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The Effect of Collaborative Learning on Developing Speaking Skill of Sri Lankan ESL Learners

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The contemporary teaching pedagogy highlights the importance of collaborative learning for teaching speaking. According to Arthur, Grainger & Wray (2006), "Effective teaching and learning is underpinned by interactive discourse..." (p. 134). This experimental study is designed to identify whether collaborative learning in teaching speaking have successful effects. The study investigates the degree of successfulness for teaching speaking in Sri Lankan English as a second language (ESL) context. The subjects of the study are the students of grade seven of Mahakeliya Maha Vidyalaya. A pre-test was carried out at the beginning of the research to examine the current English speaking proficiency of the students. The students were allowed to work in groups and as pairs throughout the research. They were allowed to engage in activities which were designed to develop four levels of student talk. The three functions of speaking involve talk as interaction; talk as transaction and talk as performance. A post-test was also conducted in order to evaluate their English speaking achievements at the end of the study. The researcher analyzes quantitative data to establish a conclusion. Quantitative data are drawn from the pre-test and the post-test. The study concludes that the effects of implementing collaborative learning in the English as a Second Language classroom have developed the students' average English speaking skills. Moreover, it can help to create an interesting learning environment where students are allowed to acquire language while developing their interpersonal skills.

Key words: pedagogy, collaborative, speaking, interaction, classroom