

Shadowing: An Alternative Learning Activity in Developing EFL Learners' Listening Skill

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to examine if using Shadowing Technique effectively improved the listening skill of EFL learners. This research was conducted in an English class of senior high school. Quasi-experimental research design was employed with two groups as the sample of the research - experimental and control groups. The data were collected by administering pre-test and post test. The mean score of the pre-test for the experimental group is 54.68, while the mean score of the post test is 76.45. The mean score of the pre-test for the control group is 58.33 and the mean score of post test is 70.50. The data analysis test results show that employing Shadowing Technique is effective in developing EFL learners' listening skill.

Keywords: Shadowing; developing; EFL learners; listening skill

INTRODUCTION

One of the most crucial skills that every learner of a language acquires is listening. Gilakjani (2016) defines listening as an active activity that involves taking in and reacting to spoken—and occasionally unspoken—messages. This process entails comprehending meaning in addition to a speaker's pronunciation, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Most people think that speaking and writing in a second language prove one's language proficiency, however listening skill is necessary for efficient communication. A person studying a second language, or a foreign language (FL), needs to integrate the language skills, especially to develop listening and speaking skills before moving on to reading and writing.

When learning and using a second language, comprehension of spoken language is crucial. Students must first learn to comprehend spoken language if they wish to learn how to talk. Learners should first acquire the ability to comprehend what native speakers say in everyday contexts if they expect to interact with them. As suggested by Hamouda (2013), in language schools, listening is the most often utilized skill. For teachers and students to accomplish their communication goals, listening is essential.

For many students, listening is difficult, but listening is essential. One way to know how important listening is to find out how much time students spend a day in the role of the listener. According to Renukadevi (2014), the average person spends 30% of their day speaking, 15% reading, 10% writing, and 45% listening. Thus, people spend more time listening than speaking, reading, and writing. Listening requires the most time. Even so, listening should get a significant portion of English teaching and learning. This is intended to help the students to acquire the listening skill. If the teaching activities are more emphasized on reading and grammar, the students have poor listening skills. They cannot repeat words from native speakers because they have poor word recognition. Limited vocabulary and interpretation appear to be related. In practice, a learner with a limited vocabulary is more likely to misinterpret what he hears. This is precisely what happened to the students during the listening test.

The English syllabus states that one of the expected goals of teaching listening at the senior high school level is that students can get information from the speaker or material and

share that information with their friends. In order to fulfill the purpose, the teacher as a facilitator must realize that the preparation of various techniques used in listening classes must be selected appropriately by the teacher to help the students develop their listening skills.

To help the learners to learn and develop their listening skill, shadowing is a training technique used to improve interpreting skills. Even though it comes from an interpreting technique, it helps the learners learn word recognition through repetition (Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013). The learners are supposed to write and understand the context of what the speaker is talking about. This technique requires the learners to repeat word for word from native speakers. In general, shadowing is the practice of repeating recorded input in the target language. When students listen to it, they try to match what the speaker says with what they hear. Shadowing can help the students practice sounding as much like a native speaker as quickly as possible.

The Shadowing Technique entails the simultaneous processes of listening and speaking. It involves the immediate recall of auditory information. This concept traces its origins to Cherry's research in 1953, which focused on dichotic listening while examining the "cocktail party phenomenon." Cherry found that individuals who "shadowed" a message presented to one ear were largely oblivious to the content being delivered to the other ear. When shadowing instructions were incorporated into the fundamental dichotic listening task, minimal information was retained from the unattended ear. Generally, shadowing consists of the repetition of recorded material in the target language. As students engage with this material, they strive to align their spoken output with the auditory input they receive. This technique can significantly assist students in achieving a pronunciation that closely resembles that of a native speaker in a relatively short period.

The notion of shadowing can be viewed as an enhancement of the repetitive activity involved in listening. In a speech recognition experiment, participants were exposed to two distinct passages. To guarantee that their focus remained on only one of the passages, they were instructed to repeat it concurrently, a process known as shadowing. Subsequently, this technique was employed to facilitate the development of simultaneous listening and speaking skills among aspiring interpreters.

Shadowing has been employed as a method for enhancing listening skills in language instruction, as it entails both listening to and reproducing the spoken material. Hamada (2015:5) notes that "shadowing was originally used to train novice interpreters, but has recently been adopted as an EFL teaching technique specifically aimed at improving listening abilities." In the shadowing process, learners are required to echo what they hear, akin to how a shadow mimics the movements of a person. Crucially, learners must perform this task without the aid of written texts, striving to replicate the audio input as closely as possible in real-time. During shadowing, learners engage in a repetitive practice, echoing the material in manageable segments.

The framework of this method is listening to audio in the language EFL learners are learning while attempting to repeat -to "shadow"- what they hear as quickly as they hear it. To put it briefly, it is almost a simultaneous repetition of a portion of native-speaker dialogue to reference the target and teaching language transcriptions of the dialogue. It is basically learning another language in the same way the students learned their first by repeating sounds exactly as they hear.

Learners are expected to develop their macro and micro skills to deal with communication objectives. Solak (2016) mentions two skills involved in listening: micro-skills and macro-skills. The micro-skills are those that remain at the sentence level, whereas the macro-skills are those that relate to the discourse level of the organization. This study focused on two aspects of micro-skills of listening skills. They are the ability to recognize vocabulary in a spoken text and deduce the meaning of words from the context that the students hear. Those aspects are related to the elements of assessment of listening skills that the researcher used; accuracy of the answer. By using the accuracy of answers in measuring the improvement of students' listening skills using

the Shadowing technique since it is very suitable for students and has become a standard model often appearing during exams.

The shadowing technique is applicable to students across various educational stages, including elementary school (Kuo & Chou, 2014), junior high school, senior high school (Rafiq, 2016), and university levels (Hamada, 2015). The choice of materials for shadowing can be tailored to the specific syllabus of the student. For instance, Hamada's study (2015) employed a TOEIC preparation book for university students, as well as the English textbook *Crwon I*.

The Shadowing Technique offers numerous benefits in the context of foreign language instruction and acquisition. A significant challenge encountered by non-native listeners is the ability to comprehend rapid speech (Hamada, 2018). Native speakers often articulate their thoughts at a swift pace and employ linking verbs to seamlessly connect their sentences, which can pose comprehension difficulties for non-native listeners. By engaging in the Shadowing Technique, learners practice by imitating and following brief spoken passages, thereby acclimating themselves to the rhythm of short speeches. Theoretically, this practice enables students to adapt to the speed of native speech over time, enhancing their listening skills.

Shadowing Technique is helpful for teaching listening. Shadowing has been used to improve EFL learners' perception skills in listening. According to Kadota (2019:81), "by helping them focus exclusively on phonological information, and not much on accessing the meaning of the information; with constant shadowing practice, perception skills can improve." When the students listened to the speaker and wrote it down, they often found new words they did not know before. Then, there is the introduction of the new vocabulary itself, followed by an increase in students' spelling.

Based on an interview with several students, it was found that senior high school students had some problems while studying listening skills. First, the students were lacking in vocabulary. Second, they were not familiar with the words they were listening to due to different dialects and accents. Third, the lack of breeding process in listening to the English words. As a result, they could not grasp the meaning of the context or audio provided by the teacher. Since they could not grasp the meaning of the context, they failed to repeat words from native speakers. When the students could not understand the meaning of the context or the speakers, they lost motivation and interest in learning listening skills.

METHODS

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design, comprising two distinct groups: the experimental group and the control group. The research framework adopted a nonequivalent control group design (Arikunto, 2013: 87). In this experimental investigation, participants were categorized into two groups: the experimental group, which employed the shadowing technique to enhance listening skills, and the control group, which did not utilize the shadowing technique for listening skill development. The purpose of this quasi-experimental design is to assess the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving students' listening abilities.

The study was conducted in two classes of grade eleven students of senior high school. There were six parallel classes in grade eleven with the total number of populations of 193 students. To decide which one is the control and experimental groups, the researchers used a cluster random sampling technique to select the sample for this research. The process of determining the sample in cluster random sampling technique was done using a lottery on pieces of paper. The names of classes were written on six small pieces of paper, rolled up, and then the sample was taken out. As a result, XI IPA 1 was selected as the experimental group and XI IPA 3 as the control group.

In the context of experimental research, two variables exhibit a correlation with one another. Variables refer to the conditions or characteristics that the researcher manipulates, controls, or observes. This study identified two categories of variables: independent and

dependent. The independent variable in this research was the implementation of the shadowing technique, whereas the dependent variable was the listening skills of the students.

In this research, the investigators employed the methodology established by Hamada (2018). He introduced innovative teaching steps and procedures, drawing upon the guidelines suggested by Kadota and Tamai (2005) for the implementation of each lesson as detailed below.

Table 1. Procedure of Shadowing Technique

Step	Procedure
Dictation cloze	Fill in the blanks of written scripts.
Mumbling	Silently shadow the incoming sounds without scripts.
Parallel reading	Shadow while reading the script of the passage.
Check understanding	Check with the scripts written both in English and Indonesian for three minutes.
Shadowing	Shadow three times.
Check details	Check with the written scripts for three minutes for sounds one could not hear or shadow; and meanings one could not understand.
Content shadowing	Concentrate on both shadowing and interpreting the meaning of the passage.
Dictation cloze	Dictation cloze (same as step 1)

To gathering data for this research, the researchers employed a paper-and-pencil method, utilizing a supply and selection type of assessment. The assessments included both a pre-test and a post-test. These tests were designed to evaluate the students' proficiency in listening skills, specifically aimed at assessing their ability to recognize vocabulary and infer the meanings of words from contextual clues.

In this study, the researchers evaluated the pre-test and post-test outcomes utilizing an assessment scale with a scoring range from 10 to 100, as referenced by Sugiyono (2013). For data analysis, a straightforward statistical approach was adopted. Initially, the researchers examined the individual scores of the students on both the pre-test and post-test, applying a formula suggested by Arikunto (2013:308) as follows:

$$\sum x = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

$\sum x$ = Standard score
 x = The score obtained
 N = Maximum score

After having the students' individual scores, she analyzed the group mean scores in both the experimental and control groups using a formula proposed by Arikunto (2013:315), as shown below.

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M = Mean score
 $\sum x$ = Students' standard score
 N = Number of students

Then, to analyze the sum square deviation score, the researchers used the following formula suggested by Arikunto (2013:355) as follows.

$$\sum x^2 = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}$$

$$\sum y^2 = \sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N}$$

Where:

- $\sum x^2$ = The square deviation sum of experimental group
- $\sum y^2$ = The square deviation sum of control group
- $\sum X^2$ = The sum score of deviation of experimental group
- $\sum Y^2$ = The sum score of deviation of control group
- N = Total number of students

Last, the researchers computed the result of the mean score and square deviation in order to know the significant difference in both two groups by using the t-counted value formula as proposed by Arikunto (2013:354) as shown below:

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right) \left(\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right)}}$$

Where:

- Mx = Mean score of experimental groups
- My = Mean score of control group
- $\sum x^2$ = The total square of experimental group
- $\sum y^2$ = The total square of control group
- Nx = Total number of students of experimental group
- Ny = Total number of students of control group

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In collecting the data of this research, the researchers administered the tests to the students as a sample of the research. The tests were given to both the experimental group and the control group. The researchers treated the experimental group while the control group was taught by using a strategy taught by the school's English teacher.

The pre-test was administered to the experimental and control groups at the first meeting. The purpose of the pre-test was to test the students' prior ability in listening. The pre-test consisted of 20 items divided into two categories; 10 multiple-choice items and 10 completion items.

After conducting the treatment for the experimental group, the researchers administered the post-test to both groups. The researchers used a similar type of the test as in the pre-test, but the content of each test was different. The purpose of the post-test was to measure the students' progress in learning listening because of the treatment given. The result can be shown as in Figure 1:

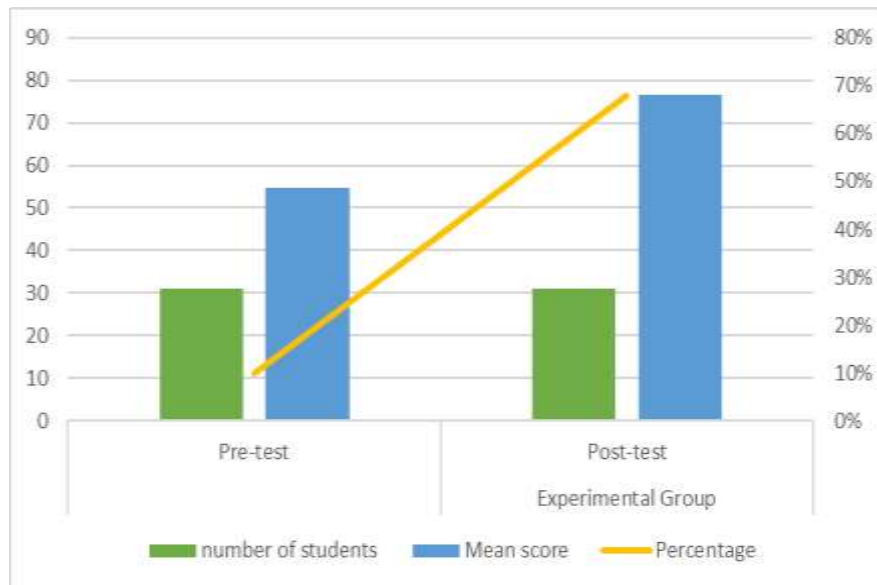


Figure 1. Pre-test and Post-test results of Experimental Group

The experimental group has a total of 31 students. Referring to the passing grade of the school which is 75.00, the result of the pre-test shows that only one student obtained good criteria, two students obtained average criteria, and 28 students obtained scores under 75.00. The findings show the mean score of students in pre-test in the experimental group was 54.68. However, the result of the post-test revealed that the score of the experimental group students significantly improved. The mean score of students in post-test in the experimental group increased by 76.45. If on the pre-test there were only three students (10%) passed the test, it rose by 68% on the post-test, twenty-one students passed the test.

Next, after analyzing the students' individual scores in experimental group, the researchers analyzed the results of the post-test for control group as presented in Figure 2:

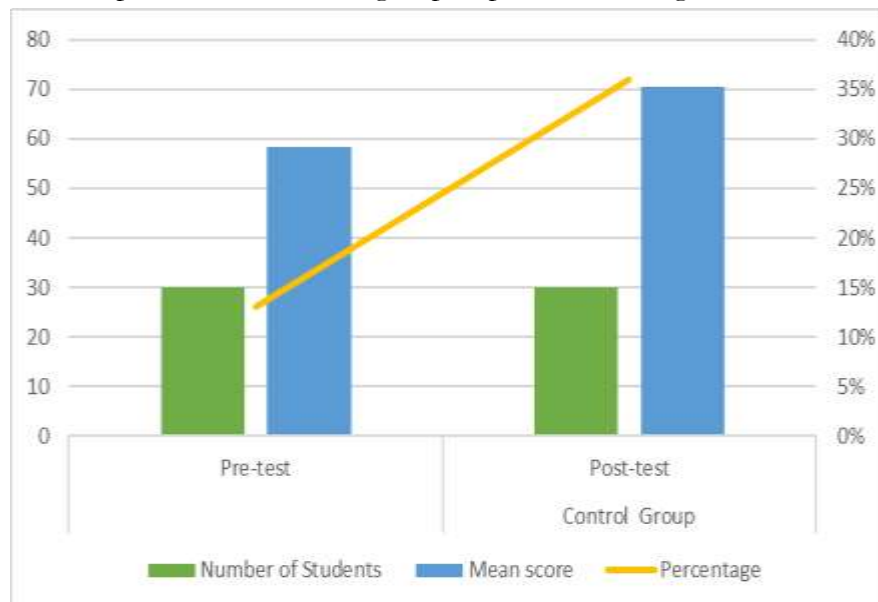


Figure 2. Pre-test and post-test result of the Control Group

In contrast to the experimental group, the control group comprises a total of 30 students. The pre-test results indicate that only one student achieved a good score, while three students met average criteria, and 26 students scored below 75.00. The data reveal that the mean score for the control group in the pre-test was 58.33. In comparison, the experimental group recorded a mean post-test score of 76.45, whereas the control group achieved a mean score of 70.50, resulting in a difference of

approximately 5.95 points. The experimental group experienced an increase of 21.77 points in their mean score, while the control group saw an increase of 12.17 points. Following the calculation of the mean scores for both the pre-test and post-test, the researchers proceeded to compute the mean deviation and square deviation to assess whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control groups.

The criterion of testing the hypothesis that if the t-counted is higher than the t-table is accepted. It means that the teaching treatment by employing shadowing technique significantly improved the students' listening skills. In contrast, the hypothesis is rejected if the t-counted is lower than the t-table. It means that the teaching treatment was not significantly effective in developing the students' listening skill.

To find out the significant difference in both experimental and control groups or test the hypothesis, the researchers computed the t-counted and the result was 6.14. The t-table was determined by applying a 0.05 significance level with the degree of freedom (df) $N_x + N_y - 2$ ($31 + 30 - 2 = 59$). It was found that the t-table of df 59 is 1.671. Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted because the t-test value is greater (6.14) than t-table (1.671), which means that employing shadowing technique can help develop students' listening skill.

DISCUSSION

The researchers conducted the treatment to the experimental group using shadowing technique. The treatment was conducted for seven meetings, excluding the pre-test and the post-test. Each meeting lasted for 90 minutes. Before starting the lessons, the researchers explained the topic of the lessons being taught by using the shadowing technique. In the first meeting, several students did not respond positively, probably because they did not understand the native speaker. In the second meeting, they began the initiative by asking questions about the topic even though they still could not catch what the native speaker said. In the next meeting, a few students began to work on the exercise when the audio was played, and the number continued to rise in each meeting. In the sixth meeting, most students could recognize the words of the context. It is because after they completed the exercise, they had to write down the words that they did not know the spelling and meaning of those words, then they practiced using those words in context, such as in sentences or dialogues, to remember the contents. In the seventh meeting, most students had to master the context they heard from the audio using shadowing technique, so they would not find it difficult to deduce the meaning from the context.

This study employed the shadowing technique to enhance the listening skills of students. The results of the t-test analysis indicated that the calculated t-value (6.14) exceeded the critical t-value (1.671). This finding supports the acceptance of the hypothesis, suggesting that the shadowing technique is effective in improving the listening skills of eleventh-grade EFL learners.

Employing shadowing technique encouraged students to imitate and repeat what they listened from the speakers. In this case, the students first practice listening to the speaker and after that they began to imitate the speakers' saying and practiced them. The students also practiced spelling the words they listened to, and then they found the meaning of those words. They did it by deducing the meaning of words from the context of what the speaker was talking about (Lestari, 2020). This could help the students increase their vocabulary mastery which promoted listening comprehension.

The results of this research support the previous research findings on the application of shadowing technique in teaching the listening skill. The previous study is important as a guide in conducting this study. There are several studies on using shadowing technique to improve listening skill. Fatimah (2017) carried out about using shadowing technique in teaching listening. She employed quasi-experimental research. Her research focused on skills to recognize vocabulary and distinguishing between positive and negative statements. She found that teaching listening comprehension using shadowing technique significantly affected students' listening comprehension. In the process of learning, the students became active listener, they began demonstrates interest and encourages continued speaking. Furthermore, shadowing can transform passive listening into active listening.

Zaidan (2021) carried out a research project about the effectiveness of Shadowing Technique to improve fifth semester students' listening comprehension. His research focused on skills to recognize the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and listening for specific information with authentic dialogues. He found that using shadowing technique improved students' listening skills significantly. As a result, the students can improve their listening skills, improve their pronunciation, be encouraged to make an effort to pronounce unfamiliar words and expand their English vocabulary. It means that using shadowing technique is effective for teaching listening comprehension.

Several implications of the results of this research for the teaching of the listening skill. Firstly, shadowing activity can enhance auditory processing. Shadowing is more likely to force the learners to actively process the spoken language in real-time. This can improve their ability to decode sounds and identify keywords and phrases. Secondly, the learners' pronunciation can be improved through shadowing. The learners can mimic the speaker's intonation and rhythm, and by doing this can gradually improve their pronunciation. Thirdly, shadowing activities potentially increase learners' focus and concentration. Engaging in shadowing necessitates sustained concentration and focus, which may enhance listening comprehension. Fourthly, the integration of shadowing in the learning process can improve learners' memory and recall. By repeating the spoken language helps to solidify the information in the listener's memory, which may improve recall and retention. Finally, having the progress in their listening skills, the learners become more confident and motivated to continue their learning.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate whether the implementation of the shadowing technique significantly enhanced the listening abilities of EFL learners. Analyzing the data obtained from both the pre-test and post-test, with a significance level set at 0.05 and 59 degrees of freedom, revealed that the calculated t-value (6.14) exceeded the critical t-value (1.671). Consequently, the researchers concluded that the shadowing technique is effective in fostering improvements in students' listening skills. Additionally, the students demonstrated advancements in their ability to recognize vocabulary within spoken texts and to infer meanings of words from their context. Therefore, the shadowing technique may serve as a valuable method to encourage active listening among students during listening exercises.

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