

Research on training basic listening and speaking skills of English language students by Shadowing method

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Abstract

Listening - speaking are always the two most important skills in language learning in general and English in particular. However, most students with N3, N2 degrees are still afraid to communicate with English people. It shows that the candidates taking the English language test are very good, but the students who study English well are in the minority. Therefore, to be able to improve these skills, the application of shadowing method will bring relatively high and practical effects in the process of cultivating and practicing listening and speaking skills, not only in English. English but also most languages in the world. This article is completed based on the survey results collected from 100 English language students at some universities in Ho Chi Minh City. From the results on the article, it shows the importance of applying shadowing method to the process of teaching and learning English in order to practice and improve students' listening and speaking skills right from the first basic steps.

Keywords: English, practice, shadowing, skills, students

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the demand for human resources who know English in Vietnam is increasing day by day. Along with that, the number of students, students, and working people learning English has also increased (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014). Therefore, right from the beginning of learning English, learning and applying an effective method is a necessity for students of university's English language major. In fact, when reaching the intermediate and advanced level, most students, although equipped with knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, but for listening and speaking skills such as reflexes, intonation, sentences, etc. still have many limitations, moreover these are extremely important skills that determine whether language learning is successful or not (Annisa et al., 2020). Currently, in the media, there is a lot of talk about solutions to practice listening and speaking when learning languages. Shadowing is a method that has appeared for a long time but has not been widely applied in English lessons (Đặng, 2017). This method will help students easily approach and familiarize themselves with English intonation - the language is said to have the fastest speaking speed in the world. Therefore, "Research on training elementary listening and speaking skills of English language students at university by shadowing method" will be a useful topic to help students improve listening and speaking so that they can communicate actively (Indrasari, 2019).

2. Research history

Since then, there have been quite a few research papers related to this topic. Chi (2017) said in this era of globalization to have the opportunity to interact with many different cultures and languages in the World requires conversational competence (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014). Although students have taken English Language Proficiency Test, they cannot hear or understand English when communicating, or even understand what the other person is saying but could not answer with proper expression and correct English (Chung, My62010). Many students are interested in improving pronunciation, but if the method is too difficult to implement, they will lose motivation. In addition, to be able to pronounce English naturally, it is important to teach intonation, but teaching it is difficult. That is why the author focuses on Shadowing - the method that has been promoted in foreign language education. Shadowing is one of the basic training methods applied right from the elementary stage in training simultaneous interpreters and becoming more and more popular in foreign language education. In addition, Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017) also stated that in second language acquisition (SLA), there is a teaching technique called shadowing that is recognized as an effective method for developing listening skills in a foreign country. The author asserts that this method will bring positive effects in reducing the fear of speaking or being judged in front of teachers and peers (Aydoğan et al., 2014).

On the basis of inheriting scientific results, this study will provide an overview of shadowing methods and at the same time clarify the current situation of students' listening and speaking as well as ways to overcome them to progress further on the path of learning English (Indrasari, 2019).

3. Research content

3.1 Shadowing definition

Shadowing in English means shadow, this is the method proposed by Dr. Alexander Arguelles. Shadowing is a method based on accurately imitating the opponent's voice. Shadowing as an oral repetition of what is heard at the same time. Hamada (2019) again emphasizes that it is important for learners to copy and repeat in parallel what they hear without prior reference to the content of the listening text. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Thammineni (2016). asserts that shadowing is not only a mechanical repetition method but it requires an extremely high level of cognitive processing from the learner.

From the above definitions, it can be seen that the shadowing method is different from the usual repetition. In normal repetition, the learner repeats after hearing the sample voice, while in shadowing the repetition happens parallel to the sample voice heard. Pure Vietnamese translation shadowing is called the method of practicing "shadowing", in a word, when implementing this method, learners will completely transform into a shadow that imitates all tones, sentences, speed of the sample voice (Annisa et al., 2020).

3.2 The current situation of listening and speaking of students

Currently, when it comes to English language ability, most people will immediately talk about the exam. Many English language students focus too much on reviewing grammar, vocabulary, and kanji to get them in English. But is it enough just to get that degree to prove that we are good at English when the English exam does not have a speaking test, while the basic goal of learning that language is listening and speaking? During class periods, students often complain about being able to hear and understand, but do not know how to say it or express it again or even if they can, it's just stammering sentences, omitted, and unbalanced tones well or in other words, it's still Vietnamese's English. Even though he has full knowledge, he still can't put it to good use in listening and speaking, it's a huge waste, like having a sharp sword in hand but can't draw it when we go to the battlefield, it comes out of the shell (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014). Students forget that studying is not only for exams, but learning also goes hand in hand with practice. As a result, he gradually lost his confidence, was shy, did not dare to speak English, was afraid of making mistakes, and was afraid of being embarrassed in front of his friends and teachers (Thammineni, 2016). Many students are aware of that and understand their own problems but do not know how to improve this situation because it is very difficult to find a method that really suits them. So shadowing is a very practical and effective method to solve problems in learning English today. However, students also need to be fully equipped with knowledge of the method to be able to properly apply it to learning (Annisa et al., 2020).

4. Research objectives, methods, scope and objects

Realizing the current situation of students, this study is conducted with the aim of introducing students to a right and effective learning method right from the elementary level. To achieve the set goals, the article is completed based on qualitative methods and combined with reference and inheritance of previous research achievements. The study was conducted among students majoring in English at university in Ho Chi Minh City. The article focuses on the application of shadowing learning, teaching and practice methods by students, especially at the elementary level.

5. Survey results and discussion

Today, due to the increasing demand for human resources, it can be said that this is the era of flourishing development of the English language. According to a survey by the Japan Economic Association, the ability to communicate in foreign languages is a must-have quality of global human resources. Those who can communicate in foreign languages will become messengers connecting the cultures of the two nations, contributing to world peacekeeping (Chi, 2017). Therefore, in the process of learning languages, especially in communication, learning methods are very important. Whether the current popular learning method really brings out the full potential of students or not. This is shown in the figure below.

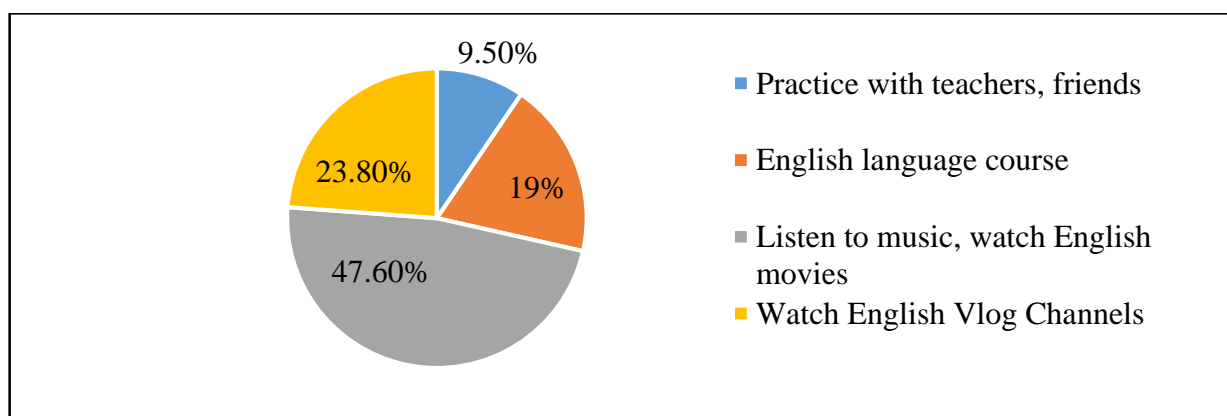


Figure 1. English listening practice method

With 4 typical listening training methods as shown in figure 1, it can be seen that all 4 methods were selected by the students participating in the survey. However, the most chosen method is listening to music and watching English movies. It shows that students have applied entertainment very well to practice listening to English, showing a high degree of initiative. However, the disadvantage of this method through English music and movies to practice listening is that students will quickly get bored, get caught up in the content and skip studying (Figure 1).

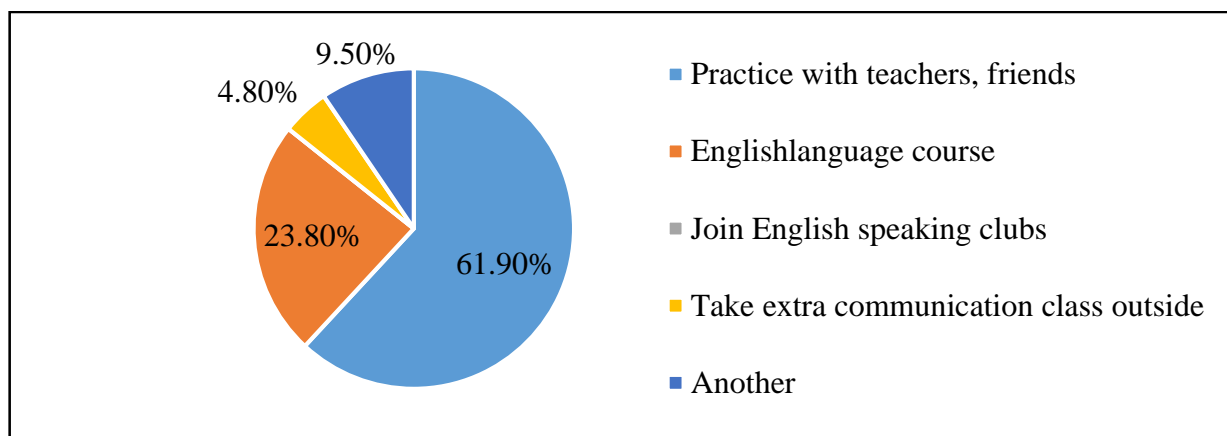


Figure 2. English speaking practice method

Coming to figure 2, it is easy to see that there is a huge difference between the method of listening practice and the method of speaking practice. In the speaking practice, the number of students who choose to practice with teachers and friends is 6 times more than in the listening practice. It shows that students can be autonomous in listening practice, but in speaking practice, they need support from teachers and friends (Figure 2). The method of practicing with teachers and friends also has its drawback that the practice time is very short, unable to be proactive in scheduling daily practice. So are the above methods of listening practice really effective for students? That is shown in the figure below.

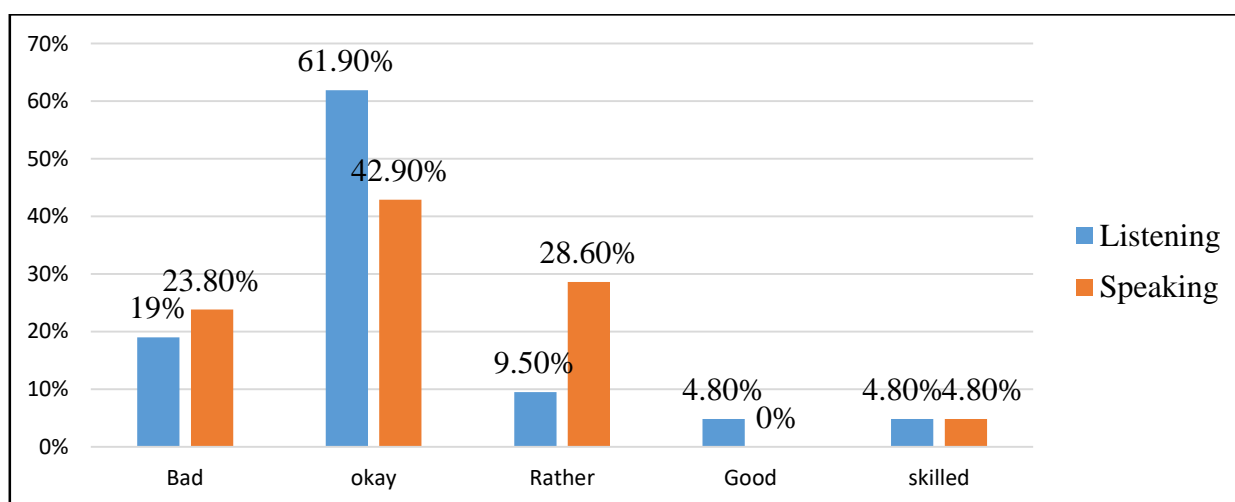


Figure 3. English listening and speaking level of students

Figure 3 again shows the current state of listening - speaking, moreover it shows that the methods outlined in figure 1 and 2 have not really brought into full play the potential of students. At this point, students have to ask if it is okay when the majority of students participating in the survey are in 3rd and 4th years but their listening and speaking skills are only good or below, at most it's temporary considered that the listener is still bad, there are only a few rare cases where they are confident that they can hear and speak at a good and good level (Figure 3). So why, or what difficulties in the learning process prevent students from improving their listening and speaking skills? First consider the objective factor.

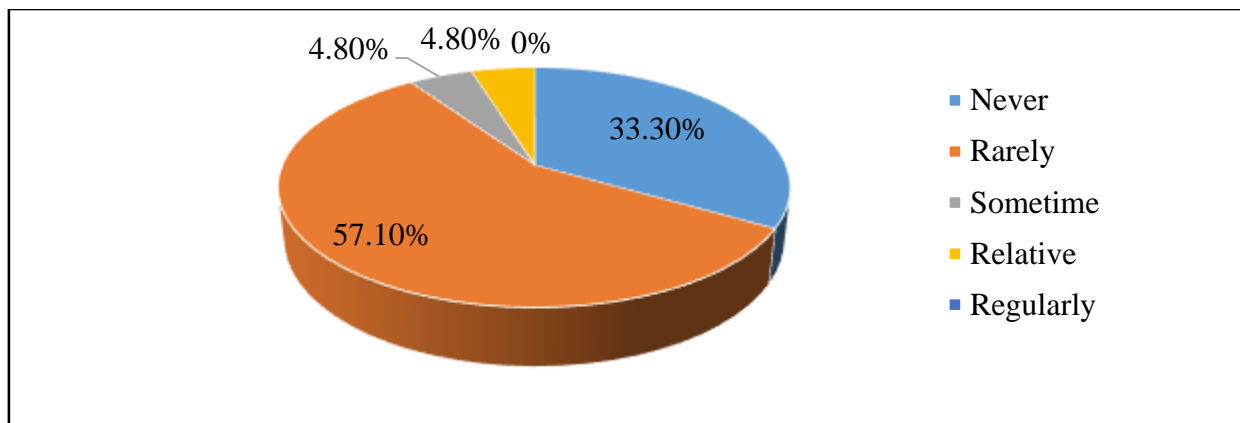


Figure 4. Opportunity to communicate with English people

From figure 4, it can be seen that more than half of students rarely have the opportunity to communicate with English people, nearly half have never had the opportunity to communicate with English people, and only a few students have a relative opportunity or occasionally. This is a disadvantage of English language students at university when the school does not have English teachers. Some of us have the opportunity by looking for Vietnamese- English cultural exchanges outside the school to join, but such exchanges are not always available. Next, consider the subjective factor.

Table 1. Difficulty in communicating in English

Number	Answer	Number of answers
1	Listen (can't hear, don't understand, don't know what the other person is saying)	6
2	Speaking (slow speech, stuttering, unable to speak complex sentences)	4
3	Reflexes (slow, listening and understanding but takes a long time to complete a sentence)	2
4	Wrong pronunciation, wrong intonation	4
5	Learning method (boring, ineffective, easy to give up)	2
6	Other reasons (not confident, not having time to study, not practicing communication much, not enough vocabulary)	10

Through face-to-face interviews conducted at the google form summarized above, temporarily ignoring other factors such as lack of confidence, not having time or not practicing much. The most obvious problem is the problem of students' listening with many reasons such as not listening in time, not understanding or not knowing what the other party is saying. Besides, there are issues to pay attention to such as speaking and pronunciation skills, intonation. 75% of English people think that pronunciation and pronunciation intonation greatly affect communication efficiency, some English think that listening to Vietnamese students talk in a short time is tiring (May, 2016). Pronounced incorrectly or without intonation, it is similar to speaking Vietnamese without diacritics, which will make the listener very uncomfortable. The 2 problems that are answered by the fewest students, but equally important, are reflexes and learning methods. In communication, if we are slow to respond immediately, but keep making the other person wait for a response, they will lose patience, do not want to continue talking or talk through the speaker, that is called communication failure. . The method is the same, if the capacity is there but the tools are not suitable, the finished product will not be good (Table 1). Therefore, shadowing the method of listening - speaking practice that can improve the above problems is really necessary. Highly rated by experts and from the table below, it can be seen that students also highly appreciate this method (Thammineni, 2016).

Table 2. Positive effects of shadowing

Number		Point ladder					Total reply	total score	medium
		1	2	3	4	5			
1	You can practice anywhere	0	3	6	9	3	21	75	0.09
2	Improve listening comprehension ability	0	0	2	13	6	21	88	0.11
3	Improve speaking ability	0	1	2	12	6	21	86	0.10
4	Suitable for practicing intonation	0	0	0	12	9	21	93	0.11
5	Better reflexes for English communication	0	0	5	10	6	21	85	0.10
6	Understanding is naturally expressed	0	1	3	11	6	21	85	0.10
7	Increase vocabulary	0	1	4	11	5	21	83	0.10
8	Know how to use words in the right context	0	1	5	10	5	21	82	0.10
9	Applies to all levels	0	3	5	7	6	21	79	0.10
10	Helping students to be more independent in learning	0	4	5	9	3	21	74	0.09
								830	1.00

According to the survey on the positive impact of shadowing, it can be seen that in all 10 sentences, over 50% of students rated it on a scale of 4 or higher, which shows that the level of students' expectations about this method is very high. 100% of students think that shadowing is suitable for practicing intonation, trying to match intonation is a skill of listening and speaking, which is also agreed by many students. Shadowing helps learners become aware of what they hear, so through practice, learners' word recognition skills, especially tone capture skills, improve, which means learners will process more information, leading to better listening comprehension skills, moreover, elementary learners pay the most attention to sound perception, so as their listening skills improve, processing Syntactic semantics is also faster leading to improved speaking skills (Hamada, 2019). The last statement also confirms that sentences 5-6-7 in Table 2 are completely grounded (Table 2).

In the 9th sentence, although most chose to agree or disagree, there were also a few students who disagreed with the fact that shadowing is a method that can be applied to all levels. However, at the beginner or advanced level, there are still equivalent songs to perform, so shadowing is not picky about the level (Indrasari, 2019). As long as there are lines to perform, shadowing can be performed no matter where we are (Dang, 2017). The statement shows that the few students who chose not to agree in sentence 1 are afraid of being watched by others when performing shadowing outside or maybe because they lose focus. In short, whether shadowing brings into full play the above 10 effects or not depends on how often students practice. In other words, it is easy to understand that students do not need to push to practice 10 hours in a day but must commit to do it 1 hour in 10 days (Table 2).

6. Proposed Solutions

Based on the given theoretical bases and survey results, the application of shadowing to practice listening and speaking is extremely practical. But the important thing here is how to apply it properly, because shadowing is not a strange learning method, but not everyone really learns to do it right (Bashir et al., 2011).

First, to be able to practice shadowing, the most important thing is to choose listening material. The concept of shadowing clearly states that shadowing is a method of imitating voice samples, so if the listening material we choose is not suitable, it will not be effective. So what kind of documentation is appropriate? There are two things to keep in mind when choosing a listening material: First, it must be compatible with the level, because if at the beginner level choose a listening lesson that is too difficult or too fast, students will immediately give up. To find materials suitable for their level is not difficult, students can buy textbooks with graded levels or visit English learning websites on the internet. Second, it should be noted that elementary level students should not use songs as a source of listening material because the lyrics have been given to catch the ear, so they do not always use the correct grammar, so only suitable for those who have mastered basic English, if desired, it should only be used as a resource to learn vocabulary (Mây, 2016).

Next is the practice. Since shadowing was originally a practice method for simultaneous interpretation, it did not have instructions for applying it to listening and speaking practice. Many students rush in to listen and then try to repeat, so when they encounter new words, they are confused and can't keep up. So it is very important to have clear steps to practice (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014).

Step One: Get Vocabulary. Students must listen carefully and then rewrite new words that do not understand the meaning, besides also pay attention to pronunciation (Bashir et al., 2011).

Step 2: Look up the meaning of words and then try to recall in our head the pronunciation of those words in the sample speech.

Step 3: Listen, confirm the pronunciation as well as the meaning of the new word, then repeat, because at first ywe will not be used to the speed, so it is inevitable that we can't keep up, so at this step we should only after listening to a short clip or phrase, click stop, then repeat.

Step 4: After getting used to the speed students can read in parallel with the sample voice, attention should not only focus on reading in time but neglect to imitate both intonation and emotion.

With the above 4 steps, students can completely practice their own pronunciation, intonation, familiarize themselves with the English speaking speed as well as add new vocabulary. However, the difficulty here is that this method requires students to persevere in practice every day (Annisa et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to keep students motivated, this method should also be applied to the teaching process in schools, classes, and more specifically, the English language class at university. Here it is not necessary to apply it to the lessons because it is quite time consuming, both teachers and students will not keep up with the lesson progress. Therefore, the best solution here is that the school should support teachers and students to take shadowing as the main method to open a specialized listening and speaking class that allows students to register freely to supplement the school's lack of knowledge. There are English teachers (Yang et al., 2013).

7. Conclusion

From the survey results, it can be seen that many students have communication problems such as not understanding what the other person is saying or even when they understand but do not know how to say it correctly with English expressions. Especially students are very aware of the importance of intonation and pronunciation when communicating but do not know how to improve. Although I know that to correct intonation and pronunciation is very difficult, but not impossible. The application of shadowing in listening and speaking right from the beginning will be an effective solution to improve the current situation of students. Shadowing is a method that will help students improve their level from vague understanding to speaking, using, and applying well. In other words, improving from book knowledge to practice and application. This is similar to the fact that when people have learned how to swim, the body will automatically kick their feet and fan their arms without thinking. An action repeated many times, over time it will become instinctive, shadowing practice too, students need to be persistent, because no matter how good a method is, without the initiative to practice regularly, it is also useless.

Limitation

This article also has certain limitations, hopefully there will be better opportunities in the near future.

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