**Enhancing Communicative Competence of High School Students in English through Group Work in Reading Texts**

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 **КВАЛІФІКАЦІЙНА РОБОТА**

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**Групова робота старшокласників при читанні текстів на уроках англійської мови як засіб формування комунікативної компетентності**

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**Abstract**

This research investigates the effectiveness of group-based text reading activities in developing communicative competence among high school students. By combining theoretical frameworks with practical implementation, the study examines how group dynamics influence the acquisition of key competencies: linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discursive. Conducted at a high school over a month, the study involved 11 students and employed mixed-method data collection strategies, including structured observations, comparative testing, and qualitative interviews. These approaches ensured a comprehensive understanding of the impact of group-based activities on students' communicative abilities and learning experiences.

Results highlight the impact of group work on communicative competence. Students engaged in group discussions exhibited enhanced language proficiency, particularly in integrating grammar, discourse markers, and strategic communication techniques. Moreover, students demonstrated greater confidence and willingness to participate in class discussions, showcasing improved collaboration and problem-solving skills within group contexts. The findings underscore the importance of creating a supportive, interactive learning environment fostering collaboration and equal participation.

Practical recommendations include structuring group activities around inclusive and level-specific tasks to optimize student engagement and performance. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate diverse and meaningful tasks, such as role-playing and project-based assignments, to maintain student interest and promote language development. This research bridges the gap between theory and classroom practice, providing actionable insights and demonstrating the critical role of group work in fostering comprehensive language skills, teamwork, and communicative competence.

Keywords: communicative competence, group work, communicative skills, text reading activity.

Ця робота досліджує ефективність групової роботи під час читання текстів для розвитку комунікативної компетентності серед старшокласників на уроках англійської мови. Основна мета дослідження полягає у вивченні того, як групова робота під час виконання завдань з читання сприяє розвитку комунікативної компетентності серед старшокласників. Комунікативна компетентність розглядається через її складові: лінгвістичну, соціолінгвістичну, стратегічну та дискурсивну, відповідно до теоретичних моделей, розроблених такими вченими, як Хаймс, Канале, Суейн та інші. Дослідження поєднує теоретичні засади з практичним впровадженням, ліквідуючи розрив між теорією та практикою в освіті.

Протягом одного місяця в одній із шкіл проводилося дослідження за участі 11 учнів із використанням якісних, кількісних та змішаних методів збору даних, зокрема структурованих спостережень, порівняльного тестування та якісних інтерв’ю. Цей підхід забезпечив всебічне розуміння впливу групової роботи на комунікативні здібності учнів і їхній навчальний досвід.

В рамках дослідження було проведено п’ять уроків з текстами, цікавими для читання для старшокласників по темі календарно-тематичного планування.

Результати демонструють значний вплив групової роботи на розвиток комунікативної компетентності. Учні, які брали участь у групових обговореннях, показали підвищення мовної майстерності, зокрема в інтеграції граматики, дискурсивних маркерів і стратегічних мовленнєвих технік. Також групова динаміка сприяла активній участі учнів, підвищенню їхньої впевненості та розвитку навичок співпраці. Крім того, вони виявили більшу готовність брати участь у групових дискусіях, покращуючи навички співпраці та розв’язання проблем у контексті групової роботи.

Це все стало можливим завдяки правильній організації групових занять, зокрема формуванню різнорівневих груп і використанню інтерактивних вправ, які покращили навчальне середовище.

Отримані дані підкреслюють важливість створення підтримуючого та інтерактивного навчального середовища, яке сприяє співпраці та рівній участі учнів. Практичні рекомендації включають структурування групових завдань із урахуванням інклюзивності та рівня знань учнів для оптимізації їхньої залученості та результативності.

Вчителям пропонується впроваджувати різноманітні й змістовні завдання, такі як рольові ігри, дискусії, інтерактивні презентації та проєктна робота. Застосування групової динаміки сприяє розвитку не лише мовних, але й соціальних навичок, таких як уміння слухати, формулювати ідеї та працювати в команді.

Це дослідження ліквідовує розрив між теоретичними знаннями та педагогічними практиками, підкреслюючи важливість групової діяльності у вивченні англійської мови. Воно актуальне для вчителів, розробників навчальних програм та інших дослідників, які прагнуть удосконалити навички комунікації в різнорівневих класах, особливо з урахуванням сучасних освітніх викликів і можливостей. Майбутнім дослідникам пропонується провести дослідження на довгостроковість результатів групової роботи, мотивацію учнів займатися груповою взаємодією та введення групової роботи під час читання текстів для інших вікових категорій таких як молодші школяри, здобувачі освіти в середній школі, студенти, які вивчають англійськоу мову в рамках своєї спеціальності в коледжі або університеті.

Ключові слова: комунікативна компетентність, групова робота, комунікативні навички, завдання з читання текстів

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**Introduction**

Group work when reading texts is one of the essential tools for developing the communicative competence of high school students, as it involves improving language skills through tasks and activities performed by students in different modes: individually, in pairs, and in small and large groups. Our research interest is group work, which requires considering many factors: creating conditions for high-quality group work, selecting tasks and activities, involving each student in the work, and establishing the ratio of individual and group responsibility of students within the group. Individual work when reading texts is more widespread due to its universality for all students. However, not all students have the same level of language proficiency in the group, and the tasks for individual work are designed more for those students who do not lag behind the program and learn the material better and faster than others. Therefore, group work is used less often than individual work when reading. That is why we turned to analyzing the learning and teaching possibilities in English classes in high school.

This study examines communicative competence as a set of skills: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic. It is also based on modern theories of communicative competence, such as the interactional and functional models, combining them with practical implementation in the educational process.

This study is relevant not only for scientific research but also for educational practice. Its relevance is underscored by the fact that modern school education strongly emphasizes developing communicative competence as the primary goal of learning and teaching a foreign language. Given the importance of communicative competence in the modern world, the need for effective methods to achieve this goal is more pressing than ever. As such, the research questions of this study are of direct interest to educators, researchers, and policymakers in the field of language education.

The research questions that guide our study are as follows:

 - Are there distinct advantages to group work when reading texts in English lessons for the formation of communicative competence of high school students?

- Under what conditions does group work when reading texts affect the development of communicative competence of high school students?

Reading is one of the most crucial tools for developing communicative competence. It contributes to creating an interactive environment as dialogue and cooperation come to the fore. Students discuss the content of texts, learn to listen, argue their opinions and respond to the point of view of other students. This forms the skills of adapting to different communicative situations. By emphasizing group dynamics, teachers can create a favourable learning environment that improves language acquisition and interpersonal communication skills, preparing students for the multifaceted demands of their future careers.

Text is the cornerstone of teaching and learning English in high school. After reading the text and completing the tasks, students can discuss the topic and idea of ​​the text, understand all aspects of what is written, complete the tasks, check them together and correct possible mistakes and misunderstandings. Besides, they can revise and practice the studied linguistic material. By exploring together, students learn to integrate new information into speaking and to adapt their speaking to the level of the interlocutor; for this purpose, paraphrases and simplifications are used because the adequate performance of the assessment work depends on this. At the same time, students at low levels can train their skills with the support of classmates. When reading texts, group work makes it possible to track students' actual behaviour and level of involvement in work.

The study was conducted using data collection methods relevant to the school: observation, interviews with the teacher, testing, comparison of data and literature review. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods allowed us to collect and interpret data. The diverse data collection tools also allowed for capturing and analyzing different elements of communicative competence. It is impossible not to mention that data collection occurred during actual training sessions, which made it possible to assess the effectiveness of some interactive group work activities in actual conditions. Data collection methods are key factors ensuring the accuracy and validity of the study results. Thanks to them, the study confirmed the effectiveness of group work.

Based on the study's findings, we have formulated practical recommendations for effectively using group work when reading texts in high school English classes. These recommendations are designed to enhance teaching and learning, foster the development of communicative competence, and make reading a beneficial activity for most students.

**Literature review**

Early theories and definitions of communicative competence laid the foundation for understanding how people can effectively communicate in various contexts. The concept gained significant traction in the 1970s, mainly through the work of the American linguist D. Hymes (1972). Hymes's theory focused on defining what a speaker must know to be competent in communication, emphasizing language use's social and cultural context. This differed from earlier linguistic theories that focused solely on grammatical competence. Hymes's approach stresses the importance of knowing and understanding how to use language appropriately in various social situations. This fundamental idea paved the way for further research and nuanced definitions of communicative competence.

The evolution of the concept of communicative competence has undergone significant refinement and expansion since its inception. Researchers distinguish two main approaches to understanding the essence of communicative competence. The first approach involves identifying and naming specific competencies contributing to effective communication. This approach helps to distinguish between different types of competence, such as linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic, each of which plays a crucial role in communication. The second approach, necessary for its practical application, focuses on the practical application of these competencies in real-world scenarios, emphasizing the importance of context and adaptability. Over time, this dual approach has allowed for a more complete understanding of how communicative competence can be developed and assessed, making it a vital component of educational and professional training programs.

At various stages of research on communicative competence, significant contributions have been made to both theoretical understanding and practical application. An important milestone was the emphasis on developing communicative competence in future specialists, particularly in the service sector. This emphasis was due to the growing role and influence of the service sector on the economy, which necessitated research aimed at classifying services and identifying the competencies necessary for effective communication. In addition, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of communicative competence have been widely studied, and considerable attention has been paid to teaching aids. These research efforts have helped create structured approaches to increasing communicative competence, thereby improving the readiness of individuals for professional activity and interaction in various contexts.

Linguistic competence forms the basis of communicative competence, focusing on mastering the language system itself. This includes knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics and syntax. The concept of linguistic competence, as formulated by Noam Chomsky (1965), emphasizes the ability of a person to create and understand an infinite number of sentences. Reliable linguistic competence allows language users to easily navigate complex language structures, ensuring accuracy and fluency in communication. For example, using verb tenses correctly and constructing coherent sentences reflects linguistic competence. Such competence is crucial for written and oral communication, laying the foundation for effective interaction in any linguistic context.

Sociolinguistic competence, another essential component of communicative competence, involves using language appropriately in different social contexts. This competence encompasses understanding social norms, cultural nuances, and contextual cues influencing language use. According to Hymes, sociolinguistic competence ensures that language users can modify their speech according to the social situation, audience, and purpose of communication. For example, speaking in a formal business meeting significantly differs from a casual conversation with friends. Being adept at such adaptations is vital for effective and respectful communication. In addition, sociolinguistic competence includes sensitivity to cultural differences, which is increasingly important in our globalized world where intercultural interactions are commonplace.

Strategic competence is overcoming communication breakdowns and effectively conveying messages despite language barriers. This competence involves using various strategies, such as paraphrasing, gestures, or asking for clarification, to maintain the flow of the conversation. Current research shows that strategic competence develops in two main directions: as a component of general communicative competence and a separate set of skills for managing communicative challenges. For example, when a speaker encounters an unknown word, they can describe the concept or use synonyms to convey its meaning. This adaptability, a key aspect of strategic competence, is crucial for communication to remain effective despite language barriers. Thus, strategic competence is key to increasing communication effectiveness, especially in multilingual and multicultural environments.

Dell Hymes's communicative competence theory revolutionized human understanding of language use by emphasizing the interaction between linguistic knowledge and social context. In contrast to previous models that focused primarily on grammatical correctness, Hymes introduced the concept of "communicative competence," which includes using language appropriately in various social situations. This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding what is grammatically correct and contextually appropriate, expanding the scope of linguistic research. Hymes's theory provides a more holistic view of language knowledge by focusing on the social aspects of communication. It bridges the gap between linguistic competence and performance, emphasizing the role of cultural norms and social expectations in effective communication. This paradigm shift has influenced numerous subsequent models and studies in the field, cementing its foundational status in the study of communicative competence.

Canale and Swain's (1980) model, introduced in the early 1980s, expanded on Hymes's seminal work by dividing communicative competence into distinct components. They identified four key areas: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discursive competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence concerns the mastery of syntax, morphology, and phonology, while sociolinguistic competence involves the appropriate use of language in various social contexts. Discursive competence involves producing coherent communication, and strategic competence concerns strategies to overcome communication breakdowns. This comprehensive model provides a structured way to analyze and assess communicative abilities, making it a significant advance in linguistic research. By distinguishing these components, Canale and Swain's model provides a more detailed understanding of what it means to be communicatively competent, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of effective communication.

Bachman and Palmer's (1982) concept further refined the notion of communicative competence by combining linguistic competence with strategic and pragmatic aspects. Their model, presented in 1982, includes linguistic competence, including grammatical and textual elements, and pragmatic competence, which involves the functional use of language in specific contexts. In addition, they introduced the concept of strategic competence, which consists of cognitive strategies that people use to manage communication, such as planning, executing, and evaluating language use. This addition emphasized communication's dynamic and adaptive nature, recognizing that effective communicators know the language and how to use it strategically to achieve their communicative goals. Bachman and Palmer's concept has been essential in language testing and educational settings, offering a comprehensive approach to assessing and developing students' communicative competence.

Table 1.1. Key concepts, theories and research on communicative competence

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key concept** | **Theory** |
| Communicative competence | Theory of communicative competence (Dell Hymes) |
| Linguistic competence | Transformational-Generative Grammar (Noam Chomsky) |
| Sociolinguistic competence | Theory of Language Socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs) |
| Discursive competence | Discourse theory (Foucault) |
| Pragmatic competence | Theory of speech acts (Austin, Searle) |
| Strategic competence | Theory of communicative strategies (Canale and Swain) |
| Intercultural Communicative Competence | Theory of cultural adaptation (Kim) |

The table presents key concepts, theories and research relevant to communicative competence. It covers the main aspects of this complex scientific category, including the different levels and composition of competence that determine an individual's ability to communicate effectively in various social contexts. The table helps to summarize and structure knowledge about communicative competence, allowing for a better understanding of its multidimensionality and complexity.

Researchers such as L. Bachman further developed the practical implications of these theoretical propositions. They focused on forming communicative competence through educational practice, emphasizing the role of socio-psychological training as a means of active learning and personality development. Together, these milestones highlight the complex interrelationships between language abilities, socio-cultural knowledge, and practical communication skills, emphasizing the need for an integrated approach to developing communicative competence in various social situations.

Linguistic competence related to Noam Chomsky's (1965) theory of transformational-generative grammar focuses on knowledge of language structure. In his work "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax," Chomsky defines the foundations of this theory.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to use language in social contexts, considering social norms and cultural differences. Schieffelin and Ochs's theory of language socialization (1986) explores how a person learns to speak through interaction with others.

Discursive competence includes understanding and creating coherent texts and languages in context. Michel Foucault's theory of discourse (1972), presented in The Archaeology of Knowledge, analyzes the structure and functions of discourse in society.

Pragmatic competence focuses on understanding and using speech acts in specific situations, as discussed in Austin and Searle's theory of speech acts, "How to Do Things with Words" (1962) and "Speech Acts" (1969).

Strategic competence is related to using different communication strategies to overcome communication difficulties. Canal and Swain (1980) developed this concept in "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing."

Intercultural communicative competence examines the ability to communicate effectively with members of other cultures. Jung Yong Kim's (1988) theory of cultural adaptation, described in "Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation", examines the processes that allow individuals to adapt to new cultural contexts.

Qualitative approaches (Hahn & Paynton, 2022) play a crucial role in understanding the nuances of communicative competence. These methodologies often involve in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis to explore individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions. By focusing on participants' lived experiences, qualitative research helps to uncover the underlying meanings and interpretations that shape communicative behaviour. In addition, qualitative methods (Hahn & Paynton, 2022) allow researchers to explore communication's dynamic and interactive nature. Methods such as discourse analysis allow scholars to examine how language is used in real-life interactions, uncovering patterns and strategies that facilitate effective communication. This approach is particularly valuable for identifying skills and competencies required for different communicative contexts, such as professional or intercultural communication. Overall, qualitative approaches provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding of communicative competence that complements the more generalized findings of quantitative research.

Quantitative approaches (Hahn & Paynton, 2022) offer systematic and objective means of measuring and analyzing communicative competence. These methodologies typically involve standardized tests, surveys, and statistical analyses to quantify various aspects of communicative skills. For example, psychometric assessments can assess individuals' skills in specific communicative tasks, such as public speaking or writing. In addition, quantitative methods allow for comparisons of communicative competence across populations and contexts. By using large sample sizes and rigorous statistical methods, researchers can generalize their findings to broader populations, increasing the external validity of their studies. This approach is particularly useful for identifying universal principles of effective communication and developing evidence-based interventions to improve communicative competence. The objective nature of quantitative research also facilitates the replication of research, contributing to the accumulation of reliable and consistent knowledge in the field.

Mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more complete understanding of communicative competence. Combining the strengths of both methodologies, mixed methods research can address complex research questions that cannot be fully explored using a single approach. For example, a study might use quantitative surveys to measure the prevalence of a particular communicative behaviour and then use qualitative interviews to explore the underlying causes of that behaviour. This combination allows for a more holistic analysis, covering both the breadth and depth of communicative competence. (Сітало, 2012). In addition, mixed methods research can increase the validity and reliability of findings by triangulating data from multiple sources. This approach helps confirm findings and provides a more detailed understanding of the studied phenomena. For example, while quantitative data can identify trends and patterns, qualitative data can explain the context and meaning of those trends. Mixed methods research also provides flexibility in addressing research questions because it can be adapted to the specific needs and constraints of the study. By leveraging the complementary strengths of qualitative and quantitative approaches, mixed methods research offers a robust and versatile framework for investigating communicative competence.

Communicative competence is essential for effective interaction and collaboration in professional and work communication. Modern quality education prioritizes preparing individuals for professional activities by developing communication skills. This includes not only the ability to articulate ideas clearly but also the ability to listen and engage in meaningful dialogue actively. Research shows that developing professional, communicative competence is crucial for students, especially in medicine and the social sciences, where clear and responsive communication can significantly impact outcomes. Communicative competence is associated with better teamwork, conflict resolution, and overall productivity in the workplace. By focusing on these skills, educational programs aim to equip students with the tools they need to succeed in their careers.

Language education and pedagogy increasingly focus on developing communicative competence as a central goal. This approach emphasizes grammatical accuracy and the ability to use language effectively in different social contexts. For example, communicative language teaching (CLT) methods favour real-life interaction and communication scenarios over memorization of rules. These methods have been supported by research (Кuznetsova, 2012), which indicates that students who engage in meaningful communicative activities are more likely to achieve higher levels of language proficiency. The educational process plays a key role in the formation of communicative competence. Interaction between participants in the educational process is essential for the development of the communicative abilities of future specialists. Group interaction significantly improves students' communicative skills, creating an environment where dialogue and cooperation are essential. Introducing challenging group activities, such as cooperative learning tasks, helps students master group techniques, allowing them to communicate and collaborate more effectively. This approach also fosters a culture of dialogue among students, encouraging them to listen to their peers and improving their overall communication skills.

Furthermore, group learning activities allow students to formulate, defend, and discuss their points of view, which is a vital skill for their academic and personal development. These interactions help students become more responsible communicators, taking responsibility for their learning and contributing to the group's success. Therefore, integrating group activities into the curriculum is beneficial and necessary to develop students' communication skills. (Nikolaienko, 2022).

For group interaction to be successful, certain conditions must be met. In their work "Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching", Richards and Rogers (2014) highlight several important conditions, such as clarity of instructions for high-quality task performance. They should be simple to understand, appropriate to the level of students and accompanied by visual materials. The second condition includes creating a favourable atmosphere in the classroom by selecting materials that will match the level of education seekers for confident performance. The third condition, which concerns the development of communicative competence, is the variety of group interaction activities, such as role-playing, small group discussions for each student's involvement, and project tasks.

One type of group work that will have a qualitative impact on the formation of communicative competence is reading. While reading, students train in pronunciation and translation skills. During discussions, they practise speaking, listening, and active vocabulary. Reading is one of the most important tools for developing communicative competence. It contributes to creating an interactive environment as dialogue and cooperation come to the fore. Students discuss the content of texts, learn to listen, argue their opinions and respond to the point of view of other students. This forms the skills of adapting to different communicative situations. By emphasizing group dynamics, teachers can create a favourable learning environment that improves language acquisition and interpersonal communication skills, preparing students for the multifaceted demands of their future careers.

**Research design and methods**

**2.1. Research design**

Communicative competence is a fundamental concept defined as the ability to use language correctly and adequately in various communicative situations.

Forming communicative competence involves carefully considering all its components (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic, social, intercultural, and pragmatic competence) and their systematic evaluation. We employ various tools to measure communicative competence, including language tests, observations, interviews, and daily data collection.

According to action research methodology, we have conducted an intervention aimed at answering the following research questions within the general problem:

- Are there any advantages of group work when reading texts in English lessons for the formation of communicative competence of high school students?

- Under what conditions does group work when reading texts affect the development of communicative competence of high school students?

The study was conducted in Chernihiv Comprehensive School No. 15 in one of the 11th-grade groups, consisting of 11 students aged 15-16. Classes were held twice a week for 45 minutes. To determine the level of students' communicative competence, we have used such tools: the analysis of student's academic achievements, grades in the journal, observation of students' work at the lessons, as well as an interview with the group teacher, who characterized the students' skills and gave an opinion on the level of language proficiency of each student. In addition, the teacher described how students cooperate during pair and group work and added his advice on how to unite students better so that the work was effective.

After data collection, students were divided into three groups according to their English language proficiency: high level, medium level, and low level (Appendix 1).

Group lessons were conducted in a traditional format during the intervention. Still, once a week, there was a lesson specifically designed to test the effectiveness of group work when reading texts. There were six such lessons in total. Students were divided into three to four groups of 3-4 people, ranging from A1 to B1. Everybody was given copies of the text for more convenient reading. We selected the texts, tasks and activities according to the topic of calendar planning. One of the texts was from a textbook, and the other five were from Internet resources. The algorithm of work was the same.

Work on texts took place at the pre-text stage, a crucial phase designed to motivate students to read, remove linguistic difficulties, and prepare them to perceive information. This significant stage sets the foundation for the subsequent reading tasks. While reading the text, students performed tasks to practice vocabulary or form answers to the questions posed. Learning took place in a combination of individual and group work modes. After reading the text, we checked the understanding of the information, groups reported on the results of text processing, and students participated in role-play games.

During the intervention, students' work in groups was observed, the results of which were noted in a research journal. Testings were conducted to measure the level of students' understanding of texts. We also assessed the students' speaking based on information from the texts. After the intervention, we analyzed students' academic results for the current period and compared them with the data recorded at the beginning of the intervention; a questionnaire was administered to students to study their opinions about working in groups when reading a text; an interview with the teacher who observed the intervention period was conducted to obtain an expert assessment of our work.

The study combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The quantitative study allowed for statistical data on changes in language proficiency. The qualitative study, through comparisons, observations, and interviews with students and teachers, helped to study the impact of group work in depth. The study was based on original data collected through daily practice.

Table 2.1. Data collection methods

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Data collection methods | Description |
| Comparison (qualitative) | Comparison of the test results of individual and group work after reading texts to identify and compare the reading comprehension level during different types of work.  |
| Testing (quantitative) | After individual and group interaction, students take a reading comprehension test to identify which type of work is better for completing tasks and reading comprehension. |
| Observation (qualitative) | Observation of group classes will reveal patterns of interaction between students in groups, in which conditions students cooperate better with each other. |
| Questionnaire/focus group (qualitative) | At the end of the study, students completed questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of group work from their perspectives. |
| Interviews with teachers (qualitative) | The English teacher analyzes the impact of group work on the development of student's communication skills while reading, advises on how best to arrange the process, and suggests what conditions to use to improve the study's final results. |
| Analysis of sources (qualitative) | An overview of the sources of researchers and scholars who have researched topics similar in specialization, direction and conditions.  |
| Maintaining a research journal | During the study, a research journal was kept, where observations of students conducting lessons, teachers' actions during the lesson, and how high school students reacted to group work, tasks, etc., were recorded. |

This table presents the various data collection methods used in the study.

The study lasted one academic month, allowing for several reading cycles and subsequent group assignments. Table 2.2 presents the stages of the study and the methods used to collect and analyze information.

Table 2.2. Main stages of the study

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stages of research | Description |
| Preparatory stage | - Selection of texts for reading (fiction and popular science) according to the level of language proficiency of high school students. - Development of tasks and activities for group work aimed at forming communicative competence during reading. - Preparation of tests to measure communication skills before and after the experiment. |
| Main stage | Conducting classes during which intervention is carried out: In one lesson, students read texts individually, while in another, we used group work. In both cases, after reading, the students took reading comprehension tests to confirm or refute how well group work affects the development of students' communication skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing.- Introduction of group work methods (project method, role-playing, discussion). |
| Final stage | - Conducting interviews with students on their attitude to group work. - Comparison of the group's results at the intervention's beginning and end.- Analysis of the results of testing, questionnaires and interviews. - Comparison of results to determine the impact of group work on developing communication skills. |

**2.2. Methods and Sources**

*Data Collection Tools*

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was used to achieve a complete picture of the impact of group work on the development of students' communication skills. This approach allowed for the analysis of not only the final results of the experiment but also the process of developing students' communicative competence during reading.

*Quantitative methods:*

Testing of communicative competence: After individual and group work, tests were conducted to determine the reading comprehension level.

*Qualitative methods:*

Comparison: Comparing the results of group and individual work was aimed at identifying the quality of reading comprehension, which type of work students understand the text better, and which type of work they perform tasks better.

Observation in lessons: Before the observation, we informed the students about the upcoming changes in the educational process and the intervention. The teacher also consented to be in the classroom and evaluate the actions within the framework of the research process. After that, the observation process itself began. It included two aspects: observation of the teacher and the students. We noted observations of the teacher's actions in the table: how he prepares the students to read the text, how he divides the group into pairs, what instructions he gives, and which tasks the teacher encourages students to discuss. As for the students, the system of questions consisted of:

1. How do students prepare to read a text? How do they respond to being divided into groups or pairs?

2. How do students complete tasks after receiving instructions?

3. How do students demonstrate understanding of the text?

4. How do students interact in groups?

5. What actions do students take to complete the task?

6. How do students record the results of their work?

We noted the results of the student observation in a table.

Teacher Interview: After the intervention, the English teacher participated in an interview to analyze how group work affected the students, what changes in communication and interaction he observed in the classes, how he evaluated the organizational and didactic conditions, and how the introduction of group work was reflected in the general level of student activity in the lessons.

Student survey: After the experiment, students completed questionnaires assessing their attitude to group work and their sense of progress in communicative competence.

Source analysis: reviewing and reading the literature to find information for quality research and referring to the experience of scientists on similar topics and areas of their research.

The study was conducted over one academic month, providing sufficient data collection and analysis time.

The primary data sources in this study include student achievement scores (grades) and reading test results as an element of communicative competence. A student survey conducted at the end of the intervention provided a qualitative assessment of student's perceptions of the effectiveness of group work and their attitudes toward this form of learning. Qualitative information from the group teacher allowed us to conclude the feasibility of introducing group work into English language teaching practice. A comparison of individual and group work provided a qualitative assessment of which type of work students perceive reading better.

The data obtained during the study were processed and analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative analysis: The test results were compared using statistical analysis. This allowed us to establish how significant the progress in the students' communicative skills was after the study and compare it with the results of the group where the study was not conducted.

Qualitative analysis: Comparison, observation, interviews, and focus groups were analyzed to identify the main trends and patterns in students' group interaction. This helped to understand better which group work strategies and methods contribute to developing communicative competencies.

This comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis allowed us to obtain a comprehensive picture of the impact of group work on the development of communicative competence of high school students while learning English.

**2.3.** **Practical Considerations**

When planning and conducting research using group work to develop students' communicative competence, several practical aspects should be considered that may affect the research's conduct and results; these include potential obstacles, limitations, and suggestions for addressing them.

Different levels of communicative competence among students (Komar, 2020) within the same group may result in varying levels of English proficiency, which can create difficulties during group work with texts. Students with a higher level may dominate discussions, while students with a lower level will be less active. To solve this problem, it is essential to carefully select group participants, combining students from different levels so that everyone can participate in the work.

Student motivation (Dörnyei, 2001): Not all students may be interested in group work. Therefore, it is important to use different motivation methods, including role-playing games and projects that can interest students. It is also important to consider interests during lessons by selecting texts that may interest them.

Limited time in the lesson: Lessons usually last 45 minutes, which may not be enough to organize group tasks effectively. To overcome this problem, tasks should be planned so that they can be completed in several stages over several lessons, or tasks should be simplified so that they can be completed within one lesson.

Technical support: For some types of group work, multimedia tools or additional materials (electronic textbooks, interactive platforms) can be provided. However, not everyone has the opportunity or access to electronic devices. The solution may be using printed materials or interactive tasks on the board.

Teacher participation: When interviewing teachers, it is important to ensure that the answers are anonymous. Teachers have the right to provide their feedback without fear of possible negative consequences.

Time management: It is necessary to inform the teacher before conducting observations, teacher interviews, questionnaires, and tests. This will avoid disruptions in the learning process and effectively use the teacher's and students' time during and outside the lesson.

Preparation of materials (Richards & Rodgers): Tasks should be adapted to the student's level of proficiency so that everyone can actively participate in group work. Various tasks must be available to adapt to groups with different levels of knowledge. For example, students with a higher level can engage in more complex discussions. In comparison, students with a lower level can concentrate on more straightforward language tasks such as retelling or reading aloud.

**Results**

**3.1. Development of communicative competence when reading texts in English lessons**

Intervention in group work by high school students reading texts in English lessons to develop communicative competence has become an exceptional experience. A group of 11 students

 from various language levels, from A-1 to B-1, participated in the class. During the intervention, different tools were used: testing, observation, questionnaires, comparison of results, and interviews with teachers.

To determine the level of students' communicative competence, an analysis of students' academic achievements was conducted based on familiarization with written works performed by students at previous stages of training and grades in the journal, observation of students' work in lessons, as well as an interview with the group teacher, who characterized the students' abilities and gave an opinion on the level of language proficiency of each student. In addition, the teacher described how students cooperated during pair and group work and added his advice on how to unite students better so that the work was practical.

Thus, while working on the text "The Silence of the Centre Court" (Appendix 2), there was a conversation about tennis as a sport, the attitude of students toward this sport, and their experience of tennis. Based on the title of the text, we stimulated students to form an assumption about the content of information in the text and also formulated questions to which they could find answers by reading the text:

1. Why is tennis considered a popular sport?

2. What do you know about Rafael Nadal?

3. What traditions and rituals might athletes have before essential matches?

To remove linguistic difficulties in perceiving information, we practised new vocabulary:

For example:

The point of no return - Точка неповернення

Pre-game ritual - Ритуал перед грою

Decisive moment - Вирішальний момент

Activated - активований

Superstition – забобони

The formation of a prediction of the content of the text, the next stage of work, took place through group discussions. Students are shown a photo of the text's title and the title and ask questions. For example:

Text: "The Silence of the Centre Court"

1. What does "silence" mean in the title? Why might it be necessary for a tennis match?

2. What does the author try to say in this passage?

Also, before the reading stage, it is necessary to motivate students and make them think about the answers themselves with the help of questions specific to the text. For example:

1. Why do athletes have special rituals before important events?

2. Can such rituals help in achieving success?

Answers to questions were formed through group discussions. After the second reading of the text, students were offered questions to understand the details of the information:

**1. Reading for general understanding (skimming)**

• Who is the main character of the text?

• What event or experience is being told?

• What mood does the text create?

Answers to questions were formed through group discussions. After the second reading of the text, students were offered questions to understand the details of the information:

**2. Reading for details (scanning)**

• What does Rafael Nadal do before a match? Name three specific steps in his ritual.

• Why does he use two water bottles?

• How does he describe the atmosphere on Center Court?

Students actively participate in the learning process by delegating questions to each other, discussing the answers, and preparing to present the information in front of the class. This active involvement keeps them engaged and fosters a sense of responsibility in their learning journey.

In addition to questions, at the stage of reading the text, we also used other tasks to practise vocabulary:

Task: Find words or word-combinations in the text that match the following meanings:

• Точка, звідки немає повернення ("point of no return")

• Слово, що означає “важливий момент” (підказка: вживається для вирішальної ситуації).

• Фраза, яка описує здатність зосередитись і мобілізувати сили (починається на “I’m…”).

The tasks are designed to be collaborative, fostering a sense of student connection. The teacher can give hints or not, and students are given tasks to build sentences with found words. Students then divide responsibilities (sentences) among themselves, discuss them, and correct possible mistakes, promoting teamwork and mutual support.

There should also be tasks to discuss detailed questions requiring each student's opinion and joint analysis of the text. For example:

• Why do you think Rafael Nadal follows his pre-match rituals so meticulously?

• How can these rituals help him prepare psychologically for a match?

• What effect does the atmosphere of Centre Court have on a player?

Sometimes, tasks are already developed by the authors of textbooks or the texts themselves. Here is one example:

Task: Complete the tasks from the "EXAM FOCUS" section (choosing sentences A–E for the gaps in the text).

• Reread the text.

• Find where the missing sentences fit (gaps 1–3).

• Explain your choice in pairs, justifying each decision.

At this point, the reading stage ends, and the post-reading stage begins, lasting 10 minutes. This stage is designed to test text comprehension and reflection, develop speaking and writing skills, and integrate the information obtained. The tasks focus on developing speaking, writing, and critical thinking and provide a comprehensive text review. Each student from the group presents one task, and so on, depending on the number of task blocks.

One of the tasks of this stage can be a role-play; in this case it is:

Task: Pair up. One of you is a journalist, and the other is Rafael Nadal.

Journalist: Ask 5-6 questions about Rafael's rituals and match preparation.

Rafael Nadal: Answer the questions using the information from the text.

Students are divided into pairs, prepare for 5-8 minutes and present information in front of the class.

To diversify the tasks and practice some grammatical constructions, one can replace some tasks with the following examples:

Text: Cheating in Sports (Appendix 3)

Task: Choose the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. In the 1986 World Cup, Maradona \_\_\_ (score/scored/has scored) a goal using his hand.

2. Rivaldo \_\_\_ (was fined/fined/has been fined) for faking an injury during the match.

3. At the 2012 Olympics, the cyclists \_\_\_ (crashed/crash/have crashed) on purpose to restart the race.

4. Cheating \_\_\_ (is/was/has been) always a controversial topic in sports.

5. Since the Rio Olympics, Carolina Marins' behaviour \_\_\_ (discussed/has been discussed/was discussed) by many fans.

This type of task is well suited for revising, studying, and discussing grammatical constructions. Students will share information and their rules and join forces to complete the task.

The next type of task aims to develop students' ability to use conjunctions and pronouns to provide a logical connection between sentences, improve their understanding of context, and the ability to argue their choices.

Text: Kirsty Wade, young athlete (Appendix 4)

Task: Fill in the Gaps. Students are given a text with gaps where they must insert the correct conjunctions (*When, However*).

1. I remember my first race. \_\_\_ it started, I felt nervous. \_\_\_, I came second and felt proud of myself.

2. I practiced running with my teammates. \_\_\_ they pushed me to my limits, I became stronger. \_\_\_, I sometimes struggled to keep up with them.

3. The competition was intense. \_\_\_ the referee signaled the start, I gave it my all. \_\_\_, I could not keep up with the leader.

4. I joined my local athletics club. \_\_\_ I started training, I realized how challenging it was. \_\_\_, I improved over time and gained confidence.

5. My coach encouraged me to try middle-distance running. \_\_\_ I tried it, but I didn't like it much. \_\_\_, I later discovered it was my strength.

6. The crowd was cheering loudly. \_\_\_ the announcer called my name, and I felt both excited and nervous. \_\_\_, I knew I had to stay calm to perform well.

7. I watched the other competitors warming up. \_\_\_ it was my turn, I felt a surge of adrenaline. \_\_\_, I reminded myself to stay focused.

Також можна змінити формат цього завдання на розширене завдання з додаванням займенників:

I remember my first race. \_\_\_ it started, I felt very nervous. \_\_\_, I told myself to stay calm and focused. The coach had trained us well, and I wanted to make him proud. The crowd was cheering loudly. \_\_\_ made me feel excited, even though I was shaking inside. I didn't win the race, but I came second. \_\_\_ was an amazing experience that taught me a lot. \_\_\_ I didn't feel confident at first, but I learned to trust in my abilities.

Answers:

1. When
2. However
3. This
4. It
5. Although

The study group studied for a month according to an updated plan, which did not exclude the work on calendar-thematic planning but was supplemented by updating in group work, where it was necessary to read the text and complete accompanying tasks for prepared speaking, which required discussing the topic between participants, writing a response, refuting the topic of the selected text, or completing tasks that included training the vocabulary of the lesson topic, etc.

As previously mentioned, the data collected included comparison results, questionnaires, observations, testing, and communication with the teacher.

Questionnaires, as a qualitative method of collecting information, helped to identify the assessment of the effectiveness of group work from the point of view of the learners, while observation of the entire process, the course of the study made it possible to assess "live" and record the impact of group interaction in the study groups. Upon completion of the intervention, a comparison of educational achievements and group results "before" and "after" was also conducted.

As a result of the intervention, the following organizational and didactic conditions were stressed: the necessity of understandable task instructions (formulation of arguments, discussion of the content of the text, analysis); taking into account different levels of English proficiency; the use of interactive activities in the form of role-playing games and discussions that stimulate communication, during which active English, previously learned or active vocabulary in the lesson is used. Last but not least, this is the correct management of work in small groups (3-4 people), in which it will be easier to ensure the involvement of all students in the work, support and the opportunity to generate ideas and express their opinions.

**3.2 Analysis of results and changes**

The majority of students, 54.5%, of the group had an intermediate level (6 students), a low level 36.4% of students (4 students) and only 9.1% (one student) had a high level of language proficiency.

Figure 3.2 shows each student's results after the intervention. The improvement in student results may indicate a positive effect of group work on texts for students with high language proficiency and average levels. For example, Student 8's result rose from average to high. Student 8 and Student 11 had positive changes within the average level, and Student 3 and Student 10 within the low level of language proficiency for the better.

Figure 3.1. Student assessments before the study

Figure 3.2. Student assessments after the study

Table 3.1.Comparison of results before and after the study

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Before research (%) | After research (%) | Change (%) |
| High level | 9.1% | 18.2% | +9.1% |
| General level | 54.5% | 45.5% | -9.0% |
| Low level | 36.4% | 36.4% | 0% |

Using Table 3.1, we can see the overall improvement in student performance in percentages.

After comparing student performance within the assessment, we interviewed the teacher to assess the study and the changes in student performance. The teacher gave positive feedback on those students who showed the results we presented in Figure 3.2 and commented on those who did not have any changes in the assessment. Due to the short duration of the study, many of those with low and intermediate language proficiency could not entirely switch to the new pace of work. Still, according to the teacher's observation, they showed diligence in completing tasks that did not require intensive discussion, taking on the role of those who search for information in the text, building sentences with new vocabulary, etc.

According to our observation, students did show diligence during group interaction. For example, Student 8 and Student 11 showed diligence during group discussions on using new active vocabulary, constructing sentences, and presenting the collected information to the class. They took on the role of leaders and delegated tasks among the students in the group according to their ability to complete them. Student 2, Student 6, Student 7, and Student 11 also actively participated in the discussion, helped other students with correct sentence construction, and played leading roles during role-playing games. All other students with low language proficiency were more focused on correct sentence construction, finding answers in texts, and noting other students' answers to present to the class. Some were absent from the study for the first time due to illness and, upon returning to school, could not immediately adapt to the new pace of work in class once a week. They did not show significant results or efforts despite completing the assigned tasks.

Our study confirmed Richards and Rogers's statement about the conditions for introducing group organization. This was evident through the favourable atmosphere in the groups, where students supported each other while working on joint tasks and discussing questions and the topic of the texts. Formulated instructions contributed to the high-quality performance of tasks and coordinated work within the groups. Moreover, of course, various activities for group interaction, such as role-playing games, in which all students were involved according to their speaking abilities. Role-playing games were made interesting enough so that all students tried to use their active English and vocabulary to exchange information, present information to classmates, and have ordinary conversations during the performance.

The effectiveness of group work on texts is also evidenced by tests conducted at the end of each lesson with group interaction. Such tests were conducted to determine how each student affects the general understanding of the text and how exactly group discussions and joint completion of tasks affected this understanding. An example is the test (Appendix 5) conducted at the end of the reading of the text "The Silence of the Centre Court". The results showed that 27.27% of students coped brilliantly with the tasks (3-4 students), 54.55% made a small number of errors (5-6 students), and 18.18% made many mistakes (2 students). From the results of this test, we can conclude that group work positively affects reading comprehension, and students perceive the presentation of the material well through group interaction when reading texts and performing related tasks as a means of forming communicative competence. For comparison, students were given the text "World's Best Soccer Player Lionel Messi will Go to Miami" (Appendix 6) to read individually with similar tasks on vocabulary training, grammar practice and presentation of the information in front of the class, avoiding group discussions. The test results showed that 18.18% (two students) coped brilliantly, 45.45% (five students) had difficulties, and 36.36% (four) made many mistakes. We consider these results to be good evidence for the usefulness of group work when reading texts as a means of forming communicative competence as opposed to individual work when reading because, during group interaction, students better understand what they read, exchange ideas during discussions on various aspects of the text, and share their results of completed tasks and discussions of issues with the class.

**Discussion**

Our study embarked on a unique approach to address the research questions. We employed an action research methodology to investigate the potential benefits of group work in English lessons for high school students. Specifically, we aimed to understand how group tasks could enhance communicative competence through reading. A trial study was conducted in a class group over a month, utilizing testing, observation, questionnaires, interviews with teachers, and comparisons to gather data. This comprehensive approach allowed us to evaluate the impact of our study on the group's results from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

The study's primary results revealed significant positive changes, as depicted in Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1, compared to the baseline results in Figure 3.1. These changes, observed during the classes, were a testament to the potential of group work in language education. We noted increased students' interest in learning English, particularly in this work format. This was further supported by the tests conducted after group and individual work on the text, where students performed better in groups and actively engaged in discussions. The exceptions were those who were never interested in learning English and those who joined our study almost at the end of the intervention due to illness.

While working on the research and creating conditions for working on texts, we noticed confirmation of Richards and Rogers' conditions in their work. A favourable atmosphere, clear instructions, and the introduction of role-playing games helped develop students' communicative competence; role-playing games enriched the lessons with group work and interactivity, and students positively perceived this learning method. In addition, during the lessons, we also paid attention to developing students' linguistic, discursive, and strategic competencies. Thanks to such tasks as "Choose the correct form of the verb in brackets" to the text "Cheating in Sports", grammatical structures are revised, contributing to the development of grammatical competence. Discursive competence is implemented through tasks such as "Fill-in-the-Gaps" to the text "Kirsty Wade, Young Athlete." Thanks to it, students learn to build logically coherent statements. They also develop discursive competence by discussing extended questions and using the contextual clues reading "The Silence of the Centre Court". All this confirms Palmer and Bachman's statement that developing communicative competence during reading in English lessons is possible only with a comprehensive approach. Its three components, discursive, grammatical and strategic competence, were implemented through reading tasks, discussion of the texts and role-playing games. This provided students with the ability not only to learn the language but also to use it strategically and functionally in real communicative situations.

**4.1 Factors that influenced the results**

The study's results combine external and internal factors contributing to positive changes and constraints. These factors help to better understand under what conditions group work was successful and identify areas that need improvement.

If we talk about internal factors, the use of interactive tasks, for example, a role-playing game based on the text "The Silence of the Centre Court", where students recreated a situation close to real life, when a journalist interviews an athlete, asking questions and receiving answers, created an environment that promoted active learning and the use of active vocabulary. Students were allowed to apply their existing knowledge of English in situations similar to real ones: to discuss issues within a group regarding the information in the text, to present this information to the audience, using both prepared and unprepared speaking, to come up with questions for the interlocutor in a role-playing game and answer them, to maintain a dialogue. The interactive nature of the task-based approach stimulated participation and focused attention on completing their part of the work. However, at first, students accustomed to individual or pair work resisted changes and only sometimes wanted to make contact with each other. This was especially true for students with different levels of preparedness. Students with a higher level of preparation adapted faster and got involved in the work, while students with a lower level sometimes needed help from the teacher: help in highlighting the main idea of ​​the work, explaining and simplifying some of the structures described in the work. Mixed groups had a positive effect on learning: students with a higher level helped those with a lower level, took on the role of group leader and delegated tasks among themselves, giving more straightforward texts to students with a lower level, and took on more complex tasks, such as presenting the results in front of the class, where they could be asked clarifying questions about the tasks or the text by the teacher and other students. It was the correct delegation of tasks that influenced the motivation of some students.

We must remember external factors that influence students' work and development during group work. To create conditions for comfortable communication, a teacher should arrange desks correctly so that groups of more than three people can easily communicate. Printed copies of texts for each student brought a little individuality during group work because not everyone can access the Internet to find and read the text.

The teacher, as an external factor, also influences group work results. It is he who creates the atmosphere in the classroom, motivates students to complete tasks, helps with completing assignments, explains certain aspects of texts for better understanding, provides assistance with understanding grammatical structures, uses vocabulary, if such assistance is needed, corrects students' communication and creates the groups in which students will work. In addition to the level, the teacher should also pay attention to how students communicate with each other, whether others bully some students due to a low level of English competence, failure to complete a task, or other factors that may also exist outside the English class. Social support from classmates is significant, and in its absence, a student may feel depressed, and motivation and performance in lessons will decrease, leading to the student's results worsening due to reluctance to participate in group work.

Another limitation of the study may be the time limit. More time is needed to observe the students' group interactions and assess the long-term effects after regular group work

 to identify all the external and internal factors that contributed to their further overcoming of minor difficulties.

Thus, the study resulted in numerous external and internal factors, among which we can highlight the teaching methodology, the important role of the teacher, and students' motivation to learn. Although certain limitations could affect the work, key aspects, such as the interactivity of tasks and support for each other in groups, ensured the intervention's success and confirmed its effectiveness in developing communicative competence.

**4.2 Recommendations for further actions**

Based on the study's results, which demonstrated the effectiveness of group work in improving the communicative competence of high school students when reading texts in English lessons and determining under what conditions group work when reading texts affects the development of communicative competence, it is possible to develop a plan or recommendations for further actions for learning a foreign language in high school. This may include supporting students during the learning process, conducting additional research, and improving group work practice.

Group work while reading texts has shown to be an effective teaching method in the format in which we conducted the intervention. This format deserves to be integrated permanently, as positive results regarding students' success and interests have been achieved. After all, reading texts affects reading and other aspects of learning and teaching, such as speaking, listening, and vocabulary building. Students liked the diverse type of learning, where several aspects of communicative competence are trained at once. Group work also increases interest in learning through communication between students during activities, which affects the atmosphere in the team and increases success. Almost all students, with a few exceptions, enjoyed group interaction in the six group work lessons. This approach will allow students to consolidate existing competence better and improve language skills. An example of successful implementation is one lesson once a week dedicated to text analysis, after which students discuss the content and conclusions and present them to the class.

To diversify such lessons, one can offer several options, such as debates, in which students will discuss the topic of the text using active vocabulary, and joint projects, in which students will make presentations and posters, and role-playing games, which can be timed to a holiday, and each group will play their role from the plot of the text or book; these can also be role-playing games on the topic of journalism, where one has to play journalists and interview classmates on environmental issues or another social topic. Teachers can also use interactive activities on the Padlet or Jamboard platforms to discuss the information from the texts. It is essential not to turn the learning process into a dull routine, which will later lose effectiveness.

According to our intervention, it is essential to form groups, considering the student's level of communicative competence, to provide effective learning and teaching. A student with level A1 will not be able to cooperate effectively as a student with level B1 and will feel less significant during work and discussion. Creating groups with only one level will also not help learning. Students cannot learn from each other's experiences or life hacks. It means that in such a matter as dividing students into groups, it is essential to take into account the characteristics of each high school student, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. For example, one student in the group will be responsible for formulating questions and another for making a report to the class. This method will ensure the inclusion of all students in the work and provide an even distribution of tasks.

The methodology of group work among high school students when reading texts proves its effectiveness, so it would be reasonable to conduct research among other age categories and investigate the urgency. For example, how would it work among younger grades, and what methods could be applied, considering their age, characteristics, and the initial stage of learning a foreign language? The same can be offered to higher school students. They already have formed skills. It is especially necessary to divide the sample of students into age categories, for example, to check the impact of group work on texts separately in each grade from the fifth to the ninth, to obtain expanded results and have an idea of ​​how group interaction with texts affects each in the youngest grade of high school and the oldest. Alternatively, research should be conducted among adult college and university students in various directions who study a foreign language for professional purposes and in their specialization. Studying other age groups would help draw conclusions about this methodology's universality and determine each category's needs.

This raises the question of group size during group work. How many people should be in a group so that everyone can cooperate effectively? Comparing small groups (3-4 students), medium-sized (5-6 students) and large (7-8 students) in the framework of the following study of this type could provide an answer to this. Such an experiment would allow us to determine under what conditions students will demonstrate better interaction, motivation and efficiency. Studying what size group cooperates better during different activities, debates, role-playing games, and presentations is advisable. After all, small groups are more suitable for intensive text discussion, while role-playing games require more people. However, is this so?

Therefore, introducing group work as a permanent part of the educational process, diversifying tasks using an individual approach and shaping students will create conditions for effectively developing students' communicative competence.

**4.3 Areas that need further research**

Despite the success of implementing group work during reading in the study group and its positive impact on the acquisition of communicative competence and student achievement, the study still has several questions. Several areas for future research require additional analysis to understand the effect of group work on various aspects of English language learning.

The long-term effects of group work in the classroom need to be studied. Current research confirms the effectiveness of this method in the short term, but do the results persist after each group work session? If so, for how long and what exactly will the results be? This is important for understanding the profound changes due to the method.

In addition to the impact on communicative competence during reading, it is essential to study how the method affects the success of students, their teamwork skills, the development of leadership qualities and social interaction. We should also remember motivation, which can change over time. What exactly drives students during group work? What results would they like to achieve, and what role does motivation play? Is it the same for everyone, and what expression does it have? What role does the teacher play in motivating students? What is the role of the teacher in English lessons during group work? In general, what aspects does the role of the teacher have during group interaction with students?

For the long term, it is essential to investigate whether students' interest in group methods remains stable. Observation is a good way to track students' motivation to engage in a particular type of work in the lessons. Over time, teachers or researchers can observe the teaching of one or more classes to assess students' group interaction and improve social skills and the ability to cooperate. Testing tools or surveys once or twice a year can also help track students' interest in this learning method.

Given the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, many schools still adhere to the distance learning format. How practical are distance lessons compared to offline lessons? Do teachers have sufficient competence to provide students with the opportunity to work in groups in lessons during video conferences on platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Discord, Skype and others? Digital technologies provide students with additional opportunities to collaborate online, collaborating from any corner of the world, but is this the case, given the possible difficulties due to technical barriers?

Moreover, in general, what are the differences between group work in the classroom and a digital format? How do the level of motivation and productivity of students change in one format or another, and do digital tools provide opportunities for mutual exchange of information and learning in the same way as contact in the classroom?

**Conclusion**

The purpose of our study was to answer the research questions:

- Are there any advantages of group work when reading texts in English lessons for the formation of communicative competence of high school students?

- Under what conditions does group work when reading texts affect the development of communicative competence of high school students?

Our study, conducted over a month using the Action Research methodology, took a unique approach. We held five weekly group work lessons, focusing solely on texts and tasks. Before this, we observed the students and the teacher, noting their work pace and language proficiency. The teacher's advice and class characteristics were also considered. This comprehensive approach, unique in its focus and depth of understanding, allowed us to begin the teaching process with a clear understanding of the students and their needs.

Based on our research, having analyzed all the data collection methods and the obtained indicators, we can state that group work in the format in which it was carried out during the study has its place and significant advantages in increasing the indicators of communicative competence: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Group work trains all these aspects during the work algorithm and the study's tasks.

Answering the second question, we cannot fail to mention the implementation of the working conditions described in their work by Richards and Rogers, namely:

• Clear planning and organization of group work

Before students began reading and tasks, they were divided into groups of different levels based on their language proficiency. This was to ensure that each group could cooperate effectively. They also received clear instructions regarding their work and the reading goals.

• Emphasis on interactive tasks

Students could play role-playing games during group work, develop oral skills, and present the collected information to the class.

• Favorable atmosphere in the group

As mentioned in the first condition, students were divided into groups of different levels, where everyone harmoniously cooperated and helped each other. This positive atmosphere in the group fosters cooperation and boosts students' performance. For example, while two students performed tasks related to the text, the third built sentences with new vocabulary, after which they exchanged information, corrected possible errors, and discussed improving grammatical constructions in sentences.

During the study, it was possible to implement these conditions and find that with their help, group work has a positive effect on the performance of students, on the general mood in the group and increasing diligence when completing tasks for the text. This reassures us of the effectiveness of group work in enhancing students' performance and overall engagement, providing a sense of confidence in its efficacy.

The study confirmed the critical role of group work when reading texts for the formation of communicative competence of high school students. This reiteration of the study's confirmation underscores the significance of the findings, ensuring the audience is well-informed about the benefits of group work. The introduction of group work positively affected the interaction between students in the lessons and their development of speech skills, providing a clear understanding of its impact. In addition, the study also confirmed that understanding texts during group work works more effectively than during individual work, thanks to tasks and discussions. Students shared information and helped and supported each other during the implementation.

The study results showed that group work has many advantages in shaping communicative competence by reading texts. This was manifested in the expansion of sociolinguistic competence, thanks to which students could practice formal communication: greetings, thanks, and addresses. Discursive competence was manifested through the ability of students to build logically coherent statements using linguistic means of cohesion, such as conjunctions and pronouns. Group work on texts improved the skills of analyzing information, highlighting key ideas and forming reasoned statements. Students improved their statements' coherence through interaction with classmates, significantly improving their oral skills. Strategic competence was manifested in the ability of students to adapt their speech skills to achieve communicative goals. During group tasks, students used periphrase strategies, for example, describing unfamiliar words or asking partners for help. Grammatical competence improved through the implementation of practical tasks related to the use of grammatical constructions. For example, tasks on paraphrasing sentences in the passive voice helped to consolidate grammatical constructions. All three components of communicative competence — discursive, strategic and grammatical — were developed in the study through the integration of texts and group tasks into the learning process. This confirmed that combining text analysis, discussions, and group interaction is effective for forming holistic communicative competence in high school students.

The observation results during the study highlighted the importance of adapting methods and tasks to the language proficiency levels, as this ensured equal engagement of learners and progress for each group member. This emphasis on personalized learning ensures that the audience knows its importance. High school students involved in group work showed higher motivation and diligence when completing tasks and a higher level of confidence when using English among themselves. The collected data can be helpful for further research on similar topics and improvements in English teaching methods.

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# **Appendices**

**Appendix 1**

**Description of the three levels of English proficiency according to the Ukrainian grading system**

**Low level (1–6 points)**

**Students at this level have limited language skills.**

Vocabulary: Minimal; includes basic words related to everyday life (e.g., food, clothes, numbers).

Grammar: Understands and uses only the simplest grammatical structures, such as verbs in the present tense (Present Simple).

Reading: Can understand single words or simple text sentences (e.g., My name is Anna. I like apples.).

Speaking: Speaks in short phrases or single words, making many mistakes. For example, I go shopping.

Writing: Can write only simple sentences, but often with grammatical and spelling errors.

Listening: Understands single words or very slow speech of a native speaker.

**Intermediate level (7–9 points)**

**Students demonstrate functional language skills that allow them to communicate at a basic level.**

Vocabulary: Knowledge of a wide range of words on everyday topics (family, hobbies, weather), ability to use synonyms.

Grammar: Use basic grammatical structures (Present, Past, Future Simple, sometimes Continuous), but with errors.

Reading: Understand the content of short texts, main ideas and familiar words. For example, weather news or a personal letter.

Speaking: Can express themselves more coherently, but with pauses for word selection. Able to answer questions and participate in short conversations. For example, I like swimming. In the summer I go to the beach with my family.

Writing: Can compose a short message or letter with a few grammatical errors.

Listening: Understand the main content of messages on familiar topics, but more complex structures need explanation.

**High level (10–12 points)**

**Students are confident in their language and demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.**

Vocabulary: Broad, including both common words and terms related to academic or professional topics.

Grammar: Ability to use a variety of grammatical structures (conditional sentences, passive voice, Perfect Tenses) with minimal errors.

Reading: Understand complex texts, including works of fiction, articles or instructions. Can identify key details and hidden meaning.

Speaking: Easily express opinions, support discussions, and argue their positions. For example, I believe sports are important because they teach teamwork and discipline.

Writing: Can write essays, essays, formal letters or reports, demonstrating good command of style and structure.

Listening: Understand both slow and fast speech of native speakers, including

**Appendix 2**

Text «The Silence oof the Centre Court»



**Appendix 3**

Text «Cheating in sports»

Anyone who loves sports will agree that cheating is bad. For example, it was simply wrong for Spain to enter people who were not actually disabled into the 2000 Sydney Paralympics basketball team. But sometimes, it is hard to draw a line between what is cheating and what is not. Many sports encourage players to be ‘sporting’, that is, to play honestly and accept when they lose. However, in sports, the prizes for winning are great, so it is natural for people to use different ways to win a game. Sometimes players cheat or bend the rules to get an advantage in a game.

Gamesmanship is when you try to win a game by bending the rules or using dubious tactics. For example, when British Team cyclist Philip Hindes had a bad start in a team race in the 2012 Olympics, he didn’t want to let his team down, and since he knew that if a rider fell early, the race would be restarted, he crashed his bike on purpose. Britain went on to win gold.

Other examples of gamesmanship are when players fake injuries or waste time. This might give them a chance for a short rest, or it could annoy their opponent and affect their concentration. For example, at the 2016 Rio Olympics, badminton player Carolina Marins screamed and shouted every time her opponent made a mistake. This affected her opponent’s feelings, and people thought she behaved rudely. However, she won the gold medal without breaking any rules.

When there is a grey area, it is the referee or umpire’s job to decide whether cheating is taking place. However, players can take advantage of this situation because referees aren’t perfect and can’t see everything. For example, in cricket, if the ball hits a batter’s legs, he is out, and most batters know when they are out, so they should leave the field immediately. However, few cricketers are sporting. They wait until the umpire tells them to go because they want to stay in the game, and the umpire might not see what happened. This isn’t considered cheating.

However, there’s no denying that Diego Maradona cheated in the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals between England and Argentina. In that particular match, Maradona infamously scored a goal using his hand. The referee, who missed the incident, awarded the goal, and unsurprisingly, Maradona didn’t question the decision. But the game of football, however, isn’t always so forgiving of those who bend the rules, as Brazilian player Rivaldo knows. In the 2002 World Cup, he faked an injury during a match. Unlike Maradona, Rivaldo wasn’t so lucky; he was caught out and was later fined, proving that the outcomes of such actions are not always in the player’s favour.

Sometimes, players might even try to lose on purpose. At the 2012 London Olympics, four women’s badminton doubles teams from China, Indonesia and South Korea purposely played badly. They all wanted to lose because it would lead to an easier place in the tournament. Although none of the players broke any badminton rules, they were all disqualified for their poor sportsmanship.

Where there are games, people will always try different ways to win. But is bending the rules the same as cheating? Or does it just make the game more interesting because sports competitions are not only about physical skills but also about clever strategies?

**Appendix 4**

Text «Kirsty Wade, young athlete»

I’ve always been keen on sport and very fit so a few years ago I decided to join my local athletics club. In the beginning I put all my effort into the long jump because it was my best event, but the coach encouraged me to try different things.

I ended up as a middle-distance runner, which means I don’t run the short distances like 100 metres, or long cross-country races, but the in-between ones like 800 metres. It’s an interesting type of running because you have to mix speed with strength. You also have to think a lot about how you race, and choose the right moment to run at your maximum speed. You need to do quite a lot of regular training when you first start and it helps if you have a good coach who can keep you motivated and teach you the basics.

I take part in some quite major competitions now, but I still remember my first race. I was so nervous before it started. And when it finished, I could still feel my hands shaking. It was a great race and I came second so I was very pleased. Since then I’ve learned to stay calm before and during races. I do a lot of breathing exercises that help me stay focused and relaxed. Competing has really helped me to trust in my own abilities. And now I find that I love running in front of a crowd – I suppose it’s a sort of performance.

One thing I don’t enjoy so much is how hard you have to work to stay fit and strong enough to race, although it helps that I often train with others. I try to eat and sleep well, but I don’t have a special diet. Mostly it’s a case of getting plenty of variety and eating more of everything because I’m so active.

I sometimes watch Olympic athletes on TV and imagine myself in their position. It must be a fantastic experience, but at the moment I don’t feel that is necessarily where I’m aiming. I think you have to give up so much if you want to reach that level.

**Appendix 5**

**I. Multiple Choice Questions:**

**1. What does Rafael Nadal do 45 minutes before a match?**
A) Meditates in the locker room
B) Takes a cold shower
C) Drinks water and rests
D) Talks to his coach

**2. Why does Rafael tie his hair before the match?**
A) To keep it from disturbing him during the match
B) It’s his superstition
C) To look better on camera
D) To save time

**3. What does the cold shower mean for Rafael before the game?**
A) It is his habit before going on court
B) He believes it helps him win
C) It’s a way to activate his strength and resilience
D) It’s a medical routine for his muscles

**4. Why does Rafael arrange his bottles in a particular order?**
A) It helps him focus
B) It is part of the match organizer’s rules
C) He likes everything to look symmetrical
D) He fears forgetting them in the locker room

**5. What is special about Centre Court for Rafael Nadal?**
A) The atmosphere is magical and unique
B) It’s his favorite training court
C) He won his first match there
D) He feels family support there

**II. Fill in the Blanks:**

**6. Complete the sentence: “Some call it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but it’s not. If it were superstition, why would I keep doing the same thing over whether I win or lose?”**

**7. What event precedes Rafael’s cold shower ritual? Write one sentence.**
***Answer:***

**III. True or False Questions:**

**8. Rafael Nadal always drinks water from just one bottle before a match.**
A) True
B) False

**9. Rafael prepares his things in the locker room in a chaotic order.**
A) True
B) False

**Appendix 6**



