# Impact of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) and Flipped Approaches on EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension

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**Abstract:** This research examined the effects of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) and flipped (FL) classroom strategies on enhancing listening skills among Iranian EFL learners. A quasi-experimental framework, employing a quantitative methodology with pre- and post-assessments, was implemented in this investigation. The sample comprised 120 EFL students chosen from the Islamic Azad University of Abadan via convenience sampling. Then, 90 EFL learners with preliminary English Test (PET) scores at the B1 level were identified as the participants of the study. The participants were randomly assigned to three groups: two experimental groups utilizing TPS and FL methodologies, and one control group (CG). To gather the data, the listening component of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) was utilized as both the pretests and posttests. The TPS class received instruction on how to implement the approach in the experimental class, and the flipped experimental group was given the materials either online or offline. In addition, the control group (CG) received the instructions from their listening textbook. Quantitative data analysis, including normality and one-way ANOVA tests, was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that the FL and TPS approaches significantly enhance listening comprehension compared to the CG. However, the mean difference showed a great outperformance of FL over TPS. The conventional approach did not significantly affect learners' listening comprehension. Moreover, the results indicated that there was no significant difference between the TPS and flipped methods. This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the FL method in enhancing the listening comprehension of EFL learners.

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## 1. Introduction

Effective communication hinges on strong listening skills. Learners must go beyond simply decoding messages to actively engage with spoken English to truly understand and utilize the language (Rost, 2016). This aligns with current perspectives on language learning that emphasize the learner's role in constructing meaning through interaction (Skehan, 2018). Encouraging learners to discuss their interpretations of what they have heard with peers fosters critical thinking and collaborative meaning construction, enhancing active listening (Ghiabi et al, 2024). Thus, the present study aimed at highlighting the role of three approaches of teaching listening comprehension via TPS, flipped (FL), or conventional approaches. Learners need to boost their listening skills regarding the results of such comprehensive and comparative studies.

Inherently challenging, the listening comprehension process necessitates involvement in a variety of complex tasks, including the ability to differentiate sounds and fully comprehend the speaker's message. Effective listening demands that individuals participate in several cognitive processes, often referred to as listening comprehension strategies (Coskun, 2010). Studies indicate that this process presents a significant challenge that many second language (L2) learners find difficult to overcome (Chang & Read, 2006), particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where learners do not have adequate exposure to the target language (Graham, 2011).

The importance of comprehensible input as a necessary (although insufficient) factor in L2 language learning is well documented in the literature on language acquisition. Krashen's theory on comprehensible input has generated significant interest in comprehension-based methodologies. This theory posits that learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to language that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency, but still understandable (Krashen, 2016). These methodologies focus on providing learners with language input that is slightly above their current proficiency level, promoting understanding through context, visual aids, and interactive communication. The aim is to facilitate natural language acquisition in a stress-free environment, which enhances learning efficiency (Khanahmadi & Nasiri, 2022). The emphasis on comprehensible input has led many educators and researchers to advocate for the active teaching of comprehension processes and strategies in second-language classrooms. This approach encourages learners to engage with the language meaningfully and contextually, helping them to internalize linguistic structures more effectively (Ellis, 2015). Recent studies have supported Krashen's

assertion that a low-anxiety environment coupled with ample comprehensible input significantly enhances language-learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Loewen and Sato (2018) found that learners exposed to comprehensible input in a supportive, low-stress setting demonstrated greater improvements in language proficiency compared to those in more traditional, high-stress learning environments. This discovery highlights the significance of fostering a supportive and encouraging environment in language learning settings.

The TPS approach, originally developed by Lyman (1981) at the University of Maryland, aligns with these expectations of learning styles and interactions (McTighe & Ferrara, 2011). It has been applied in the current study and has become recognized as an effective approach for collaborative discussions (Kaddoura, 2013). TPS represents a collaborative learning methodology in which students engage collectively to address a problem or respond to inquiries regarding a specific topic. The TPS provides students with the opportunity to contemplate a topic, create personal insights, and exchange those insights with peers. It moves away from the traditional question-and-answer teaching style, where only one student responds to the teacher's query. Instead, TPS promotes active participation from students, helping them stay focused on the task. Moreover, it aids in fostering students' comprehension of a subject, enhancing their skills in sifting through information, making informed judgments, and appreciating diverse perspectives.

The TPS is a concise, interactive learning framework that incorporates cooperative learning principles, particularly the concept of 'think time,' which has proven to be effective in enhancing student responses. Adaptable to various class sizes and contexts, TPS allows students to engage in discussions without changing seats, under the teacher's guidance (Phan & Thi My Lan, 2021). This approach encourages dialogue, enabling students to support one another in understanding the material and posing questions they might hesitate to ask in a public setting. It ensures that every student has the chance to articulate their thoughts, fostering knowledge construction through conversation—a dynamic not typically present in conventional lectures. Additionally, TPS improves students' verbal communication abilities as they exchange ideas with peers. By articulating their ideas with a partner prior to presenting them to the group, students enhance their involvement in classroom discussions, resulting in a more profound understanding of the topic at hand (Karimlou, 2022).

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The ability to listen is a crucial aspect of every individual's life, serving as the primary receptive language skill and an important method of communication. It acts as a medium through which individuals engage, converse, deliberate, and convey their thoughts and viewpoints on various subjects. Additionally, they pay attention to linguistic signals, enabling them to articulate their feelings regarding others. Listening comprehension represents one of the most prevalent challenges that obstruct EFL learners from effectively communicating in a foreign language. It is viewed as a barrier that inhibits them from expressing themselves suitably and professionally (Arvand & Gorjian, 2022).

Listening comprehension is a significant challenge for Iranian EFL learners due to limited exposure to authentic spoken English and insufficient effective listening strategies. Many Iranian learners struggle to understand native speakers, who often speak quickly, use various accents, and incorporate colloquial expressions. Listening comprehension is a receptive skill and a prerequisite ability to learn productive skills of speaking and writing. Iranian learners may face problems in listening comprehension when they listen to audio resources or read passages, but cannot gain an effective understanding. This problem could affect their self-efficacy, attitudes, motivation, and anxiety in receptive activities (Aliakbari et al., 2024).

## 1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its focused examination of listening comprehension skills among Iranian EFL learners through the adoption of TPS and flipped classroom approaches, areas that were critical for effective communication yet were often neglected in traditional language instruction. Despite the extensive research on language learning in Iran, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the specific challenges and needs related to listening comprehension. Previous studies have primarily addressed general language learning issues or focused on speaking and writing skills, leaving a gap in understanding how learners process and comprehend spoken and written English. This research addressed research questions as follows:

1. To what extent do the TPS, FL, and CG approaches significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension?
2. Is there any comparative effect among TPS, FL, and CG approaches regarding EFL learners' listening comprehension?

## 2. Literature Review
### 2.1. Listening Comprehension

As stated by Babayiğit and Shapiro (2019), listening comprehension comprises various essential elements that collaborate to facilitate the understanding of spoken language. These elements encompass the reception of vocabulary, grammar, listening comprehension, and word recognition. Furthermore, effective listening relies on both bottom-up processing (the interpretation of sounds and words) and top-down processing (the application of context and existing knowledge) of a specific topic.

Listening comprehension is defined as "the process of understanding spoken language" (Rost, 2016, p. 17). This involves recognizing speech sounds, interpreting the meaning of words, and making connections to previous knowledge. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012, p. 248), listening comprehension is "an active process whereby listeners construct meaning from spoken input through a combination of linguistic knowledge, contextual cues, and personal experiences." This highlights the interpretive nature of listening. Richards (2008) describes listening comprehension as "the process by which we understand spoken language, including decoding the sounds, comprehending the meaning of words and sentences, and relating this to what we already know."

Listening is the first and most fundamental skill proficient language learners develop when learning foreign languages. Through listening activities, individuals can acquire various language inputs, which form the basis for the other three language skills (Rost, 2016). Listening is crucial in a language class. Speaking cannot function effectively as communication if what is said cannot be heard and understood by the listener. Also, it is emphasized that listening is an active process aimed at deriving meaning from the sounds we hear.

Listening is a crucial life skill and essential for acquiring comprehensible input necessary for language development. Lin (2002) states that learners with strong listening comprehension skills are better equipped to participate effectively in class. Consequently, educators in language should prioritize the improvement of their students' listening comprehension skills. Although comprehending spoken English is crucial, numerous EFL learners encounter difficulties with academic listening resources. This challenge may arise from the inherently demanding aspects of listening or the historical neglect and minimal instruction associated with this particular language skill (Pejman & Gorjian, 2020).

Teaching listening can be approached using either conventional or innovative approaches, like TPS or flipped learning. The conventional approaches primarily involve specific activities (Davari & Mall-Amiri, 2022). After completing these activities, teachers should review the answers to assess students' listening abilities. This technique tends to focus on words and sentences rather than understanding the context. Typical conventional listening exercises include dictation, cloze listening, and multiple-choice questions, which emphasize recognition over comprehension (Richards, 2008). These traditional approaches to teach listening skills often leave learners feeling unmotivated, struggling to grasp the context, and facing difficulties during listening activities (Dehghanpour et al., 2022). Also notes that traditional listening techniques focus more on the results than the learning process itself.

## 2.2. Flipped and TPS Learning

One of the increasingly popular methodologies that integrates technology and has seen significant application in recent years is the FL classroom (Al-Hamdani & Al Breiki, 2018). In this model, students engage with open courses to independently acquire foundational knowledge at home. Then, they participate in classroom sessions to enhance their comprehension of the subject matter through various activities like discussion, conversations, etc. Consequently, learners with limited prior knowledge can "enhance their learning effectiveness upon arriving in the classroom" (Sun & Wu, 2106, p. 83).

A traditional learning environment and its associated activities are restructured via the FL method (Awidi & Paynter, 2018). Within an FL classroom, students assimilate course content via video lectures. More intricate tasks, such as "applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating," are addressed with the guidance of the teacher and through peer collaboration during class time (Ye et al., 2018, p. 3). Indeed, in an FL classroom, during class sessions, "students are equipped to engage in interactive and higher-order activities." Furthermore, educators can allocate additional time to observe students' performance and "offer immediate adaptive feedback to individuals or groups" (Chuang et al., 2018, p. 57).

In an FL classroom, learners conduct the majority of their activities in the presence of their teacher and peers, which facilitates support for listening activities (Khanahmadi & Nasiri, 2022). This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which defines the gap between what a learner can achieve with assistance and what they can accomplish independently. It posits that when learners are

within the ZPD for a specific listening task, appropriate support can enhance their task performance (Vygotsky, 1978).

The TPS is an engaging instructional technique that improves listening skills via organized collaboration. In the "Think" phase, students listen to an audio prompt and individually contemplate its content. During the "Pair" phase, they engage in discussions about their interpretations with a partner, which encourages active listening and clarification. Finally, in the "Share" phase, pairs convey their insights to the class, thereby reinforcing comprehension and communication. TPS promotes attentive listening, critical thinking, and peer learning, rendering it an effective approach for enhancing students' listening capabilities (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). This approach not only fosters individual reflection but also promotes meaningful interaction, making it a versatile tool for educators aiming to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

In the initial "Think" phase, students are presented with an audio prompt—this could be a short lecture, a podcast segment, or any relevant auditory material. As they listen, students are encouraged to focus intently on the content, taking mental notes and forming their own interpretations. This stage is essential because it enables students to connect with the material personally, prompting them to critically analyze what they are listening to. EFL teachers can improve this stage by offering guiding questions or prompts that assist students in concentrating their thoughts and enriching their comprehension of the audio material.

Following the individual contemplation, students transition into the "Pair" phase. Here, they partner up to discuss their interpretations and insights regarding the audio prompt. This collaborative discussion serves multiple purposes: it not only encourages active listening—since students must pay attention to their partner's perspective—but also fosters an environment of clarification and critical dialogue. Students may find that their partner has interpreted the content differently, prompting them to articulate their thoughts more clearly and consider alternative viewpoints. This exchange of ideas not only reinforces their understanding but also builds essential communication skills.

Finally, in the "Share" phase, pairs take turns conveying their insights to the entire class. This public sharing reinforces comprehension as students articulate their thoughts in a broader context. It also provides an opportunity for the entire class to engage with diverse interpretations, further enriching the learning experience. Teachers can facilitate this phase by encouraging questions and discussions, allowing students to delve deeper into the material and explore various angles.

The TPS approach promotes attentive listening, critical thinking, and peer learning, rendering it an effective approach to enhance students' listening capabilities. By incorporating TPS into the classroom, teachers can establish a vibrant learning environment in which students are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but rather active contributors to their educational experience. This methodology promotes a sense of community and collaboration, which are vital elements for nurturing a positive and effective classroom environment. Additionally, the skills developed through TPS—such as active listening, critical analysis, and effective communication—are invaluable both academically and in students' future endeavors.

During the perception phase, individuals identify sound categories, pauses, and intonational emphases, subsequently retaining these elements in their working memory. This phase is characterized by bottom-up processing. Listeners encode the incoming speech by (1) concentrating on the text while disregarding other ambient sounds; (2) recognizing similarities, pauses, and acoustic emphases pertinent to the language; and (3) classifying these components according to the structure of the language. This marks the preliminary stage of word segmentation. Consequently, listening comprehension evolves into a process of reconciling what is heard with expectations formed from prior knowledge and making contextually relevant inferences to grasp the speaker's intended meaning. Furthermore, studies on listening skills reveal that effective L2 listening necessitates the integration of metacognitive and cognitive strategies to navigate listening processes and attain comprehension.

## 3. Methodology
### 3.1. Research Design

A quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-tests was used in this study. Quantitative data include the mean scores of the listening comprehension pretest and posttest. The measurements were taken before and after the intervention to evaluate the effect of an intervention with random assignment of participants to groups. Since there is an independent variable of teaching methods with three levels of TPS, flipped, and conventional affecting EFL learners' skill, One-way ANOVA was used to analyze data.

### 3.2. Participants

A Preliminary English Test (PET) was employed to assess the homogeneity level of the research population at the B1 or intermediate

level, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), among university students at Arvand International University during the academic year 2024-5. A preliminary qualification shows that learners have mastered the basics of English language skills for everyday use. The band score was between 140 and 159. Subsequently, 90 students out of a total of 120 sophomores were chosen to participate in the study. These participants were native Persian speakers, aged between 22 and 41 years. Utilizing a systematic sampling method, three equal groups were randomly formed, each 30 learners. These groups were designated as two experimental groups: TPS and FL, along with a CG that focused on traditional textbook-based instruction for listening comprehension.

### 3.3. Instrumentation

The present study used the test of PET for estimating the homogeneity of the learners' proficiency level. The founder is the Cambridge English Organization that uses rigorous statistical methods (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, item response theory) to ensure internal consistency and fairness. The digital-based mock test was used, and it took 120 minutes.

The second test involved the listening component of the mock International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (2020), which was conducted to evaluate the learners' listening comprehension both prior to and following the intervention.

The IELTS Listening test has demonstrated high internal consistency, since the report showed Cronbach's alpha values above 0.85, indicating strong reliability. The mock IELTS Listening section (2020) consisted of four parts, 10 items per part. The overall score amounted to 40 and took about 30 minutes to complete, in addition to 10 minutes allocated for transferring responses to the answer sheet. The listening comprehension pretest and posttest were employed to evaluate the participants' listening proficiency prior to and following the intervention. Both the pre and posttest were similar in terms of content, but they were different regarding the format of items and choices to avoid reminding the pretest items.

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The experimental and control groups underwent PET and were randomly assigned to the TPS, FL, and CG groups. The TPS group was provided with guidance on how to apply the approach in the experimental class. The researcher described the purpose of the study, provided guidelines for discussions, and modeled the procedure to ensure that students' comprehension takes place. They received the listening module in 12 weeks, and 24 sessions that lasted 90 minutes.

A pre-test of listening comprehension will be given at the beginning of the study to estimate learners' listening comprehension proficiency before the intervention. Then the three groups participated in the intervention phases.

The TPS group acquired listening skills during the thinking phase, initiated by teachers posing a particular question or topic regarding the text. Then students "think" about what they knew or learned about the topics that were prepared by the researcher. The second phase dealt with pairing (i.e., each student should be paired with another student or a small group). Finally, the last phase was sharing, in which students share their thinking with their partner. In this phase, teachers expanded the "share" into a whole-class discussion and instruction was given by the teacher as: (1) Think over the steps (pseudo code) to (2) Check Stack is Empty (UNDERFLOW) Or was Full (OVERFLOW) before inserting/deleting elements to it, and (3) Think individually and write pseudocode for the operations.

The FL classroom received the listening materials either online or offline, and they worked on the materials when they were out of class. Then they worked together on the listening modules in class with the help of the teacher. They participated in problem-solving activities, discussions, presentations, and debates on the given topics. The received materials of audio and video (VCD) files, podcasts, and recorded files were prepared by the researcher.

The CG was taught based on the learners' textbook, Tactics for Listening: Developing. This was created by Richards (2017). It comprised 12 units, which were covered in 12 weeks. For the conventional group, a PPP approach (i.e., Presentation, Practice, Production) was used. Firstly, a warm-up was used at the beginning of the class, and it preceded a task of previewing the vocabulary, grammar, and dialogs. Then CDs and VCDs were run to have a conversation or discuss matters. Finally, in the post-task, the researcher reviewed what happened in the unit to wrap up the class.

At the conclusion of the fall semester in 2024-5, a post-test assessing listening comprehension was conducted following the intervention to gather data. The quantitative data comprised pretest and posttest scores, which were examined using normality tests (specifically, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), one-way ANOVA, and subsequent Tukey tests. These statistics showed the mean differences among learners' pre- and post-tests of listening comprehension.

## 4. Results

Essential for verifying the accuracy of hypotheses, data analysis, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, is a fundamental component of research, converting unprocessed data into valuable insights for users through the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), version 24.

### *4.1. Descriptive Statistics*

Given that in order to use statistical tests, it is first necessary to measure the normality of the variables; first, the normality of the variables has been assessed first. As can be seen in Table 1 indicates that all variables exhibit a normal distribution (P>0.05), thereby allowing for the application of parametric statistical methods such as t-tests, ANOVA, and MANCOVA.

**Table 1.** *Test of Normal Distribution of Data*

|  | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| LISpre | .064 | 90 | .200[*] | .988 | 90 | .603 |
| LISpost | .064 | 90 | .200[*] | .969 | 90 | .032 |

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

### *4.2. Inferential Statistics*

Inferential analysis of paired samples t-tests addresses two research questions. The first one concerns the effect of the TPS, FL, and CG approaches affecting Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Pre-Test and Post-Test Means for TPS and FL Approaches Affecting Listening Comprehension*

| Measure | Pre-Test Mean (M) | Post-Test Mean (M) | Mean Difference (MD) | Standard Deviation (SD) | df | t-Statistic | p-Value | Effect Size (Cohen's d) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TPS & Listening Comp. | 3.07 | 3.31 | 0.24 | 0.73 | 29 | 1.824 | 0.078 | 0.73 |
| FL & Listening Comp. | 3.28 | 4.64 | 1.36 | 0.86 | 29 | 4.030 | 0.001 | 0.86 |
| CG & Listening Comp. | 3.35 | 3.76 | 0.41 | 1.01 | 29 | 0.032 | 0.180 | 0.21 |

As shown in Table 2, the analysis reveals that the mean difference between the pre-test (M = 3.07) and post-test (M = 3.31) scores was not statistically significant (p = .078). However, the effect size (Cohen's d = 0.73) suggests a moderate effect. In contrast, the FL approach has a significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' L2 listening comprehension, as evidenced by the increase in listening comprehension scores from the pre-test (M = 3.28) to the post-test (M = 4.64), with a p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant effect. Additionally, the effect size for listening comprehension (Cohen's d = 0.86) indicates a large effect. Lastly, the mean difference between the CG's pre-test (M = 3.35) and post-test (M = 3.76) scores was not statistically significant (p = .180), and the effect size (Cohen's d = 0.21) indicates a small effect. The results revealed a sequence of effectiveness in the approaches as FL>TPS>CG.

The findings from the ANOVA analysis respond to the second research question concerning the comparative impact of TPS, FL, and CG methodologies on EFL learners' listening. These results are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Analysis of ANOVA for Comparing Groups' Listening Comprehension (posttest)*

| Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df (Between Groups) | Mean Square (Between) | F | Sig. (p-value) | Effect Size ($\eta^2$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening Comprehension (LISpost) | 8.55 | 2 | 4.27 | 8.99 | 0.001 | 0.15 |

Table 3 reveals a significant difference in the impact of instructional approaches (TPS, FL vs. CG) on EFL learners' listening comprehension, as observed (p=0.001, F (observed 2. 87<8.99), with the effect size 0.15, suggesting that the instructional methods of TPS and FL employed have a measurable effect on this construct. Post-hoc comparisons further pinpoint a significant gain from the FL approach over the TPS and CG. The details of multiple comparisons are displayed in Table 4.

The Tukey results show LISpost has two distinct subsets (TPS and FL, p>0.05), indicating CG differs significantly. This suggests that both TPS and FL affect LISpost performance; however, a significant difference is not seen between the two experimental groups.

**Table 4.** *Multiple Comparisons for Listening Comprehension (LISpost)*

| Dependent Variable | | (I) Group | (J) Group | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| LIS post | Tukey | TPS. | FL. | .04 | .17 | .963 | -.37 | .47 |
| | | | CG. | .67* | .17 | .001 | .25 | 1.10 |
| | | FL. | TPS. | -.04 | .17 | .963 | -.47 | .37 |
| | | | CG. | .62* | .17 | .002 | .20 | 1.05 |
| | | CG. | TPS. | -.67* | .17 | .001 | -1.10 | -.25 |
| | | | FL. | -.62* | .17 | .002 | -1.05 | -.20 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Tukey test revealed distinct patterns between variables: for LISpost, CG formed a separate subset from TPS and FL (0.001 and 0.002, respectively), suggesting significant differences with the CG (0.963). The harmonic mean sample size (N=30) ensured consistent group comparisons in the analysis.

**Table 5.** *MANCOVA test results*

| Group Comparison | Mean Difference | Std. Error | Sig. (p-value) | Confidence Interval Lower Bound | Confidence Interval Upper Bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TPS vs FL | 0.04 | 0.17 | 0.963 | -0.37 | 0.47 |
| TPS vs CG | 0.67 | 0.17 | 0.001* | 0.25 | 1.10 |
| FL vs TPS | -0.04 | 0.17 | 0.963 | -0.47 | 0.37 |
| FL vs CG | 0.62 | 0.17 | 0.002* | 0.20 | 1.05 |

The MANCOVA post hoc results in Table 5 reveal significant differences among the three groups. Specifically, the CG exhibited markedly inferior performance compared to both the TPS and FL, as demonstrated by the statistically significant mean differences (p=0.001 and p=0.002, respectively) and confidence intervals that exclude zero. This indicates that the intervention or condition associated with the CG was less effective. In contrast, no statistically significant difference was found between TPS and FL (p=0.963), suggesting that both groups achieved similar outcomes to some extent. Overall, these results imply that the instructional method used in FL was more effective than both groups.

## 5. Discussion

The results of the first research question revealed that the influence of FL on the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners was more significant compared to other methods, such as TPS and CG. However,

the TPS showed a significant effect compared with the CG; its mean difference of the posttest was less than the mean difference of FL. In other words, the effects of the three approaches were in a sequence of FL>TPS>CG. The paired samples t-test showed significant improvement in listening gains regarding FL but not in the TPS and CG. It should be mentioned that TPS also significantly affects learners' listening comprehension, but no significant difference was observed between FL and TPS. The lack of significance may be due to greater score variability, reduced statistical power despite comparable effect magnitude.

Consistent with Ye et al. (2018), the FL approach was proven to notably improve listening comprehension. The FL classroom approach dramatically improved listening comprehension. This complements results from other research demonstrating that flipped classrooms—which include pre-class video training followed by in-class activities—are very helpful for abilities needing instant engagement and interaction, including listening (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). This approach offers listening first priority so that students may engage with audio materials at their own speed, therefore freeing class time for interactive conversations that enhance understanding.

The TPS can be regarded as a second option for improving listening comprehension since it was significantly different from CG. This research underlined the need for peer contact and group thinking in building meaning from text, which the present data support statistically significantly by means of reading performance. Like other results, the modest impact size and significant gain point to TPS's ability to encourage deeper reading material engagement and understanding by means of discussion and explanation. This is in line with Sudarmaji and Simgih (2022), who noted that advances in listening abilities by means of cooperative learning techniques may be the cause of this effectiveness. To produce consistent gains, listening assignments could need either prolonged exposure to cooperative tactics or a different kind of scaffolding.

Regarding Iranian EFL learners, results showed their outperformance of FL over TPS. This may be due to the lack of cooperative and peer activities among the learners. In the classes, most learners prefer to work on the materials, digital texts, and virtual sources when they are home, and then they can use them in their classes. The FL approach may be more useful than the TPS or conventional listening activities since EFL learners gain much knowledge from listening exposure when they are out of the class. This is matched with Awidi and Paynter (2018), who emphasized applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating as the main techniques of

this approach. Following Raba (2017), the use of TPS needs a high level of cooperation and collaboration in the class, on the one hand, and competent teachers on the other hand. TPS, as a demanding approach, needs teachers who are very active, cooperative, and energetic. Thus, the results indicated that lower levels of success were observed in the present study concerning TPS. The other obstacle is the thinking phase in TPS that requires the learners to be critical thinkers about the cues they encounter. It was seen that learners are mostly book-oriented, and they are not trained to look beyond the texts and practice critical thinking activities.

However, McTighe and Ferrara (2011) claimed that TPS promotes peer interaction, which enhances text understanding by means of debate and explanation. The absence of notable impacts on listening comprehension might imply that the TPS approach does not efficiently interact with the specialized cognitive processes connected with hearing, which differ from those needed for reading. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), cooperative strategies may not be as successful as more concentrated listening exercises since real-time processing of auditory data significantly influences listening comprehension.

Findings of the study regarding the second research question indicated a comparative impact of TPS, FL, and conventional approaches to teach listening comprehension. One-way ANOVA revealed an improvement in learners' listening comprehension when the FL is used. But the learners who were exposed to TPS gained less success than the learners in the FL group. This may show a preference for using FL other than TPS and conventional teaching of listening comprehension. The emergence of digital sources, AI, and other advances in e-learning may be a great change that makes EFL teacher revisit their thoughts and ideas that are not working in the listening classes. They need to believe in new and effective approaches to teach listening comprehension. In line with Lee and Wallace (2018), teachers should underline the significance of digital learning in improving listening abilities and increasing verbal interaction, and facilitate students in having discussions that enrich their understanding of texts. This result is also consistent with Khanahmadi and Nasiri (2022), who note the significance of online cues and students' articulation of thoughts and clarification of their aural and oral performance with others. This digital dialogue encourages greater participation with the problem.

The lack of notable impacts of the TPS technique on listening comprehension shows limits in meeting the special cognitive requirements of this ability. Listening comprehension depends on the

immediate processing of audio information, an ability that may be absent in the cooperative interactions prevalent in TPS (Vandergriff & Goh, 2012). Cooperative methods may not be enough to provide the targeted exercise required to enhance listening skills and the timely auditory signals. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) define listening comprehension as a combination of various cognitive processes, including fast assessment and response to uttered words. Their studies highlight the need to use certain techniques that provide listening activities first importance over indirect approaches like TPS, therefore compromising the targeted listening experience. Field (2008) backs up these assertions by implying that good listening education usually asks for explicit tactics engaging students with the auditory material, including scaffolding activities helping understanding. This agrees with Eghlidi et al's (2023) findings that students' classroom talk can be enhanced if the Iranian EFL teachers can create an atmosphere through which the learners participate in class discussion and boost their conversation abilities.

This modest but significant improvement in learners' listening comprehension in TPS compared with CG also mirrors findings from earlier research (e.g., Gillies, 2006), which have documented that cooperative techniques can positively influence students' perceptions of the learning process by promoting engagement, peer interaction, and mutual support. However, the effect size in the present research is lower than in some earlier studies, which suggests that while TPS encourages more positive attitudes, the magnitude of this influence may be modulated by other contextual or individual factors.

## 6. Conclusion

This research implemented innovative instructional strategies such as the FL Learning and TPS methods to enhance listening comprehension, providing empirical evidence that may improve the quality of EFL learning in Iran. The findings also demonstrated that the FL approach significantly improved listening comprehension; conversely, traditional teaching methods did not yield any notable effects on listening skills. Furthermore, the results indicated that the TPS method could serve as a secondary option for enhancing listening abilities. Additionally, the study uncovered a significant interactive effect between the FL and TPS instructional strategies. However, no substantial difference was observed between the impacts of TPS and FL on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

The results of the FL techniques underscore the intricate dynamics of language learning strategies and their diverse effects on skill acquisition

and learner psychology. Specifically, findings of FL highlighted the need for a strategic and integrated approach to instructional design, promoting methodological flexibility to successfully meet the varied demands of EFL learners. Continued study is essential to investigate these processes, eventually improving pedagogical methods to promote other learners' language skills.

The TPS analysis indicated that it needs much collaborative and organized interaction to enhance listening comprehension and promote learners' engagement and retention. This suggests that students get advantages from previous familiarity with the content, facilitating more active and practical participation during class sessions. The notable interaction impact seen between the two methodologies on a synergistic or complementary use of TPS and the FL approach might be advantageous. Utilizing the advantages of both approaches might improve the overall learner experience and results.

Teachers should choose instructional strategies depending on particular language competency as FL, and the TPS as a second alternative, since the results showed no significant difference between the two approaches to teach listening comprehension. Both groups improved listening comprehension compared with the conventional approach. However, the FL was better for listening comprehension. The notable interacting impact of the two strategies implies that a combined approach might be most successful. Teachers might want to include components of both strategies in their lessons. For instance, combining FL components for listening exercises with TPS to promote comprehension abilities in listening might help to support overall language development. Teachers should arrange activities that make use of the advantages of every method when developing courses. Making pre-class movies or exercises for the FL model, for example, can help students be ready for in-class TPS conversations so they may participate meaningfully in reading and listening assignments.

Teachers must evaluate learners' development independently in listening comprehension. Giving comments, especially related to every teaching approach, will enable students to identify their strengths and areas for development, thereby strengthening the targeted skills more successfully. Professional development chances should stress knowledge of when and how to use various educational approaches successfully. By helping educators create courses with FL and TPS classroom components, workshops can guarantee they are ready to handle a variety of student demands. These approaches may encourage a classroom where peer assistance is valued can help to improve students' involvement and

attitudes towards learning. Over time, this may cause rising self-efficacy. By being aware of their limits and using the benefits of both the TPS and FL approaches, teachers may design more responsive and successful learning environments for EFL students. These consequences underline the requirement of deliberate instructional design considering both cognitive and emotional aspects in language teaching.

In the framework of teaching EFL, the results of the study on the FL and TPS teaching approaches have significant pedagogical consequences for syllabus designers and material makers. Content should be aligned by syllabus designers with the strengths of every teaching approach. On listening comprehension, the curriculum should start with in-class discussions or practice, then include flipped classroom components like pre-recorded lectures or audio resources. Resources created by material developers should enable FL and TPS approaches to be integrated more easily. Using FL elements—such as movies or podcasts—developing resources that prepare students for active engagement in TPS sessions may assist in connecting learning experiences and strengthening comprehension skills across modalities.

It would be interesting to see how FL and TPS affect EFL students' language acquisition and retention in the long run in future longitudinal research. To further ensure that the current study's findings are generalizable to other educational settings or with other types of students, future research might investigate the feasibility of using FL and TPS classroom approaches in different contexts. Qualitative research might delve more into students' perspectives and experiences with these pedagogical approaches. For the purpose of determining the most successful methods of teaching English as a foreign language, further studies may compare FL and TPS classrooms to other teaching approaches.

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