



## Non-English major students' perceptions of the shadowing technique in listening and speaking learning

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### Abstract

This study explores the potential suitability of the Shadowing technique for developing listening and speaking skills among non-English major students in a tertiary context. The research involved 30 non-English-major students from Thai Nguyen University of Technology in an experimental group who practiced shadowing over one academic semester. Data were collected through a post-treatment questionnaire. The findings suggest that students generally held positive perceptions of shadowing, particularly in terms of integrated listening - speaking development, learner engagement, and speaking confidence. However, students also reported challenges related to speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, and concentration. Overall, the results indicate that shadowing appears to be a potentially suitable instructional technique for non-English major students, although its effectiveness may depend on appropriate pedagogical support. Due to the limited sample size, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

**Keywords:** Shadowing technique, non-major English learners, speaking – listening skills, speaking confidence, pronunciation, engagement.

### Introduction

Developing listening and speaking skills remains a major challenge for non-English major students in tertiary English education. Among various instructional techniques, shadowing has attracted attention for its potential to support integrated listening-speaking development and learner engagement. However, empirical evidence on how non-English major students perceive this technique, as well as the difficulties they experience when using it, is still limited. This study aims to investigate non-English major students' perceptions of shadowing through a questionnaire-based survey. Specifically, the study examines students' levels of agreement regarding the effectiveness of Shadowing, the language aspects they perceive as most improved, their common shadowing practices, the difficulties encountered during its use, and their reasons for considering shadowing suitable for non-English major learners. By providing empirical insights from learners' perspectives, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the pedagogical value and practical challenges of Shadowing in tertiary English contexts.

### Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to explore non-English major students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the shadowing technique in developing listening and speaking skills. The participants were 30 non-English major students at Thai Nguyen University of

Technology who had prior experience with Shadowing activities in English listening-speaking classes.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of five main sections. The first section included five Likert-scale statements measuring students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of shadowing in improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, speaking confidence, learning motivation, and overall listening-speaking development. Responses were rated on a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*. The remaining sections comprised multiple-choice questions focusing on the language skills most improved through shadowing practice, common shadowing practice methods used in class, difficulties encountered when applying the technique, and students' reasons for considering Shadowing suitable for non-English major learners.

The questionnaire was administered to the participants after they had experienced shadowing-based activities in their English courses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to identify general trends in students' perceptions and experiences with the Shadowing technique. The findings provided insight into the perceived benefits, challenges, and suitability of Shadowing for non-English major students in the context of English listening and speaking instruction.

### Result

#### 1. Students' levels of agreement with the effectiveness of the shadowing technique

**Table 1:** Students' agreement on the effectiveness of the shadowing technique (N = 30)

Statement	1 N (%)	2 N (%)	3 N (%)	4 N (%)	5 N (%)	Agree + Strongly agree n (%)
Shadowing improves listening comprehension	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	9 (30.0)	22 (73.3)
Shadowing improves pronunciation, stress, and intonation	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	14 (46.7)	10 (33.3)	24 (80.0)
Shadowing increases speaking confidence	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	15 (50.0)	9 (30.0)	24 (80.0)
Shadowing is more effective than traditional listening methods	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	3 (10.0)	14 (46.7)	11 (36.6)	25 (83.3)
Shadowing increases learning motivation and engagement	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	10 (33.4)	23 (76.7)

Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

The results of the questionnaire show a clear positive perception of the shadowing technique among non-English-major students after 15 weeks of implementation. With the percentage of agreement (Agree + Strongly agree) ranging from 73.3% to 83.3%, the findings indicate that shadowing was perceived as effective in improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, speaking confidence, and overall learning engagement.

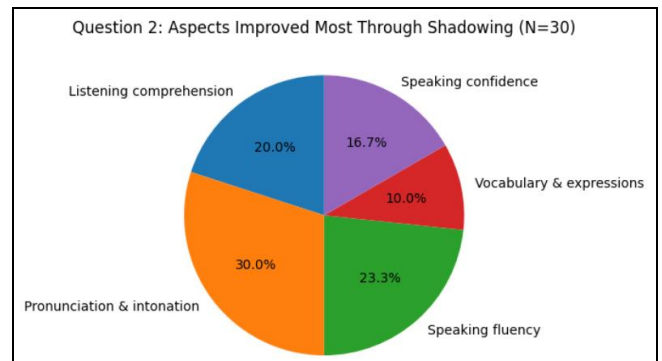
These results are consistent with previous studies on the effectiveness of shadowing in EFL contexts. Hamada (2015) [5] reported that learners who practiced shadowing demonstrated noticeable improvement in listening comprehension and pronunciation accuracy, as well as increased confidence in oral production. Similarly, Ratanapitak and Kaewsa-ard (2021) [11] found that shadowing significantly enhanced students' listening and speaking performance and was positively perceived by learners as a motivating and effective learning technique.

The high level of agreement in the present study, particularly regarding the comparative effectiveness of Shadowing over traditional listening exercises, reflects similar learner perceptions reported in these earlier studies. This consistency suggests that shadowing functions as an integrated approach that simultaneously supports receptive and productive language skills across different educational contexts.

In conclusion, the questionnaire results provide empirical evidence that non-English major students generally perceived the shadowing technique as beneficial after one semester of application. The positive perceptions observed in this study are in line with the findings of previous research (Hamada, 2015 [5]; Ratanapitak & Kaewsa-ard, 2021) [11], reinforcing the view that shadowing is an effective pedagogical technique for developing listening and speaking skills in EFL classrooms. The consistency between the present findings and earlier studies strengthens the argument

for incorporating Shadowing into listening-speaking instruction for learners with limited exposure to authentic English input.

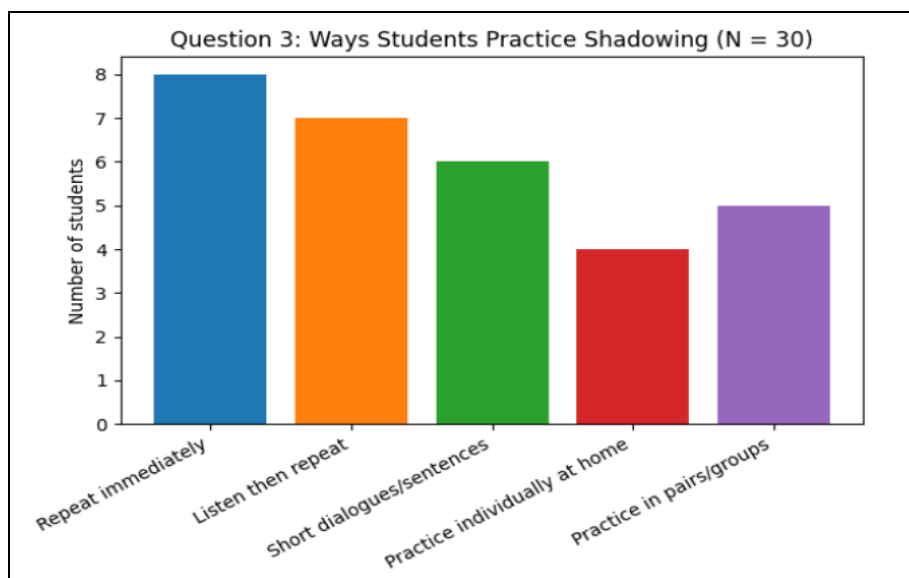
**2. Perceived improvements in listening and speaking skills through shadowing practice**



**Chart 1:** Aspects improved most through shadowing techniques

The pie chart illustrates the aspects of listening and speaking skills that students perceived as most improved through shadowing practice. Among the five aspects, pronunciation and intonation accounted for the highest proportion (30.0%), followed by speaking fluency (23.3%) and listening comprehension (20.0%). Improvements in speaking confidence represented 16.7%, while vocabulary and expressions accounted for the smallest proportion (10.0%). These results suggest that shadowing particularly benefits oral production skills and phonological features, reinforcing its effectiveness as a technique that enhances real-time speech processing rather than isolated vocabulary learning.

**3. Students' shadowing practice patterns in listening and speaking classes**



**Chart 2:** Ways students practice shadowing

The bar chart illustrates the various ways in which students practiced the shadowing technique in English listening and speaking classes after a 15-week implementation period. The most frequently reported practice was repeating immediately after the audio, selected by 26.7% of the

participants. This was followed by listening to the audio and then repeating it (23.3%), indicating that the majority of students preferred audio-based, teacher-guided shadowing activities conducted in class.

Practicing Shadowing with short dialogues or sentences accounted for 20.0%, suggesting that segmented and manageable input played an important role in supporting students' engagement with the technique. In contrast, individual practice at home was reported by a smaller proportion of students (13.3%), while pair or group practice represented 16.7% of the responses.

Overall, the distribution of responses suggests that students tended to rely more on structured and immediate repetition models rather than autonomous or collaborative practice modes. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Tamai (2005) and Hamada (2016) [6, 12], which reported that guided, classroom-based Shadowing with immediate repetition is particularly effective for learners with limited proficiency, as it reduces cognitive load and supports real-time processing. The preference for immediate repetition also reflects students' focus on accuracy and online speech

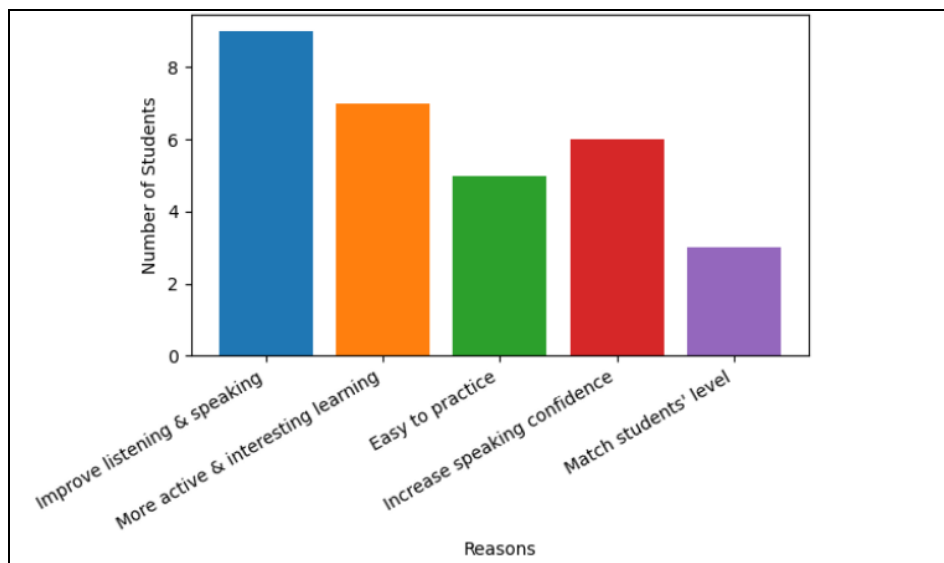
processing, which are considered core features of the shadowing technique.

**4. Difficulties encountered by students when using the shadowing technique**

**Table 2:** Difficulties in Using the Shadowing Technique (N = 30)

Difficulty	N	%
A. The speaking speed is too fast	9	30.0
B. I cannot understand the audio content	7	23.3
C. I find it hard to pronounce correctly	6	20.0
D. I feel tired or lose concentration	4	13.3
E. I am not familiar with this learning technique	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

**5. Students' perceptions of the suitability of shadowing for non-English major students**



**Chart 3:** Reasons why shadowing is perceived as suitable for non-English major students (n = 30).

The revised results indicate that the main difficulties students encountered when using the shadowing technique were related to the characteristics of the audio input rather than learner motivation or unfamiliarity with the technique. Specifically, fast speaking speed was the most frequently reported challenge (30.0%), followed by difficulty in understanding audio content (23.3%). Pronunciation difficulty accounted for 20.0%, while relatively few students reported losing concentration (13.3%) or lack of familiarity with shadowing (13.3%).

These findings suggest that shadowing is generally well accepted and sustainable for non-English major students, but its effectiveness largely depends on the appropriateness of the listening materials used. Therefore, teachers are advised to carefully select audio materials that match students' language proficiency, topic familiarity, and cognitive load, and to control speech rate and input difficulty, especially in the early stages of shadowing practice. Such pedagogical adjustments can help enhance students' listening comprehension and maximize the benefits of shadowing in listening-speaking instruction.

The bar chart reveals that students primarily perceive shadowing as suitable for non-English major learners due to its ability to enhance listening and speaking skills

simultaneously. This reason received the highest number of responses, with 9 out of 30 students selecting it, indicating a strong awareness of the integrative nature of Shadowing in developing both receptive and productive language skills. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Hamada (2016) and Kadota (2019) [6, 8], which emphasize that Shadowing promotes parallel processing of listening input and oral production, thereby facilitating integrated skill development.

The second most frequently cited reason was that Shadowing makes English learning more active and interesting, followed by its positive impact on learners' speaking confidence. Similar trends have been reported in studies by Murphey (2001) and Hamada (2018) [7, 9], which highlight the motivational and affective benefits of Shadowing, particularly its role in increasing learner engagement and reducing speaking anxiety.

In contrast, fewer students considered the practicality of shadowing or its suitability to their proficiency level as the main reasons for its effectiveness. This suggests that while shadowing is generally perceived as pedagogically valuable, some learners may still experience challenges related to language difficulty or self-efficacy. Overall, the results indicate that shadowing is valued more for its pedagogical and motivational benefits than for its ease of

implementation, supporting its potential effectiveness for developing listening and speaking skills among non-English major students.

### Discussion

The results of the questionnaire indicate a generally positive perception of the shadowing technique among non-English major students after 15 weeks of implementation. With agreement rates ranging from 73.3% to 83.3%, students perceived shadowing as effective in improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, speaking confidence, and overall learning engagement. In particular, Shadowing was viewed as more effective than traditional listening exercises in supporting integrated listening–speaking development.

These findings are consistent with previous studies in EFL contexts. Hamada (2015) <sup>[5]</sup> reported improvements in listening comprehension, pronunciation accuracy, and oral confidence among learners practicing Shadowing. Similarly, Ratanapitak and Kaewsa-ard (2021) <sup>[11]</sup> found that Shadowing enhanced both listening and speaking skills and was positively perceived as a motivating learning technique. The consistency across studies suggests that Shadowing functions as an effective integrated approach for developing receptive and productive language skills.

Regarding perceived skill improvement, pronunciation and intonation were identified as the most improved aspects, followed by speaking fluency and listening comprehension. This pattern indicates that shadowing particularly benefits phonological features and real-time speech processing, while its impact on vocabulary development appears more limited. These results support previous research emphasizing the role of shadowing in enhancing oral production rather than isolated lexical learning (Hamada, 2016; Kadota, 2019) <sup>[6, 8]</sup>.

In terms of classroom practice and challenges, students mainly engaged in teacher-guided, audio-based Shadowing activities, such as immediate repetition after the audio. The most common difficulties were fast speaking speed and limited comprehension of audio input, suggesting that input difficulty plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of shadowing. Nevertheless, few students reported motivational or familiarity-related problems, indicating overall acceptance of the technique.

Overall, the findings suggest that shadowing is perceived as an effective and motivating technique for developing listening and speaking skills among non-English major students, provided that appropriate instructional support and input adjustment are applied.

### Conclusion

This study investigated non-English major students' perceptions of the Shadowing technique in listening and speaking learning through a questionnaire-based survey conducted after one academic semester. Overall, the findings indicate that students generally perceived shadowing as a beneficial and suitable technique for developing listening and speaking skills. In particular, students highlighted its effectiveness in promoting integrated listening–speaking development, improving pronunciation and fluency, increasing speaking confidence, and enhancing learning motivation and engagement. At the same time, the study identified several challenges associated with Shadowing practice, notably fast speech rate, difficulty in understanding audio content, and pronunciation-related

issues, underscoring the importance of appropriate material selection and pedagogical support.

Despite these positive findings, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a relatively small and localized context, involving only 30 non-English major students from a single experimental group at Thai Nguyen University of Technology. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other educational settings or learner populations. Future studies are recommended to involve larger sample sizes, multiple institutions, and mixed research methods to provide more comprehensive and robust evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Shadowing technique.

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