



IIT Madras

BSc Degree

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English – II (Advanced English)
Professor Shreesh Chaudhary
Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Group Discussion – I

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GROUP DISCUSSION- I




Hello and welcome to another session of the speaking module of this course in English. We have been talking about various occasions when we make formal presentations. We spoke about reports, numbers, describing things, appearing at interviews, conducting interviews, etc. Today we are going to talk about another equally important or perhaps more important occasion when many of us are called to speak in English.


This is a group discussion or as the acronym by which it goes, sorry the abbreviation by which it goes it is a GD, how to participate in a GD, how to conduct a GD. Many companies, many institutions today call a lot of candidates for a job, for a scholarship for a particular position and ask them to talk about things among themselves, and then they decide an observer from among the group of employers, observes you and they decide who among these candidates on the basis of your performance, your behaviour, the way you conduct yourself and the way you get along with others they check and conclude who among, they observed participants may be their best prospective employee.

Group discussion, therefore, has become, group discussion, therefore, has become very popular as a method of recruitment, as a method of work, as a method of finding solutions to problems as a way of reaching consensus on otherwise not such a straightforward issue in many places, including industry, academia, universities, schools and colleges, etc., etc. So, let us see what problems we can expect an encounter while appearing at or conducting a group discussion and how we can overcome these problems, next.

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- Group Discussion is a very popular tool to reach consensus.
- Problems of good behaviour- Impatience, cross-talking, arrogance, jealousy, inattention, etc.



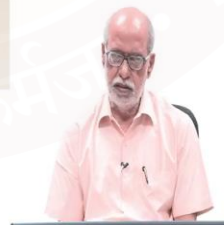
As I said, it is a very popular tool to reach consensus, it is a very popular tool also to judge people, no matter how wonderful you are by yourself, you hardly ever work only by yourself, I mean unless you are in a very different and extraordinarily different situation where you do not require colleagues, friends, family that is another matter but ordinarily speaking a good number of ordinary people work with other ordinary people.

But together these ordinary people make great groups, and that happens because of methods like group discussion. It helps you reach consensus on straightforward issues where there is no contention, where there is no divergence of opinions, where there is no differences, disagreements. But also, on those issues where you have more than one opinion, whether you have divergences of opinions, where you have to take many different kinds of groups along. How do you do that?

Should we continue learning and teaching online? Many people would say yes, there are points in favour, and many people would say no, there are points against. But in the end, as a manager, as the head of a team, somebody has to decide and that decision happens to come out best when it is the group's decision, when as a group we decide that doing so, doing not so maybe the best way. But these things are easier said than done.

In a group, none of us remains the same person; we change. Somebody has defined character as something which shows when you are all by yourself, your character reveals itself when you are alone and or but your personality reveals itself when you are in a group, you may be excellent individually, or you may be a villain, but in a group, none of us remains the same person, we change, we become either very cooperative, very helpful, very congenial, amiable, name those wonderful adjectives or the other way around. We become irritable, irritating, irritated, quarrelsome, over grabbing, hungry for attention, jealous, envious, cross-talking, arrogant, get distracted easily, a lot of variety of things happen. But, go to the next.

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You see here, maybe this is imaginary, perhaps it is not from real life, but as I have been asking, is it so unreal, does it not happen in many groups where one person goes on regardless of how others feel, pardon me I have also been going on. But in a group of equals where everyone should get a fair chance to express themselves to share their opinion to ask and answer questions,

it can be very bad having someone like my friend over there who seems to have been talking for all the time since the group met.

But this happens, all groups or many groups at least have people who speak longer than they ought to, have people who speak much less than they ought to and who also have people who speak only for about as long as their turn permits them to do. This diversity makes a group, and we have to learn how to manage ourselves and our colleagues in a group, next.

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VIDEO CLIP



Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY2yjEEoB3U>

Please watch the section 1.13-3.36

Source: Learn English with Rebecca (engVid)

Video description: The video showcases how a group discussion takes place.

We are using 2.23 minutes of this video for academic purposes.



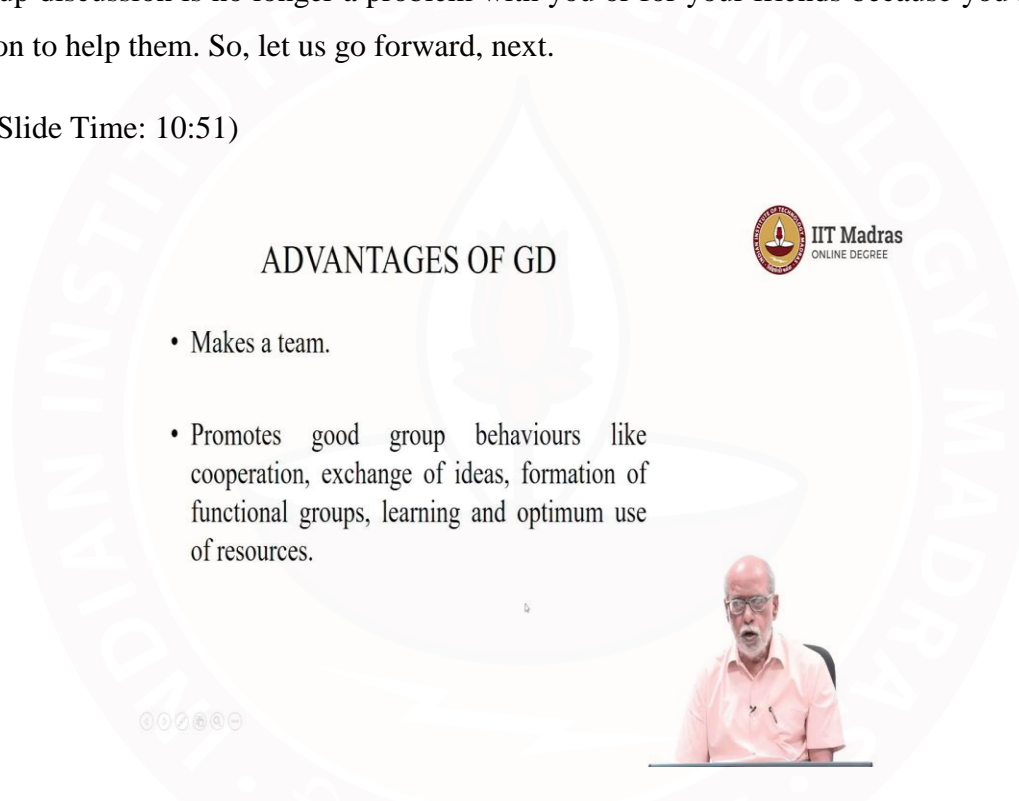
This was a group discussion, four people observed by a teacher or a proctor engaged in deciding if conventional method of learning, sitting in a classroom is good or the new ways of learning online is good, which of these is good or which of these is better what we should do, and they have arguments for and against.

But you may have noted that there are some good things like they allow each other to say things, they make new points, there also are a couple of bad things like someone speaking rapidly yeah I wonder if we would have understood that gentleman sitting in on the second chair from the observer's right, from the viewer's right, if we would have understood him without subtitle the

lady is not too slow either, actually the lady appeared to be impatient and she had to be reminded to let the other speaker complete before she could join in.

So, this is a typical group where you may have seen some good practices, some not so good practices and we can learn from them, there are lots of stuff both audio and visual and in terms of other kinds of sites, just bullet points mentioning good practices and not so good practices in group discussion, you can look at some of them as well of course as attending these sessions, and then you can have some of your own practice, and you will be very comfortable, you will see that group discussion is no longer a problem with you or for your friends because you may be in a position to help them. So, let us go forward, next.

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The slide is titled "ADVANTAGES OF GD" and features the IIT Madras logo in the top right corner. It contains a bulleted list of two advantages of group discussion (GD). In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset showing a man in a pink shirt speaking. The background of the slide has a large, faint watermark of the IIT Madras logo.

ADVANTAGES OF GD

- Makes a team.
- Promotes good group behaviours like cooperation, exchange of ideas, formation of functional groups, learning and optimum use of resources.

What are the advantages of a GD? We must understand that. A GD or a group discussion makes a team; we are all as a noted public speaker in India said, we are all marvellous people individually, but do we make a great team. So, a GD, a group discussion helps you evolve, emerge or form yourselves as a team, a good team, a good GD promotes good behaviour. What is good behaviour, what is good group behaviour?

Good group behaviour number one, the first trait of good group behavior is respect for one another, a strong sense of mutual respect I would go to the extent of saying a strong sense of respect for all colleagues without expecting anything, these are my colleagues I cannot do well

unless they do well and therefore, I must do my best to respect them and to motivate them, they should feel happy having me with them that is the kind of attitude that one ought to have.

So, a good GD, therefore, encourages good group behaviour and what is good group behaviour? It draws forth cooperation among members, it facilitates, it promotes the exchange of ideas, it leads to; otherwise, you are different individuals, somebody from computer applications, some another person from computer science, yet another person from electronics, a fourth person from logistics management and yet another person from communications division. How do you make a good team?

But you may, because you are all specialists in your domain and if you come together and see points of view of others as well as your own then that makes a great group, then you understand and you do what is missing what the group would need, it is four walls, one wall no matter how strong, does not make a house, but four walls very strong themselves and becoming stronger when they touch each other, when they meet at the corner and support a superstructure, then they themselves become unbreakable and the roof they support also becomes unbreakable.

So, that is the metaphor of a team; a team becomes a team when all its group members keep the team goal, the team is spirit above themselves. So, it encourages it promotes the formation of functional groups; it also promotes learning; you learn about yourselves, you learn from others, you learn from your colleagues, your colleague might not be an expert in your area of interest or might be.

But there are things your colleagues know, your friends; your family do that you do not. And finally, individually we only have so much, maybe 100 rupees, 200 rupees, 200000 rupees none of us has an unlimited amount of money or unlimited amount of energy or ideas or knowledge but when we become 1 plus 1, when we become 11 plus 1, when we become a thousand million plus one, then we become a still stronger team, and we utilize our resources best in an optimal manner, getting best returns from available resources. That is why GD is a very popular way of learning, teaching, behaviour, language and performance, next.

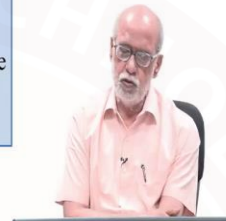
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LANGUAGE- RELATED ISSUES



Language of arrogance

- I
- My opinion
- Talking out of turn
- Talking long
- Insensitivity, like telling others, 'you should'
- Presenting oneself as a superior- I could've, I see it, keep quiet, shut up, etc.



Some people are arrogant; how would you know? Nobody writes on the breastplate here, look I am arrogant, I am arrogant, nobody does that. But just as some people are humble, humble people will never tell you they are humble, arrogant might even tell you they are arrogant, they are proud, but humble people will never tell you they are humble. So, how do who is humble, who is arrogant?

Their language is typically I-centred when I was your age; I used to work 26 hours a day. Well, you might have been great. Do you expect everyone to be a mirror image of yourself? Your team is what it is; tell them something they can do. But this an arrogant person would always tell you, in my opinion we must do it now, we must not wait or such a person would not wait for others to finish, they may talk out of turn, no matter who is speaking, if this person feels like saying something, he or she they would.

Taking long time, you have been given only so much why do you take so long and then insensitive, always preaching to others, no, no you should do this, you should not speak that way, you should speak that way, you should have seen this, you did not, always finding fault with others, none of us is perfect, none of us is perfect.

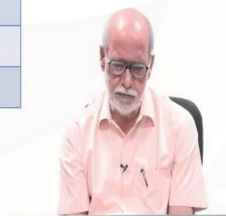
God created us all, and god created us not without some flaws in our perception, in our constitution. But god also gave us some strengths, so we should bring our strengths into play,

and we should recognize the strengths of others, and it is with their strengths we can overcome our weaknesses just as with our strengths they would overcome their weaknesses, it is not that one is only weak and another person is only strong, it does not happen that.

So, an arrogant person always presents oneself as a superior, or he did nothing for me, I could have done it, I could have taken 100 kilograms in a hanky and could have thrown it two kilometres away, something as ridiculous as that, they can be very rude in speech, they will say I see it, keep quiet they can immediately tell others no, no, shut up allow me to finish, not even allow me, I will speak first, very, very clearly visible traits.

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Language - Don'ts
His/her points are invalid.
Your argument doesn't make any sense.
Avoid words like gonna, wanna, ya etc.
Do not use pronouns in place of nouns (e.g: she, he in place of their names)
When will I get to speak
I am right, I know everything
I am not interested



All of these points, please look at them; these are the examples you will often see them, you will say no, no your points are invalid, your argument does not make any sense do not say that. If you really mean that argument does not make sense, there are ways of saying that. Can you say it differently, can you come again?

Sorry, we do not understand you, can we say it this way, rather than say no, no, your argument does not make any sense and do not use informal words like gonna, wanna or the slangs, all colleges and all groups of young people have slangs, they are wonderful within your group or not when you are in a formal situation.

And never use pronoun before you have used noun, I told her, who is her? She is bringing it, who is she? You should better say Aishwarya is bringing it, Ramakant is bringing it, put it that way and then you can say. Well, he, oh he has already started, I know, he called me before leaving for office, go on.

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- Avoid gestures like pointing fingers, tapping the desk with the pen, table thumping, looking here and there, etc.

Playing the Blame Game



Similarly, body language, your dress, go on.

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GOOD GROUP- GOOD LANGUAGE



Language of team spirit-

- Shall we,
- Can we,
- Should we,
- May I,
- You first,
- Small sentences
- Keeping time
- Remembering names and points



This is the language of team spirit, the language of cooperation, collaboration, shall we, can we, shall we try this idea, shall we find out, can we wait, should we try in this direction, please permit me or may I suggest something. No, no, you first please, I can wait or speaking small sentences, conversation, slow enough so that everyone understands you, speaking within the available and allotted time, remembering names and points so that you really do not have to ask anyone every time. Pardon me what did you say? That leaves a very bad taste, that takes not only more time than available, it also indicates that you are not attentive, we can avoid these things, next.

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LIKELY PLACES OF ERROR



Many learners do not use:

- Polite expressions like can, may
- Question sentences like shall we, should we, etc.
- Use of more pronouns or group identity we, our company, our team



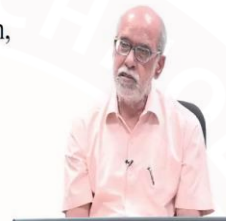
Where can we go wrong? These are the places. In a group, never say do this, do that, better say, you use questions sentences, shall we do this, should we do this, is it alright to look at it this way or will it not be better looking at it the other way, and can and may rather than will. Somebody says who can do it and if you say I will do it, it is alright, but it is not very polite, you can say well I can do it, can I have a chance, again if you are sure you can do it, speak it this way.

So, use pronouns that promote group identity, say we, us, our company, is for us to decide where we want to be five years from now or three years from now rather than it is for me to decide, it is for the company to decide if you have to say company say our company, can our company be there in 3 years, next.

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- Language of respect: All sections can be invited.
- Language of disrespect: English teachers, poor people, women.
- No use or limited use of polite words like can, shall, could, would, seem, look, feel.



So, this is the language of respect rather than say things like even women can come, as if you are making a great concession to women on the team or even people from South India can try speaking Hindi, why? You would much more respectfully say, all sections, all of us can try, that includes all regions and all genders, all caste, classes, communities, cultures, everyone.

But the language of disrespect, as I said. Well, even English teachers can come to this meeting, let us do something for poor people. Well, women should get due respect, why speak this way, you can simply say everyone can try, all who are interested are welcome, let us work for everyone rich or poor, let us give a chance to everyone men or women.

So, when you do not use or use in a limited manner polite language words like shall, could, would, may, might, feel, seem, then if, when you do not use these things you might in English sound rude, I mean exceptional situations apart the language of good social behaviour involves these words, which will come to you not only by getting these words by heart but by having a proper attitude that is the attitude of respect, the attitude of finding out, next.

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LANGUAGE OF RESPECT



Asking for opinions

Could you tell me
Do you think/ feel
May I ask you

Giving your opinion

In my opinion/ view
Sorry to interrupt you, but
As far as I can see / I am concerned



These are examples of the language of respect asking for opinions or how you can give your opinion next.

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Agreeing with an opinion

I (quite) agree
That's exactly how I see it
Yes, Indeed

Giving an explanation

What I mean is..
Well, the reason is..
Just let me explain...

Polite disagreement

I am sorry, I cant agree
I don't think so
You don't really mean that, do you?



Look at all this, next.

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ETIQUETTE



- Best shows in language.
- Soft words rather than shouting or whispering.
- Simple sentences- Mostly mono or bi-syllabic words in an inclusive tone: We can all learn
- In addition to prevailing norms of dress



Etiquette, very important in a group we must know how to stand, how to sit, how to talk; I have not spoken about dress, etc. because I believe that all of us know that on any formal situation, at any formal situation we should be properly dressed, quote on quote "properly". So, neither should we shout, nor should we whisper; we should be easily audible, visible to all.

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ACTIVITY 1



- Observe a group discussion your work place or your institution, observe the following:
 1. a. Good practices
 - b. Not such good practices
 - c. Examples of language- some that you may avoid, some others that you may use, etc.
- 2. Share your work with friends and reviewers.



It will be wonderful if you participated in a group discussion with your friends, with your colleagues and observe the entire group and make a note of or if you make a recording then afterwards observe what were the good things that were done, good practices. What was done which were not so good.

Also identify, find some examples of language, a language that you may avoid and examples of language that you may at times yourself like to use, we learn both ways, and once you have done these things, then you can share your work with your friends and with your reviewers your teachers and if you do this once in a while a few times you will become a star at any GD. Thank you very much and good luck.

