

The EFL Teacher Transition from Individual to Team Teaching¹

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Abstract

Team-teaching creates an opportunity for teacher collaborative learning. Teachers of English as Foreign Language (EFL) working in individual teaching contexts need to make a transition to team-teaching to successfully fulfill their roles as team teachers. However, teacher transition from individual to team-teaching is underexplored and there is an incomplete understanding of what happens when teachers make a transition. Thus, this qualitative case study provides empirical evidence on what happens during a transition (i.e., the two teachers worked together in pairs to successfully involve in planning, teaching, and assessing learners). The teachers' initial involvement in team teaching poses challenges. After some sessions the challenges were replaced with positive features such as 'increased classroom interaction', 'mutual support', 'needs-responsive instruction', 'increased L2 use', and 'teacher collaboration and learning'. Shedding some light on the issue of teacher transition, the study supports the notion of situated learning in a community of practice.

Resumen

La enseñanza en equipo crea una oportunidad para el aprendizaje colaborativo entre los maestros. Los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) que trabajan en contextos de enseñanza individuales necesitan hacer una transición a la enseñanza en equipo para cumplir con éxito sus roles como profesores de equipo. Sin embargo, la transición del maestro de la enseñanza individual a la del equipo está poco explorada y hay una comprensión incompleta de lo que sucede cuando los maestros hacen esta transición. Este estudio de caso cualitativo proporciona evidencia empírica sobre lo que sucede durante una transición (es decir, los dos maestros trabajaron juntos en parejas para involucrarse con éxito en la planificación, enseñanza y evaluación de los alumnos). La participación inicial de los docentes en la enseñanza en equipo plantea desafíos. Después de algunas sesiones, los desafíos se reemplazaron con características positivas como 'mayor interacción en el aula', 'apoyo mutuo', 'instrucción que responde a las necesidades', 'mayor uso de L2' y 'colaboración y aprendizaje de los maestros'. Arrojando algo de luz sobre el tema de la transición docente, el estudio apoya la noción de aprendizaje situado en una comunidad de práctica.

Introduction

Individual teachers usually perform their classroom duties alone without help from anyone else or without teaming up with other colleagues. When the same teacher works together with another teacher or a team to fulfill his/her roles, they need to acquire relevant qualifications. This process of aligning to collaborative teaching requires a transition to team teaching. The significance of the concept of teacher transition has been appreciated in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) profession (Farrell, 2015). Indeed, Campions' (2016) study of how English for General Purposes (EGP) teachers make the transition to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Farrell's (2015) argument that pre-service teachers need to make transition from TESOL programs to teaching in real classrooms can be considered as prime examples of teacher transition in TESOL profession. Working in team-teaching contexts also demands that teachers make an effective transition to successfully assume their new roles (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Sorensen, 2004; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005). However, despite the abundant studies on team-teaching, very little is known about how teachers make this transition. As a response to Johnson (2013) and Farrell's (2015) call for research describing teachers' encounters of real-world teaching to inform teacher-learners actions and Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) programs, this qualitative case study described the participating teachers' and learners' experience as they make the transition from individual (i.e., when the teacher performs her teaching work in isolation from her fellow teachers) to team-teaching.

Working within team-teaching framework is likely to engage in collaborative learning which is key to teachers' professional development (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). In this study team-teaching refers to the cooperation of two or more teachers in planning, teaching, and evaluating the same students at the same time in one class (Carpenter, Crawford, & Walden, 2007; Gardiner & Robinson, 2009; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Nokes, Bullough, Egan, Birrell & Hansen, 2008; Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). This form of

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collaboration is more than likely to bring about teacher learning as it “involves sharing of teaching expertise and reflective dialogue” (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019, p. 49).

Despite the contribution of literature to our understanding of the effect of team-teaching on teacher-learners’ professional learning (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Johnson, 2013; Johnson & Arshavskaya, 2011; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012; Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019), there is insufficient research probing teachers as they undergo transition into team-teaching. To shed some light on the issue of teacher transition within team-teaching framework, this case study provides an in-depth description of the experiences of four teachers and twenty students as they are involved in both individual and team-teaching activities. The central focus of this study is to provide empirical evidence on what happens when individual teachers experience the transition from individual into team-teaching. Therefore, the current study is motivated by the following research question to address the issue of teacher transition in the context of team-teaching:

RQ. How do EFL teachers transition from individual to team-teaching?

Literature Review

Team-teaching can loosely be defined as the practice of “two or more teachers in some level of collaboration in the planning, delivery, and/or evaluation of a course” (Baeten & Simons, 2014, p. 95). Baeten and Simons (2014) identify the following team-teaching models: observation model, coaching model, assistant teaching model, equal status model, and teaming model. These vary based on the degree of collaboration between teachers. What concerns the model implemented in the present study is the “teaming model” in which there is full collaboration between the teachers regarding course planning, delivery, and evaluation (Al-Saaideh, 2010; Carpenter, et al., 2007; Dugan, & Letterman, 2008; Helms, Alvis, & Willis, 2005). Collaboration refers to interactive professional partnership in which the collaborating teachers mutually share information and resources, define problems and goals, generate solutions, and share responsibility and accountability for outcomes (Friend & Cook, 1992; 2014). Accordingly, the team members work in harmony to fulfill their roles (Badiali & Titus, 2010; Nevin et al., 2009). In this study, teaming model is simply called team-teaching.

The current literature reports the advantages of team-teaching practices over individual ones. As the previous studies showed, team-teaching may lead to a high-quality teaching performance (Walsh & Elmslie, 2005), an increase in the collaboration and support among the teachers (Hsu, 2005), and reflection on their own assumptions and practices (Wassell & LaVan, 2009). Teachers in team-teaching context are more likely to have emotional (Dee, 2012; Gardiner, & Robinson, 2010; Vacilotto, & Cummings, 2007) and professional support from their collaborating peers (Goker, 2006; Tobin & Roth, 2005).

As far as teacher professional development is concerned, they learn how to perform as better teachers (Birrell, & Bullough, 2005; Vacilotto, & Cummings, 2007), collaborators (Dee, 2012; Gardiner, & Robinson, 2009; Jang, 2008) and reflective thinkers (Gardiner, 2010; Shin, Wilkins, & Ainsworth, 2007; Vacilotto, & Cummings, 2007). Team-teaching “can help create a dynamic and interactive learning environment ... and also inspire ... intellectual partnerships among faculty” (Leavitt, 2006, p. 1). Studies within sociocultural theory framework also show that engaging teacher-learners in team-teaching improves both their understandings and practice of teaching (Johnson, 2013; Johnson & Arshavskaya, 2011; Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Johnson and Arshavskaya (2011) assigned four teams of three or four novice teachers to teach in an ESL composition course. They found that team-teaching “created multiple and varied spaces for strategic mediation in these novice teachers’ learning-to-teach experiences” (p. 184). In another study Johnson and Golombek, (2016) found that the team-teaching project they implemented served to function as a responsive mediation that created opportunities for the teacher educator and team members to be more considerate to the content they were teaching, fostered students’ learning, made the content easier, and increased students’ engagement.

Research probing teachers’ experience in their first encounter of teaching in team-teaching contexts has shown that they were more likely to face a number of difficulties (Gardiner, 2010; Gardiner, & Robinson, 2011; Nokes, et al., 2008; Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). The major source of these difficulties is the fact

that team teachers need to assume new roles (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Forbes, 2004; Smith, 2004; Sorensen, 2004; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005) to make a transition from individual to team-teaching. In the recent study of Tsybulsky and Muchnik-Rozanov (2019), a team-teaching framework was organized in science classes by using a project-based learning (PBL) approach. Their results showed how team-teaching in science classes by using PBL helped shape student-teachers' professional identity and increased professional growth, empowerment, and gains in student-teachers' self-confidence.

Despite extensive literature on team-teaching and teacher professional development contributing to our understanding of team-teaching as an effective approach to teacher professional development (Johnson & Golombek, 2016), the issue of transition to team-teaching is underexplored. That is, further research is needed to address the question of what happens when an individual teacher undergoes transition from individual to a team teacher.

Team-teaching

The main focus of team-teaching process depends on the collaboration, engagement, and participation of teachers (Mandal, et al., 2019). Student-teachers' involvement in field experience with shared social interaction gives them the opportunity to inquire into and reflect on their own practices (Wassell and LaVan, 2009).

Mentors also play an important role in the team-teaching process. With the help of mentors, student-teachers can learn better as compared to working by themselves (Gardiner & Robinson, 2011). In this way, they can achieve higher levels of performance and receive help and support from team members (Gardiner and Robinson, 2009). The emphasis of mentorship in team-teaching is to develop good professional relationships through the mentor's feedback on a group and individual levels of team-teaching (Mandal, et al, 2019). Team-teaching (i.e., collaboration with other student-teachers and a mentor) is considered to be a valuable strategy for teacher education programs (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Theoretical framework

Team-teaching is theoretically supported by Vygotsky's (1978) and other sociocultural learning theories (Johnson & Arshavskaya, 2011; Johnson & Golombek, 2016) which adequately "recognize [...] the inherent interconnectedness of the cognitive and the social" (Johnson, 2009, p.13) processes of learning. In sociocultural theories, human learning is defined "as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities" (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). As a result, active participation "in cultural communities" is a necessary condition for human development (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3). Lave and Wenger's (1991) social theory of learning with its notion of situated learning and the concept of community of practice informs team-teaching model. In their theory of learning, along with other sociocultural theories, "the knowledge of the individual is constructed through the knowledge of the communities of practice within which the individual participates" (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). According to Wenger (1998), "engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which" individuals learn and socialize into their desired communities (p. 1). Recognizing the centrality of social processes of learning, learner agency and situated nature of human learning, Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wegner's (1998) theory of learning supports teachers professional learning within team-teaching contexts. This is because team teachers in collaboration with others "engag[e] in and contribut[e] to the practices of their communities" to improve "their practice" as newly professionalized members of their target communities (Wenger, 1998, p. 7). Within team-teaching contexts, the collaborating teachers share their interests, information, experiences, and responsibilities, and hence find the opportunity to develop professionally (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Methods

Employing a case study design, this study provides an in-depth description of the teachers' and learners' experiences in individual and team-teaching classes. Since this study required "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18), the researchers adopted a qualitative case study research to "trace changes over time" (p. 145) in the ways the participating teachers performed their roles as teachers in two individual and team teaching contexts. Informed oral and written consent were obtained from the students and their parents before the study. For this purpose, prior to the study, the parents were invited to attend a school meeting along with their children,

the authorities, and the participating teachers. The study, as well as their rights as a participant, and the possible benefits and risks of the study were clearly described. They were also assured that the researchers would keep their children's identity, information, and answers confidential. In addition, they were informed of their freedom to withdraw or refuse participation. Finally, their written informed consents were obtained through a special form explaining the study and their rights as participants. As a result, the researchers had the possibility to intensively focus on the teachers' experience in its natural setting where the variables were not manipulated and controlled (Yin, 2004). In addition, allowing the researchers to provide an in-depth description and a contextualized analysis of what experienced during the study through multiple sources of evidence, the case study research may help readers have a better understanding of the reported events and processes (Yin, 2003). This paper thus contains a vivid description of what happened as the teachers underwent the transition from individual teaching to team-teaching.

Participants

Four pre-service teachers were recruited for this study through maximum variation strategy of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). The bases for choosing the teacher participants were their experience and consent to participate in the study. All had at least one-year experience teaching in an institution. Twenty primary learners of English in the 12-15 age range participated in the study, too. They were divided into three classes instructed by the participating teachers. A summary of the teachers' background and demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Fake name	Gender	Age	Degree	Major	Teaching experience
Sarah	Female	24	MA student	TEFL	3 years
Nelina	Female	25	BA graduate	TEFL	3 years
Helen	Female	22	BA student	Translation studies	2 years
Ilia	Male	20	BA student	Translation studies	1 year

Table 1. A summary of teachers' information and demographic information (Pseudonyms were used to keep identity and data private.)

In the current study, team-teaching pairs were composed considering the principle of comparability in aspects of age, knowledge, ability and experience and their own preferences (Shin, et al., 2007; Smith, 2004). Initially, their own preferences were explored to make sure that they had no problem to pair with any of the other teachers. Then, they were randomly assigned to each of the three pairs (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). Helen and Ilia were a team in class A, Sarah and Nelina were in class B, and Nelina and Sarah were in class C.

Context

An English teaching center at one of the national universities of Iran (UOS, pseudonyms are used to be confidential about the participants' identity) were the setting in which the research was conducted. The language teaching center was established by the university's elementary school to offer general English courses to interested language learners. The three groups of elementary students in 'Class A', 'Class B', and 'Class C' were taught *Family and Friends* series levels 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The students in Class A were in the age range of 8 - 10, in Class, B 11 - 13, and in Class C, 14 - 16. The duration of the courses was six weeks. Each week includes two sessions and each session one lesson of the books were covered. In addition to the first introductory and the last final exam sessions, ten other sessions (two sessions each week) were allocated to language instruction.

Data collection procedures

The study was carried out in the spring of 2019 employing semi-structured interviews, video recordings, stimulated recall sessions, and teacher reflective journals for data collection. After obtaining the consent of the school's authorities, the language teachers working in the center were interviewed personally and informed about the purposes and procedures of the study. Four out of seven teachers willing to be part of the study were selected, and their written consents were obtained. Three individual teaching classes taught

by the participating teachers (Nelina, Sara and Helen) were chosen using purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). Prior to the implementation of the course, the teachers were interviewed using the pre-course semi-structured interview protocol to explore their cognitions on the principles of teaching and learning (e.g., teacher/learner roles, teaching activities, role of input, output, and interaction) (see Appendix 1 for the questions).

Ten sessions for each class were considered. The teachers were asked to allocate the first four sessions to individual teaching and the other six sessions to team-teaching. After the completion of individual teaching phase (the first four sessions) the teachers were assigned as teams. Helen and Ilia were a team in Class A, Sarah and Nelina were in Class B, and again, Nelina and Sarah were in Class C. Six sessions of team-teaching were held for each class. Each session took 60 minutes and was video recorded.

The teachers were asked to keep journals (McKay, 2009) reporting about their thoughts and descriptions of the experiences as individual and team teachers. These journals included a description of their experiences during class sessions and their reflections on their own performances and their students' participation. To guide them about the content and entries of journals, they were asked to write journal entries after each incident in the course, after each class meeting, and each stimulated recall session.

Then, 24 hours after each individual and team-teaching session, the teachers participated in an audio-recorded stimulated recall session (Gass & Mackey, 2000). As an introspective research methodology, it helped the researchers have access to the teachers' retrospective accounts of their theory and practice (Ryan & Gass, 2012). Selected parts of the video recordings were replayed to help the teachers recall what happened in the class and to elicit their reflections. There were 30 stimulated recall sessions (12 for individual teaching and 18 for team-teaching sessions). Each stimulated recall session lasted around 20 minutes (Appendix 3).

Finally, post-course teacher and student interviews were employed to collect further data focusing on their interpretation and evaluation of their experiences in both individual and team-teaching phases. Student interviews were also employed to explore the learners' own descriptions and evaluations of their learning experiences during the course (see Appendix 2 for the questions).

Data analysis

The data featured in this study were analyzed inductively to ascertain the meanings that people assign to their own expressions, and to adequately record the themes grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Flick, 2014). To suit this purpose, the video and the audio recordings (made during interviews, teaching sessions, and stimulated recall sessions), were transcribed verbatim and translated into English (Temple & Young, 2005). After reading and analyzing data cyclically, Constant Comparative Method outside of grounded theory was used (Fram, 2013). Initial/open coding and focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) were used in the first and second cycles of coding respectively. During coding, the researchers wrote analytic memos to note the teachers' thoughts and interpretations (Saldana, 2009). To ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Saldana, 2009), two measures were taken. First, member checking was utilized by asking the participants to review the transcripts of their interviews. Second, the researchers worked as a team to analyze and interpret the data. In this way, the researchers performed cyclical and double coding to include all pieces of data in the data analysis process, to specify the possible discrepancies, resolve disagreement through discussion, and select relevant evidence from the data.

Results

The teachers' involvement in individual and team-teaching and their experiences of the transition can be considered in three marked phases — (1) individual teaching phase, (2) the transition phase and (3) the post-transition phase. The findings of this study will be presented following the order of these three phases to explain how teachers transitioned from individual to team-teaching.

Individual teaching phase

The participating teachers were placed in three classes (A, B, and C) to teach individually. Each teacher performed her/his teaching work in isolation from her fellow colleagues. The analysis of their practices in the four successive sessions revealed a number of shared features including a 'great quantity of L1 [Persian] use', 'low engagement in learning', 'teacher increased workload' and 'inability to manage class time'. A closer analysis of the data provided ample evidence to describe each theme as experienced by the teachers.

A great quantity of L1 use

L2 use during classroom instruction was found to be a challenge for the teachers. The teachers' discourse showed that they mainly relied on their L1 (Persian) for interaction. The number of turns (i.e., the time when the teacher or students spoke in classroom conversation) showed that 60% to 75% of the turns were in L1. The teachers mentioned a number of reasons for their overuse of L1. Nelina, for example, believed that learners do not welcome L2 use. Sarah, on the other hand, attributed her dependence on L1 to her students' poor command of English.

Excerpt 1:

Researcher: *Why did you speak Persian a lot?*

Nelina: *Because the students make joke on everything. When I speak English, they scoffed me ... [because English learners in the context of this research prefer L1 use in L2 instruction, they begin to distract the teachers from using the L2]*

(Stimulated recall; Class C; Forth session)

Excerpt 2:

Researcher: *Don't you use L1 so much?*

Sarah: *... Because students seemed odd when I spoke in English.*

Researcher: *Why?*

Sarah: *... students do not understand me and I do not know how to make my speech comprehensible in English.*

(Stimulated recall; Class B; Third session)

Low learning engagement

The degree of interaction between the teachers and students was low, as the learners tended to make noise and interrupt their teachers. The teachers had to allocate their time and energy to be able to manage these problems through grading or warnings. In other words, the students were present in the class without any real engagement with learning. The teachers did not find any opportunity to involve students in classroom interaction. Thus, there was little teacher-learner, learner-learner, and learner-content interaction. When asked to provide their interpretation of the problem, the teachers' showed differential perceptions of the cause of this condition. Nelina blamed the activities in the textbook, but Sarah attributed the lack of engagement to her own ability to involve them.

Excerpt 3:

The students talked a lot with each other and I lost the control of the class...

(Sarah; Reflection paper; Class B; Third session)

Excerpt 4:

Nelina: *... I think one of the reasons is the textbook. It does not engage students very much...*

(Stimulated recall; Class C; Third session)

Increased workload

Closely related to the previous theme, the teachers were unhappy about the labour pressure and the teachers' inability to manage the class time as they taught without a co-teacher. The teachers pinpointed that carrying out all the duties is difficult for a teacher. Planning, teaching, evaluating and being responsive to all students' needs seemed to be difficult for a teacher.

Excerpt 5:

... I am busy with the students from the beginning to the end of the class. I teach ... and I evaluate ... check their ... assignments.... pronunciation and handwriting.

(Sarah; Stimulated recall; Class B; Second session)

Excerpt 6:

I didn't have enough time. I don't know how to cover these large extents of subjects.

(Nelina; Stimulated recall; individual teaching; Class C; First session)

The transition phase

After the first four sessions of the course, in which the teachers taught individually, they continued their work in the same classes with a collaborating teacher. The six sessions of team-teaching could be divided into two unlike phases marked with contrasting themes. In the *transition phase* (the first two sessions of team-teaching) teachers faced some outstanding challenges which were not easy to manage.

Teachers' competition and students' dissatisfaction

In the initial sessions of team-teaching, the teachers' mistakes were immediately corrected by their collaborating teachers. The error corrections by one teacher seemed to cause negative reactions in the other teacher. For example, Sarah's correcting Nelina's grammatical error in the first session made her anxious.

Excerpt 7:

Nelina: Ok. What's your favorite ANIMALS? [Grammatical error]

Sarah: ANIMAL. [Recast with a raising pitch and stress]

Nelina: Animal? [With a question form]

(Recording; Class B; Fifth session)

This error correction made Nelina embarrassed to handle the rest of the class and she appeared less open to team-teaching.

Excerpt 8:

Researcher: How did you feel when Sarah corrected your error?

Nelina: ... I faltered suddenly. I didn't understand what I said and what the student's favorite animal was.

(Stimulated recall; Class B; First session)

The teachers seemed to be intolerant and overtly expressed their disagreement. As an example, Nelina and Sarah disagreed about the pronunciation of 'plus'. In the second session, Nelina pronounced 'plus' incorrectly as /pl[^]z/. Sarah corrected her error immediately but Nelina emphasized on the incorrect pronunciation. This contest was a barrier to work together in a truly collaborative model.

Excerpt 9:

Nelina: Yes... /pl[^]z/ [phonological error]

Sarah: /pl[^]s!/ [Feedback- recast correction]

Nelina: /pl[^]s/? (.) No /pl[^]z/ [.] /pl[^]z/ [repetition the same error]

(Class B; Second session)

This overt contest among the collaborating teachers appeared to make the students feel negatively about team-teaching. One of the students said that "the teachers had disagreement about words" (referring to the teachers' disagreement in Excerpt 9) which made him doubt which teacher is correct. Consequently, Sorena expressed a preference to teach individually.

Excerpt 10:

Researcher: What do you think about your experience in team and individual teaching classes?

Sorena: ...because teachers had disagreement. One of the teachers said something another one said something else. I think one teacher was better.

(Student post interview; Class B; Sixth session)

As a common challenge, the teachers' contest made the team anxious about their peers' behaviors. Sarah, for example, could not match her lesson plan with that of Nelina. They repeatedly interrupted each other and were anxious about their peers' interruption.

Excerpt 11:

...When I wanted to say something she (Sarah) pointed at me to be quiet and she spoke..., I didn't like team-teaching at all, and I think individual teaching is much better than team-teaching.

(Nelina; Reflection paper; Class B; Sixth session)

The same experience was reported by the teachers in the other class (Class A). Ilia lost his track in the class as Helen's repeated interruption of his speech embarrassed him.

Excerpt 12:

I couldn't implement the plan I prepared beforehand because Helen always interrupted my speech and I lost track.

(Ilia; Reflection paper; Class C; Fifth session)

Confusion and anxiety among teachers

Uncertainty about their own performances in the presence of a new teacher and inability to predict their peers' reaction appeared to create a stressful atmosphere for the teachers in the first two sessions. The fear of being assessed by the collaborating teacher or by their learners against the other teacher contributed to their stress and confusion.

Excerpt 13:

... my first experience of team-teaching was a little bit stressful and I felt a kind of confusion. I thought I was being compared with my peer.

(Sarah; Reflection paper; Class C; Fifth session)

Excerpt 14:

... I got stress when I spoke. I felt I was being assessed by my peer.

(Nelina; Stimulated recall session; Class B; Sixth session)

This confusion and stress, in turn, brought about some difficulties in their performances. Nelina, for example, experienced difficulties in pronunciation. This was pinpointed in her reflection journal when she wrote "I'm not satisfied with my performance today. I had stress and I couldn't speak well. I made a lot of errors." (Reflection paper; Class B; Second session).

Excerpt 15

I really had stress and I just looked at my peer and said /fɛr/ or /fɔr/....what was it??? (Laugh). I found myself floundering.

(Nelina; Stimulated recall session; Class B; Fifth session)

Gender differences appeared to be the other factor contributing to the teachers' anxiety. Ilia reported a similar experience. It seemed that co-teaching with a peer of the opposite sex contributed to his stress.

Excerpt 16:

... I floundered. My peer was female and it enhanced my stress.

(Ilia; Reflection paper; Class C; Fifth session)

Team-teaching was found to negatively affect students' engagement in classroom interaction and bring about dissatisfaction of their experience as learners. As such, the learners had an imbalanced interaction and engagement with each of their teachers.

Excerpt 17:

Researcher: *Which class did you feel more convenient?*

Sorena: *The solo teaching, I had interaction in both classes.... but more in individual classes.*

(Student interview; Class B; Fifth sessions)

The post-transition phase

Classroom observation along with other data showed that the seventh session was a point of departure for teachers' transition from individual to team-teaching. A detailed description of the teachers' and the learners' experience provided ample evidence indicating change in the teachers' activities and the students' attitudes. Evidence from various data sets including recordings of sessions 7, 8, 9, and 10 - the post-transition phase, will be provided to affirm the teachers' transition from individual to team-teaching.

Students' satisfaction (more participation and more energy)

Unlike the first two sessions of team-teaching in which students were found to minimally engage in learning, the other sessions were identified with the students' willingness to participate and engage in learning.

Excerpt 18

Initially I was not used to having two teachers in one class... as the time went by, I found it more and more interesting.

(Javad; Student interview; Class C; Eighth session)

The learners' satisfaction with their teachers and team-teaching lead to a sense of belonging for both teachers. Despite Nelina's negative feeling in the transition phase (that she was unfit for collaborative teaching), in the post-transition phase, she found herself more collaborative to her colleague and easier to communicate with the learners.

Excerpt 19

... they interacted with both of us ... I was happy and did feel to be unconstructive to the class.

(Nelina; Reflection paper; Class B; Ninth session)

In the initial sessions of team-teaching, the students appeared to be non-participants. In the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th sessions, evidence was found to indicate the students' positive engagement in classroom interaction as they built up a positive rapport with both teachers.

Excerpt 20

In the seventh and the next sessions, the students and the class were funnier. The students had more collaboration. They had more energy.

(Ilia; Reflection paper; Class A; Tenth session)

Excerpt 21

This session was more efficient than the first two sessions. Although the students were naughty a little, they had a lot of energy.

(Helen; Reflection paper; Class A; Seventh session)

Decreased workload and improved mutual support

Gradually, the teachers were found to be less competitive. They displayed the identity of an assistant and supporter. The presence of the second teacher was satisfying for the peers because they shared the duties in the class as each one did not have to handle all the responsibilities.

Excerpt 22

Being with a peer teacher led me to be more comfortable. The responsibilities were half in the class and he handled some part of teaching. As a result, he was a great supporter.

(Helen; Reflection paper; Class A; Tenth session)

In a similar vein, Sarah claimed that the co-teacher is a good supporter and also the students can profit from different styles of teaching. Teaching seemed to be more effective with another teacher.

Excerpt 23

I felt we had an effective pedagogical process. The peer was a supporter. We taught a subject in different styles. It was easier to explain a concept. I think it was interesting for students.

(Sarah; Reflection paper; Class B; Eighth session)

Team-teaching created an opportunity for the students to use the assistance of two other experts (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). As the students reported, the teachers easily provided the students with a model through their joint role play and thereby a fun atmosphere in the class.

Excerpt 24

My peer and I had role playing the class. I think, it was a good model for students to see nearly a real L2 communication ... the students tried to do the same model.

(Ilia; Reflection paper; Class A; Ninth session)

Increased needs-responsive instruction

Team-teaching appeared to create a better opportunity for the collaborating teachers too. This, in turn, led into further assistance and brought about satisfaction with their performance. Quite relatedly, the students found a better chance to seek responses to their needs. As one teacher was instructing, the students could interact with the other teacher to seek assistance.

Excerpt 25

Working in a pair with another teacher leads to better understanding of students' needs and being effectively responsive to needs. This satisfied us...

(Sarah; Reflection paper; Class B; Tenth session)

Excerpt 26

It is more understandable when we have two teachers ... Because while one is teaching the other is present to respond your questions...

(Mehdi; Student interview; Class C; Ninth session)

Increased teacher learning

The evidence provided through multiple data sets indicated transformation in the teachers' cognitions and practices. To illustrate, Ilia learned new teaching activities from his co-teacher; Sarah arrived at the perception that she could teach independently of the textbook; and, Nelina learned how to collaborate with her co-teacher. Above all, they learned how to be more collaborative. For example,, Ilia learned from Helen how to teach words and phrases by drawing. Sarah learned from Nelina how to engage the students cognitively. She learned how not to be dependent on the prescribed textbook and syllabus. She found that it is possible to go beyond the syllabus through activating students' background knowledge.

Excerpt 27

My peer's drawing of the traffic light on the board to teach red, green, and yellow and also the verbs of 'go' and 'stop' was very interesting for me. I learned how to illustrate the same words or phrases by drawing.

(Ilia; Stimulated recall; Class A; Eighth session)

Excerpt 28

I learned how to give students more opportunities to think by exemplifying ... I learned from Nelina when we were teaching reading ... there were questions after reading. They needed to name two animals with fur on their bodies. While I simply relied on the two textbook examples, Nelina said "please give more examples". The students gave more examples.... I learned how students can be given a space to use their own knowledge...

(Sarah; Post interview)

Maximized teacher collaboration and interaction

In the transition phase (the 5th and 6th sessions), the teachers had low collaboration and at best they taught sequentially. The teachers' experience and performance in the seventh and the following sessions were found to be different. They managed the class more confidently and successfully collaborated with their peers. They experienced less stressful classes and more satisfactory performance. In sum, it turned to be more normal team-teaching with higher collaboration. The teachers started to think positively about team-teaching as they found themselves more engaged and contributing.

Excerpt 29

Helen was pleasant about her own and her peer's performance after some sessions. She and Ilia had more collaboration. They taught the students more energetically, which was more appealing to the students. She was delighted about the results of team-teaching and her students' learning.

(Sarah; Stimulated recall session; Class B; Eighth session)

Excerpt 30

Our performance in team-teaching was great. In addition, we were more energetic and the students were more engaged.

(Helen; Reflection paper; Class A; Tenth session)

Excerpt 31

I was more concentrated in this last session. This was because the two teachers paid enough attention to each of us and we found the opportunity to be active.

(Meraj; Student interview; Class C; Ninth session)

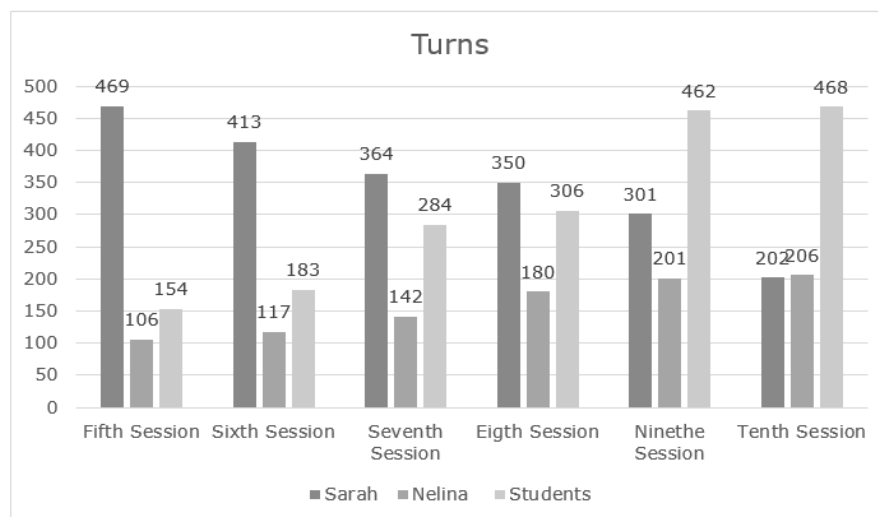


Figure 1. The teachers' and students' turn-taking in team-teaching class

Figure 1 illustrates the teacher and students' turns (i.e., the time when the teacher or students spoke in classroom conversation) during the six sessions of team-teaching in class B (the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th sessions of the program). The students had the least turns in the fifth session. Progressively, this number increased into 468 turns implying the increase of students' interaction in the final sessions. In addition, with the movement towards the tenth session the participants had a more balanced participation in classroom interaction. Sarah had the most turns in sessions five and six (469 and 413 turns respectively) compared to Nelina (106 and 117 turns respectively). Gradually the number of Sarah's turns decreased in the seventh and the tenth sessions (364 to 202 turns) but the number of Nelina's turns increased (142 to 206 turns).

Increased L2 use

The amount of L2 used by the teachers and learners in team-teaching classes increased gradually indicating a gap in L2 used between individual teaching phase, the transition and post-transition phases. As Figure 2 shows in the first session of team-teaching phase (Session five), the whole classes over relied on their first language (Persian). To be clear about the percentage change in L2 use, the percentage of English and Persian words used by the teachers and learners during each session was measured and contrasted. As depicted in the Figure 2, the participants replaced L1 use with L2 use in their instruction as the sessions continued.

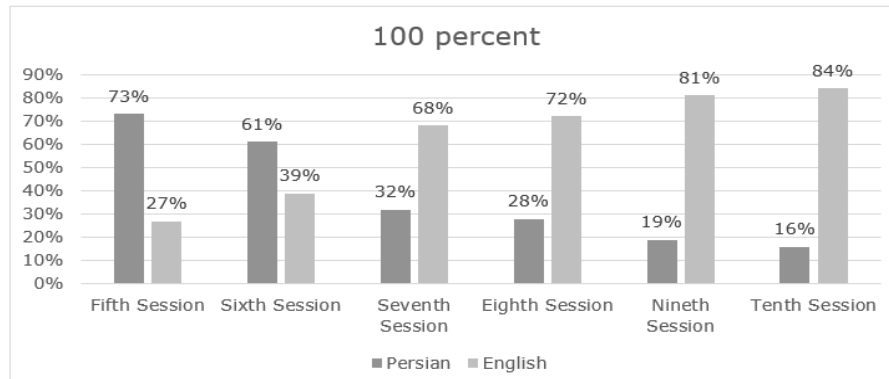


Figure 2. The amount of L1 and L2 use in team-teaching classes

Discussion

Teachers wishing to work in pairs need to develop a number of skills and identities to fulfill their roles collaboratively (Richards & Farrell, 2005). In other words, working successfully in team-teaching contexts demands a shift from individual to team-teaching. The evidence provided in the present study seemed to support the notion of the transition from individual to the team teaching. The results showed that the teachers in the present study initially failed to fulfill their roles as team teachers until they displayed their abilities to collaborate, tolerate and learn. This involved a sort of transition from individual teachers to team teachers. The notion of weak and strong versions of team-teaching (Yanamandram & Noble, 2005) could be used to explain the findings. As the teachers made the transition, the degree and quality of their collaboration, cooperation and engagement increased. In other words, they moved from a weak version to a strong version of team-teaching which is characterized by further collaboration, cooperation, integration, and engagement.

In the post-transition phase of team-teaching, the teachers' contest was gradually replaced with their mutual support. These findings showed that individual teachers' induction into team-teaching results in encountering some challenges (Bashan & Holsblat, 2012; Sorensen, 2004). The occurrence of confusion in the transition phase of team-teaching and then gaining a better control of teaching/learning process in the post-transition phase (sessions 7-10) indicate that teacher development from individual teaching to team-teaching involves a restructuring process. This is because a satisfactory individual teaching moved to a chaotic phase of team-teaching which was then replaced with a more satisfying high-quality experience.

As evidence of transition, it was shown that peer intervention in the fifth and sixth sessions (transition phase) was a challenge endangering the teachers' effective collaboration. However, as the transition occurred, this intervention turned to be an opportunity for teachers to support their peers (Dee, 2012; Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007).

It was found that team-teaching in later sessions promoted classroom interaction and the students' engagement in class activities (Yang, 2014). In individual teaching, the teachers seemed to be busy with content delivery, finding less opportunity to maximize interaction opportunity. On the other hand, team-teaching created space for the teachers to simultaneously instruct and be responsive to the students' needs. Availability of the second teacher to respond the students' requests and his/her contribution to the peers'

instruction (Simon & Baeten, 2014) can lead to the decrease of students' misunderstanding, which itself increases interaction and engagement opportunity. Any decrease in the gap between teachers' instruction and students' comprehension creates the opportunity for more interaction. Moreover, team-teaching may give students an opportunity to have a teacher preference. For example, if a good rapport is not established between one of the teachers and students, the presence of the second teacher may be considered as an alternative.

Feedback is a pedagogical tool in instruction through which teachers can scaffold their students (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). To provide formative feedback, space for assessing students' performance need to be created. Teaching in pairs increases the quantity of classroom assessment and thereby teacher feedback (Birrell & Bullough, 2005; Dee, 2012; Nokes et al., 2008). Building on the findings, it may be argued that quality team-teaching creates opportunity for classroom assessment and being responsive to students' needs through teacher feedback (Dee, 2012; Gardiner, 2010; Gardiner & Robinson, 2009).

When teachers teach in the same class, their alternative opinions and activities may lead them to think and reflect on their own and peers' performances (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). This space for reflection, along with collaboration and mutual support discussed above, brings about teacher learning. Teacher learning involves some transformation in teachers' understanding, identities and practices. Team-teaching, due to increased interaction, reflection and mutual support makes teachers' understandings, identities and practices susceptible to change.

The findings of our study provided evidence to show that the teachers used larger amount of L2 in second language instruction when they underwent transmission from individual to team teaching. This improvement may be attributed to different factors. First, the teachers finding themselves under the observation of his/her colleague may be prompted to use the L2. Second, teachers may find a chance or an opportunity to test their hypotheses about the use of their interlanguage.

Although the focus of our study was not teacher identity reconstruction, the evidence indicated that the teachers' identities underwent reconstruction. The teachers did not successfully work in close collaboration at the first two sessions of team-teaching but they changed their identity to teacher-as-collaborator in the post-transition phase. As another piece of evidence, the teachers displayed the identity of teacher-as-learner in the post-transition phase of team-teaching.

finally, team-teaching creates a space for learners to think critically about learning, teaching and knowledge construction as they find knowledge construction dynamic. In this way, the teachers' behavior in class may lead students to conclude that there is no one single solution to a problem and that they can have their choice. In addition, they finding themselves in a position to assess their teachers' performance and approaches. In this sense, team-teaching carries positive consequences for students in teacher-fronted educational cultures.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The present study explored teacher transition into team-teaching through providing an in-depth description of the participating teachers' and learners' experience as they were involved in individual and team-teaching instructions. The study suggested that teacher transition involves a transition phase characterized by some negative features such as teacher contest and stress, student dissatisfaction, overreliance on L1 use, and students' unwillingness to participate. The analysis of the second phase (transition phase) of the teachers' experience, new to the teachers, showed that the teachers, accustomed to individual teaching, faced some challenges when involved in team-teaching.

The findings contribute to the literature theoretically through supporting the notion of situated learning occurring with teacher engagement in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Revealing that teacher learning involves cognition and identity reconstruction, it showed that teachers need to make an effective transition if they want to successfully fulfill their team-teaching roles. As a result, the findings might promise some practical implications for teacher learning and education.

The study was restricted by the small number of participants. Accordingly, the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. However, providing an in-depth description of the participants' experience

through a wide range of data collection instruments makes the transferability of findings to similar contexts possible.

Although the purpose of the study was not to explore teacher identity reconstruction, the evidence revealed that teacher transition involves identity reconstruction (Tsybulsky & Rozanov, 2019). Future studies could focus on teacher identity reconstruction as teachers make effective transition to team-teaching. Further research is also needed to explore the transition from individual to team-teaching of EAP teachers when two ELT teachers or an ELT teacher co-teach with a content teacher.

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Appendices 1-3

Appendix 1

The Prior semi-structured interview questions

1. Do you have any idea about team-teaching?
2. Have you ever taught with some else in you class?
3. How do increase engagement in your class?
4. What technics do you use for giving feedback?
5. Do you use L1 in your classes?

Appendix 2

The later semi-structured interview questions

1. How is your feeling?
2. What did you experience?
3. What did you learn?
4. What challenges did you have?
5. What changes do you feel in yourself?

Appendix 3

Stimulated recall session questions

1. How was your feeling this time?
2. Why did you do this?
3. What did you learn that time?
4. What is your idea about the mentor's/peer's action?
5. What could you do to get a better result?
6. What was your feeling among your peers?