data and the discussion on that. Finally, the last chapter contains my recommendations on the issue of classroom interaction.



## Chapter Two-Literature Review

### Literature Review:

Interaction is an important word for language experience and classroom observations in the teachers. Interaction can be developed through different types of activities. Different activities have different impact and effect on classroom interaction and language learning. There are different ways of forming group. Learners' interactional patterns personalities and their individual cognitive styles are also different.

"In the era of communicative language U.S.A. teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about" (Brown. H.D, 1994)

A great deal of time is devoted to interaction between the teacher and the learners, and to interaction among the learners themselves. The quality of interaction is thought to have a considerable influence on learning (Ellis, 1985).

Interaction plays an important role in second language learning. Interaction among learners and interaction between learners and teachers both are equally important.

It is true that in a language class interaction has a great influence on learning. Time and effort are also needed to develop interaction.

The interaction in a classroom moves between the two poles of a continuum consisting of what Stern calls, "The interaction continuum." At the one end the fixed, institutionalized statuses (Cicourel, 1972:231) of teacher and students. At the other end are a variety of roles and tasks, negotiated by the teacher and students. Position oriented teaching stresses accuracy in the use of

language and the individual acquisition of linguistic skills. On the other hand person oriented learning emphasizes on the interactional process itself: that is, the way in which each learner interacts with the material and negotiations intended meanings with the other members of the group (Rivers, 1997).

In a classroom, interaction can be found among learners, between learners and teachers and also in different activities. Second language teaching not only focuses on the acquisition of the linguistics skill and accuracy but also the interactional process. In instructional teaching the role of the teacher and learner is fixed. It is a teacher-directed learning. There is a little opportunity for interaction. On the other hand in natural discourse there is group-oriented learning. This is based on interaction.

**Interactional Patterns:**

Different types of activities can be done in an ESL class, such as; whole class teaching, individual work, pair work, group work. Research on teaching suggests that whole-class instructional methods are the most commonly used models in public school teaching. Individual work or seatwork is generally the second most frequently used teaching pattern in classroom. Despite the need for whole-class teaching and individual work in a language classroom, it has often been emphasized that without other kinds of interaction, students are deprived of many useful motivating opportunities for using and learning the new language. Various alternatives have been proposed which emphasize the use of pair and small group in the classroom. The use of group work activities is another frequently cited strategy for changing the interactional dynamics of language classroom



**Effect/Impact**

In whole class activities, the teacher typically begins a lesson by reviewing prerequisite material, then introduces and develops new concepts or skills, then leads the group in a supervised activity, and then assigns seatwork or homework for students to do on their own. In whole class teaching, teacher introduces the topic, and then explains it to the class as whole. Then he gives some homework or seatwork. When students do seatwork, teacher observes them.

Individual work provides little opportunity for interaction, both with the teacher and with the students. It is sometimes difficult to monitor what students are actually doing during individual work. When the learners do any activities of their own, they do not get the opportunity to interact with the other learners. It is also difficult for the teacher to observe the learners individually.

Pair activities promote better interaction. Both students can share information to solve a problem or complete a task. Tasks are often more motivating if the result of the negotiation or interaction is some kind of product, such as a list, a map, a completed diagram, or a chart. In pair activities, learners get the opportunity to interact with his/her partner. They can also share their views to each other.

As a generic term, grouping is *"...a way of organizing students for teaching and learning."* (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1992:32). One of the ways of giving students more of the time they require to practice a language than is possible in the ESL classroom is by dividing the class into groups. The main strategies for assigning students to groups are random assignment and assignment by ability. Grouping helps teachers to individualize or match their teaching to individual learners. It reduces the dominance of the teacher over the class. It increases the amount of students' participation in the class. It also increases the opportunities for individual

students to practice and use new features of the target language. Group work promotes collaboration among learners. It enables teacher to work more as a facilitator and consultant. It can provide learners a more active role in learning. According to Sidin (1993), Group activity enables students to acquire relevant skills of communication, skills of discussion and argument, skills of interactive learning and cooperative inquiry and to develop appropriate attitudes to learning and teaching.

Grouping provides the opportunity for peer interpretation and sharing of experiences and insights. This is where, in small groups, students may have more opportunities to paraphrase, explain, describe, ask for clarification, and talk about content than what whole class interactions may provide (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1992). Group activities help learners to learn different skills of second language through discussion, arguments. If the group is small then the learners can easily share their views with the other member and also have the opportunity to ask for clarifications.

When students work in small groups to practice a skill, they can coach each other's learning. In each group, students can check each other's procedures and provide feedback. There is also the advantage of peer motivation when students work in groups. When students participate in a small group, there is a personal quality to their work because others are aware of their efforts, their successes and even their struggles. Motivation is higher in these situations, especially when group members work on a group task. In this respect, complex tasks requiring well-developed skills are much better accomplished through group work than individual work (Weber, 1994).

Many foreign language educators advocate the use of group work for a variety of reasons (Omaggio, 1986). For example, it supports the use of group work in the foreign classroom for

communicative practice, making three pedagogical claims: group work provides students with more opportunities to practice the language; it takes some of the pressure off students who may feel intimidated in a whole-class setting; and it can increase the quality of communication. Long and Porter (1985), in an excellent review of related research, find much support for the three pedagogical arguments cited above. They pointed out that in addition to these arguments; group work has been shown to provide a greater variety of language practice, to help to individualize instruction, and to increase student motivation.

**How to group students:**

When forming groups for the ESL classroom, a teacher needs to take into account several important aspects, such as the size of each group and the selection of members for each group.

With respect to group size, if the group is large, the contribution of the experiences, expertise, skills and interests to the learning activity is also broader. The amount of materials may also determine the size of each group, as also the amount of time allocated for the learning activity. In this respect, smaller groups can be more efficient. In addition, the size of the task and the number of component responsibilities may also determine group size. In large group, coordination among the learners is the vital factor. However, there is a common tendency of the members of a large group to dominate other members. An optimum size for group work needs to be determined based on the kind of task students are carrying out. If the group is too large, student interaction is affected; only a few students may participate, the others remaining silent or passive. Group activities need a goal, procedure, and a time frame to accomplish them, if they are to be focused and productive.

There are two different strategies for assigning students into groups. The first strategy is random assignment and the second one is assignment by ability. For random assignment, Gower



& Walters (1983) suggest several ways where the teacher can be random. The teacher can give each student a number (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) and then ask all number 1s, 2s, 3s etc. to sit together. The teacher can also blindfold as many people as there are to be groups, who then in turn touch the people that are to be in their groups. Another way is by dividing the class on the basis of horoscope groupings, likes and dislikes, colour of clothes, hobbies, gender etc. The teacher can also have as many pieces of string in the hand as there are to be pairs. Students take an end and find their partner. Lastly, the teacher can give out to each student at random a card with a word written on it. The students then have to go round and find words related to the subject matter (e.g. traffic light, road, car, etc.) and would then sit together in a group. With respect to assignment by ability, the teacher can place students of similar ability in one group or he/she can structure each group with a representation of high ability, middle ability, and low ability students.

### **Learner's individual differences**

Individual differences in learners' personalities and their individual cognitive styles, different patterns of interaction can often observed among learners in any class. Good and (Power, 1976) describe six interactional patterns.

### **Task oriented students:**

These students are generally highly proficient and booming in finishing educational tasks. They enter into learning tasks enthusiastically and generally complete tasks with a high level of accuracy. They enjoy school and learning. They seldom need a teachers' help. If they it they do not hesitate to ask for it. They are supportive students and form few discipline problems.

**Phantom students:**

These students may not often be noticed in the classroom; they are bright students and work progressively on classroom tasks. However, they participate enthusiastically in lessons only infrequently. Another feature of this type of student is that they seldom initiate conversation or ask for help.

**Social students:**

These students place a high value on personal interaction. Although they are capable in accomplishing classroom tasks, they tend to value socializing with friends more than completing the class assignments. They enjoy tutoring others in the class and participate actively in the lesson, although their answers may not always be correct. They tend to be admired with their classmates.

**Dependent students:**

These students need the teacher's support and supervision to complete class tasks and tend not to maintain engagement on tasks without frequent reinforcement and support. They need structure and guidance in completing tasks and are not interested to work in large groups.

**Isolated students:**

The students set themselves apart from others and withdraw from classroom interactions. They may avoid learning situations by turning away from activities such as peer or group work. They show unwillingness to sharing their work with others or allowing others to respond it. As a result they become less proficient in carrying out learning tasks.



**Alienated students:**

These students react against teaching and learning and are often antagonistic and aggressive. They create discipline problems and make it difficult for the other students around them to learn properly.

Students can increase their language store through discussion with friends; joint problem-solving etc. Interaction is thought to be important in naturalistic language acquisition. How interaction takes place in second language acquisition classroom settings can be understood by different factors such as roles of interactive teacher, questioning strategies for interactive learning, interaction through pair work/group work. To develop real interaction in classroom teacher need to give full role to the students. In second language classroom the teachers question provide necessary stepping-stones to communication. It has also been revealed that teacher's different questioning strategies may be either helpful or inhibiting communication in classroom.

## Chapter Three-Methodology

### **Methodology:**

The topic of my thesis is to find out whether group work is more effective than individual work. A quantitative method was followed for collecting data. In order for finding out the answer to this, I conducted individual and group activities with a group of high school students.

### **Target group:**

The test was conducted in class seven. The target group is the learners of class seven. All the reading and writing tests were conducted in the same class.

### **Materials:**

A short story had been selected as a reading material. A topic was also selected as a material of writing.

### **Skill focus:**

Two skills of second language learning were emphasized while designing the material for the test. Materials were designed on the basis of one receptive skill (reading) and one productive skill (writing). I have designed a test on reading and another on writing. Data were collected from these tests. Research was done on the basis of those data.

**Reading:**

A short story on friendship was selected for the reading test. Some activities were designed for conducting the reading tests. There are five multiple choice questions, five true/false and five fill in the gaps. One question is also included in the test to check the understanding of the learners.

**True/false:**

The true/false questions were not directly taken from the reading text. Some changes were made while preparing true/false questions. For example: In the reading text, there was a line “It is all known that bears hate dead meat”. This sentence was not directly given as a true/false question. A little change was made in the sentence. The sentence was rewritten as “It is all known that bears love dead meat”. The true/false questions were,

- Two friends, Sajid and Alif, planned to go hiking in the woods.
- Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible.
- One evening, while walking through the dense forest, they heard a bear growl
- It is well-known that bears love dead meat.
- Sajid and Alif were much frighten and started to run away

**Multiple choice questions:**

In multiple choice questions five sentences were given from the text. Three options were given for each sentence. The learners needed to find out the sentences refer to which option. For example: In the reading text, there was a sentence “Two friends planned to go hiking in the

woods". This sentence was given as a multiple choice question. Three options were also given. Those options were: Two friends planed to go for swimming, two friends planed to go for cinema, two friends planed to for rock climbing. The learners needed to find out the given sentence refers to which option. It was testing their understanding of the word 'hiking'. Other multiple choice questions were;

- They heard a bear growl.

This sentence refers to

1. They heard the crying of a bear
2. They heard the laughter of a bear
3. They heard the roar of a bear

It was testing their understanding of the word 'growl'.

- Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets

This sentence refers to

1. Never to trust a friend who helps you at the first opportunity he gets
2. Never to trust a friend who cheat you at the first opportunity he gets
3. Never to trust a friend who promises you at the first opportunity he gets

It was testing their understanding of the word 'deserts'.

- Alif was just pretending or if he was dead

This sentence refers to

1. Alif was just trying to be dead
2. Alif wanted to die

3. Alif was just acting or if he was dead

It was testing their understanding of the word 'pretending'.

- The bear put his nose close to Alif's ear - and then he sniffed and sniffed and sniffed

Finally the bear stopped sniffing

This sentence refers to

1. Finally the bear stopped crying
2. Finally the bear stopped walking
3. Finally the bear stopped taking smell

It was testing their understanding of the word 'sniffing'

#### **Fill in the blanks:**

There were five fill in the blanks in the test. All the sentences were directly taken from the text. In the reading text, there was a sentence "Alif throw himself flat on the ground". This sentence was directly given by omitting one word from the actual sentence as a fill in the blank question, such as: "Alif throw himself \_\_\_\_\_ on the ground." Other fill in the blanks were;

- He quickly caught hold of the \_\_\_\_\_ and climbed on \_\_\_\_\_ of the tree as soon as possible. The exact line of the story was "He quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible." 'Life-saving branch' and 'top' were omitted.
- Alif dared to take small \_\_\_\_\_ The exact line of the story was "Alif dared to take small". The word "breath" was omitted.



- The bear \_\_\_\_\_ off into the forest. The exact line of the story was “The bear slouched off into the forest.” The phrase “slouched off” was omitted.
- Sajid was so \_\_\_\_\_ that he did not even look at his friend once. The exact line of the story was “He was so scared that he did not even look at his friend once.” The word “scared” was omitted.

**Question answer:**

A question was also given in the test. At the end of the story, one friend told other friend, “never to trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets.” The question of the test was “Why did Alif walked away by saying “Never trust a friend who desert you at the first opportunity he gets”? The question was given to check the understanding of the learners.

**Writing:**

A test was also conducted on writing. The written test was also conducted in two different ways. It was conducted in groups and with individuals. A topic was selected for testing the writing skill of the learner. The question was, ‘If you become the prime minister of the nation what will you do for your country?’ It was a kind of creative writing. The scripts would be analyzed on the basis of grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, ideas and overall organization of the answer.

**Grammar:**

Application of the grammar rules is one of the major components of any type of writing. Many people are let down by their written English when grammatical mistakes are made by them. It is necessary to make any type of writing free from grammatical mistakes.

**Spelling:**

Spelling is one of the elements of a prescriptive element of language. Spelling of words is one of the features of a standard language in modern times. Spelling mistakes make the standard of any types of writing low. It is necessary to avoid spelling mistakes.

**Ideas:**

Writing is the representation of ideas. Ideas are expressed through writing. Ideas for writing develop in many ways. Some forms of prewriting are intended to help to bring subconscious ideas and interests into consciousness. If the idea of writing is not organized the writing should not be considered as a standard writing.

**Organization:**

Organization is followed in any types of writing. Some writers plan their writing carefully in advance, whereas others start writing first and let ideas flow out of them. Academic writing is long and requires careful organization. If any type of writing is not organized, it must not be considered as a standard writing.

## Chapter Four- Procedure

### Procedure:

The reading was conducted in two different ways. It was conducted in groups and also individually. The reading test was conducted with the students of class VII. At first individual test was conducted. The handout of the short story was provided to every learner and they were told to read that on his or her own. After 15 minutes, questions were given to them and they were told to answer on their own within 25 minutes. In the same way I conducted the test on reading in three high schools. There were 30 students in each class. All the learners read the text individually and then wrote down the answers for the multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks and true/false questions.

The same test was also conducted in groups. . Like the previous test, this one too was conducted with students of three high schools. The level was same. Random assignment was followed while making groups. A number (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) was given to each student and then the students were asked to number 1's, 2's, 3's etc. to sit together There were five students in each group. Students were given the short story to read in groups. They were asked to discuss among themselves and then write the answers. This way, they wrote down the answers of the multiple-choice question, true/false, fill in the blanks and the final question.

A test was also conducted on a productive skill. As mentioned before, I chose to focus on writing so that it could be compared well with the reading activities. At first the test was conducted individually. Question papers were provided to the students. The learners were told to

write the answer in the question paper. There were two blank spaces for writing the answer. Students were asked to read the question first then do brainstorming on the topic. After that, they were supposed to write down the key points in the blank space. The next space was provided for writing down the final answer. 30 minutes was given for this activity.

The same test was also conducted in groups. Random assignment was also followed here. There were 30 students in each class of each school. There were 5 students in each group. In groups, they were told to discuss among themselves. Then they would write down the key points and then the answer.

## Chapter Five-Data Analysis

### Data Analysis:

#### Results of the test on reading:

At first the individual reading test was analyzed. There were four sections in the reading test. Those were: multiple-choice question, fill in the blanks, true/false and question answer

#### Multiple-choice questions:

Most of the mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions. Wrong answers of some multiple-choice questions were circled by the learners. For examples, they circled

- “Never trust a friend who helps you at the first opportunity he gets” as the meaning of “Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets”. (Source of data: Test sheet)
- “ Alif was just trying to be dead” as the meaning of “Alif was just pretending or if he was dead”(Source of data: Test sheet)
- “Finally the bear stopped walking” as the meaning of “The bear put his nose close to Alif’s ear - and then he sniffed and sniffed and sniffed Finally the bear stopped sniffing” (Source of data: Test sheet)

All of these were the wrong answers.

#### True/False question:

The learners also made mistakes in true/false question, such as

- “Sajid and Alif were much frightened and started to run away”. This should be true but it was marked by the learners as false. (Source of data: Test sheet)



- “Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible”. This should be false but it was marked as true by the learners. (Source of data: Test sheet)
- “It is well-known that bears love dead meat”. This should be false but it was marked as true by the learners. (Source of data: Test sheet)

#### **Fill in the blanks questions:**

- The learners also made mistakes in fill-in-the-blanks questions, such as “The bear slouched off off into the forest.” (Source of data: Test sheet)

The correct answer would be “The bear slouched off into the forest.” All the fill in blanks questions were directly taken from the text. Learners did not make many mistakes in fill in the blanks. It would be better if some changes were made in the fill in the blank questions.

#### **Question answer:**

The answers of the final question were not organized enough. It needed some knowledge of writing also. The question of the reading test was,  
Why did Alif walked away by saying “Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets”?

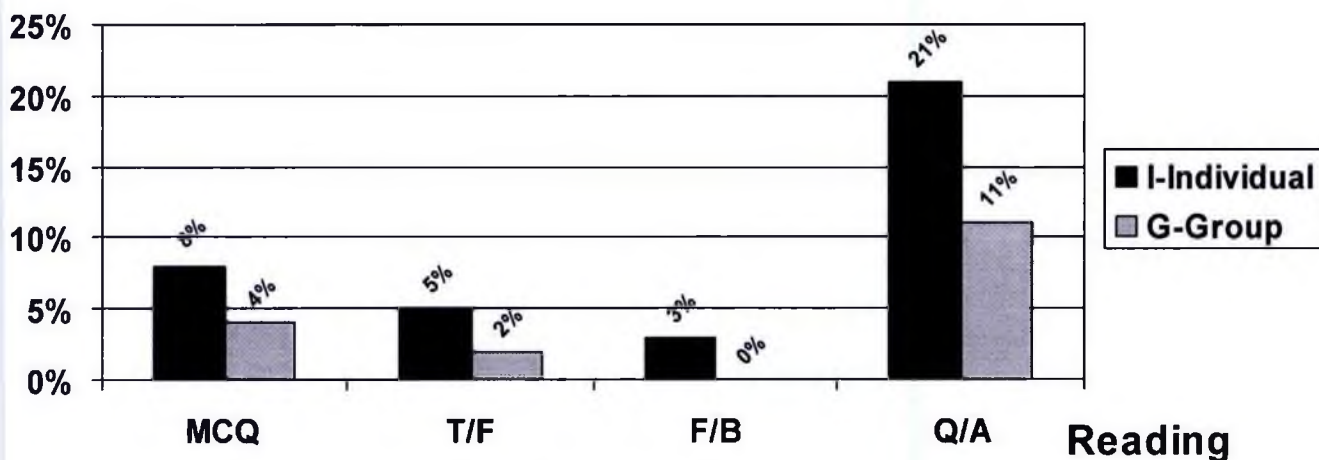
One of the learners, who wrote the answer individually, wrote it in the following way.

- *Alif walked away by saying “Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets”. One evening, while walking through the dense forest, they heard a bear growl. They were very scared and started to run away. Sajid saw a branch hanging from a tree, he quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on the top of the tree as*

*soon as possible. He was so scared that he did not even look at his friend once.* (Source of data: Test sheet)

The answer was not organized and this was not the exact answer. Many of the learners were not clear about the answer. Answer was directly taken from the text.

8% mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions. 4.5% mistakes were made in true/false and 2.5% mistakes were made in fill in the blanks. In the question answer, 21% mistakes were made. All the tasks were done by the learners on their own and there was no interaction among learners. Also, there was only a very little interaction between the learners and the teacher. As the task were done individually, it was really difficult to observe individual learner.



**Diagram 1: Group work versus Individual work**

After analyzing the individual reading test, the group reading test was also analyzed. Here mistakes were also made by the learners but the amounts of mistakes were less than the mistakes of the previous activity. Very little mistakes were made in true/false questions such as “Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible” (T). This answer should be false but the learners marked it as true.

Very little mistakes were made in multiple choice question, such as they circled the answer “they heard the laughter of a bear” as the meaning of “They heard a bear growl.” (Source of data: Test sheet) No mistakes were made in fill-in-the-blanks questions.

Some problems were also found in the final answer but the learners understood better than the learners who wrote it individually. Learners who wrote the answer in groups, one of the groups wrote the answer in the following way,

*Two friends Sajid and Aalif went for rock climbing. When they heard the bear's growl, they started to run away. Then Sajid saw a branch and hold the life-saving branch of the tree. He did not help Alif. He was busy in saving himself. He did not even look at his friend once. Alif was pretending to be dead. As bear hate dead meat, it went away. Alif was very upset with his friend and when Sajid asked him that what the bear said to him he told “Do not trust a friend who deserts you who deserts you in the first opportunity he gets.”* (Source of data: Test sheet)

This answer is more organized than the previous answer. It was not directly taken from the text. Learners shared their ideas and asked for clarifications to each other. For this reason, it is more or less exact answer of the question.

4% mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions, 2% mistakes were made in true/false and no mistakes were made in fill in the blanks. In the question answer, 11% of the answers were wrong.

As the learners were doing the activities in groups, they got the opportunity to interact with each other. They were sharing their ideas. As they were working in small groups, they had the opportunity to ask each other for clarifications. Learners could also develop their reading skill through discussion and sharing ideas.



Table 1: Reading

Group		Individual	
Sample T/F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible" (T)</li> </ul>	Sample T/F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sajid and Alif were much frightened and started to run away(F)</li> <li>Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible(F)</li> <li>It is well-known that bears love dead meat(T)</li> </ul>
Sample MCQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they heard the laughter of a bear</li> </ul>	Sample MCQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>never trust a friend who helps you at the first opportunity he gets</li> <li>Alif was just trying to be dead</li> <li>Finally the bear stopped walking</li> </ul>
Sample F/B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mistakes</li> </ul>	Sample F/B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bear <u>slouched off</u> off the forest</li> </ul>
Sample Q/A	<p>Two friends Sajid and Aalif went for rock climbing. When they heard the bear's growl, they started to run away. Then Sajid saw a branch and hold the life-saving branch of the tree. He did not help Alif. He was busy in saving himself He did not even look at his friend once. Alif was pretending to be dead. As bear hate dead meat, it went away. Alif was very upset with his friend and when Sajid asked him that what the bear said to him he told "Do not trust a friend who deserts you who deserts you in the first opportunity he gets."</p>	Sample Q/A	<p>Alif walked away by saying "Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets". One evening, while walking through the dense forest, they heard a bear growl. They were very scared and started to run away. Sajid saw a branch hanging from a tree, he quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on the top of the tree as soon as possible. He was so scared that he did not even look at his friend once.</p>



**Results of the test on writing :( Individual)**

After analyzing the results of the reading test, the results of the writing test were analyzed. The topic of writing was “If you become the prime minister what will you do for your country?” First the students’ responses to the individual writing test were analyzed.

**Grammatical mistakes:**

Very similar kind of grammatical mistakes were made by many of the students. Different types of grammatical mistakes can be made by the learners such as sentence fragment wrong tense or verb form subject-verb agreement, use of number, articles etc.

**Number:**

Many mistakes were made in the use of number. This is a very frequent mistakes made by the learners. Learners had some confusion while using this particular grammar item. For example, “I will build many school, college and hospital”, “I will set up sufficient number of school”. (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Concord/ agreement:**

Agreement happens when one word changes in form depending on to which other words it is being related. Concord or agreement error was very common in their writing. The learners had some problem in agreement. For example: “I will find out the major problems and also try to solve it.” (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Articles:**

Articles are traditionally considered to form a separate part of speech. Linguists place them in the category of determiners. There were also some mistakes in the use of articles such as "Bangladesh is a agricultural country". Some of the learners had confusion in the proper use of articles. (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Pronoun agreement error:**

Many students have a problem with pronoun agreement. They will write a sentence like "Everyone wants the welfare of their country." (Source of data: Test sheet). The problem is, "everyone" is a singular pronoun. They will have to use "his" or "her".

**Spelling:**

Spelling mistake was a very common error that was made by the learners. Some spelling mistakes were also made by the learners such as "collage (college), development (development), shading (shedding), terrorisum (terrorism)". (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Idea:**

The learners expressed their individual ideas while writing the answer of the question. Most of the learners wrote down the same points such as education, health, electricity corruption etc. There was hardly any diversity in terms of ideas in those answers.



**Organization:**

The overall organization of the answer was not very good. Points were not elaborated. “Education” is written as a point by some of the learners and it was elaborated in these ways, “I will set up many schools and college”, “I will develop the education sector”. (Source of data: Test sheet). In individual activity, learners did not get the opportunity to interact with other learners. This might have caused the limitations in their answers.

Table 2: Writing

Writing			
Group		Individual	
Sample Grammatical mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We want to help the poor people in our country</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Sample Grammatical mistakes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will build many school, college and hospital.(number)</li> <li>• I will set up sufficient number of school(number)</li> <li>• I will find out the major problems and also try to solve it.(agreement)</li> <li>• Population problem is one of the major problem of our country. (agreement)</li> <li>• Bangladesh is a agricultural country(article)</li> </ul>
Sample Spelling:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• democracy”(democracy), “illegal” (illegal)</li> </ul>	Sample Spelling:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collage(college), development(development), shading(shedding), terrorisum(terrorism)</li> </ul>
Sample Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• education sector, health, unemployment, population, agriculture, electricity, corruption, science and technology, roads and highways, friendship with the neighboring countries, tree plantation</li> </ul>	Sample Ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• education, health, electricity corruption</li> </ul>
Sample Overall organization:	<i>Education-Education is the backbone of a nation. It is necessary to develop the education sector. If I become the prime minister of the nation, I will set up many schools and colleges for developing the education sector</i>	Sample Overall organization	<i>Education-I will set up many schools and college</i>



**Results of the test on writing :( Group)**

While analyzing the results of the groups I realized that all the groups did not make the same kinds of errors.

**Grammar:**

In one group some mistakes were found in the use of number, such as; “We will set up sufficient number of school”. In the other group, mistakes were found in the use of preposition, such as; “We want to help the poor people in our country.” (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Spelling:**

Some spelling mistakes were also found in groups activities such as “democracy”(democracy), “ilegal” (illegal). The amount of mistakes was less than the mistakes of the individual activity. (Source of data: Test sheet)

**Ideas:**

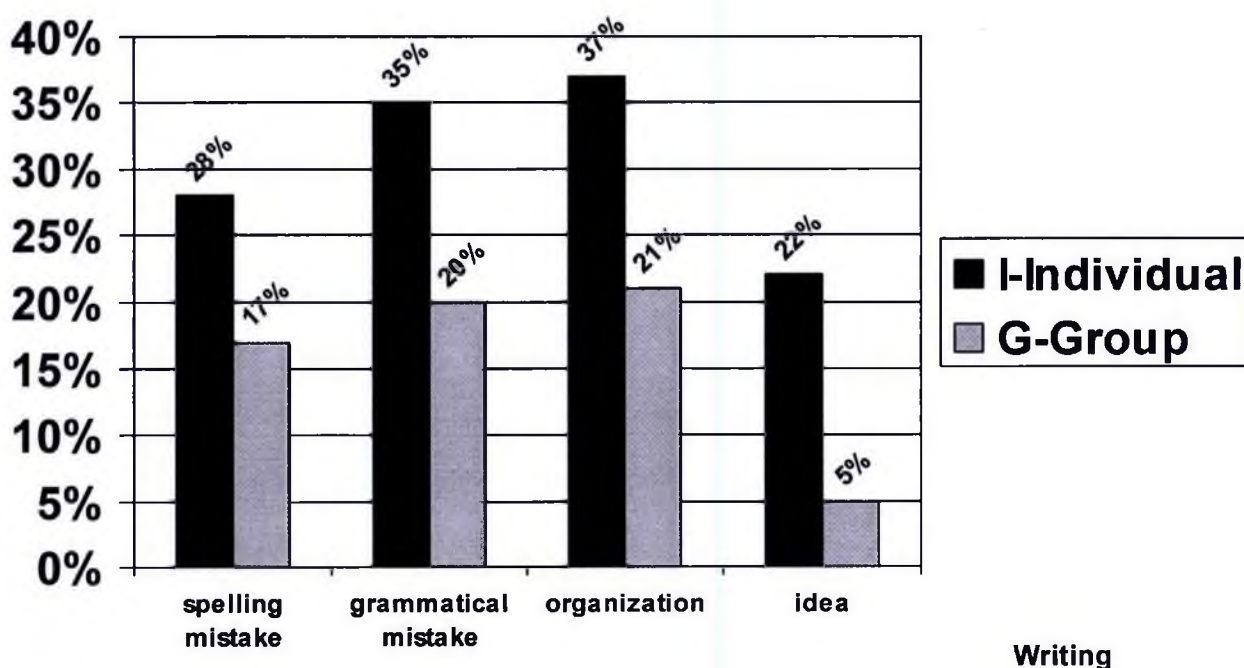
As far as the contents of the answers are concerned, the learners were able to list down different points such as, education sector, health, unemployment, population, agriculture, electricity, corruption, science and technology, roads and highways, friendship with the neighboring countries, tree plantation and so on. In groups, not all the students wrote about all these issues. So, it can be said that the ideas were diverse in this case.

**Organization:**

Also, the overall organization of the answers was good. Each point was elaborated by the learners such as they wrote a point “education” and it was elaborated it in this way,

*“Education is the backbone of a nation. It is necessary to develop the education sector. If I become the prime minister of the nation, I will set up many schools and colleges for developing the education sector.”* (Source of data: Test sheet)

In this activity, learners got the opportunity to interact with each other. They shared their ideas and also asked each other for clarifications. They got the opportunity to develop their writing skill through discussion and sharing ideas.



**Diagram 2: Individual work versus Group work**

Both individual and group activities were analyzed. In individual activities, the percentage of grammatical mistakes was 35%, the percentage of spelling mistakes was 28% and the percentage of mistakes in overall organization was 37%. In the group activity, the percentage of grammatical mistakes was 29%, the percentage of spelling mistakes was 17% and the percentage of mistakes in overall organization was 21%.

## Chapter Six-Discussion

### Discussion:

In chapter two, it was included that Individual work provides little opportunity for interaction, both with the teacher and with the students. It is also difficult for the teacher to monitor the learners individually. In the individual activity of the reading test, it was found that 8% mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions. 4.5% mistakes were made in true/false and 2.5% mistakes were made in fill in the blanks. In the question answer, 21% mistakes were made. All the learners did the tasks on their own and there was no interaction among learners. There was only a very little interaction between the learners and the teacher. It was really difficult to observe individual learners. The proclamation of literature review could be easily matched with findings. In literature review, it was found that there is a very little interaction in individual activities and while conducting the individual reading test, same thing was found.

In literature review, it was also mentioned that group work provides the opportunity to interact with each other. It also increases the opportunities for individual students to practice and use new features of the target language. Group work promotes teamwork among learners. After analyzing the data from the groups, it has been seen that students did not make any error in fill-in-the-blanks type activity. 4% mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions and 2% mistakes were made in true/false. In the question answer, 11% mistakes were made. As the



learners were doing the activities in groups, they got the opportunity to interact with each other. Ideas were shared by the learners. If they did not understand anything, they asked each other for clarifications. Reading skills were learned through conversation, sharing. This promoted association among the learners. It was found that the learners did well while doing the activities in groups. The findings match with the statement of literature review. In literature review, it was found that collaboration, sharing were the major feature of group work. While conducting the reading test in groups, same thing was found. This made difference between group work and individual work.

In individual activity of the reading test, 8% mistakes were made in multiple-choice questions. On the other hand, only 4% mistakes were made while doing the same activity in groups. Learners did better in group activities. 4.5% mistakes were made in true/false questions while the learners worked individually. Only 2% mistakes were made while they did it in groups. Here also the performance of the groups is better than that of individual works. Again, 2.5% mistakes were made in fill-in-the-blanks, while learners did it individually. On the other hand, absolutely no mistakes were made in groups. Here again, the learners in group did better job. In individual activity, 21% mistakes were made in the question answer. On the other hand, 11% mistakes were made while learners doing it in groups. Their answers were more structured than the answers of individual activities. It is found that the performance of group work is enhanced than the performance of individual work.

In the writing test, repetition of the earlier result was found. In individual activities of the writing test, the proportion of grammatical mistakes was 35%. In group activity, as the learners had the opportunity to interact with each other and correct each other, so the proportion of

mistakes is less than the earlier one; here it was 29%. In individual activity, the proportion of spelling mistakes was 28%. In group activity, learners got the opportunity to ask for clarification. In group work the percentage of spelling mistakes was 17% which is much minor than the previous one. In group activity as the learners shared their thoughts, so they did well again in it. They came up with different ideas and structured those. The percentage of idea was 22%, which is greater than the percentage of idea in individual activity. In individual activity, the percentage of idea was 5%. In individual activity, the percentage of mistakes in overall organization is 37%, which is greater than the percentage of mistakes in overall organization in individual activities. The percentage was 21 %. In group activity, as there was teamwork among the learners, so the act was also better than the act of individual activity. They got the opportunity to develop their writing skill through conversation and sharing thoughts.

In literature review, it was also found that group work reduced the pressure of the learner. It was found that when the learners were doing the activity individually, many of them were not confident. They were under pressure. When the learners were doing the same activity in groups, they were talking to each other. They were more relaxed and confident. Their result also showed this.

## **Chapter Seven-Limitations and Recommendation**

### **Limitations:**

There are also some limitations of this paper. The research would be more valid if I got the opportunity to go to more schools for collecting data. Most of the schools gave the permission of classroom observation but they did not give the permission of conducting any tests. For this reason I was able to manage to go to only three schools for conducting tests.

Another limitation is that I selected two skills, reading and writing, for conducting tests. The result would be more valid if I could conduct the tests on all the four skills. I could not conduct the speaking and listening test because it would require a lot of technological support to collect data. If I conducted tests on speaking and listening, it would have been very difficult for me to transcribe the data collected. For this reason, I limited my tests only to reading and writing.

### **Recommendations:**

Through this paper, it is clearly found that group work is more effective than individual work. Sometimes because of the class size and sitting arrangement it is difficult to organize group work. But, group work is essential in language classes as without group work it is hardly possible to develop the level of classroom interaction. The following recommendations can be helpful in developing classroom interaction in ESL classes:

**Large group in large class:**

This is not applicable for the classes of English medium schools. In the classes of English medium schools, there are not more than 30 students. Small group can be easily made here. The sizes of classes in the Bangla medium schools of our country are very large. There are more than 60 students in most of the classes. It is really difficult to organize group work in such large classes. If the teacher organize small groups in these classes, it will not be possible to monitor all the groups. Though it is better to organize small groups, large group should be organized for large classes. It makes monitoring easier for the teacher.

**2. Seating arrangement:**

Seating arrangements in the Bengali medium schools are not good. The furniture is fixed to the ground therefore, sometimes it creates problem in organizing group work. As 3/4 students sit in one bench, it is not possible to sit in a circle for group work. In this case, the students of the first bench can turn back and join the students of the second bench and do group activities. In the same way, the students of the third bench can turn and join the students of the next bench for doing group work.

**1. Authentic material in group work:**

There are several important points to consider when choosing authentic materials.

We now have an extensive collection of materials that include menus, maps, newspaper inserts, store advertisements, travel brochures, catalogs, phone books, real estate pamphlets, and various pamphlets of sightseeing and tourist information. Using sets of materials are particularly appealing to students. If we want to make the group work more effective, it is better to select



authentic materials rather than the materials of the textbook. If the learners do the group work on authentic materials, they will get the opportunity to discuss among themselves about the new things, share their ideas, and ask for clarifications.

#### **4. Interesting activities:**

Interesting activities should be designed for group work. Learners can do presentation on interesting topics. They can do role-play. They can also read stories and change the ending of the stories. The best way to teach children English is to not only get them physically involved within the lesson, but also to create the illusion that they are simply playing games.

#### **5. Creative writing in group work:**

Learners can do creative writing in groups. They can write stories on their own. Pictures can be showed. They can write story relating to those pictures. The learners can choose the theme of the story of their own. They will be free to write whatever they wish. They can write poems. Poetry may be written independently Poetry has sometimes been more loosely defined as a fundamental creative act using language. Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions to suggest at alternative meanings in the words, or to evoke emotional or sensual responses.

## **Chapter Eight-Conclusion**

### **Conclusion:**

Interaction is the most influential concept for an effective ESL class. To create an interactive class, it is essential to develop the following categories: academic instructions, motivation, evaluation and classroom management. It enables the teacher to make full use of the resource- the learners themselves. Since people tend to learn better in a sociable environment and are more likely to stick to their studies when they feel part of a group, activities which promote classroom interaction should be introduced. The research question was “Which one is more effective to develop classroom interaction, group work or individual work?” In response to the question, for a legitimate resolution, classes of some schools were inspected and a survey was also conducted. The investigation suggested that interaction was very motivating for learners to realize that, even at early stage, they could communicate information successfully. It promoted a tremendous feeling of achievement and gave them immediate confirmation that they were making progress. Since the ostensible aim of the activities is to exchange information on a specific topic, learners would focus on what they are saying rather than how they are saying it, helping to drive out of any self-consciousness or inhibitions they might have about speaking a foreign language. In addition, group work promotes collaboration among learners. Learners could pick up the reading skill through discussion and sharing. They shared their ideas and also asked each other for clarifications. Both in reading and writing tests, the learners in group did

better than the individual. In group activity, as there was collaboration among the learners, so the performance was also better than the performance of individual activity. Because they could retain words better that been used in a meaningful context rather than heard.. This is why the importance of the interaction must not be ignored. At the end, it is evident that group activity is much more effective than the individual work to develop an interactive ESL class.

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## Appendix-1

### Short Story

#### The Friends

By Manisha Deveshvar; Illustration by Shinod AP

Two friends, sajid and Alif, planned to go hiking in the woods. They packed their knapsacks, lugged them over their shoulders and started out.

One evening, while walking through the dense forest, they heard a bear growl. They were very scared and started to run away, but "Twick, twick", they could hear the twigs breaking with each step the bear took towards them.

Desperate, sajid saw a low branch hanging from a tree. He quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible. He was so scared that he did not even look at his friend once.



Alif, who was behind the first, was not so lucky. The bear was right behind him and when he saw sajid save himself, all he could think of doing was to throw himself flat on the ground.

And that's how the bear found him. Face down on the ground and not even daring to breathe. The bear put his nose close to Alif's ear - and then he sniffed and sniffed and sniffed. He was trying to make out whether Alif was just pretending or if he was dead.

Then finally he stopped sniffing. Alif dared to take small breath. Then the bear growled, and Alif's blood ran cold.

But by then the bear had decided that Alif was not alive and it is well-known that bears will not touch dead meat. So the bear slouched off into the forest.

Seeing that the worst of the danger was over, Sajid slowly climbed down the tree where he was hiding. Walking up to Alif, who was still so shaken up that he could hardly stand, Sajid laughingly asked, "Hey, what did Master Bear whisper to you?"

Alif gave Sajid a long steady look. "He told me," said Sajid very slowly, "never to trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets. So, if you'll excuse me..." Saying that, Alif picked himself up, brushed off the dust, and walked away.

## Appendix- 2

### Reading test

#### True/false

- Two friends, Sajid and Alif, planned to go hiking in the woods.
- Alif quickly caught hold of the life-saving branch and climbed on top of the tree as soon as possible
- One evening, while walking through the dense forest, they heard a bear growl
- It is well-known that bears love dead meat.
- Sajid and Alif were much frighten and started to run away

#### MCQ

- Two friends planned to go hiking in the woods

This sentence refers to

1. Two friends planed to go for swimming
2. Two friends planed to go for cinema
3. Two friends planed to for rock climbing

- They heard a bear growl.

This sentence refers to

1. They heard the crying of a bear
2. They heard the laughter of a bear
3. They heard the roar of a bear

- Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets

This sentence refers to

1. Never to trust a friend who helps you at the first opportunity he gets
2. Never to trust a friend who cheat you at the first opportunity he gets
3. Never to trust a friend who promises you at the first opportunity he gets

- Alif was just pretending or if he was dead



This sentence refers to

1. Alif was just trying to be dead
2. Alif wanted to die
3. Alif was just acting or if he was dead

- The bear put his nose close to Alif's ear - and then he sniffed and sniffed and sniffed  
Finally the bear stopped sniffing

This sentence refers to

1. Finally the bear stopped crying
2. Finally the bear stopped walking
3. Finally the bear stopped taking smell

**Fill in the blanks:**

- He quickly caught hold of the --- and climbed on --- of the tree as soon as possible.
- Alif throw himself ---on the ground.
- Alif dared to take small ---
- The bear --- off into the forest.
- Sajid was so --- that he did not even look at his friend once.
  
- Why did Alif walked away by saying "Never trust a friend who deserts you at the first opportunity he gets"?

## **Appendix- 3**

### **Writing test**

**If you become the Prime Minister of the nation, what will you do for your country?**

**Write down points:**

**Start writing:**