



Teaching English through a comprehensive sociocultural project

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Abstract

This study is an application of Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory critiqued by McLeod (2022), emphasizing upon the role of social interactions in learning. Collaborative learning is founded upon the constructivism theory that expounds how students studying together for a shared goal achieve better learning outcomes compared to those studying in isolation. The primary objective is to foster a sense of motivation among students to wish for their peers' success, thereby encouraging them to support and teach each other a second language. Sociocultural project principles are not commonly employed in Pakistani Classrooms as a pedagogical strategy, it is criticised because of problems like lack of student's active participation. The researcher experimented with this instructional strategy to assess its effectiveness in L2 teaching. The article is the result of a Survey project assigned to 95 BS English students to teach collaborative learning, research skills and hone their critical thinking and data management skills to enable them to conduct independent research in English language by improving their language competence in academic writing and evaluate their ability to work collaboratively on a project that could evoke higher order thinking skills. In addition, the secondary aim was to assess the sociocultural tendencies of the 250 Pakistani undergrad students of four universities in the twin cities Rawalpindi-Islamabad who acted as respondents of the Sociocultural Survey project. The mixed method study is based on constructivism with a clear focus on teaching SLA proposed by John (2018).

Keywords: *second language, collaborative learning, sociocultural project, research skills, scaffolding.*
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INTRODUCTION

Gary K Lew (2019) promotes active student participation and collaboration, by creating an information-rich learning environment that fosters collaborative learning in group situations or through cooperative learning strategies. The “Sociocultural project technique,” is an extension of the sociocultural theory, a theoretical perspective developed by Lev Vygotsky (1934, 2019) in the early 20th century. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction, culture, and language in cognitive development. Laal & Ghodsi (2012) observed the benefits of collaborative learning in social and behavioral sciences, categorizing the instructional strategy to be beneficial for student’s progress socially, psychologically, and in assessing linguistic competence.

As a teacher, who is keen to promote active student participation and collaboration, by creating an information-rich learning environment that fosters collaborative learning, a study was structured to teach academic writing to students learning ESL through cooperative learning strategies. The researcher desired to try this pedagogical technique and observed that both cooperative and collaborative learning approaches differ from traditional teaching methods, as they involve students working together in a group or team environment to accomplish a task. In cooperative learning Lew (2019) observes that the teacher plays an active role by assigning specific tasks to each group member and holding them accountable for their individual responsibilities. Additionally, students are responsible for helping others learn their assigned tasks. For instance, a cooperative learning activity could involve the teacher using a Jigsaw strategy, where each student researches a section of the material and then teaches it to the rest of the group.

On the other hand, theorist Lew (2020) explicates that collaborative learning is characterized by students coming together to organize and divide the workload among themselves. While each student is individually responsible for their work, they also share responsibility for the success of the team as a whole. An example of this collaborative learning is the Think-Pair-Share or Write-Pair-Share method, where students are given a discussion prompt, question, problem, or issue to consider. They work briefly on their response, share it with a partner, and then present it to the larger group. Both cooperative and collaborative learning foster a more engaging and interactive learning environment, as students actively participate, collaborate, and collectively contribute to their learning process. These approaches emphasize teamwork, communication, and critical thinking, providing students with valuable skills for their academic and personal growth.

The goal of the study is to build a framework focusing on teaching writing and research skills to students of undergrad BS English Program at a private university. This study is based on the cooperative and collaborative learning principles proposed by Laal & Ghodsi (2012) in Social Sciences and Humanities. The researcher designed a comprehensive Survey Project assigning it to the students of BS English Program enrolled in a course on Research Methodology in Linguistics and Literature. The class comprised of 50 students who were divided into 5

groups, with 10 students of mixed ability in each group. Although Ball & Forzani (2009); Grossman et al. (2009) believe that upper track students, studying in good schools have experience of engaging in Project Based Learning opportunities for enriched learning, factually speaking, none of these students had any idea how to conduct a survey or how to make research questions, therefore the researcher who happens to be their course instructor, planned to provide this collaborative learning opportunity to her students. The researcher is an innovative teacher who believes in developing skill-based courses for her students so that they are provided an opportunity of “learning for understanding” through “authentic pedagogy” (Smith, et al. 2001). The students were encouraged to brainstorm sociological topics for designing surveys, these were then assigned to the groups in order to give them a good hands-on experience of research methods and subtle differences in approaches to develop appropriate research and communication and presentation skills, in addition to the Higher Order Thinking skills in the learners. Another group, which was section B of the same semester, was the Control group.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A class of BS English Program at a private university (95 students) and the course instructor collaboratively worked on Project Based Learning to develop research skills in English for academic purpose so that innovative ideas and communication skills of students may emerge and grow through collaborative learning and speaking in the foreign language with their peers. The Project Based Learning approach has been referred to by scholars like Kavanagh & Rainey (2017), Reisman et al. (2018), as a means of teacher and student education. Theorists Ball & Forzani (2009) believe that the teacher’s role in PBL is that of a facilitator. The objective of the study, as posited by Schutz et al (2019), Von Esch & Kavanagh (2018), is to engage undergraduate students in learning with the aim to advance their learning. According to American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010), “The background and goal of a lesson and the larger purposes for learning must be taken into account in instructional decisions.”¹ King (2006) theorizes that project based learning results in personal development for the students as well as increases their communication skills and gives confidence to learners. The major demerit of this approach highlighted by Bullough et al.(2003), Gardiner & Robinson (2009), and Nokes et al. (2008) is that it is a time consuming process. Further, Nokes et al. (2008) fear that this method of teaching is not so popular in teachers when they are overloaded.

However, Carter & Francis (2001) view that despite increased workload of PBL this approach has merits because it involves “participatory lesson planning” and “peer reflection”.² Wentworth & Davis (2002) find collaborative work to be a “shared” learning process. Simons & Baeten (2016) find this pedagogical approach to be a very rewarding experience. Gardiner & Robinson (2009) guarantee acquisition of skills and enhanced confidence through project-based learning approach. Bashan & Holsblat (2012) apprehend that since students are not accustomed to working in groups therefore group tasks may lead to anxiety. On the other hand, Wassell & LaVan (2009) believe that teachers who work as mentors to students working in teams achieve more as compared to individuals working on a task due to the

collaborative nature of projects; this view is reiterated by Gardiner (2010) too. Loyens et al. (2015) claim that Project-based Approach is the most cooperative and research-based learning technique that involves students in active skill learning, particularly when data collection is desired for assessing sociocultural tendencies among participants. Istifci & Zeki (2011) highlight the use of online resources in language teaching because this type of teaching enhances interaction, which is often lacking in traditional classrooms. Ghafar & Dehqan (2013) emphasized upon sociocultural theory and the scaffolding of learners in an EFL context for Language Learning. They believed that high and low proficiency learners profited from the intervention of learner scaffolding. Their findings also indicate that an excessive amount of support from an expert can hinder language development.

The idea of collaborative tasks for teaching L2 (Second Language) is rooted in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and have been influenced by various researchers and educators over the years. Some prominent researchers who have significantly influenced the development of collaborative language learning include Swain (2013) Bruner (), Ellis (2010) and Nunan (2000).

In addition to the afore mentioned researchers Bruner's (1966b,p 40-41) theory of scaffolding proposed that learners can achieve more with the support of a knowledgeable person or peer. It was studied in detail by John (2018), Chernova & Mustafina (2016) who analyzed the "problem of encouraging educational activity as a way of investigating some interplay between sociocultural theory and second language acquisition. While Krashen's (2008) input hypothesis emphasizes on individual language acquisition, the notion of comprehensible input can be integrated into collaborative tasks where learners interact with each other using the target language. Swain's (2013) output hypothesis also considers the importance of producing the target language as a way to solidify learning. He emphasizes learners' involvement in engaging in meaningful communication.

Beatty & Nunan(2000) have written extensively on task-based language teaching (TBLT) resembling real-life language use through student to student cooperation. Ellis' (2010) contribution in the field of SLA also aligns with Nunen's ideas.

The aims of the study were:

1. To teach appropriate language skills in speaking and writing academic English for framing questions, conducting structured interviews, managing data, preparing written reports, making recommendations and presenting the findings before an audience in English.
2. To achieve the objectives of teaching research skills for learners of English, through Research Methods Course at undergraduate level.
3. To put an end to rote learning and prepare students for honing presentation and writing skills in English.
4. To enable the students to think critically and produce research which maybe of a nascent stage but not impoverished in nature.
5. 5. To gather data about the sociocultural tendencies of university going students

- of Pakistan of all genders.
6. Error analysis of the mistakes made by students in the project outcomes, discussions and presentations.

Problem statement

The performance of the female students of the same ages between 20-23 years showing a low average score in the same assessment when the same teacher taught the same course to two different sections of the undergrad BS English program posed a problem that initiated this study. Since the problem arose after an assessment of the research skills course therefore a sociocultural project was assigned to the students not only to assess their communicative competence but also their research skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative study is a Project Based Learning model utilizing cooperative and collaborative learning strategies to examine its effectiveness by engaging students in a participatory approach to learn language skills, with a focus on learning academic English. A batch of 95 undergrad students were selected by purposive sampling for study applying the constructivist design (John 2018) . All the participants were of the same age and gender. A controlled study was performed with study Group A comprising of 50 students of BS English Program at a private university and a Control Group B comprising of 45 students from another section of the same semester studying in the same discipline. Group B was lectured on what surveys are and how they are conducted while Group A participated in a Survey Project. A T-Test was given to both groups at the end of the study.

The quasi experimental research was designed at three levels to align with Kaye (1992) and Patel et al (2000) propositions .The success of implementing teaching English and research skills through a research-based project relies heavily on the role of the teacher as director. According to Kaye (1992), the success or failure of this teaching approach is influenced by social factors rather than technical factors. Teachers or directors play four fundamental roles in facilitating collaborative learning, as identified by Ryan, Scott, Freeman, and Patel (2000):

1. Educational Role: In the educational role, the teacher or director is responsible for designing and structuring the research-based project to align with the language and research skill objectives of the curriculum. They plan engaging activities and tasks that encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. The teacher provides guidance and support to ensure that the project is intellectually stimulating and promotes language and research skill development.

2. Social Role: In the social role, the teacher or director fosters a positive and inclusive learning environment. They encourage open communication, respect for diverse perspectives, and collaboration among students. The teacher promotes effective group dynamics, helps build trust among students, and resolves conflicts that may arise during group work. Creating a supportive and safe social environment enhances students' motivation to engage in collaborative learning.

3. **Administrative Role:** The teacher directs by taking administrative responsibilities to ensure the smooth functioning of the research-based project. This involves organizing and managing the logistics of the project, setting timelines, allocating resources, and coordinating group activities. Being organized and efficient in the administrative role contributes to the overall effectiveness of the project.

4. **Technical Role:** In the technical role, the teacher or director provides guidance and support related to the technical aspects of language learning and research skills. This may include offering language support, teaching research methodologies, guiding students in using research tools, and helping them navigate relevant resources. Being proficient in the technical aspects of language and research aids students in achieving the project's objectives.

The teacher's active engagement in these roles was crucial for creating a rich and meaningful learning experience for students through this research-based project. By fulfilling her educational, social, administrative, and technical roles effectively, the scholar facilitated collaborative learning, promoting language development, and cultivating students' research skills by giving them a hands on project task for completion. This approach not only enhanced students' understanding of English but also prepared them to be effective researchers and critical thinkers of the future which was the outcome of her RM course.

Sampling

All the 95 students who were participating in the experimental study were of the same age and gender. A study was performed with Experimental Group A comprising of 50 students of BS English Program at a private university and a Control Group B comprising of 45 students from another section of the same semester studying in the discipline of English too. Controlled Group B was lectured on what surveys are and how they are conducted while the Controlled Group A participated in the research based Survey Project. A T-Test was given to both groups at the end of the study.

Procedure

The Experimental group (comprising 50 students) was assigned group projects on the following topics to correspond with the Spirit of Ramadan which corresponded with the holy month at the time when the survey was conducted in April 2022. The topics assigned to the five groups of mixed ability students of 10 each, were:

1. Achieving Purity in Ramadan
2. Charity in Ramadan
3. Celebrating the spirit of Joy in Ramadan
4. Has the spirit of Ramadan in the youth of Pakistan weakened over the years or has it strengthened?
5. Time Management in Ramadan

Each of the five sub-groups in the Experimental Study A comprised of 10 students who collected data from 250 students from four universities; RIPHA International University Islamabad (Private), NUML University Islamabad (Public), IQRA University Islamabad (Private), and COMSAT University Islamabad (Public). The respondents were all university students of both genders (the female to male ratio was 51:49) aged between 18-25 years.

Variables

This research was organized for teaching a second language (L2) through a research-based Sociocultural Project, several variables were considered and analyzed to understand the effectiveness and impact of this instructional approach. Here are some of the different variables that researcher investigated:

1. Independent Variable: The teaching approach - Sociocultural Project is an Independent Variable. It represents the intervention or treatment being implemented by the researcher. In this case, it is the research-based Sociocultural Project used for teaching L2.

2. Dependent Variable: The language proficiency of the participants in the L2 as reflected in their group task. This variable is the outcome of the scholar's interest in measuring and assessing student's language and research skills as a result of the Sociocultural Project implementation. It was measured through language assessments, speaking and writing tasks, and the design and structure of the Survey.

3. Participant Characteristics: This variable included information about the participants' performance in the Research Methodology course assessment, language proficiency, and motivation for collaborative and cooperative learning. These characteristics helped the research scholar to understand how different factors influence the effectiveness of the Sociocultural Project on different subgroups of learners who were learning academic English and research skills required for research purpose.

4. Sociocultural Context: Since the sociocultural context in which the study takes place is wide, the sample size of 250 survey respondents were a variable of interest. This survey included both genders, ages between 18-25 years with varied moral values and cultural ethics, classroom dynamics as they belonged to four different public and private universities of the twin cities. The role of their social and cultural factors and the participants' values and activities in daily lives in the month of Ramadan was a reflection of contextual factors like their ethics, interests, time management skills and academic rigor.

5. Implementation Factors: The research scholar considered variables related to how the Sociocultural Project was implemented, such as the duration of the project, the frequency and duration of instructional sessions, the resources and materials used, and the level of teacher support and guidance provided. The duration of the course was the same for both the groups i.e., 18 weeks and the frequency of teacher student interaction was 3 cr hours for both the groups.

6. Language Learning Outcomes: Apart from measuring language proficiency, the researchers were also able to investigate other language learning outcomes, such as co-learners' attitudes towards language learning, their motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy beliefs of their peers and participants.

7. Collaboration and Social Interaction: Variables related to collaboration and social interaction among learners during the Sociocultural Project are equally important. They include measures of communication between group members, the quality of group discussions, and the extent to which learners actively engaged with each other.

8. Project Outcomes: The researcher would observe the participants structuring the survey along with the evaluation of the final products or outcomes of the Sociocultural Project, such as presentations, reports, or creative works, and assess their quality and language proficiency demonstrated.

9. Comparative Variables: Due to the research design, the researcher included a control or comparison group of 45 students of another section to investigate the effectiveness of the Sociocultural Project based teaching as compared to the traditional lecture method.

Research Questions for the study:

The above mentioned variables were considered according to the research objectives, and the context in which the study is to be conducted. Research questions were created keeping all these factors in mind for objectivity, specificity and validity.

Q1. Can research skills be taught through collaborative engagement, with a focus on teaching English?

Q2. Can collaborative learning of a foreign language, specifically English take place through projects?

Q3. Does independent learning or collaborative learning enable students to improve their communication skills in English more?

Research Instruments used for Data Collection

The instruments were used to collect the data of the present study: a) the survey which was the outcome of the project b) the assessment test and the outcomes of the project, questionnaires and the presentations based on the surveys conducted.

The students developed questionnaires under the supervision of their teacher and used them for collecting data for their projects. The questionnaires developed for surveys with the tabulated results are captioned Annexures A, B, C, D, and E

The experimental group A in this study received both teacher and peer scaffolding while working on research based on the sociocultural thematic project. This means that half of the learners received guidance from the teacher, while the other half

that is the Control group B received no support from their peers. The learners who received teacher scaffolding were informed beforehand that they would be assisted by the teacher during their collaboration, while those in the Control group were instructed to do self-study and follow the guidelines provided in the classroom through the conventional lecture method.

Each experimental group was further divided into 5 groups of ten learners each, except for the Controlled group B that had forty nine learners. These smaller groups collaborated with each other, utilizing peer scaffolding, and also received guidance from the teacher (teacher scaffolding). According to Rea-Dickins (2006) teacher scaffolding is a concept that includes all types of support teachers offer to enhance their learners language awareness, development and academic accomplishments.

In the teacher scaffolding, the tutor instructed the learners of Group A to carefully read the tasks and work collaboratively on the survey. They were encouraged to support each other and seek help from the teacher to successfully complete the assigned tasks.

In the course assessment that initiated the enquiry, there were in all 10 question items and the time allotted was 30 minutes. The test was tested for reliability of the test scores according to the Cronbach's alpha, with acceptable values ranging from 0.7 to 0.8 were obtained (Saidi & Siew, 2019). The value computed through the formula turned out to be 0.3 which was suitable for this study. The surveys designed in the project were thoroughly scanned for accuracy and reliability.

Sub-group I of the Experimental Group administered a closed-ended questions demanding Yes/No/Neutral responses for their topic Achieving Purity in Ramadan, annexure A. Their topic was 'Achieving Purity in Ramadan. Sub-group 2 sought close ended responses on 'Charity during Ramadan,' annexure B. Sub group 3 of the study group designed the following close ended questionnaire on the topic 'Celebrating the Spirit of Ramadan', annex C. Sub group 4 conducted survey on the question, 'Has the spirit of Ramadan weakened over the years? Annex D. Subgroup E of the study group explored 'Time Management habits during Ramadan.'

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Control group achieved a low average score of 45% marks while the study group, section A, fared better in the assessment annexure F, achieving an average of 80%. The questionnaires A, B, C, D, and E designed for the research based project was responded to, by 250 participants as discussed in the sampling section.

100% objectives of the research were achieved by the researcher because of students' independent activity to achieve the aims of the Research Methodology course offered to students of linguistics and literature. T-test Annex-F was conducted to get reliable results for this research. The mean of X1-X2 was 45% for the control and 80% for the experimental study group. The talking points of the lecture are outlined as annex G. The lecture was delivered to students of the Control Group B. The students in the control group B relied on rote learning to understand how surveys are conducted but the group that gained hands-on experience became constructors

of knowledge and not only understood skills of designing specific questionnaires and data management but also acquired writing and presentation skills, thus adding to their written as well as verbal repertoire. While the Study Group A was engaged in Projects, the lectures on Survey methodology were repeated with the Control group to clarify any ambiguities and difficult concepts. The assignment given to them was to draft an end term paper on the same topic, but it was an individual assignment.

In all the five Sub-groups of the Experimental Group A, who were assigned group tasks, it was observed that students independently grasped knowledge and ideas with or without teacher's assistance unlike the Control group B who was spoon fed and relied on the teacher scaffolding to work hard for the improvement of their language skills, as well as for understanding the following concepts:

What is a questionnaire is and how it is developed?

What are close and open ended questions and how they are framed in English?

How is the data saved, analyzed and displayed in the form of a research report and presented persuasively in writing and speaking in academic English?

The Study Group a demonstrated clarity in analysis and structuring of ideas, and information and fluency in narrating the experiences gathered during authentic tasks. The learners of group A displayed an enhanced critical thinking skills. The researcher observed that at the completion of the project the students were able to give remarkable feedback through the experiences they had gained, and exhibited proficiency in their language skills through submitting the assigned research work with the teacher's assistance and the use of online thesaurus, dictionaries, applications and websites etc.

The control group B composed of independent learners, was less confident, avoided participating in assessments and were less keen to participate in presentations and their research assignments. At the end of the course, an evaluation form was filled up by students from both groups. Those who had participated in the Survey Projects collaboratively, were highly satisfied with the teacher's pedagogy, see annexure H and ranked the course and the instructor slightly higher than average. They used better language to compiled academic reports on the themes assigned, made fewer grammatical errors in speaking and used academic jargon due to a combined team effort and collaborative learning from their peers. Tangibles like online thesaurus by the Study group A was used to improve research aims and questions that the participants were asked to present by the researcher who happened to be the director cum instructor.

The individual students of control group B submitted preliminary reports exhibiting spelling errors and had less clarity on research objectives and making good research questions. Their presentations and classroom discussions showed weaker sentences, and grammatical errors particularly in response to teacher's questions on the methodology. Whereas, the Study group improved their drafts by improving content with the help from AI writing tools, Shuttlecock, editing software's like

grammatically etc. However, both the groups used grammarly to remove plagiarism. The participants of the Study group a delivered better presentations, which were comparably better structured and were delivered more confidently due to team work.

The students of Group A also shared with the researcher that the group leaders edited their reports and helped the weaker ones improve analysis and presentation of data using Monkey learn app. The individual presentations needed more rehearsal and showed lack of familiarity in the use of software's like Tome AI, Monkey learn and Flexpro etc. During the research sessions with control Group B the students exhibited poor language skills and used adverbs of frequency incorrectly. Words like "much" and "many" were used erroneously.

Online tools and apps, mentioned afore helped the Experimental Group a students to communicate better, and organize databases in handling qualitative data cleverly. For example question items starting with "how many times" etc were improved and phrases like "what was the rate" were used instead. Errors in language like "why was less number of student" were replaced by "Why were there fewer students...." Words used redundantly like "students" were substituted by "participants" by the Study group A. Collaborative work exhibited higher accuracy in computing frequencies and correlations and better sentiment analysis of student responses, some of which was in the form of qualitative data.

Some errors were common in the project reports of both the groups, but the Experimental group A helped each other in correcting the typos. Those errors were subject verb agreement like 'The book on time management were written by Dennis Stemle.' Verb tense shifts like 'The researchers find the results are inconclusive.' Errors in run on sentences were observed by students of both groups. 'The survey was conducted on a large sample of participants it yielded interesting results' was frequently used. Articles and Commas were misused as in 'The study involved four researchers, they analyzed data.' Confusing homophones were also seen in the written reports e.g. the principle investigator.'

RESULT

The researcher found that group presentations and reports were better proof read and peers helped each other to improve the overall quality, clarity and presentation of their study. The Control group B did not utilize grammar checkers, nor did they seek feedback from their peers, who could have helped them in identifying typos and correcting spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes in the assignments given to them on the same topic.

It was found that assigning a collaborative project to students is an effective way to achieve the aim of promoting collaborative learning in the EFL classroom. A well-designed project can encourage students to work together, communicate in English, and apply their language skills in a meaningful context. The satisfaction level of the students was measured with the help of a feedback form, see annex H.

The collaborative project was structured for EFL students choosing themes and topics that aligned with the language curriculum and Vision and Mission of the University and was of interest to the students due to its sociocultural relevance. The students project was successful as all the objectives of the course were achieved, by students of BS English Program, who planned and executed the Surveys in a collaborative manner.

The researcher who was the director ensured that all subgroups participation in the experimental study were formed with care, clubbing the students of mixed abilities and preferably with diverse language proficiency levels, to create a dynamic learning environment for the smooth completion of projects. Motivated students worked with peers to achieve cross-level collaboration.

Teacher scaffolding was provided to both groups A&B. However the independent variable in students of Group was a research based project on ‘Celebrating the Spirit of Ramadan’ with a collaborative approach that created a difference in the level of learning between the two groups. The subgroups 1-5 were seen actively involved brainstorming sessions, mind maps, and making research plans to organize their ideas.

In addition to the above mentioned benefits, the cooperative and collaborative approach used by the sub groups in the Experimental Study Group a learnt task allocation skill. The group leaders assigned specific roles or tasks to each group member to ensure that everyone contributed to the project. Roles included that of a literature review researcher, data collector, data analyst, presenter, designer, report writer, etc.,

Peer learning proved more effective in providing Language Support to the peers. Group members offered language support and resources to each other in helping their peers express their ideas effectively in English. Provided better vocabulary lists, language structures, and language models to aid their oral and written communication. The creative output of the Control group B couldn’t showcase their understanding of surveys impressively. Compared to the Control Group B, subgroup members of Group A had the advantage of collaborative efforts and scaffolding in the performance outcome especially in language based skills.

The researcher provided a learning opportunity to the Experimental group A to interact with a wider student community, the respondents of diverse genders and sociocultural backgrounds for growth and self-development. At the time of the presentations, the learner’s reflected upon their experiences, and the problems they encountered during the collaborative assignment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A well-structured collaborative project should be given to students not only to foster language development but also to promote essential soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving. It enhances students’ motivation and engagement while creating a positive and supportive learning

environment in the EFL classroom.

1. Collaborative learning activities should be employed in EFL classrooms for better research tool designing, data collection, and interactive discussions based on the sociocultural themes.
2. Having engaged students in real-world sociocultural projects required them to use English in practical and meaningful ways, fostering language and social development simultaneously. The instructor should ensure that all peer to peer and student teacher communication takes place in English.
3. Projects like the one used in the study must be combined with content-based instruction. The contents of the Research Methodology course integrated language learning with the course contents, of Research Methodology , Islamic Studies and Academic writing, to provide authentic and meaningful language contexts by integrating the courses to structure an interdisciplinary study .
4. Creating opportunities for students to be surrounded by English speaking individuals provides adequate immersion in the language and culture that increases their awareness about sociocultural experiences and awareness of interpersonal linguistic differences too.

Pointers for further research

EFL teachers should consider utilizing various collaboration tools, such as Office 365, Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Sites, and Forms, or other Learning Management System (LMS) discussion boards alongside online communication platforms like Padlet, Slack, and WebKF. These technologies become particularly important when students cannot physically meet on campus or the time constraint does not permit detailed discussions on the projects. Creating collaborative group dynamics in language classrooms can be facilitated through the integration of these technological resources. However more research is required to assess the benefits of new technological tools in Second Language teaching.

CONCLUSION

Results revealed that students showed decided inclination towards learning English language collaboratively through software's, apps and other internet sources like online dictionaries, and encyclopedias. Reading authentic material for research work enabled them to write their research reports in grammatically correct academic language and present findings in a cohesive manner.

The researcher can conclude that learning outcomes of the course in English were definitely achieved by modifying methodology and inspiring students to work in groups, as better learning took place through motivation, inspiration and mutual cooperation of the classmates.

English language is something that cannot be learned through grammar books. Grammar based books leave the learners bored and unmotivated. The results of the research show that effective language learning takes place by working in peer groups especially if there is interaction and discussion in the target language, cleverly monitored by the instructor. The students were able to formulate questions specifically and were able to present the findings in simple English using concise sentences and correct choice of words.

It became evident from this research that teaching and learning becomes more meaningful when listening and speaking skills are integrated with reading, and research based writing on sociocultural themes. The ambiance in the class remained lively and energetic throughout the module. The students admitted that the task assigned by the teacher helped raise an awareness about the religious and ethical tendencies in university going population of the country.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

It is declared that the author of this research work have no competing interests.

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