



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA ESTATAL DE QUEVEDO

Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages

Faculty of Education Sciences

TITLE:

**“ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILLS OF BEGINNER LEVEL STUDENTS
THROUGH THE COTEACHING METHOD IN EFL CLASSROOMS”**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate effectively in English is a fundamental skill in today's interconnected world. However, in Ecuador's public education system, students encounter significant obstacles in developing oral proficiency. Among the most pressing challenges are overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time, and traditional teaching methodologies that emphasize grammar and writing over spoken communication. Despite the national curriculum's recognition of communicative competence as a key learning objective, many beginner-level students lack fluency, confidence, and motivation to speak English in real-world contexts (Montenegro, 2021). Recognizing these limitations, this study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the co-teaching method as a pedagogical strategy to enhance students' speaking skills in an EFL classroom setting.

Problem

In Ecuadorian public schools, particularly in EFL classrooms, students face significant challenges in developing oral proficiency. These challenges are primarily due to overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time, and traditional teaching approaches that focus more on grammar and writing than on speaking and communication. As a result, beginner-level students often struggle with fluency, confidence, and participation in English-speaking activities. Despite the national curriculum's focus on communicative competence, many students find it difficult to engage in spoken English, limiting their ability to use the language effectively in real-world contexts. This research seeks to explore the potential of co-teaching as a solution to these challenges by providing students with more opportunities for verbal interaction, personalized feedback, and real-world language practice.

Hypothesis

The implementation of the co-teaching method significantly enhances the speaking skills of beginner-level EFL students by improving fluency, confidence, and participation. This method creates a more interactive, supportive, and engaging classroom environment, overcoming the limitations of traditional teaching strategies and fostering better communication skills in English.

2. Objectives

2.1. General Objective:

To enhance the speaking skills of beginner-level students in EFL classrooms through the implementation of the co-teaching method, promoting a more interactive and effective learning experience.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the co-teaching method for the development of speaking skills in beginner-level students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class.

2.2. Specific Objectives:

- *To design and implement co-teaching strategies tailored to the needs of beginner-level students, fostering their active participation in communicative activities.*

To design and implement co-teaching strategies tailored to the needs of beginner-level students, while measuring their impact on fostering active participation in communicative activities.

To evaluate the impact of the co-teaching method on the development of students' speaking skills, using tools such as recordings, observations, and surveys.

- *To foster students' confidence and motivation to express themselves in English through practical and collaborative activities that reflect real-life communication scenarios.*

To foster students' confidence and motivation to express themselves in English through practical and collaborative co-teaching activities that reflect real-life communication scenarios.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework will be developed around the following topics:

- Co-Teaching as a Pedagogical Model
- The Impact of Co-Teaching on Oral Communication Skills
- EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and its Challenges in Ecuador
- Fluency Development in EFL Learners
- Confidence and Motivation in Language Learning
- Overcrowded Classrooms and their Effect on EFL Learning
- Differentiated Instruction in Co-Teaching
- Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development
- Student Participation and Engagement in Language Learning
- Real-World Language Application and Communicative Competence

The co-teaching method has been widely recognized as an effective instructional approach in language learning, particularly in classrooms with diverse learners and high student-teacher ratios. Research indicates that collaborative teaching strategies can optimize classroom management, diversify instructional approaches, and provide more opportunities for students to develop oral proficiency (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2017). This study builds upon existing findings to evaluate how co-teaching can enhance fluency, confidence, and participation among beginner-level EFL students in an Ecuadorian public-school setting.

3.1. Co-Teaching as a Pedagogical Model

Co-teaching is defined as a collaborative instructional approach in which two teachers share responsibilities for planning, delivering, and assessing learning experiences in the same classroom (Friend, 2019). Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of co-teaching in language learning contexts, where students benefit from differentiated instruction and multiple perspectives on language use (Boland, Alkhalifa, & Al-Mutairi, 2019).

Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) propose six models of co-teaching, which have been successfully applied in EFL classrooms:

- One Teaching, One Observing: One teacher delivers the lesson while the other collects data on student engagement and comprehension.
- Station Teaching: The class is divided into smaller groups, each working on specific speaking skills at different stations.
- Parallel Teaching: The class is split into two groups, with each teacher instructing one half to reduce class size and increase participation.
- Alternative Teaching: One teacher works with a small group needing additional support, while the other manages the larger class.
- Teaming: Both teachers actively participate in instruction, modeling conversational exchanges.
- One Teaching, One Assisting: One teacher leads the lesson while the other provides individual or small-group assistance.

3.2. The Impact of Co-Teaching on Oral Communication Skills

Research on language learning through co-teaching has consistently demonstrated notable improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition (Montenegro, 2021). In multilingual and high-density classroom settings, co-teaching has been linked to higher student confidence in speaking English, as it exposes learners to multiple teaching styles, diverse instructional techniques, and an increased number of communicative opportunities (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). By having two teachers actively involved in instruction, students experience varied linguistic input, which enhances their understanding of pronunciation, intonation, and contextual language use, all of which are essential for developing oral communication skills.

Moreover, co-teaching fosters student motivation and participation, as it allows for smaller instructional groups, real-time feedback, and personalized language support (Meena, 2020). Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches, which often limit student interaction, co-teaching creates a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment, where students feel encouraged to actively participate in discussions and collaborative speaking exercises. This is particularly relevant to the Ecuadorian EFL context, where overcrowded classrooms and limited instructional time significantly hinder oral proficiency development. By implementing co-teaching strategies, educators can overcome these limitations by increasing student engagement, ensuring that all learners

have the opportunity to practice speaking in a supportive environment. This research builds upon these findings by analyzing the effectiveness of co-teaching in an Ecuadorian public school, offering empirical evidence on its potential to improve fluency, pronunciation, and confidence among beginner-level EFL students.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

This study will employ a mixed-methods action research approach to examine the effectiveness of co-teaching on developing speaking skills among beginner-level EFL students. The research will be conducted in a public-school setting, specifically at Escuela de Educación Básica “Victor Manuel Rendón” in Valencia, Ecuador, with a sample size of 70 students in seventh grade, aged 10 to 12 years. The students will be divided into two groups: one will receive co-teaching as the instructional method, while the other will be taught using the traditional method. Both groups will be beginner-level English learners.

The study will follow a cyclical action research process consisting of four stages:

1. **Planning:** Designing co-teaching lesson plans, incorporating co-teaching strategies. This phase also includes the creation of assessment rubrics and data collection tools.
2. **Acting:** Implementing co-teaching models in the classroom, where two teachers will collaborate to deliver interactive lessons that include speaking activities, practices, group discussions, and vocabulary building exercises.
3. **Observing:** Gathering quantitative data through pre- and post-tests that assess fluency, pronunciation, and participation. Qualitative data will also be collected through observations, teacher reflections, and student surveys to measure confidence and engagement.
4. **Reflecting:** Analyzing the collected data to determine the impact of co-teaching on students' speaking abilities and making necessary adjustments to the co-teaching strategies.

4.2. Participants and Setting

This study will be conducted at Escuela de Educación Básica “Víctor Manuel Rendón”, a public school in Valencia, Ecuador, where the challenges of overcrowded classrooms and limited speaking practice are prevalent. The participants will consist of 70 seventh-grade students, aged 10 to 12 years, all of whom are at the beginner level in English. These students have been selected based on their proficiency in English, ensuring that they fall within the beginner range, characterized by limited vocabulary, basic grammatical knowledge, and difficulty forming complete sentences in spoken English.

The students will be divided into two groups:

Group 1: Co-Teaching Group: This group will receive instruction through the co-teaching method, where two teachers will collaborate in delivering lessons and supporting students through the co-teaching models.

Group 2: Traditional Teaching Group: This group will be taught using traditional teaching methods, where a single teacher leads the lessons with a more teacher-centered approach focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and written exercises, with limited opportunities for oral communication practice.

Both groups will engage in speaking activities and will be assessed based on improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and confidence. The study aims to compare the effectiveness of co-teaching in enhancing oral communication skills versus the traditional method, providing insights into how collaborative teaching strategies can address the challenges faced by beginner-level EFL learners in Ecuadorian classrooms.

By selecting a public school with overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, this study provides a realistic context for exploring scalable solutions that can be applied across Ecuadorian public schools to improve speaking skills in EFL education.

4.3. Co-Teaching Strategies

To maximize student participation and oral proficiency, the study will systematically apply all six co-teaching models over a 10-week intervention period. Each model will be strategically implemented based on lesson objectives, student needs, and classroom conditions to ensure that students have ample opportunities to engage in speaking

activities and receive personalized support. The six co-teaching strategies, adapted from Friend (2019), will be as follows:

1. One Teaching, One Observing

In this model, the local teacher will deliver a speaking-based lesson while the co-teacher observes and records student participation, fluency, and common errors. This approach will allow the teachers to collect baseline data on speaking abilities, which will be used to tailor lesson plans and adjust instructional strategies to meet students' individual needs.

2. Station Teaching

The class will be divided into three small groups, each rotating through different speaking-focused activities. These activities will include pronunciation drills, vocabulary-building exercises, and short role-plays. By having both teachers lead stations, students will receive more direct support and corrective feedback, ensuring they have more opportunities to practice speaking in a small group setting.

3. Parallel Teaching

The class will be split into two groups, with each teacher leading one group in identical speaking activities. This will reduce student-teacher ratios, allowing for more active participation in oral exercises such as storytelling and discussions. By working with smaller groups, each teacher can provide more individualized feedback, ensuring that all students can participate fully in the speaking tasks.

4. Alternative Teaching

While the main teacher works with the majority of the class on group discussions, the co-teacher will work with a smaller group of struggling students to provide additional support in pronunciation and vocabulary. This model will be particularly effective in boosting the confidence of hesitant speakers, as it allows for focused practice in a smaller, more supportive environment.

5. Teaming

In this model, both teachers will co-lead lessons, modeling conversational exchanges to demonstrate proper pronunciation, tone, and sentence structure. This approach will encourage students to mimic real-life dialogues, improving fluency and confidence in

speaking. Teachers will work together to demonstrate effective communication strategies, guiding students through various interactive speaking exercises.

6. One Teaching, One Assisting

In this model, the lead teacher will conduct the lesson, while the co-teacher will move around the room, providing individual feedback and on-the-spot support to students. This model will be particularly beneficial for students who need immediate corrections and encouragement to engage in classroom discussions. By offering individualized assistance, the co-teacher will help students build confidence and improve fluency during speaking activities.

4.4. Data Collection Methods

To assess the effectiveness of the co-teaching method on the development of speaking skills in beginner-level EFL students, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be employed. These methods will allow for a comprehensive understanding of student progress, engagement, and confidence in speaking English throughout the 12-week intervention period.

Quantitative Data Collection

- Pre- and Post-Test Assessments

Pre-test and post-test assessments will be used to measure students' fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage in speaking tasks. The tests will be graded based on a standardized rubric, assessing key aspects of oral communication such as fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence. The comparison between pre- and post-test results will allow for the measurement of improvements in words per minute (WPM) and other speaking skills.

- Participation Rates

Participation rates will be recorded to track the frequency with which students engage in speaking tasks during the intervention. Teachers will observe how often students volunteer to speak, contribute to group discussions, and participate in pair activities. These observations will provide insight into the level of student engagement and motivation to use English in classroom activities.

- Student Surveys

Surveys will be administered before and after the intervention to capture self-reported data on students' confidence, motivation, and perceived improvement in speaking skills. Students will rate their own confidence in speaking English and their willingness to participate in oral activities. This survey will also gather feedback on the co-teaching experience, asking students to reflect on whether they felt the co-teaching model helped improve their speaking ability.

Qualitative Data Collection

- Classroom Observations

Observation checklists will be used to record student participation and engagement during each co-teaching session. Teachers will observe the students' use of English in speaking activities, noting whether they speak in complete sentences, use new vocabulary, and demonstrate confidence during tasks. Observations will also focus on student interactions, such as peer collaboration in group activities and the amount of verbal interaction in class. These observations will be key in understanding how the co-teaching models impact classroom dynamics and oral proficiency.

- Teacher Reflections

Weekly teacher reflections will provide insights into the effectiveness of the co-teaching strategies. Both teachers will document their observations on classroom interactions, student progress, and challenges faced during the implementation of the co-teaching models. These reflections will help identify successful teaching practices, areas that need improvement, and how the co-teaching model can be adjusted to better meet students' needs.

- Student Self-Assessment

A self-assessment survey tailored to their age will be given to students to assess their perceptions of their own progress in speaking English. Students will reflect on their confidence, motivation, and willingness to participate in speaking activities before and after the intervention. This data will provide a personal perspective on how the students view their own improvement and whether they feel more comfortable speaking in English.

4.5.Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed in the following ways:

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the pre-test and post-test scores, focusing on improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and confidence.

Inferential statistics (e.g., paired t-tests) will be applied to determine if the improvements in the co-teaching group are statistically significant compared to the traditional teaching group.

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis will be applied to the observation checklists, teacher reflections, and student self-assessments to identify patterns in student participation, engagement, and confidence.

The analysis will highlight any correlations between teaching methods and student outcomes, focusing on areas such as interaction frequency, speaking fluency, and confidence-building.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent will be obtained from students and parents, ensuring that participation is voluntary.
- Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing student data.
- Transparency will be ensured by explaining the study's objectives and procedures clearly to all participants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

5. APPENDICES

5.1. Appendix A: Rubric for Speaking Assessments (Pre- and Post-Test)

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Fluency	Speaks smoothly with minimal hesitation and natural flow.	Mostly fluent with occasional pauses but maintains conversation.	Frequently hesitates, long pauses, disrupts communication.	Struggles to complete sentences, frequent breakdowns in speech.
Pronunciation	Clear and accurate pronunciation, few or no errors.	Mostly clear, with some mispronunciations but does not affect meaning.	Frequent pronunciation errors, sometimes affects understanding.	Many errors make speech difficult to understand.
Vocabulary	Uses a wide range of words, including some advanced expressions.	Uses an adequate vocabulary, with some variety in word choice.	Limited vocabulary, repeats simple words.	Very basic vocabulary, struggles to find words.
Grammar & Sentence Structure	Mostly correct grammar, varied sentence structures.	Some grammar mistakes but does not affect meaning.	Frequent grammatical errors, some misunderstandings.	Many errors prevent understanding, lacks sentence structure.
Confidence & Engagement	Speaks confidently, maintains eye contact, gestures, and natural intonation.	Speaks with some confidence, though some hesitation is noticeable.	Avoids speaking or requires prompting, speaks in monotone.	Very hesitant, avoids participation, little to no effort.

Scoring Guide:

- 16-20 points → Excellent
- 11-15 points → Good
- 6-10 points → Developing
- 0-5 points → Needs Improvement

5.2. Appendix B: Observation Checklist Template

Category	Yes	No	Comments
Students participate actively in speaking tasks.			
Students speak in full sentences rather than single words.			
Students use learned vocabulary and new expressions.			
Students show confidence while speaking (eye contact, gestures).			
Students hesitate less frequently than in previous lessons.			
Students ask and answer questions voluntarily.			
Students engage in pair or group speaking activities.			
Teachers provide immediate feedback during speaking tasks.			
The co-teaching method appears to increase engagement.			
There is collaboration between both teachers in lesson delivery.			

5.3. Appendix C: Student Self-Assessment Survey

Instrucciones: Lee cada afirmación y marca (✓) la casilla que mejor describa cómo te sientes respecto a tus habilidades para hablar en inglés.

Afirmación	Totalmente de acuerdo (4)	De acuerdo (3)	En desacuerdo (2)	Totalmente en desacuerdo (1)
Me siento seguro/a al hablar en inglés en clase.				
Participo en actividades orales sin miedo a cometer errores.				
Puedo hablar con más fluidez ahora que antes de las sesiones de co-enseñanza.				
Entiendo y uso más vocabulario al hablar.				
Puedo pronunciar las palabras con más claridad que antes.				
Me gusta trabajar con dos profesores en el aula.				

Hablar inglés ahora me parece más fácil que antes.				
Me gustaría seguir aprendiendo con el método de co-enseñanza.				

Comentarios adicionales:

¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de aprender inglés con co-enseñanza?

¿Qué aspectos aún te parecen difíciles en el inglés oral?

5.4. Appendix D: Survey on the Effectiveness of Co-Teaching in EFL Classrooms

Instrucciones: Esta encuesta tiene como objetivo evaluar el impacto de la co-enseñanza en el aprendizaje del inglés. Responde las siguientes preguntas según tu experiencia.

Parte 1: Selección Múltiple (Marca una respuesta por pregunta)

1. ¿Tener dos profesores en el aula te ayudó a mejorar tus habilidades para hablar en inglés?

- ☐ **Sí, mucho**
- ☐ **Sí, un poco**
- ☐ **No, no realmente**
- ☐ **No, no hizo ninguna diferencia**

2. ¿Qué estrategia de co-enseñanza te pareció más útil para practicar el habla?

- ☐ **Enseñanza Paralela (Grupos pequeños con diferentes profesores)**
- ☐ **Enseñanza en Estaciones (Rotación entre actividades en grupos pequeños)**
- ☐ **Enseñanza en Equipo (Ambos profesores trabajan juntos)**
- ☐ **Enseñanza Alternativa (Apoyo extra para los estudiantes que lo necesitan)**

3. ¿Con qué frecuencia sentiste que te animaban a hablar en clase con dos profesores?

- ☐ Siempre
- ☐ A menudo
- ☐ A veces
- ☐ Nunca

4. ¿La co-enseñanza hizo que las clases fueran más dinámicas e interactivas?

- ☐ Sí, mucho
- ☐ Sí, un poco
- ☐ No, no realmente
- ☐ No, para nada

Parte 2: Respuestas Abiertas

5. ¿Qué fue lo mejor de tener dos profesores en el aula?

6. ¿Qué se podría mejorar en la experiencia de co-enseñanza?

**7. ¿Recomendarías la co-enseñanza como método para otras clases de inglés?
¿Por qué o por qué no?**