

## **The use of the Shadowing technique for developing listening and speaking skills in EFL students**

*El uso de la técnica de Shadowing para el desarrollo de las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL)*

Jorge Fernando Chimbo Portoviejo, Martha Magdalena Guamán Luna

### **Abstract**

This semi-systematic literature review aimed to contribute to the existing literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research by analyzing the impact of the Shadowing technique on EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom, a crucial topic in EFL education. By synthesizing research conducted from 2011 to 2026, the PRISMA technique facilitated the selection of these studies. The articles selected were organized in specific key themes as follows: a) the impact of the use of the Shadowing technique (linguistic effects), b) types of materials used for developing listening and speaking skills in the EFL classroom, c) perceptions of EFL students (non-linguistic effects), and lastly, d) factors for selecting Shadowing technique strategies. The findings established that EFL students develop their linguistic skills (listening and speaking) efficiently, using the Shadowing technique in educational contexts. Thus, this literature review contributes to the pedagogical implications of Shadowing for EFL students in the classroom as a useful tool in the context of education, providing actionable insights for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: Shadowing technique; Listening skill; Speaking skill; Perceptions; Materials.

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### **Jorge Fernando Chimbo Portoviejo**

Universidad Católica de Cuenca | Cuenca | Ecuador | [jorge.chimbo.16@est.ucacue.edu.ec](mailto:jorge.chimbo.16@est.ucacue.edu.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6396-1938>

### **Martha Magdalena Guamán Luna**

Universidad Católica de Cuenca | Cuenca | Ecuador | [mguamanl@ucacue.edu.ec](mailto:mguamanl@ucacue.edu.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7385-2154>

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## Resumen

Esta revisión bibliográfica semi sistemática tuvo como objetivo contribuir a la literatura existente sobre la investigación del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) mediante el análisis del impacto de la técnica de Shadowing en las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral de los estudiantes de EFL en el aula, un tema crucial en la enseñanza de EFL. Mediante la síntesis de investigaciones realizadas entre 2011 y 2026, la técnica PRISMA facilitó la selección de estos estudios. Los artículos seleccionados se organizaron en torno a los siguientes temas clave: a) el impacto del uso de la técnica de Shadowing (efectos lingüísticos), b) tipo de materiales utilizados para desarrollar las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral en el aula de EFL, c) percepciones de los estudiantes de EFL (efectos no lingüísticos) y finalmente d) factores para la selección de estrategias de la técnica de shadowing. Los hallazgos establecieron que los estudiantes de EFL desarrollan sus habilidades lingüísticas (comprensión auditiva y expresión oral) de manera eficiente al utilizar la técnica de imitación en contextos educativos. Por lo tanto, esta revisión bibliográfica contribuye a las implicaciones pedagógicas de Shadowing para los estudiantes de EFL en el aula como una herramienta útil en el contexto de la educación, proporcionando perspectivas prácticas para educadores y responsables políticos.

Palabras clave: Técnica de shadowing; Habilidad auditiva; Habilidad oral; Percepciones; Estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera; Materiales.

## Introduction

For many researchers, Shadowing is a technique in which listeners imitate or repeat as accurately as possible what the speaker is saying (De Guerrero & Commander, 2013). Indeed, development was originally to enhance the performance of Japanese interpreters. Moreover, the Shadowing technique, as a teaching/learning tool, has been found beneficial in EFL education for the linguistic skills (listening and speaking) of EFL learners (Sumiyoshi & Svetanant, 2017; Shimomura, 2018; Shiki et al., 2010). Besides, Sumiyoshi & Svenantant (2017), indicated that this technique increased motivation and active participation in the classroom for EFL students. Based on Hamada (2024), this tool is applied in EFL contexts as follows: a) perceive the message without visual aids (listening), b) repeat the sounds (mumbling), c) read script while imitate the sounds, and focusing on the meaning (synchronized reading), d) mimic the sounds especially prosodic elements (.e.g., intonation) (prosody Shadowing), and e) practice by focussing on the message without visual support (content Shadowing). In addition, the duration of Shadowing activities should be limited to 10–15 minutes per lesson, and teachers should apply the Shadowing technique material according to the English level of EFL students (Hamada, 2019).

In many EFL countries, English language teaching focuses on reading and writing skills (Tomas, 2014). Moreover, exposure to the target language is limited in the EFL context because English is used only inside the classroom (Barker & Watson, 1984), such as the case of Ecuador. Nevertheless, the acquisition of listening and speaking skills is considered one of the biggest challenges for EFL students, as they are crucial to achieving competitive communication (Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014). Therefore, the Shadowing technique is an approach worth researching in the EFL educational context, as it aids in developing linguistic skills (listening and speaking).

The purpose of this literature review was to analyze the impact of the Shadowing technique on EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom, providing a narrative understand-

ding, and proposing recommendations for applying the Shadowing technique to EFL learners in education. The approach was a semi-systematic literature review of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies on a) the impact of the use of the Shadowing technique (linguistic effects), b) types of materials used for developing listening and speaking skills in the EFL classroom, c) perceptions of EFL students (non-linguistic effects), and d) factors for selecting Shadowing technique strategies. For this purpose, the following research questions and specific objectives were posed:

- Research question 1: to what extent can the use of the Shadowing technique improve the EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom?
- Specific objective 1: to evaluate the impact of using the Shadowing technique on the EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom.
- Research question 2: how do EFL students perceive the use of the Shadowing technique as a tool for listening and speaking skills in the classroom?
- Specific objective 2: to identify EFL students' perceptions towards the use of the Shadowing technique as a tool for developing listening and speaking skills in the classroom.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The research was guided by the Two-Level Model (Kadota, 2019), which states that there are two stages: a) perception level and b) production level for developing linguistic skills (listening and speaking) using the Shadowing technique, as this technique extends beyond a mechanical repetition or imitation of words (Kadota, 2019).

Stage 1: the students focus on bottom-up through a phonological loop. It is a unit of storage that retains incoming phonological information temporarily (Baddley, 2003). As a result, phonemes, accents, and rhythm recognition become automatic to decrease cognitive load, and then students can use them to understand the message (Kadota, 2019). Stage 2: The students focus on top-down. This one is not only imitating or repeating words but also prosody (intonation, stress, rhythm). Therefore, the Shadowing technique functions as a bridge between input and output to improve speech perception (bottom-up) and production (top-down) simultaneously (Kadota, 2019).

In addition, Hamada (2016), states that if the material is slightly below the proficiency level of students, then perhaps prosody (rhythm and intonation) can improve the result in English learning. Hence, this theory states that the material utilized in EFL classrooms is inappropriate or too complex for students to remain stuck at the stage 1 (perception level). Therefore, teachers must provide material that allows students to obtain and understand input perfectly and imitate the sounds and process content (prosody) consistently. As a result, obtaining an effective impact on learners' linguistic skills (listening and speaking) to reduce the gap between their comprehension and ability to produce speech naturally (Kadota, 2019).

Moreover, Krashen's (1982), Affective Filter Hypothesis states that whether students are stressed, nervous, or even anxious (high filter), they cannot process input correctly and remain stuck at the stage 1 perception level. Therefore, the teacher must use materials appropriate to the proficiency level of the students and their interests. As a result, they can move from stage 1 (perception level) to stage 2 (production level) to avoid cognitive capacity blocks.

## Methods

### Data Sources and Strategies

This literature review adopts a semi-systematic approach (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) based on Snyder (2019). Moreover, the most frequently used academic databases for the systematic search were Google Scholar and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). Additionally, PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) were applied to the search strategy. Finally, the Prisma process consists of 1) identification, 2) screening, 3) eligibility, and 4) inclusion. As a result, this study analyzed approximately 25 relevant articles.

### Keywords Used for the Search

("Shadowing technique") AND ("language skills" OR "language proficiency" OR "listening" OR "speaking") AND ("perceptions" OR "attitudes") AND ("English as a Foreign Language" OR "EFL").

### Selection of Articles/Journals

Table 1. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria             | Inclusion                                                           | Exclusion                                                                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus of the article | Shadowing technique on EFL students' listening and speaking skills. | Articles that do not cover Shadowing techniques on EFL students' listening and speaking skills. |
| Publication date     | From 2011 to 2026.                                                  | Articles published prior to 2011.                                                               |
| Publication type     | Scholarly, peer-reviewed articles.                                  | Non-academic sources, and articles unrelated to EFL students contexts.                          |
| Language             | English and Spanish.                                                | Other languages will not be included.                                                           |

Source: own elaboration

### Research Themes

The review addressed the following thematic clusters: a) The impact of the use of the Sha-

dowing technique on the listening and speaking skills of EFL learners: evaluating linguistic (e.g., improvement listening bottom-up (listening skill), or improvement of prosody (speaking skill)) effects, b) Shadowing technique materials strategies: types of the Shadowing technique materials used for developing listening and speaking skills in the EFL classroom, c) EFL learners' perceptions of Shadowing technique: identifying the students' perceptions of the use the Shadowing technique in EFL classroom (non-linguistic effects (e.g., decrease of anxiety)), and d) Factors for selecting Shadowing technique strategies: use of the Shadowing technique regarding EFL students' English level.

## Review Protocol and Data Analysis

This literature review was structured as follows: First, the formulation of the objective and research questions, search protocol, and keywords was based on Snyder's semi-systematic review guidelines. Second, the PRISMA criteria were used to search and select the studies. After extracting relevant data using a standardized form, data analysis was organized regarding key themes. Finally, the findings were synthesized into descriptive summaries and presented in tables for transparency and discussed in narrative summaries.

## Results

This semi-systematic literature review aimed to contribute to the existing literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research by analyzing the impact of the Shadowing technique on EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom. The studies were organized in seven categories: the study's geographical location by continent, the year of publication, the study's setting, the linguistic effects of the use of Shadowing technique, the type of Shadowing technique materials, EFL students' English level, and lastly, students' perceptions towards the use of Shadowing technique (non-linguistic effects). In addition, the results are presented through a descriptive analysis, which is appropriate for a semi-systematic literature review (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, this section presents the findings identified in the literature.

### Geographical Location

Table 2 shows the geographical location by continent where the studies selected for this literature review were conducted. Twenty-three of the 25 studies (92%) correspond to Asia, while the rest of the studies (8%) correspond to South America and Oceania.

Table 2. Geographical location

| Author                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Location      | N  | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----|------------|
| Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020); Kusumoto (2015); Hamada (2021); Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Ev & Sariçoban (2023); Faruji, Soleimanian & Shafipoor (2024); Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022); Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023); Kuo & Chou (2014); Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025); Yokubova (2025); Zuhriyah (2016); Zakeri (2014); Teeter (2017); Sumarsih (2017); Shimomura (2018); Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011); Nakayama (2016); Horiyama (2012); Hamada (2016); Hamada (2011a); Hamada (2011b); Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013) | Asia          | 23 | 92%        |
| Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Oceania       | 1  | 4%         |
| Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | South America | 1  | 4%         |
| N = 25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |    |            |

Source: own elaboration.

**Publication Dates**

Table 3 states the number of studies conducted and published from 2011 to 2025, except in 2019. The highest percentage (12%) corresponds to the years 2011, 2016, 2017, 2023, and 2025, which indicate 15 out of 25 studies (60%).

Table 3. Year of Publication

| Author                                                                                                       | Year of Publication | N | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---|------------|
| Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011); Hamada (2011a); Hamada (2011b)                                            | 2011                | 3 | 12%        |
| Horiyama (2012)                                                                                              | 2012                | 1 | 4%         |
| Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013)                                                                                    | 2013                | 1 | 4%         |
| Zakeri (2014); Kuo & Chou (2014)                                                                             | 2014                | 2 | 8%         |
| Kusumoto (2015)                                                                                              | 2015                | 1 | 4%         |
| Zuhriyah (2016); Nakayama (2016); Hamada (2016);                                                             | 2016                | 3 | 12%        |
| Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017); Teeter (2017); Sumarsih (2017)                                                 | 2017                | 3 | 12%        |
| Shimomura (2018)                                                                                             | 2018                | 1 | 4%         |
| Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020)                                                                            | 2020                | 1 | 4%         |
| Hamada (2021)                                                                                                | 2021                | 1 | 4%         |
| Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022)                                                                              | 2022                | 1 | 4%         |
| Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023); Ev & Sariçoban (2023); Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023) | 2023                | 3 | 12%        |
| Faruji, Soleimanian & Shafipoor (2024)                                                                       | 2024                | 1 | 4%         |
| Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025); Yokubova (2025)                  | 2025                | 3 | 12%        |
| N = 25                                                                                                       |                     |   |            |

Source: own elaboration.

The Setting Table 4 presents a breakdown of the different educational settings that were a focus of the studies, the majority of which were conducted at the higher education level.

Table 4. Setting

| Author                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Setting                    | N  | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|------------|
| Kuo & Chou (2014)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Elementary School          | 1  | 4%         |
| Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023);<br>Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Junior High School         | 2  | 8%         |
| Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Hamada (2011a)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Senior High School         | 2  | 8%         |
| Zakeri (2014)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | English Language Institute | 1  | 4%         |
| Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020); Hamada (2021); Ev & Sarıçoban (2023); Faruji, Soleimanian & Shafipoor (2024); Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022); Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025); Yokubova (2025); Zuhriyah (2016); Teeter (2017); Sumarsih (2017); Shimomura (2018); Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017); Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011); Nakayama (2016); Kusumoto (2015); Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013); Horiyama (2012); Hamada (2011b); Hamada (2016) | University                 | 19 | 76%        |
| N = 25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |    |            |

Source: own elaboration.

### *The Linguistic Effects of the Use of Shadowing Technique*

Tables 5 and 6 show the effects of the shadowing technique on the linguistic skills of EFL students in the classroom. The studies were divided into two categories: 1) listening skill (Table 5) indicates that all studies stated that shadowing technique improved bottom-up (phonemes and word recognition), and similarly, 2) speaking skill (Table 6) shows that 11 out of 13 (84.62%) studies indicated that shadowing technique enhanced pronunciation than other prosody elements such as intonation, fluency, stress, and rhythm.

Table 5. Linguistic Effects

| Category        | Subcategory                                                   | N  | Author                                                                                                                                                                                                           | %    |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Listening Skill | Phoneme recognition<br>Word recognition<br>Phrase recognition | 10 | Sumarsih (2017); Hamada (2016); Zuhriyah (2016); Hamada (2011a); Horiyama (2012); Hamada (2021); Hamada (2011b); Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023); Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Shimomura (2018) | 100% |
| N = 10          |                                                               |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |      |

Source: own elaboration.

Note. The studies analyzed are 10 because they focus on listening skills.

Table 6. Linguistic Effects

| Category       | Subcategory                                     | N      | Author                                                                           | %      |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Speaking Skill | Pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.         | 1      | Horiyama (2012);                                                                 | 7.69%  |
|                | Pronunciation and intonation.                   | 1      | Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013);                                                       | 7.69%  |
|                | Pronunciation                                   | 3      | Kuo & Chou (2014); Zuhriyah (2016); Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020)            | 23.08% |
|                | Pronunciation, intonation, and stress.          | 1      | Kusumoto (2015);                                                                 | 7.69%  |
|                | Accentedness and intelligibility.               | 1      | Nakayama (2016)                                                                  | 7.69%  |
|                | Pronunciation, intonation, stress, and rhythm.  | 2      | Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011), Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025) | 15.38% |
|                | Fluency                                         | 1      | Zakeri (2014)                                                                    | 7.69%  |
|                | Pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and stress. | 1      | Yokubova (2025)                                                                  | 7.69%  |
|                | Pronunciation, and fluency                      | 2      | Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023); Ev & Sariçoban (2023)                       | 15.38% |
|                |                                                 | N = 13 |                                                                                  |        |

Source: own elaboration.

Note. The studies analyzed are 13 because they focus on speaking skills.

### *The Type of Shadowing Technique Materials*

Table 7 shows a breakdown of the types of Shadowing technique materials used in the studies. The highest percentage (64%) corresponds to non-authentic materials, pointing out that the textbooks were the most used type (40%).

Table 7. Type of Shadowing Technique Materials

| Material  | Type                                                          | N | Author                                        | %  |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Authentic | Magazine audios                                               | 1 | Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013)                     | 4% |
|           | Podcasts, TV shows, movies, YouTube channels (e.g., TED, BBC) | 1 | Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025) | 4% |
|           | Audio online platform                                         | 1 | Kuo & Chou (2014)                             | 4% |
|           | Songs                                                         | 1 | Nakayama (2016)                               | 4% |
|           | Movie                                                         | 1 | Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011)             | 4% |
|           | Podcasts and video recordings                                 | 1 | Ev & Sariçoban (2023)                         | 4% |

| Material      | Type                                                | N | Author                                                                                                         | %   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Non-authentic | Textbook audios/<br>audio passages<br>/audio tracks | 4 | Yokubova (2025); Hamada (2016); Hamada (2011b); Horiyama (2012)                                                | 16% |
|               | Top Notch Textbook                                  | 1 | Faruji, Soleimanian & Shafipoor (2024)                                                                         | 4%  |
|               | IELTS textbook                                      | 1 | Sumarsih (2017)                                                                                                | 4%  |
|               | TOEIC textbook                                      | 2 | Shimomura (2018); Teeter (2017)                                                                                | 8%  |
|               | Aisi English Textbook                               | 1 | Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025)                                                                                    | 4%  |
|               | American accent training Textbook                   | 1 | Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020)                                                                              | 4%  |
|               | Audio/video recordings                              | 1 | Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023)                                                                            | 4%  |
|               | Audio recordings                                    | 5 | Kusumoto (2015); Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017); Zuhriyah (2016); Zakeri (2014); Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022) | 20% |
| Mixed         | Obama speech collection and Textbook                | 1 | Hamada (2011a)                                                                                                 | 4%  |
|               | Songs, movies, Tv series, and Textbook              | 1 | Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023)                                                               | 4%  |
|               | Tv shows, speeches, and Textbook                    | 1 | Hamada (2021)                                                                                                  | 4%  |
| N = 25        |                                                     |   |                                                                                                                |     |

Source: own elaboration.

### *EFL students' English level*

Table 8 presents a breakdown of the different English levels of EFL students according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), highlighting the dominant distribution at the independent user level.

Table 8. EFL Students' English Level

| Category         | Subcategory           | N  | Author                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | %   |
|------------------|-----------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Independent User | Intermediate (B1)     | 16 | Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020); Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Ev & Sarıçoban (2023); Faruji, Soleimanian & Shafipoor (2024); Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022); Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025); Yokubova (2025); | 64% |
|                  |                       |    | Zuhriyah (2016); Zakeri (2014);                                                                                                                                                                                                 |     |
| Basic User       | Pre Intermediate (A2) | 3  | Teeter (2017); Sumarsih (2017); Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011); Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013); Horiyama (2012); Hamada (2016); Hamada (2011b)                                                                                    | 12% |
|                  |                       |    | Hamada (2011a); Rumpa, Rombepajung & Kumayas (2023); Shimomura (2018)                                                                                                                                                           |     |
|                  |                       |    | Campoverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023); Nakayama (2016)                                                                                                                                                               |     |
|                  | Beginners (A1)        | 2  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 8%  |

| Category | Subcategory                                               | N | Author                                        | %  |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Mixed    | Pre-Advanced (B2)/Intermediate (B1)/Pre Intermediate (A2) | 1 | Kuo & Chou (2014)                             | 4% |
|          | Advanced (C1) /Intermediate (B1)                          | 1 | Hamada (2021)                                 | 4% |
|          | Not specified                                             | 2 | Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017); Kusumoto (2015) | 8% |
| N = 25   |                                                           |   |                                               |    |

Source: own elaboration.

Students' Perceptions towards the Use of Shadowing Technique Table 9 indicates students' perceptions of the use of the Shadowing technique (non-linguistic effects) in the EFL classroom. The 12 out of 16 studies (75%) indicated favorable affective variables, stating that motivation was the most beneficial non-linguistic effect (81.25%).

Table 9. Students' Perceptions (non-linguistics skills)

| Perception | Subcategory                                                                                     | N | Author                                                                                  | %     |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Positive   | Confidence                                                                                      | 1 | Hamada (2011b)                                                                          | 6.25% |
|            | Self-confidence, interesting, and reduced anxiety                                               | 1 | Teeter (2017)                                                                           | 6.25% |
|            | Motivation, confidence, and active participation.                                               | 4 | Horiyama (2012); Zuhriyah (2016); Yokubova (2025); Rumpa, Rom-bepajung & Kumayas (2023) | 25%   |
|            | Motivation, confidence, reduced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, engagement, and enjoyment. | 2 | Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh & Viet (2025); Ev & Sariçoban (2023)                    | 12.5% |
|            | Motivation and interesting                                                                      | 2 | Rosyidi, Paris & Masyudi (2022); Cam-poverde Villavicencio & Argudo Serrano (2023)      | 12.5% |
| Mixed      | Motivation and reduced anxiety                                                                  | 2 | Mu & Wasuntarasophit (2025); Sugiarto, Prihantoro & Edy (2020)                          | 12.5% |
|            | Motivation Confidence Frustration                                                               | 2 | Kuo & Chou (2014); Hamada (2011a)                                                       | 12.5% |
|            | Reduced anxiety Fun                                                                             | 1 | Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa (2011)                                                       | 6.25% |
|            | Difficult                                                                                       | 1 | Sumiyoshi & Svetanant (2017)                                                            | 6.25% |
| N = 16     |                                                                                                 |   |                                                                                         |       |

Source: own elaboration.

Note: The studies analyzed are 16 because they focus on students' perceptions.

After presenting the results, the following section discusses the findings through a narrative analysis, which is appropriate for a semi-systematic literature review (Snyder, 2019).

## Development

This semi-systematic literature review aimed to contribute to the existing literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research by analyzing the impact of the Shadowing technique on EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom. In addition, this part of this literature review was divided as follows to answer the two specific objectives.

Regarding specific objective 1: The impact of using the Shadowing technique on the EFL students' listening and speaking skills in the classroom. The findings previously stated that the use of the Shadowing technique in the EFL classroom can be an effective pedagogical strategy for developing listening and speaking skills related to the English proficiency of EFL learners. Sumarsih (2017) used the Shadowing technique with intermediate-level Indonesian at the university, and Mu and Wasuntarasophit (2025) applied this technique with intermediate-level Chinese teenagers at the university and high school, respectively, who had difficulties with listening skill. The process was two sections per week and extra time at home (in the first study) for one month. As a result, these students improved by double in listening comprehension (bottom-up) after finishing this program. Moreover, Campoverde Villavicencio and Argudo Serrano (2023) and Hamada (2011a), used this tool with beginner Ecuadorian students and pre-intermediate level Japanese learners at a senior high school, respectively. The duration of this program was 6 weeks (first study) and 4 weeks (second study). After completing the section, the students enhanced their bottom-up skills (phoneme perception and word recognition) with short passages. However, the long passages had insignificant outcomes, as they found them difficult to understand. Similarly, Zurihyah (2016), stated that obtaining an efficient and effective level of bottom-up skill (identifying sounds and words) can be improved through repetitive practice to achieve an automatic recognition of sounds. Consequently, the recognition of sounds and words progressively improves (Hamada, 2011a).

Moreover, in terms of speaking, according to Horiyama (2012), Zuhriyah (2016), Sugiarto, Prihantoro, and Edy (2020) and Yokubova (2025), implemented this tool for intermediate-level students at universities in Japan, Indonesia, and Uzbekistan with deficient oral skills. The application was 3 months (studies 1 and 4), one month, and 8 sections, respectively. The results showed that Shadowing is a useful technique for developing and enhancing pronunciation and other prosody elements such as intonation, fluency, stress, and rhythm. Likewise, Zuhriyah (2016) stated that when EFL students mimicked or repeated in real time, they improved their ability to recognize phonemes faster and enhanced their pronunciation. In addition, Horiyama (2012), Kusumoto (2015), and Saito et al. (2011), stated that the Shadowing technique increases and engages phonological awareness in EFL learners, helping them achieve prosodic elements such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Moreover, Nakayama (2016) indicated that the Shadowing technique improved accentedness and intelligibility. Furthermore, Zakeri (2014) demonstrated that increasing the speech rate of the Shadowing technique improves fluency.

Therefore, intermediate-level students can better understand the message by decreasing cognitive load, developing stage 1 (perception level), and developing top-down processing, as the technique involves not only imitation of sounds but also achieving stage 2 (production level) (Kadota, 2019). In addition, it can be affirmed that the intermediate level based on CEFR was the majority of students, as these pupils can achieve significant progress to enhance their deficient linguistic skills with complex audios, while basic user students cannot do so due to their knowledge being limited, and advanced level learners can obtain insignificant outcomes (Sumarsih, 2017; Mu & Wasuntarasophit, 2025).

Additionally, Shadowing can be an effective instructional approach for developing listening and speaking skills if the types of materials are appropriate. The researchers applied several materials. For instance, Sugiarto, Prihantoro, and Edy (2020), Yokubova (2025), and Mu and Wasuntarasophit (2025) used textbooks (non-authentic materials) with intermediate university students in Indonesia, Uzbekistan, and China, respectively. Equally important, Shimomura (2018) applied a textbook among Japanese university students at the pre-intermediate level. Therefore, it demonstrates that the selection of this material has also been based on students' English levels, as academic English textbooks (e.g., Top Notch Textbook, IELTS Textbook, TOEIC Textbook) are designed and adapted to students' proficiency levels and are easily available. It can be a reason why the majority of the Shadowing technique materials used in the studies were textbooks. Similarly, the Shadowing technique is effective when using authentic materials adapted to learners' English level. For example, Kieu, Huyen, Huong, Nhien, Vinh, and Viet (2025) applied it to podcasts, TV shows, movies, and YouTube channels (e.g., TED, BBC) among Japanese University learners at the intermediate level; and Hamada (2011a) used the Obama speech collection with Japanese high school students at the pre-intermediate level.

Regarding specific objective 2: EFL students' perceptions towards the use of the Shadowing technique as a tool for developing listening and speaking skills in the classroom. According to positive perceptions, the majority of students stated that using the Shadowing technique in the classroom increases motivation. As Rosyidi, Paris, and Masyudi (2022) and Sumiyoshi and Svetanant (2017) indicated, the university students affirmed that the Shadowing technique was interesting and attractive to them because this tool is not a traditional method (passive and boring) to enhance their language skills (listening and speaking), as it becomes an active learning method, which increases their interest to learn in the classroom. Furthermore, the learners stated a desire to continue practicing as they noticed significant outcomes after each section. Similarly, other non-linguistic effects mentioned by learners after using the Shadowing technique include increased confidence and reduced anxiety. As Ev and Sariçoban (2023) and Kieu et al. (2025), stated, students felt less fear of making mistakes since they felt relaxed and began actively participating in listening and speaking activities in the classroom. Consequently, it demonstrates that learner motivation is a crucial element to achieve effective outcomes when using the Shadowing technique in the classroom. However, the findings reported negative perceptions (non-linguistic effects) of the students using the Shadowing technique in the classroom. As Sumiyoshi and Svetanant (2017), Kuo and Chou (2014), and Hamada (2011a) argued, students felt frustrated because they could

not understand input due to the audio speed being too fast and demanding, which they had to concentrate on to produce output incorrectly without developing automated bottom-up and top-down processing effectively. Moreover, these authors indicated that if the content is not familiar to learners, bottom-up processing cannot be automated and cannot enhance listening skills, as the Shadowing technique becomes a simple phonetic repetition exercise. Hence, it implies that the Shadowing technique can be effective if the materials are used and aligned with the English-level learners to avoid the high filter. As the Krashen Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) states, students cannot process input correctly and can remain stuck at stage 1 (perception level) if they are frustrated, stressed, nervous, or even anxious (high filter). As a result, they can move from stage 1 (perception level) to stage 2 (production level) to avoid cognitive capacity blocks.

One of the unexpected findings was the concentration of research on the use of the Shadowing technique as a tool for developing listening and speaking skills in the classroom in Asian educational contexts over the last 15 years, especially in Japan and Indonesia. It can suggest that this continent fosters new methodologies for teaching/learning in EFL students while other continents, such as Latin America, focus on traditional methodologies for reading and writing skills (Tomas, 2014), especially in Ecuador.

Another finding was the absence of research on the long-term effects of the Shadowing technique in EFL students. Although the studies showed a positive impact in developing listening and speaking skills, no research indicated that these skills were maintained over time. However, the researchers recommended that if this technique is applied during programs of 3 months of duration (Sumarsih, 2017), with sections of 10–15 minutes per lesson (Hamada, 2019), and repetition of audios for a maximum of 6 times (Sugiarto, Prihantoro, & Edy, 2020). As a consequence, it can suggest that EFL learners can achieve significant outcomes with better retention over time.

This literature review presents limitations, as the majority of the studies were conducted in Asia. Moreover, the university was the most used setting, as in Asian educational contexts, it is common to find intermediate-level students in this setting (Hamada, 2011a). Hence, it is impossible to state strong statements about the success or failure of using the Shadowing technique in other educational settings, particularly in Latin America. As a consequence, further research should address the long-term impact of using the Shadowing technique, applications in online learning environments, and implementation in Latin American EFL contexts, especially in Ecuador, to develop listening and speaking skills and to avoid biases in EFL pedagogy that can lower the relevance of the findings in these contexts.

## Conclusion

The evidence reviewed suggests that Shadowing can be an effective instructional technique for developing listening and speaking skills in many EFL educational contexts, providing actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers, as most EFL students achieve positive

outcomes. However, it is essential to be attentive to the complexity of materials used according to students' proficiency to avoid problems such as frustration.

Additionally, the principal limitation of this literature review is that most of the studies were conducted in Asia. Thus, it does not permit affirming categorical declarations that the Shadowing technique is a productive pedagogical tool for developing listening and speaking skills of EFL students in the classroom across all educational contexts with the same findings.

Finally, the recommendation for further research is to conduct experimental classroom research in EFL educational contexts on applying the Shadowing technique for developing linguistic skills in EFL learners with different applications, especially in Ecuador.

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## Authors

**Jorge Fernando Chimbo Portoviejo.** Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and am currently pursuing a master's degree in English Language. EFL teacher with experience teaching students of different ages and proficiency levels.

**Martha Magdalena Guamán Luna.** Teacher at the Language Center of the Catholic University of Cuenca, Master's in Pedagogy for Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Higher Diploma in Innovative Pedagogies. English teacher for over 20 years in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, university, as well as private and public institutes.

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