

## **Student Teams Achievement Divisions and Think-Pair-Share: Which Works Better for Listening?**

Hamid Marashi\*, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran

*hamid.marashi@iauctb.ac.ir*

Zahra (Mina) Tabatabayi, M.A., Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran

*tabmina@yahoo.com*

### **Abstract**

This study was an attempt to investigate the comparative impact of Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Think-Pair-Share (TPS) on EFL learners' listening. Accordingly, 60 female EFL learners selected from a larger group of 90 learners based on their performance on a sample piloted Preliminary English Test (PET) who studied at a language school in Tehran were randomly divided into two experimental groups. Both groups demonstrated homogeneity in terms of their listening at the outset. The same content was taught to both groups during 15 sessions with one experimental group undergoing STAD while TPS was used in the other group. At the end of the treatment, another sample PET listening section was administered to both groups. The result of the independent samples t-test run on the participants' mean scores on the posttest revealed that the TPS group significantly outperformed those in the STAD group. These findings have certain implications which are discussed at length in the paper.

**Keywords:** listening, cooperative learning, STAD, TPS

### **Introduction**

The English language turned into the world's most widespread international language throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century thus becoming a necessity in almost all four corners of the world. In fact, by the end of the century, the total population of nonnative speakers of English outnumbered that of the native speakers (Schmitt, 2002). To this end, the need to acquire the necessary skills for communicating appropriately and effectively in English is perhaps indispensable for a growing number of people from different linguistic backgrounds.

Among these skills, listening is arguably the most important part of verbal communication (Page & Page, 2011; Rourke & Collins, 2009) such that "most of the time is spent on learning through listening" (Tyagi & Misra, 2011, p.195). Nevertheless, this skill has not received the due attention it requires in ELT classrooms (Vandergrift, 2003) despite the fact that a huge majority of individuals spend more time listening than reading, speaking, or writing (Fujishin, 2007; Hedge, 2000). It is no wonder then that the teaching of listening continues to remain a major domain of research in ELT (Brown, 2011; Richards, 2005; Siegel, 2013).

Within the extensive realm of the different methods and techniques adopted to teach the language skills (listening included), cooperative learning (CL) pioneered by Johnson and Johnson and also Slavin in the 1970s (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1980) have managed to attract significant popularity among language teachers and learners; indeed the literature is overwhelmed by empirical studies in favor of the advantageousness of CL (e.g., Bolukbas, Keskin, & Polat, 2011; Dabaghmanesh, Zamanian, & Bagheri, 2013; Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Khabiri & Lavasani, 2012; Marashi & Khatami, 2017; Sharan, 1980; Stevens, 2003; Zahedi & Tabatabaei, 2012).

Slavin (2011) refers to CL as “instructional methods teachers use to organize students into small groups, in which students work together to help one another learn the content” (p. 2) with the principal goal of enhancing the quality of learners’ learning (Felder & Brent, 2001). Soon after its introduction, CL started being employed in many educational environments across varying disciplines (from humanities and social sciences to engineering) and, increasingly, in ELT contexts all over the world as many regarded it to be an effective teaching method (Johnson & Johnson, 1992; Kessler, 1992).

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1994) identify the five essential elements that have to be mainstreamed in a CL lesson as, “(1) positive interdependence, (2) individual accountability, (3) quality of group interaction, (4) teaching of cooperative skills, and (5) teaching of social skills” (p. 77).

There are different modalities of CL developed by educators all of course architected upon the paradigm that students work together in the process of learning and bear responsibility for their own and their classmates’ learning (Slavin, 2011); among these variations are *Think-Pair-Share* (TPS) and *Student Teams Achievement Divisions* (STAD). Several studies report that STAD is a highly successful CL technique in ELT (e.g., Balfakih, 2003; Chim, 2015; Khansir & Alipour, 2015; Mills, 2001; Razavi, Nakhle, & Naghavi, 2012; Rimani Nikou, Bonyadi, & Ebrahimi, 2014) while quite a number of researches have demonstrated the effectiveness of TPS in language teaching (e.g., Brown & Thomson, 2000; Carss, 2007; Kothiyal, Majumdar, Murthy, & Iyer, 2017; Mandal, 2009; Raba, 2017).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Despite the relatively rich literature on CL and its sub-methods in ELT and also the considerable number of studies conducted on STAD and TPS, the researchers were not able to find any studies on the effect of STAD and TPS on EFL learners’ listening. Interestingly, both STAD and TPS are arguably highly common modalities of CL pedagogy in the literature. Hence, the researchers were somewhat surprised to see that these two procedures had not been compared and contrasted in terms of their impact on listening, which in turn is a very frequently studied language skill. To this end, they sought to investigate the comparative impact of these two CL sub-methods on the listening skill of EFL learners. Accordingly, the following research question was posed:

*Q: Is there any significant difference between the effect of student team achievement divisions and think-pair-share on EFL learners’ listening?*

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Listening**

Listening is generally “the ability to analyze and understand the aural information” (McLoughlin & Leather, 2013, p. 75) and a “mental process by which listeners take in the sounds uttered by a speaker and use them to construct an interpretation of what they think the speaker intended to convey” (Fauziati, 2005, p. 117). Listening is a highly active process in which the listener interprets and converts the symbols into a meaningful message (Author). It is indeed a complex procedure “of perceiving and interpreting the sounds correctly, as well as understanding the explicit and implied meaning of the oral message” (Rizvi & Kapoor, 2010, p. 91) that includes several skills and sub-skills including speech decoding, comprehending, and oral discourse analysis through which the listener needs to “identify main ideas and supporting details, understand long speeches, identify the formality level, and deduce unfamiliar vocabulary and incomplete information” Rizvi (2005, p. 71).

Accordingly, Richards (2005) stated that learners need to be good listeners in order to tackle their problems in natural contexts. Listening is indeed a challenging skill because it requires listeners to decipher the meaning of the oral input by using and activating both their schematic and second language knowledge (Nagle & Sanders, 1986; Young, 1997). In other words, listeners need to be active processors of information while cultivating students' listening skill is one of the most challenging tasks for any ESL teacher (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

The teaching of listening has undergone drastic change over the decades as perhaps the conceptualization of listening as a skill has witnessed major variation. Before the 1970s, listening was perceived merely as a passive skill in language learning (Osada, 2004) and students were required to repeat what they listened to and develop a more accurate pronunciation (Vandergrift, 2007). The dominant paradigm in teaching listening circled around the notion of acquisition through osmosis (Mendelsohn, 1995) whereby if students listened to the target language all day, they would improve their listening comprehension through the experience (Goh, 2008).

Since the 1980s, however, perhaps propelled by the ideas put forth by Widdowson (1978) and Krashen (1982), the perception of listening as a passive activity which took less class time has shifted to an active process and it is now widely accepted as an essential skill (Morley 2001). In this regard, the role of the listener is beyond simply receiving input; rather, the listener actively participates in constructing and illustrating meaning (Ferris, 1998; Murphy, 1991; Rost, 2002).

The importance of listening has been elaborated in very simple terms with an incontrovertible logic by Rost (1994) where he asserts, "Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Thus, listening is fundamental to speaking" (pp. 141-142). Rost of course is by no means alone in this stance as the ELT literature is abundant with the aforesaid position (e.g., Anderson & Lynch, 2003; Dunkel, 1991; Field, 2008; Matsuoka, 2009; Mendelsohn, 1994; Morley, 2001; Osada, 2004; Vandergrift, 2003). Despite this importance, Nunan (1997) wrote in a memorable statement that, "Listening is the Cinderella skill in second language learning. All too often, it has been overlooked by its elder sister: speaking" (p. 47).

### **Student Teams Achievement Divisions**

As stated earlier, several models of CL have been developed by different educators which fall into two major categories: the first set is the so-called *structured team learning* which involves rewards to teams based on the learning progress of their members, and they are also characterized by individual accountability which simply means that the success of a group depends on the learning of the individual and not group products (Slavin, 2011). Within this category, the STAD technique was developed by Slavin at Johns Hopkins University (Rimani Nikou et al., 2014) based on years of research on CL and is perhaps the simplest and most straightforward of the CL approach. It has been applied to a wide variety of subjects from math to language arts and social studies thereby organizing classes and accelerating the achievement of all students (van Wyk, 2012).

In addition, STAD can be utilized to teach different students with different performance levels, gender, and ethnicity (Arends, 2009). According to Leighton (2003), STAD "has five basic components: forming heterogeneous learning teams, presenting content, team practice or concept development activities, assessing individual student mastery, and calculating team improvement scores and recognizing team accomplishments" (p. 284).

Despite the overwhelmingly positive outcomes reported on STAD (stated above), there have also been rare reports which have concluded otherwise. One such example is the study by Lew, Mesch, Johnson, and Johnson (1986) in which they asserted that the potential drawbacks of

STAD might be the aftermath of when the groups are asked to exchange ideas, leading to subjective peer reviews and growing hostilities. Nevertheless, STAD has been reported to be a widely considered as a salient and rewarding CL instructional strategy and procedure in different educational contexts (Ghaith, 2001).

### **Think-Pair-Share**

The second set of CL sub-methods or the *informal group learning method* contains procedures with more focus on dynamics, projects, and discussion than on mastery of well-specified content (Slavin, 2011). The think-pair-share (TPS) technique as a subcategory of the informal group learning method was developed by Lyman (1981). This is a simple and quick technique and also can be defined as “a multi-mode discussion cycle in which students listen to a question or presentation, have time to think individually, talk with each other in pairs, and finally share responses with the larger group” (McTighe & Lyman, 1988, p. 19).

The strategy incorporates wait-time, verbal rehearsal, discussion, and CL. In its original form, Lyman (1981) defined two wait periods: the initial time after the issue posed by the teacher (Wait-time I) of three to five seconds and then another wait period (Wait-time II) of at least three seconds after each pair would share back to the group.

According to El Salehi (2013, as cited in Khaghaninejad & Saadabadimotlagh, 2015), learners can benefit greatly from Lyman’s strategy in a way that it can motivate individual communication and involve the whole class. TPS encourages silent learners to answer questions or do the task with a pair in place of standing in front of the students (Cooper & Robinson, 2000, as cited in Marashi & Baygzadeh, 2010). Moreover, it can develop higher order thinking skills and allow students to formulate their reasoning individually before sharing and provide students prompt and descriptive feedback on their understanding, from not only their instructors but also their peers (Himmele & Himmele, 2000).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were 60 adult female intermediate EFL learners studying at a private language school in Tehran. These 60 participants were selected based on their performance on a sample language proficiency test, i.e. the Preliminary English Test (PET) from among 90 intermediate learners who were made available to the researchers as an intact group (convenient nonrandom sampling); these 60 participants were those whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean. The test had been previously piloted with another 30 intermediate learners. The 60 participants were subsequently non-randomly divided into two equal experimental groups of 30 learners as they were intact groups in each but the assignment of the two groups was done randomly. Furthermore, the two researchers who enjoyed inter-rater reliability ( $r = 0.89$ ,  $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ) scored the participants’ writing and speaking papers.

### **Instrumentations and Materials**

#### ***Pretest: Preliminary English Test (PET)***

A sample Cambridge ESOL PET was administered for the participant selection process as described above. For the assessment of the writing and speaking sections, the researchers used the PET general mark scheme. Furthermore, the reliability of the test during the piloting and main administration stood at 0.87 and 0.91, respectively.

### ***Listening Comprehension Posttest***

To test the participants' listening comprehension following the treatment, the listening section of another sample PET test consisting of 15 items was used. The posttest was given to both groups of participants at the end of the study and its results were compared between the two experimental groups of the study. The aforesaid test had been first piloted among 30 intermediate students different from the participants and as a result of the item analysis, six items were omitted leaving 19 on the final version for administration.

### ***Course Book***

The main textbook in this study was *Four Corners* (Richards & Bohlke, 2012). This book consists of 12 units and each of them is divided into four lessons of A, B, C, and D and contains different tasks and exercises for all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this study, in each term, the first three units of this book were covered each unit lasting five sessions.

### ***Procedure***

To achieve the main purpose of the study, the following procedure was followed. Once the two groups were formed (as described above), a statistical test was run on the participants' scores on the listening part of the sample PET to make sure that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their listening ability prior to the treatment. The classes were held three times a week for 15 sessions, each session taking one hour and 45 minutes. Both groups were taught by the same teacher (one of the researchers) using the same course book (described above).

In both STAD and TPS groups, the participants were supposed to interact with their classmates and share ideas with each other to accomplish the common goal. The teacher/researcher used pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities in both groups as described below.

### ***STAD Group***

The STAD procedure detailed by Johnson et al. (1994) was used in the classroom during this treatment. Following the introduction phase of the students in class, the teacher described STAD to the learners. Next, the students were divided into groups of 4-5 members. She asked them to pay attention to maintaining eye contact with their classmates. They were supposed to look at each other instead of the teacher while speaking to others.

The students could name their groups after their favorite singers, animals, or anything they liked; this reflected a sense of identity and would motivate them for better competition. Each group was thence referred to by the name they had chosen. The teacher subsequently selected a student as a leader in each team to monitor and manage the cooperation; the selection was done randomly. Moreover, the teacher rotated this role among the group members every session to encourage and help the students to overcome their communication difficulties and try harder to do their best.

The teacher chose a top-down pre-listening activity to stimulate the learners' use of their background knowledge to understand the listening text so this top-down pre-listening activity involved asking students to recall what they knew about the topic of the listening track. For example, their listening track took place in an amusement park and she would ask the students to talk about the last time they went to an amusement park and describe their experience there. Then, the teacher drew their attention to the pictures of the task and asked them to make some

predictions about the following topic of the listening part. The teacher pre-taught unfamiliar vocabularies while the students were talking about the pictures and the learners shared their ideas with each other and discussed in their groups.

Next, the teacher gave the students enough time to read the questions carefully with their group-mates and told them that they would listen to a recorded speech passage three times. For the first time, they should make notes of whatever they could get from the text and try their best to answer the questions. They then compared their first guesses together and shared their ideas and understanding of the passage with the class and added new information.

For the second time, the participants listened to the audio and verified earlier disagreement and wrote down additional understanding cooperatively. While students were working in their groups, the teacher walked around to ensure that everyone was engaged. For the third and final time, they listened to get the details they had missed. They shared their ideas and the leader wrote their answers. In this round, after checking their answers with each other and the entire class, the teacher also commented on their ideas.

Lastly, the teacher asked them some questions related to the listening text and these questions focused on the students' reaction to the content and made them talk about what they had listened to. Subsequently, she asked the groups to make up three questions based on the listening track. The students had to write questions without the answer. Also, they needed to write their group names. After finishing writing the questions, they needed to circulate and give their papers to a different group. Each group then tried to answer the other group's questions and returned to the test creator group for a grade.

### ***TPS Group***

The teacher used the TPS procedure detailed by McTighe and Lyman (1988) for use in the classroom during this treatment. Following the introduction phase of the students in class, the teacher described TPS to the learners. Next, the students were grouped in pairs to discuss their thoughts; the teacher tried to change the assigned seating regularly so that everyone had an opportunity to work with different people.

As a warm-up, the teacher asked the students what they knew about the topic of the listening they were about to listen to. For example, it was an audio track about a cook explaining how to make a dish; she asked the students to suggest what words might come up as the cook explained each step of the recipe (first, then, after that) or to talk about the steps of the best food that they had ever made. Then, she drew their attention to the pictures of the task and asked them to make some predictions about the pictures of the listening. The teacher pre-taught unfamiliar vocabularies while the students were talking about the pictures in order to activate their prior knowledge to help them have a better understanding and also build their confidence in listening.

The learners shared their ideas with each other and discussed the questions in pairs. It is worth mentioning that the teacher asked them to sit back to back and discuss the issue for two minutes. Next, the teacher asked the participants to read the questions carefully in pairs. She told them that they would listen to the recorded speech passage and they should make notes of whatever they could get from it and try their best to answer the questions. The audio was played three times. The first time, they were asked to write whatever they heard. They listened and thought independently about the questions and formed ideas of their own. After think time (usually 1-3 minutes), they wrote down the answers.

The second time, the learners listened to the audio and were asked to answer the listening questions. They were allowed time in order to formulate their thoughts; all the students were given the chance to participate not just the few who volunteered or whom the researcher called

on. In this section, the students paired with a partner and the teacher asked the students to use the language associated with expressing opinions (“in my opinion ...,” “I think...,”) and sharing ideas (“What is your opinion?,” “What do you think?,” or simply “How about you?”).

The students worked together to create a synthesis of ideas, came to a consensus, or gave a unique answer. By this stage, the students had already engaged with the task and were keen to find out how their responses compared with their classmates. In fact, the students exploited this time to actually discuss the task rather than socially chat. The teacher could use this time to walk around the classroom checking that they were all involved.

The third time, the learners were asked to listen to the audio again and answer the questions. For this, the students again paired with a partner and discussed the questions. Lastly, the teacher called on pairs to share their ideas with the entire class. During this stage, the students could share their ideas in several ways. One way was to have all the students stand and after each pair responded, they sat down. This continued until all the pairs were seated. Another way was to move quickly around the class, having pairs respond quickly, one after the other. To ensure that the students listened, she asked other pairs to repeat what had been said and asked if they agreed or disagreed or would like to add some of their ideas. The teacher also commented on the ideas, directed the students, and sometimes avoided conflicts among pairs. This also let the teacher check the students and find about their weaknesses.

## Results

### Participant Selection

#### *Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration*

As discussed earlier, the piloted sample PET was subsequently administered for participant selection. Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics of this administration with the mean being 70.39 and the standard deviation 11.01, respectively.

**Table 1.** *Descriptive Statistics of the PET Pretest*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PET Administration	90	44	97	70.39	11.008
Valid N (listwise)	90				

#### *Dividing the Participants into Two Groups*

As the students in the language school came from intact groups and the researchers did not have the luxury of random sampling, they had to make sure that the 30 learners in each group bore no significant difference in terms of the dependent variable (listening comprehension) prior to the treatment. Hence, the mean scores of the two groups on the listening section of the PET administered earlier were checked for any significant difference. First, descriptive statistics (Table 2):

**Table 2.** *Descriptive Statistics of the Listening Scores of the Two Groups on the PET Pretest*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
STAD	30	13	19	16.47	1.548	-.322	.427
TPS	30	14	19	16.47	1.525	-.057	.427

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
STAD	30	13	19	16.47	1.548	-.322	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30						

Going back to Table 2, the skewness ratios of both groups ( $-0.322 / 0.427 = -0.754$  and  $-0.057 / 0.427 = -0.133$ ) fell within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1.96$  thus signifying that the score distributions in both groups represented normality. Therefore, running an independent samples *t*-test was legitimized.

As Table 3 below indicates, with the *F* value of 0.020 at the significance level of 0.889 being larger than 0.05, the variances between the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. The results ( $t = 0.000$ ,  $p = 1.000 > 0.05$ ) indicate that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the outset; consequently, any probable differences at the end of the treatment could be attributed to the effect of the treatment.

**Table 3.** Independent Samples *t*-Test of the Mean Scores of Both Groups in Their Writing Prior to the Treatment

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.020	.889	.000	58	1.000	.000	.397	-.79	.794
Equal variances not assumed			.000	57.9	1.000	.000	.397	-.79	.794

### Posttest

The researchers administered the listening posttest (described in detail earlier) among the two experimental groups once the treatment was completed. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics for the Posttest in Both Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
STAD Posttest	30	17	23	19.60	1.673	-.021	.427
TPS Posttest	30	18	23	20.90	1.242	-.262	.427
Valid (listwise)	N 60						

The mean and the standard deviation of the STAD group were 19.60 and 1.67 while those of the TPS group were 20.90 and 1.24, respectively.

### Responding to the Research Question

To respond to the research question and test the null hypothesis of the study raised based on it (i.e., there is no significant difference between STAD and TPS on EFL learners' listening), the researchers intended to conduct an independent samples *t*-test. Going back to Table 4, the skewness ratios of both groups fell within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1.96$  (-0.049 and -0.613); therefore, running a *t*-test was legitimized.

**Table 5.** Independent Samples *t*-Test on the Mean Scores of Both Experimental Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.577	.064	3.417	58	.001	1.300	.380	.539	2.06
Equal variances not assumed			3.417	53.5	.001	1.300	.380	.537	2.06

As Table 5 above indicates, with the *F* value of 3.557 at the significance level of 0.064 being larger than 0.05, the variances between the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. The results ( $t = 3.417$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) indicate that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the posttest. It can thus be concluded

that the presupposed null hypothesis was rejected meaning that the TPS group who gained a higher mean score on the posttest outperformed the STAD group in this study.

Following the rejection of the null hypothesis, the researchers were interested to know how much of the obtained difference could be explained by the variation in the two levels of the independent variable. To determine the strength of the findings of the research, that is, to evaluate the stability of the research findings across samples, effect size was also estimated to be 0.85. According to Cohen (1988, p. 22), this is a large effect size. Therefore, the findings of the study could be generalized.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study were in line with the results of previous studies demonstrating that TPS has a positive impact on EFL learners' language achievement (e.g., Brown & Thomson, 2000; Carss, 2007; Khaghaninejad & Saadabadimotlagh, 2015; Kothiyal et al., 2017; Mandal, 2009; Raba, 2017). The results further supported the use of TPS for teaching listening as it allows the students to comprehend more information, associate with other ideas, and incorporate new ideas into their prior knowledge. Therefore, when information is cooperated by their partners, learning would be easier.

One plausible explanation of this outcome is that students in the TPS group received peer encouragement and personalized support from their partners. They may have perceived that their contributions were expected and valued for the success of their partners. Since, they had to do the tasks in pairs, they were more responsible and interactive towards one and another than the students in the STAD group. Additionally, the students in the TPS group felt important due to this very responsibility placed on each person to become engaged directly in the task; this, however, was not necessarily the case in the STAD group.

Another reason for this outperformance may lay in the overall cultural tendency of Iranian students which is perhaps more individualistic. In such a competitive culture, it may be very difficult to convince learners to learn in groups, especially when they know they would be tested individually. The teacher/researcher tried to convince the learners that their final scores would be based on their performance in the classroom but the students could get along and perform better in pairs than in groups of 4-5.

Moreover, it seemed that the multilateral conversations within groups were another reason for this outcome; although the learners were not encouraged to engage in social chats with each other, such group conversations did develop and thus guided the students toward a diversification of topics with different goals in the class. Perhaps another factor at work was engendered by a methodological discrepancy between the two procedures. TPS allows students wait time during which the teacher encourages the students to participate actively in the teaching and learning processes through prompting the students to think independently or solve a problem quietly and then pair up and share their thoughts or solutions with a fellow peer; STAD, on the other hand, does not allow the students this wait time.

Another observation was that in the TPS group, the students could listen to the audio and themselves better since they worked in pairs and were thus able to concentrate more. Interestingly, there was no temptation of interrupting each other, whereas in the STAD group, the students were often diving into each others' thoughts and ideas. This perhaps contributed to less concentration and consequently less learning in the STAD group.

### Conclusion

The findings of the present study can have implications for both teachers and syllabus designers. To introduce the effectiveness of TPS, teacher training centers and institutions obviously need to familiarize teachers with explicit techniques of this CL method which has been proven effective in improving learners' listening. This training could be done for both teachers who are being trained or those already engaged in the practice of pedagogy in the form of in-service courses.

Teachers of English can be encouraged to use the TPS strategy in their classes since it helps improve learners' achievements and increases cooperation and motivation. As a result, learners can manage their own learning and gain a sense of responsibility. Moreover, they would show readiness to communicate in the target language with more confidence. This technique also motivates learners through granting them a positive attitude toward communicating in a foreign language.

Furthermore, the results of this study may have implications for syllabus designers in including more TPS tasks and activities in materials. Syllabus designers and materials developers may wish to use this technique to provide the content of teaching materials with comprehensible and proper tasks and activities to familiarize learners with real-life listening through which native-like language proficiency can be facilitated. In this way, a large number of the problems caused by traditional instructions in learners' listening could be compensated.

Last but not least, in the process of conducting this study, certain suggestions for other studies in line with the one at stake came to the researchers' minds which are stated below:

1. In this study, the comparative effect of STAD and TPS on students' listening was observed. Other studies can be conducted observing such comparative effect on students' other skills and components.
2. This research was carried out among adults; the same experiment could be implemented among other age groups to see whether age is a factor in comparing the impact of STAD and TPS instructions on EFL students' listening.
3. Only female students participated in this research; it would be interesting to see whether gender is also a factor.

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