Co-Teaching in an EFL Writing Class: A Mixed-Methods Probe into its Effects and Students' Perceptions

Reza Bagheri Nevisi (Corresponding Author)

English Language & Literature Department, University of Qom, Qom, Iran.

re.baghery@gmail.com

Jalal Khademian

English Language & Literature Department, University of Qom, Qom, Iran.

jalal.khademian@gmail.com

Seyyed Mohammad Reza Amirian

English Language & Literature Department, University of Hakim Sabzevari, Sabzevar, Iran.

Sm.amirian@hsu.ac.ir

Abstract

Recently, co-teaching has been employed as an instructional technique to accelerate and facilitate second or foreign language learning process. This study was set up to investigate the effectiveness of co-teaching on EFL students' writing ability and also to probe into their attitudes towards co-teaching. Two male Iranian EFL teachers with the same language experience and academic degree represented the writing co-teachers. Furthermore, two available classes of 20 students were utilized. Oxford Placement Test was first used to ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of language proficiency. Second, a writing pretest was run to assess the participants' writing ability prior to the implantation of co-teaching. Third, the experimental group went through an eight-week instructional period with the two writing instructors while the control group was taught with a single teacher. Fourth, a writing posttest was administered to see how different the two groups were regarding their written performances. Finally, a semi-structured interview was also conducted to delve into the students' overall attitudes towards the effectiveness of co-teaching. Regarding the qualitative phase, the researchers conducted the interviews and then transcribed them. Independent samples t-test results indicated that the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group with regard to their written performances and participants in the experimental group held positive attitudes toward co-teaching. It behooves the stakeholders to delve into the potential pluses and minuses of co-instruction and determine how effective it can be for their intended audience under various pedagogic settings.

1. Introduction

Writing in the second or foreign language is considered a special and unique capability among the four major language skills. Writing tasks in the language learning process as a cognitively-demanding activity is highly beneficial for students because it enables them to express their ideas, opinions and feelings. The L2 linguistic context of authors is entirely different from that of their L1. In fact, L1 writers have a greater repertoire of vocabulary knowledge and an intuitive capacity to come up with proper syntax (Hyland, 2003).

Writing skill is considered by the experts and researchers to be one of the most exacting skill in language learning process (e.g. Deane et al., 2008; Richards & Renandya, 2002). The difficulty of writing skill can be attributed not only to its normal needs to a good mastery of target language, but also to the necessity of using some special macro strategies such expressing opinions, constructing and translating sentences (Al-Haq & Al-Sobh, 2010). The complex interactions between different aspects of writing e.g., content, lexical items, objectives, mechanics, and organization cause writing skill to be seen as a highly complicated task in the academic contexts which can lead to frustration and anxiety for learners (Jahin & Idrees, 2012). Taking the complexity of writing task into account, it is widely believed that majority of language learners suffer from serious deficiencies in achieving a good mastery of this skill (Ong, 2011). In fact, this skill is not merely difficult for non-natives, but the natives also have to adopt some strategies to properly tackle the complexity of this skill (Umar & Ratharkrishnan, 2012). Accordingly, it is essential for researcher and experts to do their best to find some strategies and techniques to promote this pivotal skill.

Recently, co-teaching has been employed as an instructional technique to accelerate and facilitate L2 learning process. The term was first used in the investigations of Walther-Thomas (1997). However, it reemerged in the research dealing with the problems and deficiencies of the handicapped learners (Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker, 2001; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Gately & Gately, 2001; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Stanovich, 1996; Tobin, 2005; Vaughn et al., 1997). The research evidences proved that the complexity of providing the handicapped learners with an effective teaching necessitated more workforce which could be compensated by co-teaching.

The present study is significant in that it has implemented co-teaching in an EFL writing class to see how it affect their overall writing ability in comparison with a group of learners in a traditional writing class with one instructor. This instructional technique encompasses the effective and technical presentation of writing instruction using different approaches and variations, taking the needs and goals of the students into account Through employing this technique, not only can the students' individualized education program (IEP) purpose be accomplished, but also the learning demands of other students are met. The co-teachers have fluid functions, each taking a responsibility and sharing their suitable designs and procedures by negotiation to achieve the desired objectives in a writing class (Friend et al., 1993, 2010).

Several studies conducted in the Iranian EFL have adopted the traditional approach to EFL writing instruction with one writing instructor in the class and have asked students to prepare a piece of writing (e.g., a composition or essay) on various topics and then have assessed and evaluated their ultimate product on the basis of a particular scale or framework. The imposed

apprehension and stress on the students during EFL/ESL writing instruction in traditional classes are the most enormous and present a grave challenge to both the writing instructor and learner at the same time. Furthermore, the writing teachers might not be able to provide feedback to all students and correct all their essays on his or her own without proper assistance from a capable peer or colleague. Therefore, one of the main problems in EFL writing classes is how to appropriately handle all of the students' tasks and activities with one individual teacher present in the class who has to do several tasks at the same time: Instructing, planning, monitoring student behaviors, assigning tasks and activities, and finally evaluating them based on pre-determined criteria. It seems co-teaching has a lot to offer and can help writing instructors tackle such problems at hand. In the same vein, since no study has been yet conducted to probe into the impact of co-teaching on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability, this research was an attempt to fill this existing gap in the literature. Accordingly, the objectives of the research were twofold; first to probe into the possible effect of co-teaching on EFL learners' writing ability and second, to delve into students' attitudes toward co-teaching in their writing class.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Co-Teaching

Co-teaching which was once considered merely a conventional model in the realm of special education (Pratt, 2014) has recently gained particular attention within the realm of second language pedagogy (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). The concept of co-teaching has been treated by teachers and instructors in a variety of ways. For instance, Angelides (2006) regarded co-teaching as the process during which the responsibility of a class is on the shoulder of two teachers who collaboratively work together and share their duties in terms of planning instruction and developing teaching materials. The concept of co-teaching in the early 1970s was also referred to as "team teaching" and "collaborative teaching" or "cooperative teaching" (Reinhiller, 1996). Despite the fact that all these terms can be employed interchangeably to describe a learning situation in which two teachers are collaboratively engaged in the teaching process by sharing teaching-related activities, each has its own unique implications concerning the instructional technique (Jang, 2006). In team teaching, the main focus is on contributions made by each of the two teachers, while collaborative and cooperative teaching deal mainly with assistance and scaffolding process and procedures each participant undertakes in the teaching.

In its general sense, co-teaching refers to an approach in which the process of teaching is carried out by cooperation of two or more teachers. Various definitions and conceptualizations have been proposed for co-teaching by different researchers. For example, Wenzlaff et al. (2002) defined co-teaching as the presence of two or more individuals who jointly work together in a collaborative manner to achieve an outcome which cannot be possibly attained if the work is done individually. However, it is also described as the shared work of two instructors, one general and the other specialized, to fulfill similar or different teaching responsibilities in the classroom (Gately & Gately, 2001; Gallo-Fox et al., 2005). Cook and Friend (1995) presented a different view in this respect arguing that co-teaching refer to the mutual presentation of the "substantive instruction" to a group of heterogeneous learners in one

classroom. Put in another way, co-teaching system has been built on a substantial approaches and characteristics which make it distinct from such a conventional interpretation.

In a much more technical definition, Murphy and Carlisle (2008) referred to co-teaching as a means of providing a wide range of opportunities for transformative action as well as developing through a jointly made contribution. The teacher or instructors who involve in co-teaching process have equal responsibility in terms of different teaching activities such as evaluation (co-evaluate) of the teaching process and planning (co-plan) of the procedures for the future co-teaching sessions.

In the same vein, the nature of co-teaching requires two or more teachers with distinct individual attributes to engage in a teamwork which is the key and crucial factor in construction of an effective partnership by co-teaching. Looking from another points of view, Gallo-Fox (2010) postulated that if the co-teacher would experience a successful sharing of ideas as well as effective teaching, they have to go beyond his/her own individual preferences. In fact, teacher and co-teacher should create a sense of mutual trust, reliance, and honesty to each other through which they can cope with personal anxieties and dilemmas, as well as create an atmosphere which elicit cooperation.

The construction of team for co-teaching depending on the co-teachers' characteristics, teaching objective and student needs can be done in various manners. For example, the co-teaching team can be formed by cooperation of a science teacher with a non-science, or a special needs teacher with a general teacher. According to Roth. et al. (2004), the co-teaching and cooperation of a student teachers with an experienced teacher can provide them with golden opportunities to gain new insights and experiences in teaching science and to foster the learning of high school students.

2.2. Empirical Studies

Different aspects of co-teaching have been explored like instructor readiness (DelliCarpini, 2014), instructor interactions (Im & Martin, 2015; Park, 2014), and the instructional role of the teacher (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). Furthermore, these studies have been carried out in various settings and by a variety of learners. A large number of conducted studies deal with exploring the multi-dimensional nature of co-teaching in terms of English language instruction. Furthermore, the pros and cons of co-teaching in ESL contexts have been extensively dealt with, the merits vary from assisting instructors to develop as educators (Chandler-Olcott, et al., 2014; Martin-Beltran, & Peercy, 2014) to promoting teaching practices and attending to learners are other facets and dimensions that have been explored in the previously-done studies (e.g., Chandler et al., 2014; Chandler-Olcott, & Nieroda, 2016; Gladman, 2014; Kong, 2014). However, co-teaching suffers from serious drawbacks including time management, (Chandler, et al., 2014; Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Kong, 2014;); adaptability (Al-Saaideh & Al-Zyoud, 2015; Gladman, 2014; Martin- Beltran & Peercy, 2014); Support and training (Al-Natour & Al-Zboon, 2015; Hallam, et al., 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Steyn, 2016). Accordingly, to ensure the proper attainment and efficiency of co-teaching, these major challenges should be also taken into account (Goddard et al., 2015; Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016).

In a research on the effectiveness of co-teaching, Boland et al., (2019) investigated the impact of this teaching approach on the EFL students' language learning achievements and performance which encompasses the mastery of four language skills. To this end, a six-week intervention was carried out on 24 EFL students. The obtained findings suggested that those students who were taught English using co-teaching procedure indicated much better performance in language tests and achieve better outcomes in this regard compared to those EFL students who undergone the traditional teaching procedures with one teacher. These findings revealed that a well-organized co-teaching programs could provide an effective support for students in the classroom settings, which in turn could lead to better or quality learning.

In a similar study, Rao and Yu (2019) explored the influence of using co-teaching approach on the Chinese EFL learners' English proficiency, and determine the learners' attitudes on this mode of teaching. To do so, two teachers, one native and the other non-native English teacher, were selected as co-teachers. Three co-teaching models were employed in this study including: (1) one instructing/one helping, (2) group instruction, and (3) station instruction. The results of this study showed that co-teaching approach exert considerably positive influence on the EFL students' English proficiency. The results of the questionnaire also revealed that a large portion students have positive tendencies toward this teaching approach and attributed the efficiency of co-teaching to three beneficial aspects of it which are pleasant linguistic atmosphere, complementary teaching behaviors, and enjoyable cultural environment.

Jao and McDougall (2016) in an attempt to carry out a Collaborative Teacher Inquiry Project conducted a study to promote the teaching and learning of 9 graders of Applied mathematics by stimulating teachers to act collaboratively. This study was conducted on 11 mathematics teachers in Southern Ontario, Canada. According to Collaborative Teacher Inquiry Project, the selected teachers constructed a learning community through making collaboration. Although it was found that some barriers hindered the collaboration process, teachers did their best to adopt effective strategies to cope with these barriers. These teachers were much more motivated to overcome the barriers when they saw the beneficial aspect of collaboration to promote their professional quality and their students' achievements.

In a meta-analysis study, Murawski and Swanson (2001) found that co-teaching positively influenced students' language achievement in general and their reading comprehension ability and language art in particular. Moreover, they reached the conclusion that the co-teaching application could be reflected by "two are better than one" expression in pedagogic settings (Gately, 2005).

Dahlberg and Hoover (2003) explored the role played by co-teaching in enhancement of K6 Students' discipline and attendance and found that co-teaching has positive influence on these two variables and makes students to pursue the line of education at school much more enthusiastically. Furthermore, it was found that co-teaching could result in a decline in behavioral matters in pedagogic settings.

In a similar vein, Maultsby and Barbara (2009) investigated the effectiveness of co-teaching on the reading comprehension, language, art and mathematical attainment among the 5-8 grad students in Tennessee. The required data was collected using Tennessee Comprehensive

Assessment Program (TCAP) Achievement test in six schools. In this study, the co-teachers refer to the special and general educator which were jointly go along with the process of teaching. In three of the selected schools co-teaching approach was employed and in the other group of schools the teaching was pursued adopting traditional procedures. The findings showed that co-teaching could lead to promotion of Math achievement in students with disabilities and a decline in linguistic and artistic accomplishment for learners without disabilities.

Aliakbari and Mansoori Nejad (2010) examined the impact of co-teaching on the EFL students' grammar proficiency. In order to fulfill the purpose of this tidy, 58 EFL students were selected from junior high school and were assigned to two groups. In the experimental group, grammar was instructed through co-teaching approach, while control group received traditional instruction. It was found that using co-teaching in the classroom did not significantly impacted EFL learners' grammatical achievement.

Walther-Thomas (1997) conducted a research in 25 elementary and middle schools, found that the adoption of co-teaching process could lead to considerable academic development and promotion of self-confidence among students.

The effectiveness of co-teaching has also been explored in technology-based instruction. Jang (2006) using a quasi-experimental method combined the technology-based instruction with co-teaching in seventh-grade science classes. To do so, the four selected science classes were further subdivided into two groups. The results revealed considerable development in the participants' academic achievement when web-based instruction was integrated with co-teaching. The above-mentioned studies have explored and analyzed the effect of co-teaching on students' grammar proficiency, reading comprehension, math achievement, English proficiency, discipline, attendance, and etc. However, this study was set up to investigate the effectiveness of co-teaching on developing EFL students' writing ability and also to delve into their attitudes towards co-teaching. Therefore, the researchers formulated these questions:

1. Does co-teaching significantly affect Iranian EFL students' writing ability?

2. What is the attitude of EFL learners towards the effectiveness of co-teaching to improve their writing ability?

3. Methodology
3.1. Research Design
To accomplish the already-stated aims of the research, the researchers adopted a mixed-methods design. The type of mixed methods was a sequential mixed method in a sense that, quantitative phase was followed by qualitative phase, both were of paramount importance, and none of the phases were advantageous or prioritized over another.

3.2. Participants
Two male Iranian EFL teachers with the same language experience and academic degree represented the co-teachers. Furthermore, based on convenience sampling, the researchers selected two intermediate groups of EFL students in ILI and Pooyesh language institutes in Isfahan. Each group of students included 20 language learners ranging from 21 to 26 years old and they all were native Persian speakers.

3.3. Materials and Instruments
The following research instruments and materials were utilized in the study:

3.3.1. American English File Textbook
The primary source was American English File that is used in some Iranian EFL institutes. The book consists of some units and has various essays accompanied by detailed examples on different topics ranging from the way to write different essays to the ways to analyze, summarize, and paraphrase them.

3.3.2. Writing pretest and posttest
Pretest and posttests were reviewed by two writing experts with nearly twenty years of teaching writing who were associate professors of TEFL to ensure their validity. The tests consisted of three topics for each the participants were supposed to write a well-formed composition. The allotted time for each task was 25 minutes. It should be noted here that the writing task was assessed by Cambridge IELTS task 2 writing band description. There are four criteria to assess an essay writing task including task response (for task 2), coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. Each criterion was awarded a band score from 0 to 9. The criteria were weighted equally.

3.3.3. Semi-structured interview
In addition to the quantitative phase, a semi-structured interview was conducted to delve into the students' overall attitudes towards the implementation of co-teaching. It was designed by the researcher in the form of the semi-structured open-ended interview with 15 items. According to Dornyei (2007), a semi-structured interview encompasses some pre-scribed items and questions in which the interviewer should be about to go through with the task and allow the respondent talk about particular subjects. Some sessions were conducted in focus group sessions to find out teachers' opinions about the details of the study. It should be mentioned that to ensure the validity of the research instruments, they were reviewed by three language experts, and their comments were utilized in the final draft. Moreover, utilizing Cronbach Alpha, the overall reliability of research instruments was evaluated and reported to stand at .81.

3.4. Piloting
One of the most important parts of the research was "piloting" because it was possible to detect the unforeseeable minute points and problems with the instruments of the main study, and in this way it prevented "a great deal of frustration and possible extra work later on" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 75). Regarding this point, the researchers piloted the study. Reliability indices of research instruments were also estimated through a pilot study. Five EFL learners with the same features as the students of the main research were randomly selected and piloted with. The most important purpose was to allocate the time limit, and find out the weaknesses of the research instruments to be eradicated in their final versions.

3.5. Procedure
The research was implemented to examine whether co-instruction had a positive effect on students' writing. To this end, two groups of Iranian EFL intermediate learners were selected from two language institutes in Iran based on convenience random sampling. Although the institutes had already determined the participants' proficiency level, OPT was used to further ensure the overall proficiency level and based on the obtained results from OPT, the researchers

could specify that the students were at an intermediate level of English language proficiency. Prior to the study, the pretest was run to assess the participants' overall writing ability. The experimental group went through an eight-week instructional period and the class was held every other day for one hour and 20 minutes. As stated earlier, the co-teaching model for the current study was team teaching. Based on this technique, two language instructors with the same language experience and academic degree collaborated jointly to instruct and run a writing class. They gave instruction mutually and simultaneously and ran the class based on pre-designed planning and organization. During the study, the two classes were assigned to one control group in which traditional writing instruction was delivered by a single teacher and one experimental group in which two instructors were involved in teaching activities at the same time. One teacher instructed while the other noted students' errors and comments and provided feedback and assistance. At other times, one specific instructor explained class activities and divided students into groups of two or three and monitor their activities and performance while the other instructor evaluated and assessed their writing performances based on pre-determined criteria.

In both groups, the teacher used textbook and some text passage as the teaching materials to develop students' comprehension ability. As it was put forward previously, the class A (control group) underwent the traditional writing instruction by only one teacher. The instructor in the control group did his best to teach the same materials, however, he was short of time to handle all class activities at once. He postponed feedback provision to later and assigned students some tasks to do outside the class as he ran short for time and couldn't manage all classroom procedures and tasks. In terms of evaluation and assessment, the teacher in the control group was unable to provide online feedback so the essays had to be delivered for later correction and there could be no on-the-spot correction and feedback. students in the control group also had fewer opportunities to work in pairs, triads, groups and had little time to interact with the writing instructor about their problematic areas and issues with pedagogic tasks. neither can give feedback to all students nor correct them while teaching new materials, subjects, etc. In sharp contrast, adoption of the co-teaching technique provided ample opportunities for learners to communicate with the instructor as well as with one another and their peers about their writing problems. Moreover, students could be better engaged in classroom activities and well-monitored and evaluated by the two instructors. Finally, a writing posttest was administered to see how different the two groups were with regard to their written performances.

3.6. Data Analysis

To investigate the research questions in the study, the researchers ran an independent samples t-test to delve into the first question. The validity of instruments was estimated in their relevant studies but the researchers calculated their reliability through Cronbach's Alpha since the context had changed.

Regarding the qualitative phase, the gathered information from interviews were transcribed and the themes and subthemes were identified and codified by the researcher. This process was done based on theme-based approach. This approach provided a good guideline for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes of the raw data by which the researchers described and

categorized details of data. In fact, it was not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework and so it was used within various contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. Results

In order to ensure the normality of distribution, the normal probability plot was presented. To do so, first the data was filtered, then the uniformly distributed percentiles were calculated from the normal distribution. The proximity of the attributes to the standard line verified the regular distribution of the data. As the distribution of indices verified the normality of the data, the study was accompanied by an inferential analysis to address the research questions. The values of kurtosis and skewness and their corresponding z-scores for both experimental and control groups were calculated to test the first assumption.

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis Values

	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
Experimental	-.112	.328	-.624	.749
Control	.165	.314	-.759	.616

Evidently, none of the z-scores was higher than 1.86, which showed a normal distribution of the scores. Furthermore, to examine the second assumption, namely, the homogeneity of variances, Levene's test was run the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Levene's Test Results

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	.084	1	39	.722
Based on Median	.078	1	39	.719
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.078	1	34.02	.719
Based on trimmed mean	.082	1	38	.720

According to Table 2, the Levene's test was non-significant at $p \leq .05$. It is thus assumed that the difference between the variances of the groups was not substantial and essentially equal, and therefore, the homogeneity of the variances was retained. Although the key assumptions of the parametric test were met, the independent t-test samples were run. As shown in Table 3, the reliability of the research instruments, namely Writing Pretest/Posttest, and interview, is presented.

Table 3. Reliability Indices of the Research Instruments

	Items	**Index**
Pretest	3 Topics	0.79
Posttest	3 Topics	0.78
Interview	15	0.81

Then, the descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest of the experimental group (EG) is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Descriptive Analysis of Results for Experimental Group

	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD.
Pretest	20	73	84	79.5	3.170
Posttest	20	72	90	83	6.194

As shown in Table 4., the pretest mean score of EG was 79.5 and SD= 3.170. Moreover, the posttest mean score of EG was 83 and SD=6.194. Table 5 presents the descriptive analysis of the control group.

Table 5. The Descriptive Analysis of Results for Control Group

	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD.
Pretest	20	71	83	78.5	3.648
Posttest	20	73	82	79	2.719

As shown in Table 5, the mean of control group in pretest was 78.5 with the standard deviation of 3.648, while the posttest of this group indicated a mean score of 79 with the standard deviation of 2.719. The first research question investigated whether co-teaching had a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. In order to answer this question, the researchers ran independent samples t-test.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-test for both Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.		Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.309	.255	-2.73	39	.007	-2.800	1.024		-4.828	-.772
Equal variances not assumed			-2.73	117.61	.007	-2.800	1.024		-4.828	-.772

As demonstrated in Table 6, since Levene's Test is not significant (p> 0.05) equal variances assumed were examined. In t-test for Equality of Means, $p< 0.007$ was less than significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, thus, it was concluded that the mean scores for the experimental group was significantly different from that of the control group. That is to say, the co-teaching significantly affected Iranian EFL learners' writing ability.

5. Discussion

The second question examined the attitude of EFL learners towards implementing co-teaching to improve their written performances. The results of the interview revealed that most of the participants favored utilizing co-teaching to improve their overall L2 writing ability. Some of the participants argued that their teachers were not trained on how to teach together. However,

they verified that even without training, working teachers together will make positive progress. One of the interviewees stated that:

"I believe that those group of EFL students who are in elementary and intermediate level of language proficiency and studying in the private language institutes need much more explicit English teaching, and carrying out co-teaching in these situation might often lead to a scheduling problems when intending to go along with all students' requirements in the class".
They also pointed out that there were still distinct advantages to having two instructors in the same class. One of the interviewees responded that:

"Co-teaching offers many opportunities to both teachers and learners. For example, not only do teachers pick up new insights from their co-teaching peers, but they also see new techniques that can be used for explicit training sessions with their English learners. At the end of the day this may result in progress for her English-speaking pupils when they are more cognizant of their instructional requirements beyond the reach of direct communication with their learners." In addition, another interviewee pointed out the benefits of the co-teaching:

"I think working with someone who works mainly on the growth of English has acted as a lesson for all teachers to understand the needs of various learners. It just provides teachers a very good reminder of what they should do to help their learners. I mean, there's so much they can learn by watching each other and doing what they're doing."

Other participants proposed that co-teaching should be used as a counterpart to instruction in general EFL classes, and that co-teachers collaborate together to help comprehend what each learner wants, the amount of scaffolding each learner gets, and if that is necessary, and the best level of scaffold. In fact, through co-teaching both co-teachers know what is being instructed. Lessons are aligned and complete each other. Co-teachers work jointly and decide which learners can work more independently and which learners need more support. Thus, learners know what they are doing with a specific instructor. Co-teaching makes learners feel both instructors will assist them along the way, and learners respect both of them.

Concerning other pluses of co-instruction, some of the respondents believed that co-instructing is a kind of double teaching in EFL classes. The strength of each instructor complements the other, and the special plus or the added bonus is the two-sided respect and assistance that will be provided by each instructor, which might help to boost each other's confidence. They argued that there was more compatibility and agreement with lessons because of their co-teaching. One of them said:

"In my view, it makes both co-teachers better at what they're doing because sometimes she/he may pick up on something that her/his co-teacher not noticing."

Therefore, according to the interviews, co-teaching made both instructors better at what they were performing in the classroom. In such a context, teachers can spend additional hours with students, and co-instructors and learners at the same time take advantage of this experience. In fact, the extra pair of hands and eyes in the class is always helpful to everyone. Almost all participants agreed on cooperation and encouragement between the two teachers, making the preparation and implementation of teaching more fruitful for students and teachers. In co-

teaching scenarios, each teacher understands what is learned and how it is taught (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). This is congruent with the findings of other research. For instance, according to Pardy (2004), it can be helpful for learners to go out of the class for pedagogical scaffolding. Learners also might like small group activities outside class environment more. The participants also talked about the roles of educators engaged in the co-instructing as well:

"*I think…. teachers teach us the simple language that we should live when we first arrive here; be able to make demands, call for assistance, that sort of stuff, and then refer to the university-level lexicons, when we have adequate English to advance and make developments on that and then help us to be capable of reading, writing, listening and speaking elements*." The interviewees also mentioned the challenges of the co-teaching which their teachers faced.

"*In my opinion the main difficulty for teachers is not to believe like they are linked to new teaching in contrast to teachers in standard programs, and the shared difficulty that all instructors had was a shortage of time to collaborate with one another. Both teachers wanted more time to prepare together and collaborate on teaching as a team of co-teachers.*"

Furthermore, the respondents highlighted the importance of instructional time in co-teaching. They believed that together the time for conducting the co-teaching is restricted, and this might make scheduling and instructing a challenge. One of the interviewees asserted:

"*I suppose time is still going to be the most critical thing. Finding time to work together, finding time to well, occasionally the co-teachers will be available, and meeting the learners that they need to fulfill with it and it's just all trying to shape it smoothly, it's all pretty hard.*"

In the same vein, another interviewee argued that not only do the EFL co-teaches are provided with the opportunity to back their EFL learners, but they also assist their current co-teachers. By showing the paths to better instructor language students, the EFL co-instructors present the current instructors with such tools to utilize. The current co-instructors passed on their experiences that indicated how they watched their counterpart to notice strategies they could utilize. Other respondents argued that they had been familiarized with strategic and cultural issues by their co-instructors:

"*We are so lucky that we have a strong links with co-teachers who are researching cultural events, and if there are big events, holidays, things like that for the culture in which we learners are affected.*"

In addition, one of the teachers noted that his contact with a co-teacher could only be a brief chat. They both confirmed that without the contact, be it short, they could have experienced significant problems with the instructional technique. Additionally, the impact of teacher personalities during the co-teaching was mentioned in the interviews. In fact, when the co-teachers have the same characteristics they certainly cooperate effectively. The dynamics of a relation was also affected by the personality factors. One instructor described the co-instructional technique as a very fruitful and instrumental stratagem depending on personalities. Another teacher noted:

"*That if you teach with someone like you, and you can put up with each other's teaching style and attitude, that's the greatest thing ever. If you don't, it's the hardest thing you've ever done.*"

They still agree that the truth of dealing with another person is that people need to get along. While the experience of a person entering into a connection should be optimistic, there are inevitable factors affecting the relationship which are beyond their control. Teachers understand that the form of personality is beyond their influence and still may have a lasting influence on the co-teaching process. Moreover, the interviewees maintained that co-instruction readiness among educators depends on their years of experiences. They all talked about the differences they experienced with their assigned co-teachers. They also said that most instructors made a comparison between years of their teaching experiences and their co-instructional readiness and how they were impressed or impacted by the co-teaching experience. Furthermore, the interviewees emphasized the importance of teachers' experience in co-teaching and asserted:

"*It made a huge difference for the co-instructor to have experience of the subject matter. When I have such instructors who can solidly manage the class, and can develop rapport with students, and know some of the things about English, pays off.*"

One respondent concluded that experience matters by defining her instructor as knowledgeable and affective in the development of the learners. In fact, they suggested that the fact that they had both expertise added to the success of their co-teaching class. Both teachers agreed that teachers with fewer experience, and thus less understanding of content, and teacher teamwork skills, posed a greater difficulty in collaborating with co-teachers. The interviewees discussed the importance of teacher preparation. In reality, instruction on the various types of co-teaching and how to apply the model to the classroom provided teachers with knowledge and direction. Teachers overwhelmingly pointed to lack of teacher training as a big concern. The co-teachers reported mixed feelings about co-teaching training. One of them contended that he did not know he was a co-teacher until he faced a class filled with students.
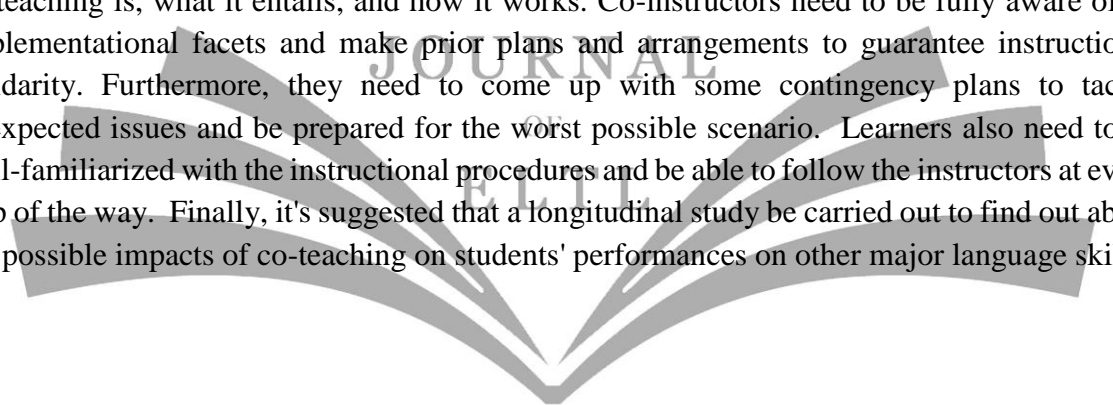
"*In the situation, I had no influence and no planning. I was educated when I began the TTC courses for the first time, and the language centers provide instruction to English teachers. My first year of teaching was five years ago, and they described EFL preparation as something I should "subscribe" to which indicates that it was voluntary. During the TTC lectures, I was a co-teacher and received co-teaching and teamwork classes in my undergraduate training. However, I mentioned that I had not undergone any instruction from my new co-teacher*".

6. Conclusion

The current study has its own limitations and the first limitation was the sampling size which could have undermined the generalizability of the findings. The second limitation was that researcher could not control for all the intervening variables including learners 'attitudes and teachers' different teaching styles. The third limitation could be related to the self-flattery syndrome inherent in answering the questions of the semi-structured interview where learners

might have done their utmost to overrate themselves and project an exaggerated image of themselves.

The future studies can explore the association between educators' background and their capability to collaborate effectively with EFL students and work in cooperation with co-teacher. One efficient strategy in this respect might be increasing sample size which lead to providing additional patterns to be used by learners. Context exert an impact on the findings of the study, so it requires further attention. Another factor which is highly important is the teaching experiences of EFL teachers which can influence their attitudes. To fully grasp the co-teaching model, more investigations should be conducted which explores student achievement. Instructors should be exposed to appropriate training so as to understand what co-teaching is, what it entails, and how it works. Co-instructors need to be fully aware of its implementational facets and make prior plans and arrangements to guarantee instructional solidarity. Furthermore, they need to come up with some contingency plans to tackle unexpected issues and be prepared for the worst possible scenario. Learners also need to be well-familiarized with the instructional procedures and be able to follow the instructors at every step of the way. Finally, it's suggested that a longitudinal study be carried out to find out about the possible impacts of co-teaching on students' performances on other major language skills.

References

Al-Haq, F., & Al-Sobh, M. A. (2010). The effect of a web-based writing instructional EFL program on enhancing the performance of Jordanian secondary students. *The Jalt Call Journal, 6*(3), 189–218.

Aliakbari, M., & Manoori Nejad, A. (2009). Implementing a co-teaching model for improving EFL learners' grammatical proficiency. *Proceedings of the international conference ICT for language learning" 3rd Edition,* Florence.

Aliakbari, M., & Nejad, A. (2010). Implementing a co-teaching model for improving EFL learners' grammatical proficiency. In *International Conference "ICT for Language Learning" 3rd edition*. Florence, Italy. Retrieved from http://conferencepixel-online.net/ICT4LL2010/

Aliakbari, M., & Nejad, A. (2013). On the effectiveness of team teaching in promoting learners' grammatical proficiency. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(3), 5-22.

Al-Natour, F., & Sidek, K., (2015). Academic writing in the Yemeni EFL context: History, challenges and future research. *The Effects of Brief Mindfulness Intervention on Acute Pain experience: An Examination of Individual Difference, 1*, 167-174.

Al-Saaideh, M. A., & Al-Zyoud, M. (2015). Benefits of teaching interdisciplinary subjects collaboratively in Jordanian pre-vocational education. *Educational Research and Reviews, 10*, 2702-2712.

Angelides, P. (2006). *Implementing a co-teaching model for improving schools*. Paper represented at 19th International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Fort Lauderdale.

Bacharach, C.V., Kang, E., Afanador-Vega, A., & Stevenson, A. (2008). My partner always helps me: Exploring two co-teachers' practices to support writing in a first-grade linguistically diverse elementary class. *TESL-EJ, 24*(2),1-18.

Bacharach, N., Heck, T., & Dahlberg, K. (2008). Co-teaching in higher education. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 5*(3), 9-16.

Ballantyne, K.G., Sanderman, A.R. & Levy, J. (2008). *Educating English language learners: building teacher capacity*. National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, Retrieved November 10, 2016, from:http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/3/EducatingELLsBuildingTeacherCapacityVol1.df

Boland, D., E., Alkhalifa, K., B., & Al-Mutairi, M., A. (2019). Co-Teaching in EFL Classroom: The promising model. *English Language Teaching, 12*(12), 95.-117.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2).77-101.

Butler, D. & Schnellert, L. (2012). Collaborative inquiry in teacher professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(8), 1206-1220.

Chandler-Olcott, K., & Nieroda, J. (2016). The creation and evolution of a co-teaching community: How teachers learned to address adolescent English language learners' needs as writers. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*, 170-182.

Chandler-Olcott, K., Nieroda, J., & Crandall, B. (2014). Co-planning and co-teaching in a summer writing institute: A formative experiment. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education, 3*(2), 15-34.

Dahlberg, K. A., & Hoover. J. (2003). *The effects of co-teaching on K–6 student discipline and attendance*. St. Cloud University.

De Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 101–124.

Deane, P., Odendahl, N., Quilan, T., Fowles, M., Welsh, C., & Bivens-Tatum, J. (2008). *Cognitive models of writing: Writing proficiency as a complex integrated skill.* Educational Testing Service.

DelliCarpini, M. (2014). Modeling collaboration for ESL teacher candidates. *The New Educator, 10*, 129-144.

Dieker, L. A. (2001). What are the characteristics of 'effective' middle and high school co-taught teams for students with disabilities? *Preventing School Failure*, *46*(1), 14-23.

Dieker, L. A., & Murawski, W. W. (2003). Co-teaching at the secondary level: Unique issues, current trends, and suggestions for success. *The High School Journal, 6*(4), 32-48.

Dornyei, M. G., (2007). *Co-teaching for English learners: A guide to collaborative planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection.* Corwin.

Dove, M., & Honigsfeld, A. (2010). ESL Coteaching and collaboration: Opportunities to develop teacher leadership and enhance student learning. *TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 3-22.

Dove, M., & Honigsfeld, A. (2014). Analysis of the implementation of an ESL co-teaching model in a suburban elementary school. *NYS TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 62-67.

Forte, A.M., & Flores, M.A. (2014). Teacher collaboration and professional development in the workplace: A study of Portuguese teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(1), 91 105.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for creative effective practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 28*(3), 1-12.

Friend, M., Cook, L., Hurley-Chamberlain, D., & Shamberger, C. (2010). Co-teaching: An illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 20*(1), 9-27.

Friend, M., Reising, M., & Cook, L. (1993). Co-teaching: An overview of the past, a glimpse at the present, and consideration for the future. *Preventing School Failure, 37,* 6-10.

Gallo-Fox, J. (2010). Risk-taking as practice in a coteaching professional learning community. In *Coteaching in International Contexts* (pp. 109-128). Springer, Dordrecht.

Gallo-Fox, J., Scantlebury, K, Wassell, B., Juck, M., & Gleason, S. (2005). *Co-teaching: A professional development model of co-respect, co-responsibility, and co-generative dialogues for interns and cooperating teachers.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Gately, S. E. (2005). Two are better than one. *Principal Leadership.* Retrieved on Octobe1,2006fromhttp://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4002/is_200505/ai_n13638381

Gately, S. E., & Gately, F., J. (2001). Understanding co-teaching components. *Teaching Exceptional Children 33*, 40-47.

Gladman, A. (2014). Team teaching is not just for teachers! Student perspectives on the collaborative classroom. *TESOL Journal, 6*(1), 130-148.

Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Kim, E.S., & Miller, R. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leaders, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. *American Journal of Education, 121¸* 501-530.

Graziano, K., & Navarett, L. (2012). Co-teaching in a teacher education classroom: Collaboration, compromise and creativity. *Issues in Teacher Education, 21*(1), 109-126.

Hallam, P., Smith, H., Hite, J., Hite, S., & Wilcox, B. (2015). Trust and collaboration in PLC teams: Teacher relationships, principal support, and collaborative benefits. *NASSP Bulletin, 99*, 193-216.

Hepner, S., & Newman, S. (2010). Teaching is teamwork: Preparing for, planning, and implementing effective co-teaching practice. *International School Journal, 29*(2), 67-81.

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. (2008). Co-teaching in the ESL classroom. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 8-14.

Honingh, M., & Hooge, E. (2014). The effect of school-leader support and participation in decision making on teacher collaboration in Dutch primary and secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 42*(1), 75-98.

Hyland, K. (2003), *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.

Im, B., & Martin, V. (2015). The challenge of co-teaching in inclusive classrooms at the high school level and what the teachers told us. American Secondary Education, 32, 77-88.

Jahin, J. H., & Idrees, M. W. (2012). EFL major student teachers' writing proficiency and attitudes towards learning English. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Sciences, 4*(1), 10–72.

Jang, S. (2006). Research on the effects of team teaching upon two secondary school teachers. *Educational Research, 48(2),* 177-194.

Jao, L., & McDougall, D. (2016). Moving beyond the barriers: supporting meaningful teacher collaboration to improve secondary school mathematics. *Teacher Development*, 20(4), 557-573.

Keefe, E.B., & Moore, V. (2004). The challenge of co-teaching in inclusive classrooms at the high school level: What the teachers told us. *American Secondary Education*, *32*(3), 77-88.

Kelly, J., & Cherkowski, S. (2015). Collaboration, collegiality, and collective reflection: A case study of professional development for teachers. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 169*, 1-27.

Kong, S. (2014). Collaboration between content and language specialists in late immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 70*(1), 103-122.

Maduako, I., & Oyatogun, A. T. (2015). Application of team teaching in the English language class. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6(*29), 101-120.

Martin-Beltran, M. & Peercy, M. (2014). Collaboration to teach English language learners: Opportunities for shared teacher learning. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*, 721-737.

Maultsby, S. & Barbara, M. (2009). A descriptive analysis of the impact of co-teaching on the reading/language arts and math achievement of selected middle schools' students in a middle Tennessee school district. *Tennessee State University*.

McLaughlin, V. L., & Walther-Thomas, C. (2002). Outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive and pullout programs. *Exceptional Children*, *68*(2), 203-222.

Murawski, W. W., & Hughes, C. E. (2009). Response to intervention, collaboration, and co-teaching: A logical combination for successful systemic change. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 53*(4), 267-277.

Murawski, W., W. & Swanson, H., L. (2001). A meta-analysis of co-teaching research: Where are the data? *Remedial and Special Education, 22*(5), 258–267.

Murphy C., & Scantlebury K. (2010). Introduction to co-teaching. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 4*(2), 201-219.

Murphy, C., & Carlisle, K. (2008). Situating relational ontology and transformative activist stance within the 'everyday' practice of co-teaching and co-generative dialogue. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 3*(2), 493-506.

Ong, J. (2011). Investigating the use of cohesive devices by Chinese EFL learners. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly, 11*(3), 42–65.

Pancsofar, N., & Petroff, J. (2013). Professional development experiences in co-teaching: Associations with teacher confidence, interests, and attitudes. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 36*(2). 83-96.

Park, J. (2014). English co-teaching and teacher collaboration: A micro-interactional perspective. *System, 44,* 34-44.

Pardy, D. (2004). The perceived effectiveness of simultaneous team-teaching in a dual language program. *Journal of Research in International Education, 3*(2), 207-224.

Peercy, M. M., Ditter, M., & Destefano, M. (2016). "We need more consistency": Negotiating the division of labor in ESOL–mainstream teacher collaboration. *TESOL Journal, 8,* 215–239.

Peercy, M., Martin-Beltrán, M., Silverman, R., & Nunn, S. (2015). "Can I ask a question?": ESOL and mainstream teachers engaging in distributed and distributive learning to support English language learners' text comprehension. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 42*(4), 33-58.

Pratt, S. (2014). Achieving symbiosis: Working through challenges found in co-teaching to achieve effective co-teaching relationships. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 41*, 1-12.

Rao, Z., & Yu, H. (2019). Enhancing students' English proficiency by co-teaching between native and non-native teachers in an EFL context. *Language Teaching Research*, https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819873937.

Reinhiller, N. (1996). Co-teaching: New variations on a not-so-new practice. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 19*, 34-48.

Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Roth, W. M., Tobin, K., Carambo, C., & Dalland, C. (2004). Co-teaching: Creating resources for learning and learning to teach chemistry in urban high schools. *Journal of Research in Science teaching*, *41*(9), 882-904.

Shooshtari, Z., Jalilifard, A., & Haghighi, S., B. (2017). A multimodal approach toward teaching for transfer: A case of team-teaching in ESAP writing courses. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS), 35*(4),157-190.

Sileo, J. (2011). Co-teaching: Getting to know your partner. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 43*(5), 32-38.

Stanovich, P. J. (1996). Collaboration: The key to successful instruction in today's inclusive schools. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 32*(1), 39-42.

Stefanidis, A., & Strogilos, V. (2015). Union gives strength: Mainstream and special education teachers' responsibilities in inclusive co-taught classrooms. *Educational Studies, 41*, 393-413.

Steyn, G. M. (2016). Teacher collaboration and invitational leadership in a South African primary school. *Education and Urban Society, 48*, 504-526.

Tobin, R. (2005). Co-teaching in language arts: Supporting students with learning disabilities. Canadian Journal of Education, *28*, 784-801.

Umar, I., & Ratharkrishnam, M. (2012). The effects of online teachers' social role and learning style on students' essay writing performance and critical thinking in a wiki environment. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 46*, 5730–5735.

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Arguelles, M. E. (1997). The ABCDE's of co-teaching. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 30(2),* 4-10.

Walther-Thomas, C. S. (1997). Co-teaching experiences: The benefits and problems that teachers and principals report over time. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 30*(4), 395-407.

Wang, L., Y. (2013). Non-native EFL Teacher Trainees' Attitude towards the Recruitment of NESTs and Teacher Collaboration in Language Classrooms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(1), pp.12-20.

Wenzlaff, T., Berak, L., Wieseman, K., Monroe-Baillargeon, Bacharach, N., & Bradfield Kreider, P. (2002). Walking our talk as educators: Teaming as a best practice. In E. Guyton, & J, Ranier (Eds.), *Research on meeting and using standards in the preparation of teachers* (pp.11-24). Kendall-Hunt Publishing.