

ATTITUDE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS TOWARDS THE VARIOUS MODES OF CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The attitude people have towards something can positively or negatively affect their success. Students can have either positive or positive attitude towards the modes of classroom organizations that their instructors use. The main objective of this study is to identify what kind of attitude students have towards the modes of their classes are organized in the class to carry out the teaching and learning process. To do the research the researcher used questionnaire and interview as primary data collection instruments. Having collected the data, the researcher used quantitative and qualititative techniques of data analysis and found the following results. Most of the students have positive attitude towards group work, most of the students have positive towards pair work, most of the students have negative attitude towards individual work, most of the students have negative attitude towards whole class work.

Keywords:

Group work is a technique of class organization in which 3-8 students work together.

Whole class work is a technique of class organization in which all students work together with the teacher at the same time.

Pair work is a technique of class organization is which two students work together in class.

Individual work is a technique of class organization in which each student works on his/ her own.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English is the medium of instruction in Ethiopian Educational system in higher institutions. It is also being given as a subject in higher institutions like Debre Markos University at freshman level. It is commonly understood that the majority of students in higher institutions do not

perform to the extent of the expected standards. This may have a number of different reasons. One of these could be the attitude of students towards the various modes of class organization the instructor uses.

Language learning is different from learning other subjects in that it needs a great deal of discussion and interaction between or among students with the teacher as a facilitator. Students discuss and do pieces of work in groups, in pairs, as a whole class, and individually. Since the aim of language is to effectively communicate using the target language, students need to have the chance of using the language in class.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The study is conducted under the following objectives

1. To discover the current attitude of students towards the various modes of class organization.
2. To find out the reasons behind students' attitudes.
3. To point circumstances that may contribute to the development in students, of attitudes conducive to cooperative learning.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Students' attitude towards the various modes of class organization may affect the teaching learning process either positively or negatively. Hence finding out the current attitude of students towards the various modes of class organization is very important for teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular.

Effectiveness in teaching may partly depend on the attitude of students towards the various modes of class organization. Knowing students' attitude towards the various modes of class organizations may help teachers to take the students' needs and wants in to acquire before they decide on the mode(s) of class organization needed. This study is hoped to have the following benefits:

1. The study serves in showing how the learner's attitude affects his/her performance positively or negatively.
2. The study may make instructors aware of their role in improving student's attitude towards the various modes of class organization.
3. It is expected to provoke other researchers and give them some hints to study the situation with depth.

1.3. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited only to Debre Markos University freshman students which is convenient for the researcher to get the necessary information for this paper. This is done because of the constraints of time, money, and other resources.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

This study has limitations. It is limited only to Debre Markos University. The researcher is aware that it would have been more useful to conduct the study at a wider scope including all other universities and colleges in the country. However, because of time, money and other resources limitations the study is limited only to Debre Markos University.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Different instruments have been used to acquire the information needed of the completion of the whole work. One of them was the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to freshman students to find out that attitude they have forwards the various modes class organization. The questionnaire has five parts. The first part which consists of nine statements is about their attitude towards group work. The second part is about their attitude towards whole class work and consists of nine statements. The third part is about their attitude towards pair work which again consists of nine statements. The fourth part is about their attitude towards individual work which consists nine statements. The fifth and the last part consist of a question to rank the modes of class organization according to the respondents' preference. All questionnaires distributed returned after being filled out.

The first four parts are designed to be chose as agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree and neutral. These are Lickert scales. In each statement spaces are provided for the students to tick which they think most appropriate. In preparing the questionnaires a great deal of care is taken to keep the students anonymous and free in filling what they think is most appropriate. Of these some of them are:

- The purpose of the questionnaire was made as clear as possible so that they would become confident in filling their attitude.
- The students were informed not to write their names in filling the questionnaire to make them free.

The second instrument use was interview. Three interview questions were asked for six different students so as to know their attitudes directly.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to undertake the study the following techniques of data collection were used. First a questionnaire which consists of ten items was designed (appendix 1). The questionnaire was collected after it had been filled out by the students. The students who have filled the questionnaire were selected randomly. There are sixty five sections in which freshman students learn. From these four sections were selected and fifteen questionnaires were randomly distributed in each of the four sections.

The other method used was interview. Four students were interviewed on their attitude towards the various modes of class organization. The questions of the interview were asked in the same order. This interview provided supplementary data and an in depth investigation of the subjects' attitudes.

DATA ANALYSIS

All 60 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the students were returned to the writer completely filled out. The responses have been summarized by grouping similar items together. The first four parts are structured statements where the respondents gave their opinion by checking agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree and neutral. The five point Lickert scale was taken from Medhinie's MA thesis (1986:23). These require students to put a tick in one of the boxes according to their opinions towards the various the various modes class organization.

The results of the interview questions regarding the students' attitudes towards the various modes of class organization were analyzed.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Attitude Towards Group work

Key -A- Agree

SA- Strongly

Agree

DA – Disagree

SD – Strongly Disagree

N-Neutral

TABLE 1.

	A		SA		DA		SD		N.	
	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
1.1. Group work makes students Passive	17	26.3	16	18.3	31	51.6	16	26.6	-	-
1.2. Group work enhances cooperation among	28	46.6	31	51.6	-	-	1	1.6	-	-
1.3. Group work is the best way to learn in class	22	36.6	22	36.6	4	6.6	5	8.3	1	11.6
1.4. I hate group work	3	5	3	5	29	48.3	19	31.6	6	10
1.5. Group work wastes our time	1	11.6	2	3.3	35	58.3	1	11.6	9	15
1.6. Every group member contributes equally in group work	10	16.6	5	8.3	30	50	13	21.6	2	3.3
1.7. Group work is usually dominated by very active students.	30	50	12	20	14	23.3	3	5	1	1.6
1.8. Group work activates every student in class	27	45	10	16.6	13	21.6	7	11.6	3	5
1.9. I like group work	30	50	12	35	4	6.6	3	5	1	1.6

1. PART – ONE

Attitude Towards Group work

This part is on students attitude towards group work. The reaction of students to the statements is analysed as follows:

Item No 1 Group work makes students Passive

The response given by the students shows 28:3% agree; 18:3% strongly agreed; 51.6% disagreed; 26:6% strongly disagreed. From this we may say that the majority of students believe that group work doesn't make students passive.

Item No 2 Group enhances cooperation among students

To this statement 46.6% agreed; 51.6% strongly agreed; 1.6% strongly disagreed

Almost all students responded positively that group work enhances cooperation among students. From this we may say that the majority of students have the belief that group work enhances cooperation.

Item No 3 Group work is the best way to learn in class.

Regarding this statement 36.6% agree; 36.6% strongly agree; 6.6% disagreed; 8.3% strongly disagree; and 11.6% were neutral. As we can see most of the students responded that group work is the best way to learn in class. Only some students responded negatively to the statement. Few students responded neutral. From this we may say that the majority of students believe that group work is the best way to learn in class.

Item No 4 I hate group work

Concerning this statement the response of the students was 5% agreed, 5% strongly agreed; 48.3% disagreed; 31.6% strongly disagreed and 10% were neutral.

The above response shows that the majority of the students do not hate group work. Only some students responded positively that hate group work. Few students responded neutral. This shows that the majority of the students do not hate group work.

Item No 5 Group work wastes our time

The response given by the students is as follows: 11.6% agreed; 3.3% strongly agreed; 58.3% disagreed; 11.6% strongly disagree and 15% were neutral. This shows that the majority of students do not believe that group work wastes their time. Only some students responded positively that group work wastes their time.

Item No 6 every group member contributes equally in group work.

Regarding this statement 16.6% agreed; 8.3% strongly agreed; 50% disagreed; 21.6% strongly disagreed and 3.3% were neutral. This indicates that most of the students do not believe that each member contributes equally in group work. In other words while working in group very active students do much of the work. Only some students responded that each student contributes equally in group work.

Item No 7: Group work is usually dominated by very active students

To this statement 50% agreed, 20% strongly agreed, 21% disagreed, 11.6% strongly disagreed, and 1.6% were neutral. This reveals that the majority of the students have belief that group is usually dominated by very active students. Some students responded otherwise and few were neutral.

Item No 8: Group work activates every student in class

The response given by the students to this statement is 45% agree, 16.6% strongly agree; 21.6% disagree; 11.6% strongly disagree and 5% neutral. Most of the students responded positive that group work activates every student in class. On the other hand, some students responded otherwise saying that group work does not activate every student in class. Few responded neutral.

Item No 9: I like group work

The response given to this statement is as follows: 50% agreed, 35% strongly agreed, 6.6% disagreed, 5% strongly disagreed, 1.6% were neutral. The response shows that most of the students liked group work and some students didn't. Others were neutral. From the responses given to the statements we may say that the majority of students have favorable towards attitude towards group work. However, some students are not in favour of group work, this proves although most of the students have positive attitude towards group work, the need for some improvements needs a serious consideration.

II Attitude Towards whole class work

Key -A- Agree

DA – Disagree

N-Neutral

SA- Strongly

SD – Strongly Disagree

TABLE II.

	A		SA		DA		SD		N	
	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
2.1. Whole class work makes students passive	29	4.83	6	10	18	16	10	10	1	1.6
2.2. Whole class work enhance cooperation among students.	19	31.6	9	15	24	40	5	83	3	5
2.3. Whole class work is the best way to learn in class	6	10	9	15	18	30	21	35	6	10

2.4. I hate whole class work	28	46	6	10	9	15	8	31.3	9	15
2.5. Whole class work wastes our time	11	18.3	3	5	24	40	13	21.6	9	15
2.6. Every student participates equally in whole class work	12	20	4	6.6	2.2	36.6	19	31.6	3	5
2.7. Whole class work is usually dominated by very active students.	27	45	19	31.6	12	20	1	1.6	1	1.6
2.8. Whole class work activates every student in class	18	30	5	8.3	28	46.6	6	10	3	5
2.9. I like group work	12	20	9	15	27	45	-	-	12	20

PART TWO

2 Attitude toward Whole class work

This part is on students' attitude towards whole class work. The reaction of students towards the statements is analysed as follows:

Item No 1: whole class work makes students passive.

To this statement 48.3% agreed; 10% strongly agreed; 30% disagreed; 10% strongly disagreed and 1.6% were neutral. As can be seen the majority of students believe that students become passive during whole class work. Some students responded that whole class work doesn't make students passive, few students responded neutral.

Item No 2: whole class work enhances cooperation among students.

The response given by the students to this statement is as follows, 31.6% agree; 15% strongly agree; 40% disagree; 8.3% strongly disagree and 5% were neutral. Most of the students do not believe that whole class work enhances cooperation among students, some students responded that whole class work enhances cooperation. Few students responded "neutral."

Item No 3: whole class work is the best way to learn in class

Regarding this statement 10 % agreed, 15% Strongly agreed, 30% disagreed, 35% strongly disagreed, and 10% were neutral. As we can see the majority of students do not believe that whole class work is the best. Some students said that whole class work is the best. Few students responded neutral.

Item No 4: I hate whole class work

The responses given by the students to this statement are as follows: 46% agree, 10% strongly agree, 15% disagree, 13.3 strongly agree, and 15% were neutral. This shows that most of the students hate whole class work. Some students responded that they do not hate whole class work. A few responded “neutral.” Therefore we can say that whole class work is hated by the majority of the students.

Item No 5: whole class work wastes our time

Concerning this statement 18.3 agreed, 5% strongly agreed, 40% disagreed, 21.6% strongly disagreed, 15% were natural. Regarding the time wastage because of whole class work the majority of students responded that whole class work doesn't waste their time. Some students responded whole class work wastes their time. Few responded “neutral.”

Item No 6: Every one Participates equally in whole class work

To this statement 20% agreed; 6.6% strongly agreed; 36.6% disagreed; 31.6% strongly disagreed, and 5% were neutral. This reveals that most of the students believe that whole class does not enable students to participate equally. Some students responded whole class work enables students to participate equally in class.

Item No 7: Whole class work is usually dominated by very active students

The responses given to this statement are as follows. 45% agree, 31.6% strongly agree, 20% disagree, 1.6% strongly disagree, 1.6% were neutral. This indicates that the majority of students believe that whole class work is usually dominated by very active students. Some students responded that whole class work is not usually dominated by very active students.

Item No 8: Whole class work activates every student in class

Regarding this statement 30% agreed, 5% strongly agreed, 46.6% disagreed, 10% strongly disagreed, and 5% were neutral. The majority of students responded that they don't believe that whole class work activates every student in class.

Item No 9: I like whole class work

To this statement 20% agreed, 15% strongly agreed, 45% disagreed, 0% strongly disagreed, 20% were neutral. As can be seen the majority of students do not like wholeclass work. Some students responded they like whole class work. Some students responded neutral.

According to the responses given to the statements regarding whole class work most of the students do not have positive attitude towards whole class work. This attitude may have arised from many reasons some of the reasons are because whole class work is dominated by very active students, it makes students passive; it wastes their time, and etc.

III. Attitude Towards whole class work

Key -A- Agree

DA – Disagree

N-Neutral

SA- Strongly Agree

SD – Strongly Disagree

Attitude towards Pair work

TABLE III.

	A		SA		DA		SD		N	
	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
3.1. Pair work makes students passive	16	26.6	7	11.6	24	40	13	21.6	-	-
3.2. Pair work enhances cooperation among students.	33	55	20	33.3	4	6.6	1	1.6	2	3.3
3.3. Pair work is the best way to learn in class	29	48.3	10	16.6	18	30	1	1.6	2	3.3
3.4. I hate pair work	1	1.6	1	1.6	37	61.6	19	31.6	2	3.3
3.5. Pair work wastes our time	2	3.3	-	-	36	60	12	20	1	1.6
3.6. Every student contributes equally in pair work	10	16.6	3	5	30	50	10	16.6	7	11.6

3.7.Pair work is usually dominated by very active students.	26	43.3	8	13.3	24	40	7	1.6	2	3.3
3.8.Pair work activates every student in class	29	48.3	19	15	18	30	-	-	4	6.6
3.9.I like group work	34	56.6	23	38.3	2	3.3	-	-	1	1.6

PART THREE

Attitude towards pair work

This part is on students' attitude towards pair work. The students' responses to the statements are analysed as follows:

Item No, 1 pair work makes weak students passive

To this statement 26.6% agreed; 11.6% strongly agreed; 40% disagreed; and 21.6% strongly disagreed. This shows that the majority of students do not believe that pair work makes students passive. On the other hand some students believe that pair work that pair work makes students passive.

Item No 2: pair work enhances cooperation among students

The response give to this statement are 55% agreed; 33.3% strongly agreed; 6.6% disagreed; 1.6% strongly disagreed, and 3.3% neutral. Most of the students responded that pair work enhances cooperation among students. Some students responded it doesn't. Few students responded neutral.

Item No 3: Pair work is the best way to learn in class.

Regarding this statement 48.3% agreed; 16.6% strongly agreed; 30% disagreed; 1.6% strongly disagreed; and 3.3% were neutral. This reveals that the majority of students believe that pair work is the best way. Some students believe that pair work is not the best way to learn in class. Few students responded neutral.

Item No, 4 I hate pair work.

Concerning this statement 1.6% agreed; 1.6% strongly agreed; 61.6% disagreed; 31.6% strongly disagreed; and 3.3% were neutral. The majority of the students responded that they do not hate pair work. Few students responded they hated pair work. Few students again responded “neutral.”

Item No 5: Pair work wastes our time

To this statement 3.3% agreed; 60% disagree; 35% strongly disagree and 3.3% were neutral. Most of the students responded that pair work doesn't waste their time.

Item No 6: Every student contributes equally in pair work.

Regarding this statement 16.6% agreed; 5% strongly agreed; 50% disagreed; 11.6% strongly disagreed; 11.6% were neutral. Most of the students do not believe that in pair work students contribute equally in pair work students contribute equally. Some students responded that every student contributes equally. Few responded neutral.

Item No 7: Pair work is usually dominated by very active students

To this statement 43.3% Agree; 13.3% strongly agreed; 40% disagreed 1.6% strongly disagreed and 3.3% were neutral. The majority of students responded in support of the statement that pair work is usually dominated by very active students. A considerable percent of students disagreed. Few students responded “neutral.”

Item No 8: Pair work activates every student in class

The response given to this statement is 48.3 agreed; 15% strongly agreed; 30% disagreed; and 6.6% were neutral. As can be seen the majority of students responded positively to the statement that pair work activates every students in class. A considerable number of students responded otherwise. Few responded “neutral.”

Item No 9: I like pair work

Concerning this statement 56% agreed; 38.3% strongly agreed; 3.3% disagreed and 1.6% were neutral. This statement is supported by the majority of students. More than 94% of the students responded. Positively few responded otherwise. Very few responded “neutral.”

In general as can be seen in most of the responses given to the statements regarding pair work the majority of students are in favour of pair work. We may conclude then that the majority of students have positive attitude towards pair work. However, some students are not in favour of pair work, this proves that although most of the respondents have positive attitude towards pair work, the need for some improvement to make pair work attractive to the few students who don't like pair work.

IV. Attitude towards Individual work

Key -A- Agree

DA – Disagree

N-Neutral

SA- Strongly Agree

SD – Strongly Disagree

Attitude towards Pair work

TABLE III.

	A		SA		DA		SD		N	
	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
4.1. Individual work makes students passive	20	33.3	23	38.3	8	13.3	7	11.6	2	3.3
4.2. Individual work enhance cooperation among students.	2	3.3	5	8.3	33	55	16	26.6	4	6.6
4.3. Individual work is the best way to learn in class	6	10	-	-	38	63.3	9	15	4	11.6
4.4. I hate Individual	24	40	3	5	15	25	7	11.6	11	18.3
4.5. Individual work wastes our time	6	10	3	5	32	53.3	11	18.3	8	13.3
4.6. Individual work is usually dominated by very active students.	20	33.3	11	18.3	18	30	3	5	7	11.6
4.7. Individual work activates every student in class	23	38.3	1	1.6	17	28.3	13	21.6	6	10
4.8. Each student participates equally in individual work	12	20	2	3.3	29	48.3	15	25	2	3.3
4.9. I like individual work	13	21.6	15	23	23	38.3	5	8	10	16.6

PART – FOUR**4.2.3. Attitude towards Individual Work**

The part is on students' attitude towards individual work. The response of students to the statements is analysed as follows:

Item No 1: Individual work makes students passive

To this statement 33.3% agreed; 38.3% strongly agreed; 13.3% disagreed; 11.6% strongly disagreed, and 3.3% were neutral. As can be seen most of the students believe that individual work makes students passive. On the other hand, a considerable percent of students do not believe that individual work makes students passive. Few students responded neutral.

Item No 2: individual work enhances cooperation among students

Regarding this statement 3.3% agreed; 8.3% strongly agreed; 55% disagreed, 26.6% strongly disagreed; and 6.6% were neutral. The majority of students do not believe that individual work enhances cooperation among students. Few students responded that individual work enhances cooperation among students. Few students responded neutral.

Item No 3: Individual work is the way to learn in class

Concerning this statement 10% agreed; 63.3% disagreed; 15% strongly disagreed, and 11.6 were neutral. Most of the students responded that individual work is not the best way to learn in class. Few students responded otherwise. Few students responded natural.

Item No 4: I hate individual work

To this statement 40% agreed; 5% strongly agreed; 25% disagreed; 11.6% strongly disagreed, and 18.3% were neutral. As can be seen the majority of students responded that they hate individual work. A considerable percent of students responded that they don't hate individual work. Some students responded neutral.

Item No 5: Individual work wastes our time

The responses of the students to this statement are 10% agree, 5% strongly agree; 53.3% disagree; 19.3% strongly disagree; and 13.3% were neutral. “The majority of students responded that individual work wastes their time. Some responded other wise and others “neutral.”

Item No 6: Individual work is usually dominated by very active students.

Regarding this statement 33.3% agreed; 18.3% strongly agreed; 30% disagreed; 5% strongly disagreed; and 11.6% were neutral. Most of the students responded that individual work is usually dominated by very active students.

Item No 7: Individual work activates every student in class

The responses to this statement are 28.3% agree; 1.6% strongly agree; 28.3% disagree; 38.3% strongly disagree; and 10% neutral. As can be seen most of the students do not believe that individual work activates every students in class.

Item No 8: Each student participates equally in individual work

To this statement 20% agreed, 33% strongly agreed, 48.3% disagreed, 25% strongly disagreed, and 3.3% were neutral. The majority of students responded that each student do not participate equally in individual work. Some students responded positively that each student participates equally. Few responded neutral.

Item No 9: I like individual work

Regarding this statement 8.3% agreed, 15% strongly agreed, 38.3% strongly disagreed, 21.6% strongly disagreed, and 16.6% were neutral as can be seen the majority of students responded that they do not like individual work which indicates that most of the students are not in favour of individual work. Some responded that they like individual work some responded neutral.

As can be seen in most of the responses given to the statements the response of most of the students are against individual work. From this we may conclude that most of the students don't have positive attitude towards individual work. Some students responded positively to individual work. This proves since most of the respondents have negative attitude towards individual work, the need for some improvement needs a serious consideration.

Individual work 10%

Whole class work 3.3%

PART SIX

The Interview

To make the study useful the researcher used interviews in addition to the questionnaire. Six interviewees were asked three same questions. This was done to know their reaction towards the various modes to class organization. The interview supplemented the data collected by means of questioner and provided a closer study of the situation.

1. Which mode of class organization does your instructor use? Does it interest you?

For this question four of the students said that teacher uses group work, of these four students three of them said their teacher's mode of class organization is interesting. This reveals that most of the students are in favour of group work.

Two of them said that their instructors use individual work most of the time. One of them said he likes his instructor's mode of class organization. The other student said she doesn't like his mode of class organization.

Most of the students responded that they liked group work more than other modes of class organization.

2. Do very active students dominate the class when you do group work?

Regarding this question five of students interviewed responded that very active students dominate the class in the group. Only one student said that group work is not dominated by very active students. From this we can infer that most of the students believe that very active students dominate when students are engaged in group work.

3. Which mode of class organization do you like most?

Similar to what is found from the questionnaire, most of the students liked group work. Three of them said they liked group work, two of them like pair work, and one student individual work.

Most of the students were in favour of group work. From this we can conclude that group work is the best mode of class organization by most of the students followed by pair work.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

.1. CONCLUSION

In this paper an effort has been made of find out the attitude of freshman students towards the various modes of class organization. In gathering the information needed for the study, various techniques have been used. A questionnaire was used to find out students' attitude towards the various modes of class organization. After the questionnaire was filled out and returned the data was tailed, tabulated and analysed. The other technique used was interview; four students were asked the same question, their response were analysed.

Based on the analysis of the data the following conclusions have been made:

1. Most of the students have positive attitude towards group work.
2. Most of the students have positive towards pair work.
3. Most of the students have negative attitude towards individual work.
4. Most of the students have negative attitude towards whole class work.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above conclusion the following recommendation are made.

1. Instructors should ensure that every student participates equally when students work in pairs or groups
2. Instructors should select the appropriate mode of class organization depending on the nature of classroom, size of the students, and students' preferences.
3. Instructors should minimize the domination of very active students by encouraging less active students to participate.
4. Tasks to be done in-group or pair must be interesting and discussable so that every student will be motivated.
5. Instructors should ensure and develop cooperation among the students' when students work in groups and pairs
6. The university and other bodies concerned have to try their best to provide students and instructors with the necessary facilities like good class room condition, books, etc so that the atmosphere would be more conducive to good teaching learning situation in the various modes of class organization.

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