

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Educational Sciences Department of English Language Teaching

The Use of Group Work in EFL Classes and Student Perceptions: A Descriptive Study

MASTER THESIS

Mariam Al Awawdah

Nicosia – 2012

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MASTER THESIS

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Supervisor: Çise Çavoşoglu

Co-Supervisor: Doina Popescu

Nicosia – 2012

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Mariam AL Awawdah titled “The Use of Group Work in EFL Classes and Student Perceptions: A Descriptive Study” and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

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Signature

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The Use of Cooperative Learning in EFL Classes and Student Perceptions: A Case Study of NEC

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This study aims to examine the perceptions of students on the use of group work activities in the English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms at 7th and 8th grade levels in Near East College (NEC). It also aims to analyze the classroom processes; teacher's teaching techniques and students reactions, during group work activities in the classroom. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in this study using two types of instruments: a questionnaire and classroom observations. The researcher-made questionnaire was given to 112 students to analyze student perceptions in NEC. The qualitative data was collected by using two observation sheets focusing on cooperative skills and pre-speaking, while-speaking and post speaking activities. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA calculations were conducted to analyze the quantitative data. Open coding and content analysis were used to analyze the qualitative data.

Classroom observations revealed that the positive classroom atmosphere and the teachers' positive approaches towards students appeared to positively affect the students' responses to the activities. Furthermore, group work activities seemed to enhance students' interactions, encouragement, and involvement with each other in EFL classes. The analysis of the questionnaire indicated that group work is perceived positively by the students. The analysis also showed that 8th grade students preferred working alone more than 7th grade level students despite the fact that both groups found group work useful. In terms of gender, males seem to believe that they work better on their own compared to females who are undecided about this issue. Similarly, in terms of communicating easily and confidently in English, the "other" nationalities group appeared to be more confident compared to Cypriots and Turkish students. However, in terms of group work, there did not seem to be any differences between different national groups.

Keywords: Group work, Student Perceptions, Classroom Activities, English as a Foreign Language

ÖZ

İngilizce Yabancı Dil Sınıfları ve Öğrenci Algıları Grup Çalışması Kullanımı: Tanımlayıcı Çalışma

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Bu çalışma, Yakın Doğu Koleji olarak 7. ve 8. sınıf düzeyinde İngilizce Yabancı Dil sınıflarda grup çalışması faaliyetlerinin kullanımına ilişkin öğrencilerin algılarını incelemektir. Ayrıca sınıf süreçlerini; öğretmenlerin sınıfta grup çalışması faaliyetleri sırasında, teknik öğretme ve öğrencilerin tepkilerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. anket ve sınıf gözlem araçları kullanılarak kalitatif ve kantitatif veriler bu çalışmada toplanmıştır. Araştırmacı yapımı anket Yakın Doğu Koleji öğrencilerinin algılarını analiz etmek için 112 öğrenciye verilmiştir. Kalitatif veri işbirlikçi yetenek ve ön-konuşmaya odaklı iki gözlem kağıdı kullanılarak toplanmıştır; konuşma ve konuşma sonrası aktiviteleri. Kantitatif veri analizi Frekans sayımı, yüzde, ortalama, standart sapma, t-testi ve tek yönlü ANOVA hesaplamaları yürütülerek analiz edilmiştir. Kalitatif veri analizi açık kodlama ve içerik analizi kullanılarak hazırlanmıştır.

Sınıf gözlemleri olumlu bir sınıf ortamı ile, öğretmenlerin öğrencilere olumlu yaklaşımları öğrencilerin de faaliyetlere olumlu yaklaşımını etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca grup çalışması aktiviteleri öğrencilerin etkileşimleri, cesaret, ve İngilizce Yabancı Dil sınıflarında yine öğrencilerin birbirleriyle iştiraki arttırdığı görülmüştür. Anketin kantitatif analizi grup çalışmasının öğrenciler tarafından olumlu olarak idrak edildiğini belirtmektedir. Ancak, sınıf düzeyi, cinsiyet ve milliyete dayalı idrak edilmiş grup çalışmaları arasında istatistiksel olarak önemli farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Analize göre her iki grubun da grup çalışmasını yararlı bulmasına rağmen, 8.sınıf öğrencilerin 7.sınıf düzeyindeki öğrencilerden daha fazla tek başına çalışmak istemişlerdir. Cinsiyet açısından, erkeklerin bu konuda kararsız olan kadınlara kıyasla kendi başlarına daha iyi çalışabildiklerine inanmaktadırlar. Benzer şekilde, İngilizce olarak kolayca ve güvenle iletişim kurma açısından, “diğer” milliyetler Kıbrıslı Türk ve öğrencilere göre daha özgüvenli oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak, grup çalışmaları yönünden, çeşitli ulusal gruplar arasında farklılıklar görülmemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Grup Çalışması, Öğrenci Algıları, Sınıf Faaliyetleri, İngilizce Yabancı Dil

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA :	Analysis of Variance
EFL :	English Foreign Language
NEC :	Near East College
SPSS :	Statistical Package for Social Science
TRNC :	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus