THE EFFECTS OF THINK-PAIR-SHARE ACTIVITIES ON ENGLISH ORAL PARTICIPATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE TESOL STUDENTS AT THONGSOOK COLLEGE, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT
This study examined changes in English oral participation following Think-Pair-Share (TPS) activities among second-year undergraduate TESOL students at Thongsook College, Bangkok, Thailand. A quasi-experimental four-group pretest-posttest design involved 192 students in four existing classroom groups, with 48 students per group. Three groups participated in TPS activities, while one comparison group received instruction without TPS. The four-week intervention covered effective English teachers, speaking challenges, and encouraging participation. A 20-item questionnaire assessed five dimensions of oral participation: frequency, response, interaction, contribution, and initiation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired-samples *t*-tests, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The findings shows that overall participation scores changed slightly from 3.026 (SD = 0.603) at pretest to 3.035 (SD = 0.774) at posttest. No significant within-group change. After controlling for pretest scores, adjusted posttest scores did not differ significantly among groups, $F(3, 187) = 1.277$, $p = .283$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$. The planned comparison between the three TPS groups and the comparison group was also nonsignificant ($p = .705$). Individual perception items generally received favorable ratings, although low internal consistency limited interpretation of the perception questionnaire. The findings did not establish an advantage for TPS over instruction without TPS during the four-week period. The study provides on pedagogical implications and suggestions for further investigations.
Keywords: Think-Pair-Share, English Oral Participation, TESOL Students, Cooperative Learning, Quasi-Experimental Design

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INTRODUCTION

English oral communication played an important role in higher education, particularly among undergraduate students preparing for professional careers in teaching and education. Effective communication enabled students to express opinions, explain concepts, ask questions, and participate in academic discussions. In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, however, students experienced difficulties participating in classroom speaking activities because of limited vocabulary, insufficient preparation time, speaking anxiety, and fear of making mistakes. Horwitz et al. (1986) identified communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation as important components of foreign language classroom anxiety. Similarly, MacIntyre et al. (1998) emphasized the relationship between language confidence and willingness to communicate. These perspectives highlighted the importance of creating supportive learning environments that encouraged students to participate actively in English classroom interactions.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasized meaningful communication, learner interaction, and active participation in language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). One instructional strategy consistent with these principles was Think-Pair-Share (TPS), introduced by Lyman (1981). TPS consisted of three stages: Think, in which students independently organized their ideas; Pair, in which students exchanged opinions with a partner; and Share, in which students communicated their responses to the class. The strategy was supported by Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasized learning through social interaction, and Johnson and Johnson's (2009) Cooperative Learning Theory, which highlighted the importance of collaboration and structured peer interaction. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) reported that collaborative preparation through TPS increased students' classroom participation. Similarly, Benjelloun (2021) reported that TPS supported English-speaking development among Moroccan university students. These studies suggested that TPS could provide opportunities to encourage oral participation, although its effectiveness could vary across educational contexts.

Despite the potential benefits of TPS, further investigation was needed to understand its application among undergraduate TESOL students in Thailand. Previous studies had examined classroom participation and speaking development in different educational settings; however, limited evidence from the reviewed literature specifically addressed five dimensions of English oral participation—frequency, response, interaction, contribution, and initiation—among undergraduate TESOL students at Thongsook College. Students preparing for teaching careers required opportunities to develop classroom communication skills, including asking questions, explaining ideas, and interacting with others. Therefore, the present study examined changes in English oral participation before and after the implementation of TPS activities. The study adopted a quantitative one-group pretest-posttest design involving eligible students at Thongsook College, Thailand, over a four-week intervention. A structured observation checklist and questionnaires were used to examine students' oral participation and perceptions of TPS activities. The study aimed to provide context-specific evidence concerning the potential usefulness of TPS as a student-centered instructional strategy.

Research Problem Statement

Undergraduate TESOL students required opportunities to participate actively in English classroom communication. However, students sometimes hesitated to speak because of language difficulties, limited preparation time, and concerns about making mistakes. Although Think-Pair-Share (TPS) activities had been investigated in different educational contexts, their relationship with English oral participation among undergraduate TESOL students at Thongsook College required further examination. The study therefore employed a quasi-experimental four-group pretest-posttest design involving 192 second-year TESOL

students, with 48 students in each group. Over four weeks, from 16 August to 13 September 2026, three groups completed TPS activities through individual preparation, partner discussion, and whole-class sharing. One comparison group studied the same topics for equivalent instructional time through teacher-led questions, individual responses, and whole-class discussions without the structured TPS sequence. The study examined changes in English oral participation within each group and compared improvements between the three TPS groups and the comparison group. Research Questions were RQ1) To what extent did students' English oral participation change in each group after the four-week intervention? RQ2) Did students in the three TPS groups demonstrate significantly greater improvement in English oral participation than students in the comparison group?

Research Objectives

RO1) To examine students' English oral participation change in each group after the four-week intervention.

RO2) To examine the three TPS groups demonstrate significantly greater improvement in English oral participation than students in the comparison groups.

Research Hypotheses

H1: English oral participation scores would increase from pretest to posttest among undergraduate TESOL students who participated in TPS activities.

H2: Students who participated in TPS activities would demonstrate significantly greater improvement in English oral participation than students in the comparison group.

Conceptual Framework

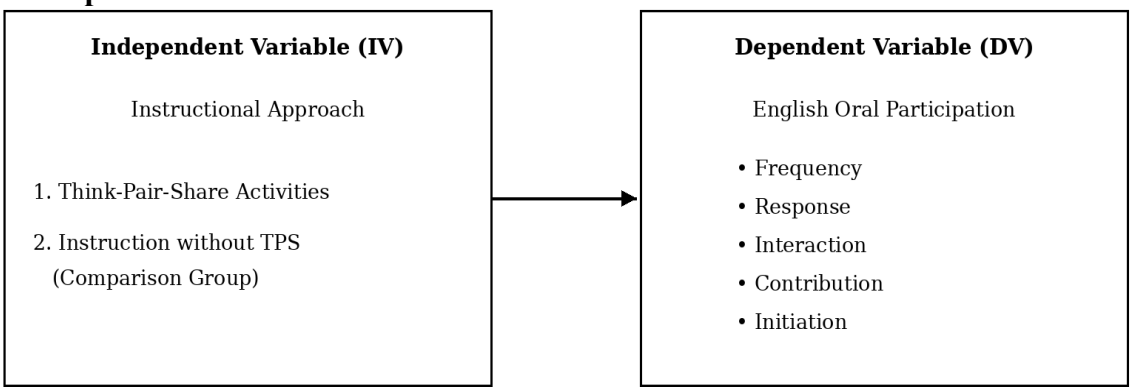


Figure 1 Proposed conceptual framework adapted from Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes meaningful language use, interaction, and active participation in classroom activities. Hymes (1972) state that the concept of communicative competence, emphasizing that effective communication requires both linguistic knowledge and the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Similarly, Littlewood (1981) and Richards and Rodgers (2014) explained that communicative teaching encourages learners to develop language abilities through purposeful communication rather than memorization alone. Activities such as pair discussions, role-play, problem-solving, and information exchange provide opportunities for learners to express opinions and negotiate meaning.

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is compatible with CLT because it encourages students to prepare ideas, communicate with partners, and participate in whole-class discussions. However, communicative activities do not automatically ensure equal participation. Teachers must provide clear instructions, appropriate topics, sufficient preparation time, and opportunities for students to contribute. Recent research by Benjelloun (2021) examined TPS among Moroccan university EFL learners and states benefits for interactive speaking development.

This provides a relevant empirical basis for investigating structured communicative activities among undergraduate TESOL students.

Social Constructivist Theory

Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes the importance of interaction, collaboration, and social support in learning. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which explains how learners may accomplish tasks with appropriate assistance that they cannot yet complete independently. In English language classrooms, interaction with classmates can provide opportunities to clarify ideas, exchange information, and develop understanding through communication.

TPS reflects social constructivist principles through its three instructional stages. During the Think stage, students independently organize their ideas. During the Pair stage, they exchange opinions and receive peer support. During the Share stage, students communicate their responses to a larger audience. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) investigated collaborative preparation and classroom participation, providing recent empirical evidence relevant to the relationship between peer interaction and participation. Their findings support investigating whether structured partner discussions encourage students to participate more actively in English classroom activities.

Cooperative Learning Theory

Cooperative Learning Theory emphasizes structured collaboration among students to achieve shared learning objectives. Johnson and Johnson (2009) identified positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing as important components of effective cooperative learning. These principles suggest that students may benefit from working together when classroom tasks provide clear responsibilities and opportunities for meaningful interaction.

TPS incorporates cooperative learning principles by combining individual preparation with partner discussion and whole-class sharing. Students are first responsible for developing their own responses and then participate in collaborative discussion before sharing ideas with the class. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) demonstrated that collaborative preparation can influence students' willingness to participate in classroom discussions. Their research provides relevant evidence for examining the potential contribution of cooperative learning activities to English oral participation. However, teachers should monitor participation to prevent one student from dominating the discussion.

Think-Pair-Share and English Oral Participation

Think-Pair-Share is a structured instructional strategy introduced by Lyman (1981) to encourage active student involvement in classroom discussions. It consists of three stages: Think, Pair, and Share. The Think stage allows students to prepare ideas independently, the Pair stage provides opportunities to exchange opinions with classmates, and the Share stage encourages students to communicate their responses to a larger audience.

Recent empirical research has examined the application of TPS in language learning. Benjelloun (2021) investigated the strategy among university-level EFL students and states improvements in interactive communication and speaking confidence. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) examined the effects of collaborative preparation on classroom participation and found that peer discussion encouraged students' willingness to participate. These studies suggest that TPS may provide a structured environment for encouraging oral communication.

Previous Empirical Studies and Research Gap

Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) found that TPS increased students' classroom participation, while Benjelloun (2021) states improvements in EFL students' speaking confidence and interaction. Similarly, Darmawan and Lestariningsih (2023) and Guenther and Abbott (2024) highlighted the benefits of TPS for communication and active participation. Al Abri and Al-

Mekhlafi (2025) states mostly nonsignificant differences in oral communication outcomes, whereas Wu et al. (2026) and Ghifari et al. (2026) states improvements in speaking performance and participation. Despite these findings, limited evidence from the reviewed studies specifically addresses English oral participation among undergraduate TESOL students in Thailand. Therefore, the present study examines five dimensions of oral participation frequency, response, interaction, contribution, and initiation following a four-week TPS intervention at Thongsook College, Thailand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach combining a quasi-experimental four-group pretest-posttest design with semi-structured interviews to examine changes in English oral participation among second-year undergraduate TESOL students at Thongsook College, Bangkok, Thailand. The study was conducted over four weeks, from 16 August to 13 September 2026. The sample comprised 192 students selected through random sampling, with 48 participants in each of four existing classroom groups. Three groups, totaling 144 students, participated in Think-Pair-Share (TPS) activities, while one comparison group of 48 students received instruction without TPS. At the beginning of the study, all groups completed a 20-item oral participation questionnaire, and baseline participation was assessed using a structured observation checklist. Speaking activities covered three topics: Effective English Teachers, Speaking Challenges, and Encouraging Participation. The three TPS groups followed the same sequence: independently organizing ideas during the Think stage, discussing responses with a partner during the Pair stage, and presenting ideas and answering questions during the Share stage. The comparison group studied the same topics through teacher-led questions, individual responses, and whole-class discussions without the structured TPS sequence. Instructional topics and classroom time were kept comparable across groups, and attendance and classroom participation were recorded during each session. At the end of the intervention, all groups completed posttest questionnaires and classroom observations, while students in the TPS groups also completed a 10-item TPS perception questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants to explore their experiences of the speaking activities. Questions addressed classroom participation, perceived changes in participation, helpful aspects of the activities, speaking difficulties, and suggestions for improvement. Oral participation was assessed across five dimensions: frequency, response, interaction, contribution, and initiation. An IELTS examiner reviewed the instruments for content relevance and clarity and observed students' progress during classroom activities. Observation scores and self-reported questionnaire scores were analyzed separately. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized participant characteristics, participation scores, and perceptions of TPS. Paired-samples t-tests examined pretest-posttest changes within each group, while a four-group analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) compared posttest scores while controlling for pretest scores. A planned comparison examined the average adjusted outcome of the three TPS groups against that of the comparison group. Relevant statistical assumptions were examined, and effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals were reported, with statistical significance set at .05. Ethical procedures included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without academic penalty. Findings were interpreted cautiously because existing classroom differences and the inclusion of only one comparison class limited causal interpretations.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics and Questionnaire Reliability

The largest age category was 20-24 years (43.75%). Females represented 34.90% of respondents, males accounted for 31.77%, 17.19% selected another gender identity, and 16.15% preferred not to disclose their gender. Most respondents had studied English for 5-10 years (51.56%). One-quarter practiced speaking English outside class less than once a week (25.00%). Previous TPS experience was reported by 27.60%, while 38.54% reported no experience and 33.85% were unsure.

English Oral Participation Before and After Instruction

Table 1 Overall English Oral Participation Scores by Group

Group	N	Pretest M	Pretest SD	Posttest M	Posttest SD
TPS 1	48	3.038	0.606	3.114	0.823
TPS 2	48	3.122	0.709	3.030	0.907
TPS 3	48	2.929	0.548	2.949	0.754
Without TPS	48	3.017	0.535	3.046	0.592
Overall	192	3.026	0.603	3.035	0.774

Table 1 shows small increases in overall participation in TPS Groups 1 and 3 and the comparison group, while TPS Group 2 showed a decrease. Across all groups, the mean changed slightly from 3.026 to 3.035. At the dimension level, TPS Group 1 showed increases across all five dimensions, with its largest descriptive increase in initiation, from 3.026 to 3.203. TPS Group 2 showed decreases across all dimensions, while changes in TPS Group 3 and the comparison group were mixed.

Within-Group Changes: RQ1

Table 2 Paired-Samples Tests of Overall Participation

Group	Mean change	95% CI	t(47)	p	Cohen's dz
TPS 1	+0.076	[−0.069, 0.221]	1.053	.298	0.152
TPS 2	−0.092	[−0.205, 0.022]	−1.627	.110	−0.235
TPS 3	+0.020	[−0.115, 0.154]	0.296	.769	0.043
Without TPS	+0.029	[−0.098, 0.157]	0.460	.648	0.066

Table 2 shows that no group demonstrated a statistically significant change in overall participation, and all confidence intervals included zero. Holm-adjusted p-values also remained nonsignificant: .893, .442, 1.000, and 1.000 for TPS Groups 1-3 and the comparison group, respectively. Thus, H1 was not supported.

Between-Group Comparison: RQ2

Table 3 Adjusted Posttest Participation Scores

Group	N	Adjusted mean	SE	95% CI
TPS 1	48	3.102	0.065	[2.974, 3.230]
TPS 2	48	2.930	0.065	[2.801, 3.058]
TPS 3	48	3.051	0.065	[2.923, 3.180]
Without TPS	48	3.056	0.065	[2.928, 3.184]

Table 3 shows that after controlling for pretest scores, adjusted posttest participation did not differ significantly among the four groups, $F(3, 187) = 1.277$, $p = .283$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$. The planned comparison between the average adjusted score of the three TPS groups and the comparison group was also nonsignificant, adjusted difference = −0.028, 95% CI [−0.176,

0.120], $t(187) = -0.379$, $p = .705$. Accordingly, H2 was not supported. A supplementary comparison of raw change scores produced the same interpretation, with no significant advantage for TPS ($p = .712$). The group-by-pretest interaction was nonsignificant ($p = .078$), although residual normality showed some departure ($p = .029$). These between-group findings remained exploratory because the analyses did not account for classroom clustering and included only one comparison class.

Students' Perceptions of TPS Activities

The overall mean score for students' perceptions of TPS activities was 3.86 on a five-point scale, indicating generally favorable responses in the supplied dataset.

Thematic Analysis of Interview Examples

Table 4 Themes Identified in the Ten Fictional Interview

Theme	Codes	Summary
Preparation and willingness to participate	Thinking time; organizing vocabulary; partner rehearsal; volunteering	The examples portrayed preparation and rehearsal as supporting willingness to answer questions and share ideas.
Peer interaction and clearer contributions	Exchanging opinions; requesting clarification; giving reasons; providing examples	The accounts described partner discussions as opportunities to clarify ideas and develop more detailed explanations.
Comparing ideas and developing solutions	Considering alternatives; identifying causes; evaluating practicality; justifying choices	The examples portrayed comparing viewpoints and explaining practical solutions to classroom problems.

Table 4 summarizes four themes identified in the supplied fictional interview preparation and willingness to participate, peer interaction and clearer contributions, comparing ideas and developing solutions, and instructional support and suggested improvements. These themes describe the practice accounts and cannot be reported as findings from actual student interviews.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined changes the effects of think-pair-share activities on English oral participation among undergraduate tesol students at Thongsook college, Thailand. The findings showed small and inconsistent changes across the four groups. Overall participation increased slightly in TPS Group 1, TPS Group 3, and the comparison group, whereas TPS Group 2 showed a decrease. None of the within-group changes was statistically significant. Accordingly, the results did not support H1. TPS Group 1 demonstrated the largest overall increase, from 3.038 to 3.114, with initiation showing its greatest descriptive improvement. However, this pattern was not consistent across the other TPS groups. The variation suggested that participation outcomes could not be explained by the instructional sequence alone. Classroom characteristics, students' readiness to participate, peer relationships, and implementation differences were possible influences, although their contributions were not established by the available analyses. Regarding H2, the ANCOVA indicated no significant difference among the four groups after controlling for pretest scores, $F(3, 187) = 1.277$, $p = .283$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$. The planned comparison between the average adjusted outcome of the three TPS groups and the comparison group was also non-significant, adjusted difference = −0.028, 95% CI [−0.176, 0.120], $p = .705$. These findings show that in relation to the study's Communicative Language Teaching framework. Both instructional conditions included opportunities to express opinions, answer questions, and discuss meaningful topics. The

comparison group therefore also engaged in classroom communication. This shared emphasis may have reduced differences between the conditions. The results suggested that introducing the Think-Pair-Share sequence did not necessarily provide an additional measurable advantage over the speaking opportunities already available in the comparison classroom.

The Social Constructivist and Cooperative Learning perspectives provided a rationale for individual preparation, peer assistance, and collaborative discussion. However, the presence of these instructional features did not establish that participation would improve within four weeks. Effective collaboration may depend on how partners interact, how responsibilities are distributed, and whether students receive sufficient support. The perception results offered a different perspective on the activities. Individual item means ranged from 3.625 to 3.861, indicating responses that generally leaned toward agreement. The highest-rated item concerned encouragement to participate in English discussions. Nevertheless, the perception questionnaire demonstrated very low internal consistency, with Cronbach's $\alpha = .076$. Consequently, individual ratings could be discussed separately, but a combined score could not provide a dependable overall evaluation of TPS. Favorable perceptions also did not establish improved participation.

The interview results show that preparation, peer interaction, and developing explanations remained useful areas for qualitative investigation, but they could not be treated as confirmed student experiences without analysis of the original interview responses. Authentic accounts, including negative and unchanged experiences, would help explain why participation patterns differed among the classes.

In conclusion, this study examined English oral participation among 192 second-year TESOL students at Thongsook College using a four-group pretest-posttest design. Following the four-week intervention, participation scores increased slightly in two TPS groups and the comparison group but decreased in one TPS group. None of the within-group changes was statistically significant. Adjusted posttest scores also showed no significant differences among groups, $F(3, 187) = 1.277$, $p = .283$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$. Therefore, neither hypothesis was supported, and the findings did not establish an advantage for TPS over instruction without TPS. Guenther and Abbott (2024) reported increased participation and improved discussion quality following TPS implementation in small-group medical education. Their findings suggested potential benefits in another educational setting but did not establish effectiveness among TESOL students in the present study. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2025) states that teacher-student relationships and supportive questioning practices as factors associated with participation among shy middle-school students, highlighting the relevance of classroom context. Further research should examine TPS across more classes, longer instructional periods, and multiple sources of evidence. TPS could remain an instructional option, but claims about improved participation should depend on demonstrated outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the states results and relevant literature, TESOL trainer should consider incorporating structured Think-Pair-Share activities into English-language lessons. Teachers should provide meaningful discussion questions, sufficient individual thinking time, balanced opportunities for partner interaction and supportive whole-class sharing. Particular attention should be given to students who are hesitant to speak, ensuring that participation opportunities are distributed fairly rather than dominated by confident students. Lecturers should also use consistent classroom observation procedures to assess frequency, response, interaction, contribution, and initiation. Educational administrators may support the implementation of cooperative learning strategies through teacher training, classroom observation, and instructional development activities.

Future Research

Future studies should include more classroom groups in each instructional condition and use analyses that account for classroom clustering. Longer interventions and delayed assessments could examine whether participation changes developed gradually and persisted over time. Particular attention should be given to preparation time, partner interaction, implementation consistency, and differences among students. Comparisons with role-play, group discussion, and information-gap activities could further clarify which instructional features supported participation most effectively.

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