# The Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning in Improving English Speaking Fluency among Junior Secondary Class Students

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This research investigates the effectiveness of collaborative learning in improving English speaking fluency among junior secondary students in the Nintavur Education Division, Sri Lanka. The primary objective of this study is to examine how collaborative learning strategies influence students' English-speaking fluency, coherence, vocabulary and pronunciation. The study addresses a significant gap in students' spoken English abilities resulting from traditional teaching methods that prioritize grammar, reading, and writing over oral communication. Collaborative learning strategies, including group discussions, role plays, peer teaching, storytelling, and language games, were explored as potential solutions to address this challenge. A mixed-method approach was employed, involving oral tests, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. Speaking fluency was measured using oral proficiency rubrics that evaluated fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The research sampled 320 students (Grades 6 to 9) and 11 English teachers from 8 schools, selected through a stratified sampling method. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and statistical evidence indicated 65% improvement in students' oral fluency scores after implementing collaborative strategies. Qualitative findings were drawn from thematic analysis of classroom observations and interviews. The study emphasizes the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative learning, including Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and its practical applications in improving speaking fluency. The review identifies gaps in implementing interactive methods within the Sri Lankan context, particularly in rural regions like Nintavur. The findings revealed that students exposed to collaborative learning strategies demonstrated significant improvements in their speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English. The data highlighted those interactive activities fostered a supportive learning environment, reduced students' speaking anxiety, and bridged gender gaps in participation. Students achieved higher oral test scores compared to those taught using traditional teacher-centered methods. Teachers also acknowledged the benefits of collaborative learning but cited challenges such as resource limitations, large class sizes, and insufficient training as barriers to effective implementation. The study underscores the importance of integrating collaborative learning techniques into English language instruction to create inclusive and interactive

classrooms. Recommendations include targeted teacher training programs, curriculum reforms to accommodate collaborative strategies, and the provision of necessary resources. By addressing these aspects, the study aims to decolonize English education by shifting away from rote-based instruction toward dynamic, learner-centered pedagogical practices. This research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance English language education and foster students' communication skills, ensuring their readiness for academic and professional opportunities.

*Keywords:* Collaborative learning, English-speaking fluency, Junior secondary education, Decolonizing English, Nintavur