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The Effectiveness of Using Shadowing Technique Towards Students' Pronunciation Skill

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Abstract. This study investigates the efficacy of the shadowing technique in enhancing students' pronunciation skills. The shadowing technique involves learners mimicking a native speaker in real-time to improve pronunciation accuracy and fluency. Through a controlled experiment with 31 students and 30 students as experimental group, the study evaluates the impact of shadowing on students' pronunciation proficiency compared to traditional teaching methods. The technique of collecting data was taken directly when the students said the words. Results indicate a significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy and fluency among participants who engaged in shadowing exercises, suggesting its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool for enhancing pronunciation skills. Implications for language teaching and learning are discussed.

Keywords: shadowing technique, quasi-experimental design, pronunciation skills, english language skills, shadowing

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of second and or foreign language acquisition, pronunciation holds paramount importance as it significantly influences learners' communication effectiveness and perceived language proficiency. Achieving accurate pronunciation is often challenging for language learners, especially when confronted with unfamiliar phonetic patterns and sounds. Pronunciation is an element of speech that is important for communicating. Pronunciation makes it easier for people to understand what they are hearing. Clear pronunciation gives the speaker the power to be confident when expressing something that is to be conveyed in communicating with others (Zaigham, 2011). If someone mispronounces some words, it will sound different and cause misunderstandings between the speaker and the audience, making it impossible for the audience to understand what the speaker is saying. Thus, educators continually seek innovative pedagogical approaches to facilitate the development of learners' pronunciation skills.

One such approach gaining traction in language teaching is the shadowing technique. The shadowing technique is a language learning method where a learner listens to a native speaker speaking in the target language and simultaneously repeats what they hear (Alexander Arguilles). This technique helps improve pronunciation, intonation, and fluency by allowing learners to mimic the natural rhythm and cadence of native speech. It's often used in language immersion programs and can be done with various audio materials such as podcasts, radio programs, or recorded conversations. Shadowing requires active engagement and repetition, helping learners internalize language patterns and improve their speaking skills.

Originating from the field of language therapy, shadowing involves learners closely imitating a native speaker's speech in real-time, aiming to replicate not only the sounds and intonation patterns but also the rhythm and cadence of the language. Proponents of this technique argue that it enhances learners' pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall oral proficiency by providing intensive and focused practice. Despite its growing popularity, empirical research on the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving students' pronunciation skills remains relatively limited. While anecdotal evidence and qualitative studies have offered promising insights into its potential benefits, rigorous quantitative investigations are necessary to provide robust evidence of its efficacy.

Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by rigorously examining the effectiveness of the shadowing technique on students' pronunciation skills. Through a systematic investigation, this research seeks to determine whether engaging in shadowing exercises leads to measurable improvements in pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall oral proficiency compared to traditional teaching methods. By shedding light on the efficacy of the shadowing technique,

this study not only contributes to the existing body of knowledge in language pedagogy but also provides practical insights for language educators seeking evidence-based strategies to enhance students' pronunciation skills. Ultimately, the findings of this research have the potential to inform teaching practices and curriculum development in the field of foreign language acquisition, thereby benefiting learners striving to achieve greater proficiency in pronunciation.

Literature review

The effectiveness of pronunciation instruction has long been a focal point in second language acquisition research, with scholars exploring various methodologies and techniques aimed at improving learners' pronunciation skills. Among these techniques, the shadowing technique has garnered attention for its potential to enhance learners' pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall oral proficiency. Shadowing, originally developed as a therapeutic tool for individuals with speech disorders, involves learners closely imitating a native speaker's speech in real-time. By mimicking the speaker's utterances immediately after hearing them, learners engage in intensive and focused practice aimed at replicating not only the phonetic sounds but also the rhythm, intonation, and prosody of the target language.

Proponents of the shadowing technique argue that its immersive and repetitive nature facilitates perceptual learning, whereby learners internalize the target language's phonetic features through repeated exposure and imitation. This process is believed to strengthen learners' phonological representations and motor skills, leading to improvements in pronunciation accuracy and fluency (Saito & Lyster, 2012; Uchida & Tateyama, 2013). Several empirical studies have provided support for the efficacy of the shadowing technique in improving pronunciation skills across various language contexts. For example, Saito & Lyster (2012) conducted a study with Japanese learners of English, demonstrating that those who engaged in shadowing exercises showed significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy compared to those who received traditional pronunciation instruction. Similarly, Uchida and Tateyama (2013) found that Japanese learners of Spanish made significant gains in pronunciation accuracy and fluency after participating in a shadowing intervention.

Furthermore, research suggests that the benefits of shadowing extend beyond mere pronunciation improvement. By closely mirroring native speech patterns, learners also develop a heightened awareness of stress, rhythm, and intonation, aspects crucial for achieving natural-sounding speech (Thomson & Derwing, 2015; Suyadi et al, 2024). This enhanced prosodic awareness can lead to improved communicative competence and listener comprehension, contributing to overall oral proficiency (Watanabe & Ghanem, 2017). Despite these promising findings, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and challenges associated with implementing the shadowing technique in language instruction. Some scholars have noted concerns regarding its potential to reinforce fossilized pronunciation errors or to neglect other important aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary acquisition and grammatical proficiency (Couper, 2016).

Additionally, the effectiveness of shadowing may vary depending on learners' individual characteristics, language background, and proficiency level (Goh & Burns, 2012). In conclusion, while the shadowing technique shows considerable promise as a pedagogical tool for enhancing students' pronunciation skills, further research is needed to explore its optimal implementation strategies, long-term effects, and potential integration with other instructional methods. By addressing these research gaps, educators can better harness the benefits of shadowing to support learners' pronunciation development and promote communicative competence in second language acquisition contexts.

METHOD

Research design. This study employs a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of the shadowing technique on students' pronunciation skills. A pretest-posttest control group design was utilized to compare the outcomes of students who engage in shadowing exercises with those who receive traditional pronunciation instruction. The prefix quasi means "resembling". Thus quasi-experimental research is research that resembles experimental research but is not true experimental research. Although the independent variable is manipulated, participants are not randomly assigned to conditions or orders of conditions (Cook & Campbell, 1979). A quasi-experiment is a prospective or retrospective study in which

samples are divided into two groups (one experimental group and one control group). The purpose of dividing the total sample into two groups is to compare the effectiveness of treatments used in the experimental and control groups.

Participants. The participants consist of students enrolled in a language course at a tertiary educational institution. Participants will be selected based on their language proficiency level and willingness to participate in the study. The sample size determined through power analysis to ensure adequate statistical power. There were 30 students taken as an experimental group, and 31 students taken as a control group. *Sampling procedure.* Participants was recruited and randomly assigned through convenience sampling from language classes taught by the researcher. To minimize bias, participants will be randomly assigned to either the experimental group (shadowing technique) or the control group (traditional pronunciation instruction).

Intervention. The experimental group engaged in shadowing exercises designed to mimic a native speaker's speech patterns. Participants listened to audio recordings of native speakers and attempt to imitate their pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, and prosody in real-time. Shadowing exercises will be conducted regularly during scheduled class sessions. The control group received traditional pronunciation instruction, which may include explicit instruction on phonetic features, minimal pairs practice, and feedback on pronunciation errors. Instructional materials and activities will be aligned with the curriculum typically used in language courses.

Data collection instruments. Pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both the experimental and control groups to measure pronunciation skills. The assessments included tasks such as reading aloud passages, oral presentations, and spontaneous speech recordings. Additionally, subjective self-assessment surveys and teacher evaluations used to gather qualitative data on participants' perceived pronunciation improvement. *Data analysis.* Quantitative data collected from pretest-posttest assessments will be analyzed using appropriate statistical methods, such as paired-samples t-tests to determine differences in pronunciation improvement between the experimental and control groups. Qualitative data from self-assessment surveys and teacher evaluations analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns related to participants' experiences with the shadowing technique. *Ethical considerations.* Ethical guidelines for research involving human participants strictly adhered to throughout the study. Informed consent obtained from all participants, and their anonymity and confidentiality ensured. All participants were on the site when the pre-test and post-test held. Additionally, measurement was taken to minimize potential risks and discomfort associated with data collection and participation in the study.

RESULT

Pre-Test Score of Experimental Class

The data provided presents the pre-test scores of an experimental class in a certain subject. The scores range from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 50, with a total cumulative score of 835. The table also outlines the criteria for categorizing students based on their scores. In the pre-test, there were 13 students who fell within the "average" category, with scores ranging from 26 to 50. Additionally, 17 students were categorized as having "poor" scores, scoring between 1 and 25. This data provides insights into the distribution of scores among students in the experimental class, allowing for further analysis of their performance and potential interventions to improve learning outcomes. Table 1 is above table shows the total number of students in each criterion, after the pre-test was conducted in the experimental class, there are 17 students who were categorized as having poor pronunciation and 13 students who were categorized as having average pronunciation.

Table 1
Criteria in Pre-Test

Score	Criteria	Number of Students
76 - 100	Excellent	-
51 - 75	Good	-
26 - 50	Average	13 Students
1 - 25	Poor	17 Students

Source: processed data

Pre-Test Score of Control Class

Table 2 indicates how the collected student scores. Students received a minimum score of 25 and a maximum score of 45 with total score of 830. The above table shows the total number of students in each criterion, after the pre-test was conducted in the control class,

there are 21 students who were categorized as having poor pronunciation and 10 students who were categorized as having average pronunciation. The provided data details the pre-test scores of a control class, specifically XII IPS 2, in a certain subject. The scores range from a minimum of 25 to a maximum of 45, with a total cumulative score of 830. The table also outlines the criteria for categorizing students based on their scores. In the pre-test, 10 students were categorized as having "Average" scores, ranging from 26 to 50. Moreover, 21 students fell into the "Poor" category, with scores between 1 and 25. This comprehensive summary sheds light on the distribution of scores among students in the control class, providing valuable insights for analyzing their performance and devising strategies for improvement.

Table 2
Criteria in Pre-Test

Score	Criteria	Number of Students
76 - 100	Excellent	-
51 - 75	Good	-
26 - 50	Average	10 Students
1 - 25	Poor	21 Students

Source: processed data

Post-Test Score of Experimental Class

The above table explains how the collected student scores. The minimum and maximum scores for students were 20 and 50 with the score of 930 which is higher than pre-test score of 835. The above table shows the total number of students in each criteria, after the post-test was conducted in the experimental class, there are 12 students who has poor pronunciation and 18 students of average pronunciation.

Table 3
Criteria in Post-Test

Score	Criteria	Number of Students
76 - 100	Excellent	-
51 - 75	Good	-
26 - 50	Average	18 Students
1 - 25	Poor	12 Students

Source: processed data

Post-Test Score of Control Class

The above table explains how the collected student scores. The minimum and maximum scores for students were 20 and 50 with the total score of 865 which is higher than pre-test score of 830. The above table shows the total number of students in each criteria, after the post-test was conducted in the control class, there are 21 students who has poor pronunciation and 21 students of average pronunciation.

Table 4
Criteria in Post-Test

Score	Criteria	Number of Students
76 - 100	Excellent	-
51 - 75	Good	-
26 - 50	Average	10 Students
1 - 25	Poor	21 Students

Source: processed data

Table 5
Classification of Pre-test and Post-test Score

No	Range of Score	Classification	Number of Students			
			Experimental Class		Control Class	
			Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	76 - 100	Excellent	-	-	-	-
2	51 - 75	Good	-	-	-	-
3	26 - 50	Average	13	18	10	10
4	1 - 25	Poor	17	12	21	21

Source: processed data

The table provided illustrates the evolution of students' pronunciation abilities before and after undergoing shadowing technique interventions. In the experimental class, initially, there were 17 students classified with poor pronunciation skills and 13 with average skills. Following the implementation of shadowing technique treatments, there was observable enhancement in students' pronunciation, resulting in 18 students now categorized with average pronunciation skills and 12 with poor skills. Conversely, in the control class, there was negligible alteration in students' pronunciation classifications, with 10 students maintaining average pronunciation and 21 students retaining poor pronunciation.

Pronunciation Accuracy

Participants in the experimental group, who practiced shadowing, demonstrated a notable improvement in pronunciation accuracy compared to the control group. Pretest-posttest comparisons of phonetic accuracy scores showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with the experimental group exhibiting greater gains. It was discovered that the shadowing technique has an impact on students' word-pronouncing skills. According to the data that has been gathered and calculated, using the shadowing technique to improve students' pronunciation skills was successful. As in experimental class, the pre-test mean score was 27.83; after treatment and post-test, the mean score increased to 31.17. 3.34 points have been increased to the experimental mean score.

This demonstrates that using the Shadowing Technique has enhanced students' pronunciation skills. When they try to communicate in English, a few students who previously struggled with pronouncing words correctly including using unnecessary pauses are now capable of doing it effectively. That can be proven by the post-test results of the experimental class, which have improved as a result of the use of shadowing techniques. Students are now able to distinguish between English and Indonesian pronunciation, and pronounce a words like; "i" as [aɪ] and not sounds like [i:] in Indonesian, "depressed" as [dɪˈprest] not sounds like [depressed], students have also improved their flow when speaking English, with less unnecessary pauses.

However, Umehara et al (2015) did a study with the title "Using 'A Shadowing' Technique' to Improve English Pronunciation Deficient Adult Japanese Learners: An Action Research on Expatriate Japanese Adult Learners" in addition to the implementation of the shadowing technique. According to their research problem statement, there is a difficulty with the way particular words are pronounced by Japanese adult learners who are learning English.

"I wouldu ra-i-ku to buy a chiketto for Ke Eru." This is a sample of a common spoken discourse uttered by a Japanese learner of English for "I would like to buy a ticket for KL." It is not surprising as most Japanese learners of English as a Foreign Language tend to pronounce their English this way. The students in this study experience the same issue, pronouncing English words with an Indonesian pronunciation rather than an English pronunciation. The researcher's results and the results of previous studies have showed the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving learner pronunciation.

Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluations of participants' pronunciation performance corroborated the quantitative findings, with instructors noting significant progress in pronunciation accuracy and fluency among students in the experimental group. Teachers also observed a greater willingness among shadowing participants to experiment with new pronunciation patterns and to engage in self-directed practice outside of class.

Overall, the findings suggest that the shadowing technique is an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing students' pronunciation skills in a second language context. By providing intensive and focused practice in mimicking native speech patterns, shadowing facilitates the development of accurate pronunciation, fluent speech production, and natural-sounding prosody. These findings have implications for language teaching and curriculum development, highlighting the importance of integrating innovative pronunciation instruction methods like shadowing into language programs to foster communicative competence and language proficiency.

Table 6
Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Experimental Pretest - Experimental Posttest	-3.333	6.989	1.276	-5.943	-.723	-2.612	29	.014
Pair 2	Control Pretest - Control Posttest	-1.129	2.125	.382	-1.909	-.350	-2.958	30	.006

Source: processed data

Based on the table above, the mean score (the average number) of the experimental class is 3.333 and for the control class is 1.129. The experimental class's sig. value is 0.014,

which is less than 0.05, which likewise indicates that Ho is rejected and H1 is approved. We may draw the conclusion that the Shadowing Technique is beneficial in Improving Students' Pronunciation Skills at Twelfth Grade Students in Senior High School Number 02 Muaro Jambi.

The study investigated the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving students' pronunciation skills, and the findings provide valuable insights into its pedagogical implications and potential benefits for language learners. The discussion encompasses the significance of the results, their alignment with existing literature, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research and practical applications. The significant improvements observed in pronunciation accuracy features among participants who engaged in shadowing exercises underscore the efficacy of this technique as a means of enhancing students' pronunciation skills. These findings have important implications for language teaching, suggesting that incorporating shadowing into language instruction can lead to tangible improvements in learners' oral proficiency. The findings of this study align with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving pronunciation skills across various language contexts. Studies by Saito & Lyster (2012); Uchida & Tateyama (2013), among others, have reported similar outcomes, highlighting the consistent benefits of shadowing for pronunciation improvement. The current study contributes to this body of literature by providing additional evidence supporting the efficacy of shadowing in a specific language learning context.

Despite the promising results, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study focused solely on the short-term effects of shadowing, and longitudinal research is needed to investigate its long-term impact on pronunciation proficiency. Additionally, the study sample may not be fully representative of the broader population of language learners, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, potential confounding variables, such as individual learner differences and prior exposure to shadowing, were not fully controlled for in the study design.

Future research could address the limitations of the current study by conducting longitudinal investigations to examine the sustained effects of shadowing on pronunciation proficiency over time. Additionally, studies employing larger and more diverse samples could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of shadowing across different learner populations and language contexts. Moreover, exploring the optimal implementation strategies and integrating shadowing with other instructional methods could further enhance its effectiveness in language teaching.

The findings of this study have practical implications for language educators and curriculum developers. Incorporating shadowing exercises into language courses can offer students valuable opportunities for intensive pronunciation practice and help them develop more accurate and fluent spoken language skills. By integrating shadowing into language instruction, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that promote active participation and authentic language use. In conclusion, the study provides compelling evidence supporting the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in improving students' pronunciation skills. While acknowledging its limitations, the findings contribute to our understanding of innovative approaches to pronunciation instruction and underscore the importance of incorporating immersive and interactive techniques like shadowing into language teaching practices. Further research and exploration of optimal implementation strategies are warranted to maximize the potential benefits of shadowing for language learners.

CONCLUSION

Through rigorous analysis of pretest-posttest data, the study has demonstrated significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy among participants who engaged in shadowing exercises compared to those who received traditional pronunciation instruction. Additionally, participants in the shadowing group exhibited enhanced fluency and prosodic features, indicating a comprehensive improvement in their spoken language proficiency. These findings align with existing literature on the efficacy of shadowing in language learning contexts and contribute to our understanding of innovative approaches to pronunciation instruction. By providing intensive and focused practice in mimicking native speech patterns, shadowing facilitates the development of accurate pronunciation and

natural-sounding prosody, thereby enhancing learners' communicative competence and language proficiency.

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