

The Impact of Co-teaching Model on Improving Motivation and Achievement of Iranian Young EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to find out whether co-teaching model has statistically any significant impact on improving motivation and achievement of Iranian Young EFL Learners or not. The study was conducted at Salehin English Language Department in Tehran. To accomplish the purpose of this study, the researchers chose a sample of 91 participants which was reduced to 62 homogenous students through administration of YLE test. Then, these participants were divided randomly into two 30 and 32 participants groups as experimental and control groups. The participants in both experimental and control groups, were tested on test and questionnaire as pretests in the first session. In the following 10 sessions, the participants in the experimental group received co-teaching lessons, while the control group received traditional teaching. At the end of the term, the same test and questionnaire were administered to the participants of both groups as the posttests to check the effectiveness of the treatment. Finally, the means of both groups were compared through t-test ($\alpha=.05$). The results indicated there were significant differences between the performances of both groups. It was concluded that participants who received teaching by two teachers, outperformed those who did not.

Keywords: index terms-achievement, co-teaching, general education teacher, motivation, special education teacher, traditional classroom

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the foreign languages for Iranian learners at all academic levels. In Asia and in Europe in particular, there has been a tendency to lower the age at which children begin to learn a foreign language, since it is believed that the earlier a child starts to learn a foreign language, the greater the ultimate achievement will be (Alderson, 2000; Bachman, 2004). Persian Language and English Language are both Indo – Europeans Languages. So, in many cases they are similar. Teaching English involves four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing and four components: grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. According to Hargis (1990),

“A teacher must think of ways and means of stimulating and encouraging their learners. S/he should motivate them to learn. S/he should create conditions in which they feel the need to learn.” (p. 92). There is no opportunity for a teacher in traditional learning methods to give individual attention to all students. The result may be that these students become unmotivated and disinterested in performing at the standard level of instruction. Over the last two decades college instructors have suggested collegial collaboration between teachers for enhancing learning process and functions of education systems (Hadley et al., 2000; Larsen & Goebel, 2008; Murawski & Swansone, 2001;). One of the innovative methods that has been proclaimed is co-teaching. Tobin (2005) describes the co-teaching approach as

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“a restructuring of teaching procedures in which two or more educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in integrated educational settings” (p. 785). Co-teaching has become a popular model in many foreign schools due to shortages in classroom space and the inclusion of special education students in the regular classrooms. In addition, co-teaching provides teachers with the opportunity to collaborate more effectively.

To fulfill the purpose of the present study, which is to find out whether a co-teaching model has any significant effect on improving motivation and achievement of Iranian Young EFL learners, the following questions were raised:

Q₁. Does a co-teaching model have any significant impact on improving motivation of Iranian Young EFL learners?

Q₂. Does a co-teaching model have any significant impact on achievement of Iranian Young EFL learners?

With the intention of investigating the aforementioned research questions empirically, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀ 1. A co-teaching model does not have any significant impact on improving motivation of Iranian Young EFL learners.

H₀ 2. A co-teaching model does not have any significant impact on achievement of Iranian Young EFL learners.

A. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What is motivation? Gardner (1983) defined motivation as referring to “a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language”. In the field of language learning, a distinction is sometimes made between an orientation, a class of reasons for learning a language, and motivation itself, which refers to a combination of the learner’s attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

What is traditional classroom? According to Hertz-Lazarowitz (1992), “The teacher is the center of activity. She controls all communication networks and presents knowledge to pupils. The learning task is structured as individualistic or competitive. Student-student interactions are minimal and each student looks after himself or

herself.” (p. 73).

What is achievement? Achievement or performance is the outcome of education — the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important — procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Ward, Stoker & Murray-Ward 1996).

What is co-teaching? According to Villa (2004), “Co-teaching is two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of students.” (p. 3).

B. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Participants. The subjects participating in this study were 91 Iranian Young Learners of Salehin English Language Department in Tehran, and they were all male learners. The selected participants ranged from 8 to 11 years of age. The YLE test was administered to check the homogeneity of the students. After analyzing the data, 62 learners whose scores were one SD (standard deviation) above and below the Mean (x) were chosen for the experimental and control groups. We had 30 learners in the Experimental group and 32 learners in the Control group.

Instrumentation. The YLE test was employed to find out the homogeneity of language learners. It was administered to the population of 91 students for the purpose of measuring the participants’ level of proficiency. The items measure the examinees’ general knowledge on listening, speaking, reading and writing. This test included listening (25) items which took the learners approximately 25 minutes to answer, reading and writing (40) items which took the learners approximately 30 minutes to answer, and finally speaking (10) items which took the learners approximately 7 minutes to answer. A 31- items MSL (Motivated Strategies for Learning) questionnaire was administered as a pretest to determine the effect of co-teaching on learners’ motivation. The original questionnaire was in English and then translated into Persian. Students rated themselves on 5 point scales from 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (very true of me). In addition one test was used as pretest to see the effect of

co-teaching on learners' achievement. This test was chosen from Family and Friends 3 Testing and Evaluation Book which was published by Oxford University Press. This test is designed to evaluate children's progress in listening, reading, writing and speaking. These test and questionnaire were used as pretest and posttest at the beginning and the end of the semester.

Procedure. To conduct the research and verify the research hypotheses, the following steps were taken:

In this study, the participants of experimental group experienced co-teaching during 10 sessions and each session consisted of ninety minutes, three sessions in a week. In order to make sure of homogeneity of the participants, all 91 students took YLE test. This test was chosen from Cambridge Young Learner English (YLE) book. It is worth mentioning that one of the university professors rated the speaking questions.

After having homogenized students, they were divided into two different groups of control and experimental on a random basis. Control group consisted of 32 learners while experimental group contained 30 learners. The teaching materials that the participants studied were mainly from Family and Friends 3 published by Oxford University Press for all groups. On the first session of class, the researcher gave questionnaire and one standard test as pretest to both experimental and control groups. The participants in experimental group were taught English using co-teaching by two instructors. These two teachers cooperatively taught the lessons based on team teaching model. Also it should be mentioned that during the term, teachers spent lots of time coordinating the lessons and talking about the procedure of team teaching. The problems were discussed, and the instructors looked for better ways and method of teaching. There were many actions that co-teachers did before, during, and after teaching. For example, before the lesson began, teachers talked about their talents, participants' need in class. During the lesson, co-teachers talked about their responsibilities for deciding on who should teach which part of the lesson, who should provide feedback, and who should ask questions. After the lesson, teachers communicated with each other to plan lessons and activities, and decide if any students needed extra instruction or not.

Finally on the 10th session, the last day, the posttests were administered to all classes to see

the effect of treatment. To measure the effect of co-teaching on learners' motivation the same questionnaire was used. To measure the effect of co-teaching on learners' achievement researcher used the same test (pretest) as posttest.

Design. Among several research designs, the one which seemed to best fit the purpose of the present study was the quasi-experimental research: pretest-posttest design.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis of the instruments. In order to test the hypotheses, the relevant data were analyzed. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance of test scores were obtained. Independent Sample T-test was run to compare the motivation and achievement means of two groups at both pre and posttest.

Results. With regard to the nature of the present investigation which mainly concerned with comparing the mean scores of the experimental and control groups, the Independent Sample t-test formula was used for describing the significance of the difference between groups. To do so, the results of the subjects' performance on the two sets of tests (pretest and posttest) had to be compared. If the comparison indicated that their performance differed significantly, the researchers would be able to claim that there is an impact of co-teaching on improving learners' motivation and achievement.

Table (1) shows descriptive statistics for participants' motivation of two groups at pre and posttest. The motivation mean scores of control and experimental groups were 3.41 and 3.32 correspondingly, which are close to one another, while the mean value of control and experimental groups turned out to be 3.61 and 4.11 respectively, after the instruction which are far from each other. The standard deviations were .34 and .26 for control and experimental at pretest, and .31 and .25 for control and experimental, respectively, at the posttest. Standard deviation of each group is not very far from another uncovering homogeneity of the scores in two groups.

Table (2) is the results of T-test for comparing the motivation means of two groups at both pre and posttest. T-test results showed insignificant difference between control and experimental at pretest ($t = 1.17$, $p = .24$), in which the t -observed was less than the t -critical of 2.00, and the Sig. was more than .05 ($p > \alpha$), however, it revealed significant difference between the

two groups at posttest ($t = 6.79$, $p = .000$), in which the t -observed was more than the t -critical of 2.00, and the Sig. was less than .05 ($p < \alpha$). Therefore, the first null hypothesis,

which states: **Co-teaching model does not have any significant impact on improving motivation of Iranian Young EFL learners, was rejected.**

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for Participants' Motivation of Two Groups at Pre and Posttest

Source	Group	N	Range	Mini.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Pretest	Control	32	1.29	2.84	4.13	3.41	3.42	3.42	.346
	Experimental	30	.93	2.90	3.83	3.32	3.33	2.90 ^a	.267
Posttest	Control	32	1.14	3.05	4.19	3.61	3.61	3.15 ^a	.319
	Experimental	30	.96	3.61	4.57	4.11	4.12	4.19	.250

Table 2

Independent Samples Test to Compare the Motivation Score of Control and Experimental Groups at Pre and Posttest

Source	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Pretest	2.155	.147	1.17	60	.247	.0925	.0790
Posttest	1.547	.218	-6.79	60	.000	-.4973	.0732

Figure (1) graphically depicts the comparison between motivation mean score of control and experimental groups at both pre and posttest. A quick look at this figure hands on that the motivation pretest mean scores of control and experimental are 3.41 and 3.32 respectively, and the its line chart does not rise from pretest to posttest. On the other hand, posttest mean scores of two groups are 3.61 and 4.11 correspondingly, which its line chart rises almost sharply from pretest to posttest.

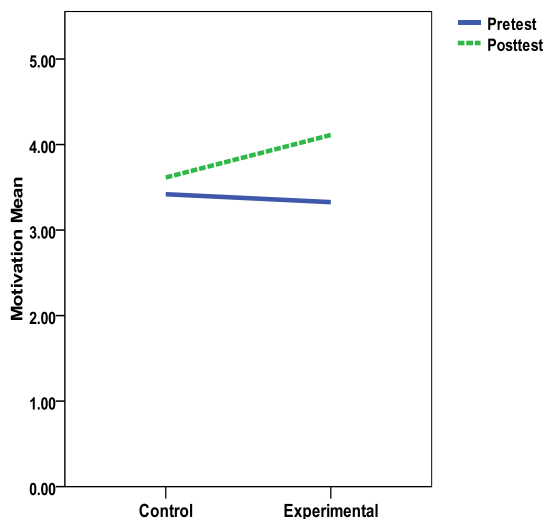


Figure (1) Comparison between Motivation of Two Groups at pre and Posttest

In order to test the second null hypothesis, participants' performances on achievement test in the two groups were assessed at pre and posttests. Table (3) shows descriptive statistics for participants' achievement of two groups at pre and posttest. The achievement mean scores of control and experimental turned out to be 3.98 and 3.76 respectively, which are near to one another, instead the mean values of control and experimental showed 26.39 and 28.18 correspondingly, which are far from one another. The standard deviations were 1.22 and 1.41 for control and experimental at pretest, and 1.92 and 1.28 for control and experimental respectively at posttest. Standard deviation of each group is close to another signifying homogeneity of the scores in two groups.

Table (4) is the results of T-test for comparing the achievement means of two groups at both pre and posttest. T- test results showed insignificant difference between control and experimental at pretest ($t = .64$, $p = .52$), in which the t -observed was less than the t -critical of 2.00, and the Sig. was more than .05 ($p > \alpha$), but, it showed significant difference between the two groups at posttest ($t = 4.27$, $p = .000$), in which the t -observed was more than the t -critical of 2.00, and the Sig. was less than .05 ($p < \alpha$). As a result, the second null hypothesis which reads: **Co-teaching model does not have any significant impact on achievement of Iranian Young EFL Learners, was rejected.**

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for Participants' Achievement of Two Groups at Pre and Posttest

Source	Group	N	Range	Mini.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Pretest	Control	32	4.0	2.0	6.0	3.98	4.00	3.5 ^a	1.22
	Experimental	30	4.5	1.5	6.0	3.76	4.00	2.0 ^a	1.41
Posttest	Control	32	7.0	23.0	30.0	26.39	26.50	27.0	1.92
	Experimental	30	4.5	25.5	30.0	28.18	28.25	28.0 ^a	1.28

Table 4
Independent Samples Test to Compare the Achievement Score of Control and Experimental Groups at Pre and Posttest

Source	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Pretest	1.317	.256	.647	60	.520	.2177	.3364
Posttest	5.355	.024	4.27	60	.000	1.7927	.4190

Figure (2) is a graphical representation of the comparison between achievement scores of control and experimental groups at the posttest. The mean index for control and experimental groups are 26.39 and 28.18 correspondingly, and therefore experimental group's achievement is significantly larger in account.

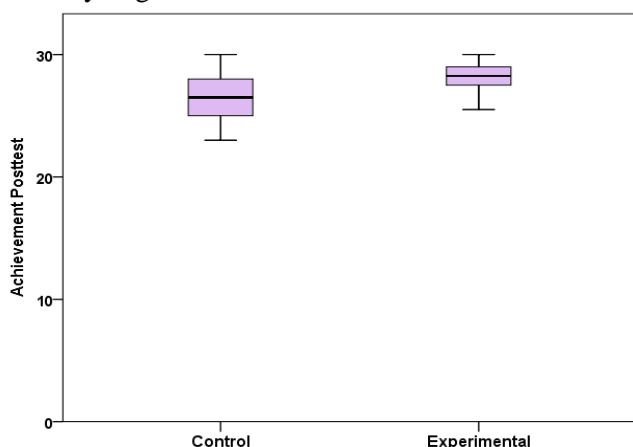


Figure (2) Box Plot for Comparing Achievement Means of Two Groups at Posttest

II. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this research study was to investigate the effect of co-teaching on improving motivation and achievement of Iranian Young Learners. The outcomes of the study showed that using co-teaching model has a great impact on improving motivation and achievement of Young Learners. It seemed clear that the participants in this research had more motivation and learned English through co-teaching better than they did in traditional way. It is worth mentioning that the outcomes of this research are in line with Scarcella & Oxford's (1992) study which found

that the degree of motivation is the most influential impact on how and when students use language learning strategies.

The study lends support to Ellis' idea (1994) that motivation influences the extent to which language learners persevere in learning, the kind of behavior they apply, and their real achievement.

The findings of this study also have several implications for both teachers and students. As teachers begin to co-teach, it is better if they have some choice for what content area they would like to co-teach, and who their co-teaching partner will be. Teachers will be more willing to participate in co-teaching if it is their choice and additionally, administrators honor their choice. Teachers should have the choice of what content area they would like to co-teach. This provides them to choose a content area with which they have more knowledge or experience. Furthermore, teachers should have input in whom they would like to co-teach within the classroom. Choosing a co-teaching partner allows teachers to consider who would be compatible interpersonally and if they believe they have similar philosophical perspectives. The findings from this study also provide practical implications for teachers in regards to improve their classroom management skills, increased their collaboration skills and increased their confidence.

The implication of this study for students includes: First, by watching their teachers that how they work together, students could begin to assimilate these models into their own interpersonal behaviors. Secondly, the co-teaching provides consistency in students' instruction and finally co-teaching facilitates collaboration and problem-solving.

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