ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SHADOWING TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study indicates how shadowing techniques are essential in shaping the pronunciation of English as a Foreign Language students. The research employed a Quantitative method: "Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. "It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations." (Bhandari, 2023, para. 1) with a Pre-Test/Post-Test Design among 30 EFL students in a particular learning center. The researcher divided students into two groups (15 for the control group and 15 for the experimental group). Throughout the research, the experimental group was asked to follow the rules of shadowing, such as repeating every word right after a native speaker on a YouTube video, while the control group used traditional methods, such as reading aloud, teacher modeling, and dictation exercises. The current results are satisfactory: 1) after two months of practicing shadowing techniques, students can pronounce almost all English words accurately and fluently without difficulties; 2) students with poor pronunciation skills have been improved to an average level now; 3) they have benefited from shadowing to improve not only pronunciation or intonation but also listening skills. Hence, at the end of the research, the results have demonstrated that shadowing techniques can significantly improve both students' speaking and listening skills.

Keywords: shadowing techniques, pronunciation and listening skills, control group, experimental group, EFL students.

Introduction

These days, the number of people learning English as a second language is increasing considerably across the globe. In terms of speaking not only in English but also in other languages, pronunciation is central to communication. If you are learning a foreign language, in particular English, you should pronounce words correctly to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, various techniques can help individuals to learn a language easily, one of which is known as shadowing. Shadowing is an effective tool if you want to improve your pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation by imitating native speakers. Alongside pronunciation, you will be more likely to strengthen your listening

too. According to Ev & Sarıçoban. (2024, p. 45), the shadowing technique has proven to be an effective method for helping B1-level EFL learners develop positive attitudes toward their speaking skills and become more active during speaking tasks. Moreover, learners do not need to spend much money, as they can boost their pronunciation skills at home by watching YouTube videos.

Definition of shadowing technique

Shadowing has been defined in various ways by different researchers. Hamada, Y. (2012) noted that shadowing was originally used to train interpreters. In recent decades, shadowing has grabbed the attention of language teachers and been introduced to teaching a foreign language in schools.

Barkov, M. (2022) stated in his article that "shadowing is a technique in which language learners repeat aural stimuli in a foreign language without a delay".

Shadowing in teaching involves a student following an instructor, who provides guidance, inspiration, and encouragement to adopt methods they might not have otherwise observed (Ende, J. 2019).

Hsieh et al. (2013) suggest that employing shadowing technique, originally introduced for interpreters, can significantly improve the intonation of EFL learners.

Based on various expert definitions, the author concludes that shadowing is a technique that includes listening and immediately repeating what a native speaker says on a video with script first, then without. Language learners can listen to the native speakers along with imitating them which is more likely to help to improve both listening and pronunciation skills at home or throughout classes with the help of a teacher.

Methodology

Method: The research examines the efficacy of shadowing techniques on students at a particular learning center. For this experiment, the researcher employs a quantitative method: "Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. "It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations." (Bhandari, 2023, para. 1) with a pre-test/post-test design to examine the impact of shadowing techniques on EFL students' pronunciation and listening skills.

Participants: The study includes 30 EFL learners, aged 17-18, from a specific learning center. The participants were divided into two groups – control (15 students) and experimental (15 students). They were selected randomly to avoid bias.

Research Design: A pre-test/post-test design was employed. Both groups were tested to diagnose their level before the experiment. The experimental group practiced the shadowing techniques, while the control group trained traditional techniques, including reading aloud, teacher modeling, and dictation. After two months, a post-test was carried out to compare the changes.

Procedure: The experimental group practiced the shadowing in 45-minute sessions, three times per week. At first, they used a script, which was later removed. Meanwhile, the control group followed standard pronunciation exercises without employing the shadowing technique.

Results

The results of the study indicate that the shadowing technique had a notable impact on the pronunciation and listening skills of the experimental group. Prior to the experiment, both experimental and control groups performed at the same level. However, after two months of practicing shadowing technique, the experimental group demonstrated noticeable progress. Their average score improved significantly, reaching 85.2 out of 100, while the control group which did not follow daily shadowing practices, represented a more moderate increase, with an average score of 73.4. The most remarkable improvements were noticed in intonation and word stress, showing that shadowing boosted efficiently learners' phonetic awareness and general pronunciation accuracy. Moreover, students in the experimental group reacted positively to the techniques, reporting significantly increased confidence to speak fluently and expressing themselves more naturally in conversations. This suggests that shadowing not only enhance pronunciation accuracy or listening skills but also self-esteem which considered the most crucial one in learning foreign languages.

Conclusion

The study aimed to enhance the pronunciation skills of EFL students through shadowing techniques. The findings revealed that the experimental group showed a significant improvement in both areas compared to the control group. The results suggest that shadowing is a highly effective tool to boost pronunciation, particularly such aspects, including intonation and word stress, alongside fostering listening comprehension. However, the experiment was conducted in a relatively short time with the limited number of EFL learners, which may affect generalizability of the findings. Further research could explore the long-term effects of shadowing techniques with different proficiency levels and larger participant groups.

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