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College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Public School Students' Tensions and Transformations after Experiencing Collaborative
Learning in EEC

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Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate public school students' tensions and transformations after experiencing collaborative learning in Experimental English Classes. As students are exposed to traditional grammar-translation method at public schools, the prevalence of collaborative learning in EEC creates a number of tensions in public school, in EEC and certain transformations in EEC. Therefore, the aim of the study is to find out the students' tensions and transformations at the intersection of these two contexts.

The study was carried out in four public schools in Yerevan and in Experimental English Classes by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University of Armenia. The qualitative data was collected through 13 observations and 13 semi-structured interviews with public school and EEC teachers and 15 EEC students. Whereas the quantitative data was collected through questionnaire surveys administered to 48 EEC students. The quantitative data was analyzed by SPSS software package while the qualitative data was analyzed through the identification of themes and categories.

The findings of the study revealed that because of the change of the way of learning, public school students go through certain tensions both in public schools and in EEC. Also, during the transitional process from one culture to another, students undergo a number of positive transformations in EEC after experiencing collaborative learning and undergo certain changes in individual qualities as becoming active, self-confident, sociable and friendly, cooperative, open-minded, motivated and autonomous. The findings also report that students' overall attitude towards collaborative learning is positive and they welcome and enjoy learning collaboratively

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable shift in foreign language teaching and learning field from the traditional grammar-translation and teacher-centered approach to the implementation of other methods, mainly collaborative language learning. “Collaborative learning is a reacculturative process when a group of students learn and accomplish tasks together using each other’s resources and knowledge and which helps students become members of the knowledge communities” (Brufee as cited in Oxford, 1997, p. 3).

It is widely recognized among educators that the old ways of learning are not any more able to create the knowledge and skills that the citizens should have in order to live a good life in a knowledge society.

Teachers and scholars in Armenia are facing a number of challenges to implement collaborative learning in classroom environment. The main challenges encountered by teachers are lack of necessary conditions and opportunities, freedom from administration and professional development. The main approach employed by the most public schools in Armenia is mainly individualistic approach to learning. Thus, students who are exposed to teacher-centered approach of learning at schools experience a number of tensions and transformations after experiencing students-centered, communicative way of learning.

The paper investigates the tensions and transformations public school students undergo after experiencing collaborative learning in Experimental English Classes (EEC). EEC was established in 2005 by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of American University of Armenia as an afterschool English program for children from six to 17years old. The community is targeted toward offering children communicative student-

centered English classes and giving students the opportunity to learn English through communicative methods of teaching. Also, it helps young learners to develop confidence and enable them to make positive changes in their country (<http://eec.do.am>). Thus, the change students experience going from public school to EEC creates a number of tensions in public school, in EEC and certain transformations after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC. Hence, the comparison of these two communities will give the chance to understand the Armenian local culture, find out the main tensions that public students undergo after doing collaborative activities in EEC and explore the type of transformation (negative or positive) students experience in EEC.

This research will be of great value as Armenian teachers tend to express strong willingness and motivation towards collaborative method of learning. The discovery of the tensions and transformations will definitely contribute to finding out what effect collaborative learning has on the students. In 2005 an in-service training program was launched in Armenia to explain the current state of collaborative language learning in Armenian public schools (Hovhannisyanyan & Sahlberg, 2010). It aimed to find out Armenian teachers' prior exposure and attitude to alternative student-centered teaching methods to enhance teamwork and cooperative learning (a number of trainings of teachers at large). The results of the study show that, as a whole, though most of the teachers were motivated about the new kind of learning, however, there has not been a significant change in teaching methods of teachers (World Bank, 2009). Hence, this paper will also try to find out whether after nine-year period of time, there has been a change in teachers' attitude and belief system about collaborative learning and attempts to integrate collaborative learning into the curriculum.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning has been considered a significant concept and one of the most researched areas of education nowadays. It is a new and complex set of ideas and principles, which are gradually integrated into educational institutions, both elsewhere and in Armenia. According to Dornyei and Martin (1997; 2007), collaborative learning methods are recognized as the most valuable components of classroom learning among the traditional way of instruction at schools.

According to Brufee, "collaborative learning is a reacculturative process that helps students become members of the knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of knowledge communities they already belong to" (Brufee as cited in Oxford, 1997, p. 3). As stated by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978), the nature of collaboration is grounded on the social-constructivist model which prioritizes social interaction as a means of knowledge building. Therefore, collaborative learning makes use of the social-constructivist framework that views social interaction as the critical point for the learning process to be more dynamic and real-life, a learning process where the students construct their knowledge by themselves as an essential part of learning process (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Amal Al-Nataur, 2012). Likewise, the underlying principle of this philosophy is to view individuals as part of a community who learn a language by being part of it. More importantly, the approach puts emphasis on the learning process where the learners acculturate and immerse themselves to the new classroom environment and learning community via collaborative tasks and guidance of the teacher (Brufee, 1993).

When compared with traditional instruction, collaborative learning is more advantageous and valuable for the students. According to a number of studies by Merebah (1987), Alghamdi and Gillies (2013), the traditional classroom instruction is characterized by lecturing and memorization of the material. The traditional classroom instruction is a passive mode of instruction since there is no interaction between the students. The teacher plays the central role sending a lecture and student receiving it without participating and expressing themselves. In comparison with individualistic approach, the results obtained in the studies by Johnson and Holubec (1994), Slavin (1991) reveal that collaborative learning may have a number of advantages over the traditional individualistic approach in bolstering intrinsic motivation, encouraging thinking skills, building helpful and compassionate relations, enhancing students' attitudes towards the subject matter and reducing students' anxiety level. Still, others have found that collaborative approach is likely to boost students academic achievement irrespective of age and subject, provide a space for students to have discussions and contribute to the shared learning between the group members (Slavin and Cooper, 1999; Cianciolo et al., 2001; Nolinske & Millis, 1999; Johnson, Mauyama, Jihnsion, Nelson, & Skon, 1981). It should be also noted that several studies indicate that irrespective of the structure of collaborative groups, it is likely to improve students' interactional skills compared with the complex tasks (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 1990). Meanwhile, another finding suggests that students prefer cognitive conflict as in this way they have the opportunity to state their disagreement, clarify, give explanations and justify their opinions during the conflict and find new alternative ways to resolve the conflict (Tudge, 1989).

2.2 The Difference between Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Although cooperative and collaborative learning seem to substitute each other, however, they are different in meanings. Olsen and Kagan state that “cooperative learning is a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups in which each learner is held accountable for his or her learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others” (1992, p.8), while Brody and Davidson imply that “cooperative learning is a combination of different methods of instruction which organize students to work in groups toward a common goal or outcome, or share a common problem or task in such a way that they can only succeed in completing the work through behavior that demonstrates interdependence, while holding individual contributions and efforts accountable” (1998, p. 8). Therefore, the most essential purpose of cooperative learning for students is to be accountable also for the learning of the peers, responsible for learning together instead of competing with each other. This kind of learning requires a number of social skills that are needed to accomplish a task jointly with each member having a say in the task (Slavin, 1991).

Compared with cooperative learning, collaborative learning is more about learners' acculturation process into the new collaborative learning community and culture (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). The process of reaccluturation is very complicated. In order to become a full member of another community or culture the student should change and adjust his/her participation in the elements of the community such as language, understanding and values of the community (Brufee, 1993). Thus, collaborative learning incorporates such elements as working in groups, helping group members to accomplish a goal using various talents, abilities and backgrounds of the peers. The convergence of group-work and individual accountability brings

about the improvement of both knowledge and social skills. And when we say to collaborate, we mean working together where each member is responsible and accountable to group members, when students cooperate with group members, take advantage of each other's resources and skills, construct the knowledge by interacting and sharing experiences and become members of a new collaborative learning community. (Slavin, 1995; Brufee, 1993)

2.3 The Main Characteristics of Collaborative Learning

There are four typical characteristics of collaboration that should be taken into consideration:

- The first characteristic is the *knowledge shared between teachers and students*. Unlike traditional classrooms where the main role and power is given to the teacher and who is the main person to give information without the interaction with the students, in collaborative classrooms the knowledge is shared. Also, it is extremely important to integrate student input into collaborative classroom where students' share their experiences or knowledge. (Roberts, 2004)
- The second characteristic feature to emphasize is the *shared authority between teachers and students*. In contrast with the teachers in traditional classroom, collaborative teachers differ in setting goals to be taught. Teachers provide choice for students to select activities and assignments that will meet their interests and objectives. (Tinzmann as cited in Roberts, 2004)
- The third characteristic feature to be highlighted is *teachers' roles as mediators*. Since teachers and students share knowledge and authority together, the task of the teacher becomes a mediator encouraging students to learn how to learn. (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986)

- The last one to emphasize is *heterogeneous groupings of students*. This is a vital characteristic of collaborative classroom. This characteristic teaches students to respect and evaluate the contributions made by all members of the class irrespective of students' abilities, achievement and interests. (Panitz ,1997)

These characteristics respectively bring about new roles and tasks for teachers and students. These features in their turn change the type of interaction that occurs in collaborative classrooms compared with the traditional ones. Subsequently, teacher being a facilitator and students as equal participants are the main pre-requisites for collaborative learning.

2. 4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning brings many social and academic benefits to students. Recent studies demonstrate that collaborative learning when compared with traditional way of learning has a number of advantages. Collaborative learning prioritizes the interaction and the construction of knowledge with all the members of the group applying their knowledge, personal experience and skills to help accomplish a task (Vygotsky, 1978).

The academic benefits of collaborative learning can be illustrated as follows (McKinney & Graham-Buxton, 1993):

- 1) Firstly, it promotes critical thinking skills. It boosts communication skills, makes clear the ideas via discussions and debates. It also results in a thorough learning of the materials as the students are always interacting with each other and share a great variety of ideas and opinions (McKinney & Graham-Buxton, 1993).
- 2) Second, students are active participators of the lesson. This benefit fits well with the constructivist approach. It creates an environment of learning where the learners are

lively, engaged. It also helps students to explore new things and encourages student responsibility for learning (Roberts, 2004).

- 3) Third, it improves classroom results. Collaborative learning promotes to attain higher levels of achievement and class attendance. Students become assertive as they know the subject matter better. This leads to a more interest towards the issue being discussed and leads to a better performance (Pray Muir & Tracy 1999).
- 4) Lastly, it helps to foster modeling appropriate student problem-solving techniques which contributes in improving students' performance by creating a safe environment for students with different learning styles.

Apart from academic benefits, collaborative learning has also a number of social benefits:

- 1) Collaborative learning enables students to work in groups and gain social and team working skills that are very essential for their future career. Unlike teacher-centered classes where teacher talk is dominating and students are deprived of the chance to have real interactions with peers, in a collaborative setting there is an increasing encouragement and chance available for students to work together and cooperate with each other (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007).
- 2) Also, it promotes to recognize and value the diversity that exists within the group as each of the members of the group possesses different learning styles and strategies. The interactions and the discussions during which students employ different strategies and styles help students to observe situations from others' standpoint (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

Collaborative learning has the same advantages in the secondary schools in Armenia. Armenian students seem to welcome collaborative learning as they are more active during those

classes which are held with collaborative methods. They like to sit in groups and to have the same issue of discussion resulting in a high level of accomplishment by the members of the group.

Alongside with the above mentioned advantages of collaborative learning, there are also several disadvantages. We know that every person has his/her own character, some human qualities, etc. They are the same in the collaborative classroom. The problem is that more quiet or shy people might not feel comfortable to talk to a group or to share his/her ideas with the group members (Hovhannisyan & Sahlberg, 2010). Another disadvantage is a group member's passive role in a group. At schools passive members of the group are not actively involved in the effective work of the group, but still take credit for the task. This is a serious problem in collaborative classrooms, which again recommends the teachers careful and complex approach to the individual work of each student (Hovhannisyan & Sahlberg, 2010). Another disadvantage worth noting is that sometimes the most active members of the groups take control and do not let the other group members share their knowledge. This affects badly on the other group members, especially from the psychological point of view. Absolute leadership of one member makes the other less self-confident, so they become passive during the teaching and learning process (Hovhannisyan & Sahlberg, 2010). However, the advantages of collaborative learning outweigh its disadvantages.

Thus, we see a shift on the views of teaching and learning in collaborative classrooms. This shift brings about new roles and tasks for teachers and students.

2.5 Students' and Teachers' Roles in a Collaborative Classroom

Nowadays collaborative learning method implies new roles and responsibilities for students being collaborators and active participators. In collaborative classrooms, self-regulated learning is important. Taking responsibility for monitoring and adjusting is critical for students to learn today in order to check their progress toward goals and make changes to reach their goals. In a collaborative classroom, students are viewed as collaborators who are required to come to an agreement by negotiating intellectually, taking the responsibility and judging collectively in which the knowledge is shared within the community of peers (Bruffee, 1993). Meanwhile, the new roles have a great influence on the activities and tasks students conduct before, during and after learning process. Students are often provided with choices of setting a goal. In this case, students are more involved and would better evaluate their performance and plan for future learning. Together with goal setting, there are other student roles one of which is designing learning tasks and monitoring. This implies that students take up much more responsibility to plan their learning activities which have more purpose and interest (Arthur, 1997). Also, a new responsibility for students of a collaborative classroom is self-assessment. In collaborative classrooms, self-assessment is viewed as the evaluation of one's own learning and whether the students achieve their final goal of what is intended to learn through learning strategies and learning resources (Bruffee, 1993).

In a collaborative setting, the change of the students' role subsequently brings a shift in the teachers' role. According to Vygotsky (1978), there has been a shift in teachers' role from an authoritative person to becoming a facilitator and an organizer. Learning requires mediation from the teachers and they provide students the necessary support that is 'scaffolding' to help students to develop language and cultural skills, to become autonomous and self-governing learners

(Vygotsky as cited in Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). In collaborative classrooms teacher's role is to build a safe classroom environment where all the students are actively involved in the lesson, where students are provided with the chance to collaborate on various authentic tasks and bring about their own knowledge, personal experience and skills to solve a problem or make decisions (Arthur, 1997).

2.6 Research on Students' and Teachers' Attitude toward Collaborative Learning

Many studies have been conducted to find out students' and teachers' attitudes toward collaborative learning. As revealed by Hoffman and Redman-Bentley (2012), students appear to have more positive attitudes toward teamwork and collaboration than faculty. Whereas the meta-analysis of several studies revealed that the vast majority of the students tend to have a positive attitude towards collaborative learning which results in a shift in learning habits and in teachers' role. In particular, it has an impact on enhancing the social relations among group members, self-governing and confidence in learning and the shared support among group members (Delucchi, 2006). Similarly, the research done in Ali Shah Arid University indicates that the majority of students have positive attitude towards collaborative learning as an effective teaching approach (Kiran, 2012). On the other hand, other studies indicate that a number of students express reluctance to do collaborative task for several reasons:

- First, students may have bad previous experience in working with peers which leads to a change of students' attitude and makes students unwilling to do a collaborative task (Lou, Abrami & d'Apollonia, 2001).
- Second, students do not trust to do group work with students whom they do not know for a long time (Delucchi, 2006).

- Third, lack of basic social skills causes resistance for the students. The students are not aware of what to do, how to do and why to do, how to work and interact with peers, how to take roles and responsibility and how to divide the work among the group members (Cohen, 1994; Van den Bossche et al., 2006; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007).
- Finally, a number of students view collaborative learning a waste of time as working in groups is more time-consuming than individual learning. Also, several students stressed the fact that some of the group members tend to lead group interactions and take on the whole responsibility which results in discouragement and unwillingness to participate (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007).

As far as teachers' attitudes are concerned, research conducted in Jordanian schools point out that several variables such as experience, educational level and teaching experience influence teachers' attitudes. Teachers with Bachelor degree of education and little teaching experience appear to welcome collaborative learning while teachers with Master degree and much teaching experience tend to avoid using collaborative techniques (Amal Al-Natour, 2012). On the contrary, a vast number of studies show that teachers tend to demonstrate resistance when they are asked to implement collaborative tasks and techniques in the classroom. Results of a number of studies revealed the basic problems that lead to teachers' reluctance:

- The first reason not to try collaborative learning is the change of focus of teaching when teachers should change the focus from teachers to students putting the main emphasis on the interactions between their peers (Shimazoe & Aldrich, 2010).
- The second reason that teachers address are most likely to be related to students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards collaborative learning, group size and

composition, task organization and group interactions in a collaborative setting (Sharan, 2010).

- Another major challenge for teachers is strongly connected with the lack of school culture, which implies lack of collegueship and teacher-administration relationship. Teachers appear to have conflicts with the bureaucracy at schools to implement collaborative learning. As Lieberman states, the truth about the school culture is that teacher work at school is isolated, without constructing collegial relationships with other teachers, feeling support from the administration, without working together to support each other, solve problems together and be accountable for the situation at school jointly (Lieberman, 1988).
- Also, teachers may sometimes meet resistance by the administrations to take part in the decision-making process in students' learning. Teachers are not provided with the chance and freedom to design the curriculum, materials and instruction together with the principle. Teachers are deprived of the chance for their further professional growth (Lieberman, 1988).

Therefore, for successful implementation of collaborative work, an adequate preparation, practice, support and motivation is needed for the teachers as according to Koutselini 'learning from cooperative learning' causes shift towards positive attitudes which 'learning about cooperative learning' alone cannot achieve. (Koutselini as cited in Sharan, 2010, p.8) Consequently, collaborative culture is crucial for teachers' professional development as it is a new way of learning from each other when people with different roles and responsibilities bring their own experience to the relationship. (Johnson & Kerper, 1996)

2.7. Research on Cooperative Learning In Armenia

It is important to find out whether there has been any research done related to collaborative learning in Armenian public schools. In Armenia for the first time an in-service training program was conducted in 2005 aimed at engaging the most experienced, teachers in teacher training programs (Sahlberg & Boce, 2010). The training project was launched by the Ministry of Education of Armenia aimed at providing teachers from 52 school centres with the training opportunity to develop the efficiency of education by changing the teachers' understanding about cooperative learning and providing the knowledge and skills necessary for integrating these techniques in the classroom setting. As it was stated in the article by Hovhannisyan and Sahlberg (2010), Armenian teachers tend to use individualistic approach as a mode of instruction and there is an absence of student-centered learning at schools. However, teachers appear to be constrained by the administration to have freedom and responsibility to conduct the lessons integrating their individual approaches, experience and techniques (Heyneman 2000; Sahlberg & Boce, 2010). The presentation-recitation mode of instruction, memorized knowledge stems from these previous beliefs and thinking, which, in its turn, influences the teachers' choice of teaching style. Therefore, in Armenian schools teachers played the role of realizing plans that were created beforehand. Armenian teachers have been trained to use collaborative way of learning to enhance teamwork and cooperative learning (a number of trainings of teachers at large), however, as a whole, there has not been a significant change in teaching methods of teachers (World Bank, 2009).

The main findings suggest that most teachers believe that they have adequate knowledge and understanding of cooperative learning after attending the training workshops, but that only a few are able to implement it as a common practice in the classroom environment. Another

important finding to be highlighted is that many teachers with much teaching experience (30years) were hesitant in the effectiveness of cooperative/collaborative learning strongly believing in traditional teaching methods and resisting using cooperative learning in classroom (Sharan, 2006).

The findings of the research revealed that Armenian teachers seem to express great willingness and motivation to learn and practice new methods. Moreover, new behavior of using collaborative learning has not yet been sustained. Therefore, Armenia needs designing and introducing productive ongoing support mechanisms for teachers. Collaborative learning can have an impact on young generation's viewpoints and can bring about a further growth of the education system for better preparation of the new generation (World Bank 2009).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The present study investigates the main tensions that students experience both in public school and in Experimental English Classes (EEC) after experiencing collaborative work in EEC and the transformations caused by the tensions. It aims to find out how public school students coexist in these two cultures (EEC and public school), the challenges they face because of the prevalence of collaborative work in EEC and the transformations they go through after experiencing collaborative work in EEC.

The methodology chapter introduces the research design of the study. Then it proceeds with an overview of the objectives of the study, its educational setting and research population. Afterwards, it goes on to illustrate the employed procedures and the instrument of data collection.

3.2 Research Design

The research study was based on triangulation combining observations, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The research design was a sequential combination of both qualitative and quantitative research (QUAL-->quan). This kind of study comprised two stages with the qualitative stage dominating. As the study was highly qualitative and exploratory in nature, it gave opportunities to delve deeper into the topic and gain new insights for the study (Dörnyei, 2007).

This study being highly qualitative in nature, was left open and flexible to be able to account for the subtle nuances of meaning and new details that could have emerged during the

process of investigation. Therefore, the flexibility also applied to the research questions which evolved, changed and refined during the study. The research questions pursued in this study have changed because of the emergent nature of the study. The major research question the study aims to investigate is the following:

What tensions and transformations do public school students undergo after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC?

3.3 Setting of the Study

The current study was conducted in an EFL context in Yerevan, more specifically in four public schools and in EEC, offered by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University of Armenia. The courses are open to both children and young learners aiming at improving their English language proficiency in all aspects of the language. The classes are student-centered and focus on developing EFL learners' communicative skills. Classes last for 10 weeks and meet twice a week with duration of an hour.

3.4 Participants of the Study

The participants involved in this study were public school teachers, EEC teachers and EEC students (also students from public schools).

- The total number of teachers was 13 (five EEC teachers and eight public schools teachers).
- The age of the teachers in EEC ranged from 25-30, while public school teachers' from 35-55.

- The number of the observed and interviewed teachers was eight in public school and five in EEC.
- The total number of the participants was 70, however, only 48 students from six EEC groups filled out the survey because of being absent during the class. The age of the students ranged from 11-15.
- Among the 48 students who participated in the study, approximately 70 % of the students were female and 30 % were male. As for age, 22 % of the students were between 15 and 16 years old, 78% percent were between 11-14 years old.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. Before starting the observations at public schools, short information was given to 15 EEC groups (from Pre-Intermediate Level to Upper-Intermediate Level of proficiency). The questions aimed at finding the target classes at schools mostly attended by EEC students. As a result of the analysis of the short information, seven most common secondary schools were selected, however, out of seven schools, only four schools allowed to observe English language classes. Hence, the same 15 target students were purposfully selected to be observed both at public schools and EEC and to be interviewed (some of the students were of the same class at public school). Subsequently, EEC teachers and public school teachers were selected based on the observations I did.

3.6 Instrumentation

Three main instruments are:

- ❖ Observations
- ❖ Semi-structured interviews
- ❖ Questionnaire surveys

3.6.1. Observations

The initial stage of data collection was done through observations both in public schools and in EEC. However, only eight observations were done at public schools since a number of teachers were not willing to be observed during the English class time. The total number of observations was 13 (eight observations in four public schools and five observations in EEC). The classroom observations gave valuable information to prepare interview questions for both teachers and students. Observation form adapted from Farrelly (2013) (see Appendix A) were completed both for public schools and EEC. This gave the opportunity to observe the same students and explore their attitude towards these two ways of instruction and come up with the main list of tensions and transformations after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC. The observation form is very detailed and encompasses such points that fit well with the model of collaborative learning, for example, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, activity selection, teacher presence, action-oriented objectives of the lesson. Also, it has a space for additional comments and suggestions. In addition to these, teachers were not informed about the precise topic of the research during observations for the purposes of the objectivity of the study.

3.6.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students. The format was open-ended not to limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story and investigate the questions in more depth. Overall, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight volunteer public school teachers (see Appendix B), five EEC teachers (see Appendix C) and 15 EEC students (Appendix D). However, one limitation that I faced during the study was that a number of teachers in public school were unwilling to be interviewed. The interviewed teachers, oftentimes, tried to over-report desirable attitudes and behaviors about collaborative learning and collegial work in public schools which appears not to be consistent with the reality existing in public schools.

It is important to note that public school and EEC teachers' interview questions were constructed differently. The main reason lies in the fact that based on the observations at secondary schools it was found that the method of instruction in these communities is different. The questions were constructed to find out the students' tensions and transformations at the intersection of these two contexts.

The EEC students' interview questions were constructed around three main themes, mainly change, behavior and attitude. However, the interview questions were not fixed. As the study was exploratory in nature, based on the students' responses, new questions emerged during the interview process. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants in the interviews, each student was assigned a number from one to nine. The interviews with 15 selected students took place individually in EEC and in American University of Armenia. The interview was designed to form a basis for the questionnaire survey, to know what items to include in the survey. This best serves the purposes of the study and suggests potential theme in the process of data analysis.

3.6.3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to six EEC classes, the proficiency level ranging from low-intermediate to upper-intermediate. The questionnaire (see Appendix E) consisted of 23 questions in total, 21 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The survey was carried out anonymously to reduce the potential for uncomfortable feelings among the participants. From 23 questions, four questions were factual questions aiming to find out information about the respondents. The information mainly covered demographic characteristics as age, gender, level of education and the number of terms studying in EEC. Two questions were open-ended which aimed to find out students likes and dislikes about group work both in EEC and in public school. The other 17 items were designed around a five-point Likert-scale. These items aimed at addressing behavioral and attitudinal questions to identify the participants' actions, learning behavior and attitude towards using group work during English class time in EEC and in public schools and learn about the tensions and transformations when after experiencing group work in EEC.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data for the research study was both qualitative and quantitative including observations, interviews and questionnaire survey. For qualitative data analysis, first the data from all the participants were transcribed, and then analyzed according to the identification of major themes and categories, whereas the quantitative data was computed by SPSS software package. The data was coded, then entered into the database. Descriptive and correlation statistics were used to present the frequencies and determine the statistical significance and

correlation coefficients between different variables. Therefore, the triangular investigation provides rich data for the analysis of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This study was designed to investigate public school students' tensions and transformations after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC. The study offered rich data to answer the following research question:

What tensions and transformations do public school students experience after doing collaborative learning in EEC?

This chapter is a synthesis of the triangular investigation. In this chapter we will focus on the students' tensions in public schools, tensions in EEC and transformations in EEC.

4.2 Tensions at schools

Students experience a number of tensions in public schools after experiencing collaborative work in EEC as the method of instruction in public school is different. In public schools the approach of teaching is grammar-translation, teacher-centered which is predominantly different from EEC. It means that because of the prevalence of collaborative work in EEC, students undergo several tensions.

The tensions that students experienced at school were identified through observations, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The tensions students experience at public schools after doing collaborative work in EEC are the following:

- Rare group work
- Traditional, teacher-centered way of teaching
- Tense environment

- No freedom of speech
- Fear of making mistakes
- Error correction overuse
- Grades

➤ Use of Armenian language during English class time

4.2.1. Rare group work

According to the observations at the four public schools, teachers almost never do group work during English class time. Also, the results of the interviews with fifteen students showed that students almost never do group work, even if they do, they do once or twice a month.

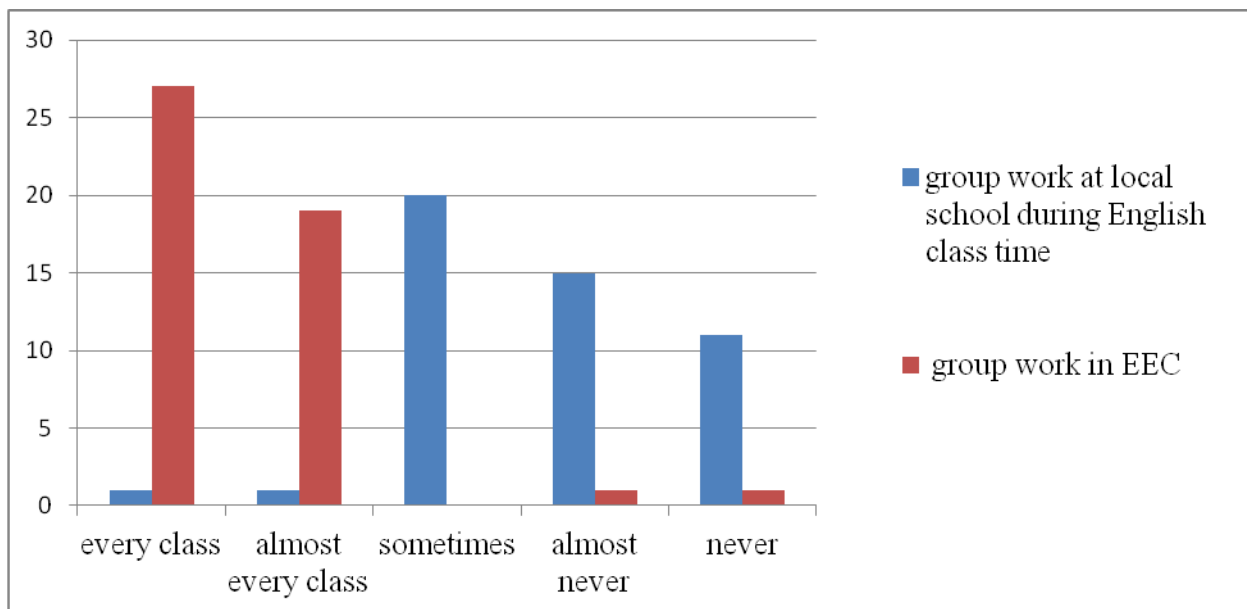


Figure 1. Use of group work in EEC and public school.

As can be seen from the Figure 1, during the English class time group work is hardly used at schools compared with EEC. However, in EEC there is an extensive use of group work in every class and almost every class based on the descriptive statistics results.

In addition to these results, the correlation analysis was computed between the variables of learning style and students' level of engagement identified through the questionnaire. The analysis shows that their relationship is positive but moderate ($r(27) = .45, p < .05$). Therefore, the style of learning influences students' level of engagement. The more group work they do in EEC, the more are they engaged in the lesson.

Whereas the results of the interviews with public school teachers indicate that they do not use collaborative learning at school as the majority of the teachers at schools face a number of challenges. The challenges reported by the vast majority of interviewed public school teachers is that the duration of English class time is very short (forty minutes), the number of the students is large (ranges from 20-35) and there is constant noise in the classroom. Short duration of the class, the number of the students and the noise caused by the large number of the students make it difficult to implement group work during the class. In addition to these challenges, all the interviewed teachers reported other problems related to the physical environment, mainly the inappropriate classroom arrangement and lack of classroom equipment or computer labs. Teachers reported that the classroom arrangement at schools is not appropriate to do group work and because of time constraints, they could not rearrange them during the classtime. *A quote from a public school's teacher,*

Group work is good and it is a new method, it is right to implement them in the classroom. But our schools are not ready for this new method, our schools have limited opportunities in terms of classroom arrangement, desks, classroom equipment, also other materials like posters, cards and toys required for group work.

It became evident from the interviews that another major challenge for the majority of the teachers is the curriculum overload and the compulsory textbooks given by the Ministry of Education (MoES). Teachers expressed their discontent that, on the one hand, MoES demands

the use of interactive methods during the English class time, on the other hand, the curriculum overload prevents from implementing these new methods. Also, the year plan by the Ministry of Education coincides with the high-stakes testing for university entrance exams, so the teachers should follow the plan to manage to cover all the material in the textbooks. *A quote from a public school's teacher,*

We are given a year program, plan that we should fulfill it. We do not manage and do not have time for group work. If I do group work more frequently, I will not manage the plan that they demand it as the plan coincides with high-stakes university exams in Armenia.

A number of teachers explain the rare use of group work with students' age-related characteristics. Some teachers report that group work can be best implemented with students of low-level proficiency; however, with students of high-level proficiency group work can rarely be used at public schools. The main reasons are the students' maturation stage and leadership characteristics. Students tend to eschew doing group work as each of them have different personality features and there is no consensus and understanding between them. *A quote from a public school's teacher,*

We cannot do group work with teenagers. It is really impossible to do it as all of them want to be the first, to be bossy and these qualities do not let them do group work. I think it comes from our culture because in our culture parents want and teach their children to be always the first.

As revealed in students' interviews, they also confessed that at public school students want to be the leader of the group. However, after doing collaborative work in EEC, they become equal and do every task jointly.

Likewise, based on the public school teachers' interview results, most of the teachers have lack of awareness and understanding about collaborative learning. The teachers' unawareness mainly stems from different sources. It became clear that teachers' prior education plays a great

role in choosing the way of teaching. The findings show that teachers with more teaching experience do not seem to welcome the new trends in teaching and learning like collaborative learning, having stronger beliefs in the ways that they were taught during university years. The experienced teachers seem to be more hesitant in the effectiveness of collaborative learning, whereas young teachers tend to welcome collaborative learning more easily and willing to integrate in their pedagogical repertoire. Also, most of the teachers rarely attend workshops or trainings. Though some teachers attend trainings, they were not effective because it is primarily theoretical in nature and does not require assessment of learning. Moreover, teachers admitted that they need more practical training instead of academic training to apply them in the classroom setting. Regarding the question of collaboration outside the classroom, the majority of the teachers appear to collaborate with their colleagues, observe each other's classes and support each other which is also important for their professional development. *A quote from a public school's teacher,*

Of course, sometimes I go to listen to other new teachers' classes and I learn a lot. Especially, I learnt much when I was first given a class to teach at school. It was something new for me, I did not know how to teach kids. I really had a problem. I clearly saw that I did not give results. So, I observed many classes and in this way I learned a lot and it gave many ideas and helped me as a new teacher.

However, it was promising that the majority of the teachers felt the support and encouragement of the administration. Thus, it can be concluded that the school culture, for the most part, is encouraging and supportive to the public school teachers. Most teachers confessed that the administration tries to give space, encouragement and autonomy for what is effective for the students. However, the main problem lies in the teachers' professional development and more support and practical experience for using them from the Ministry of Education.

4.2.2. Traditional, teacher-centered way of teaching

The second tension is related to the method of teaching in public schools. Based on the observations at public school, it was evident that the main method of teaching in all four public schools was grammar-translation method. The lessons were teacher-centered and the students were the passive receivers of the knowledge, whereas in EEC the students are taught through communicative student-centered approach. Thus, the change from one approach to another creates tensions in students. In public schools students are used to doing only passive kind of activities, such as exercises, translations of the text, translation from Armenian into English and vice versa, retelling the text, vocabulary learning through translation. However, based on the students' and EEC teachers' interviews, in EEC, there is an extensive use of group work during the class time. They incorporate different kinds of group work activities that are engaging and meet their interests. The group work activities encourage them to help each other, interact, learn from each other and push each other to learn. *A quote from an EEC student,*

In EEC we do a lot of activities that are interesting for us, like presentations, BBC video watching, debates and hot discussions. I like these activities as we discuss it in groups, help each other and we report presenting all the group members' ideas.

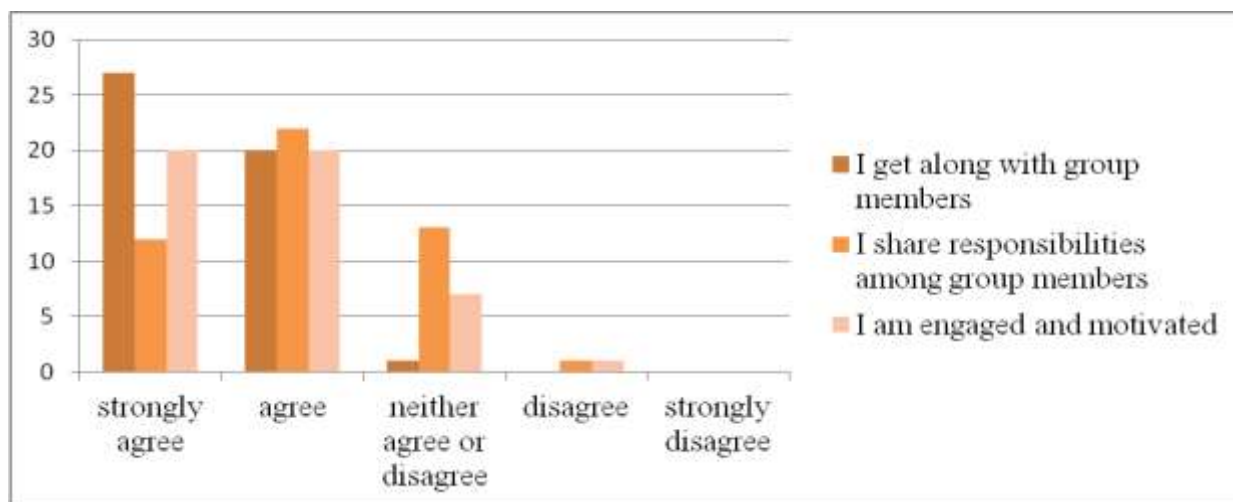


Figure 2. Students' attitude towards group work in EEC.

The figure shows that the majority of the students when doing group work in EEC, get along with group members. Also, they mainly agreed that they share the responsibilities among group members most of them are engaged and motivated in EEC classes. *A quote from an EEC student.*

We hardly ever had disagreements among group members, the activities become easier as whenever I do not know something or I have difficulties, my peers help me. Then we come to a conclusion considering all members' ideas and suggestions.

The correlation analysis between the relations of the group members and engagement in the lesson ($r(48) = .45, p < .005$) reports that when group members are in good relations with each other, they become more engaged and involved in the lesson.

4.2.3. Tense environment

The *third tension* is related to the tense environment at public schools. Coming from public school to EEC, students experience tensions in terms of the environment in the classroom. Based on observations and student interviews, the environment at public schools is generally tense and noisy. First of all, it comes from the teacher-centered approach at schools. At schools teacher is viewed as the authority of the class while in EEC the environment is safe and students' anxiety level is low. In EEC the role of the teacher changed from being an authoritative person to a facilitator and a councilor. The tension related to the tense environment has its sub tensions. The *sub tensions* are the following:

- *No freedom of speech*
- *Fear of making mistakes*
- *Error correction overuse*
- *Grades*

The environment at schools is strict and unfriendly. Students could not express their opinions freely, speak confidently and teachers do not provide opportunities for students to interact and cooperate with their peers. Students have a fear as when speaking they may make mistakes which will, definitely, influence their grades. Also, teachers at public schools seem to pay much attention to error correction which results in an unwillingness and avoidance to speak.

A quote from an EEC student, ‘‘I am not free to make a mistake at school. If I make a mistake, teacher will correct all my mistakes and I will get a lower grade’’.

On the contrary, in EEC culture the picture is different. According to students, EEC teachers create a safe and relaxing atmosphere where students are free to speak, interact with peers, express themselves and they do not pay attention to correcting all the mistakes. The analysis of the EEC teacher interviews shows that in EEC the learning goal is to try to convey the message and communicate and the teachers' role is to motivate, provide opportunities and encouragement for them to speak and interact. Also, teachers and students mentioned that in EEC there are no grades which makes the students relaxed and lowers their anxiety level.

A quote from an EEC student, ‘‘When I speak, I do not worry about making mistakes because my teacher does not correct every single mistake’’.

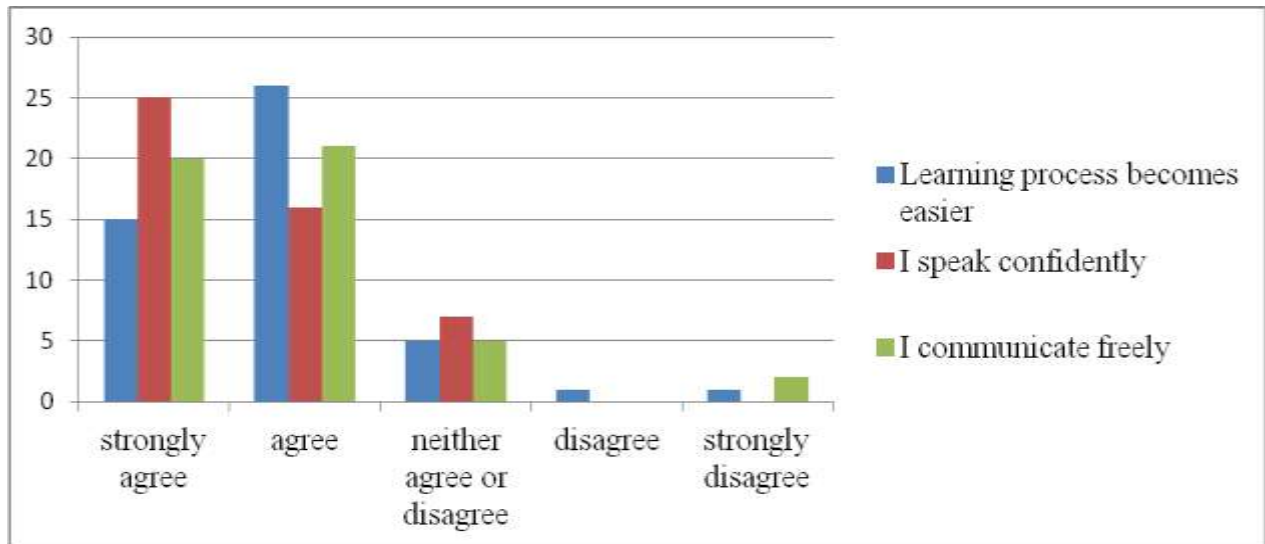


Figure 3. Students' attitudes towards group work in EEC.

As shown in Figure 3, students mainly agreed that when they do group work in EEC, learning process becomes easier for them, they speak confidently and communicate more freely. Also, students mentioned that working in groups helped them in terms of speaking confidently as before presenting they first discuss the questions in groups, share their ideas and then based on different group members' ideas and suggestions present more freely. The same results can be also drawn from the correlation analysis. The analysis computed between the two variables of the easy learning process and confident speaking during the class ($r(48) = .47, p < .005$) tends to display positive correlation. It implies that the easier the learning process becomes for students, the more confident they speak. The next correlation analysis shows that ($r(48) = 0.5, p < .005$) the relationship between the variables easy learning process and engagement is strong, indicating that the easier the learning process in EEC, the more engaged the students are in the class.

4.2.4. The use of Armenian during English class time

The last tension worth highlighting is the use of Armenian during the English class time. The observations and student interviews reveal that teachers at public schools mainly use Armenian during the class time. The grammar instruction, the explanations and other assignments are done in Armenian. Whereas, when students study in EEC, they experience tension because of the use of English during the class time. Moreover, they admit that it is very effective to use English and to interact with teachers and peers in English, to ask and respond in English. It leads to the improvement of speaking and communication skills.

4.3 Tensions in EEC

Based on the evidence of the student interviews and EEC teacher interviews, students undergo the following tensions in EEC after experiencing collaborative work:

- First group work in EEC
 - Feeling lost
 - Feeling shy to speak
- Reluctance to work in groups
- Reluctance to move
- Reluctance to speak
- Exposure to English

4.3.1. First group work in EEC

The firsts tension that students experience in EEC is their first group work. Students and teachers admit that students experience tension when they are asked to do group work on the

very first day. Teachers mentioned that when students are asked to collaborate when they first come to EEC, they feel lost and they do not know what to do. This kind of learning is strange for them and they are not used to that kind of learning. *A quote from a public school's teacher,*

When I first asked students to play a game, it was strange for them and they thought that I am joking. The first day they played the game and when I asked them to play a game in the next lesson, one of the students asked me, " Teacher, when will we learn a real, serious English?"

4.3.2. Reluctance to speak, move and work in groups

This is strongly connected with the fact that students do not have prior experience with working in groups and they lack team working and interacting skills. They are not used to that way of teaching. Also, students are reluctant to speak because they are not used to speaking English during English class time. They are reluctant to move as movement is not close to their heart. Also, they are feeling lost because the instructions and the interaction with the teacher is in English and they do not know how to respond or ask a question.

Whereas, the correlation coefficient analysis ($r(48) = .44, p < .005$) suggests that there is a moderate relationship between frustration and gender and these two variables tend to display positive correlation. It shows that gender influences students' level of frustration. Moreover, boys tend to be more frustrated when doing first group work than girls.

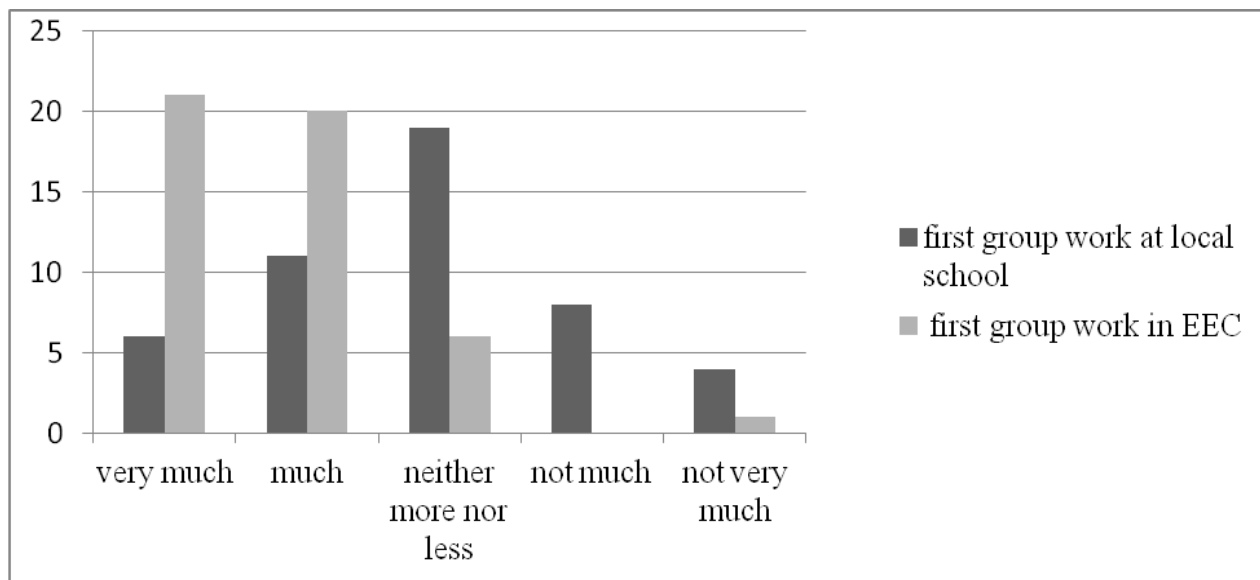


Figure 4. Students' level of enjoyment when doing first group work at local school and in EEC.

Although during the interviews students mentioned some tensions that they undergo when doing their first group work in EEC, Figure 4 shows that mostly EEC students enjoyed their first group work in EEC more than in public schools.

4.3.3. Exposure to English

Students are not used to listening and responding in English during English class time. In EEC, exposure to English during the class time seems very difficult for them to understand the teacher, the instructions or ask any questions in English. However, the interview results show that although they go through many tensions for some time to try to understand the meaning and communicate in English, students after a term of studying in EEC were motivated to speak and express their ideas in English.

4.4 Students' Change of Attitude towards Group Work

Both students and EEC teachers noticed change of attitude and behavior towards group work over time. They start liking group work if the teacher directs, leads them properly or explains the value of collaborating together. Also, students confessed that if their peers help and support, they become accustomed to it very easily. As all EEC teachers stated, for the majority of the students it takes one term to get adjusted to group work. However, student interviews revealed that the students who study in EEC for a long time, they have more positive attitudes towards group work. Out of 48 students, approximately 20 students study in EEC already from four-six years and they have very positive attitudes towards collaborative work. Several students who study in EEC for a short period of time are a little bit hesitant about this way of learning and have neutral attitude towards the use of group work.

The correlation coefficient analysis ($r(48) = .37, p < .005$) indicates that there is a moderate relationship between the number of terms students study in EEC and easy learning process. Terms and easy learning process are likely to display positive correlation. It implies that the more students study in EEC, the easier the learning process becomes for them. In addition to this, positive attitude towards group work can be seen from the interview and questionnaire analysis that the majority of the students prefer to learn in groups rather than individually. Also, the majority of the students expressed their willingness to do group work also in public schools.

A quote from an EEC student, ‘‘Working in groups is more interesting than alone. When we work in groups, we share knowledge with each other, when you don’t know anything, you know that your friends are there to help and support you. And it is more fun’’.

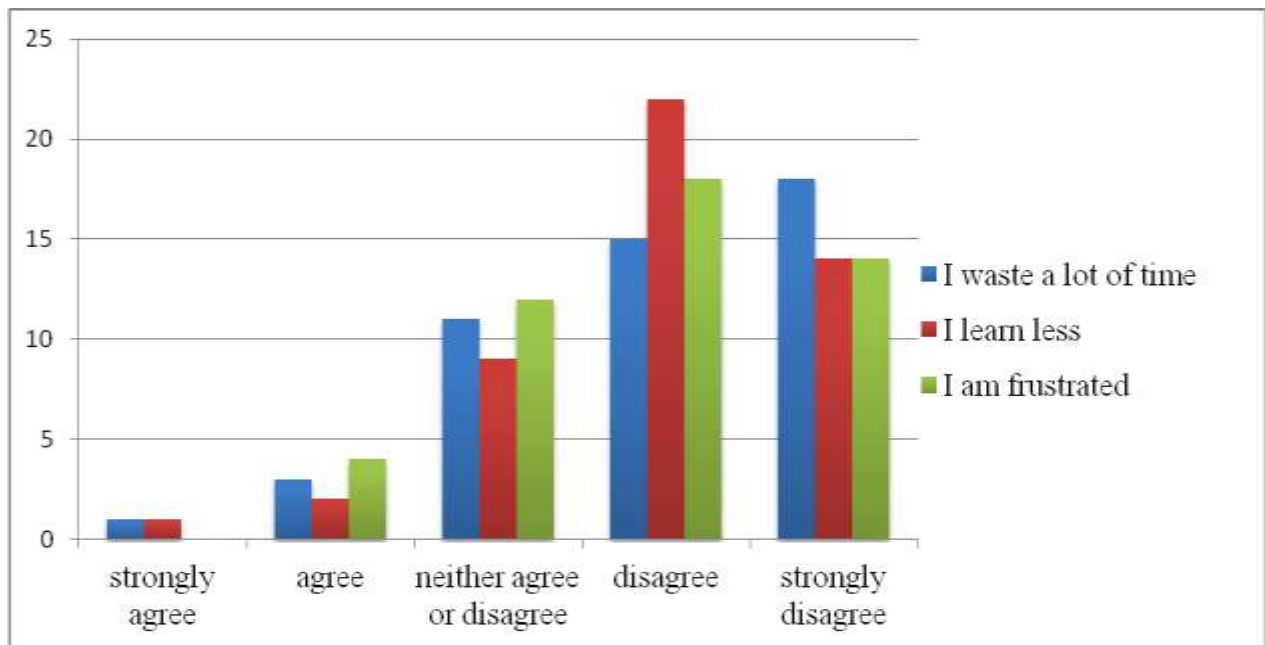


Figure 5. Students' attitude towards group work.

Figure 5 comes to prove students' supportive position towards group work. Most of the students do not view group work as a waste of time and during group work they do not learn less. Generally, when doing group work, students are not frustrated and anxious as in the first experience.

4.5 Transformations in EEC

Besides tensions, students experience a number of transformations after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC. The transformations are mainly caused by the tensions. The study aims to find out the extent students transformed themselves into the EEC culture. The transformations are primarily related to personality development, transformation in character, personal qualities and way of behavior. The list of transformations is reported as a result of a

synthesis of different kinds of evidence. As a result of the transformations in EEC, students become:

- Active
- Self-confident
- Sociable and friendly
- Respectful to others and open-minded
- Cooperative
- Intrinsically motivated
- Autonomous and independent

A quote from an EEC teacher,

Transformation is very significant for the students and it is quite effective. It implants in the students very important features that may be necessary for the future career because in their real life they are going to work in groups, to know the skill of dealing with different types of people. In addition to these, it develops other features as well, of not being kind of shy and just the opposite, overconfident.

4.5.1. Active and confident

Based on the observations and interview results, students have undergone a number of transformations after experiencing collaborative work in EEC. The first transformation is connected with the change as an individual. Students are transformed from being passive learners to becoming more active and participating in the class. Also, they become more confident in their own abilities and more sociable. Most of the students confess that they changed very much, as before coming EEC, they were shy and diffident. **A quote from an EEC student,** ‘I was very

shy at school, but after coming to EEC, things changed a lot. I got a lot of friends after doing group work with them, became more sociable and confident in myself”.

4.5.2. Sociable, cooperative and open-minded

In EEC students do group work easily as they are in friendly social relations. All the students are equal and know how to work in groups. Students help each other, become more open-minded, share ideas, make suggestions, respect and consider each other's views or arguments and come to a consensus jointly. However, at schools students have more disagreements because of the lack of group working skills and the problem to be the leader of the group without taking into consideration each other's opinions and ideas. *A quote from an EEC student*, “Studying in EEC for several years, I became more open to communicate, my parents also saw and felt the difference. When we go abroad, I speak with foreigner easily and I am not shy to speak”.

4.5.3. Intrinsically motivated and autonomous

Students who study in EEC for a long time, become autonomous learners. They become responsible for their own learning and they know why they are learning and are more intrinsically motivated.

These transformations affect positively on students and their behavior. It is very encouraging that students transform themselves into EEC culture and try to transform themselves at school to some extent. Having the characteristics of being more active, confident, sociable and open-minded also influences on their peers. Students in this situation become small agents of change who try to bring the new culture of collaborative learning into the school culture too, influencing on their peers positively. They make friends with them easily, help them if needed,

are in good relations with the peers and when doing group work help them to know how to work cooperatively. However, the question whether these students dominate the class or not, I noticed during the observations that EEC students revitalize the public school classes, make them more engaging and involve their peers in the discussion opening up discussion points. EEC students make attempts to transform their peers resulting positively on the peers as they also learn from them, try to be active and involved in the class. Also, from the interviews it became evident that some teachers welcome new suggestions and activities proposed by the students. When observing the classes I noticed that one of the teachers in one public school employed the book discussion that was proposed by the students who study in EEC and it was quite effective and engaging for the students. *A quote from an EEC student,*

My teacher is very interested in our classes in EEC. Oftentimes, she asks some questions about our classes and the group work activities that we do during the class. And there are a lot of activities that we now do at school too, such as home reading and book discussion, whole-class discussions of different texts, role-plays.

4.6 Secondary Transformations

Interview results show that there is a discrepancy between students' attitudes towards their English classes. Based on the evidence, students experience slight negative transformations after experiencing collaborative work in EEC. From the interviews with students it became obvious that a small percent of students changed their attitude towards their English classes at school. English classes at school became boring and uninteresting and a waste of time for them. In addition to these, some of the students have changed attitudes towards public school teachers, not considering them as knowledgeable and trustworthy as EEC teachers. On the contrary, the other half of the students confessed that EEC classes motivated and helped them to like their English classes more than before. They become more active and engaged in the class, because they

already communicate easily and confidently and do not meet so many barriers like their peers do.

A quote from an EEC student,

After EEC it is very easy to learn English at public school. Everything becomes a repetition for me, because we cover so many interesting topics and we are so informed in EEC that at public schools we do not have any problems.

Many of the interviewed students expressed the same thoughts about this point. It becomes clear from their answers that the approach of collaborative learning employed in EEC predominantly facilitates students' language learning process, thus helping them to overcome the difficulties that they may encounter at school. The overall picture is that students studying in EEC stand out from their peers in terms of knowledge, speaking and communication skills, activeness and confidence which, however, do not imply any sign of patronizing themselves at schools after studying collaborative learn

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the major findings of the research are discussed. In the second section the pedagogical findings are reported. While in the third and fourth sections limitations faced while conducting the study and suggestions for further research is provided.

The study which aimed at finding out the tensions and transformations public school students experience when doing collaborative work in EEC was guided by the following research question:

What tensions and transformations do public school students undergo when doing collaborative work in EEC?

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research findings can be summarized in accordance with the research question.

- *What are the tensions that public schools students experience when doing collaborative work in EEC?* The overall picture that emerged from the findings is that students' overall attitude towards collaborative learning is very positive. Although when first experiencing collaborative learning in EEC they feel lost, shy and reluctant to speak and work in groups, however, the analysis of the study shows that it does not take very long time to get used to the new way of learning.

Also, it is worth mentioning that for students, the process of changing their attitudes towards collaborative learning is slow, it takes more time for students to transform and acculturate themselves into the EEC culture. As evidence shows, students who studied in EEC already from three to six years, seem to have immersed themselves into EEC culture. During the transitional process from one culture to another, students undergo a number of positive transformations in EEC after experiencing collaborative learning and undergo certain changes in individual qualities as becoming active, self-confident, sociable and friendly, cooperative, open-minded, motivated, responsible and autonomous. Being full members of the EEC culture, they try to influence, though to a small extent, on their peers at public school and try to bring EEC culture into the school culture as much as possible. The influence in public school is reflected more at a personal level such as making their peers active and willing to participate in the classes, sociable; when doing group work, they help their peers with group working skills such as how to divide workload, how to be responsible, how to listen to group members' ideas, respect them and come to a mutual consensus.

At the same time findings indicate that although some teachers have conservative and stereotypical views on the effectiveness of collaborative learning, however, they admit that their students like to collaborate and they do it with great pleasure. It is interesting to find out that besides the students' influence on their peers, there is strong evidence that students also impact positively on public school teachers. Several teachers observing their students' positive changes over time after experiencing collaborative learning in EEC, express willingness to incorporate some of collaborative tasks into the English class time sessions at public school. From their students' anecdotal experience in EEC, they change their attitude towards collaborative learning considering it effective and engaging for students. However, the lack of knowledge and

professional and career development creates a number of obstacles for them to implement collaborative learning at schools.

Therefore, it is evident that the findings of this study is consistent with the results of the in-service teachers' training program conducted in 2005 (Hovhannisyan and Sahlberg, 2010). Compared with the previous study, the final results tend to be quite similar. After nine years period of time, there have not been any significant changes. Overall, teachers' attitude towards collaborative learning was quite positive and teachers expressed willingness to implement collaborative learning in the classroom environment, however, there is no evidence of the integration of collaborative learning from the observations that I did in four public schools in Yerevan.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

There is a discrepancy in Armenia between teacher education and future practice. Public school teachers are not much aware of the latest trends in teaching like collaborative learning. In Armenia, there is a great need of maintenance of sustainable professional development of teachers and some kind of framework to regulate the process. Teachers should be provided with the training opportunities to gain knowledge about collaborative learning as a latest tendency in teaching and learning to be able to realize them at school. Collaborative approach of learning will empower teachers to encourage the development of individual qualities of the students and provide student-centered learning. Having a full understanding of collaborative learning, its academic and social benefits, teachers will be able to revisit their teaching styles and decisions to integrate them in their pedagogical repertoire. Also, when given the opportunities to attend various trainings and workshops, the teachers' learning process should be assessed to be more

effective them. In addition, teachers should be given opportunities to collaborate with different schools and school teachers which, in its turn, will result positively on teachers' professional development and the change of school culture.

5.4 Limitations of the study

A number of limitations were encountered during the process of the implementation of the study. First of all, because of time constraints, the study could focus only on four public schools and there was not any other opportunity to include more public schools for the results to be more generalizable. After finding the six most attended schools by EEC students in Yerevan, only four schools out of six allow me to do observations and interviews at school. However, even though having the allowance to make observation reports at certain schools, several teachers were unwilling to be observed and interviewed. Another limitation worth mentioning was Hawthorne effect. When observing the classes, I immediately noticed that one of the experienced teachers thought of conducting the class using group work on the spot. She tried to perform differently using group work during the class based on the topic of the research. When doing interviews with teachers, one limitation that I faced was that the participants try to meet social expectations and sometimes overreport desirable attitudes and behaviors about school collaboration when the teachers of the same school are not aware of this process going on at the same school. Regarding delimitations, the study addressed only intermediate level classrooms and the results might not be generalized to students of other levels.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

For further investigation, it is recommended to conduct research which will aim to investigate more deeply the negative transformations students may undergo at public schools after experiencing collaborative work in EEC. Also, it would be interesting to observe whether there are negative transformations as patronizing themselves from their peers and exhibiting themselves as the most important people in the class in students. In particular, it would be valuable to explore the extent EEC students transform themselves into the new culture and kind of positive changes they make in and out of the classroom.

Another study could be conducted in more depth to find out transformations EEC students go through after experiencing collaborative learning taking into consideration short-term and long-term study in EEC. This will give a valuable insight of the amount of time students need to acculturate themselves into the EEC culture and transform the new culture to their peers.

Also, another significant research study could be done to identify and investigate teachers' overall attitude towards using collaborative learning during the English class time and the major challenges Armenian teachers face to implement collaborative learning in Armenian public schools. In this kind of research more public schools should be selected and it would more of a longitudinal study.

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OBSERVATION FORM

Instructor Name:
of Learners
Date:
Age of Learners:
Level of Class:

Observed by:

CRITERIA	Comments	
SUMMARY <i>(completed at end of evaluation)</i>		
Strengths of lesson overall, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Planning (e.g., objectives, activity selection, pacing, assessment) • Teacher Presence • Teaching & Learning Methods 		
Opportunities for growth, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Planning (e.g., objectives, activity selection, pacing, assessment) • Teacher Presence • Teaching & Learning Methods 		
Criteria	W r i t e C, M o r I	C= Completely Effective M = Moderately Effective I = Ineffective
		COMMENTS
LEARNING <i>(provided in Lesson Plan & state explicitly for learners)</i>		OBJECTIVES
Provides action-oriented learning objectives for lesson; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented verbally and/or visually for learners • Number of learning objectives appropriate for session length • Lesson content matches learning 	C C C	

objectives		
LESSON PLAN		
Warm-up/Review		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activates background knowledge • Elaborates on prior learning • Involves learners in active learning 		
Presentation and Practice Phases of Lesson		
Draws upon student experience and/or current events (builds background knowledge)	C	
Pace of lesson supports learning (i.e., not too fast or too slow)	C	
Appropriate activity selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity is appropriate for the level of students (e.g., not too simplistic or advanced) • Activity involves all learners 	C C	
Wrap-up		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishes with an overview of what was covered and what is to come (e.g., homework, reading, topic of next lesson) 	M	
INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT AND STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTION		
Instructor gives clear instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps are presented verbally and written (if appropriate) • Makes sure students know what to do before they begin 		
Instructor checks or is aware when students are lost, hurried , etc. (e.g., asks content comprehension questions, monitors during group work)		
Fostering Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks a variety of question types (e.g., factual, application, opinion, critical) • Builds off student answers/comments (provides feedback) • Encourages dialogue/discussion/student-student interaction 		
INSTRUCTOR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS		
Teacher Presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains eye contact (e.g., not 		

reading from notes or slides) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears excited about/interested in material (good energy) • Body language indicates confidence, willingness to engage, comfort in teacher role, and professionalism 		
Teacher Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is respectful and inclusive • Rate of speech is appropriate • Uses appropriate language (e.g., no slang or jargon; no unexplained idioms, structures not too complex) 	C C M	
COMMAND OF LANGUAGE		
Models appropriate structures, vocabulary, register and pronunciation	C	
PRESENTATION TOOLS		
Uses best visual medium for material and classroom	C	
Audio-Visuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual aids complement, illustrate or explain material • Visuals are uncluttered (e.g., appropriate amt. of text, whiteboard content clear and organized) 	C C	
Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses technology effectively (e.g., has practiced prior to class; knows how to navigate software/program/tool) 	N A	
Thank you for the opportunity to visit your classroom. Here are some additional comments and suggestions:		

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are the public schools ready to implement collaborative learning? Are the students ready for this new way of teaching? Are the conditions appropriate for this new way of teaching?
2. What are the main constraints that will prevent teachers from using collaborative learning?
3. How do the students feel when they are asked to collaborate with their peers? What are students' reactions and attitudes towards collaborative learning?
4. What behavioral patterns do you see in students over time? Do you notice any differences in the behaviors of the students over times, how students help each other, interact with each other?
5. Do you notice any collaboration among your colleagues in the school level? How much encouragement is given to the teachers from administration to collaborate with colleagues, to observe each other's classes, discuss difficulties and challenges with each other?
6. Is there a room for taking risks, implementing something new at public schools?
7. What current trends in public education in Armenia do you welcome? What trends are not acceptable?

EEC TEACHERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How often do EEC teachers do group work during the class time?
2. What size group work do you prefer? Do you give the students freedom to choose their partners themselves? If yes, why?
3. What type of group work activities do you prefer to do? What activities do the students like to do? Do the activities meet their interests and objectives?
4. What are the main reasons of using group work during the class? To what extent is group work effective for students?
5. How do the students feel when they are asked to collaborate with their peers, when they first come to EEC? What are students' reactions and attitudes towards collaborative learning for the first days and over the time?
6. How do the students work in groups? How do they get along with each other?
7. What behavioral patterns do you see in students over time? Do you notice any differences in the behaviors of the students over times, how students help each other, interact with each other?
8. Do you notice any collaboration among your colleagues in EEC? How much encouragement is given to the teachers from administration to collaborate with colleagues, to observe each other's classes, discuss difficulties and challenges with each other?
9. What are the teachers' and students' role in collaborative classroom?
10. What is your attitude towards using collaborative learning? Do you use group work elsewhere except EEC?

STUDENTS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you like to learn in general: individually or in groups? Please, explain why?
2. How often do you do group work at your secondary school during the class time? How often do you do group work in EEC?
3. How hard was it for you to do your first group work in EEC?
4. Was it easy for you to work with your peers? Do you have disagreements during group work?
5. Did you change your behavior after EEC classes? Do you feel more confident at school after attending EEC classes?
6. Are English classes more interesting for you after attending EEC classes? Do you start to like/dislike your English classes?
7. What type of group work do you do in EEC and at school? Which one do you prefer?
8. Would you like to be a leader of your group or you would like to do it together with your peers?
9. How does EEC course help you?
10. What do you like about group work?
11. What don't you like about group work?
12. Would you like to do group work at your school too?

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Circle the answers to the following questions.

1. How many terms have you studied in EEC? Write the answer in numbers.

2. How do you prefer to learn in general most of the time?

- Individually
- In groups of two
- In groups of three and larger
- It depends on the subject

3. How often do you do group work at your local school during the English class time?

- Every class
- Almost every class
- Sometimes
- Almost never
- Never

4. How often do you do group work in EEC?

- Every class
- Almost every class
- Sometimes
- Almost never
- Never

5. How much did you enjoy your to do your first group work in EEC?

- Very much
- Much

- Neither more nor less
- Not much
- Not very much

6. How much did you enjoy your first group work at the local school?

- Very much
- Much
- Neither more nor less
- Not much
- Not very much

7. Please respond to the following statements by either agreeing or disagreeing.

When I do group	Strongly, Agree, Neither agree, Disagree, Strongly				
	Agree	or Disagree,			Agree
Work in EEC					
1. The learning process becomes easier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I started to speak freely and confidently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I communicate freely outside the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I become frustrated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 5. I learn less
- 6. I help group members
- 7. I am usually the leader
of the the group
- 8. I get along well with
other group members.
- 9. I waste a lot of time
- 10.I share the
responsibilities
- with group members
- 11. I am engaged
- and motivated

7. How often would you like to do group work at your local schools?

- Every class
- Almost every class
- Sometimes
- Almost never
- Never

8. What do you like most about working in groups?

9. What do you like least about working in groups?

Gender _____ Female _____ Male

Age _____

Grade at school _____

Պատասխանիր հետևյալ հարցերին՝ շրջանակի մեջ վերցնելով պատասխանները:

1. Քանի՞ կիսամյակ են սովորում EEC-ում: Գրիր կիսամյակների թիվը:

2. Մեծ մասամբ ինչ պե՞ս են նախընտրում սովորել

- Առանձին
- Չուղղորդված (2)
- Երեք և ավելի խմբով
- Կախված է առարկայից

3. Ինչ քա՞ն հաճախ են կատարում խմբային աշխատանք հանրային դարոցում անգլերենի դասաժամին:

- Ամեն դասին
- Յուրաքանչյուր ամեն դասին
- Երբեմն
- Յուրաքանչյուր երբեք
- Երբեք

4. Ինչ քա՞ն հաճախ են կատարում խմբային աշխատանք EEC-ում?

- Ամեն դասին
- Յուրաքանչյուր ամեն դասին
- Երբեմն
- Յուրաքանչյուր երբեք
- Երբեք

5. Ի՞նչ չափով քեզ դուր եկավ քո առաջին խմբային աշխատանքը EEC-ով:

- Բավականին շատ
- Շատ
- Ոչ շատ, ոչ քիչ
- Քիչ
- Շատքիչ

6. Ի՞նչ չափով քեզ դուր եկավ քո առաջին խմբային աշխատանքը հանրային դարոցով:

- Բավականին շատ
- Շատ
- Ոչ շատ, ոչ քիչ
- Քիչ
- Շատքիչ

7. Արտահայտեք ձեր կարծիքը հետևյալ պնդումների վերաբերյալ :

Երբ խմբային աշխատանք էմ կատարում EEC-ով	Ես	Լիովին	Ոչ	Լիովին
	համաձայնեմ	համաձայնեմ	համաձայնեմ, չեմ	համաձայնեմ
	չ	չ	չ	չ
	չ	չ	չ	չ

1. Սովորելը

ավելի

հեշտե դառնում

2. Ես ավելի

վստահ ու

ազատ եմ խոսում

3.Յեշտ եմ

շփում

դասից դուրս

4.Ես արված եմ

լինում

5.Ավելի քիչ

եմ սովորում

6.Օգնում եմ խմբի

անդամներին

7. Սովորաբար խմբի

առաջնորդն

եմ Լինում

8.Լավ հարաբե-

րու թյուններին

անդամներին

հետ

9.Ես շատ

ժամանակ եմ

վատն ու մ

10.Աշխատանքը

կիսուժեմ

խմբի անդամների մեջ

11.Ոգևորված և

հետաքրքրված

եմ լինում

8. Ինչքան հաճախ կցանկանայիր կատարել խմբային աշխատանքը հանրային դարոցում:

- Ամեն դասին
- Չամարյ ամեն դասին
- Երբեմն
- Չամարյ ատրբեք
- Երբեք

9. Ի՞նչն էս ամենից շատ սիրում խմբային աշխատանքի մեջ անգլերենի դասաժամին EEC-ում և հանրային դարոցում:

10. Ի՞նչը չէս սիրում խմբային աշխատանքի մեջ անգլերենի դասաժամին EEC-ում և հանրային դարոցում:

Սեռ: _____ Իգական _____ Արական

Տարիք: _____

Դարոց, դասարան: _____

List of Figures

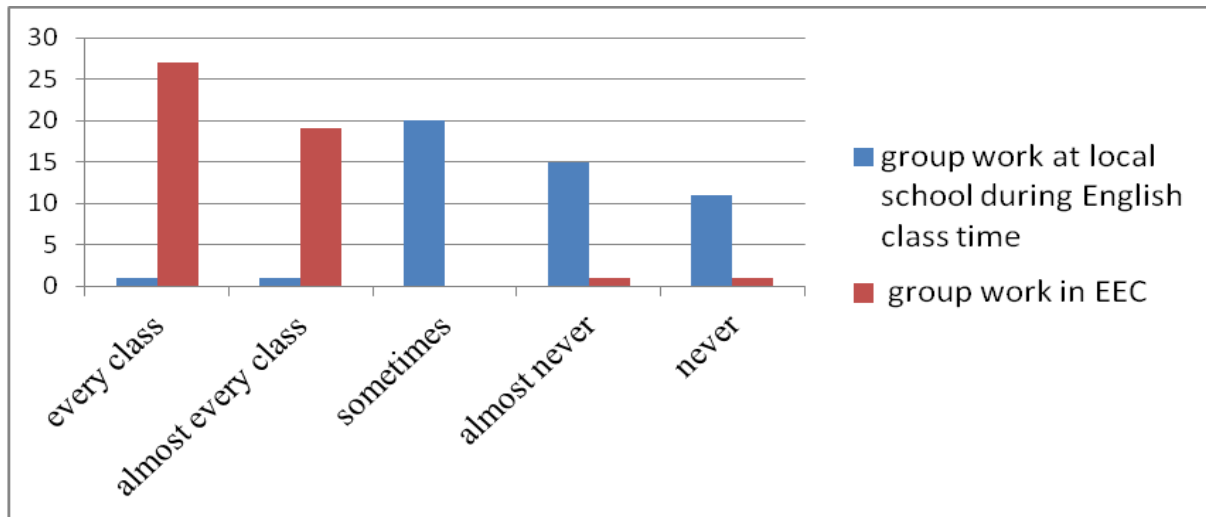


Figure 1. The Use of Group Work in EEC and Public School

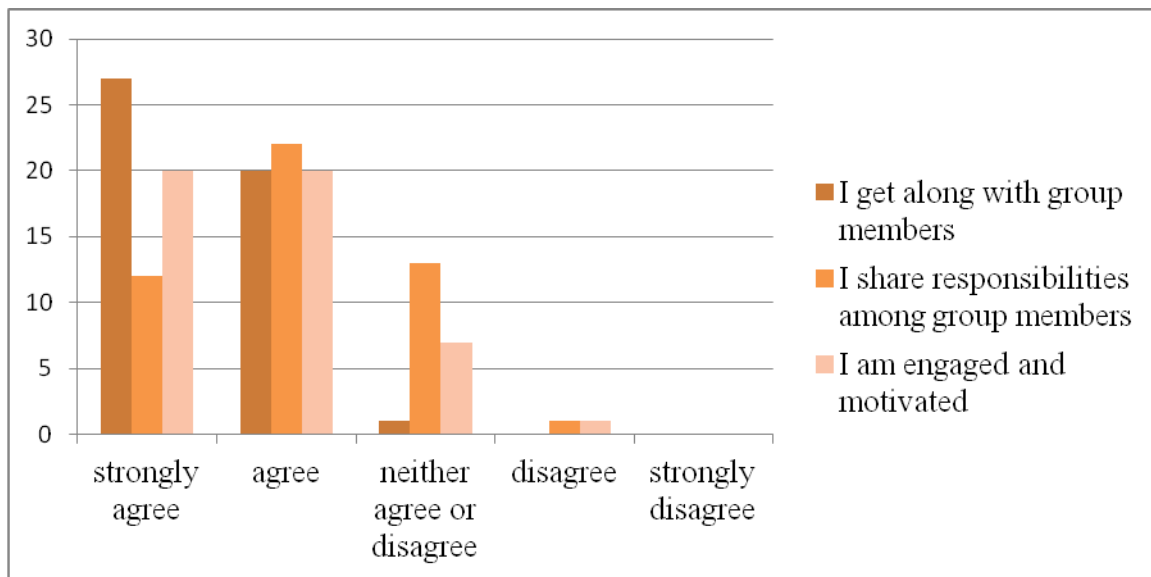


Figure 2. Students' Attitude about Group Work in EEC

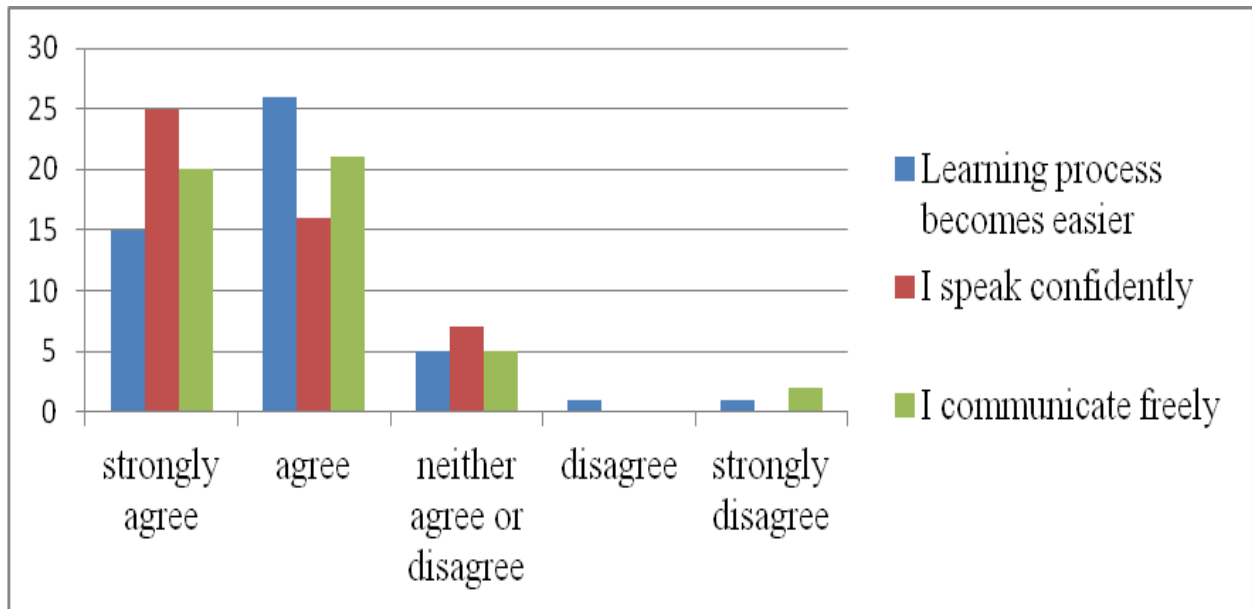


Figure 3. Students' Attitudes toward Group Work in EEC

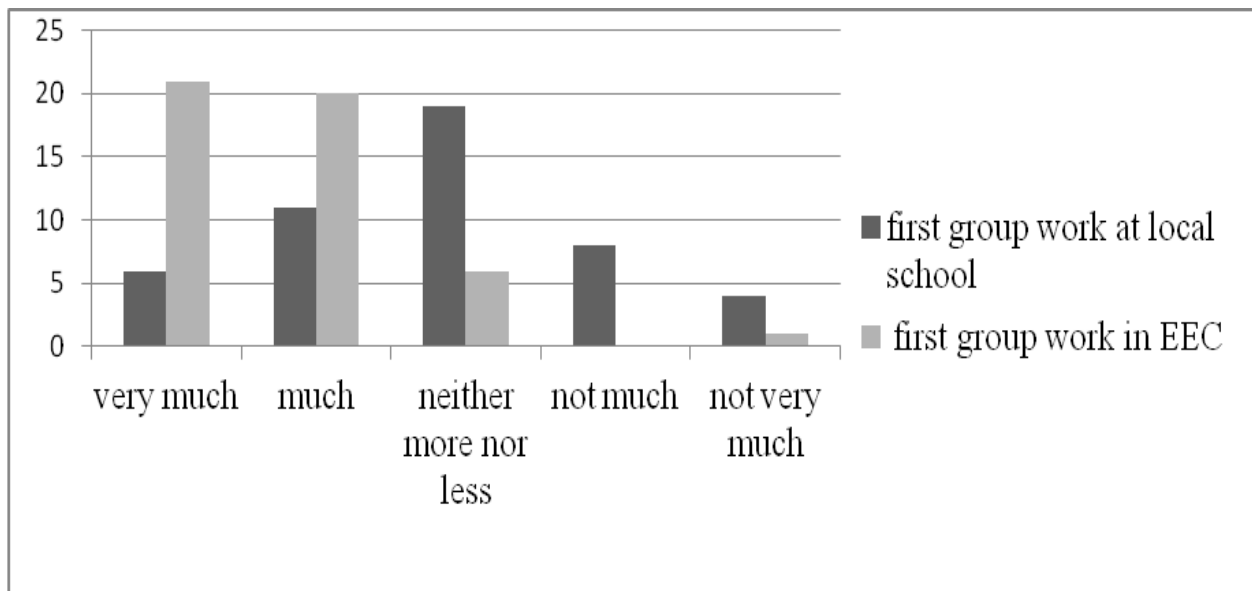


Figure 4. Students' Level of Enjoyment when Doing First Group Work at Local School and in EEC

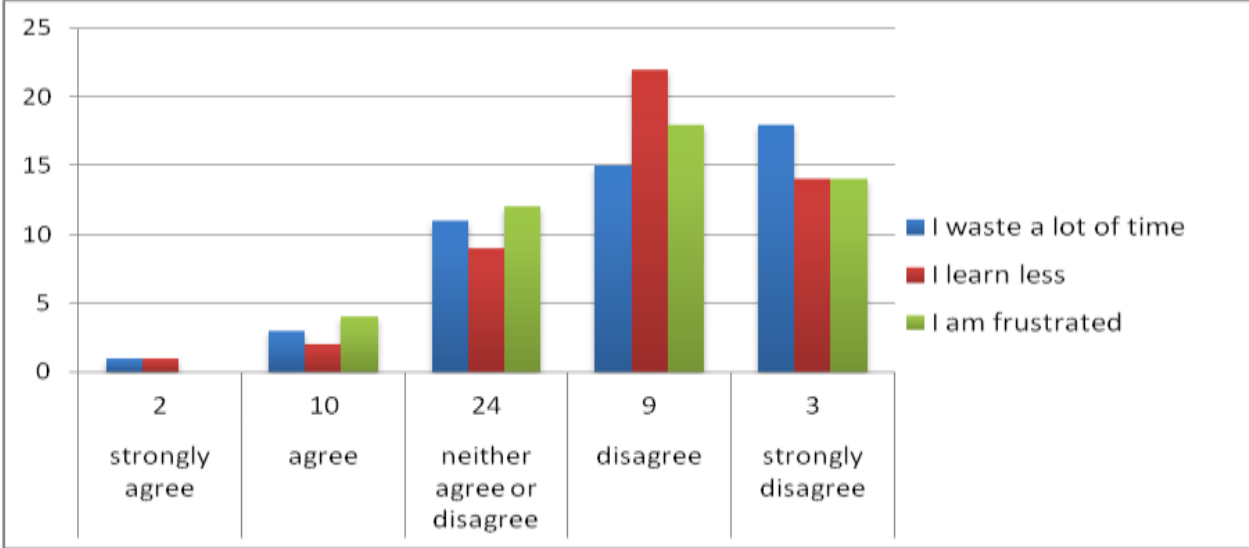


Figure 5. Students' Attitude towards Group Work