



The effectiveness of cooperative learning strategy on English listening comprehension

Trần Thế Khoa

University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

* Corresponding Author: **Tran The Khoa**

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Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the effectiveness of cooperative learning on English listening competence at intermediate level at the University of Finance and Marketing (UFM). This study was conducted within 2 months. A pre-test and post-test was used to collect data for study. An independent sample t-test, a paired sample t-test and a frequency command were run to determine the result of the study. After analyzing collected data, the result showed that cooperative learning strategy helped to improve and develop EFL students' English listening competence at intermediate level. Moreover, the author also suggested using different teaching approaches in English listening teaching at intermediate level such as Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (Slavin, 1994).

Keywords: Cooperative learning, UFM, listening skills, intermediate level

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Teaching English in general and teaching English listening skill in specific, many teaching methods have used to improve learners' language skills. Among those methods, cooperative learning strategies play an important role to afford the opportunities for developing of teaching language's result. Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2010) ^[21] pointed out that cooperative learning is one of effective and convenient teaching methods because it encourages interaction among the learners through working in groups whereby it develops their language skills and their achievement in language learning. In the groups, learners can share and discuss as well as contributing their knowledge and experiences to complete group's tasks and get knowledge and experiences from the other learners. In Fearon and his colleague's research (2012) ^[7], cooperative learning helps to improve not only team spirit but also social communication skills of participants. This result shows that cooperative learning affects both internality and externality of learners. Through affecting internal and external factors, cooperative learning can help learners increase their motivation and cooperative ability. Thus, the effectiveness or even efficiency of cooperative learning strategies on English teaching and learning is shed light on.

In terms of listening skill, Thomas (2006) ^[23] aimed that cooperative learning exercises can significantly improve listening skill and promote high level reasoning as well as increasing transfer of knowledge of learners. However, Thomas' research (2006) ^[23] seems to be a solo attempt. Thus, it needs more research to identify the effectiveness of cooperative learning on EFL learner's competence in listening comprehension.

Besides that, Nihalani and al. (2010) ^[17] find out that the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies on language teaching and learning can be impacted by group-level performance. Group-level performance is understood as the contribution of each member to achieving an expected result for tasks and activities of group. This means that the effectiveness of cooperative learning can be affected by learner's proficiency. In other words, cooperative learning strategies can bring negative effects on learners at low individual level, which also comprises the intermediate level.

1.2. The aims and significations of the study

Firstly, this paper aims to identify the effects of cooperative learning on students' competence at the intermediate level at UFM. In other words, the current study attempts to find out whether cooperative learning changes learning result and performance of EFL learners' listening comprehension at intermediate level as well as recognizing cooperative learning strategies have been used at UFM. Furthermore, the main point of this study is to determine that whether students in cooperative learning environment outperform students in classroom where traditional teaching methods are used. Through the result of this study, the author wants to suggest some teaching strategies to develop and promote the advantages of cooperative learning strategy as well as reduce and limit its disadvantages in English listening teaching and learning at intermediate level (if any).

1.3. Research questions of the study

To achieve the mentioned aims, the current study attempts to find out the answers for three following questions:

1. Can cooperative learning strategy changes students' English listening competence at intermediate level?
2. How does cooperative learning strategy affect students' English listening competence at intermediate level?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of cooperative learning and its role in English teaching and learning

According to Slavin (1989) ^[20], cooperative learning is understood as teaching methods in which learners have to cooperate in groups or teams to help one another to get a common goal or an assigned task. Kagan's research (1994) ^[12] pointed out that cooperative learning is one of successful teaching strategies in English teaching and learning. It refers to cooperation among learners together to achieve a mutual goal. Through working and discussion in a group or a team, cooperating with others, each student, who can be at different levels of ability in English learning, can apply the various learning activities to improve and develop their language skills and understanding about the subjects. Moreover, in a team, each member can share and exchange the knowledge or experiences that they master with others whereby it helps to create and promote an atmosphere of achievement. It cannot deny that cooperative learning has been applied popular because it affords learners the various benefits. Specifically, it helps to improve students' learning and their academic achievement as well as encouraging students' retention and develop their oral communication and social skills.

In order to shed light on the effectiveness of cooperative learning on English teaching and learning, Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., and Smith, K. A. (1991) ^[10] pointed out five elements of cooperative learning strategy as well. The first one is positive interdependence in which each member has to contribute his or her resources or role for success of task of group. The second factor is face-to-face interaction. This method requires each member to orally explain to suggest the solutions to solve the common problems. The third one is individual and group accountability, which focuses on observation and recording the contribution of each member in a group. The fourth element is called interpersonal and small-group skills, which helps learners to develop their leadership, conflict management skills, trust-built et cetera. Group processing is the last one. It helps to recognize and

determine the contribution of each member in a group whereby it makes the decisions relevant to continuation or change the way of work of group.

2.2. The effects of cooperative learning into English teaching and learning

2.2.1. Advantages of cooperative learning

According to cooperative learning consists of complex steps, but it is very flexible. This method is neither rigid nor associative with any specific content. Therefore, it can be applied in various ways and teaching methods at many levels and skills. Burke (2011) ^[4], working in a group or team can help learners have more information and resources from the variety of backgrounds and experiences of members as well as stimulating learners' creativity and interpersonal skills that really need for listening comprehension. Moreover, learners have a tendency to comprehend new knowledge and remember what they were taught well when they were discussed or conducted in a group (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005) ^[1].

More specifically, Momani (2009) ^[16] investigated the effectiveness of cooperative learning towards reading comprehension of EFL students. The result showed that the respondents had positive effectiveness towards learning English through working in small groups. Specifically, this study identified that cooperative learning helps to increase learners' performance in listening comprehension.

Conducted qualitative research to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning on learning result of Asian students. The result showed that cooperative learning helps to enhance learner's performance in English learning. Moreover, most Asian students highly valued the significance and role of cooperative learning because it can help learners enhance and broaden their cultural understanding through interacting with students from other cultures and backgrounds. Cooperative learning provides the opportunities to improve learners' English skills as well as other language skills and develop negotiating, teamwork, interpersonal communication skills as well as making friends as well.

Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) ^[22] studied 40 EFL undergraduate students at the English department in the College of Basic Education in Kuwait to identify the effectiveness of cooperative learning on EFL students' learning procedure in high education. The result of the analysis showed that the listening score of students, who worked in the group to carry out the tasks, is higher than the others, who worked individually. This study found out that cooperative learning helps to increase motivation and enthusiastic towards English learning as well.

Moreover, Xue (2013) ^[26] found out that cooperative learning could affect both listening comprehension and grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Specifically, cooperative learning helps to increase listening score of learners as well as improve learners' grammatical competence across such as pronunciation, vocabulary usage and sentence structure. In addition, cooperative learning also enhances socio-cultural knowledge of learners and learners can know how to apply the successful learning strategies through working in group. Thus, it is certain that cooperative learning helps to increase both learning result, including listening skill, competence and attitude of EFL learners into language skills.

2.2.2. Disadvantages of cooperative learning

Beebe and Masterson (2003) ^[2] found out some disadvantages of application of the different forms of cooperative learning strategies in English listening teaching. Firstly, discussion in a group can lead to pressure among members because they have to conform to the majority opinion and avoid conflict situations. Moreover, in listening skill, psychology plays an important role to keep listeners' attention. Therefore, psychological pressure can lead to neglect during English listening process. Secondly, the contribution of each member to the group's tasks may not be equal. Some members can dominate and be dynamic while the others can have passive responses. In addition, cooperative learning can require more time to analyze and discuss opinions than work in individual. Thus, at intermediate level, learners can have to face some barriers in application of cooperative learning strategies in their English listening process.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of cooperative learning on English listening can be limited by other factors that are not mentioned in the above research. According to Zhao and Jiang (2009) ^[27], individual-level factors and group-level factors can affect the group interaction process and its effectiveness. Individual-level factors and group-level factors refer to language skills, performance, background knowledge and comprehension, and acquisition of language of the members in the groups. Hence, at intermediate level, individual-level factors can negatively affect discussion after listening.

Moreover, Azmi, Celik, Yidliz and Tugrul (2014) ^[3] pointed out one of the difficulties of application of cooperative learning strategy in English listening comprehension that is socio-affective strategy. Socio-affective strategy is known as a technique that learners use in collaboration with others (Vandergrift, 2003) ^[25]. It refers to interaction and attitude toward listening together among members in a group. Because learners can have different backgrounds, experiences and ideas as well as unequal knowledge, they could be hard to listen together.

In summary, it can recognize that cooperative learning strategies can afford both positive and negative effects in English listening comprehension of EFL students at intermediate level.

2.4. Hypotheses

In general, there are many the previous studies about effectiveness of cooperative learning on English listening comprehension. Besides Azmi, Celik, Yidliz and Tugrul (2014) ^[3], Beebe and Masterson (2003) ^[2] and Zhao and Jiang (2009) ^[27] considered that cooperative learning could because of difficulties in English listening skill, many researchers such as Burke (2011) ^[4], Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) ^[1], Taqui and Al-Nouh (2014) ^[22], Xue (2013) ^[26] et cetera, strongly claimed that cooperative learning affords learners opportunities to improve, practice and apprehend English listening skill.

Therefore, it can be believed that (1) cooperative learning strategies can change learning results on listening comprehension at intermediate level. Probably most importantly, based on the proof in the previous studies, it is hoped that (2) cooperative learning affords learners opportunities to improve and raise their learning result and performance in English listening comprehension.

In brief, it is hoped that this study can find out cooperative

learning strategies have used in English listening teaching at UFM as well as reinforcing clues to claim that cooperative learning strategy is effective for English listening teaching at intermediate level.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Context of the study

As we know, there are varied teaching methods and strategies in English teaching. One of them is cooperative learning, which has researched and applied popular. According to Li and Campbell (2006) ^[14], cooperative learning is an opportunity to:

"Broaden the understanding of the course or assessment-related issues, and to develop negotiating, teamwork, interpersonal communication skills, and to make friends".

Raja and Saeed (2012) ^[18] stated that cooperative learning helps learners are easy to interact together in a comfortable environment as well. In this learning environment, viz the comfortable environment, learners are provided the opportunities to express themselves and their emotions. However, according to Zhao and Jiang (2009) ^[27], cooperative learning can be influenced by the performance quality of each member in a group. As mentioned above, at the intermediate level, learners' performance quality can be lower than other levels. Moreover, they are also easily to be influenced by pressure and negotiation when they cooperate with others. Besides that, application of cooperative learning in listening teaching face with many difficulties (Azmi, Celik, Yidliz and Tugrul, 2014; Beebe and Masterson; 2003 and Zhao and Jiang, 2009) ^[3, 2, 27] and the number of the research investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning on listening skills still be limited.

Thus, it is important to explore the effectiveness of cooperative learning on learning proficiency and learning results in listening comprehension at the intermediate level. Actually, at intermediate level, learners face with difficulties to discuss or share their ideas by English about different topics, unless these topics are simple or relate daily life. Thus, applying cooperative learning in listening comprehension at this level needs to be implemented.

3.2. Research method

3.2.1. Participants

The participants in this study are 39 students, who are studying English at B1 level (Common European Framework of Reference for language) at UFM.

The scope of the current study, it is hoped that they are approached the new methods of cooperative learning whereby they are easy to identify the effectiveness of cooperation with others in their English listening learning.

3.2.2. Research instruments

A quasi-experimental design was conducted within two months (i.e. thirty-two periods). Thyer (2012) ^[24] and Cook (2003) ^[6] claimed that quasi-experimental research affords several benefits more than the other research methods. Specifically, because quasi-experimental research does not offer an artificial research environment, the research process is more likely to be genuine. Quasi-experimental design may be more feasible than many true experimental designs because it does not constrain the researchers and participants have to spend a lot of time. In addition, lack of randomization

of quasi-experimental research also helps to reduce the time in research process. Taking the mentioned advantages of quasi-experimental research, this study attempts to apply this research method to find out the result.

The result of the study was found out through comparing the score of students' pre-test, post-test period and data analysis from student questionnaires.

The pretest-posttest sample which was received and adapted from the Preliminary English Test (PET) version of Cambridge University. Post-test sample has the similar structure and form with pre-test. However, because it is used after treatment period, it is more difficult than the pre-test.

3.2.3. Research treatments

This study used three Kagan's structures and five Kagan's strategies to explore the effectiveness of cooperative learning on listening comprehension at intermediate level at UFM.

In theory, Kagan's structures can be divided into five main groups. They are team building, class building, communication building, mastery and concept development. The current study focused on using three among five Kagan's structures. They are team building, class building and concept development.

In terms of team building, learners share information with group members in turn. Through giving ideas and creating stories, learners' contribution in group is fair. Class building structure requests participants show their ideas, viewpoints about a topic or an issue that is given by teacher. Then,

learners form small groups to share and discuss together. This group structure helps learners approach a topic or an issue from the other angles whereby this increases knowledge and respect for the other ideas. The last structure is concept development. Teacher gives an issue that request high analysis and assessment. Learners are given time to prepare answers or solutions. Then, they discuss their result with their shoulder partners. This structure helps to create and assess hypothesis as well as developing inductive and deductive methods (Kagan, 2003). These structures are used because of their simplicity and flexibility. They are applied during study period within 32 sessions.

The five Kagan's strategies that are applied in this study are Think-pair share, Line up, Pairs-squared, Pairs-compare and one stray strategy.

Think-pair share strategy helps students share and approaches different ideas as well as developing cooperative skill. It also increases individual accountability and equal participation. To apply this strategy, 20 students in the experimental group were divided into 5 small groups equally. A question or an issue was posed. Students spend from 2 to 5 minutes thinking and finding their answer or solution. Then, the student discussed with his or her shoulder or face partner to unify result (stage 1). After 2 minutes, students exchanged partners in their group and spent 2 minutes to continue discussing and unifying (stage 2). Subsequently, students exposed answer or solution with class.

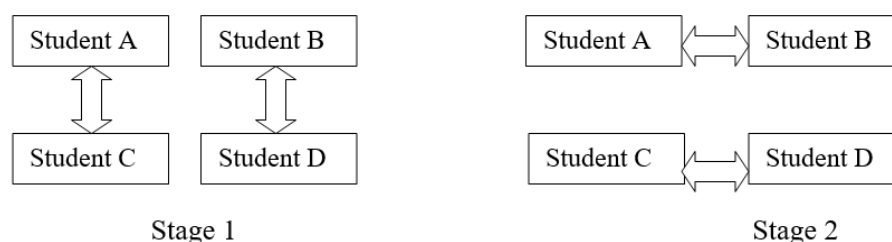


Fig 1: Think-pair share strategy procedure

Line Up is a Kagan's cooperative strategy helps students develop logical thinking and understand ordering. This strategy includes two steps. Firstly, students received items or subjects from the teacher. Second step, students worked in pairs to arrange these items or subjects based on some specific criterions such as color, shape, usage et cetera.

Third strategy is Pairs-squared. This strategy is a good way to share and receive information among students in a group. This has two stages. At first stage, students cooperated with their shoulder partner after listening a test. After discussing, at second stage, each pair formed a foursome by matching with another pair and continued unifying answers.

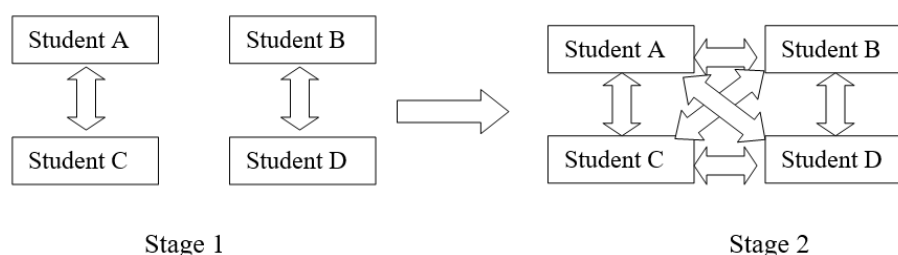


Fig 2: Pairs-squared strategy procedure

The fourth strategy is Pairs Compare Strategy. This strategy is developed from Kagan's class building structure. Each student among the first ten students was assigned a number from 1 to 10. Each student among the other ten students was

also assigned a number like the first ten students. After listening, students who had the same number worked in a pair to compare and discuss answers.

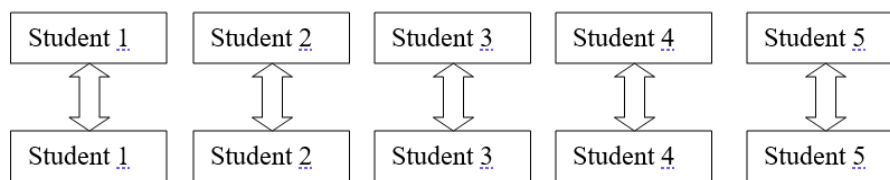


Fig 3: Pairs Compare Strategy procedure

The last one is One stray strategy. This strategy affords students opportunities to share and approach problems from different angles. Students were assigned to form foursomes. Each student in each group was assigned a number, from number 1 to number 4. After listening, students had a few minutes to share and discuss answer or solution. Until the teacher said “stray”, student number one in each group moved to other group to continue sharing and discussing. This procedure continued until student number four’s turn. During the study process, the control group and experimental group had two different lesson plans. Experimental group’s lesson plan used the four Kagan’ cooperative learning as the main strategies to teach English listening skill. In contrast, control group’s lesson plan did not use any cooperative learning strategies during English listening teaching. The four Kagan’s strategies were used because they are simple and popular. They can be applied easily in English listening teaching in different ways with different teaching conditions.

3.3. Data collection procedure

The participants in this study were divided into two groups. 19 students belonged to the control group and the other 20 students were in the experimental group. During the learning process, the first group (i.e control group) carried out the tasks individually and the second group (i.e experimental group) discussed in a group and worked in pairs or team to complete the assigned tasks. In the experimental group, the participants dealt with the tasks through working in pairs and small groups. Each small group had from three to four students. The participants were assigned to work with the partners whereby it is hoped to make the dynamic and sociable learning environment among the students. The assignment was also considered carefully to ensure the equality relevant to learning proficiency among the experimental groups. The participants were also diffused about the purpose and importance as well as process of the current study. During the experimental process, both two groups received the instruction equally from the teacher to ensure that all of the students were able to receive and get the same amount of knowledge. The students were performed the same tasks and course outline.

At the first stage of the research, a pre-test was offered to check students’ competence. After the treatment stage (i.e after two months from pre-test stage and at the end of the course, too), a post-test was used to measure the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies into students’ learning result in English listening learning. The answer keys of the pretest-posttest were not offered until the participants completed their post-test.

The analysis of the scores of pre-test and post-test stage was carried out through SPSS software, version 22.00. This

procedure was explained in the next part.

3.4. Data analysis procedure

As mentioned in the data collection procedure, collected data of this study was imported into SPSS software. Obviously, the Cronbach Alpha was used to estimate the reliability of each pre-post test and questionnaire first.

In term of pre-test and post-test, an independent sample t-test was used to check whether the cooperative learning strategies is affective on students’ learning result and performance in English listening comprehension at intermediate level. The independent sample t-test was used because the data is independent. A hypothesis (H_{01}) was exposed to hypothesize that there is not the difference between participants’ competence in experimental and control group at the pre-test stage. Similarly, a hypothesis (H_{02}), which supposes that students’ competence in the post-test stage is not different between the two, was revealed. The independent sample t-test was run twice time. The first one aims at check whether difference between participants’ competence in English listening comprehension at both experimental and control group at the pre-test period. Second time, the t-test was used to compare scores of the two groups at post-test stage. The affirmation or rejection of hypothesis (H_{01}) and (H_{02}) answer for the first question research above.

Then, a paired sample t-test statistic technique was used to find out the difference between the score of experimental groups at the pre-test and post-test. The paired sample t-test expresses the correlation (r-value) between two variables, which is related together. The use of this t-test is appropriate because both the two variables in this case (i.e. the result of the pre-test and post-test stage) are dependent on each other. Moreover, the two variables presented the two different scores of the same object in the two time points (i.e. before and after the intervention). Besides that, a hypothesis (H_1) assumes that the improvement of students’ competence in experimental group is higher than control group.

The result of independent sample t-test and paired t test offered the answer for the question whether cooperative learning strategies are affective on English listening comprehension of EFL learners at intermediate level at UFM. Through these finding, the study identified the effectiveness of cooperative learning on learners’ competence in English listening comprehension at the intermediate level.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Findings

Firstly, an independent sample t-test was run to estimate participants’ English listening competence of both control group and experimental group at pre-test period. The result was presented in the following tables.

Table 1: Independent Samples Test: The comparison between students' English listening competence in the two groups at pre-test period

Variable	M	SD	t	df	P
Total score at pre-test Experimental group	36.85	4.10744	0.675	36.951	0.504
Control group	36.00	3.75648		37	

Table 1 shows that the students' English listening competence at pre-test period in experimental group was not different from control group ($p = 0.504$), which was not statistically significant. The mean scores of two group indicate that the average score of experimental groups ($M = 36.85$) is not significantly different with the score ($M = 36.00$) of control group at pre-test. The difference between the means of the two groups is only 0.85 points on a 100-point test. This means that the hypothesis (H_{01}) that supposed that there is not the difference between participants'

competence in experimental and control group at the pre-test period is accepted.

Similarly, an independent sample t-test was used to estimate participants' English listening competence of both control group and experimental group at post-test period. This helped to answer the first research question that is whether cooperative learning strategy positively effects on students' English listening competence at intermediate level. The result was showed in table 2.

Table 2: Independent Samples Test: The comparison between students' English listening competence in the two groups at post-test period

Variable	M	SD	t	df	P
Total score at pre-test Experimental group	88.1000	4.72284	19.912	33.46	0.000
Control group	62.5263	3.18623		37	

Table 2 pointed out P-value is 0,000 ($p = 0.000$). This referred that the students' English listening competence at post-test period in experimental group was different from control group. The mean scores of experimental groups is 88.1 ($M = 88.1$) is higher than control group is 62.5263 ($M = 62.5263$). This result expressed that there is a significant difference between the two mean scores. The difference is 19.912 points on a 100-point test. This means that the hypothesis (H_{02}), which supposed that students' English listening competence in the post-test period is not different between the two groups is not accepted.

In addition, to find answer for the second research question is that how cooperative learning strategy effects on students' English listening competence at intermediate level. A pair sample t-test was used to estimate score of pre-test and post-test period in experimental group.

Table 3: Pair Samples Test: The difference between student's achievements in two groups

Variable	M	SD	t	df	P
Total score at pre-test and post-test	51.25	4.90837	46.695	19	0.000

Table 3 expressed that students' English listening competence in experimental group at pre-test period is different from English listening competence at post-test period ($p = .000$), which was statistically significant. This showed that English listening competence in experimental group at post-test period is higher than pre-test period, $t(19) = 46.695$, $p = .000$. This result points out that hypothesis (H_1), which hypothesize that students' English listening competence in experimental group at post-test period is higher than pre-test period, is accepted.

4.2. Conclusion

The result of data analysis pointed out the result of this study. Firstly, the data analysis in table 1 showed that there are not difference of pre-test score in English listening between control group and experimental group. On the other hand, English listening competence between the two groups at pre-test period is similar together. However, the data analysis in table 2 expressed that post-test score is different from pre-test score. In short, students' English listening competence in

experimental group at post-test period is different with their English listening competence at pre-test period. This is also the answer for the first research question that cooperative learning strategy can changes students' English listening competence at intermediate level.

Additionally, the analysis of data in table 3 showed that there is a significant difference between students' pre-test score period and students' post-test period in experimental group. In other words, students' English listening competence in experimental group at post-test period is different from their English listening competence at pre-test period. Moreover, table 2 showed mean scores of English listening competence in two group at post-test period is different. Particularly, mean scores of control group at post-test period is 62.5263 ($M = 62.5263$) is lower that mean scores of experimental group at post-test period is 88.1 ($M = 88.1$). From these points, the answer for the second research question is explored. This means that cooperative learning strategy affects positive on students' English listening competence at intermediate level (research question 2).

In conclusion, it can say that cooperative learning strategy can change English listening competence at intermediate level. Moreover, this change is positive. On the other hands, cooperative learning strategy helps to improve and develop English listening comprehension at various level, including intermediate vel.

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