

IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY THROUGH SHADOWING TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Shadowing has been used for years and has led to better listening skill. This study was aimed to observe the use of Shadowing to improve students' ability in listening comprehension. It was conducted by using classroom action. The subject of the research was one group out of four groups of the first semester students' of English Department of Nommensen KHBP university which is consisted of 35 students. Listening test, observation sheets and diary notes were employed to collect the data. The result showed that the students listening ability improved through the implementing of shadowing technique. It was showed by the mean score that increased from 58.43 to 79.45 in the end of the cycle. The observation and diary notes also showed that the students felt better, easier, and interesting to learn listening that leading to the acquirement of more successful listening comprehension skill. Therefore, it can be concluded that shadowing technique could be used to improve students' ability in listening comprehension.

Keywords: *Listening comprehension, shadowing technique, students' ability, teaching listening*

Introduction

As global language, English has been taught in Indonesia at a very young level. As a developing country, Indonesia has included English in the curriculum as one of the compulsory subjects to be taught since junior high school. Learning and teaching English has four skills to be mastered, namely: listening (understanding spoken language), speaking (producing spoken language), reading (understand written language), and writing (producing written language). Students need to be able to achieve those skills in order to get successful in English.

As years by, the role of listening skill in English education has more emphasized than before. It is included in the curriculum. But it is not easy to teach this kind of skill. Listening skills is one of the most important skill yet difficult to be learned yet. As Rost, 2011 stated, listening is a complex activity because listening is receiving what the speaker actually says; constructing and representing meaning; negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding; and creating meaning through, imagination and empathy. Another thing that make listening difficult is that listening involves understanding a speakers' accent and

pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, and grasping the meaning (Banat, 2015, p. 52).

In line with those things, there are some major problems on listening namely, memory strategy, intonation patterns, difficulty to answer Wh-questions, and unclear pronunciation (chao 2013). While Bingo, 2014 stated the other difficulties encounter the learner are the quality of recording material, culture differences, unfamiliar vocabularies, length and speech of listening, lack of concentration, and physical condition. Problems on linguistics knowledge (such as phonemes, words, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and accent) and non-linguistics knowledge (such as topic and main idea, general knowledge about the world) make listening difficult for the students.

Meanwhile for ESL teacher, the teaching listening skill is still neglected in the teaching process (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011, p. 977), because there is a belief that the listening skill will develop naturally within the process of language learning (Hamouda, 2013, p.114). This make teachers and students have serious problems in listening comprehension. However, some of students still had another problem such as anxiety and confused, did not focus about listening the audio and most of them are passive learners.

Thus, under those circumstances above, the development and implementation of effective

teaching technique for listening is highly necessary. There are some techniques that can be used in teaching listening. One of them is shadowing technique. Thus this paper will explore shadowing technique as an effective method to improve students' listening ability.

Listening can be defined as the process of understanding speech in a second language or foreign language (Richard and Lockhart, 1994) that involves many things such as accent, grammar, pronunciation and meaning. It is receiving the transfer of images, impressions, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions from the speaker.

Chofifah and Kumalarini stated that listening seems to be the first skill which is needed to be taught before other skill (2013, p.2). Most of learners spend more time listening to the foreign language than producing it. The ability to understand a native speaker or a recorded speech testifies to a student's confidence in communication. They can only talk sensibly when they can understand what is said to them. Therefore, listening as a chief constituent plays an important role in language learning and teaching.

Listening is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all above and interpret it within the immediate as well as the large socio-cultural context of the utterance (Saputra, 2014, p.167)

Richard (2008) stated there are two different perspectives of listening, namely listening as comprehension (the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening and based on the view on the assumption that the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse) and listening as acquisition (based on the assumption that the role of listening in language program is to help develop learners' abilities to understand things they listen).

As an active process, in listening comprehension, listeners analyze what they hear and interpret it on the basis of linguistic and their knowledge of the topic. It is more than just hearing what native speaker said, but it is the ability to understand the meaning of the words we hear and relate them to some ways such as prior linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge.

Teaching listening is the process of learning in which the knowledge transfers through the sound or voice of the teacher to students. It is

a complex activity that can be done to help the students develop their listening comprehension ability from listen to the sound to get and interpret the message of spoken discourse. The aim of this is to teach the listeners how to listen, help learners to become aware of and regulate the process that can improve their listening comprehension ability.

In teaching listening, teachers need to choose listening material and devise listening tasks. They should think of giving the students something realistic to listen to and prepare the students for coping with listening in real life. In choosing listening material, it should be something that relevant to the students' need and interest and also suited to their level of knowledge. It should be varied and cover most listening situations such as song, poems, stories, radio and TV broadcasts, lectures, conversations, announcements, news reports, advertisements. Listening exercises that commonly observed in classrooms is listening to a passage or conversation and answer questions related to audios.

There are 3 phases of teaching listening. They are pre-listening activities that is to establish a framework for listening so that learners do not approach the listening practice with no points of references (knowledge schema), while listening that is tasks carried out during or after listening that directly require comprehension of the spoken material by using various kinds of techniques, and post-listening activities in which the students take the information they have gained from the listening passage and use it for another purpose. These three phases are always involved in teaching listening.

Shadowing can serve both as practice for listening and for speaking under the general rule. As Hamada (2013) stated if the students lack sufficient phoneme perception skills (the skill to recognize the sound they are listening to), shadowing should be used only as listening practice; once they are able to catch the sound they are listening to or if they already have good phoneme perception skills, shadowing can be used as a speaking ability.

At the beginning, shadowing was used for training interpreters, then, in the current decade it's been incorporated into teaching a foreign language. The basic definition of shadowing is a paced, auditory tracking task which involves the immediate vocalization of auditory presented stimuli (Lambert, 1992, p. 266). In this technique the subject is asked to repeat one of them word by word or phrase by phrase (Cherry, 1953, p. 976). This technique is more than a passive activity. It is an active activity in which learners track the heard

speech and vocalize it as clearly as possible while simultaneously listening (Tamai, 1997). This learning technique enable students to repeat the sound that heard with a little delay and produce it like it's pronounce. The process of repeating incoming speech and monitoring the shadowed material involves many areas of the students' brains especially the language center. Then this technique will improve the students to comprehend by the way of reproducing the same spoken text as the speaker said in the audio file. Thus, Shadowing benefit students' listening process as follows: the bottom-up processing at the micro level is activated, and this processing helps more information to be passed on the macro-level analysis, thereby activating top-down processing (Tamai, 1992).

According to Hamada (2013), there are five important rules to use shadowing as listening practice:

1. Since shadowing is demanding, both the teacher and students should understand the mechanism and purpose of the technique to keep the students concentrated and motivated.
2. Shadowing should be used intensively for the short period of time only. It will be difficult for the students to maintain motivation for repetitive and demanding nature of shadowing in long time.
3. Research shows that five or six repetition is enough. Once the students shadow the same text that times, they should move on to a different text.
4. The source or material of listening should match the listening goal.
5. Students should understand the content of the target material before working on the technique, but the teacher should remind them to focus on the phonological features rather than meaning while shadowing.

There are few points to note to use shadowing for listening comprehension improvement namely, producing output and practicing shadowing along with other activities such as reading silently and simply listening. It leads to development of procedures using shadowing technique like the model used here by Hamada (2012) on the figure below.

Table 1
Procedure of Shadowing Technique by Hamada

| Steps | Procedure |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Dictation cloze | Fill in the blanks of written |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Mumbling | scripts. Silently shadow the incoming sounds without scripts. |
| Parallel reading Check understanding | Shadow while reading the script of the passage. Check with the scripts written both in English and Indonesian for three minutes |
| Shadowing Check details | Shadow three times Check with the written scripts for 3 minutes for sounds one could not hear or shadow; and meaning one could not understand |
| Content shadowing | Concentrate on both shadowing and interpreting the meaning of passage. Dictation cloze as step 1 |

Dictation cloze

In applying the shadowing technique, students need to coordinate several cognitive processes in order to be able to reproduce what they hear from the input. Then this technique focuses on students' attention on phonological aspect of what they hear as well. Therefore, shadowing push the students to pay attention on the source of input to be able to get the listening achievement. Thus, taking into account of all explanation above, this study was attempted to explain in the case of shadowing technique could give an improvement on students' listening ability.

Method

This study applied classroom action research. The participant of this study was a group of first semester students of Nommensen HKBP University that consist of 35 students. The data collected through the listening test, observation, and notes. The test was fill in the blanks item. Then the observation and note is the alternative way to describe the phenomenon happened in the class (include students' attitudes, perception, feeling, thought, etc). The procedure on collected the data was done in two cycles that involved four phases namely planning (the arrangement for doing something that involved planning of the lessons), acting (the process of doing the listening technique), observing (the activity to find out information of the action), and reflecting (feedback process from the action which had been done). To find the improvement, students were tested in the end of the cycle after taught by shadowing technique.

Finding and Discussion

This study applied both qualitative and quantitative data that taken from the test of

listening, observation sheet, and diary notes. The test were given three times, a test at the beginning without any technique or it can be called a pre-cycle and two tests (using shadowing technique) after each cycle. Based on observation before and the result on the pre-cycle, the ability of the students was still low and most of them can reach the standard score (75). But their score showed improvement continuously in every conducting test. It is shown on the table below:

Table 2
The Students Score

| No | Initial | Test 1 | Test 2 | Test 3 |
|------|---------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| 1. | S-1 | 51 | 65 | 74 |
| 2. | S-2 | 55 | 68 | 74 |
| 3. | S-3 | 67 | 76 | 83 |
| 4. | S-4 | 67 | 73 | 83 |
| 5. | S-5 | 70 | 72 | 86 |
| 6. | S-6 | 70 | 72 | 86 |
| 7. | S-7 | 56 | 65 | 80 |
| 8. | S-8 | 58 | 68 | 76 |
| 9. | S-9 | 67 | 73 | 80 |
| 10. | S-10 | 67 | 76 | 86 |
| 11. | S-11 | 56 | 68 | 76 |
| 12. | S-12 | 67 | 73 | 80 |
| 13. | S-13 | 65 | 73 | 76 |
| 14. | S-14 | 62 | 73 | 80 |
| 15. | S-15 | 70 | 72 | 86 |
| 16. | S-16 | 50 | 68 | 75 |
| 17. | S-17 | 55 | 65 | 78 |
| 18. | S-18 | 52 | 70 | 80 |
| 19. | S-19 | 56 | 70 | 76 |
| 20. | S-20 | 48 | 60 | 75 |
| 21. | S-21 | 48 | 62 | 72 |
| 22. | S-22 | 55 | 68 | 75 |
| 23. | S-23 | 58 | 68 | 78 |
| 24. | S-24 | 48 | 65 | 75 |
| 25. | S-25 | 45 | 68 | 76 |
| 26. | S-26 | 56 | 70 | 80 |
| 27. | S-27 | 58 | 70 | 83 |
| 28. | S-28 | 48 | 68 | 76 |
| 29. | S-29 | 70 | 78 | 86 |
| 30. | S-30 | 56 | 70 | 86 |
| 31. | S-31 | 58 | 70 | 80 |
| 32. | S-32 | 56 | 68 | 75 |
| 33. | S-33 | 60 | 72 | 80 |
| 34. | S-34 | 64 | 75 | 83 |
| 35. | S-35 | 58 | 78 | 80 |
| Mean | | X = 58.43 | X = 70 | X = 79.45 |

It could be seen in the first treatment, the number of the students who got the point 75 was nothing. The percentage of this was $P1 = \frac{0}{35} \times 100\% = 0\%$. In the second treatment, the number of the students who got the point 75

was 15 students. The percentage of this was $P2 = \frac{15}{35} \times 100\% = 37,5\%$. In the last treatment, all of the students got the point 75 up. The percentage of this was $P3 = \frac{33}{35} \times 100\% = 94.28\%$

The finding of this study is that the students' listening comprehension ability improved with the shadowing technique. The data showed that the students have got an improvement in every cycle. In the first meeting the students were not active. They look so shy and nervous to share the information about the information they were listening. But in cycle two they tried to be more cooperative, more active and achieve good score in the last treatment. This achievement can be gained because the technique of shadowing had some good influence in teaching and learning process.

This study was consist of 2 cycles. In the first cycle, the students were confused and unfamiliar with the technique because it the first time for them to apply the technique that they do not know well. So they could not shadow and interpret the listening well. That's why they need the second cycle. At that time the students had more relax and enjoyed the process and it lead them to easier and faster comprehension. Then they can be focus, listen and shadow, and they could do the test well. Then it can be stated that shadowing technique is able to improve students' listening comprehension ability.

Conclusion

The data gathered in this study show that students can improve their listening comprehension ability through shadowing technique since there was differences in the mean score of students test. There are some factors such as students' motivation and interest could also affect the result. Shadowing technique motivated students in learning listening comprehension and make them more active and interested in the process. Therefore, shadowing technique can be considered as one alternative technique in teaching listening.

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