EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF SHADOWING TECHNIQUE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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The study's focus on EFL students' perceptions of shadowing technique for improving listening comprehension is valuable. This study aimed at exploring EFL students' perceptions towards the use of shadowing technique on the improvement of listening comprehension in EFL context. This study addresses research questions regarding perceived effectiveness of shadowing; The participants were 36 Islamic university students of Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari of the first year who were asked to complete a written questionnaire containing 5 items at the end of the study period. The study employs descriptive approaches, to analyze the results and findings. The results indicate that the majority of participants perceive shadowing as effective for improving listening comprehension. However, individual differences were found in how they favor the shadowing speed in relation to their comprehension of the content.
Keywords: perception, shadowing technique, listening comprehension

INTRODUCTION

The acknowledgement of "shadowing technique" as an effective for enhancing listening skills in second language acquisition (SLA) reflects its growing significance in the context of language learning in Indonesia. Shadowing refers to an auditory tracking task of simultaneous repetition of heard native speech through a headphone set (Lambert 1992); which had been originally used as a training method for simultaneous interpreters, as it requires a high competency of both listening and speaking skills occurring at the same time. This act of simultaneous listening and speaking is not only unique to shadowing, but often occurs in our daily

lives in a form of inner voice, or sub-vocalization, in the phonological loop of working memory in the brain (Baddeley 1992). This sub-vocalization typically occurs when thinking aloud, repeating the interlocutor's speech in mind, or even reading a book to process the linguistic information inside the brain. This sub-vocalization is the very key feature of the shadowing technique since it activates high level of intended attention in the working memory. Tamai's redefinition (1997) of 'shadowing' in the Japanese EFL context as a listening training technique where learners aim to repeat incoming information simultaneously, aligns with the emphasis on attentive listening and precise repetition. This contributes to the evolving understanding of 'shadowing' in language acquisition. On the other words, Tamai (1997), the pioneer of shadowing research in Japan's English as a foreign language (EFL) context, redefined Lambert's definition of shadowing as a training technique of listening which the learner attempts to repeat the incoming information simultaneously as exactly as possible while listening attentively to the heard speech (pp. 105–106).

Tamai's finding (1992) of statistical significance, favoring shadowing over dictation, has contributed to the increased popularity of shadowing as a second language teaching technique in Japan. This underscores its perceived effectiveness in language learning context. The proven effectiveness of shadowing is evident in various research studies within the EFL context (Hamada 2011a, 2016; Shiki et al. 2010; Tamai 1997), as wel as in the Japanese as a second language (JSL) context (Kurata 2007; Mochizuki 2006; Toda et al. 2012). These findings contribute to the broader understanding and acceptance of shadowing as beneficial language learning practice. Dealing with this, the effect of shadowing is attributed to the stimuli of working memory during the attempt of on-line brain activity (simultaneous listening and speaking), which encourages automatization of the bottomup language processing (Kadota 2007, 2012). However, Kadota contends that it is a highly cognitive activity, which requires careful consideration by practitioners when implemented as a pedagogical tool in language classroom teaching. The mechanical characteristic of shadowing practice has been considered suited to Japan's EFL context, since this context is mostly based on grammar-translation method and is a memorization-centered pedagogical culture (Sasaki 2007); which is why shadowing has won popularity in Japan's L2 learning context.

On the other hand, this suggests possible difficulties in implementing shadowing in a different L2 context, outside Japan, such as in an English speaking context such as Australia in the present study. According to Markee's (1992) framework for innovation in language teaching, the mechanical routine work of shadowing would potentially trigger resistance in employing shadowing practice outside Japan, since the quality of teaching can be more harmful than beneficial (p. 233); largely due to differences in comparison to the L2 pedagogical mainstream of communicative language teaching, where learners' creative language output is mostly emphasized (Hamada 2015, p.9). In addition, the audiolingual aspect of shadowing, with its requirement for learners to reproduce speech precisely in front of an audience, can potentially lead to anxiety, including speech apprehension, test

anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al. 1986). Addressing these concerns is crucial for creating a positive and supportive learning environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The target participants of this study were 36 Islamic university students of Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari, who were enrolled in intensive listening. Since shadowing practice and other listening-related tasks were part of the unit assessment, it was compulsory that students complete those tasks as unit requirements. However, students were told that their participation in this study was voluntary, and their decision would not affect their grades.

The study's results and findings are presented, utilizing data obtained from participants through the designated instrument. The focus is on addressing the research question and delving into listening comprehension problems. The relevant information is summarized in a single table for clarity and concise representation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 - EFL students' perception towards the g use of shadowing technique on the improvement of listening comprehension

EFL students' perception towarids the use of shadowing technique on the improvement of listening comprehension (α = .907)	No.	Item summary	Agree + Strongly agree	Partially agree	Partially disagree	Disagree + Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)
Listening (Lt)	1	Shadowing is effective in improving listening skills.	23 (63.9%)	7 (19.4%)	5 (13.9%)	1 (2.8%)	4.69 (1.091)
	2	Listening skills improve if shadowing improves	21 (58.3%)	12 (33.3%)	3 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	4.72 (0.914)
	3	Listening skills improve the more practice shadowing	22 (61.1%)	10 (27.8%)	3 (8.3%)	1 (2.8%)	4.72 (1.031)
	4	Became better at listening	28 (77.8%)	5 (13.9%)	3 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	4.94 (0.860)

5	after practicing shadowing. Don't thinks hadowing is good for listening skills	1 (2.8%)	4 (11.1%)	8 (22.2%)	23 (63.9%)	4.78 (1.098)

For the 1st item, a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 4.69 and 63.9% agreement for the statement "*shadowing is effective in improving listening skills*" signifies strong support from 23 EFL participants (63.9%), making it the most agreed-upon item among them.

For the 2nd item, with 58.3% agreement and a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 4.72, it suggests strong support among 21 participants (58.3%) for the statement "*listening skills improve if shadowing improves*." This indicates a positive response to the 2nd item regarding the perceived impact of shadowing on listening skills.

For the 3rd item, with 62.1% agreement and a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 4.72, it suggests strong support among 22 participants (62.1%) for the statement "*listening skills improve the more practice shadowing*." This indicates a positive response to the 3rd item, emphasizing the perceived positive correlation between increased shadowing practice and improved listening skills.

For the 4th item, with 77.8% agreement and a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 4.94, it shows substantial support from 28 participants (77.8%) for the statement "*I become better at listening after practicing shadowing*." The high mean score suggests strong agreement, indicating that the majority perceive a positive impact on listening skills through shadowing practice.

For the 5th item, with 63.9% disagreement and a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 4.78, it indicates that 23 participants (63.9%) strongly disagree or disagree with the statement "*I don't think shadowing is good for listening skills*." The higher mean score reflects a consensus among the participants against the notion expressed in the 5th item.

The single table above summarizes the frequency and percentage of responses for the 5 questionnaire items. The responses, 'Agree + Strongly Agree', and 'Disagree + Strongly Disagree', are put together for the purpose of the simple organization of the table; however, the actual scores of 6 scales were used, and negatively phrased items used reversed scores in order to align the positive consistency for statistical analyses. Cronbach alpha was calculated for internal consistent reliability for each category. The high consistency within the improvement ($\alpha = .907$). It is reasonable to conclude that the great majority of participants perceive shadowing as effective for improving listening skills.

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CONCLUSION

The study's results, highlighting participants' positive perceptions of the shadowing technique and the belief in its effectiveness for improving listening skills, are noteworthy. The acknowledged limitation of a small participant size, particularly for factor analysis, emphasizes the need for caution in generalizing the findings. The suggestion for further research at different proficiency levels adds valuable context and potential for broader applicability.

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