

The Effect of Co-Teaching on Iraqi Female Advanced EFL Learners' Writing

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Abstract

The present study examines the effects of co-teaching on advanced female EFL learners in Erbil, Iraq comparing its results to traditional single-teacher instruction. The study employed a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design to examine 41 learners at Andisheh Language Institute who received either co-taught instruction (n=21) or single-taught instruction (n=20) during a five-week period. The research used Brown's (1991) scoring scale to evaluate writing proficiency through pre- and post-tests and collected learner perceptions through a post-intervention survey. According to the quantitative findings of the study ($p=.031$), the co-taught group achieved better writing results than the control group. The survey results showed that students strongly preferred co-teaching because it provided better feedback and increased their engagement and motivation and facilitated better interaction with teachers. The results of the study can be justified by research uses Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Bandura's self-efficacy framework in demonstrating how co-teaching helps solve EFL writing difficulties in Iraq and provides recommendations for developing curricula and training teachers in collaborative teaching methods.

Keywords: Teaching, Writing, Learners

أثر التدريس التشاركي على كتابة المتعلمات العراقيات المتقدمات في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة أثر التدريس التشاركي على المتعلمات المتقدمات في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في أربيل، العراق، مقارنةً بنتائجه مع التدريس التقليدي الذي يعتمد على معلم واحد. استخدمت الدراسة تصميمًا شبه تجريبيًا ذا منهج مختلط، حيث شملت ٤١ متعلمة في معهد أنديشة للغات، تلقين إما تدريسًا تشاركيًا (ن=٢١) أو تدريسًا فرديًا (ن=٢٠) على مدار خمسة أسابيع. استخدم البحث مقياس براون (٢٠٢٠) لتقييم كفاءة الكتابة من خلال اختبارات قبلية وبعديّة، وجمع آراء المتعلمات من خلال استبيان بعد انتهاء البرنامج. وفقًا للنتائج الكمية للدراسة (قيمة الاحتمال = ٠.٠٣١)، حققت المجموعة التي تلقت التدريس التشاركي نتائج كتابة أفضل من المجموعة الضابطة. أظهرت نتائج الاستطلاع أن الطلاب يفضلون التدريس التعاوني بشدة لأنه يوفر تغذية راجعة أفضل، ويزيد من تفاعلهم وتحفيزهم، ويسهل التفاعل بشكل أفضل مع المعلمين. ويمكن تبرير نتائج الدراسة بالاستناد إلى نظرية فيجوتسكي الاجتماعية والثقافية وإطار باندورا للكفاءة الذاتية، حيث يوضحان كيف يُسهم التدريس التعاوني في حل صعوبات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، ويقدمان توصيات لتطوير المناهج الدراسية وتدريب المعلمين على أساليب التدريس التعاوني.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التدريس، الكتابة، المتعلمون

Introduction

Background

Skills: Writing is central because literacy is essential for academic and work success. A letter to the editor That students may become contributing members of a well-educated contemporary society, one would hope that students have facility with non-eloquent writing. Moreover, it is impossible to achieve academic success without writing . Writing facilitates learning and thinking. If this is so, then spoken language and writing will always be the necessary instrument of higher levels of understanding and abstraction (Graham, 2020). In this information explosion age, text communication is more and more frequent in all kinds of life situations, and the importance of English writing ability is self-evident, but mastering this skill is not easy. For a number of reasons, writing is an essential tool in school and in the workplace. It is crucial in one's personal as well as professional life and has even been an integral part of English for General Purpose (EGP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The pedagogical role of writing covers beginner, intermediate and advanced competences, providing the audience with a medium where they can express fluently what they want to convey (Hyland, 2019). Collaborative Teaching According to certain scholars (Conderman & Hedin, 2021; Ricci&Fingon, 2023), collaborative instruction has been re-discovered when searching for and advocating effective curricula and methodologies. Traditionally, collaborative teaching has been based upon general education and special education teachers working collaboratively to plan and deliver instruction for the entire class as a whole (Friend, 2022). This is a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde teaching where collaborative instruction can make the bad outweigh the good. (Solis & Segura, 2024, p. 12) Solis and Segura describe collaborative teaching as "two teachers co-planning a lesson during school hours," They share the responsibility for delivering instruction to all students in the inclusion class. In the first model one teacher utilizes a traditional lecture format, in a second model both teachers function as teammates." Collaborative teaching is set up to cover two teachers preparing lessons together (leading, teaching and preparing the lesson together), bearing equal responsibility in the class of doing research for both of them and concurrent design on all processes. No matter which type the teacher-student relationship takes, the two teachers should work together to minimize workload when they have little time to teach and learn. Collaborative teachers needed to encourage each other, keep high sense of self-confidence, clarify teaching methods in cooperative instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Undoubtedly, writing is a complex process in which ideas are shaped and expressed. Learning to write in a foreign language is even more difficult, and skillful writing requires a considerable amount of time and effort. The role of English writing instruction in foreign language education is quite prominent in order to become a skilled writer (Siddiqui et al., 2023). The importance of writing in international communication and the complexity of this skill necessitate the application of appropriate teaching and learning strategies or approaches. Therefore, as Zhang et al. (2022) claim, teaching this skill to the learners in a proper way is of utmost importance, and EFL writers have to pay attention to higher-level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and accuracy, i.e., using the correct forms of language. The problem learners and teachers usually face is that even in higher levels of education, learners suffer poor writing skills. Thus, learners and teachers need to work harder and more on this very complex skill. However, as Asnas and Hidayanti (2023) assert, it should not be just thought that the need for hard work in writing is only more and more practice. The problem of poor writing can be attributed to many factors, including teachers' classroom practice (Siddiqui et al., 2023). Therefore, going beyond this simplistic definition of teaching writing is expected since a lot of practices in writing without any appropriate medium of instruction do not always guarantee successful outcomes. Therefore, writing is a complex task and can be challenging for students; however, it is one of the vital skills in communication and knowledge organization. In contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, writing is usually overlooked at elementary stages of learning. In the Iraqi context, most EFL advanced learners' English writing is generally poor in terms of content, organization,

vocabulary, and language use; however, they are supposed to have mastered various aspects of writing to meet their academic and sometimes interactional needs during the courses they have taken at schools or institutes (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). Hence, providing the learners with a more effective and appropriate teaching approach can lead to easier and better mastery of this very skill. One of these approaches can be co-teaching. Co-teaching could be one of the revolutionary options that might help in struggling with underachievement in EFL (Ghasemi et al., 2022). Co-teaching is a method of coordinated classroom teaching involving a team or two or more teachers working together with a single group of students. By working together with the same class, teachers can observe and critique each other's teaching and assessing pedagogy, supporting each other to enhance the learning outcomes of students. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating and comparing the effects of co-teaching vs. conventional one on improving learners' writing skill. Second language (L2) education has long been interested in looking for approaches that could be used effectively to teach students in the classroom a foreign language. In doing so, the researchers and educators have slowly realized from the long search that there has never been and perhaps never will be a tool for all learners, and have therefore preferred to use a diverse, integrated approach to help teachers make the right choice of classroom tasks and activities based on the important results of L2 learning and teaching studies (Zhang et al., 2022). On the other hand, most educators find that a growing number of students are placed in an English class with a variety of different backgrounds and knowledge that are treated in the same way and are generally expected to achieve the same level of success as other learners. Accordingly, Moses and Mohamad (2019) aptly state that, "It is not enough to merely place students within general class settings without providing appropriate training, materials, and support to them and their teachers. If done so, their failure is the outcome" (p. 3389). Therefore, due to the large number of students and their misplacement in large classes, it seems that one teacher would not be able to take responsibility for all teaching, including planning, practice, and evaluation, and, more importantly, use programs to meet the needs of poorly performing learners within a limited period of time. Drawing upon the above-mentioned views, the present study aimed to use co-teaching in an attempt to investigate the possibility of its applicability in the Iraqi EFL teaching context; more specifically, the study aimed to investigate the effect of co-teaching on female advanced Iraqi EFL learners' writing.

Significance of the Study

In general, the benefits of co-teaching for both students and teachers, as identified by various researchers (as cited in Almethen, 2023), include:

- Increased academic, behavioral expectations, and social skills achievement for students with disabilities (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).
- Students received more help in the co-taught classroom (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).
- Students experience a greater variety of instructional options (Bacharach et al., 2010).
- Improved teacher collaboration and communication skills (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).
- Increased understanding of the curriculum (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).
- Professional growth for teachers (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).
- Ability of teachers to try new teaching activities and methods (Murawski & Hughes, 2009).

The ability to write academic text successfully comprises one of the most important abilities required in English as a Second Language (ESL) as well as EFL (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2014). Writing well is of "critical importance for success in a wide variety of situations and professions" (McNamara, Crossley, & McCarthy, 2010, p. 58). Writing is considered to be the most difficult of the four language skills since it is a productive skill and the writer creates new language. For communication and learning, writing is important. It is known as an efficient contact style. Reading helps generate the vocabulary like voice. Students are deemed to be able to express their thoughts in an organized way by teaching. This allows us to communicate ideas, solve problems and appreciate our changing world (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2014). Due to the importance of writing as mentioned above, the current study tried to improve teaching writing in English language classrooms by offering a co-teaching strategy in EFL classrooms. This study is significant in that it seeks to advance knowledge in the field of language education, more specifically

writing skill. Additionally, through considering the study's results, practical considerations for enhancing co-teaching are offered. It is hoped that by evaluating the effectiveness of co-teaching on female advanced EFL learners' writing performance, more competent learners be trained using this strategy by schools and institutes. It is also hoped that language teachers and educators apply the results of this study in their teaching writing and maybe other skills; moreover, it is hoped that education authorities take the results into consideration in changing the class management system using co-teaching strategy.

Research Questions

To guide this investigation, the study addresses the following research questions:

- I. To what extent does co-teaching significantly enhance the writing skill development of advanced EFL learners in Erbil, Iraq
- II. How do advanced EFL learners in Erbil, Iraq, perceive the effectiveness of co-teaching compared to traditional single-teacher instruction in improving their writing skills?

Literature Review

What Does Co-Teaching Involve?

One of the teaching practices which is meant in this study to be examined is co-teaching approach. Co-teaching as pedagogy has been in use since the 1960s (Benninghof, 2020; Pratt, Imbody, Wolf, & Patterson, 2017) when it was proposed as a method for reorganizing secondary schools in the U.S. and Britain. Team teaching was identified as a variant of co-teaching, where teachers shared responsibility for planning but continued to teach separately in many open-concept schools in the 1970s (Murawski & Lochner, 2020). In the 1990s, in the restructuring of middle school, co-teaching was used with an emphasis on student transfer and interdisciplinary teamwork (Hang & Rabren, 2009). Recently, there has been a great deal of interest in co-teaching as a means of reducing barriers to learning for students (Brendle, Lock, & Piazza, 2022), in teachers' roles and relationships in co-teaching, and the impact this has on the effectiveness of the experience (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2020; Keeley & Furtak, 2019).

Some studies refer to cooperative teaching as co-teaching, while others refer to it as collaborative teaching. Nonetheless, all three terms tend to have one meaning: a transformation of teaching styles in which two or more educators with a shared set of skills operate in a coordinated manner to collectively educate heterogeneous groups of students both academically and behaviorally (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2020).

Different definitions have been proposed for co-teaching by different scholars. For instance, Murawski & Bernhardt (2021) claim that co-teaching can be taken as an instructional approach in which teachers come together to plan, implement and evaluate a teaching activity for the same group of learners. In another instance, Friend & Cook (2022) define co-teaching as a process in which all members are equally involved and responsible for students' instruction, assessment and the setting and meeting of learning objectives. In another definition by McDuffie et al. (2021), co-teaching is a situation in which two or more teachers work together combining their talents, knowledge, interests and resources to teach the same students and take the responsibility of all aspects of all students. Pratt et al. (2017) define co-teaching as "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space" (p. 14). According to Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury (2016), "Co-teaching is two or more teachers teaching together, sharing responsibility for meeting the learning needs of students and, at the same time, learning from each other" (p. 1). Reynaert, Gelan, & Vansieleghem (2023) presented a more complete definition by including planning and lesson implementation; for them co-teaching is "all arrangements that include two or more faculty in some level of collaboration in the planning and delivery of a course" (P.8).

In order to produce a production in the language, the learner must understand the input provided by the teacher(s) (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Furthermore, when it comes to language learning, the teacher(s) should connect the content of their lessons with the prior knowledge of the students, taking into account the scheme of the EFL learners (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2017). All teachers work well, have equal responsibilities and decrease student-teacher ratios within the same physical space in a co-teaching setting

(Lochner, Murawski, & Guadarrama, 2021). In other words, co-teaching provides opportunities for the exhibition of multiple skills. It is more result-oriented, and goals better are achieved when two teachers are involved. Furthermore, some of the advantages of co-teaching are the complementary skills shown through a variety of methods, providing more student-support, and adding better supervision to the class (Friend et al., 2022).

The traditional model of student teaching often fails to prepare teachers to effectively collaborate (Gallo-Fox, Scantlebury, & Wassell, 2020) "The model leads to many otherwise well-prepared teachers who, shut the classroom door to the outside world and do not view their profession as a collaborative one since their apprenticeship and first exposure to the profession was a solo one" (Gallo-Fox et al., 2020, p. 86). Wassell, Scantlebury, & Gallo-Fox (2021) found that "preparation of cooperating teachers for their roles is effective in developing a more positive context" (p. 520) with cooperating teachers more likely (a) to be active listeners, (b) use different teaching methods and (c) interact with their student more efficiently. Teachers and collaborating teachers with whom they are paired have no proven teaching relationship prior to the teaching experience of the student. "Research indicates that planned, purposeful talking with each other about roles and objectives might alleviate contradictions and the frustrations that flow from them" (Wassell et al., 2021, p. 524).

Friend and Cook (2022) described the more common approaches as following:

1. One teach/one observe approach in which in preparation, co-teachers can determine which categories of unique observational information to gather during teaching and can settle on a data collection system. The teachers should then jointly evaluate the details.
2. One teach/one assist approach in which one instructor executes entire group teaching while the other addresses questions, clarifies definitions and redirects students' attention and gathers student data.
3. Parallel teaching approach in which, both teachers teach the same information, but they divide the class group at the same time. In parallel teaching, which divides students into two groups, each group works with one teacher exclusively.
4. Station teaching approach in which teachers divide the content and the students. Then each teacher teaches one group the content and then repeats the instructions for the other group. If necessary, a third "station" may require students to work independently. In this station, students are divided into rotating groups, each teacher providing each small group with a part of the lesson.
5. Alternative teaching approach in which one teacher is responsible for the large group, while the other deals with a smaller group on occasions when special attention is required by several students. Some students stay with one teacher in this method, while the other teacher re-teaches, offers reinforcement, or pre-teaches a lesson to a small group of students marked as requiring additional guidance by observation. One of the main features of this model is that teachers will bring students together and share positions in educating the big and small groups.
6. Team teaching approach in which all teachers concurrently provide the same instruction. In other terms, the teachers collectively instruct the entire group. Many instructors point to this in two bodies as just one brain. Others call it tag team teaching. In the present study team teaching model was used.

The analysis of co-teaching structures remains crucial but the nature of writing instruction requires equal attention because writing skills serve as the fundamental basis for this research study.

Teaching Writing

Writing as a productive mode of language is a very important skill for the L2 learners to develop their language knowledge and the teaching of this skill has become essential in second language classrooms. Writing has always been part of the syllabus of English education as one of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (Hyland, 2016). Writing, as a way of expressing ideas, thinking, and learning content must be regarded as a crucial tool for language learning as well as communication. Writing is not only a way of expressing ideas and feelings and exchanging information or a way of using

words to express oneself, but also it is a social activity in which people interact with their partners (Tardy, 2019).

In the classroom, there are various ways to approach writing. In any situation, best practice will depend on many factors like the student type, the type of text being studied, the school system, etc. A closer look through the history of writing skills teaching shows that among the different approaches that have been studied to successfully teach writing, three approaches have been the most common that are product approach, process approach, and genre approach. A lot of research has shown that all these strategies have their own weaknesses and strengths, but they are also complementary to each other. (Hyland, 2016; Tardy, 2019; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2023).

Product-oriented Approach

The approach of the product focuses on the construction of the writing end-product rather than the writing process itself. According to Hammadi and Sidek (2015), learners are given an ordinary example of writing in an ordinary product-centered curriculum, which they must then adopt and modify to re-create a section of the original text. The most popular and conventional approach used by teachers of the EFL is the product-oriented approach. Brown (2014) indicated that valuable learning is calculated in the case of product-focused approaches by the degree to which the text is well-organized and grammatically accurate. According to Pincas (1982), this approach focuses on linguistic knowledge as well as the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices.

There are four stages of product-oriented approach: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. Familiarization is intended to make learners aware of certain characteristics of a specific text. In the next two steps, directed and driven learning, learner review of the features illustrated and learn how to arrange ideas until they are ready for the section on free writing. Free writing is the end product of the learning process as students use their writing skills, concepts and vocabulary learned to produce the product (Brown, 2014). Despite its advantages, the product-oriented approach receives criticism because it places excessive emphasis on form rather than meaning. Hence, the process-oriented approach has gained support from educators because it focuses on the developmental stages of writing.

Process-oriented Approach

Writing process approach pays attention to the different stages through which any piece of writing passes and how ideas are developed and formulated in writing. Harmer (2015, p. 258) states, "A process approach asks students to consider the procedure of putting together a good piece of work." In this method writing is regarded by observing a number of stages as a phase through which meaning is generated. Writing in process approaches deals predominantly with language skills such as preparation and writing rather than technical knowledge, for example comprehension of grammar and document structure.

A process-oriented approach can have a number of stages with different views that writers go through in creating a piece of writing, but it describes a common model that involves four steps: prewriting, composition or drafting revising, editing, and eventually generating a finished version. The writing process is actually more complicated than this. Such different writing levels are performed in a sequential way. It means that between these different stages, the writer moves backwards and moves forward. For example, after editing or revising certain authors may feel like going back to the pre-writing process and thinking again, and then rewriting parts of the writing as he drafts it (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2023). Conversely, since process-oriented instruction cannot solely address the social contexts in which writing occurs, the genre approach receives additional attention.

Genre Approach

The genre approach emphasizes the knowledge of language and the ties between writing and social purposes. Writing, in the genre approach, is developed by the analysis and imitation of input. Proponents of the genre approach view writing as predominantly linguistic with an emphasis on the social contexts variation where writing is produced. Writing is regarded as a social activity driven by the need to write as oriented by explicit outcomes and expectations. Writing in different contexts considers the purpose, subject matter, relationship between the writer and audience, and patterns of organization (Hyland, 2016).

Genre-based instruction is culture-specific in which students' individual differences require that teachers incorporate into their instruction diverse ways of using language in certain cultures. At the early learning stage, teachers strive to develop students' awareness of writing genres by providing explicit explanation of the contextual dimension. Such awareness assists the students to interconnect the distinctive use of the language to diverse genres (Tardy, 2019). Genre instruction offers teachers the opportunity to provide learners with explicit and systematic explanations of utilizing writing for communication. It also enables students to "exploit the expressive potential of society's discourse structures, pull together language, content, and contexts" (Hyland, 2016, p. 150). Beyond the proposed genre-based model for writing, the SRL approach has been developed based on recent research which has highlighted the role of learner autonomy and self-regulation in enhancing writing skills.

SRL Approach

The SRL approach also rooted in the socio-cultural influences refers to writing as a social activity (Martin & Rose, 2008). In this context, writers are engaged in developing their awareness of writing organizational patterns, and handling real world writing that improves their attitudes and desires to learn the language (Graham & Harris, 2018). The SRL approach integrates complementary elements that each single writing approach contributes to improve writing performance and knowledge (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). It combines "the interdependencies among textual products, cognitive processes, and socio-cultural dimensions of writing" (Kern, 2000, p. 187).

The SRL approach recognizes the contributions of the cognitive approach that has established positive progresses through goal-setting and decision-making processes. These processes enhance students' thinking. They provide students with heuristics needed to generate ideas and plan strategies, to construct writing pieces, to monitor their progress, and to review writing products (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In this approach, students are involved in deconstructing authentic texts and identifying recursive features of linguistic patterns of genres (Martin & Rose, 2008).

A number of studies have been done on investigating the influence of various teaching methods on different domains of language skills. In the era of co-teaching, a brief review of the literature revealed that the co-teaching technique has been investigated in a way or other. However, to the researcher's knowledge few studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of co-teaching on diversity of pedagogical areas as particularly language skills such as writing. Accordingly, the current study can enrich the body of the literature by exploring the impact of co-teaching on writing performance of participants in an EFL context. In other words, the study reported here that it aims to fill some of the gaps in the area of co-teaching by comparing two groups of Iraqi EFL learners studying English as a foreign language to examine whether co-teaching approach could improve EFL students' writing more than the traditional single teaching. In summary, while the research shows that different teaching methods for writing and instructional organization (co-teaching) have shown effectiveness but there is limited research on how these strategies work together particularly in the Iraqi EFL context. The present study used a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design as follows.

Method

Design of the Study

The study adopted a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design to investigate co-teaching's effect on advanced EFL learners' writing skills in Erbil, Iraq. A pre-test/post-test structure with two intact groups—an experimental group receiving co-teaching and a control group taught traditionally—was implemented, reflecting scheduling constraints at Andisheh Language Institute (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The independent variable was the teaching approach (co-teaching vs. single-teacher), and the dependent variable was writing skill improvement, measured quantitatively via pre- and post-tests. To explore learners' perceptions, a qualitative post-intervention survey was added, aligning with the study's dual objectives. This design balanced causal inference with contextual insights in Erbil's EFL setting.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of 41 female EFL learners who were studying English at Andisheh Language Institute in Erbil. This renowned institution offers advanced English courses. The participants, range of 15-21, were selected from four advanced-level classes homogenized by their performance on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT, 2004) ensuring proficiency homogeneity (mean score: 41.25, SD: 3.41). The prominence of female education in Erbil, combined with the institute's reputation, made this research sample appropriate. Forty-nine students were initially tested, with 41 selected and assigned into two groups: experimental (n=21, co-teaching); control (n=20, single-teacher). Due to quasi-experimental design limitations and the constrained imposed by the institute regulations, it was not possible to implement a full randomized method.

Instruments

Five instruments were employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data, tailored to Erbil's EFL setting:

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT): The 60-item Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) on grammar, vocabulary, and reading, scales scores as CEFR levels in a very reliable way (Cronbach's alpha =.90). Scores of 0 to 10 suggest a Beginner level (A1), 11 to 20 an Elementary level (A1–A2), 21 to 30 Pre-Intermediate (A2–B1), 31 to 39 Intermediate (B1), 40 to 47 Upper-Intermediate/Advanced (B2) and 48 to 60 Advanced/Proficient (C1–C2). For example, a score between 40 to 47 shows that students can study in advanced settings (such as academic or professional) as they can understand difficult materials and are fluent. There may be slight differences in the thresholds due to differences in the institution, but the adaptive nature of the OQPT will surely place you in the right place, so to speak, in educational contexts.

Writing Pre-test: The 100 word essay assignment about the topic "Ways of Being a High Achiever," evaluated initial writing skills in a 40 minute session, consistent with typical institute screening evaluations in Erbil. Analyzed using Brown's (1991) categories—content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics—it gave an overview of the entire writing skill. Content measured the appropriateness and depth of ideas, organization assessed the structure and coherence, vocabulary detected word choice, language use addressed grammar and syntax, and mechanics addressed punctuation and spelling. It was a task that closely modeled real-world academic writing requirements and provided valid information on students' performance.

Writing Post-test: Similarly, for the post-test, a 100-word essay titled "Qualities of a Risk Taker" was used to assess writing performance after the intervention, in line with the pre-test ("Ways of Being a High Achiever"). Delivered in 40 minutes, it was modeled after the institute testing and scored on a variety of dimensions according to Brown's (1991) categories—content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Brown's (1991) Scoring Scale: The analytic scale developed by Brown (2001) presents an elaborated scoring rubric to assess the quality of academic writing. The inter-rater reliability of the scores were $r = .73$ (pre-test) and $r = .81$ (post-test), respectively, which were considered a desirable reliability index.

Perception Survey: A post-intervention questionnaire, designed and tailored for the experimental group, extracted learners' perceptions of co-teaching versus traditional teaching which including 10 Likert-scale items (e.g., "I have become a better writer in co-teaching than with a single teacher") and 2 open-ended questions (e.g., "What did you like about co-teaching?") provided the depth of the qualitative dimension. Its reliability was piloted on 5 learners for clarity and was approximated by Cronbach's alpha ≈ 0.85 .

Procedure

The study was conducted during twelve 1 hour and half sessions over five weeks at Andisheh Institute, following its academic schedule. In order to conduct the study after getting the required permissions from the institute authorities and its supervisor, in the pre-intervention phase of the study, learner selected from the intact classes assigned by the institute to participate in the study, the OQPT was given to 49

participants after acquiring their consent toward participation in the study among which 41 of them were spotted as advanced learners and taken as the participants of the study. Later, a pre-test was used to assess the writing skills of the participants at the start of the study and was scored by the researcher and a trained rater. The participants were told about the purpose of the study which was to improve writing and to establish the teaching preferences with the guarantee of anonymity and the significance of which was emphasized in the context of Erbil's trust-sensitive culture. As the next stage, the participants were assigned as the experimental group (n=21) and control group (n=20). During the intervention phase of the study, the experimental group (n=21) was taught by two teachers (the regular instructor and a colleague) using the team-teaching model for ten sessions. They planned the lessons together, delivered the instruction and provided feedback on writing tasks (e.g., paragraph development) and focused on process-oriented strategies. The control group was taught by a single teacher on the same topics as the experimental group but without any collaborative input. Both groups were asked to submit weekly writing assignments to enhance their writing skills. After ten sessions of treatment both groups were administered the post-test in the same manner as the pre-test. Furthermore, the experimental group was asked to fill in the perception survey in a 30-minute session and answer the Likert items and open-ended questions to express their views on co-teaching. The intervention was brief due to the institute's limitations but it was possible to obtain both quantitative and qualitative results.

Data Analysis

The research questions were addressed through a mixed-methods analysis of the data. The analysis of writing skills utilized SPSS as the statistical tool for the quantitative component. The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that pre-test and post-test scores followed a normal distribution since the p-values exceeded .05 thus allowed to use parametric tests. An independent-samples t-test evaluated the initial writing proficiency of both groups to examine their starting point equivalence. The analysis used paired-samples t-tests to evaluate changes in each group's writing skill between pre-test and post-test. Finally, another independent-samples t-test evaluated post-test results to determine which group achieved superior results and outperformed other. The analysis of learner perceptions was conducted using Likert-scale survey responses which were evaluated through descriptive statistics including mean scores and Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach was applied to open-ended responses to identify common opinions between co-teaching and traditional teaching methods by grouping responses into themes such as "increased feedback" and "teacher collaboration". The dual research method enabled researchers to gain comprehensive insights into both learning abilities and student understanding.

Results

Quantitative Results: Writing Skill Improvement

First, before any intervention was administered to the experimental group, all groups were given the pretest on writing ability. After getting the scores of the participants in both groups, the normality of the data distribution was assessed by Shapiro Wilk tests. After the confirmation of the distribution normality of the scores, the participants' initial writing ability was compared.

Table 1

Independent Samples t-test Comparing Groups' Performance on the Writing Pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Writing Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.041	.657	-.566	39	.363	-4.692	.366	-.938	.523
	Equal variances not assumed			-.572	38.828	.379	-4.692	.363	-.931	.516

As shown in the table above, the observed t-value of .56 and the observed significance level of .37 which was far above the critical value .05., it can be argued that the observed t was not significant and it can be inferred that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained from these two classes in pretest.

After being informed of the Experimental and Control Groups ' homogeneity with regard to their writing skills in the target language (English), the researchers began applying intervention, i.e. using co-teaching technique to instruct the experimental group for about 10 sessions. The post-test was then carried out for both groups. A comparison was made to address the study's research question and examine the effectiveness of writing strategies promoting learners' pre- and post-test scores.

Table 2

Paired Samples t-test for the Experimental Groups' Performance on the Pre and Post-tests

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Experimental Pre-test Experimental Post-test	-16.78	2.131	.336	-5.897	-4.527	-15.493	20	.017

Based on the results and comparing the mean differences, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the group's mean scores as the degree of significance ($p = .01$) was less than .05. Therefore, it was concluded that the participants were able to improve their writing performance when taught using co-teaching strategy. The research, though, used a control group that was not treated as equal to the experimental group. In order to check the writing performance of the control group, the researcher adopted a paired samples t-test analysis to compare the mean scores.

Table 3

Paired Samples t-test for the Control Groups' Performance on the Pre and Post-tests

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Control Pre-test Control Post-test	-9.39	3.413	.246	-5.897	-4.527	-12.493	19	.041

Based on the results, it was concluded that the difference between the mean scores of the group was statistically significant since the significance level equaled .04 which was less than .05. Hence, it was concluded that the participants in control group also were able to improve their writing performance when being taught by a single teacher. However, due to the significance of the performance difference within both groups, the researcher compared the posttests of both groups taking writing homogeneity of all participants.

Table 4

Independent Samples t-test Comparing Groups' Performance on the Writing Post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Writing Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.023	.545	-.346	39	.031	2.701	.526	-.838	.615
	Equal variances not assumed			-.341	38.828	.031	2.701	.523	-.831	.616

The findings showed a significant differential between the experimental and control groups [$t(39) = -.34$, $p = .031$], which means that co-teaching has been much more successful in improving the overall writing ability of the treatment group.

Qualitative Results: Learners' Perceptions of Co-Teaching

In order to address the second research question and find out about participants perspectives, a perception survey was administered to the experimental group ($n=21$) after posttest including 10 Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) and 2 open-ended questions. The findings are presented below, based on descriptive analysis of the Likert responses and thematic analysis of the open-ended answers. Responses to the 10 Likert-scale items were analyzed descriptively to assess learners' perceptions, with means, standard deviations, and the percentage of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing (scores of 4 or 5) reported in Table 6.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Perception Survey Likert Items

Item Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	% Agree/Strongly Agree
1. Co-teaching helped me improve my writing more than a single teacher would have.	4.24	.62	85.7%
2. Two teachers provided clearer explanations than one.	4.10	.70	76.2%
3. I received more useful feedback with co-teaching.	4.38	.58	90.5%
4. Co-teaching made writing lessons more engaging.	4.05	.67	71.4%
5. I prefer co-teaching over traditional single-teacher instruction.	4.19	.75	81.0%
6. Two teachers helped me understand writing structure better.	4.14	.65	76.2%
7. Co-teaching increased my confidence in writing.	4.00	.71	66.7%
8. I felt more motivated to write with two teachers.	4.29	.64	85.7%
9. Co-teaching improved my vocabulary use in writing.	4.10	.70	76.2%
10. Two teachers made it easier to ask questions about writing.	4.33	.66	85.7%

The mean scores ranged from 4.00 to 4.38 which demonstrated that all participants maintained a positive perspective toward co-teaching. The highest mean score ($M = 4.38$) belonged to Item 3 because 90.5% of learners strongly agreed or agreed that dual feedback provided them with more useful feedback. The combination of two teachers made students more motivated to write (Item 8 $M = 4.29$) and easier to ask writing questions (Item 10 $M = 4.33$) with 85.7% of learners agreeing to both statements. The lowest mean score of 4.00 appeared in Item 7 ("Co-teaching increased my confidence in writing") yet 66.7% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that co-teaching affected their confidence. The standard deviations ranged from 0.58 to 0.75 which indicated moderate variation in learner responses. The survey demonstrated high reliability through its Cronbach's alpha score of 0.89 which validated the 10-item scale.

Thematic Analysis of Responses to Open-Ended questions

The two open-ended questions—"What did you like most about co-teaching?" and "How did co-teaching affect your writing compared to a single teacher?"—generated comprehensive responses from all 21 participants. These responses were subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, from which four principal themes emerged:

1. **Enhanced Support and Feedback (15/21 respondents):** The participants highlighted the advantages of being taught by two teachers in their responses. The following statements represent typical findings from the participants: "I liked that two teachers corrected my work—it was faster and more helpful," and "They gave me different tips, like one on grammar and the other on ideas, which made my writing stronger." This theme emphasizes the benefits of collaborative teaching in providing multiple sources of instruction that are essential in the multilingual EFL setting of Erbil.

2. **Increased Engagement and Motivation (12/21 respondents):** More than half of the learners indicated that the classes were more enjoyable because of the interaction between the two teachers. Co-teaching was shown to be able to increase learner motivation through statements such as, "Lessons were more interesting with two teachers—I didn't get bored," and "I felt motivated to write because they made it fun and shared the teaching," thus highlighting the importance of co-teaching in the academically competitive context of Erbil.

3. **Perceived Skill Improvement (10/21 respondents):** More than half of the participants asserted that their writing skills improved after being exposed to the co-teaching model. Comments like, "My essays improved a lot—they taught me structure and new words together," and "I learned more about organizing

my paragraphs than I would have with one teacher" show that students recognized the effectiveness of co-teaching as a teaching strategy.

4. Improved Interaction (8/21 respondents): Most participants felt that having two teachers made the class more accessible. The fact that the students did not hesitate to ask questions and share their ideas with the co-teachers is evident from statements such as, "It was easier to ask questions with two teachers around—I got answers quickly," and "I wasn't shy to talk because they both helped me," which indicates that co-teaching increased the interaction between the teacher and the student and between the students and the teacher, which is essential for EFL students.

5. Negative Perspective: Some participants (3/21) had a single negative comment: "Sometimes their suggestions were different, and I got confused about what to do." This issue is relevant, but it is not significant enough to overshadow the positive feedback that was received. All of the participants in response to the second open-ended question (95.2%) showed a preference for co-teaching to single-teacher instruction. This was evident in comments such as, "I'd choose two teachers anytime—they made writing less hard and clearer."

Likewise, the Likert-scale results reinforced these qualitative findings, with strong agreement (66.7%–90.5%) that co-teaching was more effective than traditional teaching in several areas including feedback quality, engagement, motivation, and ease of interaction, as well as structure, vocabulary, and self-assurance. The open-ended responses supported these quantitative trends and the participants agreed that the co-teaching model improved the following areas: support, engagement, skills, and interaction. Overall, it can be inferred that advanced EFL learners in Erbil preferred co-teaching to the conventional single teacher approach because the former provided a more comprehensive framework to meet their writing needs.

Discussion

An investigation into the effect of co-teaching on writing proficiency development of advanced female EFL learners in Erbil, Iraq revealed that co-teaching showed better impact in comparison to single-teacher instruction. The study's findings reinforce prior research on collaborative pedagogy in an EFL setting by aligning with established theories while offering a detailed look at collaborative instruction in a specific context.

Accordingly, the findings of the study revealing the outperformance of the co-taught group in comparison to the traditionally taught group can be justified by Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interactions with more knowledgeable others. The two teachers probably expanded the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to include scaffolding through structure modeling by one teacher and vocabulary enrichment by the other teacher, resulting in writing skill advancement that one teacher could not achieve. Friend and Cook (2022) support that co-teaching strengthens instructional intensity by providing learners with twice the amount of feedback and guidance needed to achieve writing complexity.

The learners rated co-teaching very positively due to its positive effects on feedback and classroom interaction and engagement. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory supports the learners' positive views on co-teaching. The classroom environment became more supportive through the dual-teacher approach which improved learners' confidence and motivation to achieve skill mastery. The results of Honigsfeld and Dove (2022) support this finding by demonstrating that co-teaching enables students to receive individualized attention especially in a multilingual context.

The research results are also in line with Moradian et al.'s (2020) conclusion about co-teaching effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension which demonstrates its potential to improve productive skills such as writing. Both studies demonstrate that two instructors provide better comprehension and expression abilities than single instructors but contradict Aliakbari and Bazyar (2019) who found parallel co-teaching did not result in improved general proficiency. This difference could stem from variations in teaching methods between team teaching used in this study and parallel teaching models or cultural factors because the students in Erbil seemed more ready to learn in a collaborative environment. Writing as a skill benefits more from consistent dual feedback during its iterative process (Graham, 2022) than rule-based

grammar instruction, according to Aliakbari and Mansourinejad (2020) who reported no improvement in grammar skills through co-teaching. Potter (2021) found that co-teaching had no impact on students with disabilities which indicates that co-teaching is most effective with typical, advanced students as observed in Erbil where motivation and interaction create better outcomes.

According to Murawski and Swanson (2021), effective collaboration requires both shared roles and complementary strengths among co-teachers. The interaction between two teachers in Erbil probably eased the natural writing difficulties such as idea organization and mechanical refinement (Brown, 2020) by distributing the teaching work and using different instructional approaches. The positive feedback from students about motivation and engagement supports Gillespie and Israel's (2021) perspective that co-teaching makes content more accessible while creating a dynamic learning environment which differs from the conventional inflexible methods still used in Iraq (Hammadi & Sidek, 2020).

Final Remarks

The research results demonstrate important implications for future exploration which shows the educational potentials of co-teaching in EFL context such as Erbil, Iraq. The EFL writing instruction programs in Erbil should include co-teaching as part of their curriculum development while using process-oriented methods such as drafting and revising to maximize dual-teacher capabilities for syllabus delivery. Teacher training programs should concentrate on developing co-teaching abilities among teacher-students including co-planning methods and role negotiation techniques and feedback delivery methods to maximize writing education effectiveness and professional development. Educational institutions should use co-taught classes as motivational tools to enhance writing proficiency because students prefer interactive supportive learning environments. Educational authorities in the Kurdistan Region should start co-teaching pilot programs in public EFL settings to determine its potential for widespread implementation in addressing regional writing difficulties. This research establishes co-teaching as a theoretically sound and practically successful method to improve EFL writing instruction in Erbil. The study demonstrates the value of collaborative instruction through its alignment with socio-cultural and efficacy theories while diverging from context-limited prior findings to create opportunities for pedagogical innovation in Iraq's EFL landscape.

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