

Enhancing Student Participation in Intensive EFL Classrooms: The Role of Collaborative Learning Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Collaborative learning is an effective pedagogical approach that enhances student participation and engagement in language education. This study examines its impact on student motivation, participation, and language proficiency in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. The research employs a classroom action research design with structured observations, student surveys, and group assessments. Findings indicate that collaborative learning fosters a supportive environment, increasing student confidence in speaking and listening activities. Students demonstrated greater willingness to engage in discussions and improved comprehension skills. The teacher's role shifts from a knowledge provider to a facilitator, promoting active participation. Despite challenges such as unequal participation and time constraints, structured implementation enhances engagement. These results highlight the importance of collaborative learning in language education, advocating for student-centered models. Future research should explore digital and blended learning tools to further optimize engagement.

Keywords: collaborative learning; student participation; language proficiency; peer interaction; EFL learning.

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran kolaboratif merupakan pendekatan pedagogis yang efektif dalam meningkatkan partisipasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam pendidikan bahasa. Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak pembelajaran kolaboratif terhadap motivasi, partisipasi, dan kemampuan bahasa siswa dalam konteks pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian tindakan kelas dengan observasi terstruktur, survei siswa, dan penilaian kelompok. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran kolaboratif menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam kegiatan berbicara dan mendengarkan. Siswa menunjukkan kesediaan yang lebih besar untuk terlibat dalam diskusi dan peningkatan kemampuan pemahaman. Peran guru bergeser dari penyedia pengetahuan menjadi fasilitator, yang mendorong partisipasi aktif siswa. Meskipun terdapat tantangan seperti partisipasi yang tidak merata dan keterbatasan waktu, implementasi yang terstruktur dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Hasil penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pembelajaran kolaboratif dalam pendidikan bahasa, yang mendukung model pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa. Penelitian lanjutan dapat mengeksplorasi penggunaan alat pembelajaran digital dan blended untuk lebih mengoptimalkan keterlibatan siswa.

Kata-Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran kolaboratif, partisipasi siswa, kemampuan berbahasa, interaksi antar teman sebaya, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing.

INTRODUCTION (Palatino Linotype – 11 Bold, Huruf Besar)

The role of collaborative learning in language education has gained increasing attention in recent years due to its alignment with contemporary educational theories emphasizing social interaction, constructivism, and socio-cultural learning. Collaborative learning creates opportunities for students to interact, exchange ideas, and co-construct knowledge, thereby fostering deeper engagement in language learning. This perspective is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that learning occurs through social interactions that mediate cognitive development (Stephen et al., 2016). This theory highlights the importance of structured peer collaboration, where learners support each other in developing linguistic competence. Additionally, the experiential learning approach underscores the significance of cooperative learning methods in enhancing language competencies among students with diverse educational backgrounds (Raha, 2024). This model, rooted in constructivist principles, advocates for active engagement and reflection in the learning process, thereby allowing learners to derive meaning from their experiences (Sastre et al., 2022). Furthermore, the integration of digital technologies in language education, particularly mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), has revolutionized collaborative learning by providing interactive and dynamic platforms that facilitate peer engagement (Cong-Lem, 2018; Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2017).

Student participation plays a crucial role in effective language learning, particularly in second-language acquisition contexts. Research consistently demonstrates that active participation enhances motivation and engagement, which are fundamental for improving language proficiency (Y. Li, 2023; Manipol, 2024). Motivation serves as a driving force that encourages students to practice language skills beyond classroom settings, thus reinforcing learning and improving retention. The metacognitive processes involved in participation help learners develop effective strategies for language acquisition (Qi, 2023). Additionally, the quality of communication between students and teachers, as well as among peers, significantly influences learning outcomes. Positive classroom interactions foster a supportive learning environment, leading to increased motivation and positive attitudes towards language learning (Bala, 2020; Qi, 2023). Moreover, out-of-class language activities play an integral role in language development, as informal practice enables learners to apply their language skills in real-world situations, thereby strengthening their proficiency (Richards, 2015).

Despite the advantages of collaborative learning, student participation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is often hindered by several challenges. One of the primary issues is the disparity in language proficiency among students, which can create imbalances in participation. Higher proficiency learners may dominate discussions, leaving lower proficiency students reluctant to engage due to feelings of intimidation or lack of confidence (Y.-M. Chen, 2020). Additionally, cultural factors may influence participation levels, as some students may come from backgrounds that discourage assertiveness in classroom interactions. The fear of making mistakes in front of peers further exacerbates this issue, discouraging students from actively engaging in discussions (Chen, 2020). Another significant challenge is the implementation of pedagogical strategies that effectively encourage participation. While innovative approaches such as flipped classrooms and problem-based learning have shown promise, their success depends on the teacher's ability to facilitate engagement effectively (Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021). Many educators face difficulties in implementing these methods due to inadequate training or limited resources, leading to

inconsistent participation levels. Furthermore, large class sizes present logistical challenges, making it difficult for instructors to monitor student engagement and provide individualized feedback.

Several collaborative learning strategies have been found to be particularly effective in increasing student engagement in EFL classes. Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) has been shown to enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement by fostering cooperative learning among peers (Sonia et al., 2021). This method encourages students to work in small groups, share insights, and develop reading strategies collaboratively. Additionally, gamification has gained popularity as an innovative tool for increasing student motivation and participation in language learning. By incorporating game elements into instruction, educators can create an interactive and enjoyable learning environment that enhances students' communicative abilities (Spathopoulou, 2024; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Furthermore, the use of authentic materials and interactive tasks, such as jigsaw reading and structured group discussions, has been found to stimulate higher-order thinking skills and encourage active participation (Arianie, 2017). Creating a supportive classroom environment is also crucial for fostering collaboration, as research indicates that a positive classroom climate, characterized by mutual respect and teacher support, significantly impacts student engagement and learning outcomes (Barus et al., 2022; Ma, 2024).

LITERARY REVIEW (Palatino Linotype – 11 Bold, Huruf Besar)

Classroom conditions, including class size, student proficiency levels, and overall learning environment, play a crucial role in determining participation in EFL settings. Large class sizes often limit student interaction and make it challenging for teachers to provide individualized attention (Hussain, 2023). This can lead to disengagement, particularly among students who struggle with language proficiency. Additionally, mixed-ability classrooms present difficulties in ensuring balanced participation, as less proficient students may feel marginalized (Ahmed, 2022). Differentiated instruction that caters to varying proficiency levels is essential for fostering an inclusive and participatory learning environment. The overall classroom atmosphere also significantly impacts student engagement, with research highlighting the importance of a supportive and respectful environment in encouraging active participation (Barus et al., 2022; Ma, 2024). Positive teacher-student interactions and an inclusive classroom climate can enhance student motivation and willingness to engage in language learning activities (Wei-zheng, 2019).

Given the importance of collaborative learning in language education, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of structured collaborative activities in increasing student participation in EFL classrooms. By employing action research, this study seeks to address the challenges of low engagement through targeted interventions and systematic analysis. The findings of this research will contribute to the growing body of literature on effective language teaching methodologies and provide practical insights for educators seeking to enhance student participation through collaborative learning strategies. This study is particularly significant as it bridges the gap between theoretical frameworks and classroom practice, offering evidence-based recommendations for improving language learning outcomes. Ultimately, by fostering a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, collaborative learning can serve as a powerful tool in promoting engagement and improving language proficiency among EFL learners.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework to investigate the impact of collaborative learning strategies on student participation in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The methodology follows a systematic and structured approach to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. This section details the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques employed to achieve the study's objectives.

Research Design

The study adopts the CAR approach, which consists of four cyclical stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Dania, 2020; Putra et al., 2022). This method allows for iterative refinement of teaching strategies to enhance student participation. The planning phase involves diagnosing the problem of low participation through preliminary observations and surveys. In the action phase, interventions in the form of structured collaborative learning activities are implemented. The observation phase records changes in student engagement using structured observation protocols, while the reflection phase analyzes the outcomes to refine future interventions (Aningrum, 2024).

Participants

The study involves 35 third-semester students enrolled in a General English course at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. These students come from various academic backgrounds, with different levels of English proficiency. The selection criteria ensure a diverse representation of learners to assess the effectiveness of collaborative learning across different language competencies. Participants were informed about the research objectives, and consent was obtained to collect observational and self-reported data.

Data Collection Methods

To comprehensively measure student participation and engagement, this study employs multiple data collection techniques, including structured classroom observations, video recordings, self-reported student surveys, and focus group discussions.

Observational Data

Observational data provide direct insights into student engagement and interaction patterns. A structured observation protocol was used to assess indicators such as participation frequency, verbal contributions, non-verbal communication, and collaborative problem-solving (Sari et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2021). Classroom interactions were recorded over multiple sessions to ensure consistency and allow for comparative analysis of participation before and after the intervention.

Video Recordings

Video recordings complement observational data by capturing nuanced behaviors that may be overlooked in real-time observations. By analyzing recorded sessions, researchers can identify recurring participation trends, group dynamics, and communication patterns (Pirker et al., 2016). This method enhances the reliability of observational findings and provides a deeper understanding of collaborative learning processes.

Self-Reported Surveys

To gain insights into students' perceptions of collaborative learning, self-reported surveys were distributed. These surveys measured students' motivation, confidence, and perceived benefits of group work in improving their English proficiency. Triangulating survey results with observational and video data strengthens the validity of findings (Tesema et al., 2020).

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to explore students' experiences with collaborative learning in greater depth. Students were encouraged to share their challenges, preferences, and suggestions regarding collaborative activities. This qualitative method provides a richer understanding of students' engagement and motivation, complementing quantitative participation data (Korkealehto et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to analyze the collected data. This ensures a comprehensive evaluation of collaborative learning's impact on student participation.

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to interpret focus group discussions and self-reported survey responses. Recurring themes related to engagement, motivation, and learning strategies were identified. Observational data were coded to categorize different types of participation behaviors, such as verbal contributions, active listening, and peer interaction (Kassab, 2024). This approach provides insights into the underlying factors influencing student participation.

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze observational data and self-reported survey responses. The frequency of participation was measured across different classroom sessions, comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention participation rates. Peer evaluations were also analyzed to assess the effectiveness of group dynamics and task contributions. Statistical validation was employed to confirm significant trends in student engagement.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation. Data confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing student responses and video recordings. Participants were informed about the research objectives and had the right to withdraw at any stage without repercussions.

Reliability and Validity Measures

To ensure the reliability of observational data, inter-rater reliability was assessed by having multiple researchers independently analyze participation behaviors. Triangulation was employed by integrating observational, survey, and focus group data to enhance the validity of findings (Lee et al., 2019). This multi-method approach minimizes biases and strengthens the credibility of the study's conclusions.

Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of collaborative learning in enhancing student participation, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size is limited to a single institution, which may affect generalizability. Additionally, variations in students' prior experiences with collaborative learning may influence their engagement levels. Future research could expand the participant pool and explore long-term effects of collaborative learning interventions.

RESULTS

Initial Challenges in Student Participation

Student participation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is influenced by multiple factors that either facilitate or hinder engagement. This section outlines key

barriers that were identified in the study, namely language anxiety, lack of motivation, student fatigue, confidence levels, and proficiency disparities in mixed-ability classrooms. Addressing these challenges requires an understanding of their underlying causes and the implementation of targeted strategies to promote an inclusive and participatory learning environment.

One of the most significant barriers to student participation in EFL settings is language anxiety, which can manifest as a fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, or being judged by peers (Hiver et al., 2021; Korkealehto et al., 2021). This anxiety leads to hesitation in speaking, avoidance of participation, and reduced engagement in classroom discussions. Research indicates that students who experience high levels of language anxiety are less likely to take risks in using English communicatively (Hiver et al., 2021). Strategies such as fostering a supportive classroom atmosphere and implementing peer collaboration techniques can help alleviate anxiety by making students feel more comfortable expressing themselves in English. Furthermore, incorporating non-evaluative speaking activities, such as informal discussions and low-stakes presentations, can gradually build students' confidence and reduce their fear of negative evaluation.

Another critical factor affecting participation is the lack of motivation among students. Motivation plays a pivotal role in language learning, as it influences students' willingness to engage with the material and persevere in their studies (Arcipe, 2023; Xu, 2024). Monotonous teaching methods, limited interactive opportunities, and a perceived lack of relevance in the curriculum contribute to decreased motivation levels (Xu, 2024). To counteract this, educators can implement gamification, project-based learning, and technology-enhanced instruction, all of which have been shown to improve student engagement (Noori, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, personalizing lessons to reflect students' interests and real-life applications can enhance intrinsic motivation and encourage active participation (Fatimah et al., 2021; Ghanizadeh et al., 2015).

Student fatigue, particularly in evening classes, presents another obstacle to effective participation. Fatigue can lead to decreased concentration, reduced retention of information, and reluctance to engage in classroom activities (Kushlev & Epstein-Shuman, 2022). Studies show that students in late-day classes often struggle to maintain focus, resulting in lower levels of interaction and participation ("Research on the Relationship between Foreign Language Enjoyment and Learning Engagement among College Students", 2024). To mitigate this issue, teachers can incorporate movement-based activities, frequent breaks, and multimodal instructional techniques that cater to different learning preferences (C.-C. Liu et al., 2016). Furthermore, creating an interactive and stimulating classroom environment can help sustain students' energy levels and encourage engagement (Pahlevi, 2020).

Confidence levels are a crucial determinant of student participation in English-speaking activities. Research suggests that students with high self-confidence are more likely to engage in discussions, take risks in language use, and develop fluency more effectively (Purba, 2024). In contrast, students with low confidence may hesitate to speak, fearing that their language proficiency is inadequate or that they will make errors in front of peers (Katiandagho & Sengkey, 2022). Collaborative learning environments can serve as a confidence-building tool by creating a sense of solidarity and support among students (Arta, 2019). When students work together in pairs or small groups, they can practice their language skills in a less intimidating setting, thereby increasing their willingness to communicate

(Khajavy et al., 2014; Rihardini et al., 2021). Encouraging peer feedback and using positive reinforcement techniques can further enhance students' confidence in their English abilities.

Finally, mixed-ability classrooms present a unique challenge for collaborative learning. Disparities in proficiency levels can lead to an imbalance in participation, with more proficient students dominating discussions while less proficient learners remain passive. Research suggests that structuring group tasks to ensure equitable participation can help address this issue. Assigning roles within groups ensures that all members contribute, regardless of their proficiency level. Additionally, designing activities that require mutual dependency, such as jigsaw tasks or peer teaching exercises, can create a more inclusive environment where all students feel valued and engaged (Nijat et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the initial challenges in student participation in EFL classrooms stem from a combination of language anxiety, lack of motivation, fatigue, confidence issues, and proficiency disparities. By recognizing these barriers and implementing targeted strategies—such as fostering supportive learning environments, incorporating engaging teaching methodologies, and structuring collaborative learning effectively—educators can enhance student participation and create a more dynamic and inclusive language learning experience.

Implementation of Collaborative Learning Activities

Collaborative learning activities have been widely acknowledged as an effective means to enhance student engagement and participation in language learning. This section discusses the most effective small-group activities, the influence of peer collaboration on student motivation and speaking confidence, the role of task design in maximizing engagement, and structuring group work to ensure equal participation among students.

One of the most effective small-group activities in language learning is **jigsaw learning**, where each student is responsible for mastering a specific segment of the lesson and teaching it to their peers. This method not only promotes active engagement but also fosters a sense of accountability, as students must rely on one another to complete their understanding of the topic. Research indicates that jigsaw activities encourage deep processing of content and enhance peer-to-peer interaction, leading to improved language retention and confidence in communication. Another highly effective approach is **role-playing**, which allows students to practice their language skills in realistic, interactive scenarios (Gortaire-Díaz, 2023; Jie, 2023). By assuming various roles, students develop fluency and spontaneity in conversation while simultaneously reducing anxiety associated with public speaking.

Peer review and feedback sessions also contribute significantly to student participation. Through this method, students work in pairs or small groups to evaluate each other's work, fostering critical thinking and reflection on language use (Brundage et al., 2022). Studies show that students who receive peer feedback exhibit higher levels of motivation and engagement, as they feel supported and encouraged by their classmates. Additionally, **collaborative projects**, such as group presentations or written reports, enhance participation by requiring students to communicate, negotiate, and cooperate towards a shared objective. These projects help learners build teamwork skills while reinforcing language structures and vocabulary.

Peer collaboration plays a crucial role in boosting student motivation and speaking confidence. Research suggests that a strong sense of community among learners enhances their willingness to participate in classroom activities. When students work together, they

often feel more comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves in English, knowing they have the support of their peers (Amri, 2024). Collaborative learning also encourages social interaction, which has been shown to create a positive learning environment conducive to active participation.

Moreover, studies indicate that students who engage in **collaborative speaking tasks** report increased confidence in their oral skills (N. Li & Liu, 2022). The exchange of ideas and feedback in peer discussions enables learners to internalize language structures, thereby enhancing their ability to articulate thoughts clearly. Collaborative dialogue also fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process, motivating students to engage more deeply in language use and practice.

Task design is another essential element in maximizing engagement and participation in language classes. Effective task design follows the principles of **Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**, which emphasizes meaningful, real-world tasks that require active language use (Amansyah, 2023; Lume & Hisbullah, 2022). When tasks align with students' personal interests and needs, they are more likely to engage actively and invest effort in completing them. Research highlights that students show higher levels of motivation when they perceive tasks as relevant to their daily lives and future aspirations.

In addition to relevance, structuring tasks to **foster collaboration** significantly improves participation. Tasks requiring cooperative problem-solving, such as group discussions or peer teaching exercises, encourage students to interact meaningfully and develop both linguistic and interpersonal skills. Another critical factor in task design is **student autonomy**. When learners have the freedom to choose topics or modes of engagement, they tend to take greater responsibility for their learning, leading to increased participation. Empowering students with choice enhances their intrinsic motivation and reinforces their role as active participants in the learning process.

Ensuring equal participation among students in group work presents both opportunities and challenges. To address these, educators can implement **clearly defined roles** within groups, ensuring that each student contributes meaningfully to the task at hand (Abbott, 2018; Mohamadi, 2017). Roles such as facilitator, note-taker, and presenter distribute responsibilities equitably, preventing dominant students from overshadowing their peers while encouraging quieter students to take an active role in discussions.

Another effective strategy involves **structured protocols** for group discussions, such as the "think-pair-share" technique, where students first contemplate a question independently, then discuss it with a partner, and finally share their insights with the class. This method ensures that every student has an opportunity to articulate their thoughts, thus promoting balanced participation. **Teacher monitoring** also plays a vital role in maintaining equitable group dynamics. By actively circulating among groups, instructors can observe interactions, provide support, and intervene when necessary to facilitate engagement among all students.

Reflection and feedback sessions following group activities further enhance equitable participation. Encouraging students to evaluate their own contributions and those of their peers fosters self-awareness and accountability. Research suggests that post-activity reflections improve future group work experiences by highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, thus promoting a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of collaborative learning activities hinges on well-structured small-group tasks, the positive influence of peer collaboration on motivation and speaking confidence, the strategic design of engaging tasks, and the equitable structuring of group work. By integrating these elements, educators can create an inclusive, interactive learning environment that encourages active participation and language development. These findings underscore the importance of collaboration in language learning and offer practical strategies for enhancing student engagement in EFL classrooms.

Improvement in Student Participation

Collaborative learning has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach to enhancing student participation in language learning. This section presents empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness, examines the influence of structured group work on speaking and listening activities, identifies measurable indicators of increased participation, and explores students' perceptions of the benefits of collaborative learning in their language development.

Empirical Evidence Supporting the Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning in Improving Participation

Extensive empirical evidence highlights the benefits of collaborative learning in fostering student participation in language education. Kassab et al.,(2024) found that creating a positive tutorial atmosphere, encouraging shared decision-making, and promoting active listening in collaborative groups enhanced students' sense of belonging, leading to higher motivation and engagement. Similarly, Zare (2024) reported that integrating data-driven, form-focused tasks in collaborative activities increased EFL learners' motivation and task engagement. These findings suggest that fostering an inclusive and interactive learning environment encourages students to take an active role in their education.

Research also shows that problem-based and authentic tasks contribute to greater language use and practice. Mohammadi (2017) demonstrated that problem-based vocabulary tasks provided opportunities for socialization and target language use, which improved vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Gilson and Sauder (2021) found that dialogic discourse in collaborative discussions helped students develop self-determination and motivation, leading to increased participation. Sampson et al (2010) emphasized that active engagement in collaborative activities is evident when students make substantive contributions and coordinate their responses effectively.

Furthermore, technology-enhanced collaborative learning has been found to further boost participation. Chen and Hwang(2019) showed that concept mapping-based flipped learning approaches, which incorporated peer review and group presentations, significantly improved EFL students' speaking performance, critical thinking, and engagement. Alsowayegh et al.,(2019) demonstrated that blended learning activities provided structured opportunities for listening and speaking practice, leading to increased language competencies. These studies collectively indicate that collaborative learning, when supported by well-structured tasks and technological tools, enhances student participation in language education.

Influence of Structured Group Work on Student Engagement in Speaking and Listening Activities

Structured group work has a profound impact on student engagement in speaking and listening activities in language learning environments. Research suggests that well-designed collaborative activities promote active participation, enhance communication skills, and cultivate a sense of community among learners. Muñoz et al., (2018) found that peer interaction played a crucial role in the co-construction of knowledge, leading to better language task performance. Similarly, Haerazi (2023) showed that integrating technology with collaborative activities in mobile-assisted flipped learning empowered students to take ownership of their learning, increasing participation in speaking and listening tasks.

Game-based learning and situational contexts have also been shown to improve students' speaking and listening abilities. Chien et al.,(2022) demonstrated that an AI-based chatbot enhanced learners' interaction skills by providing a realistic and engaging context for language practice. Hwang and Chen (2011) found that students who practiced speaking in familiar settings with diverse peers developed greater fluency and accuracy. Additionally, Hwang et al., (2015) observed that mobile game-based learning encouraged students to speak more frequently, construct meaningful sentences, and communicate with greater confidence.

The flipped classroom model has further been recognized for fostering engagement in language learning. Chien et al., (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study revealing that the flipped approach improved students' behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social engagement in EFL classes. Liu et al.,(2018) found that implementing a student response system in a flipped EFL classroom increased motivation, self-efficacy, and participation in in-class discussions. Tacarraoucht et al., (2022) demonstrated that the team games-language learning model, which emphasized collective responsibility for language acquisition, led to improved speaking and listening skills.

Measurable Indicators of Increased Participation in Collaborative Learning Environments

Assessing increased participation in collaborative learning environments requires multiple measurable indicators. One of the most direct measures is the **frequency of contributions** in discussions and activities. Counting the number of times students participate—whether through speaking, writing, or using digital platforms—provides quantitative data on engagement levels (Wendt & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2015). Increased contributions indicate higher engagement and willingness to participate.

Another important indicator is **peer interaction rates**, which assess how often students engage with their peers in meaningful discussions. Observing the number of student-to-student interactions, such as asking questions, providing feedback, or engaging in group problem-solving, can provide insights into collaborative engagement levels (Vujović et al., 2020). Studies show that higher rates of peer interaction correlate with greater language development and confidence.

Task completion rates also serve as a valuable indicator of student participation. Tracking the percentage of students who complete assigned collaborative tasks or projects provides insight into engagement levels. Research suggests that when students are actively involved in collaborative tasks, they are more likely to complete them successfully, demonstrating sustained participation (Tüzün et al., 2019).

Additionally, **self-reported engagement surveys** provide qualitative data on students' perceptions of their participation levels. These surveys can include questions about their comfort level in contributing to discussions, their perceived value of collaborative activities,

and their overall engagement (Shimizu et al., 2020). Lastly, **academic performance metrics**, such as grades on group assignments or speaking assessments, serve as indirect indicators of participation. Improved performance in collaborative tasks often reflects higher levels of engagement and interaction.

Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Collaborative Learning in Their Language Development

Students generally report positive experiences with collaborative learning, particularly regarding language skill development. One of the most frequently cited benefits is **enhanced speaking and listening abilities**. Jie (2023) found that students who engaged in collaborative learning reported increased fluency due to frequent peer interactions. Liu (2017) noted that students in collaborative settings had more opportunities to practice English in authentic contexts, leading to greater confidence and improved communication skills.

Moreover, collaborative learning has been shown to **increase motivation and engagement**. Okla (2023) found that students reported feeling more motivated when working in groups, as collaboration fostered a sense of responsibility and shared learning goals. This motivation was further reinforced by the social aspect of collaboration, where students felt connected to their peers and were encouraged to contribute actively.

Another significant benefit is the **development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills**. Nieuwoudt (2020) found that students engaged in discussions and group work had to articulate their thoughts clearly, consider alternative viewpoints, and negotiate meaning, thereby enhancing their cognitive skills. This process not only benefited language learning but also prepared students for real-world communication scenarios.

Finally, students often highlight the **sense of community and support** provided by collaborative learning. Ching & Hsu (2013) found that students felt more comfortable expressing ideas and asking questions in collaborative settings, contributing to a positive learning atmosphere. This sense of belonging encouraged students to take risks and actively participate in their language learning journey.

Therefore, these findings also demonstrate that collaborative learning significantly enhances student participation in language education. Empirical studies confirm its effectiveness in fostering engagement, improving speaking and listening skills, and increasing motivation. Measurable indicators, such as contribution frequency, peer interaction rates, task completion, and self-reported engagement, further validate its impact. Students perceive collaborative learning as beneficial for language development, motivation, critical thinking, and social interaction. These findings emphasize the importance of structured group work and interactive pedagogies in creating an inclusive and participatory language learning environment.

DISCUSSION

Collaborative learning has emerged as a transformative approach to enhancing student participation in language education. Unlike traditional teacher-centered methods, which often position students as passive recipients of information, collaborative learning emphasizes active engagement, peer interaction, and shared responsibility in the learning process. This section critically examines the comparative effectiveness of collaborative learning versus traditional approaches, its long-term impact on student engagement and language proficiency,

the role of classroom structures and teacher facilitation in ensuring its success, and the challenges associated with its implementation.

A fundamental distinction between collaborative learning and traditional teacher-centered methodologies lies in their approach to student participation. Traditional instruction often relies on direct knowledge transmission from teacher to student, limiting opportunities for active engagement (Alzubi, 2024). In contrast, collaborative learning fosters a more inclusive and interactive environment, allowing students to assume greater ownership of their learning process. Research by Yamada (2020) suggests that students in collaborative settings exhibit higher levels of engagement, demonstrating increased willingness to contribute ideas, participate in discussions, and engage in group tasks. Furthermore, the social dimension of collaborative learning enhances student motivation, as it creates a sense of community and shared responsibility. This finding aligns with Du's (2018) research, which indicates that peer interaction in collaborative learning contexts not only strengthens language acquisition but also cultivates problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Additionally, collaborative learning accommodates diverse learning styles and proficiency levels more effectively than traditional methods, providing opportunities for peer support and scaffolding, which can lead to greater engagement and participation.

The long-term effects of collaborative learning on student engagement and language proficiency are well-documented. Studies indicate that students who engage in collaborative learning exhibit sustained levels of motivation and commitment to language learning over time (Nadeem et al., 2013). By fostering a sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning, collaborative approaches encourage students to actively seek opportunities for language practice beyond the classroom. Research by Du (2018) highlights the correlation between collaborative learning and improved long-term language retention, demonstrating that students who participate in structured group activities develop stronger communication skills and linguistic competence. Additionally, sustained engagement in collaborative tasks has been linked to increased confidence in speaking and listening, as students repeatedly practice language use in meaningful contexts (Yamada, 2020). These findings suggest that collaborative learning not only enhances immediate classroom participation but also contributes to long-term language acquisition and student motivation.

Classroom structures and teacher roles play an important and crucial role in determining the success of collaborative learning initiatives. Research indicates that physical classroom arrangements that promote interaction—such as flexible seating and group-oriented layouts—enhance student participation in collaborative tasks (Heinimäki et al., 2020). A well-organized classroom structure facilitates communication among students, allowing for seamless collaboration and peer engagement. Additionally, the teacher's role as a facilitator is crucial in guiding collaborative learning activities. Effective facilitators create an inclusive environment where students feel encouraged to share ideas, take intellectual risks, and participate actively in group discussion. Structured group roles, such as discussion leaders, note-takers, and presenters, further enhance participation by ensuring that each student contributes meaningfully to the learning process. Research by Sørensen et al., (2018) suggests that when students understand their roles within collaborative tasks, they are more likely to engage actively and take responsibility for their learning outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of strategic classroom design and teacher facilitation in maximizing the effectiveness of collaborative learning.

Despite its numerous advantages, the implementation of collaborative learning presents several challenges. One of the most common obstacles is **unequal participation**, where certain students may dominate discussions while others remain passive. This challenge is particularly evident in mixed-ability classrooms, where variations in language proficiency can influence participation dynamics. To mitigate this issue, research suggests that structured group work—such as role assignment and discussion protocols—can help ensure equitable participation. Another challenge is the **time constraints** associated with collaborative learning. Given the interactive nature of group tasks, collaborative activities often require more time than traditional lecture-based instruction, posing difficulties for educators operating within rigid curricular schedules. To address this limitation, blended learning approaches that integrate online collaboration with face-to-face interaction have been proposed as a potential solution.

Teacher training and professional development also emerge as critical factors influencing the successful implementation of collaborative learning. Many educators may lack the necessary training or confidence to facilitate collaborative activities effectively (Anitha & Kavitha, 2022). Research suggests that ongoing professional development programs focused on collaborative learning strategies can enhance teachers' ability to design and implement effective group-based tasks. Additionally, the **cultural context** of educational institutions can impact the adoption of collaborative learning. In some educational settings, traditional teacher-centered approaches remain deeply ingrained, making it challenging for both students and teachers to transition to student-centered methodologies (Adomaitis et al., 2023).

Therefore, collaborative learning presents a highly effective alternative to traditional teacher-centered approaches, offering significant advantages in fostering student participation, sustaining engagement, and improving language proficiency. The success of collaborative learning initiatives depends on well-structured classroom environments, effective teacher facilitation, and strategies for mitigating common challenges such as unequal participation and time constraints. While implementation challenges exist, ongoing research and professional development initiatives can help educators refine collaborative methodologies to optimize learning outcomes. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of collaborative learning across different cultural and educational contexts, with a focus on developing scalable strategies for integration into diverse pedagogical settings.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of collaborative learning as a pedagogical approach to enhancing student participation and engagement in language education. Through a comparative analysis, it was demonstrated that collaborative learning fosters greater interaction, active involvement, and a sense of community among learners, distinguishing it from traditional teacher-centered methods. The research findings indicate that collaborative strategies contribute to sustained motivation, improved language proficiency, and enhanced speaking and listening skills. The incorporation of structured group activities, role assignments, and interactive tasks ensures that students remain actively engaged while simultaneously developing essential cognitive and communicative competencies.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the long-term impact of collaborative learning on language acquisition. The evidence suggests that students who engage in peer-supported tasks exhibit higher levels of confidence in using the language and are more likely to participate in discussions. The role of teachers as facilitators, rather than sole

knowledge providers, has also been emphasized as a key factor in maximizing the benefits of collaboration. Additionally, the flexibility of collaborative learning allows for inclusive participation, catering to students with diverse learning styles and proficiency levels.

However, despite its advantages, collaborative learning presents challenges such as unequal participation, time constraints, and the need for structured implementation. Addressing these issues requires strategic classroom management, teacher training, and institutional support to optimize collaborative techniques. Future research should explore the scalability of collaborative learning models across different educational settings and cultural contexts, as well as investigate the integration of digital tools to enhance collaborative engagement in language learning.

The implications of this study extend beyond language classrooms, as the principles of collaborative learning can be applied across disciplines to foster critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. By contributing to the broader discourse on student-centered learning, this research reinforces the importance of active participation and social interaction in education. Ultimately, the findings underscore the need for educators and policymakers to embrace collaborative pedagogies as a means of improving engagement and learning outcomes in diverse academic environments.

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