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TO WHAT EXTENT GROUP-WORK COOPERATIVE LEARNING
AFFECTS LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF AUTONOMY

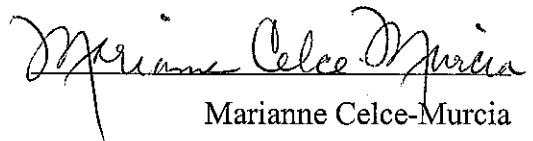
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MASTER OF ARTS IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

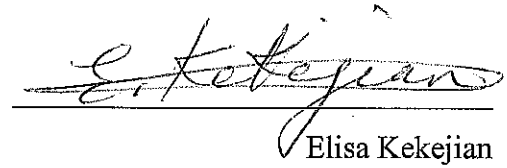
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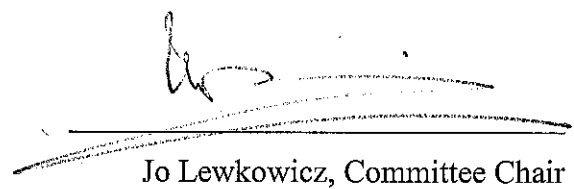
Gayane Petrosyan

2006

The thesis of Gayane Petrosyan is approved.


Marianne Celce-Murcia


Elisa Kekejian


Jo Lewkowitz, Committee Chair

American University of Armenia

2006

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy.

The action research study was carried out with a single group of students at an ordinary school which can be considered representative of an average English language class in an Armenian village.

In total, 32 students participated in the study. As data collection instruments, pre- and post- study questionnaires on learners' perception of autonomy and a small question-based log were used. Both of the instruments were translated into Armenian.

Questionnaire data were analyzed by the *McNemar chi-square test* that is used primarily in before-after studies to test for an experimental effect. According to the results of this test, no significant difference was found after the treatment between the pre- and post-study questionnaire responses related to learner perception of autonomy. However, the qualitative outcomes showed that the participating students' attitudes towards learner autonomy changed as a result of the teacher's innovative methodology and style of teaching used in the action research study. In addition, data collected through students' question-based logs revealed positive attitudes towards group-work cooperative learning on the part of the language learners.

Key words: Autonomy, English language teaching, group-work cooperative learning

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In a formal educational context learner autonomy is regarded as the learners' conscious acceptance of responsibility for their own learning (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1985; Little, 1991). According to Little (1999), when related to foreign language learners, autonomy is characterized as one's willingness to function on his/her own, to meet one's own needs and purposes.

Learner autonomy is based on the theory that only learners can do their own learning, that education or teachers can only guide learning, and that teachers cannot force learning (van Lier, 1996). In addition, if learners are consciously aware of their learning goals and strategies, learning becomes more effective, and they will be able to go beyond the limitations of their own learning environment (Little, 2001).

1.2 Background of the study

In formal educational contexts **learner autonomy** is considered to be the learners' conscious acceptance of responsibility for their own learning; this is an ongoing process that ensures the growth of understanding what one is learning, why and how successfully (Little 1999). It is emphasized that the most crucial components of learner autonomy, that is, willingness to take **responsibility** for the process of learning, readiness to **initiate** one's own learning, **reflection** on what is learnt and what still needs to be and **self evaluation** should be built up in the setting in which learners find themselves.

Learner initiation or self directed learning is one other influential factor for autonomous learning to take place. Lowry (1989) says that learner initiation takes place when language learners set goals and handle their learning processes on their own (Lowry 1989).

Abdullah (2001) shares Lowry's (1989) point of view concerning learner initiation stating that the following principles should be regarded when discussing learner initiation (self directed learning):

- ❖ Learners are in charge of their own learning process.
- ❖ Learners control the process and objectives of learning.
- ❖ Learners work in groups with their classmates and cooperate with teachers.
- ❖ Learners build up new skills and understanding and become capable of applying those skills and understanding to new learning situations.
- ❖ Stimulus and choice are central in initiating and keeping the learner's motivation to work hard (Abdullah, 2001, n. p.).

Above all, learners must develop the capacity to reflect on the process of preparation, processing and evaluating their own learning (Dam, 1995, Little, 2001; Sheerin, 1997). Little (2004) states that learner autonomy necessitates active learner involvement in language learning and reflection on it. It is central for learners to enhance their ability to evaluate and reflect on what is being achieved while working in groups or dyads for them to direct possessed knowledge to other points of their own learning process (Little, 1998). Little (2001) states that in an autonomous language learning environment reflection is initiated as a collaborative activity that takes place between the language learners and instructors to reveal maximally the results and outcomes of the learning process.

Self-evaluation is considered to be the last step in the autonomous language learning process. Learners are supposed to reflect critically on what they have studied, so as to learn from the difficulties they have experienced. Self-assessments help learners monitor their level of success in specific learning tasks. There are various tools for self-assessment that contribute to monitoring progress towards particular learning objectives. According to

O'Malley and Pierce (1996), self-assessment can be accomplished through various strategies: checklists, logs, reflective journals, as well as questionnaires completed by learners. Brown (1998) states that it is practical for language learners to complete journals and logs as they usually use logs to comment on what they have learnt in class and record what they have understood and what they have not. According to Brown (1998), language teachers may make useful observations concerning students' autonomous language learning as well as metacognitive learning strategies by referring to learners' logs.

Regarding **working cooperatively in groups** as an important aspect in developing **learner autonomy**, it is crucial to examine the concept of interrelatedness of these ideas. Oxford (1997) considers cooperative learning as one of three communicative strands in the language classroom. The other two strands are collaborative learning and interaction.

One of many possible ways to foster learner autonomy is to involve learners "in collaborative writing activities – a translation, a story, a collection of poems, a sketch to be performed in front of the class" (Little, 2004, p. 23). The teacher is there to direct them when they need to be guided through some aspects of the learning process (Benson, 2001). Students will be more enthusiastic and eager to learn a foreign language if they feel that they are independent and at the same time cooperative learners. There are various approaches to build up and develop learner autonomy. Some learners become autonomous after they have set clear goals. Others become autonomous after building up their autonomous learning skills. It is the teachers' role to engage students with awareness-raising activities and involve them in special tasks that develop learner autonomy.

According to Benson (2001), **the teacher** in the autonomous language learning classroom is considered to be a facilitator, guide, and helper rather than the only authority in the classroom. The teacher should really be motivated to be engaged in interpretative teaching, that is, having the required set of materials to teach, but to allow language learners

and herself/himself to improvise and make the learning process more relevant to students' needs. Little (2001) discusses three pedagogical principles: learner empowerment, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use as major tools that an L2 teacher should be well aware of.

Learner empowerment is explained as an approach on the part of teachers who are willing to "share initiatives with their learners in every aspect of the teaching-learning process: setting and prioritizing learning goals, selecting learning activities, deciding how exactly they should be managed, evaluating learning outcomes, and assessing individual and group learning progress" (Little, 2001:51). **Learner reflection** is a logical continuation of learner empowerment. A reflective approach to language learning ensures the growth of autonomy in language learning and with it learners gain the ability to shift the skills they acquired into practical life. Little (2001) states, that reflective writing activities individually and/or in groups ensure students' true involvement in autonomous learning processes especially if the tasks are within students' capabilities to complete them. Consequently, the third pedagogical principle Little (2001) talks about is **appropriate target language use**.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In the Armenian formal educational environment the whole studying process is considered to be teacher-centered rather than learning centered. The majority of learners undergo the process of learning through traditional educational methods in which the teacher is the 'authority' rather than the 'facilitator'. Most Armenian EFL students have never experienced a student-centered learning environment in terms of group-work autonomous learning. In order for language learners to accept the responsibility for their own learning, they should be provided with a share in the control regarding certain aspects of their learning processes (Benson, 2001; Little, 2001). For the promotion of learner autonomy in formal

environments, learners first should be willing and ready to become involved in group work cooperative learning. In other words, learners play an important role in the promotion of learner autonomy in Armenian secondary schools and higher educational establishments. However, in Armenia, little research has been done to investigate learner perception of autonomy in group-work cooperative learning.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following research question.

1.4 Research question: To what extent does group-work cooperative learning affect learner perception of autonomy?

1.5 Significance of the study

It should be emphasized that the literature offers little research on the application of group-work autonomous learning in the Armenian educational context. The primary purpose of this study is to identify the level of students' perception of autonomy while learning English in cooperative groups in an Armenian secondary village school, which can be considered representative of an average English language class in an Armenian village school.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, the research question, and significance of the study have been discussed. The next chapter will present the relevant literature on learner autonomy. The third chapter presents the methodology and discusses the participants, materials, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures of the study. The fourth chapter, the data analysis chapter, describes the statistical analysis and the results of the analyses. In the final chapter, the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this action research study is to identify to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy.

The first section of this chapter is devoted to the literature that defines autonomous learning and the historical background of learner autonomy. The next section covers the ideas that explicate learner autonomy through its key features in terms of learner acceptance of responsibility, learner initiation, processing and self assessment. The third section discusses three pedagogical principles of autonomous learning. This is followed by a further look at the role of group-work cooperative learning in the EFL classroom. The next section covers the teacher's role in an EFL classroom to promote autonomous learning. And the last section presents the overall concept of learner autonomy in Armenia as well as the present situation of foreign language teaching in Armenia.

2.2 Defining autonomy

The Collins Cobuild Dictionary defines autonomy as the ability "to make your own decisions about what to do" (n.p.). In a formal educational context learner autonomy is regarded as the learner's conscious acceptance of responsibility for their own learning (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1985; Little 1991). According to Little (1999), when related to foreign language learners, autonomy is characterized as one's willingness to function on his/her own, to meet one's own needs and purposes. This approach requires an ability and readiness to perform independently and in cooperation with others as a member of a community. Little (1999) refers to Bergen (1990,p. 102) to support the idea that an autonomous learner is not only a

responsible learner but also “an active interpreter of new information in terms of what he/she already and uniquely knows”. This is an ongoing process that ensures the growth of understanding of what one is learning, why and how successfully (Little, 1999). Little (1994, p. 431) states, “learner autonomy not only entails learning but also learning how to learn”. Learner autonomy also entails learners’ full involvement in initiating, processing and reflecting on their own learning (Little, 1991). Later, Little (2001) regards learner autonomy as crucial for two interrelated reasons: one reason is that students perform more successfully and are more focused if they are reflectively involved in initiating, reflecting and assessing their learning process. The other reason is that if consciously engaged in learning a foreign language on their own, learners can then transfer the ability to function autonomously to other spheres of everyday life.

2.3 Historical background

The concept of learner autonomy has caught the attention of foreign language experts since the 1960s. From the 1960s and as a consequence of improvement and growth of technology in Europe, learning to learn has somehow become more essential than acquiring knowledge itself (Gremmo and Riley, 1995). According to Benson (2001), the initial stages of promoting learner autonomy in the field of foreign language learning were set up by the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project, which was formed in 1971. The main purpose of the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project was to provide adults with the chance for constant learning (Benson, 2001). One result of this program was the foundation of the *Centre de Recherches et d’Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL) at the University of Nancy, France, which later became a widely recognized research center for foreign language experts. Benson (2001, p. 8) states that the initiator of CRAPEL, Yves Châlon, is “the father of autonomy in language learning”. Since Châlon’s death, Henry Holec has continued leading

the project up to the present. Holec's project report to the Council of Europe in 1981 is considered to be the first official document on autonomy in language learning. In this report, Holec judges the development of learner autonomy as a key feature of learning outside school in democratic societies. He states that there is a need to develop the individual's freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives (Holec, 1981, p. 1). Accordingly, the focal point of the project was to enable and support people to develop their own responsible way of functioning in society (Benson, 2001).

Another project concerning learner autonomy, which has been functioning since 1971, is the journal *Mélanges Pédagogiques* published at CRAPEL. The primary aim of this yearly journal is to publish all the interesting contributions and papers concerning autonomy in language learning by CRAPEL's members or their students, by researchers with common interests, and also papers from colloquia organized by CRAPEL.

2.4 Basic features of autonomous learning

The basic features of autonomy are responsibility, initiation, reflection, and self esteem. These will be considered in turn.

2.4.1. Responsibility

For more than three decades, learners' acceptance of responsibility has been viewed as the initial and the most important step for an autonomous learning process to take place (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). Little (2001) regards responsibility in learner autonomy as the step by step development of a way of thinking which requires a particular performance that can be outlined and led by reflection. Kohenon (1992) develops the notion of learner autonomy into learner interdependence arguing that:

Personal decisions are necessarily made with respect to social and moral norms, traditions, and expectations. Autonomy thus includes the notion of

interdependence that is being responsible for one's own conduct in the social context: being able to cooperate with others and solve conflicts in constructive ways (Kohenon, 1992 : 19 cited in Benson, 2001).

Scharle and Szabo (2000) state: "Responsible learners do not have to be especially keen on team work but they are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefit".

2.4.2 Initiation in autonomous language learning

Learner initiation or self directed learning is one other influential factor for autonomous learning to take place. Little (1991) states that learner autonomy also entails learners' full involvement in initiating, processing, and reflecting on one's own learning. Kohenon (1992) also makes clear that decision-making processes especially in group-work cooperative activities, provide learners with more responsibility for their own learning process. Most researchers assume that learners initiate and continue a kind of behavior to the point that they believe leads to desired objectives (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Learner initiation happens when language learners direct their learning process as well as learning goals on their own (Lowry, 1989). Lowry (1989) states that learners' initiation of their own learning takes place when they keep making decisions concerning why and how to manage the learning process. Abdullah (2001) agrees with the positive effect of learner initiation (self directed learning) adding that learner initiation includes the following principles:

- ❖ Learners are in charge of their own learning process.
- ❖ Learners control the process and objectives of learning.
- ❖ Learners work in groups with their classmates and cooperate with teachers.
- ❖ Learners build up new skills and understanding and become capable of applying those skills and understanding to new learning situations.

- ❖ Stimulus and choice are central in initiating and keeping the learner's motivation to work hard (Abdullah, 2001, n. p.).

Abdullah (2001) further points out that prior to initiating their own learning process, learners should consciously think about some crucial aspects such as their long-term and short-term goals concerning language learning, further expansion of their already acquired knowledge of the L2, as well as a maximally successful application of the available language learning resources. Accordingly, learner autonomy necessitates active learner involvement in language learning and reflection on it (Little, 2004).

2.4.3 Reflection and processing in autonomous language learning

It is central for learners to enhance their ability to evaluate and reflect on what is being achieved while working in groups or dyads for them to direct possessed knowledge to other points of their own learning process (Little, 1998). Little (1991) had earlier developed this idea not as a separate operation on the part of language learners but as a progressive behavior led by reflective analyses that involve all phases of the learning process including application of the L2 in social-interactive group-work as well as reflection on it in the language learning process. Above all, learners must develop the capacity to reflect on the process of preparation, processing and evaluating their own learning (Dam, 1995; Little, 2001; Sheerin, 1997). Learners, consequently, should develop a capacity for reflection and evaluation that they can also apply to other aspects of their own learning (Little, 1998). Little (2001) states that in the autonomous language learning environment reflection is initiated as a collaborative activity that takes place between the language learners and instructors to reveal the results and outcomes of the learning process. Little, (1991, p. 4, cited in Little, 2001) states, '[t]o this extent learner autonomy depends on a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action'. According to Dam (1995) and Seeman

and Tavares (2000), learner autonomy develops through interaction, cooperation and collaboration on the part of the language learners. Little (2001) furthers the viewpoint mentioned above explaining that there are two reasons for this. First, all humans have a need for communication or face-to-face interaction to function successfully in society. Secondly, pedagogically speaking, putting responsibility on students in a language learning environment enhances cooperation and collaboration on the part of the learners. Fostering learner autonomy that works toward achieving a common goal has been proved to be very effective (Gokhale, 1995).

2.4.4 Self evaluation in autonomous language learning

Self-evaluation is considered to be the last step in the autonomous language learning process. Learners are supposed to reflect critically on what they have studied, so as to learn from the difficulties they had experienced. According to Dam and Legenhausen (1999), self-evaluating needs to be encouraged, learned, and developed like any other leaning skill. When doing self-evaluation, the students are concentrating on the learning process itself rather than the grades they get; they concentrate more on learning and improving their language performance rather than getting high marks.

As O'Malley and Pierce (1996) have indicated, self-assessment can be accomplished through various strategies: checklists, logs, reflective journals, as well as questionnaires completed by learners. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) state that this kind of alternative approach to assessing emphasizes language learners' strategies, feelings, thoughts, and activities all the way through the learning practice.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a log is "a regularly kept record; journal" and a journal is "a personal record of experiences and reflections; a diary" (1991, p.

740). Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) note that it is reasonable for language learners to complete journals and logs as they usually use logs to comment on what they have learnt in class and record what they have understood and what they have not. Brown (1998) states that language teachers may make useful observations concerning students' autonomous language learning as well as metacognitive learning strategies by referring to learners' logs.

In my teaching experience, my practice shows that combining a learner self-assessment checklist and a reflective journal into a single question-based log works well as an alternative self-assessment tool for both language learners and teachers. Together with a learner questionnaire this question-based log may provide language teachers with much reliable data concerning language learners' linguistic abilities, strengths and weaknesses, as well as improvements in their language knowledge.

2.4.5 Group-work cooperative learning in learner autonomy

Given the importance of working cooperatively in groups in developing learner autonomy, this section explores how these ideas are interrelated.

Cooperative learning is considered as group-work that requires high motivation and interdependence in classroom interaction on the part of language learners as well as highly structured lesson procedures on the part of language teachers. Oxford (1997) states that according to several studies, in contrast to

competitive and individualistic learning experiences, cooperative learning is more effective in promoting intrinsic motivation and task achievement, generating higher-order thinking skills, improving attitudes toward the subject, developing academic peer norms, heightening self-esteem, increasing time on task, creating altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice (1997: 445).

According to Davis (1999), course objectives determine whether to involve group-work cooperative learning assignments in the process of language learning or not. For instance, if language learners are expected to use knowledge they have acquired in the

classroom setting to real-life situations, or use decision-making or problem-solving skills, it will be practical to involve autonomous group-work cooperative learning in the arrangement of the foreign language class. It is also crucial to take into account the class size since the bigger the class, the more careful arrangement it requires for autonomous group-work cooperative learning to take place successfully. Oxford, (1997) considers cooperative learning as one of three communicative strands in the language classroom. The other two strands are: collaborative learning and interaction. Oxford (1997) further clarifies that there are six principles of cooperative learning that ensure the successful implementation of autonomous performance on the part of the learners:

- Positive interdependence: All the group members get the same objectives, appraisals, and activities to carry out.
- Accountability: Students are assessed individually and as groups taking into account individual and cooperative performance.
- Team formation: Various approaches to forming teams are used in the classroom setting according to students' preferences.
- Team size: The smaller the group the better it performs as a cooperative unit of learners.
- Cognitive development: Enhancement of responsibility, reflection, and self-evaluation of cooperative learners is the main way of developing autonomous learning skills.
- Social development: Students should prepare themselves for further functioning in social situations in a maximally successful way (Oxford, 1997: 445).

2.4.5.1 Research on cooperative learning

Oxford (1997) states, that research outside the second language field on promoting positive interdependence accountability learning shows that positive interdependence takes

place when each member of the group feels responsible for completing the goal which belongs to the whole group. Oxford (1997) further discusses some other research on effective formation of cooperative groups. According to the research accomplished outside L2 field, conscious formation of cooperative groups should be implemented on the part of the teacher as casual grouping or interest-based grouping can provide a sense of fairness, but on the other hand, it can lead to incompetent groups.

According to Harmer (1998), pair and group work instantly increase the amount of student talking time giving them an opportunity to communicate with each other to share “suggestions, hypotheses, insights, feedback, successes, and failures”. Vygotsky (1962, 1978), states that while learning cooperatively in pairs or groups students build up more their individual way of thinking.

Cooperative learning in group-work provides student with more opportunities to develop critical thinking by discussing/solving problems and becoming more responsible for their own learning (Gokhale, 1995). Little (1996, p. 210) states that it is essential for learners to take part in cooperative and collaborative activities in language learning as “the development of a capacity for reflection and analysis, central to the development of learner autonomy, depends on the development of an internalization of a capacity to participate fully and critically in social interactions”.

“When learners are working together in groups they must engage in tasks that they can sustain in the target language”(Little, 2004 : 23). Little (2001) emphasizes learner engagement, self-assessment and evaluation of outcomes in interactive group activities and ongoing discussions, as key principles for a successful learning process. One of many possible ways to foster learner autonomy is to involve learners “in collaborative writing activities – a translation, a story, a collection of poems, a sketch to be performed in front of the class” (Little, 2004 : 23). The teacher is there to direct them when they need to be guided

through some aspects of the learning process (Benson, 2001). Students will be more enthusiastic and eager to learn a foreign language if they feel that they are independent and at the same time cooperative learners. There are various approaches to build up and develop learner autonomy. Some learners become autonomous after they have set clear goals. Others become autonomous after building up their autonomous learning skills. It is the teachers' role to engage students with awareness-raising activities and involve them in special tasks that develop learner autonomy. Esch (1996), cited in Shiroyan (2004) states:

... in talking about "promoting learner autonomy" I am only arguing for the provision of circumstances and contexts for language learners which will make it more likely that they take charge-at least temporarily- of the whole or part of their language learning programme and which are more likely to help rather than prevent learners exercising their autonomy (Esch, 1996 : 37).

2.5 Teachers' role in autonomous learning.

This section explains foreign language teachers' role in autonomous learning and considers three pedagogical principles of learner autonomy. Despite the fact that the main part of the issue regarding learner autonomy clearly refers to the learners, the teachers' role should not be ignored. Any foreign language teacher needs to be conscious that his/her main task is not only the transmission of knowledge, but also task setting and counseling and directing the language learners. According to Benson (2001), the teacher in the autonomous language learning classroom is considered to be a facilitator, guide, and helper rather than the only authority in the classroom. The teacher should really be motivated to be engaged in interpretative teaching, that is, having the required set of materials to teach, allow language learners and herself/himself to improvise and make the learning process more relevant to students' needs. Consequently, it is very important to concentrate on teacher education, in terms of the growth and expansion of a more conscious and accurate set of skills. The

teachers should be conscious that learner autonomy raises students' self-esteem and promotes autonomous behavior on the part of the language learners. Moreover, discovering the learners' most desired wants and wishes concerning their own learning generates a greater sense of dedication and participation on their part. (e.g. Holec ed, 1988; Shiels, 1992).

2.5.1. Three pedagogical principles of learner autonomy

According to Little (2001) there are three pedagogical principles of learner autonomy:

- Learner empowerment
- Learner reflection
- Appropriate target language use

Little (2001) discusses these three pedagogical principles as a major tool that an L2 teacher should be well aware of. Once an L2 teacher use applies three pedagogical principles he/she can easily handle any situation where language learners show unwillingness to study English. All three principles should be implemented in the classroom setting gradually and opportunities should be provided for introducing them step by step.

Little (2001) regards learner empowerment as an approach that requires much consciousness on the part of the language teachers. The teacher's role is to motivate language learners to feel responsible for their own learning. This means that teachers should be willing to "share initiatives with their learners in every aspect of the teaching-learning process: setting and prioritizing learning goals, selecting learning activities, deciding how exactly they should be managed, evaluating learning outcomes, and assessing individual and group learning progress" (Little 2001, p. 51).

Learner reflection is built on learner empowerment. In the same way as learning empowerment it requires much time and practice on the part of language teachers and learners. The teacher's role here is to raise the students' consciousness of what they are

learning, why, how, and how successfully (Little, 2001). A reflective approach to language learning ensures the growth of autonomy in language learning and with it comes the ability for learners to shift the skills gained into practical life. Little (2001) states, that language learners will benefit much if they do reflections in written form. This approach will help them to develop their thinking, writing, analyzing, comparing, contrasting and other skills.

The third pedagogical principle Little (2001) talks about is appropriate target language use. Any foreign language is studied to be applied to practical situations. Any classroom setting should prepare students to meet the needs of practical life especially when learning a foreign language is the main goal of the class. The teachers' role in this case is to promote as much pragmatic language as possible starting from the initial stages of teaching a foreign language. Practice shows that it is very crucial to engage students in setting goals, completing them and reflecting on them in written form. Little (2001) suggests, that reflective writing activities individually and/or in groups ensure students' true involvement in autonomous learning processes especially if the tasks are within students' capabilities to complete. Reviewing these statements, it is evident that it is very important for autonomous learners to set realistic goals and consciously choose ways, methods and approaches to accomplish those goals (Benson, 2001; Little, 1991; Scharle and Szabo, 2000). The only condition Little mentions is:

The essence of my argument has been that the pedagogical dialogue will be maximally effective only if teachers as well as learners are fully involved, open to challenge and change (2001: 53).

2.6 Learner autonomy in the Armenian reality

This section is devoted to explicating learner autonomy in the Armenian reality.

In Armenia little research has been carried out concerning language learners' autonomy in secondary schools. Most Armenian L2 teachers and learners have not even heard of learner autonomy and group-work cooperative learning. In the Armenian formal educational environment the whole studying process is considered to be teacher-centered rather than learning centered. The majority of learners undergo the process of learning through traditional educational methods in which the teacher is the 'authority' rather than the 'facilitator'. Most Armenian EFL students have never experienced a student-centered learning environment. Therefore teachers may feel worried about this relatively new approach to teaching English without getting special training in advance. Above all, English language teachers have rarely had a chance to diverge from the main curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education for Armenian secondary schools.

These conditions do not motivate teachers to initiate something new and stimulating for the students. As a result, students are not motivated to study English in secondary schools. What is more disappointing, the textbooks and general methodology that reflect the curriculum are not relevant to students' needs and interests and do not relate to their current needs. As a rule, Armenian secondary school students are not able to communicate in English at all even after completing the English language course. In brief, Armenian schools are mostly rule-bound educational establishments in which autonomy, independence and creativeness are less favored than conformity, control and diligence. As a result of the competitive examination system in Armenia, Armenian learners are mostly syllabus dependent, passive, exam-oriented, and do not volunteer to take the initiative.

Having little space for autonomous performance, teachers are not inspired or even allowed to share responsibilities with the students to initiate a more interesting learning environment in terms of various group or pair activities and cooperative learning that will raise the students' perception of responsibility for their own learning initiatives.

Learning will be more effective when students become conscious of the approaches and goals of the learning process (Little, 1999). This kind of treatment may be regarded with some resistance on the part of the teachers and students as both are mostly unaware of the benefits of group work cooperative teaching and learning. To overcome these kinds of problems in EFL classrooms, students will need to be introduced to pair and group work gradually. Harmer (1998) suggests introducing students to group-work cooperative learning at the beginning of the course of study and encouraging them to participate in small cooperative activities. Harmer (1998) states that the teacher can extend the range of activities being offered gradually in order for the students to get used to the idea of working in pairs and groups.

In my teaching experience my practice shows that learners can play an important role in supporting change in the educational system toward learner autonomy. This research attempts to fill the gap in the literature by investigating to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy in an Armenian classroom.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the literature on the theory of learner autonomy was reviewed. The literature on the definition of learner autonomy, approaches to promote learner autonomy, learning strategies, curriculum, classroom management, lesson methodology, assessment, teacher and student roles in learner autonomy, as well as the original study, and learner autonomy in Armenia were discussed. The next chapter will be concerning the methodology used in this study, including participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This action research study was designed and carried out in an Armenian secondary school to investigate to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy. The study was carried out in an ordinary secondary school in an Armenian village named Doghs in the Armavir region, which can be considered representative of an average English language class in an Armenian village school.

The methodology chapter consists of four parts. In the first part, the participants of the study are presented. In the second part, the instruments that are used in the study are discussed. In the third part, the data collection procedure is presented. In the last part, the data analysis procedure is explicated.

3.2 Participants

The study was conducted in an Armenian secondary school in a village called Doghs in the Armavir region. The participants of the study were the researcher and 32 (15-16 years old) high beginner level Armenian students who are in the 9th grade. The action research study was carried out with a single group. Students were involved in six weeks of English instruction. Students had English classes twice a week for one academic hour. The instructor who applied group-work cooperative learning activities in the action research study was the researcher herself. The researcher redesigned two chapters of the 9th grade English course book activities such that they required much more group-work cooperative learning on the part of the research participant learners in the study. The course book was published in 2000 by Macmillan Armenia, and is titled *English 9*.

The researcher contacted the previous English language teacher of the research participant students to find out if they had had any practice of cooperative group-work learning during previous English classes. The conversation revealed that that teacher's methodology of teaching English had mainly been teacher-centered rather than learner-centered or cooperative learning.

3.3 Instruments

Two units (Unit 7 and Unit 8) of the 9th grade English course book were redesigned by the researcher to make tasks involved in the chapters more cooperative learning based. Flash cards A, B, or A, B, C, D randomly grouped students depending on the task type and the number of students present. The researcher also took into account the fact that the students had not had any cooperative group-work learning practice and that is why during the first class, students were involved in rather simple group activities such as asking and answering one another questions on relatively familiar topics such as their name, age, place of residence, hobbies and others. The researcher wrote in advance patterns of the questions and answers on the blackboard for the learners to practice before the actual group work started.

As data collection instruments, the researcher designed a twelve-item five-point Likert-scale questionnaire on learners' perceptions about autonomy (see Appendix A) and a small question-based log. Both instruments were administered in Armenian anonymously.

The first three questions of the questionnaire were designed to reveal students' attitude towards an English language teacher's role in the English language classroom. The second three questions illustrate the student's feeling concerning their own learning initiation and autonomy. The next set of three questions indicate the students' knowledge concerning learning strategies used for foreign language learning. The last set of three questions make

clear the students' perception of group work cooperative learning in the English language classroom.

The third, fourth, ninth and eleventh questions were of negative polarity therefore the researcher reversed the scales of the questions before inputting the results into SPSS 11.

The other instrument of the research study was the short question-based log. The students were asked to complete the question-based log anonymously in the last five minutes of every class. The question-based log had two aims: first, it would provide the researcher with introspective qualitative data concerning students' feelings about cooperative group-work learning and second, it would serve as reflection, reinforcement and self-assessment on the part of the learners regarding the acquired knowledge in a group-work cooperative learning-based session. This was done in the students' mother tongue for two reasons. First, the students did not have sufficient knowledge of English to complete the log in the target language. Second, students would give more reliable data in their mother tongue as they would be able to express themselves freely in Armenian. The log consisted of three questions in Armenian:

1. What did you learn during today's class?
2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?
3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why?

If not, why?

The first question served the researcher as a means of observing how students performed as self-evaluators. The second question revealed the students' attitude and perception towards autonomous group-work cooperative learning. The third question was related to students' feelings towards the English class itself where the researcher implemented a new, autonomous group-work cooperative learning atmosphere. The question-

based log had two aims: first, it would provide the researcher with introspective qualitative data concerning students' feelings about cooperative group-work learning, and second, it would serve as reflection, reinforcement and self-assessment on the part of the learners regarding the acquired knowledge in group-work cooperative learning-based sessions.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire on learner perception of autonomy was translated from English into Armenian by the researcher and then checked by two English and Armenian language specialists.

On February 15, 2006, the researcher received permission from the principal of secondary school of Doghs village, Armavir region to carry out her action research study in that school.

On February 23, the Armenian versions of the Likert-scale questionnaire were pilot-tested with 25 10th grade students. These students were chosen to pilot the questionnaire as they were of approximately the same level of English proficiency and the questionnaire items that would seem difficult to comprehend to 10th grade students would reveal the difficulties the 9th grade research participants would have. The 10th grade respondents gave feedback on the comprehensibility of the 12 items in the questionnaire and the researcher made changes accordingly.

The tasks that were used in the action research study were selected primarily from the 9th grade course book and redesigned so that they required much more group-work cooperative learning. This was done in order not to cause any changes in the scheduling of the course program. Those redesigned tasks focused on a wide range of skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The data collection procedure lasted six weeks starting March 3, 2006. A total of 32 students took part in the action research study as a single group. The English sessions were

conducted by the researcher. Before each session started students were divided into pairs or groups with the help of A, B, C, and D flashcards.

At the beginning of the six weeks of English language instruction the learners filled out the Armenian version twelve item questionnaire on their perceptions of autonomy. The questionnaire asked learners to indicate their level of agreement with twelve statements on a five-point Likert-scale (Appendix B).

The other instrument used in this study was a small question-based log. The students filled it out after each of the sessions that were carried out by the researcher. The students were asked to complete the question-based log in the last five minutes of every class. After each class, learner-participants were required to fill out the question-based log in L1 concerning their participation in group and pair activities and their feelings about the degree of autonomy they experienced.

At the end of the six-week course of study the learners filled out the same questionnaire that they had filled out at the beginning of the study. This approach investigated what changes had taken place concerning learners' perception of autonomous learning after the six weeks of instruction with special lesson plans requiring more autonomous group-work cooperative learning on the part of the learners.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data for this study was composed of both quantitative data, from the questionnaires, and qualitative data, from the question-based logs.

In order to analyze the qualitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 11.0 was used. The data were analyzed using the *McNemar chi-square test* which assesses the significance of the difference between two dependent samples when the variable of interest is a dichotomy. It is used primarily in before-after studies to test for an

experimental effect. McNemar's test is sometimes called *McNemar's test of symmetry* or *McNemar symmetry chi-square* because it, and the marginal homogeneity test which extends it beyond dichotomous data, apply to square tables in which the diagonal reflects subjects who did not change between the before and after samples (or matched pair samples).

To find out to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy the research participants filled out one and the same twelve item pre- and post-study questionnaire in Armenian (See appendix B for a copy of the Armenian questionnaire).

In order to present the data, the items in the questionnaire were grouped under various topics according to topic similarity. As stated above, the first three statements of the twelve-statement questionnaire were designed to determine students' attitude towards an English language teacher's role in the English language classroom. The second three statements would illustrate the student's feelings concerning their own learning initiation and autonomy. The next set of three statements would indicate the students' knowledge concerning learning strategies used for foreign language learning. The last set of three statements would make clear the students' perception of group-work cooperative learning in the English language classroom.

Responses in the questionnaire were designed on a five point Likert-scale and were assigned values ranging from strongly agree=1, agree=2, neutral=3, disagree=4 to strongly disagree=5. The third, fourth, ninth and eleventh statements were of negative polarity; therefore the researcher reversed the scales of the questions before inputting the result into SPSS 11.0. The main reason for reversing the questions was to provide the researcher with more reliable data as the same questions were given in an opposite way to see if the students understood what the statements were intended to find out.

The other instrument of the research study was the short question-based log. After the reflections of the students were analyzed, the ideas which were most common were chosen

and used as the basis for qualitative data for this action research study. One student (Student A) was discussed as a representative of the group of students who responded positively throughout the twelve English sessions' period. Two students (Student B and Student C) represented some 4 or 5 students who were inclined against group-work from the very first class.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, descriptions of the participants, instruments used, data collection and analysis procedures were presented. The next chapter explains the data analysis procedures and their specific outcomes in more detail.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate if group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy. The research was carried out to answer the following research question:

Research Question: To what extent does group-work autonomous learning affect learner perception of autonomy?

The null hypothesis stated for the research was:

$H_0: f_o = f_e$, that is, group-work autonomous learning does not affect learner perception of autonomy.

And the alternative hypothesis stated for the research was:

$H_1: f_o \neq f_e$, i.e., group-work autonomous learning affects learner perception of autonomy.

The first part of this section presents an analysis of qualitative data collected for this study through questionnaires (See appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire).

4.2 Quantitative data

The analysis will be presented in four different sub-sections. The first sub-section presents the attitude towards an English teacher's role in facilitating learner autonomy in the English language class. In the second sub-section, an analysis of students' feelings about their own language learning is presented. The third sub-section presents students' awareness of language learning strategies. In the fourth sub-section, an analysis of students' perceptions of cooperative language learning is presented.

To find out to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy the research participants filled out one and the same twelve item pre- and post-study questionnaire in Armenian (See appendix B for a copy of the Armenian questionnaire).

The third, fourth, ninth and eleventh statements were of negative polarity; therefore the researcher reversed the scales of the questions before inputting the result into SPSS 11.0. The main reason for reversing the questions was to provide the researcher with more reliable data as the same questions were given in an opposite way to see if the students understood what the statements were intended to find out.

In the chi-square calculations of responses of the questionnaire there were two frequencies-observed (f_o) and expected (f_e). The observed frequencies were based on the samples involved, while the expected frequencies theoretically represented the populations as a whole. The data were analyzed using the *McNemar chi-square test*, which assesses the significance of the difference between two dependent samples when the variable of interest is a dichotomy. It would help to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of responses to the questions at the beginning and end of the study. The McNemar test uses the chi-square distribution, based on this formula:

a	b	r_1
c	d	r_2
c_1	c_2	n

$$\text{Chi-square} = (|a - d| - 1)^2 / (a + d)$$

$$\text{degrees-of-freedom} = (\text{rows} - 1)(\text{columns} - 1) = 1$$

The responses were coded 0=No; 1=Yes as the column variable and as the row variable. Each response of each statement in before and after study questionnaires was coded and calculated separately applying the following coding system 0=No; 1=Yes.

4.2.1 Students' attitude towards an English teacher's role in the English language class

Students' responses to the first three questions relating to their attitude towards an English teacher's role in the classroom on the pre-study questionnaire are shown in Table 1. The data shows that most students consider that their teacher is responsible for their learning. This attitude seems to have changed little after the six-week study. In most instances the distribution of responses on the post-study questionnaire are similar to those of the pre-study questionnaire and no statistically significant difference was found when McNemar's chi-square test was conducted. The only statistically significant difference noted was for question 1 where fewer respondents disagreed with the statement at the beginning of the study than at the end of the study (Table 1). Respondents who on the pre-study questionnaire disagreed with the statement seem to have agreed or strongly agreed with it, thus confirming further the teacher's responsibility for students' learning and suggesting that if the sample size had been greater, the differences for agreed and strongly agreed may also have been statistically significant. Using a table of the distribution of *chi-square*, with 1 degree of freedom, if the computed chi-square is less than the critical value found in the table for the desired significance level, which is .05 in this case, then the difference between samples is not significant. Thus, at the .05 level of significance, the critical value of chi-square is .065, which is more than 0.5; the difference between samples is not significant. The same kind of *chi-square* calculations were done to all the 60 responses (twelve statements with five points for each one). Yet, given the lack of statistically significant differences for the other questions, it is likely that the six weeks of the study were not sufficient for the students' overall view of their teacher's role to have changed.

Table 1: Comparison of students' attitude towards their teacher at the beginning and end of the study.

Questions		1 strongly agree	2 agree	3 neutral	4 disagree	5 strongly disagree	N of valid cases
1. The teacher is the person most responsible for my learning English.	Pre	2	6	2	20	2	
	Post	9	7	2	10	3	
	Chi-square	.065	.774	1.000	.031*	1.000	30
2. I am in charge of my own learning English.	Pre	13	16		3		
	Post	14	12	3	2		
	Chi-square	.791	.424	. ^a	1.000	1.000	31
3. I cannot learn any English without a teacher	Pre	1	7		12	12	
	Post		5	2	8	16	
	Chi-square	.549	.754	. ^a	.581	.481	31

*P<.05

.^a means computed only for a P x P table, where P must be greater than 1

The first, second, third, and fifth answers of the first statement did not significantly change the distribution of *chi-square*. However, the fourth answer to the first statement (.031) shows that the difference between samples is significant.

4.2.2 Students' feelings about their own language learning

Students' responses to the second three questions relating to their feelings about their own language learning on the pre-study questionnaire show that most students learn whatever and however their L2 teacher finds useful for them to learn. The results in Table 2 show that this attitude does not seem to have changed after the six-week study. The distribution of responses on the post-study questionnaire are approximately similar to those of the pre-study

questionnaire and when the McNemar's chi-square test was carried out, there was no significant difference for any of the questions between the pre- and post-study questionnaires.

This probably means that the six weeks of treatment were not sufficient for the students' to change their feelings about their own language learning.

Table 2: Comparison of students' feelings about their own language learning

Questions		1 strongly agree	2 agree	3 neutral	4 disagree	5 strongly disagree	N of valid cases
4 . The teacher decides what English to teach and that is what English I learn.	Pre	13	16		3		
	Post	14	12	3	2		
	Chi-square	. ^a	.791	1.000	.648	1.000	31
5. I initiate my own learning processes for English	Pre	1	7		12	12	
	Post		5	2	8	16	
	Chi-square	1.000	.774	. ^a	.774	1.000	31
6. Learning English happens when I start to pay attention to English.	Pre		4	2	13	6	
	Post	1	9	1	16	4	
	Chi-square	1.000	1.000	. ^a	1.000	. ^a	27

*P<.05

.^a means computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1

4.2.3 Students' awareness of language learning strategies

The results of students' awareness of language learning strategies on the pre-study questionnaire are found in Table 3. The data show that almost all the students are not aware or conscious of strategies they use to learn the English language. This attitude does not seem to have changed after the six-week study. The distribution of responses on the post-study questionnaire are approximately similar to those of the pre-study questionnaire and when

McNemar's chi-square test was carried out, there was no significant difference for any of the questions between the pre- and post-study questionnaires. The research participants were probably unaccustomed to using any kind of learning strategies for learning English since pre- and post study questionnaires didn't reveal any change in their attitude towards using or not using any kind of strategy for learning English. This would suggest that the six weeks of treatment were not sufficient for the students' to become conscious of the strategies they used in group-work cooperative learning.

Table 3: Comparison of students' awareness of language learning strategies

Questions		1 strongly agree	2 agree	3 neutral	4 disagree	5 strongly disagree	N of valid cases
7. My teacher tells me how to learn English.	Pre	5	19	3	5		
	Post	7	17	2	4		
	Chi-square	.500	.804	1.000	1.000	^a	30
8. I am aware of many good strategies to learn English.	Pre		10	2	13	6	
	Post	3	9	2	14	2	
	Chi-square	^a	1.000	1.000	1.000	.289	30
9. I don't know the best ways to learn English.	Pre	2	13	5	8	3	
	Post		16	2	12	1	
	Chi-square	^a	.607	.453	.454	.625	31

*P<.05

^a means computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1

4.2.4 Students' perceptions of cooperative language learning

Table 4 shows the results of the students' perceptions of cooperative language learning on the pre-study questionnaire. The data illustrate that more than half of the students are almost not conscious of cooperative language learning. This attitude does not seem to have changed after the six-week treatment. The distribution of responses on the post-study questionnaire are approximately similar to those of the pre-study questionnaire and when McNemar's chi-square test was carried out, there was no significant difference for any of the questions between the pre- and post-study questionnaires. However, the first response to the twelfth statement (.021) shows that the difference between samples is significant. This would suggest that the six weeks of the study were not sufficient for the students to become conscious of the strategies they used in group-work cooperative learning. Yet, the first response to the twelfth question probably means that students started to become conscious of the fact that they in fact learnt English in groups during group-work cooperative learning. It is possible to conclude that after six weeks of learning in groups and dyads students might become accustomed to the thought that it is possible and even useful to learn English cooperatively in groups or pairs. Consequently, it seems possible that they responded positively to the twelfth statement of the questionnaire.

Table 4: Comparison of students' perceptions of cooperative language learning

Questions		1 strongly agree	2 agree	3 neutral	4 disagree	5 strongly disagree	N of valid cases
10. I can learn things in English by working together with my friends.	Pre	6	21	1	2	1	
	Post	12	16		1		
	Chi-square	.227	.549	. ^a	1.000	. ^a	29
11. I think learning English with other students in groups is a waste of time.	Pre	3	23	1	3	1	
	Post	4	22	1	1	2	
	Chi-square	1.000	1.000	1.000	.625	1.000	30
12. Sharing information in a task in English with other students helps me learn English.	Pre	8	21	1	2		
	Post	17	12				
	Chi-square	.021*	.143	. ^a	. ^a	. ^a	29

*P<.05

.^a means computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1

Overall outcome of the study show that group work autonomous learning for a period of six week does not affect learner perception of autonomy as 58 out of 60 responses to the twelve statements of pre-and post study questionnaire showed a higher critical value of level of significance. Taking into account all four tables of frequency distribution as well as chi-square calculations of research participants' pre-study and post-study questionnaires, we become 95% sure that six weeks of treatment has resulted in no significant difference between students' perception of autonomy in group-work cooperative learning.

As a result, H₀, that is, the group-work autonomous learning does not affect learner perception of autonomy is accepted. Accordingly, six weeks of teaching English using innovative approaches in an inductive way didn't change the students' traditional, rule bound way of thinking concerning the FL teachers' role in their FL learning process. Perhaps, the

six week period was not enough time for the students to become conscious of the fact that they started to correct their peers' and their own mistakes without the teacher's help, they chose on their own who was going to present the group's work in front of the class, and they felt responsible for their peers' performance.

In interpreting the results of this action research study, there were some limitations, which will be considered in detail in the Limitations section of the Conclusion. One limitation of the study is that approximately 40 % of my research participant students missed classes throughout the six-week period. No mechanism was put in place to prevent students who did not attend the class sessions during the action research study from answering the questions in the post-study questionnaire. Their answers might have affected the statistical results.

4.3 Qualitative data

The other instrument of the research study was the short question-based log. After the reflections of the students were analyzed, the ideas, which were most common, were chosen and used as the basis for qualitative data for this action research study.

Different participants responded in different ways to the questions of the log. At first it was relatively difficult for them to reproduce what was learnt, there were cases (especially with students of negative attitude towards group-work) when there was not a single reflection concerning the third question of the log. Later, step-by-step students started to become conscious of what they were required to do (See Appendix D).

Research participant students reacted in different ways to the methods and styles of teaching of the teacher-researcher. At the very beginning of the action research study some students showed an absolutely negative reaction towards group-work cooperative learning. Two students (Student B and Student C) represent some 4 or 5 students who were inclined

against group-work from the very first class. They did not like the way of grouping and working in groups with particular group members. Some of their responses are recorded here:

Student B: "I didn't like group work and I don't want to work with those students in one group".

Student C: "Today's group work didn't help me at all".

I discuss one student (Student A) as a representative of the group of students who responded positively throughout the twelve English sessions' period (See Appendix D):

Student A: "I think group-work was very effective; group-work helped me a lot, it ensures better understanding of the new word learnt during the lesson, it gives chance to learn more about your friends personal attitude; Today my friends helped me a lot

In the last five minutes of the class I asked the students who reacted especially negatively to comment in writing on whatever part of the lesson that seemed unpleasant or ineffective to them. After reading their comments, I decided to change their groups as many times as it would seem necessary for them to feel comfortable with their group members and as well as feel responsibility for their own and their peers' performance during group work. The idea of changing group members proved to be the right approach, as students seemed to feel comfortable working in groups with the classmates they themselves chose. The other point that helped me to get students' active participation in group-work cooperative learning was the individual treatment for each student. They became more and more motivated to perform better as they felt responsibility for their own group participation in the class.

I used approximately the same types of activities all twelve sessions so that the language learners could become aware of what they were going to do next, without much interference on the part of the teacher. After three classes of group-work cooperative learning students, who were of negative attitude towards it started to change their position:

Student B: "Today's group-work seemed more interesting as my teacher asked me to change my group".

Student C: "Today's group work was more successful and motivating, our teacher said that we were the best and the fastest group in today's class".

In my teaching practice, encouragement has helped much when it seems evident that students are almost ready to participate in learning activities. Students enjoy individual treatment and encouragement and show willingness to justify the responsibility the teacher puts upon them. At the end of the research study the students who were not comfortable with group-work cooperative learning stated how successfully they managed to learn through group-work cooperative learning:

Student B: "We wrote a letter in our group, I hope our teacher likes whatever we have written. It's a pity this is our last class".

Student C: "This is our last class so we did our best to write a pleasant letter to our teacher".

It is probably due to the individual treatment and encouragement that the students who did not show any interest and motivation in participating in group-work cooperative learning during the first class gradually changed their negative attitude and in the end truly enjoyed group-work cooperative learning. Perhaps, the six week period was not enough time for the students to become conscious of the fact that they started to correct their peers' and their own mistakes without the teacher's help, they chose on their own who was going to present the group in front of the class, and they felt responsible for their peers' performance.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter quantitative and qualitative analyses of the results were presented. The quantitative data analysis section included the following sub-sections: students' attitude towards an English teacher's role in the English language class, students' feelings about their own language learning, students' awareness of language learning strategies, and students' perceptions of cooperative language learning. According to qualitative data, H_0 , that is, the group-work autonomous learning does not affect learner perception of autonomy is accepted.

The qualitative data analysis section included the discussion of students' reflections on what was learnt in group-work cooperative learning, how and how successfully. The records make evident, that in six week period of autonomous learning the students started to correct their peers' and their own mistakes without the teacher's help, they chose on their own who was going to present the group in front of the class, and they felt responsible for their peers' performance.

In chapter five the major findings of the study, pedagogical implications, suggestions for further studies, and the limitations of this study will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study was designed to investigate to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy. It tried to answer the following research question: To what extent does group-work cooperative learning affect learner perception of autonomy?

The participants of the study were the researcher and 32 (15-16 years old) high beginner level Armenian students who study in the 9th grade.

5.2 Discussion of the results

The overall results of the quantitative study showed that, H_0 , that is, the hypothesis that group-work autonomous learning does not affect learner perception of autonomy is accepted. Quantitative results suggest that group work autonomous learning for a period of six week does not affect learner perception of autonomy as 58 out of 60 responses to the twelve statements of the pre-and post study questionnaires showed higher critical value of level of significance. Taking into account all four tables of frequency distribution as well as *chi-square* calculations of research participants' pre-study and post-study questionnaires, we become 95% certain that six weeks of study has resulted no significant difference between students' perception of autonomy in group-work cooperative learning. Accordingly, six weeks of teaching English using innovative approaches in an inductive way didn't change the students' usual, conservative way of thinking concerning the FL teachers' role in their FL learning process. Perhaps, the six-week period was not enough time for the students to become conscious of the fact that they started to correct their peers' and their own mistakes without the teacher's help. They chose on their own who was going to present the group in front of the class, and they felt responsible for their peers' and their own performance.

Qualitative data show, that after twelve sessions of group-work cooperative learning students started to feel comfortable and enjoyed helping their group members, correcting their peers' and their own mistakes without the teacher's help. Some of the students who showed an absolutely negative attitude towards group-work cooperative learning radically changed their position and became the most actively participating students. After three sessions of group-work cooperative learning they started to reflect positively on any activity done in group-work, for instance, representing their groups in front of the class (See Appendix D). After the six-week study, almost all the research participant students became more responsible for their peers' and their own performance during English language classes.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

In interpreting the results of this action research study, there are some limitations to be considered. These limitations are related to the participants and the length of the study.

First, many absences on the part of the participants caused some problems; students were missing classes because there was a virus of "German measles" spread all over the region's schools. Students who were infected with that virus had to miss classes for ten days in order not to infect other students. Approximately 40 % of my research participant students missed classes throughout the six-week period. No mechanism was put in place to prevent students who did not attend the class sessions during the action research study from answering the questions in the post-study questionnaire. Their answers might have affected the statistical results.

Another limitation of the study was the length of the treatment. A six-week period does not seem enough time to make students change their traditional, rule bound, syllabus dependent way of thinking. A longer teaching period using the same methodology and style of teaching might have affected the results.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learners' perception of autonomy.

These findings may be used to redesign the traditional, rule bound style of teaching English as a foreign language in the Armenian secondary schools. The reason for this conservative treatment of teaching English is that the FL teachers are mostly unaware of the new and effective approaches for teaching English. Most of the time in English language classes traditional, whole class methodology is used, the teacher is the only expert and the decision maker, whereas students are passive listeners and note-takers. As a rule, students memorize grammar rules presented by the teacher, review them, and then forget them very soon, because the language they learn is neither authentic nor pragmatic.

However, in classes where group-work cooperative learning is used teachers are facilitators and advisors, whereas students are active participants of the learning process. Regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other ways. They ask and answer questions on their own, make predictions, analyze, discuss, assess their strengths and weaknesses, work together, and try to learn. For teachers and students in Armenia, where traditional, teacher-centered methodology have been applied for decades, changing these roles might be very difficult. The findings of this study may also be important since they give clear evidence that one by one, individual treatment and encouragement of all the students may raise their motivation to participate in the class and learn English. Another key to motivate students to participate in group-work cooperative learning is the right choice of materials and activities on the part of the EFL teachers. During the action research study it proved to be effective to base some lesson plans on personal star signs, in order to teach

certain parts of speech, make students ask and answer questions with interest, and motivate them to describe each others' characteristic features according to their star signs.

It is very important for both language teachers and learners to be trained in advance on new approaches of group-work autonomous learning/teaching in order for them to be able to handle difficulties, which may arise while applying cooperative learning in the classroom.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Some suggestions for further research come out from the findings of this study.

First of all, for more meaningful results the period of the study should be extended.

A six-week period of autonomy for promoting the teaching of English does not seem enough time for the language learners to become used to the idea that it is more meaningful to make decisions about what to learn, how, and why on their own.

In this study, learners' perception of autonomy in group-work cooperative learning seemed unchanged as many students had to miss classes because of the virus of "German measles" spread all over the region's villages. A mechanism should be put in place that would not permit students who do not attend the class sessions during the action research study answer the questions in the post-study questionnaire. It will insure more valid data for later statistical analyses. In a further study, learners' perception of autonomy in group-work cooperative learning may be sought while teaching different skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this action research study was to determine to what extent group-work cooperative learning affects learner perception of autonomy.

No statistically significant differences were found between the results of pre- and post- study questionnaires. However, qualitative data gathered through question-based logs suggested some positive changes in students' attitudes towards group-work cooperative learning after six weeks of exposure to group-work cooperative learning activities.

This study may be considered as an initial step to encourage learners to become actively involved in the learning process by reflecting on their attitudes towards group-work cooperative learning.

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Appendix A

Tick (✓) in one appropriate box.

1. The teacher is the person most responsible for my learning English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am in charge of my own learning English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
3. I cannot learn any English without a teacher.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
4. The teacher decides what English to teach and that is what English I learn.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
5. I initiate my own learning processes for English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Learning English happens when I start to pay attention to English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
7. My teacher tells me how to learn English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
8. I am aware of many good strategies to learn English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
9. I don't know the best ways to learn English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
10. I can learn things in English by working together with my friends.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
11. I think learning English with other students in groups is a waste of time.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Sharing information in a task in English with other students helps me learn English.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B Հարցում

Նշեք (✓) վանդակի մեջ:

1. Իմ անգլերենի ուսուցչուհին է պատասխանատու իմ անգլերեն լեզվի գիտելիքների ձեռքբերման համար:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ես սովորում եմ անգլերեն, որովհետև ես ինքս եմ պատասխանատու իմ անգլերենի գիտելիքների ձեռքբերման համար:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ես չեմ կարող անգլերեն սովորել առանց անգլերենի ուսուցչուհու:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Ես սովորում եմ այն, ինչ իմ անգլերենի ուսուցչուհին է որոշում է սովորեցնել մեզ մեր անգլերենի դասաժամին:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ես ինքս եմ կազմակերպում իմ անգլերեն սովորելու գործընթացը:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ես անգլերեն եմ սովորում, երբ սկսում եմ առանձնահատուկ ուշադրություն դարձնել անգլերենի վրա:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Իմ ուսուցչուհին է հուշում, թե ես ինչպես անգլերեն սովորեմ:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Ես գիտեմ շատ լավ հնարքներ, որ օգնում են ինձ անգլերեն սովորել:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Ես անգլերեն սովորելու ոչ մի լավ հնարք չգիտեմ:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Ես կարող եմ անգլերեն սովորել ընկերներիս հետ խմբակային աշխատանք/առաջադրանք կատարելով:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Ես կարծում եմ, որ ժամանակի կորուստ կլինի ընկերներիս հետ խմբով անգլերեն սովորելը:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Անգլերեն լեզվով առաջադրանք կատարելիս խմբակային համատեղ աշխատանքը ընկերներիս հետ օգնում է ինձ անգլերեն սովորել:	Լիովին համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն եմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Չեզոք <input type="checkbox"/>	Համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>	Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C

՞ինչ սովորեցիք այսօրվա անգլերենի դաս ընթացքում:

Խմբակային աշխատանքն անգլերենի դասին որքանով ձեզ օգնեց կամ խանգարեց այսօր:

Լավ անցավ արդյոք ձեր դասն այսօր: Եթե այո՝ ինչու՞:

Եթե ոչ՝ ինչու՞:

Appendix D

Dates / Short description of the English class	Participant's reaction	1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>10.03.2006 – Unit 7- Who are You? Pre –activity 1 Discussion (in L1) of the most important things people look for in other people. <i>(It is done to activate background knowledge and awake expectation of the students for the upcoming class)</i> Pre-activity 2 – Presentation on the blackboard and explanation of new words and expressions, which students then would deal with in the main activity. Main activity – Students get into groups of four (ABCD sorter), get their worksheets (each pair gets a worksheet) and work on the activity. After completing the task, the two dyads in the group exchange their worksheets and check them. After both worksheets get checked, students read aloud their answers. Each group reads one answer. The teacher randomly asks any student to present the group. (p.76) As a home task students should find some synonyms and antonyms from the newly learnt list of words and answer to true/ false questions concerning the definitions of some relatively interesting adjectives. In the end 5 minute written reflection on what was learnt in groups and how successfully.</p>	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>We learnt some new vocabulary</p>	<p>I think group-work was very effective; group-work helped me a lot, it ensures better understanding of the new word learnt during the lesson, it gives chance to learn more about your friends personal attitude; Today my friends helped me a lot.</p>	<p>we enjoyed the class, we learnt a lot of new words, the atmosphere throughout the class encouraged us to learn better, we were trying to use as much English words as we could</p>
	<p>Starting to react (Student B, Student C)</p>	<p>I didn't manage to learn anything because I didn't like the way students get into groups.</p>	<p>I didn't like group work and I don't want to work with those student in one group"(Student B) <i>(Next class I asked him to change his group)</i></p>	
	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, Student C)</p>	<p>My peers were too noisy for me to be able to concentrate on the task the teacher asked us to complete.</p>	<p>"Today's group work didn't help me at all" (Student C)</p>	

Dates / Short description of the English class	Participant's reaction		1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>13.03.2006 – Unit 7 Checking homework (5-7 minutes) Discussion and correction of some mistakes. Pre-activity- Presentation on the blackboard and explanation of new words and expressions that relate to the previous class, which students then would deal with in the main activity. Main activity. Students get into groups of four this time another groups are formed. They get their worksheets (each pair gets a worksheet) and work on the activity. They should 1. Match the words with their explanations below, 2. Match the words with the face expressions (feelings), and 3. Fill the gap with the suitable word given below. <i>I repeated the style of the activity, as I wanted my students to feel confident with that type of activities as much as possible by having more practice.</i></p> <p>After completing the task, the two dyads in the group exchange their worksheets and peer editing takes place. After both worksheets get checked, students read aloud their answers. One representative of each group reads one answer. The teacher randomly asks any student to present the group.</p> <p>As homework student should write a short description of their personal feelings on various topics given in their course book (ex. 2/d)</p> <p>In the end 5 minute written reflection.</p>	Participant's reaction	We learnt some new vocabulary	I am satisfied with the group-work that I participated in today; it helps a lot when one helps the other to understand English; I enjoyed the class;	I enjoyed the class, it was interesting to learn about my star sign in English; I enjoyed the class	
	Positive reaction (Student A)	I didn't learn anything because my partner was not active at all	"Today's group work even hindered me to learn anything" (Student B)	(Next class I asked him to change his second group)	
	Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)	I learnt some words concerning my star sign.	"Today's group work didn't help me at all" (Student C)		

Dates / Short description of English classes	Participant's Reaction		1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>17.03.2006 – Text reading “ Courage”</p> <p>Pre activity 1- Students try to predict of what the text is going to talk about.</p> <p>The teacher writes all the predictions on the black board.</p> <p>Pre activity 2- Students get into pairs and highlight or underline all the words and expressions they recognize in the text. <i>(I wanted my students to become conscious of how much of the text they were able to understand on their own, I was sure that they would understand the most part of it as I tried to teach them approximately all the relatively difficult and unknown expressions and words in advance.)</i></p> <p>Main activity. Students get into pairs and work on one paragraph of the text given on the worksheets. Students are required to read the passage intended for them, create a suitable title for the very passage and answer to the comprehension questions in the end of the paragraph. (I divided the text into three parts as I thought that it would be better for some groups (dyads in this case) have the same passage to work on) Then any representative of the pair tells the class about their impressions concerning the text as well as shares with the class their own variants of titles. As a home task students get a list of words (30 words) for which they are required to find synonyms and antonyms from the text. In the end 5 minute written reflection on what was learnt in groups and how successfully</p>	Participant's Reaction	We learnt some new vocabulary	Group-work helps to understand each other better; I helped my friend to answer the question in English; I taught my friends some new English words; group-work helped me to reinforce the knowledge we acquired during the last English language class; through group-work I become more and more interested in English language.	we enjoyed the class, we learnt a lot of new words, the atmosphere throughout the class encouraged us to learn better, we were trying to talk in English to each other in our groups	
	Positive reaction (Student A)	I managed to create a nice title for our own passage.	Group work didn't help me today, I like working on my own. I think I it is interesting to create titles for a story, my title was the best. (Students B)	It seems motivating to learn English, if the activities you do are interesting.	
	Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)	I learnt a lot of words that helped me to understand the passage on my own.	Today's group work didn't seem successful to me, students were noisy. I didn't know that I have learnt so many words during previous classes" (Student C)	I learnt a lot of English words.	

Dates / Short description of English classes	Participant's Reaction		1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>20.03.2006 – Checking of homework Students exchange their homework and do peer editing. Then one student after another comes and writes the correct variant of the synonyms and antonyms on the blackboard. (<i>Students especially liked that activity I think because individual treatment and encouragement raised their motivation to participate in the class actively.</i>) Pre-activity. Write a tongue twister on the blackboard (Oh, no don't go home alone, nobody knows how lonely the road is!) and ask students to read one by one. After everybody reads it I get students into groups of four and distribute the same tongue twister words separately written on small pieces of papers for the students to find the right order of them. (<i>I did it to introduce students the "strip story activity"</i>). Main activity. Divide the text "Courage" into six paragraphs and cut them into strips. Each group gets one paragraph of the story stripped. The students' task is to find the correct order of the stripped lines then as a whole class to find the correct order of each paragraph. As a home task student write a description for Frenchmen, what kind of person he was, and in their opinion what would his star sign be? (explain what is star sign and bring examples) In the end 5 minute written reflection on what was learnt in groups and how successfully.</p>	Participant's Reaction	We learnt how to ask and answer questions in English.	Group-work helped me understand grammatical items better, we together with my friends worked on the exercises. My friends helped me to make a correct reply to my teacher's statement; without group-work we wouldn't be able to ask and answer questions in English; I think through group-work I develop my oral skills; it is more interesting to work in groups	we enjoyed the class, the time seemed very short today, we enjoy our class because we like our teacher; today we learnt to talk to each other in correct English	
	Positive reaction. (Student A)	I like saying tongue twisters, I say it fast.	"Today's group-work seemed more interesting as my teacher asked me to change my group (Student B) (<i>For the second time</i>)	It was interesting to find the correct order of the story. Our teacher says that I am good at learning foreign languages.	
	Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)	I like strip stories, they seem interesting especially if the whole group works on it.	Today's group work was more successful and motivating, our teacher said that we were the best and the fastest group in the class. (Student C) (<i>Encouragement helps much when the teachers feels that students are almost ready to participate</i>)	I found out that I can say a tongue twister in English.	

Dates / Short description of English classes	Participant's Reaction		1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>27.03.2006 – Unit 7 Star Signs</p> <p>Checking of homework, students express their opinions about Frenchman; make guesses about Frenchman's star sign.</p> <p>Short discussion on the topic of astrology. Do students believe in it or not.</p> <p>Pre-activity</p> <p>Presentation and explanation of the pronunciation of 12 star signs in English. Get students into groups of four and handout the worksheets, which present the 12 star signs with the description of their characteristic features for each. Students' task is to ask each other questions concerning their star sign and answer them according to patterns written on the blackboard. After some time students should have three-descriptions of each of their peers in the group. (<i>Students got involved in this activity actively as they were interested in their own and others' star signs.</i>)</p> <p>After all the students had three descriptions of the group members, rearrange the groups for the students to read the name and description of the star sign of their previous group members for the present group members to guess who was who.</p> <p>Post activity- ask students to group themselves by their star signs and express three positive and three negative features of their own star sign.</p> <p>At home they should write a few words about their family members. Do their star sign describe them?</p> <p>In the end 5 minute written reflection on what was learnt in groups and how successfully</p>	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>We learnt a lot of new words concerning star signs; we asked and answered questions in English in small groups.</p>	<p>Today we learnt some useful, pragmatic English; I helped my peer to understand find out her; I star sign, we talked in English in our group; it is easier to ask question working in groups</p>	<p>I enjoyed the class, it was interesting to learn about my star sign in English; I helped my friends to ask and answer questions in English (Student B)</p>	<p>I enjoyed the class, it was interesting to learn about my star sign in English; I helped my friends to ask and answer questions in English (Student B)</p>
	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)</p>	<p>I learnt that my star sign is Sagittarius.</p>	<p>I think it is interesting to create questions about people for the class to guess who is who.</p>	<p>I like talking English on my own.</p>	<p>I learnt three star signs in English.</p>

<p>Dates / Short description of English classes</p>			
<p>31.03.2006 - Pre-activity. Present the list of new words on the blackboard. Explain their meaning and usage. Ask the students to find as many of those words as they can from the text "star signs" in their course book. Get students into groups of four and ask them to compare the descriptions of one- two-three (depends on the number of groups in the class) star sign they had on their worksheets with those in the course book. Do they coincide? Emphasize similar and different features discussed in the two sources of information. Main activity. Get students into groups of four and handout student worksheets. They are required to work on gap filling activities. There is a list of adjectives, as well as expression describing human nature which they should put in the correct place according to the star sign given. There is no single correct answer. The only difficulty is that the word should suit with the context. Ask students to exchange their worksheets and do peer editing. Ask students to feel free to explain why they chose particularly those adjectives for those particular star signs. At home the students are required to read a text, answer the questions and be ready to discuss some points regarding the texts. In the end five minute reflection of what was learnt in groups and how successfully.</p>	<p>Participant's reaction</p>	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)</p>
<p>1. What did you learn during today's class?</p>	<p>We learnt a lot of new words in English how to ask and answer questions in English.</p>	<p>I learnt to spell correctly some words.</p>	<p>I revised a lot of words and learnt some new adjectives in English.</p>
<p>2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?</p>	<p>Today's group work help me a lot as with the help of my group member friends learnt words which then used in gaps. Today's group work seemed very effective to me.</p>	<p>I think group work is useful, as we learn some words through peer editing. (Student B)</p>	<p>I like finding mistakes of my peers and correcting them.</p>
<p>3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?</p>	<p>I enjoyed asking and answering questions in English; I enjoyed today's lesson as I mostly understood what was going on in the class</p>	<p>We edit each others work for then to present the correct version to the class. It helps a lot to learn English.</p>	<p>I like finding mistakes of my peers and correcting them.</p>

<p>Dates / Short description of English classes</p> <p>03.04.2006 – Revision</p> <p>Warm up – small roundtable discussion of the quote: Be careful what you set your heart upon, for you will surely have it. –Ralph Waldo Emerson</p> <p>Main activity</p> <p>Get students in groups of four. Handout worksheets and ask to complete three assignments in pairs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the word mean? (Choose the right definition from the opposite column) 2. Fill in the gaps with the words on the left, using them in their correct forms. <p>After completing the task students exchange their worksheets and do peer editing. As a result one worksheet is checked by three different students and in the end one representative of the group reads the draft for everybody to follow and check finally.</p> <p>Handout students the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling. Ask students to read and highlight all the familiar words and expression. This poem is relatively difficult so explain as many words as you manage for students to literary translate it at home.</p>	Participant's reaction	1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
	Positive reaction (Student A)	We a list of new words in English.	We helped each other during group work; my friends always help me to remember things that I don't remember during the English class; I revised whatever I know during today's group work	we enjoyed the class; today we learnt to talk to each other in English
Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)	We learnt that is important to want something very hard in order for to have it.	We together with my friends worked on the exercises. My friends helped me to make a correct reply to my teacher's statement (Student B)	Our English class is interesting last days	
	The poem seemed a bit difficult before the teacher explained it for us.	It easier to do gap filling exercises in groups (Student C)		

Dates / Short description of English classes	Participant's reaction	1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>07.04.2006 – Unit 8 That's What Friends Are For</p> <p>Warm up. Ask the students their literary translation of the poem 'If' by Rudyard Kipling.</p> <p>Pre-activity.</p> <p>Encourage them to revise it one more time and bring back. Start a discussion concerning a good person; what qualities he/she should have, and then go further discussing "Three Musketeers", as people representing many good, worth mentioning human features. Make sure all the students are familiar with the literary heroes of the famous novel.</p> <p>Introduce some expressions like: I think, in my opinion, if you ask me, I guess, I believe, and others, encourage students to use all of them to express their attitudes.</p> <p>Main activity.</p> <p>Get students into groups of four. Handout students worksheets with one of the heroes name written ask them to describe him/ her including appearance and as many inner features as possible, without mentioning the name. After all the heroes are portrayed, let the students read for the class their description for the class to guess who was described. At home students should write about their favorite literary hero, portraying him/her and explaining why they like him/her. Five minute reflection.</p>	<p>Participant's reaction</p>	<p>We learnt how to ask and answer questions in English.</p>	<p>We enjoyed describing our favorite heroes in groups. We get better and better at English. It is interesting, different people had different ways of translating the poem "If".</p>	<p>, we enjoy our class because we like our teacher; today learnt how to make a good description</p>
	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>I learnt some useful expressions in English</p>	<p>I practiced a lot of English expressions in our group. (Student B)</p>	<p>It seems fun to teach my peers how to pronounce some expressions in English.</p>
	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)</p>	<p>I learnt three different expressions of how to start or continue conversations</p>	<p>Working in groups ensures learning of what is written on the blackboard. (Student C)</p>	

<p>Dates / Short description of English classes</p> <p>10.04.2006 – Work on words Warm up- to practice a short tongue twister. Ask student to read their short essays concerning the favorite literary heroes. Get students into groups of four, handout the worksheets with three tasks;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rewrite the sentences, paraphrasing to the words in italics 2. Fill the gaps with the words on the left, using them in their correct forms. 3. Describe the people in the picture using the expressions below. <p>After the tasks are complete ask students to discuss in their groups where they are likely to be taken from. (Indicate the novel or story they think those short tasks resemble). At home students should complete the tasks written in their course books 1. a, b, 2. a, b, c, p.89 In the end five minute reflection of what they learnt and how successfully in group work cooperative learning.</p>	<p>Participant's reaction</p>	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, Student C)</p>	<p>1. What did you learn during today's class? We learnt to replace some words and expression with other ones.</p>	<p>2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today? We helped each other to read and understand one passage of the text indicated for us, paraphrase it; my group members helped me to learn the tongue-twister by heart; I especially like describing the pictures.</p>	<p>3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why? today we learnt to paraphrase some English sentences,</p>
				<p>I guessed from the context the meaning of the words in the left column</p>	<p>I helped my friends to write the second exercise correctly as I am good at guessing the words' meanings. (Student B)</p>	<p>I enjoy the class, when I do something successfully.</p>
				<p>I learnt some English expressions</p>	<p>Today's group-work was very effective, we helped each other a lot, I like gap filling activities especially when I work with my peer. (Student C)</p>	<p>Describing pictures helps us to revise a lot of adjectives.</p>

<p>Dates / Short description of English classes</p> <p>14.04.2006 – Unit 8</p> <p>Students ask whatever question they have from the home tasks</p> <p>Focus on grammar :</p> <p>Revision- Reported speech: questions</p> <p>General questions, Special questions</p> <p>Get students into groups of four, handout their worksheets, and let them write a dialogue in pairs on a given situation.</p> <p>After they complete writing the dialogue let two pairs in the group exchange their worksheets and using ask and tell where necessary to write the sentences in reported speech.</p> <p>After the tasks are complete ask the students read at firsts the dialogues then the sentences in reported speech.</p> <p>Afterwards let one students from group A read the first line of the dialogue just created then a student from group B respond reading the second line of the group B's dialogue.</p> <p>Then make the whole class to write the sentences just heard in reported speech? (My practice shows that students like this kind of activities especially when they are done after relatively difficult tasks. As a rule, it proves to be difficult to return to the serious class condition immediately that is why let the students just sing the song they know in English. (Once I had taught them a song before starting my research study in that class.)</p> <p>At home students are required to write ex. 3 a., b., and ex. 4. p. 95</p> <p>In the end five minute written reflection.</p>	<p>Participant's reaction</p>	<p>1. What did you learn during today's class?</p>	<p>2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?</p>	<p>3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?</p>
	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>We learnt how to ask and answer questions in English.</p>	<p>I enjoyed participating in a group-work and writing the continuation of the dialogue given in the worksheets; I liked creating dialogues with my group member friends; today our group was the best as we tried to use all the adjectives that we had learnt during our previous classes</p>	<p>we enjoyed the class, the time seemed very short today, we enjoy our class because we like our teacher; today we learnt to talk to each other in correct English</p>
	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, C)</p>	<p>We learnt and revised some grammar items</p>	<p>Group-work helped me understand grammatical items better, we together with my friends worked on the exercises. My friends helped me to make a correct reply to my teacher's statement (Student B)</p>	<p>I understood very well whatever the teacher explained on the blackboard.</p>
		<p>I did some grammar exercises on my own</p>	<p>In group work we practiced the grammar items explained by the teacher.</p>	<p>I don't like learning grammar.</p>

<p>Dates / Short description of English classes</p> <p>17.04.2006 – Warm up: write a list of words on the blackboard, which contain silent letters. Ask students one by one to come to the black board and cross out silent letters which are not pronounced.</p> <p>Pre-activity. Focus on grammar. Adjectives such and so. After a thorough explanation of differences between the meaning and usage of such and so on the blackboard. Ask students to get into groups of four.</p> <p>Handout students' worksheets on which there are three tasks to complete;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a small dialogue: put in such or so. 2. Insert the word on the left. Use them in their correct form. <p>After students finish doing the tasks ask them to exchange their worksheets and do peer editing. Ask students to explain in their words how they understood the difference between the meaning and usage of such and so.</p> <p>At home students are required to continue the "A little gossip" exercise in their own words using the adjectives serious, polite, silly, bight.</p> <p>I the end five minute written reflection on what was learnt in groups and how successfully.</p>	Participant's reaction	1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
	Positive reaction (Student A)	We learnt how to ask and answer questions in English.	We asked each other questions in English and answered them; I like helping my friends to learn English; I enjoyed making dialogues with my peer	We enjoy our class because our teacher creates interesting activities for us to participate in group-work
	Starting to react negatively (Student B, Student C)	We learnt some grammatical items.	"it was fun to help each other to make the story complete" (Student B)	I liked the class as it was full of fun.
		I thought there are only two words that have silent letters: homework and Wednesday.	Today we had a pleasant lesson (student C)	I am surprised about how active everybody was.

Dates / Short description of English classes	Participant's Reaction	1. What did you learn during today's class?	2. How did working in a group help or hinder your learning today?	3. Did you enjoy your English lesson today? If yes, why? If not, why?
<p>21.04.2006 – Revision</p> <p>Check the homework. Discuss and revise all the grammar points learnt during the previous eleven classes.</p> <p>Get students in groups of four. Ask them to write a farewell letter to their teacher. Each student should write anything he/she wants then in the end four of them combine their letters to make one letter and edit it.</p> <p>After collecting the letters, ask students to remember all tell the class all the worth mentioning moments and fragments of the classes they had together.</p> <p>In the end 5 minute reflection of what was learnt and how successfully.</p>	<p>Positive reaction (Student A)</p>	<p>We did a lot of revision of grammar and vocabulary and wrote a letter to our teacher.</p>	<p>During group-work letter writing I participated actively, because I like our teacher very much. We used almost all the good words we know in English to write a letter to our teacher.</p>	<p>Today the class-time seemed very short. We enjoy our class because we like our teacher.</p>
	<p>Starting to react negatively (Student B, Student C)</p>	<p>We learnt how to write a letter in English. As always we learnt a lot of things today.</p>	<p>We wrote a letter in our group, I hope our teacher likes whatever we have written. It's a pity this is our last class. (Student B)</p>	<p>I found out that English and Armenian letters are written in different ways. We enjoyed talking in a foreign language During our English classes.</p>