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The Role of Group Work in Developing English-Speaking Skills among EFL Students

Reem Fahad Alibrahim

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Abstract: **Speaking is one of the most demanding areas of English learning because learners must retrieve vocabulary, organize grammar, pronounce words, interpret other speakers, and respond in real time. In many EFL classrooms, however, students have limited opportunities to speak because one teacher must share lesson time with a large number of learners. This literature-based research paper examines the role of group work in developing English-speaking skills among EFL students. It considers group work not simply as placing learners together, but as a structured form of interaction in which students have a reason to exchange information, solve a problem, make a decision, or complete a shared task. Research in second-language acquisition has long connected small-group interaction with increased opportunities for language production and negotiation of meaning. The paper discusses how group work can support fluency, confidence, participation, vocabulary use, communicative strategies, and learner autonomy. It also considers important limitations, including unequal participation, overuse of the first language, dominant group members, inaccurate peer language, anxiety, mixed proficiency, and weak task design. The review concludes that group work can contribute substantially to speaking development when tasks create genuine interdependence, individual responsibility, meaningful communication, and repeated opportunities to produce English. The teacher remains essential as a designer, organizer, monitor, language resource, and source of feedback. Practical recommendations and a sample group-speaking lesson are provided in the appendices.**

Keywords: **group work, EFL, speaking skills, oral interaction, cooperative learning, fluency, classroom interaction.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is often one of the clearest signs of language ability from a learner's point of view. Students may study English for years and still feel dissatisfied if they cannot participate comfortably in a conversation. Unlike many written tasks, speaking usually happens under time pressure. A learner has to understand what another person has said, decide what to communicate, choose suitable words and grammar, pronounce the message clearly enough, and adjust the response when misunderstanding occurs. These processes make speaking both a linguistic and a social activity.

The EFL classroom presents a practical difficulty. Students need frequent opportunities to speak, but teacher-fronted instruction naturally limits the amount of time available to each individual. In a class of thirty students, even a highly communicative teacher cannot hold a long conversation with every learner during a single lesson. Group work offers one response to this problem because several conversations can take place at the same time. Long and Porter (1985) argued that small-group work can increase language practice and create conditions for negotiation that are difficult to achieve in a lockstep, teacher-led lesson.

Group work, however, should not be romanticized. Students sitting in circles are not necessarily learning. One learner may dominate while another remains silent. A group may complete a worksheet by writing rather than speaking, switch almost entirely to the first language, or finish a task without needing to exchange meaningful information. Pica and

Doughty's classroom research indicated that task characteristics can be more important than participation pattern alone. This distinction is central to the present paper: the educational value of group work depends on what students are required to do together and how responsibility is distributed.

The topic is particularly relevant to speaking development because interaction gives learners opportunities to produce output, receive responses, notice communication problems, reformulate ideas, and try language again. Swain's work on output emphasizes that producing language can push learners to attend to how meaning is expressed, test their developing knowledge, and reflect on language. Later interaction research has continued to connect output and conversational interaction with opportunities for second-language development.

This paper asks: What role can group work play in developing English-speaking skills among EFL students? Supporting questions concern the amount and quality of student talk, fluency, confidence, negotiation of meaning, vocabulary and grammar use, communicative strategies, group composition, task design, teacher roles, and common challenges. The discussion is based on published theory and research rather than invented classroom data. Its purpose is to present a balanced account and translate that account into practical recommendations for English teachers.

2. SUBJECT / MAIN DISCUSSION

1. The Nature of Speaking Skill

Speaking is more than producing grammatically correct sentences. Effective oral communication requires a combination of accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, discourse organization, interactional awareness, and pragmatic judgment. A speaker must know not only what words mean but how to enter a conversation, hold a turn, respond to another person, ask for clarification, show agreement or disagreement, and repair a message when communication breaks down.

Fluency is especially important in classroom speaking because learners often know more English than they can retrieve quickly. A student may recognize a grammatical form on a test but hesitate for several seconds when trying to use it in conversation. Repeated speaking practice can help make familiar language more accessible under time pressure. Group work can create this repetition without requiring the teacher to manage every exchange personally.

Accuracy remains important, but an excessive focus on immediate correction can make students cautious and reduce their willingness to speak. Meaning-focused group tasks allow learners to use their current resources to communicate first. Accuracy can then be addressed selectively through preparation, monitoring, post-task feedback, and later repetition. A balanced speaking program therefore needs moments for both communication and attention to form.

Interactional competence is another major component. Conversation is jointly created. Speakers listen, predict, respond, clarify, interrupt appropriately, and adapt to the reactions of others. These abilities are difficult to develop through individual drills alone because they require another person whose response is not completely predictable. Group work creates a social environment in which students must coordinate language with other learners.

2. What Group Work Means in the EFL Classroom

Group work refers to classroom arrangements in which a small number of learners work together on a shared activity while the teacher is not the main speaker in every exchange. It includes information-gap tasks, problem solving, ranking activities, role plays, discussions, projects, jigsaw tasks, collaborative planning, and decision-making tasks. Pair work is closely related, but groups create additional interactional demands because learners must manage several voices and perspectives.

A useful distinction exists between ordinary group work and cooperative learning. Cooperative learning generally involves more deliberate structures designed to create positive interdependence and individual accountability. Students may have assigned roles, different pieces of information, or a shared product that cannot be completed successfully unless members contribute. This structure helps address a common weakness of unplanned group work: the possibility that one student does most of the work.

Group size affects the experience. Groups of three or four often provide enough variety for discussion while still giving members frequent turns. Larger groups may offer more ideas but can reduce individual speaking time and make it easier for quiet students to disappear. Pairs maximize individual turns but provide less diversity of opinion and fewer opportunities to manage multi-party interaction. The appropriate size therefore depends on the task and the learners.

The physical arrangement is only the visible part of group work. The deeper issue is interactional design. A task should give students a reason to listen to one another and contribute information that matters. If every learner already has the same answer and one confident student can finish the activity alone, the group format adds little. Effective tasks create a communicative need rather than merely a shared table.

3. Theoretical Reasons Group Work Can Support Speaking

One important rationale comes from interactionist approaches to second-language acquisition. When learners do not understand each other, they may ask questions, repeat information, simplify a message, confirm meaning, or reformulate an utterance. This negotiation can make input more understandable and draw attention to gaps in communication. Long and Porter (1985) connected the negotiation possible in learner-learner talk with a psycholinguistic rationale for group work.

Output provides a second rationale. Swain's output perspective proposes that producing language can push learners beyond general understanding. A student who understands another speaker may still avoid difficult grammar, but a student who must express a precise idea has to make linguistic choices. Output can reveal what the learner cannot yet say, provide a chance to test a form, and create a reason to reflect on language.

Collaborative dialogue also has a social dimension. Swain and Lapkin's work showed how learners can use dialogue to solve linguistic problems together. During a collaborative task, students may question a word, propose an alternative, correct a form, or explain why an expression sounds more appropriate. The conversation is therefore both the means of completing the task and a potential site of learning.

These theories do not imply that every learner conversation produces acquisition. Opportunities can be missed, incorrect forms can pass unnoticed, and a poorly designed task can generate little language. The theoretical value of group work is best understood as the creation of conditions in which useful processes can occur more frequently.

4. Increasing Opportunities to Speak

The most immediate advantage of group work is mathematical. When the teacher speaks with the whole class, only one person normally holds the floor at a time. When eight groups speak simultaneously, many students can produce language during the same five-minute period. Long and Porter (1985) highlighted increased language practice as a major pedagogical argument for group work.

More speaking time matters because oral skill requires practice under communicative pressure. Students need to retrieve words, build sentences, respond, hesitate, repair, and continue. These processes become easier through repeated use. A learner who answers one teacher question in a lesson receives much less practice than a learner who explains an opinion, asks follow-up questions, negotiates a group decision, and reports the result.

Quantity alone is not sufficient. A group task that produces many one-word answers may offer less developmental value than a shorter task requiring explanation and follow-up. Teachers should therefore consider both speaking time and the quality of talk. Tasks that require reasons, comparisons, predictions, descriptions, and negotiated decisions tend to generate more extended language.

Teachers can also build repetition into group work. Students may first discuss a question in pairs, then join another pair, and finally report a conclusion to the class. The topic remains familiar, so cognitive pressure decreases while the learner gets another opportunity to express the same ideas more smoothly. This kind of repeated speaking can support fluency without requiring students to memorize a script.

5. Group Work and Speaking Fluency

Fluency involves producing speech at a reasonable pace with manageable hesitation and sufficient continuity for communication. Learners often become more fluent when they repeat familiar content because they no longer need to invent every idea and linguistic choice simultaneously. Group tasks can provide repeated, meaningful production when students explain the same information to different partners or revisit a problem after receiving new information.

Planning also supports fluency. Before a group discussion, students can be given two or three minutes to organize ideas and note useful expressions. This preparation reduces the burden of generating content and language at the same moment.

Less confident learners benefit particularly from a short planning stage because they enter the conversation with something ready to say.

Fluency should not be confused with speed alone. A very fast speaker who is difficult to understand is not necessarily more proficient than a slower speaker who organizes ideas clearly and responds effectively. Group work can develop functional fluency: the ability to keep communication moving, use fillers appropriately, paraphrase missing words, and recover from problems.

Repeated group tasks can also reduce the novelty of speaking in front of others. As learners become accustomed to short exchanges, their attention can shift from the fear of producing any English toward expressing ideas more effectively. The teacher can support this development by avoiding constant interruption and by giving delayed feedback on a small number of recurring problems.

6. Confidence, Anxiety, and Willingness to Communicate

Many EFL learners understand classroom material but hesitate to speak publicly. Fear of mistakes, negative evaluation, pronunciation problems, and comparison with stronger classmates can reduce participation. Small groups may lower the social pressure because the audience is smaller and the conversation is less formal than a whole-class performance.

A supportive group can give hesitant students a safer place to test language. They can ask a peer for a word, restart a sentence, laugh at a misunderstanding, and try again without feeling that the entire class is evaluating them. Successful small interactions can gradually build confidence for larger speaking situations.

The opposite is also possible. An unsupportive group can increase anxiety if one student mocks errors, interrupts constantly, or controls the task. Group work is therefore not automatically psychologically safe. Teachers need classroom norms that value patience, listening, and respectful disagreement. Changing groups periodically can also prevent fixed status differences from becoming permanent.

Willingness to communicate depends partly on having something meaningful to say. Personal but non-intrusive choices, realistic problems, ranking tasks, and opinion questions often generate stronger participation than abstract prompts with an obvious textbook answer. When learners care about the outcome, speaking becomes a tool for achieving a goal rather than a performance for the teacher.

7. Negotiation of Meaning and Communication Strategies

Communication problems are not necessarily failures. In a language classroom, they can create learning opportunities. When one learner does not understand, the group may use clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetition, examples, gestures, or paraphrase. These strategies keep communication moving while making language more comprehensible.

Learners also discover what their current English cannot express. A student may begin a sentence, stop because a word is missing, and then describe the idea in another way. This circumlocution is a valuable communicative strategy. It allows the conversation to continue and teaches students that successful speaking does not require perfect vocabulary.

Information-gap and jigsaw tasks are particularly useful because misunderstanding has consequences. Each learner holds information needed by others, so group members must listen and clarify. Long and Porter (1985) emphasized the importance of careful task structure, and later interaction research has continued to treat task conditions as central to the quality of learner talk.

Teachers can make strategies visible by teaching phrases such as What do you mean?, Could you say that again?, Do you mean...?, How do you say...?, and Let me explain it another way. These expressions give learners tools for managing interaction rather than abandoning English when difficulty appears.

8. Vocabulary and Grammar Development through Group Talk

Speaking tasks require learners to retrieve vocabulary rather than merely recognize it. A student who knows a word from reading may struggle to access it during conversation. Group discussion creates repeated retrieval opportunities, especially when a topic is sustained across several activities. Words connected with the task become increasingly available as students hear and use them.

Peers can also supply vocabulary. One learner may know the word another learner needs, or group members may jointly construct an expression. This collaborative assistance can keep the conversation in English and expand lexical resources. However, peer suggestions are not always accurate, so the teacher should monitor recurring uncertainty and clarify important language after the task.

Grammar can become noticeable when learners attempt to express complex meanings. A student may ask whether a past form is needed, compare two possible structures, or reformulate after a peer's response. Swain and Lapkin's research on collaborative dialogue illustrates how learners can use interaction to work through linguistic problems rather than simply exchange content.

Group work should not replace explicit grammar or vocabulary teaching. Its strength is that it creates a reason to retrieve and apply language. Pre-task input can provide useful forms, while post-task feedback can address problems that appeared during communication. The group task then functions as the bridge between knowing about English and using English.

9. Peer Feedback and Self-Correction

Peer interaction creates immediate evidence about whether a message works. If listeners look confused, ask a question, or interpret an idea incorrectly, the speaker receives feedback even when nobody explicitly corrects grammar. The speaker may then repeat or reformulate the message. This interactional feedback is closely connected to communicative effectiveness.

Direct peer correction can also be useful when classroom relationships are supportive and the task makes language reflection appropriate. During a planning activity, for example, students can discuss which expression sounds better. During a fluency task, however, constant peer correction may interrupt communication and make learners self-conscious. Teachers should distinguish between activities where accuracy is the main goal and those where meaning should remain primary.

Self-correction is an important sign of developing control. Group work gives learners many chances to hear their own language and adjust it. A student may begin with He go yesterday and immediately change the form to He went yesterday. The correction can occur because the learner notices the error during production rather than because a teacher interrupts.

A useful post-task routine is to collect anonymous examples of language heard during monitoring. The teacher can write several sentences on the board, including both effective expressions and errors, and ask the class to improve them. This protects the flow of the original discussion while ensuring that group work is connected to language development.

10. The Role of the Teacher

Group work changes the teacher's role but does not reduce its importance. Before the task, the teacher chooses the objective, organizes groups, explains the outcome, checks instructions, provides essential language support, and decides how success will be evaluated. Weak preparation often produces weak interaction.

During the task, the teacher monitors rather than dominates. Monitoring allows the teacher to identify groups that misunderstand the instructions, students who are excluded, useful language worth praising, and recurring problems for later feedback. The teacher can intervene when communication completely stops, but frequent interruption can reduce learner autonomy and speaking time.

After the task, the teacher helps transform experience into learning. Groups may report decisions, compare solutions, or reflect on communication strategies. The teacher can then address selected pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar issues. Delayed feedback respects the communicative purpose while still giving students access to expert guidance.

Teachers also shape the social climate. Students need to understand that group work is not free time and that respectful listening is part of the learning objective. Clear roles, time limits, visible outcomes, and accountability can help. At the same time, excessive control can make the activity feel like a disguised test. Effective management combines structure with genuine learner responsibility.

11. Task Design: The Difference between Productive and Weak Group Work

Research suggests that the task itself can be more influential than the simple choice between group and teacher-fronted participation. Pica and Doughty's work found that group interaction increased individual input and production, while task characteristics strongly influenced interactional features. This finding explains why some group activities generate rich discussion and others produce almost no meaningful speech.

A strong speaking task normally has a clear outcome. Students may need to agree on the best solution, reconstruct a story, plan a trip within a budget, rank possible responses to a problem, or identify differences between information sets. The outcome gives the conversation direction. A vague instruction such as discuss this topic may work with advanced, motivated students but often produces short exchanges in less confident classes.

Information distribution is another design tool. If every student receives different information, no single member can complete the task alone. This creates positive interdependence and a reason to ask questions. Role cards can serve a similar purpose by giving members different priorities or perspectives.

Individual accountability prevents social loafing. The teacher can randomly choose any member to report the group's decision, require each student to record one idea contributed by another member, or assign rotating roles such as facilitator, questioner, summarizer, and reporter. Accountability should encourage participation without turning every conversation into surveillance.

Language support should be sufficient but not overwhelming. A small phrase bank can help students disagree, ask for reasons, invite a quiet member, and clarify meaning. If the worksheet provides complete sentences for every turn, students may simply read rather than communicate. Scaffolding should make interaction possible while leaving genuine choices to the learners.

12. Group Composition and Mixed Proficiency

Teachers frequently ask whether groups should be mixed or similar in proficiency. There is no single arrangement that is best for every task. Mixed groups can allow stronger students to model language and help peers, while weaker students may contribute ideas or knowledge that is not purely linguistic. However, a large proficiency gap can also lead the strongest learner to dominate.

Similar-proficiency groups may produce more balanced participation because students process language at comparable speeds. They can also allow the teacher to differentiate tasks. Yet lower-level groups may need more scaffolding, and higher-level groups may require greater challenge to prevent superficial discussion.

Personality and relationships matter alongside proficiency. Two confident friends may speak extensively but exclude others. A quiet learner may participate more with supportive classmates than with the linguistically strongest students. Teachers therefore benefit from changing group composition over time and observing interaction rather than relying only on test scores.

Roles can reduce status problems when they are meaningful and rotated. A student who is usually quiet can serve as summarizer or questioner, giving that learner a legitimate reason to speak. Roles should not become permanent labels. The goal is to broaden participation, not identify one student forever as the leader and another as the note taker.

13. Common Problems: Dominance, Silence, and Unequal Participation

Unequal participation is one of the most visible weaknesses of group work. Confident students may answer every question, make decisions quickly, and unintentionally remove the need for others to speak. Quiet students may accept the final answer without contributing. If this pattern continues, the learners who need speaking practice most may receive the least.

Teachers can address dominance through task design rather than repeated verbal reminders. Turn-taking structures, assigned information, rotating roles, time-limited individual contributions, and random reporting can distribute responsibility. A rule such as everyone must give one reason before the group decides can be more effective than simply telling students to participate equally.

Silence has different causes. A learner may lack language, need more planning time, fear judgment, dislike the topic, or be processing the discussion carefully. Teachers should avoid interpreting every quiet moment as laziness. Brief preparation, vocabulary support, smaller groups, and predictable routines can help hesitant learners enter the conversation.

Participation should also be evaluated qualitatively. A student who speaks less but asks an important clarification question or summarizes the group's reasoning may be contributing substantially. The objective is meaningful engagement, not identical word counts.

14. Use of the First Language during Group Work

When the teacher steps away, students may switch to their first language. This is often presented as proof that group work has failed, but the issue is more complex. Learners may use the first language briefly to clarify instructions, solve a difficult conceptual problem, or help a peer understand a word. Swain and Lapkin observed learners using both languages as tools while solving linguistic problems.

Nevertheless, if the purpose is English-speaking practice and most of the task is completed in the first language, the opportunity for oral English development is reduced. Teachers need realistic expectations. A strict English-only rule may create silence in lower-level classes, while unlimited first-language use may remove the communicative challenge.

Task difficulty is often the key. Students are more likely to remain in English when they have enough vocabulary, understand the instructions, and can complete the task with their current resources plus modest support. Useful communication phrases, visible word banks, and teacher modeling can reduce unnecessary switching.

Teachers can also establish a functional principle: use English for the interaction itself, while allowing brief strategic first-language support when necessary. The balance may change with proficiency. The long-term goal is increasing the range of situations students can manage through English.

15. Accuracy, Error, and the Quality of Peer Language

A common concern is that learners will hear incorrect English from one another and acquire errors. Learner speech does contain errors, but research on group interaction has not supported the simple conclusion that students should therefore speak mainly with the teacher. Long and Porter (1985) reviewed arguments showing that learner-learner interaction can still provide valuable negotiation and practice.

The teacher remains the main expert source for difficult language. Monitoring allows recurring errors to be identified, and post-task feedback can prevent uncertainty from remaining unresolved. Students can also be taught to mark a question when the group is unsure rather than confidently inventing a rule.

Error tolerance should depend on the objective. During a fluency discussion, interrupting every mistake may reduce communication. During a rehearsal for a formal presentation, students may benefit from more careful correction. A mature speaking program varies the focus rather than treating accuracy and fluency as competing ideologies.

Peer language also has advantages. Learners may use expressions and explanations that are easier for classmates to understand. They may recognize each other's difficulties because they share similar learning experiences. Peer interaction therefore provides a different kind of input from teacher talk, not simply a lower-quality version of it.

16. Group Work, Autonomy, and Classroom Responsibility

Group work can shift learners from waiting for the teacher toward managing communication themselves. Students decide who speaks, ask each other questions, solve misunderstandings, use reference tools, and judge whether the group has completed the task. These behaviors contribute to learner autonomy.

Autonomy does not mean the absence of structure. In fact, students often become more independent when routines are clear. If they know how to begin, how to ask for help, what product is expected, and how much time is available, they can manage the interaction without constant teacher direction.

Reflection strengthens this process. After a task, groups can discuss which communication strategies helped, whether everyone participated, and what language they needed but did not know. Such reflection makes speaking practice more conscious and gives students goals for the next activity.

Responsibility can extend beyond the classroom. Students who become comfortable with peer interaction may be more willing to join English clubs, online exchanges, study groups, or informal conversation practice. Group work can therefore teach not only language but also a method for creating future speaking opportunities.

17. Practical Recommendations for EFL Teachers

Group work should begin with a clear speaking objective. The teacher needs to decide whether the main aim is fluency, interactional strategies, vocabulary use, pronunciation, accuracy, or a combination. The task, support, monitoring, and feedback should then match that aim.

Instructions should be demonstrated rather than merely explained. A short model with two students can show what a successful exchange looks like. Teachers should check understanding before groups begin because confusion quickly leads to first-language discussion about what students are supposed to do.

Tasks should create a genuine reason for multiple students to contribute. Information gaps, role differences, individual preparation, and shared decisions can distribute participation. Groups of three or four are often manageable, but size should be adjusted according to the task and classroom.

Preparation time, useful phrases, and topic vocabulary can lower the entry barrier for less confident students. During the task, the teacher should monitor selectively and record language for later feedback. After the task, students should report, repeat, reflect, or perform a related activity so that speaking has a visible outcome.

Group work should be used regularly enough that routines become familiar. If students encounter it only occasionally, much of their attention goes to organization rather than communication. Regular practice allows the teacher to raise expectations gradually and helps students learn how to collaborate productively.

18. Discussion of the Evidence

The literature provides a strong rationale for using group work, but the most defensible conclusion is conditional rather than absolute. Small-group interaction can increase individual opportunities for input and output, and negotiation during learner talk can create conditions relevant to second-language development. Long and Porter (1985) presented both pedagogical and psycholinguistic arguments for group work, while Pica and Doughty's research showed that group participation can increase individual production but that task design is a critical variable.

Swain's work adds an important explanation for why speaking itself may contribute to development. Output can push learners to make linguistic choices, notice gaps, test possibilities, and reflect on language. Swain and Lapkin's analysis of collaborative dialogue further shows that peers can use interaction to solve language problems jointly. These findings support the view that learner talk is not merely practice after learning; under appropriate conditions, it can be part of the learning process.

At the same time, no theory removes the practical problems of classroom groups. Unequal participation, first-language overuse, inaccurate peer language, weak motivation, and social tension can reduce the value of an activity. These are not reasons to abandon group work. They are reasons to design it carefully and monitor how it actually functions in a particular class.

The most important distinction is therefore between group work as an arrangement and group work as pedagogy. An arrangement changes where students sit. Pedagogy creates interdependence, accountability, communicative purpose, appropriate challenge, support, and feedback. Speaking development is most likely when those elements are present consistently.

Group work should also be one part of a varied speaking curriculum. Students need interaction with the teacher, individual planning, pair work, presentations, pronunciation practice, listening input, and explicit language instruction. Small-group work contributes something distinctive: many learners can use English with one another at the same time, and the conversation can require them to manage meaning collaboratively.

3. CONCLUSION

Group work can play an important role in developing English-speaking skills among EFL students because it increases opportunities for learners to use language rather than only study it. Well-designed group tasks can provide repeated speaking practice, encourage negotiation of meaning, support fluency, promote communicative strategies, and give learners opportunities to retrieve vocabulary and grammar in real time. Small groups can also reduce the pressure of whole-class speaking and create a space in which hesitant learners gradually become more willing to communicate.

The value of group work, however, does not come from group formation alone. Research and classroom experience both point to the importance of task design. Students need a reason to exchange information, listen to one another, contribute individually, and reach an outcome. Without these conditions, group work can become silent worksheet completion, first-language conversation, or a task controlled by one confident member.

The teacher remains central throughout the process. Effective group work requires careful preparation, clear instructions, suitable grouping, language support, monitoring, and selective feedback. Teachers also establish the social expectations that make peer interaction respectful and productive. Rather than correcting every error immediately, they can allow meaning-focused interaction to continue and use post-task feedback to address important language problems.

A balanced view also recognizes limitations. Group work can reproduce classroom inequalities when dominant learners control discussion. Peers can provide inaccurate language, and mixed-proficiency groups do not always function smoothly. Some students need planning time and structured roles before they can participate confidently. Strategic first-language use may support learning, but extensive reliance on it can reduce English-speaking practice. These challenges require adjustment rather than a single universal solution.

In conclusion, group work is most effective when it is treated as a carefully designed environment for communication. Its greatest contribution is the opportunity it gives learners to speak, listen, negotiate, repair, explain, question, and try again with other learners. When these opportunities are supported by purposeful tasks and thoughtful teaching, group work can help EFL students move from knowing English as classroom content toward using English as a practical means of communication.

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Appendix A: Sample Group-Speaking Lesson

Topic: Planning a class trip

Level: Intermediate EFL

Time: 60-75 minutes

Group size: Four students

Main objective: Students will negotiate a shared decision in English and use language for suggesting, agreeing, disagreeing, asking for reasons, and clarifying.

Materials: Four role cards with different priorities, a simple options sheet, and a phrase bank.

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Procedure

1. Preparation (10 minutes). Introduce the situation and review a short phrase bank: I suggest..., What if we...?, I agree because..., I'm not sure about that..., What do you mean?, Could you explain why?, and So, have we decided...?

2. Individual planning (5 minutes). Each student reads a different role card and prepares two priorities. Students may write keywords but not a full script.

3. First group discussion (15 minutes). Students share priorities and compare the available trip options. The group must agree on one destination and three reasons.

4. Communication challenge (10 minutes). The teacher gives each group a new restriction, such as a lower budget or shorter travel time. Students must reconsider their decision.

5. Report (10 minutes). Any group member may be selected to explain the final choice, so everyone must understand the decision.

6. Feedback (10 minutes). The teacher presents useful expressions and recurring language problems heard during monitoring. Students correct examples together.

7. Reflection (5 minutes). Students identify one expression they used successfully and one communication problem they managed.

Appendix B: Group Interaction Observation Checklist

Appendix B: Group Interaction Observation Checklist

Observation	Yes	Sometimes	Not yet
Contributes ideas in English			
Asks another member a question			
Gives reasons, not only short answers			
Uses clarification strategies			
Responds to other students' ideas			
Invites quieter members to speak			
Uses target speaking expressions			
Repairs or rephrases when misunderstood			
Stays focused on the group outcome			

Appendix C: Student Reflection

1. What idea did you contribute to your group?

2. What did another student say that changed or improved your thinking?

3. Which English expression helped you participate?

4. Did you have a communication problem? How did you solve it?

5. Did everyone have a reasonable chance to speak? Explain briefly.

6. What would you like to improve in the next group discussion?