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Student Motivation and Learning: The Impact of Collaborative Learning in English as Foreign Language Classes

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Abstract: Teaching approaches and techniques shape classroom practices and ultimately contribute to students' learning and achievement. While abundant research exists on how such practices impact student learning in EFL classes around the world, this research still remains scarce in Kosovo. Therefore, the current research addresses this existing gap by exploring the link between teacher classroom practices and student learning. Participants of this study included 10th and 11th grade students across six municipalities in Kosovo (N=237). The respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire inquiring about practices adopted by teachers to teach EFL. The results reveal disparate teaching practices adopted by teachers to teach the material. To that end, female students report enhances participatory and collaborative approaches used by teachers and in the meantime an overall higher perception of the chances given by teachers to express opinions and ideas in class, compared to male students. Similarly, 10th grade students reported higher opportunities provided by the teacher in class to express opinions as well as collaborate with other students to complete tasks. Finally, significant positive correlations are evident between certain collaborative and participatory approaches utilized by teachers in class as well as students' motivation. Evidently, students enjoy problem solving tasks and are much more active in cases when they collaborate with other students. In conclusion, this study sheds light on how students perceive teacher techniques and teaching methods used in EFL classes.

Keywords: motivation and learning, collaborative learning, English as Foreign Language teaching approaches and techniques.

Introduction

The intention of this research is to study the degree of interaction, cooperation and collaboration as strands of CLT of high school students in Kosovo as well as to measure the impact of interaction, cooperation and collaboration in students' motivation. These CLT teaching strands are with the same line with (Dörnyei, 1994) group components of motivation relating to dynamics of learning group which are: increase group goal orientation, promoting the incorporation of class norms, assistance in maintaining class norms, minimize the detrimental effect of intrinsic motivation assessment, promoting the development of group cohesion and strengthening ties between students and use of cooperative-collaborative learning techniques.

This research article explores the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Project Based Language Teaching (PBLT), Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Engage Study Activate (ESA) as English teaching methods by emphasizing the use of communication and students' interaction (cooperation, collaboration, pear and group work) in achieving the goal of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Furthermore, we want to see if there is a link between students' interactivity and (Dörnyei, 1994) group components of motivation relating to dynamics of learning group.

When it comes to dynamics of learning in groups, students have opportunity to take risks, translation opportunities as well as multilevel feedback (Vosburg, 2017). They also have possibility to promote language interaction via collaborative tasks, improve confidence, reduce foreign language anxiety, and have willingness to communicate in a target language (Vosburg, 2017). Kosovo Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education states some of the elements where students need to communicate through

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foreign languages, they need to solve problems, they also need to find and use learning instruments and methods, they need to lean in teams and exchange their positive experiences, students need to work independently and as part of working teams, they need to proof their self-confidence and they need to have competencies of interpersonal and intercultural relations.

The CLT puts at the center the student. The students are very engaging, their creativity as well as their activity is significant which is directed by the teacher. The work of the students is the center of different tasks, students' feelings, their understanding and curiosity. Furthermore, Students mostly discuss about their life problems and their interests, and boring topics from the text books (Urinboyeva, 2020).

In order to achieve learning competences, especially in communicating in a foreign language, Kosovo Curriculum emphasizes that students need the interrelationship between conceptual aspects and practical dimensions, such as the implementation practical and everyday life real problems in a class situation.

Constructivist learning involves collaboration through different learning activities such as: exploring, searching, analyzing, planning as well as sharing information (Yeh, 2019).

Literature Review
Contemporary teaching methods enhancing cooperative and collaborative learning
According to Constructivist approach, the learning process happens when students build knowledge by engaging themselves in pears and groups by experimenting through different learning tasks and activities in order to come to a solution of different problems (Moloney, 2013). Students' interaction, their cooperation as well as collaboration are crucial components in their ability to learn, discuss, explain, interpret, practice, solve problems and communicate in EFL. These components cannot be found in all teaching methods especially in traditional methods derived by behavior theory. The author (Zoghi, Mustapha and Maasum, 2010) makes emphases to social theories, Constructive theory as well as Humanistic theory when they elaborate students' cooperative and collaborative learning, found in teaching methods which achieve higher result with their students and they are: CLT, TBLT, PBLT, and ESA. Another author such as (Anderson, 2020) emphasizes the creation of students' good relationship through their group and pair work. He puts great emphasis on Text-based Teaching by stating that it enhances learners' use of language during different class activities while performing and they have less fear while using the language. At the same time students are more motivated while using the foreign language.

A special role of CLT, the authors (Toro et al., 2019) give to the development of activities in the pair work, role play, group activities, work through projects, seminars, quizzes and the Internet. Student activities in CLT is more complex and it is based on collaborations where students talk, exchange ideas, listen, and do not rely too much on the teacher. In this student-centered vision, the teachers are facilitators and do not carry sole responsibility for the manner in which the material is conveyed. In other words, students take on more responsibility in learning and become more independent where the teacher is just a facilitator or manager in a learning process. CLT method as more diverse incorporating other methods within itself such as: Task-Based Learning, Content Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Interactive Learning, Collaborative Learning etc.

The different denominations suggest differences in their aim and objectives when in reality what ties these methods together is teaching by involving students to use target language. So, the main objective of each of them is communication, or rather how to get to communication as soon as possible (Richards, 2005). To achieve this goal, themes and topics concern everyday practices and examples taken from real life. For instance, what people do on weekends and holidays as well as learning about the interests, activities, preferences and opinions of classmates by sharing them with others. It can also include explaining daily routines, discussing current events, writing an email, telling a book, an article, or an interesting video clip (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Snow, 2014).

CLT has numerous techniques such as: 1. Presenting authentic language through articles, news, movies, telephone conversations, etc. 2. Using games, problem-solving tasks, roles play, and discussions to help students experience real-life interactions. 3. Encouraging cooperative learning through interactions among learners. 4. Acting as a facilitator and advisor on the part of the teacher while students are engaged in group activities. 5. Emphasizing suitable application of a language by physical contexture and co-text (Farahian and Rezaee, 2015).

Motivation in class situations
There are different theories about motivation such as: behavioral, cognitive, humanistic Constructivist etc. Humanistic theories place special emphasis on the role of need (Musai, 1999). According to constructivism in the learning settings, students should reflect on their previous learning experience, they

should gain knowledge in order to analyze real matters, problems and affairs, know to research, how to debate as well as gain students' collaborative learning (Cetin-Dindar, 2015).

Similarly, our intention is to find out the motivation that occurs not only in a class situation but the motivation that students have while working together about a project, a task or activity outside of the class as well, which is learning and integration. This king of motivating learners who acquire knowledge in EFL does not include only intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). Students working together and cooperating direct them in developing intrinsic motivation and leads to improve their f self-esteem, working in pairs, increases their pro-academic standards, as well as their sense of being part of particular group (Ning and Hornby, 2014).

Dörnyei (1994) uses about thirty strategies in terms of student motivation in the classroom that divides them into several levels / categories such as: level of language, level of students, level of learning situation which are part of specific motivation components in the course/subject as well as teachers' specific motivational components and groups' specific motivational components (Dörnyei, 1994).

According to Chang (2010), the connection of group has to do with to how well group members work together. By working together, the members the group are connected by sharing ideas, and taking part in different tasks and activities. This group identity then helps to create an affective individual students' motivation in a foreign language (Chang, 2010).

We are interested to know the students' motivation inside as well as outside the class situation, especially if students' interaction, their collaboration, cooperation, pear work and group work as strategies of different Contemporary teaching methods such as: CLT, TBL, PBL recommended by Kosovo Curriculum have effects on learners' motivation in EFL. So, (Dörnyei, 1994) specific motivational components of the group will help us in understanding and having a better view.

Furthermore, we are aware that there is a kind of correlation between the students' interaction, their cooperation, collaboration and (Dörnyei, 1994) specific motivational components of the group, so we want to see to what extend is this kind of correlation.

This research addresses a major gap in research by exploring teaching approaches in EFL in Kosovar schools. More specifically the study explores common approaches used by teachers and how these approaches impact achievement in English Language. The hypotheses of this study are:

H1. There are positive correlations between collaborative and participatory approaches.

H2. Female students perceive enhanced opportunities for collaboration and contribution in class compared to male students.

H3. There is a correlation between the students' collaboration and the enjoyment of learning and problem solving.

H4. There are differences in achievement according to teaching techniques and approaches used by teachers.

Materials and Methods

The nature of this research a quantitative research design. Therefore, it can be stated that quantitative method aims to show the degree of students' interaction (cooperation, collaboration, group and pear work) in EFL. Furthermore, we want to know if this interaction has any effect in students' motivation within the framework of contemporary teaching methods such e CLT, BPL and ESA of EFL learners. Since the design is a case study the sample was chosen purposely. The participants were tenth grade students of high school. Both groups were using the same syllabus as well as the same level of proficiency.

Participants

The subjects of this study were 237 tenth and eleventh grade high school students with the same level of proficiency in English language.

The table below presents the demographic data for the participants of this study. Most of the participants were male (N=125, 53%), while 112 participants of 47% of the sample were female students. In terms of grade distribution, 124 participants were in the 11th grade (52%) and 113 participants were attending the 10th grade when the research took place. Larger number of the participants reported that they had the highest grade in the English Language course (N=137, 58%), 61 participants (26%) reported that they had a grade higher than 3 and equal or lower than 4. Finally, 26 participants had a grade between 2-3 and 13 participants had the lowest grade 1-2.

When asked about the level of their mother's education, 100 participants (42%) reported that their mothers had a high school diploma, 64 participants (27%) reported that their mothers had a BA degree,

39 participants (17%) reported having mothers with a Master's degree or higher.

In terms of residence, 52 participants (22%) resided in Prishtina, 58 participants (24%) in Gjilan, 43 participants (18%), 37 participants in Gjakove (16%) and the remaining 47 participants or 20% of the total sample resided in Mitrovice.

Table 1
Sample description

	N	%
Gender		
Male	125	53
Female	112	47
Class		
10th	113	48
11th	124	52
Grade		
1-2	13	5
2.01-3	26	11
3.01-4	61	26
4.01-5	137	58
Education level mother		
High school diploma	100	42
BA	64	27
MA or PhD	39	17
Other	34	14
Education level father		
High school diploma	79	33
BA	80	34
MA or PhD	48	20
Other	30	13
Residence		
Prishtine	52	22
Gjilan	58	24
Prizren	43	18
Gjakove	37	16
Mitrovice	47	20

Instruments of data collection

Regarding the hypothesis, the instrument used was a questionnaire:

• A students' questionnaire was used to collect data about their interactivity (cooperation, collaboration, pear and group work as well as their motivation. The questionnaire included close ended questions where the students were asked to circle the possible answers according to Liker Scale from (Strongly Disagree – 1, Disagree – 2, Neutral – 3, Agree – 4, Strongly Agree – 5). It consists of 15 questions and it is divided in tree parts the first parts are consisted of five questions which has to do with Language Skills in English Language, the second part is consisted of five questions which has to do with Learner Interaction/collaboration, and the third part is consisted from five questions which has to do with Students' Intrinsic Motivation.

Procedure

In order to prove the hypothesis, the quantitative research method was used. The data that was gathered from students were analyzed by using structured questionnaire by incorporated only close-ended questions The questionnaire was written in English; however, it was translated in Albanian in order to be better understood by the high school students and it was delivered to students in a hard copy where

the students could circle the answers. After the collection of all questionnaires the data were put into SPSS.

Results

The findings of t-test independent samples revealed that there are significant differences in gender, in their perceptions of teachers giving them the opportunity to discuss and share ideas in class t (235) =-3.911, p<.05. More specifically female students reported higher perceptions (M=4.38, SD=1.09) compared to male students (M=3.84, SD=1.36). There are also gender differences on student perceptions on teachers providing them with the opportunity to discuss and do practical exercises regarding texts t (235) =-2.509, p<.05. Female reported higher perceptions (M=4.21, SD=1.09) compared to male students (M=3.83, SD=1.23). Finally, the findings of a t-test reveal that there are also significant differences among genders within their perceptions of teachers providing students with the opportunity to collaborate in completing tasks t (235) =-1.603, p<.001. Similar to other questions, female students reported higher perceptions (M=3.68, SD=1.05) compared to male students (M=3.43, SD=1.35).

Table 2

Pearson correlation matrix for study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. The teacher supports the learning through listening and practical activities	-														
2. The teacher encourages students in asking questions and sharing ideas while discussing about Topics	.354**	-													
3. After reading a text in the English Class the teacher initiates discussions	.315**	.372**	-												
4. The teacher gives tasks where I can use my writing skills	.137**	.425**	.139*	-											
5. The teacher provides motivating learning material to be used in the classroom	.255***	.032	.129*	-.008	-										
6. I constantly cooperate with other students in the English language class	.140*	.221**	.318**	.152*	.047	-									
7. There are not any possibilities for being active in learning English in a class	-.75	-.235**	-.222**	-.100	.041	-.344**	-								
8. The learning exercises develop interaction with other students	.057	.341**	.261**	.233**	.010	.326**	-.217*	-							
9. I have a chance to cooperate to other students in the class in completing the tasks	.145*	.307**	.278**	.037	.079	.180**	-.059	.118	-						
10. I often communicate with other students within the English language course	.082	.193**	.293**	.229**	.014	.301**	-.231**	.336**	.159*	-					
11. We feel free to speak and give our opinions in English language classes	.246**	.458**	.493**	.197**	.068	.231**	-.151*	.354**	.342**	.138*	-				
12. I enjoy working together in solving a problem or working for a project	.100	.285**	.292**	.136*	.185**	.303**	-.219**	.300**	.167*	.275**	.175**	-			
13. The interactivity between students makes me more active	.189**	.385**	.289**	.272**	.168*	.230**	-.100	.330**	.210**	.225**	.379**	.294**	-		
14. The cooperation with friend makes me more curious	.060	.138*	.079	.050	.145*	.118	-.124	.174**	.097	.130*	.100	.210**	.182**	-	
15. Our collaboration in the class motivates us to finish the tasks	.134*	.128*	.253**	.101	.152*	.131*	-.056	.213**	.240**	.178**	.250**	.314**	.309**	.196**	-

In terms of differences between classes the findings of the independent t-test samples reveal that students' significant differences are shown on their perceptions on teachers supporting the learning of the material through listening and practical exercises t (235) =2.356, p<.05, where students attending the 10th grade reported higher perceptions (M=3.78, SD=1.06) compared to students from the 11th grade (M=3.40, SD=1.20). Table1, above presents the correlation between variables. It reveals that there is a significant positive correlation among teachers supporting learning through listening and practical exercises and teachers giving students opportunities to ask questions and share ideas (r=.354, p<.01), teachers doing practical exercises and initiating discussion after reading the text (r=.315, p<.01), teachers giving students tasks to practice writing skills (r=.137, p<.01), teachers providing effective materials to be used in the classroom (r=.255, p<.01), teachers promoting interaction between students (r=.140, p<.05), promoting student cooperation in completing in class tasks (r=.145, p<.05), enabling students to freely speak and give opinions in English (r=.246, p<.01), and motivating students through collaboration (r=.134, p<.05).

Data from a correlation analysis reveal that there are significant positive correlations between teachers giving students opportunities to ask questions and share ideas during in class discussions and teachers doing practical exercises and initiating discussion after reading the text (r=.372, p<.01), teachers giving students tasks to practice writing skills (r=.425, p<.01), teachers promoting interaction between students (r=.221, p<.01), promoting student cooperation in completing in class tasks (r=.307, p<.01), enabling students to freely speak and give opinions in English (r=.458, p<.01), and motivating students through collaboration (r=.128, p<.05). Finally, the results of the study reveal that collaborative work increases student activity during learning (r=.289, p<.05) while it also makes solving problems more enjoyable (r=.292, p<.05).

Discussion

According to students' answers regarding the approaches the teachers use in teaching EFL it is obvious that students were not satisfied with the teachers' support while learning listening skills. They claimed that the material used was not adequate and teacher do hardly any exercises regarding listening skills. On the other hand, results from t-test revealed that students' perceptions about their opportunity to discuss in the class as well as share their ideas while discussing about different topics was high. It is obvious that students were satisfied with learning of speaking skills in a class situation as well as their engagement in a class discussion. There were differences between how female perceive learning speaking skills male students' perception about speaking skills, however, both of them were satisfied with their engagement in learning speaking skills. The finding reveals that 10th grade students are more satisfied with their teachers regarding the teaching material as well as their participation in listening skills compared with 11th grade students. In addition, finding show that there is a link between teaching different skills. The positive correlations are usually between listening and speaking skills where students listen materials and then they do practical exercises, usually speaking and communicating between each other and with teacher as well. Another very important issue is the correlations between the reading, speaking as well as writing skill where students are engaged in reading and later, they are able to do practical exercises, initiate discussions and practice their writing.

The research data provided within the scope of this study reveal that there are gender differences in perception of opportunities to express ideas and collaborate in English language classes, with female students reporting more opportunities to collaborate in tasks and exercises compared to male students. Cooperative learning (CL) according to (Mahbib et al., 2017) found in literature is described as successful teaching strategy where working in small groups and pairs with diverse students, teachers can use different varieties of learning activities so that students improve their knowledge EFL. CL involves working in teams and pairs where students work together in accomplishing learning objective being helped by their teacher.

Almost the same aspect of teaching procedures and techniques are mentioned by (Khoshsima and Shokri, 2016) where is mentioned that, learners should be exposed, motivated and they should be given opportunities to use the language. Furthermore, they stated that most of the teaching activities should have features such as engaging, studying and activation. The main goal for English teacher is to wake learners' intention, their curiousness, as well as their interest by providing different tasks and activities which continuously engage students. Such activities and materials: games, interesting topics, visual aids, engaging activities, discussing themes as well as contemporary stories (Harmer, 2007).

Kosovo Subject Curriculum for tenth grade students for English language states that teachers should promote CLT, TBL as well as PBL in order to develop learners' creativity and autonomy as well as their collaboration, cooperation and interaction. As a matter of fact, teachers should promote learning

with the student in the center over the traditional way of teaching. Kosovo Curriculum also supports the students' extracurricular activities and encourages students' behavioral habits in order to enable them to survive in the world outside the class situation.

The main objective of English Language Curriculum is to promote students' communication in a successful way. The CLT aims to enables students' interaction between each other outside the classroom. Kosovo Subject Curriculum for tenth grade students for English language suggests that teachers should use the four language skills in order students to be able become a better communicator.

Another important finding of this research is that there are positive correlations between different practices of teachers. To that end, teachers who provide students with opportunities to ask questions and share ideas are the ones who also provide more support for student learning, as reported by students. On a similar note, there are positive correlations between teachers doing practical exercises with students and teachers promoting interaction and collaborative learning between students. Evidently, future research studies should explore the impact of specific teaching approaches and strategies utilized by teachers in teaching EFL in order to explore their impact on student learning.

Conclusions

While present research addresses a major gap in literature linked to student learning and motivation on one hand and teacher practices and approaches on the other, current research has a number of limitations. The study reveals gender differences in perceptions, with female students perceiving classrooms to foster collaboration and teachers to provide more opportunities for expression, discussion and working together, compared to male students who reported lower perceptions on all variables. To that end, future studies should explore these differences in perceptions in order to understand how students build perceptions regarding collaboration. Future studies should research the gender differences in student perceptions on the opportunities provided by teachers to share ideas and collaborate in class. Additionally, results of present research also reveal that students report being more active in learning when they have more opportunities to collaborate. In the meantime, students also tend to enjoy solving problems in cases when they collaborate with others. Building up on the results of the present research, future studies should research the link between collaborative learning and student achievement, in order to understand if and to what extend collaborative learning translates into higher achievement by impacting motivation and student activity.

Current research has a number of limitations. Firstly, this research study took place during the last phase of the pandemic and the results of this study may have been impacted by it. Secondly, current research gathered data only from students, and it would be interesting to explore the same topic from the perspective of the teachers.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.K.; methodology, H.K and M.XH; software, H.K.; formal analysis, H.K. and M.XH; writing—original draft preparation, H.K. and M.XH,; writing—review and editing H.K. and M.XH. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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