

# Female Students' Participation and Performance in Peer-Led Language Learning (PLLL) in EFL Classrooms: Bahir Dar University Second Year Textile Engineering Students in Focus

Medhanit Belachew Beyene<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*This study examines the involvement and performance of female second-year Textile Engineering students in a classroom setting where language learning is driven by peers. One hundred eight female students, spread across 6 sections, made up the total 351 pupils. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, three teachers were teaching the course "Communication Skills" to those students as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. Three male students from each of the three parts, 34 female students from three sections, and all three teachers were chosen using convenience sample and purposive sampling procedures. Data was gathered using focus groups, document analysis, classroom observations, and interviews. The results indicated that female students' involvement in the Peer-Led Language Learning (PLLL) process was extremely low or unsatisfactory, but that the introduction of peer-led team learning improved the performance of female students as a whole.*

**Keywords:** Peer-led language learning (PLLL), female students, ESP/EFL classrooms

## Background of Study

Language learning is a process of enhancing and developing the necessary elements of language skills for different purposes. Despite language learning encompasses various purposes; its relevance in peoples' daily lives is undoubtedly important. Therefore, schools and institutions consider English language learning as a timely requirement. Since English has been taught as a subject and a medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ethiopia, starting in grade 1 and continuing higher institutions Ph.D. programs, for more than 60 years, its familiarity has been acknowledged and supported by numerous sectors of the contemporary educational system. Those days, English had been taught dominantly as EFL, but recently, it is supposed to be included in curriculums as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and ESP. This is due to schools currently using English for specific fields of study and as a supplementary course to assist students in their future careers. In addition to the practical function of

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, MA, MEd. Bahir Dar University, Ethiopian Institute of Textile and Fashion Technology (EITEX); Corresponding author: Email: medibel39@gmail.com

English language proficiency in different sectors in Ethiopia, the English language improvement program (ELIP) has been given prior attention.

In the process of learning English, curriculum designers and teachers suggest and use different strategies; for instance, active learning methods, which are participatory and with a lot of learner autonomy levels, collaborative or peer-led language learning that enhances the students' reflective skills and self-assessment towards achieving the language learning objectives are the most common ones. Adane et al. (2009) acknowledge that learning quality can be enhanced through teachers' effective design of their classes by employing peer assessment and self-reflection techniques into account.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classrooms are usually concurrent with interactive and collaborative language teaching/learning strategies. Even if it does not mean that other language teaching and learning methods are as such less important, the present paradigm of education, especially in language learning perspectives, acknowledges CLT as the most preferable. In CLT approach, students can develop their interactive skills and peer-assistance performances while working collaboratively. According to Fry et al. (2009), students, especially less achievers, can be more benefited from collaborative learning with their peers. However, not all collaborative language teaching and learning strategies are always a panacea because of different reasons, especially, in encouraging female students to help participate actively and develop their communicative performances. Hence, in this study, the researcher investigated how much female students of textile engineering, in Bahir Dar University-(EiTEX), participating in peer-led language learning process in EFL/ESP classrooms.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Students, in EFL/ ESP classes, are required to be exposed to contextualized language learning strategies. Those strategies should not only work in order to make students efficient in learning and using the language, but should also contribute to their self-directed learning (Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006). Peer-led language teaching/learning strategy is one of the best mechanisms to increase students' active involvement, build their confidence, enhance social skills, and autonomous learning besides promoting their language proficiency and performance. From Piaget in the 1950s and Vygotsky in the 1960s and 70s to more current research findings like Sadeghi and Baneh (2012) and Arendale (2014), scholars acknowledge peer-led language learning leads to cognitive

challenges, which direct students to review and modify the frameworks, through which they view the world; PLL facilitates learning and increases students' communicative abilities. Therefore, students in a peer-led language learning process, have ample opportunities to develop their linguistic competence and performances.

Undergraduate students in Bahir Dar University, particularly in Ethiopian Institute of Textile and Fashion Technology (EiTEX), are familiar with peer-led learning which has been applied in every course they are taking. Although, peer learning. That is, collaborative learning in classrooms has been used sporadically in different levels of education for a long period of time. The intention of applying this strategy, in all higher institutions in Ethiopia, is in order to improve the learners' autonomy and collaborative learning nationwide on a large scale. In order to employ this strategy effectively, students are assigned in different manageable groups with a leader or representative for each group. Although there are relatively few female students in each group (e.g., out of 351 students of second year Textile Engineering students, the number of female students is only 108). Thus, female students' involvement in every group activity is certainly important pertinent to the current goal of the country to empower female students. From the researcher's observations during a preliminary study, many of female students were observed passive in collaborative activities. This is due to a patriarchal orientation mentality (where males always play major roles), female students seem to be dominated by the male students' opinions and decisions during collaborative activities.

The main purpose of this research was to examine the level of female students' participation in peer-led English language learning process and their roles in peer-led language tasks. The assumption was that these students are limited and seemingly dependent on their male group mates. Consequently, the researcher believed that their level of participation highly impacts their performance. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated to explore female students' participation and performance in a PLLL classroom environment.

### **Research Questions**

The primary objective of this study was to explore female students' participation in PLLL process and its impact to their performance. This research therefore sought to answer the following questions.

- How do female students of EiTEX participate in the peer-led language learning process in EFL classrooms?

- How does the participation and role of female students in the peer-led language learning process affect their performance?

## Literature Review

### Peer-led Learning

Peer-led learning is one of the active learning strategies which bases in social constructivism. According to Drane et al. (2014), peer-led small group learning is considered as a widely used approach or model especially in higher institutions in the US. The model emerged as a popular teaching method resembling many other collaborative learning approaches as of 20 years ago. It also received a wider attention in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The intention of peer-led learning is to promote an environment for meaningful learning unlike traditional classrooms. Peer-led learning can be a remedy to large class size problems where students lack opportunities to know each other, ask questions without intimidation and reflect on their own learning. According to Lewis et al. (2009) and Nelson & Pearson (1999), students may feel isolated in large class size situations because they are unable to familiarize themselves with their professor and other students. However, in small group peer-led learning environment, students establish relationship through time, and the peer leader is a fellow or their own school mate; therefore, students feel at ease and participate freely (Kaufman et al, 1989). Furthermore, students will be in a collaborative and less competitive context unlike large class size contexts. In addition, this supporting climate can create better student outcomes particularly for underrepresented students (Arendale, 2014).

Several scholars such as Kaufman et al. (1989), Sadeghi and Baneh (2012) and Arendale (2014) also acknowledged peer-led learning as advantageous and important strategies for a better student-centered learning and teaching process. Some of the advantages are improving grade performance, empowering retention in course and course sequences, learning gains and enhancing high levels of perceived personal development and satisfaction.

This peer-led learning approach is also considered as an approach that particularly supports learning for women (Drane et al., 2014). This aligns with studies that show that women tend to prefer better in a collaborative environment to a competitive environment. According to Arendale (2014), peer-led learning has some guiding principles. It has an integral

program to the course through required attendance at two hours of workshop time weekly; trained peer leaders in group relationship and course content; challenging, yet accessible activities and materials; deep involvement of the faculty; conducive physical space and environments to discussion and learning; and strong support from the institution.

### **Female Students' Roles in PLLL Environment**

Language acquisition is a process that can be achieved through different context-based strategies. Some of them might include similarities of the L1 and L2 or the foreign language, the use of authentic and sound teaching/learning methods and socio-cultural establishments.

From a gender standpoint, men and women do have separate responsibilities that are either very different or moderately different in terms of sociocultural norms. And language learning and/or acquisition takes the huge part of socio-cultural contexts. Consideration of students' prior knowledge, experience, and motivation level, each of which is influenced by numerous other factors such as gender roles, is one of the important factors that determine how effective communicative language teaching and learning is (Fajlik, 2011). Moreover, it is often found that females are introverts and males are extroverts in the classroom and these characteristics are rooted in societal perceptions and acknowledgements. Although there are exceptional cases, those gender-based characteristics are very common reflections in local EFL/ESP or any other classrooms.

In relation to this, there are certain learning strategies that both male and female students accept in light of their unique situations and which actually have a substantial impact on students' performance. According to Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006), gender, based on studies conducted using learning strategies in higher levels of education, has a strong parallel relationship with language proficiency. Furthermore, studies also shown that there are gender differences in the use of learning strategies. Those differences appear most evidently in the use of socially driven strategies like group learning. Females are more frequent users of learning strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies). From those strategies, females use more of social learning strategies (authority). They also use formal rule-based practice strategies and conversational or input strategies (authority. Fajlik (2011) acknowledges this inclination of females towards these strategies stating that women enjoy interacting with others; place a great value on interpersonal relationships compared to men; they feel confident in using

their interpersonal skills which are important factors for the development of the use of foreign language skills; particularly, in a communicative classroom or communicative teaching/learning environment. In addition, Fajlik claims that the socially interactive aspect of the communicative approach involving pair and group work may lend itself better to the interpersonal tendencies of women, and their adept interaction with others leads to achieve the linguistic goals of communicative based approach.

### **PLLL and Academic Performance of Female Students**

Female students can perform better in activities that involve interpersonal skills, for they are with a better level of interpersonal skills which are key elements in peer-led language learning process. However, there are other factors that positively or negatively influence the performance of students in EFL/ESP contexts. According to Berhanu et al. (2011), student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors are considered determining students' performance. These factors, which are assumed as demographic factors, include age, gender, geographical issues belongingness, ethnicity, marital status, socioeconomic status, parents' educational level, parental profession, language diversity, income and religious affiliations. Furthermore, in Theory of Educational Productivity, there are nine factors based on cognitive, affective and behavioral skills for optimization of learning that affect the quality of performance. These are: aptitude (ability, development and motivation), instruction (amount and quality) and environment (home, classroom, peers and television). Based on these and related factors, female students could perform better than male students in certain instances (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004) or vice versa. However, the best combination of aptitude, instruction and environment can enhance the level of female students' performance in PLLL.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate female students' participation in PLLL process. A qualitative approach was employed to obtain necessary data on how female students participate in PLLL process and their performance in EFL/ESP classrooms. According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative approach is used to explore meaning to an individual or group accredit to a social or human problem. Hence, the researcher used different instruments such as focus group discussion (FGD), interview, observation and document analysis to investigate the female students' participation in PLLL contexts and their performance

through the process. Furthermore, participants, who provided the relevant data, were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods in order to obtain the relevant data. The detailed procedure of the selection process is presented. In order to understand the female students' participation in PLLL process and the contribution of PLLL to female students' performance, recorded group/peer assignments were employed.

### **Participants**

The researcher selected three teachers, who delivered the course communication skills to second year textile engineering students, using purposive sampling technique. Moreover, 34 female students from three sections (all female students from each section; i.e. 10, 10 and 14 students) were taken as participants using purposive sampling technique. In addition, three male students, who are classroom representatives from each classroom, were selected purposively and two students selected using convenience sampling technique) from each of the three sections. Then, in total, 9 male students were taken as additional participants.

### **Instruments**

The researcher used focus group discussion, interview, classroom observation and document analysis to obtain necessary data and answer the research questions designed for this study. These instruments were found relevant and important, for the researcher has to obtain the required information so as to draw possible answers from the research questions and each instrument is stated in detail below.

### **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)**

Focus group discussion was one of the instruments used to investigate female students' level of participation in PLLL process. The discussion was conducted for three days; two hours were spent with students, in each section. The agenda for focus group discussion were adapted from the literature and Hong-Nam and Leavell, (2006). The researcher provided each topic for discussion one at a time, and invited all the discussants to participate in the group discussion. Furthermore, the female students, each from the three sections, were divided into two groups having (5:5), (5:5), (7:7) students in each group in order to manage the discussion. The researcher guided the discussants not to drift away from the topic by paraphrasing the points under discussion and inviting them to explain their views in line with the topic provided.

### **Interviews**

The semi-structured interview was designed and administered for EFL/ESP teachers, who were selected purposively, in order to understand female students' level of participation in PLLL process. The interview was also for male students in order to crosscheck the data about female students' participation. According to Creswell (2013) interviews are advantageous to get data from participants who cannot be directly observed. The interview, with an individual, took from 10 to 15 minutes and was conducted in different days. This procedure helped the researcher to triangulate the data obtained from focus group discussion and classroom observation.

### **Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation was the other instrument that the researcher used in order to understand the exact classroom situation of PLLL process in EFL/ESP classrooms. Moreover, it was used as a way to understand how female students were handling different roles with their peer group members. Observation is advantageous to obtain first-hand information; i.e. the researcher has first-hand experience with the participant (Creswell, 2013). During the process, the researcher played non-participant observer roles. The data that was gathered through observation used to support the information that was gained from focus group discussion and interview.

### **Document Analysis**

In addition to the group/peer activities conducted frequently in EFL/ESP classes that are not recorded or used for students' performance evaluation, students are usually provided instructions to work on 2-5 assignments to be recorded and will be part of their final evaluation results or grades with their peers. The students, from the selected three sections, were instructed to work with their peers/groups on three assignments that will be recorded. The results of female students, from PLLL process, which were recorded from three different assignments, were used to check their (female students') performance. According to Creswell (2013), and in line with this context, document analysis represents data in which participants have given attention. Moreover, it enables the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants. Therefore, the recorded outcomes are believed to show how female students perform in such activities in PLLL process.

### **Procedure**

The researcher used focus group discussions to investigate female students' participation in PLLL process. Additionally, interview was used



to gain information about female students' participation in PLLL process from course teachers and male students. Classroom observation and document analysis were other instruments used in order to check classroom situations and students' responses respectively. The findings or results that are organized in thematic manner.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Findings from interview**

From interviews that were conducted to communication skills teachers and selected male students, female students did participate in PLLL activities, and they did different activities with their peers/group members. However, their roles in their peers/ groups defined differently by the course teachers and male students. Course teachers defined female students' roles in PLLL as moderate except few students. Besides, although it is impossible to track their roles on PLLL activities which most of them were outside classroom (home take) activities, there were few female students who participated actively during oral presentations.

On the other hand, male students described female students' roles as passive and dependent on their male partners. Even though there were very few female students, not more than two, out of 57-59 students in the class, only 8-21 of them were females taking active roles in PLLL process. Related to this fact, male students also described female students that they only played minor roles such as copying written assignments, for "some of them have a better hand writing" instead of playing active roles in a every activity/task. Male students further justified their reasons that female students did not have confidence in doing tasks as male students do. Besides, female students were not willing to join their group mates to do tasks together. On the other hand, male students did not trust female students' abilities lest (for fear) their final result would be affected by their female partners' performance on those tasks.

Therefore, male students preferred to do the activities individually such as reading passages, inferring information from the passages, compiling activities from different sources to effectively accomplish their assignments without female peer member's participation.

### **Findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

The focus group discussions were accomplished within three days' time given two hours for each day. The participants of the focus group discussions were second year textile engineering female students that are

34 in number. Based on the preset agendas, the students discussed about their participation, roles and performance in PLLL process.

From the discussions, many of the participants (32 of 34; i.e. 94%) explained that peer-led learning was important and they gained a lot from it. They believed they got the chance to develop their interpersonal skills, shared relevant information and they found it a means to understand their level of competence. They believed that these experiences in turn helped them to perform better in both group and individual activities.

However, students raised issues that they found it difficult to use PLLL process successfully in their situation. The first challenge was each student's own perception. They believed that males can do better or they were doing well academically; therefore, they preferred to let male students do every activity that they were supposed to do it in groups. This wrong mentality and lack of self-confidence on female students could strengthen the second problem; that is male students' fear of female students' ability in performing tasks, so they did not want to rely on the work done by female students. Therefore, they (male students) preferred to do all the tasks by themselves.

The third problem that female students confirmed was that they were not willing and interested in spending time with their male peer group members on doing tasks. They mentioned that only one or two female students were found in peer group activities, and it was "less comfortable" for them to be at working places ("space") anytime their male group mates call them. They rather preferred providing resources like money for printing, copying and binding and writing ups. Due to repeated unwillingness of female students to participate in peer group activities, male students were forced not to insist them, and required to handle tasks by themselves. Male students only allowed female partners to re-write again the already drafted assignments in legible hand writing and to make themselves ready for the oral presentations.

The fourth problem was that peer leaders were assigned based on their better scores of GPA (which very few of them were females), and only few leaders did invite female peer members to participate and take part on the tasks; however, most of them held the work load as well as monopolize the activities. Moreover, peer leaders usually considered, especially, intelligent students could perform better than other students even this idea is shared by some teachers. The justification behind was that they do not trust other students' competence and they claimed they could perform activities better than their peer group members.

In relation to using English while doing peer group activities, female students explained that they usually use Amharic. Furthermore, if they had to use English, it was when they were supposed to present their work orally. Based on their roles in PLLL process, they rated themselves as intermediate level English language users.

### Findings from Classroom Observations

Female students in classroom activities were found to be medium in participating in PLLL process compared to many of their male classmates. They were few in number (8 to 21) in a class size of 58 in average. From these female students, 2 to 3 of them were active participants; asked questions, responded to questions and reflected their own ideas on lessons they learnt voluntarily in classroom activities. On the other hand, many of them were usually kept quiet and were not seemed interested in participating in different classroom activities if they thought they were not evaluated for grade. Similarly, there were some male students who were found as passive as those female students. As the focus of this study was to explore female students' participation and their roles in PLLL process the role and participation of male students were not given due attention in PLLL process.

### Findings from Document Analysis

In this study, document analysis was used as one mechanism to explore female students' participation in PLLL process. As the Table below indicates, the result was collected from three consecutive assignments. The first assignment accounts 10% of students' tutorial grade point; and the second and third assignments contribute to 30% and 40% respectively.

**Table1.** Female Students' Results of PLLL Assignments

Assignments /Range of scores	Number of Female Students		
	Low (0-5)	Average/ Medium (6-8)	High (9-10)
Assignment 1 (10%)	0	29	5
Range of Scores	Low (0-14)	Average/ Medium (15-25)	High (26-30)
Assignment 2 (30%)	0	29	5
Range of Scores	Low (0-20)	Average/ Medium (21-33)	High (34-40)
Assignment 3 (40%)	0	26	8

## Discussion

The findings obtained from the data collection process indicated that despite peer-led learning was assumed to give different advantages to the betterment of female students' academic progress and interpersonal skills, the result failed to confirm it. This is inconsistent with the advantages suggested by the participants of the study and acknowledged by researchers and scholars such as Drane et al. (2014), Philip et al (2010) Gneezy et al. (2003), Niederle & Vesterlund (2007) etc. in Drane et al. (2014) etc. These scholars claim that peer learning provides a better learning environment in CLT contexts, improving students' interpersonal skills, improving students' cognitive capacity, developing students' leadership skills and developing the habit of collaboration among students. Furthermore, peer-led learning is a good mechanism in motivating underrepresented groups (i.e. female students in this case) to participate in different activities. However, this study did not seem to reveal the stated roles of PLLL.

Female students' participation and role in PLLL process was found necessary because they responded that they gained different benefits as mentioned above. However, the findings showed that female students' participation in PLLL process was limited. From a total of 8 to 21 students, only 1 or 2 of them were actively involved in different activities such as reading, researching, outlining and compiling reports. A few participants (2 to 5 females) were peer leaders, so they were observed working hard and taking the huge responsibilities in doing the part of the tasks because they felt they were more responsible than the others. Many of the female students' roles were limited to only providing cognitively non-value adding activities like supporting the peer group with money and materials like paper as a compensation for their absence or limited participation. They read the written report of the already completed tasks if they were going to give an oral presentation on the tasks.

The findings obtained from the interview of male students, focus group discussions and classroom discussions particularly confirmed the benefits of peer-led learning model. These responses also supported that female students' performance and level of confidence were improved because the implementation of PLLL. Nevertheless, there is a logical question here that how did female students' language performance and level of confidence improve while their participation in PLLL activities was limited and their roles were weak?

The most plausible response could be presented from two perspectives. The first perspective is that all peer/group activities are home-take activities, and individual roles are hardly detectable. Also, when a peer group is having multiple tasks, the leader sometimes distributes tasks of different courses or a course to individuals; therefore, some members of the peer group may not have a chance to see what is included in the task that other members are doing. The second perspective is related to time. Teachers provide activities and assignments to peers/ groups, and the only ways they could do in order to check individuals' participation on the task is either by checking the peer groups' progress frequently, or making them present it orally (which is common), or by including it in a quiz or exam. To apply these checking mechanisms especially, the first and the second, teachers need time (which is not usually ample) to provide feedback and see the students' progress before the end of the semester. Consequently, students will be forced to review the copy of the submitted group work to pass during the evaluation.

Despite seeming paradoxical, the findings of the study showed that female students revealed progress both academically and in self-confidence. Moreover, female students rated their language proficiency level as intermediate during the focus group discussions. This has a positive correlation with the findings obtained from classroom observation and document analysis. During classroom observation, some students (3to 5) in a classroom participated in responding to questions, asking questions and providing reflections. This indicates that, not many (because the number of female students in a classroom range from 8to 21), but some students participated in classroom activities. Despite this outcome did not show the exact roles of female students in peer-led group activities handled outside the classroom, most of them were at the medium level of performance which coincides with the result of document analysis. From three recorded assignments, there were no female students who achieved low scores (as it is presented on the table above). Although it is difficult to generalize based on the scope of this study, it is possible to state that PLLL process has a positive correlation with students' performance based on the findings gained through interview, focus group discussion and document analysis.

On the other hand, the findings indicate that peer-led learning model created some challenges like lack of interest, motivation and commitment among female students; lack of trust of female students' abilities among male students and teachers; and implementation problems. Unlike evidence mentioned by Fajlik (2011), second year Textile Engineering

female students' challenges were related to lack of confidence, interest, motivation and commitment. And there was no evidence to prove that females are either better or comfortable with using their interpersonal skills in this research. However, the improvement of interpersonal relationships and skills in peer-led learning process was confirmed by many of the participants.

The other challenge is the implementation problem related to awareness and time. It could be inferred from the findings of the investigation that students were not aware of the necessity of working in peers despite they know its benefit, for they perceive it as one way of handling tasks to get good grades. Setting their primary goals at getting a pass mark or grade hindered them from enjoying the process of working collaboratively; and internalizing its benefits. In relation to this, lack of time for teachers to cross check individual roles and contributions was the other challenge which keeps medium and low achiever, and less active participant students dependent and makes no use out of the PLLL process.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

This research was intended to explore female students' participation in PLLL process in BDU EiTEX focusing on second year textile engineering students. The implementation of peer-led learning in science and technology programs was assumed to be practical. The findings of this research indicate, there were many things students benefited from it. Some of the major benefits were developing their communicative skills, enhancing collaborative work and promoting their academic performance. Meanwhile, the model has to be further applied so as to contribute positively to bring feasible changes in English language learning and teaching process. Pedagogically, peer-led team learning could contribute a lot to achieve successful implementation of scaffolding techniques since students have chances to learn from each other. Furthermore, having frequent interaction with their peers, students would be motivated towards learning, and alleviate anxiety and frustration in EFL/ESP classrooms; especially, for female students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) areas, who are in serious problems, can be a means to solve the above-mentioned problems. Likewise, female students, from developing countries like Ethiopia, could perform better in working collaboratively rather than working competitively.

## Recommendations

This study, however far from exhaustive in scope and throws some extremely intriguing light and provides a starting point for further research into the effectiveness of PLLL in language courses. As a result, this study may serve as a useful baseline for future research on the effectiveness of peer-led learning in classrooms with similar design features. In addition, the results suggest that the following measures should be taken.

- ✓ Students should understand what peer-led team learning is, what benefits they receive from it, and why they are expected to work in peer groups. Otherwise, they may mistake it for group work where only a select few students handle the tasks and the others rely on those students who are working to get better scores. As a result, all students who are needed to operate in PLLL contexts should receive comprehensive training.
- ✓ Peer leaders' assignments need to be changed. Based on their higher ratings, peer leaders are chosen. If the leaders have good leadership qualities, that helps to facilitate the members' roles; however, the majority of them frequently worry about their grades, which causes them to be overburdened with doing the majority of the group's assignments because they do not want to rely on other members who are generally low achievers
- ✓ Conducive environments for peer groups discussions and practices should be prepared. Both male and female students need places where they may freely discuss and practice on their tasks without disturbing other people.
- ✓ There should be sufficient time allotted for peer-led group activities so that teachers can assess each student's participation and progress in a positive way, rather than in a controlling way that makes sure students are prepared for a test, exam, or oral presentation because they will be punished or receive other forms of negative reinforcement.

In general, more research and in-depth examinations of this subject are crucial to increasing students' awareness of PLLL, motivation for the PLLL process, and mechanisms to assess individual language proficiency in PLLL. These factors will undoubtedly result in additional and more emphasized benefits through the PLLL process. Peer-led learning is essential for students to concurrently build their content knowledge and interpersonal skills because to its importance in CLT and learning. As a

result, applying the PLLL in EFL/ESP classes aids to create appropriate sociocultural learning contexts.

### **Declarations**

This study is conducted to navigate female students' participation and performance in PLLL. The data collected from the participants after a proper clarification made on the fact that the data they provided will be used only for research purpose. The researcher is immensely grateful for the participants who provided the necessary data for this study; i.e. second year textile engineering students, teachers who were teaching communication skills course and all participated in supporting the whole process in the Ethiopian Institute of Textile and Fashion Technology (EiTEX), Bahir Dar University. While conducting this study, the researcher did not get any fund from any establishment. Therefore, the researcher declares that this research work cannot be the reason for any conflict of interest by any means.

### **References**

- Arendale, D.R. (ed.). (2014). Postsecondary peer cooperative learning programs: Annotated bibliography [Unpublished manuscript, postsecondary teaching-learning department]. College of Education and Human Development. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- Desta, D., Chalchisa, D., Mulat, Y., Berihun, A., & Tesera, A. (2009). Enhancing active learning through self-and-peer reflections: The case of selected schools in Ethiopia. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 12(1), 71-87.
- Drane, D., Micari, M., & Light, G. (2014). Students as teachers: Effectiveness of a peer-led STEM learning programme over 10 years. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 20(3), 210-230.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Research Design: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: A case of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 7(2), 1-14.



- Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., & Marshall, S. (Eds.). (2008). *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: Enhancing academic practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hong-Nam, K., & Leavell, A. G. (2006). Language learning strategy use of ESL students in an intensive English learning context. *System*, 34(3), 399-415.
- Philp, J., Walter, S., & Basturkmen, H. (2010). Peer interaction in the foreign language classroom: What factors foster a focus on form?. *Language Awareness*, 19(4), 261-279.
- Sadeghi, K., & Baneh, M. D. (2012). Relationship between Student Self-monitoring, Type of Peer Feedback and EFL Writing Performance. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(5), 909-915.
- Schmidt-Fajlik, R. (2011). Gender and interpersonal competence in the foreign language classroom. *GALE Journal*, 4, 31-43.