

M.A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GROUP WORK
IN BUILDING UP ENGLISH SPEAKING
CONFIDENCE OF TERTIARY LEVEL
STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the effectiveness of group work based learning as a strategy to build up English speaking confidence of tertiary level students. It also studied the advantages and limitations of applying group work based learning/teaching strategy in tertiary level large classes when compared to the traditional Teacher centered method which is generally practiced in the classroom. The research was carried out on two hundred (200) first year arts stream university students of the academic year 2013/2014 of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, who followed the Compulsory English Program conducted by the English Language Teaching Unit of the University and eight (8) lecturers in their respective classrooms. The data of the current study were gathered at multiple points of time before and after the experiment to determine the significance of group work based learning in building up the English speaking confidence of the students. The students' and lecturers' attitude towards group work based learning/teaching as well as the effect of the strategy on the areas like classroom management, time management and individual attention were also investigated. Oral tests and questioners were the tools used to gather data for the research. The data was analyzed using basic statistical methods including mean scores, standard deviations and effect size. The findings showed a remarkable development in the students' speaking confidence and attitudes after the introduction of group work based learning techniques. In light of findings, the researcher recommended that teachers should benefit from applying group work based learning method in English large classes which will intern develop students speaking confidence and attitudes.

Key words: Significance, Group work, English speaking confidence, Tertiary level