

Teacher and EFL Primary School Students' Perspectives on the Shadowing Technique for Pronunciation Instruction

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Abstract

This study elaborates the perspectives of teachers and primary school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) regarding the application of the shadowing technique for pronunciation. Scholars have acknowledged shadowing as an effective technique for improving learners' pronunciation, where pupils replicate speech as carefully and promptly as possible following a speaker. This qualitative study was carried out at MIN 2 Langsa throughout the academic year of 2022-2023. Subject of the research was an English teacher and 30 fifth-grade pupils selected purposively. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with an EFL teacher and focus group discussions with the primary school students, followed by classroom observations to provide a deeper comprehension of the actual use of the method. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes in participants' responses. Results revealed that teacher considered the technique effective for enhancing students' speech accuracy, rhythm, and intonation. It offers students an immediate opportunity to correct their pronunciation and actively involves them in learning English, particularly in terms of pronunciation. The learners primarily viewed shadowing activity as an enjoyable exercise, where they practiced English chorally. This technique fosters students' confidence in the English classroom by alleviating individual pressure, while all participants learn and practice English together. Thus, it can be a powerful tool for enhancing young learners' pronunciation in an engaging way. English teachers might employ the technique as an alternative strategy to engage young learners in foreign language acquisition, particularly in pronunciation.

Keywords— instruction, pronunciation, shadowing, stechnique

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi pendidik dan murid sekolah dasar yang belajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (*EFL*) mengenai penerapan teknik *shadowing* untuk pembelajaran pelafalan. Para ahli mengakui pendekatan *shadowing* merupakan salah satu metode yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pelafalan siswa, di mana siswa menirukan ucapan dengan cermat dengan mengikuti pembicara. Penelitian kualitatif ini dilakukan di MIN 2 Langsa pada tahun ajaran 2022-2023. Subjek penelitian ini adalah seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan 30 murid kelas lima yang dipilih secara purposif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru bahasa Inggris dan diskusi kelompok terfokus dengan murid sekolah dasar, diikuti dengan observasi kelas untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang penggunaan teknik *shadowing*. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan guru berpandangan teknik *shadowing* merupakan pendekatan yang sangat baik untuk meningkatkan akurasi, ritme, dan intonasi bicara siswa dalam bahasa asing. Teknik ini memberikan kesempatan langsung kepada murid untuk memperbaiki kesalahan pengucapan dan melibatkan mereka dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, terutama dalam hal pengucapan secara aktif. Para murid berpandangan, pembelajaran menjadi lebih menyenangkan, di mana mereka berlatih bahasa Inggris secara lisan. Strategi ini menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri murid karena pembelajaran berlangsung secara kolaboratif dan mereka berlatih bahasa Inggris Bersama. Pengajar Bahasa Inggris untuk tingkat pemula dapat menerapkan metode ini dalam pembelajaran untuk membangun ketertarikan pembelajar dan membangun keterampilan mereka dalam berbahasa asing, khususnya pada aspek pengucapan.

Keywords— *pengajaran, pengucapan, shadowing, teknik*

1. Introduction

Teaching pronunciation to young learners has always been a crucial yet challenging aspect of language instruction. According to Astina (2020), appropriate media, the influence of mother tongue, and unmotivated students are the issues that should be concern about in the process of pronunciation learning. Pronunciation is not merely about producing sounds correctly; it also involves intonation, stress patterns, rhythm, and the melody of speech (Danisti, V., Masita, E., & Thabran, 2023). These components are necessary for successful

second language communication, particularly for young learners who are still developing their ability to pronounce words correctly. Despite its significance, teaching pronunciation is frequently disregarded in favor of teaching vocabulary, grammar, and other language skills (Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, 2016). Whereas, it is easier to teach young learners to speak or master a language than it is for adults, so it is important that they learn how to pronounce words correctly. Many teachers, however, struggle to discover the right pronunciation teaching technique (Grandyna, 2018).

In fact, there are numerous techniques in teaching pronunciation. Using songs as media is one of the examples. Songs can assist young learners to improve their English pronunciation by listening and repeating to the lyrics of the songs (Palupi, D., Prasetyaningsih, E. T., Bilandari., 2022). Film is another media to teach pronunciation. Rahma, S., & Mubarok (2021) say that through film, students can learn dubbing and subtitling to support pronunciation, speaking, and listening abilities. This kind of audio-visual media contributes to develop students' enthusiasm in learning (Prayogo & Lestari, 2022). While media and techniques can help students improve their pronunciation, shadowing is also seen as an important alternative that can be used to improve pronunciation in the classroom.

In the process of teaching, shadowing technique has gained attention as a potentially effective approach for pronunciation instruction. Ulfa, S. T., & Fatimah (2019) state that shadowing involves learners listening to a native or fluent speaker's speech and then repeating it almost simultaneously, focusing on imitating the speaker's pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. Moreover, Kheider (2015) says that shadowing is the process of mimicking a particular speaking pattern. In other words, the shadowed echoes what the speaker says while listening to the audio input through headphones. This argument is to support what Arguelles defines about shadowing that it is a method of language

learning in which a student concurrently repeats what they hear while listening to a recording of the target language. The goal of shadowing is to make you concentrate on the sounds of your target language and practice pronouncing words like a native speaker (Abdurazakhova, 2024). This technique is believed to improve learners' phonetic skills, listening abilities, and speech fluency by exposing them to authentic language input and requiring immediate oral response. On other words, helping teachers and students organize their teaching-learning processes is the aim of the shadowing technique. Thus, the shadowing technique involves having the listener repeat or instantly introduce the product speech (A Salim & Narasima, 2020). Shadowing techniques involves teachers to demonstrate proper pronunciation, which then replicate by learners. Demonstration techniques contribute to enhance students' learning outcomes (Endayani, Agustina, & Rina, 2020).

Several studies have explored the shadowing technique in language teaching with varying degrees of success. For instance, Utami, H., & Morganna (2022) argued that shadowing can enhance learners' listening comprehension at SMPN 1 Curup Timur in Bengkulu, especially for teenage learners of English. The study found that repeated shadowing exercises helped them to achieve better listening accuracy and pronunciation fluency. However, the research did not specifically address young learners or focus exclusively on pronunciation. Besides, Sugiarto, R., Prihantoro, P., & Edy (2020) also conducted a study on 40 tertiary English students selected randomly from university level and found that shadowing improved pronunciation. The study highlighted how shadowing assists learners in noticing and reproducing speech patterns, thereby enhancing their phonological awareness. Nevertheless, their study also concentrated on older learners rather than young children. In addition, Ardana (2023) reveals that shadowing technique effects senior high school students' pronunciation ability. Her research revealed that students who received instruction in the shadowing technique improved their ability to pronounce words in English and

less frequently in Indonesian, and that some students who had previously been classified as having poor pronunciation skills now met the average criteria.

Furthermore, an investigation of the impact of shadowing on students also concluded that shadowing helped improve both listening and pronunciation skills. The study emphasized the importance of integrating shadowing with other learning activities to maximize pronunciation gains. Hamada, Y., & Suzuki (2024) adds that the most significant feature of shadowing is simultaneity. However, it did not specifically analyze the effect of shadowing on the pronunciation development of young learners, whose language acquisition process differs significantly from that of older students.

While previous studies have shown some benefits of using the shadowing technique for improving listening and pronunciation skills, most research has focused on adult or adolescent learners, with little attention given to young learners. The unique cognitive and linguistic characteristics of young learners—such as their ability to acquire new sounds more easily than older learners, their shorter attention spans, and the need for engaging and interactive teaching methods—require tailored approaches in pronunciation instruction. Additionally, there is limited research on young learners' perspective in the learning of pronunciation by using shadowing technique.

Based on the elaboration above, the gap between the previous studies and the current research is evident. One apparent difference is the focus on the level of learners. Where the existing research emphasized adult learners, this research emphasizes younger students who learn at secondary levels. It seems more significant since young agers are considered fast learners, especially in imitating others, just like what shadowing teaches us to learn a language's pronunciation. Furthermore, the existing literature also lacks detailed analysis of how shadowing could be adapted to suit the needs of young learners, taking into account factors such as the choice of materials, the length and frequency

of shadowing exercises, and the role of feedback from instructors. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of the shadowing technique's potential and limitations in teaching pronunciation to young learners for integrating particular instruction for young learners should consider their specific developmental needs (Idami, 2022). Thus, this study seeks to figure out how the teacher and students perceive on the use of shadowing technique in pronunciation instruction.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology to examine the viewpoints of both teachers and students regarding the implementation of the shadowing technique in pronunciation instruction. According to (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002), qualitative research seeks to explore problems related to the comprehension of the significance and experiential aspects of human existence and social environments. Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger (2020) assert that qualitative research aims to comprehend the essence of phenomena, notably in elucidating observed occurrences, assessing intricate multi-faceted treatments, and prioritizing intervention improvement. A qualitative approach facilitates a comprehensive examination of participants' experiences, attitudes, and views of this teaching style. This qualitative study examines the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers on the shadowing approach. It reveals personal narratives regarding the influence of the shadowing technique on pronunciation acquisition, explores the motivations and obstacles faced by both educators and learners throughout the educational journey, and records the application of the technique by instructors along with the immediate reactions from students. A qualitative research approach provides an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and utilization of the shadowing technique by both students and teachers.

The research subjects are a teacher and students. In qualitative research, sampling aims to acquire comprehensive understanding of a situation or event, or to explore various facets of an individual, presuming that the individual is representative of the group and will thus offer insights into the group (Kumar, 2011). The research encompassed two cohorts of participants: teacher and learners. The teacher is an English language instructor proficient in teaching pronunciation and experienced in employing the shadowing technique and students who have firsthand experience in learning pronunciation through the shadowing technique. Purposive sampling was employed to choose individuals who satisfy the inclusion criteria of having utilized or undergone shadowing in pronunciation practice involving an English teacher and 30 learners.

The study employed three primary data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. In a semi-structured interview, the researchers adhere to a rigorous procedure and seek responses to a predetermined set of questions using personal information (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The researchers conducted interviews with the teacher to investigate her experiences, instructional methods, and views on the efficacy of the shadowing strategy in enhancing students' pronunciation.

The researchers conducted focus group discussion to examine learners' experiences and perspectives on the shadowing approach in a conversational context. They intentionally chose information-rich participants in qualitative research to guarantee the provision of essential data (Kumar, 2011). Consequently, the researchers selected 10 students for the focus discussion group. This approach fosters student participation, resulting in a more profound examination of their perspectives on the technique. Twelve weeks of observational sessions preceded the focus group discussion.

During observation, the researchers collected data and information primarily based on their observations, without conducting an interview. This method provided the benefit of collecting data and information at the precise location and moment of an event, independent of participant consent (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The researchers incorporated observations to record the immediate application of the shadowing approach in pronunciation courses. This study utilized participant observation, a methodology in which a researcher engages in the everyday activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group to gain insight into the explicit and implicit dimensions of their life routines and culture (Dewalt & DeWal, 2011). In this study, the researchers used classroom observation to gather contextual data on student-teacher interactions and practical obstacles encountered during the instructional and learning process through the shadowing technique.

The researchers performed a thematic analysis of the data. It involves the identification, analysis, and interpretation (Christou, 2023). The steps using (Braun & Clarke (2006) framework, including familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing report. In coding the instruments, the researchers utilized manual coding instrument, namely using word document with comments and highlight. To verify the findings, the researchers collect data from multiple sources for validation. This encompasses observations throughout the learning process, focus group discussions, and interviews with participants and the teacher regarding their experiences.

3. Findings and Discussions

The study examined the viewpoints of teachers as well as students about the implementation of the shadowing technique for pronunciation teaching in a primary EFL context. Data obtained from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations sought to provide a

comprehensive understanding of the technique's influence on pronunciation acquisition. The results are summarized as follows:

a. Teacher's viewpoints on employing shadowing technique for teaching pronunciation.

The instructor expressed a favorable view regarding the implementation of the shadowing approach, since it enhanced students' pronunciation reliability. She stated that shadowing assisted students in articulating words with greater clarity and precision. Consistent exposure to the production sound enables learners to replicate it. This exposure allows them to reproduce the sound and acquire practice.

Shadowing is a method in which students auditory process a speaker's words and subsequently replicate them. Throughout the educational process, the instructor articulates words audibly while the students replicate them. The imitation activity enables the student to replicate sounds precisely. This aids in mastering the accurate pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds. Research by Sugiarto, Prihantoro, & Edy, (2020) illustrates a beneficial effect of the strategy on students' English pronunciation. Their English pronunciation included elements such as monophthongs, diphthongs, triphthongs, semi-vowels, consonants, consonant clusters, strong and weak forms, linking phonemes, syllable stress, sentence emphasis, rhythm, pitch, and intonation. To achieve comprehensible pronunciation, it is essential to cultivate certain elements. Pronunciation intelligibility refers to the capacity to discern the words spoken by a speaker in sequence, commonly assessed through listeners transcribing or recording the words or phrases read aloud by speaker (Pennington, 2021). Intelligence denotes the capacity for articulate and coherent communication. This practice facilitates the enhancement of learners' listening skills. As previously, they must closely observe the teacher's enunciation and pace. This technique of active listening resulted in enhanced comprehension and

overall linguistic skills. Hamada (2018) posits that novice learners should commence with shadowing to enhance their speaking abilities through listening. This task may enhance students' self-efficacy as they are just reiterating what they hear and articulating the target language, without yet constructing their own sentences. Listening practice enhances learners' capacity to identify words and phrases, forming the basis of effective communication.

Furthermore, the instructor emphasized that shadowing was useful in enhancing the pronunciation of frequently misarticulated sounds. Certain learners see the articulation of specific sounds, such as in the phrases 'three', 'they', and 'there', as daunting. Shadowing enables students to obtain quick feedback on their pronunciation, and the rigorous repetition of words and feedback fosters the enhancement of correctness. Researchers discovered that the shadowing strategy is advantageous for improving pupils' speaking fluency. By mimicking sound creation, pupils were compelled to articulate speech more rapidly, so diminishing hesitations and enhancing the ease of their speech. The results correspond with prior studies indicating that shadowing provides frequent exposure to genuine language models, hence improving learners' phonetic awareness.

The accurate mimicry of native speech aids pupils in internalizing correct sound articulation, facilitating the transfer of these skills to spontaneous speaking. Ev & Sarıçoban (2023) assert that most participants in their study cultivated favorable attitudes toward speaking skills and had increased willingness to engage in communication activities. Nguyen & Thuong (2024) find that the shadowing strategy markedly improves learners' speaking abilities in four areas: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The focus on real-time continuous speech production, which compels learners to adjust to native-like speech patterns, underlines shadowing's role in enhancing fluency. This

technique facilitates accelerated cognitive processing of words, minimizes pauses, and postures more assured pronunciation.

Furthermore, the teacher emphasized that specific obstacles arose in implementing the method, as learners only imitated the sounds without comprehending their meanings, thus efforts for long term retention is required. The teacher must ensure her pronunciation is accurate; otherwise, learners may mimic mistakes, that reinforcing improper pronunciation habits. The large classroom setting was also a significant obstacle, since it hindered the teacher's ability to ensure that each student accurately imitated what was being taught. Nonetheless, the strategy was successfully implemented, as the teacher asserts that during the learning process, all students enthusiastically mimic the teacher's pronunciation. This is evident in their vocal and harmonious enunciation of the word.

Many pupils found the techniques enjoyable as it facilitates their active engagement in the learning process. Teacher observed that students participated in lessons due to the necessity of active listening and imitation. The endeavor to replicate the teacher's speech, perceived as a game, inspired the students. The teacher employs shadowing technique during the learning process, concentrating on phonetic practice and vocabulary enhancement. Additional research indicates that students remained motivated throughout the teaching and learning process; 2) their feedback regarding their learning experience was predominantly positive; and 3) they exhibited notable improvements in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Agus Salim, Terasne, & Narasima, 2020).

b. Students' perspective regarding the application of the shadowing technique in teaching pronunciation.

Students, particularly those in the focus group, indicated that an increased confidence in articulating new word and sounds. One of the students remarked, "We enhance our English skills by reiterating words demonstrated by our instructors." I found it easy to articulate the word as the teacher enunciated the sound audibly and we consistently repeated it together. Several individuals proposed that shadowing enabled them to identify and promptly rectify their errors, as the instructor offered rapid feedback and assisted them in discerning the accurate pronunciation. Teachers frequently offer pronunciation modifications related to phonemes and words (Couper, 2019). Huang & Jia (2016) assert that the majority of educators and learners concur that corrective feedback is both essential and consequential, as numerous pupils continue to encounter difficulties with pronunciation. It is recommended that feedback be given soon following students' presentations or after their English practice sessions. Teachers' corrective feedback is crucial as it aids pupils in rectifying mispronunciations and mistakes. Certain learners may remain oblivious to their errors until they obtain feedback.

Additionally, students observed that acquiring English using the shadowing technique facilitates their learning process. This occurs due to their practice of choral vocabulary pronunciation. One of the students indicated, "I do not understand English because I do not speak it, but I enjoy learning English as I practice the vocabulary with friends, which facilitates my memorization of words when we articulate them loudly." Choral activities foster an engaging learning atmosphere (Wati, 2022). All students engage in vocabulary practice, which may subsequently alleviate strain on particular individuals. When students engage in vocabulary drill collectively, they may discern accurate pronunciation by listening to words articulated by their instructor and fellow learners. Choral

activities build an engaging, participatory, and supportive educational environment through participation, repetition, and cooperation. Students exhibit a favorable disposition towards the implementation of shadowing techniques in pronunciation acquisition, as it offers numerous benefits (Rumpa, Rombepajung, & Kumayas, 2023); it also influences the enhancement of students' pronunciation proficiency (Utami & Morganna, 2022).

Furthermore, the students believe that shadowing among peers enhances their motivation to acquire English pronunciation. Shadowing approaches enhance motivational elements. This (Rosyidi, Paris, & Masyudi, 2022). This strategy allows learners to allocate time to listen to the audio of a native speaker or their instructor, thereafter imitating the sound to achieve accurate pronunciation. Immediate imitation cultivates a sense of achievement as individuals actively listen and practice. The activity also establishes an interactive learning model as participants listen to and repeat the phrases they hear. Both teachers and students agreed that corrective feedback is not only important but necessary since most students still have pronunciation problems and the best time to provide corrective feedback is soon after presentation. The feedback allows the learners to identify weaknesses and improve their practice.

4. Conclusion

Shadowing technique is an effective method for enhancing speech in language learners. It enables pupils to engage with the sounds and language rhythm, thus improving their speaking and listening abilities. Educators can modify this adaptable technique for various levels and educational circumstances. Both teacher and learners possess favorable views on the application of the technique in learning pronunciation, as it enhances their clarity and promotes fluency and confidence among EFL primary school pupils. They consider it an essential strategy for teaching pronunciation. It boosts young learners' pronunciation abilities and cultivates a more engaged and motivated

learning environment. English teachers may employ simple rhymes that align with the students' proficiency level. Promoting repeated practice was crucial for reinforcing learning, as repetition assists learners in internalizing sounds, rhythms, and stress patterns. The shadowing technique is suggested to be implemented in conjunction with other methods, including phonics instruction, minimal pair drills, storytelling, role play, and reading aloud, as not all learners benefit from auditory learning. Consequently, the integration of techniques accommodates diverse learning preferences and develops skills.

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