



## FROM ECHO TO EXPRESSION: LEARNER EXPERIENCES WITH SHADOWING TECHNIQUE FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT IN AN INDONESIAN EFL CONTEXT

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### Abstract

The shadowing technique is increasingly recognized as an effective approach to developing speaking abilities in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. However, limited research has explored how learners experience and respond to this technique during the learning process. This study aims to examine a learner's experience with the shadowing technique to improve speaking fluency and the challenges encountered during its implementation. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through a semi-structured interview with a single participant who has C1 English proficiency and prior experience with shadowing. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal three key aspects of the learner's experience: (1) shadowing as a natural and enjoyable practice that supports consistent engagement, (2) perceived improvement in speaking intonation and fluency, reflected in the learner's increased ability to follow the rhythm, stress, and pacing of native speech more accurately, and (3) the development of independent learning habits through repeated practice and self-monitoring. In terms of challenges, three themes were identified: (1) difficulty in matching the speed and intonation of native speakers, particularly in fast-paced audio, (2) feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence when attempting to produce speech in real time, and (3) limited access to appropriate learning resources and corrective feedback. These findings suggest that shadowing can be a valuable strategy for improving speaking fluency in EFL contexts; however, its effectiveness is influenced by the learner's emotional readiness, the availability of feedback, and the suitability of learning materials.

**Keywords:** Shadowing Technique, EFL, Speaking Proficiency, Learner's Experience

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## INTRODUCTION

## مقدمة

Speaking is commonly acknowledged as one of the most crucial and difficult abilities to learn in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting (Brown, 2001; Ur, 1996). It requires not only grammatical understanding and vocabulary management, but also fluency, coherence, and the ability to generate language spontaneously in real time. In EFL situations such as Indonesia, students often have little exposure to actually spoken English and few opportunities to promote phonological awareness and automatic language processing. According to Kadota (2019), shadowing increases integration of listening and speaking by teaching learners to quickly duplicate input, which supports both receptive and productive language abilities. Shadowing also meets the Newton & Nation (2020) criteria for fluency-building exercises since it encourages real-time language use with an emphasis on natural rhythm, intonation, and speech flow (Hamada,

2016). Recent studies further confirm that shadowing remains effective in improving speaking fluency and pronunciation accuracy, particularly through repeated exposure to authentic input and real-time language processing (Hamada, 2021; Whitworth & Rose, 2025)

While several studies have proven the usefulness of shadowing using quantitative measurements that focus on skill outputs, few have looked into learners' interior feelings and impressions of the method itself. Qualitative research is excellent for eliciting deep contextual insights into personal experiences and emotional reactions. As a result, this study fills a research gap by conducting a qualitative investigation into learners' personal experiences with shadowing techniques in EFL speaking development, with an emphasis on the perceived benefits and problems faced along the way. A key component of learning a foreign language is being able to speak English, particularly in EFL nations like Indonesia. Even after learning English since elementary school, many students still struggle to speak the language smoothly because they haven't had enough exposure to it or haven't had enough real-world oral practice. One method that is becoming increasingly recognized for enhancing this skill is the shadowing technique, which involves listening to and directly mimicking the speech of native speakers. This strategy was originally developed in simultaneous interpreter training, but has since been used in language acquisition because of its ability to improve language processing speed, pronunciation, and fluency (Hamada, 2021). In addition, recent research highlights that learners' emotional responses, such as anxiety, confidence, and motivation, significantly influence their speaking performance and engagement in language learning (Botes, 2020; MacIntyre & Wang, 2021)

This method was effective in earlier research. You, (2023) Discovered that Chinese students' speaking and listening abilities were enhanced through shadowing. Following the implementation of this continuous learning technique, (Utami & Morganna, 2022) Demonstrated improvements in the pronunciation of junior high school students in Indonesia. Valesya, Ellanda et al (2025) and Binarkaheni & Dewangga (2024) on the other hand, concentrated their study on a particular kind of text—narrative texts—and discovered interesting outcomes in terms of students' pronunciation. Furthermore, after using the shadowing technique, students' listening abilities improved, according to et al. (Andriani et al., 2021) and suggests that this method is versatile and applicable to a range of language skills. Theoretically, the shadowing strategy is anchored in the theory of automatic and simultaneous processing of phonological data. According to Kadota (2007) and Hamada (2021) Shadowing teaches the brain to combine language production and listening at the same time, which eventually promotes linguistic correctness and fluency.

Few studies, particularly in the context of speaking instruction in Indonesia, have qualitatively examined students' experiences with shadowing, despite the fact that numerous studies demonstrate the technique's efficacy in terms of results. However, without thoroughly examining learners' individual viewpoints and lived experiences through shadowing, the majority of this research either used quantitative methods or concentrated on particular language abilities, such as listening or pronunciation. Recent studies also indicate that shadowing enhances learners' fluency and processing efficiency by strengthening the coordination between perception and production during real-time language use (Hanzawa & Suzuki, 2023; Suzuki & Kormos, 2020) Theoretically, the shadowing strategy is grounded in the concept of automatic and simultaneous processing of phonological information. According to Kadota (2007) and Hamada (2021) shadowing trains learners to integrate listening and speaking processes simultaneously, which gradually enhances fluency and linguistic accuracy.

Furthermore, there are still limited qualitative studies that examine how learners perceive the

shadowing technique as a whole, how they apply it independently, and what specific challenges they encounter during the process. Exploring learners' subjective experiences is essential, as individual perceptions, learning strategies, and self-regulation significantly influence language learning outcomes (Teng & Huang, 2023; Whitworth & Rose, 2025). By employing a qualitative methodology to investigate an EFL learner's individual experience with the shadowing technique, this study aims to address this gap by providing a deeper understanding of the learner's experiences and challenges. This study has two primary objectives: (1) to examine how the learner experiences the use of shadowing in speaking development, and (2) to identify the challenges encountered during the process. In addition, understanding learners' experiences can provide valuable insights for developing more learner-centered and context-sensitive instructional practices (Li et al., 2024). By understanding these experiences, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to language teaching, particularly in informing how shadowing can be implemented as a more relevant and contextualized strategy in EFL speaking instruction.

### **Shadowing Techniques in Language Learning**

Shadowing is a language acquisition strategy that involves the direct repetition of spoken inputs. According to Nguyễn & Nguyen Phuong (2025) shadowing has a strong association with improved students' speaking skills, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. This study found that students who used the shadowing strategy improved their speaking skills significantly more than those who used traditional instructional methods. The effectiveness of shadowing lies in its ability to engage learners in simultaneous listening and speaking processes, which encourages active language use and helps learners internalize linguistic patterns more efficiently. Shadowing promotes active engagement and supports the development of speaking fluency through continuous exposure to authentic auditory input and immediate repetition, which strengthens learners' processing speed and automaticity in language production (Matsumoto, 2021; Kim & Kim, 2022). As a result, shadowing is considered a practical and interactive technique that not only improves linguistic accuracy but also facilitates more natural and fluent speech production in EFL contexts.

Furthermore, Surayya et al (2024) found that using the shadowing strategy in conjunction with Voice of America (VOA) media significantly enhanced undergraduate students' speaking skills. The use of authentic materials such as VOA provides learners with real-world language exposure, allowing them to better understand natural English intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation. In addition, authentic input helps learners become more familiar with different accents and speaking styles, which are often absent in traditional classroom materials. This finding suggests that combining shadowing with authentic media can create a more meaningful and contextualized learning experience, enabling learners to practice language in a way that closely resembles real communication. Moreover, such exposure not only improves learners' speaking performance but also increases their confidence and motivation to engage in spoken interaction, as they become more accustomed to how English is naturally used in real-life situations.

### **The Challenge of Speaking Skills in the Context of Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), students frequently face difficulties in developing their skills. According to Petalolo et al (2024) pronunciation problems—particularly with certain consonant sounds—can make communication more challenging and reduce clarity in spoken interaction. These difficulties are not only linguistic in nature but also

relate to learners' limited exposure to authentic spoken English and insufficient opportunities for real-time communication practice. As a result, many learners struggle to produce speech fluently and accurately, even after years of formal instruction. EFL learners often experience challenges related to speech processing, hesitation, and limited automaticity, which hinder their ability to communicate effectively in real-time situations (Teimouri et al., 2019)

This study concludes that the shadowing technique is effective in assisting students in overcoming these challenges by significantly improving their language processing ability. Shadowing can enhance students' self-esteem and motivation in learning English, as it provides structured and repetitive practice that helps learners become more familiar with natural speech patterns. However, the study also found that unfamiliar recordings and different accents can create additional difficulties for learners, particularly when the input exceeds their current proficiency level. This finding is supported by recent research suggesting that mismatched input difficulty and unfamiliar accents may increase cognitive load and reduce learners' confidence during speaking practice (Jiang, 2024) Therefore, it is important for learners to select materials that are appropriate to their proficiency level in order to maximize the effectiveness of shadowing as a learning strategy.

### Students' Perspectives on Shadowing Techniques

Gaining insight into how students view learning strategies is essential to enhancing their efficacy. According to Nguyen (2025) the majority of first-year students at Hanoi Open University had a positive perception of using shadowing techniques in their learning process. Although some students encountered difficulties, including limited vocabulary and anxiety about making mistakes, they believed that this strategy helped them improve their speaking abilities. These findings indicate that learners tend to value shadowing not only as a tool for linguistic development but also as a supportive practice that encourages active engagement in speaking.

Learners' perceptions of learning strategies are closely related to their motivation, confidence, and willingness to communicate in a second language (Lee & Hsieh, (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Lee, 2019). Furthermore, shadowing strategies can increase students' motivation and confidence in learning English, in addition to improving their speaking abilities. This is because repeated exposure to spoken input and immediate imitation allows learners to become more familiar with natural language patterns, reducing hesitation and increasing speaking readiness. In this regard, positive learning experiences through shadowing may contribute to lower anxiety levels and greater self-confidence, which are essential factors in successful speaking development (Zhang et al., 2024).

## METHOD

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### *Subsection Identification*

The interview data were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework, which includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for potential themes, reviewing and refining these themes, defining and naming them, and finally producing the report. This analytical approach enabled the researcher to identify significant patterns and themes in the participant's narrative.

The analysis was conducted interpretatively, focusing not only on identifying themes but also on understanding how and why the participants perceived shadowing as meaningful in relation to speaking development. Although the study only included one participant, this analytic process allowed for a thorough and contextualized understanding of the learner's lived experience using the shadowing technique for developing English-speaking skills.

However, this study is based on a single case, and therefore, the findings should be interpreted as preliminary insights rather than generalizable conclusions. This case suggests how shadowing may be experienced by an advanced EFL learner, but further studies with a larger sample are needed to confirm and extend these findings.

### ***Participant (Subject) Characteristics***

The participant in this study, Justin (a pseudonym), was chosen specifically because of his previous experience with shadowing approaches in English acquisition. He was a university student whose English proficiency level was C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicating advanced competence. He used shadowing as part of his personal language learning practice, especially to increase his speaking fluency. Because of his advanced expertise and familiarity with the approach, he was deemed an information-rich case, capable of providing thorough and reflective insights into the use, benefits, and challenges of shadowing as a learning tool.

The participant was selected using purposive sampling to obtain an information-rich case, as he had substantial prior experience with shadowing and was able to provide detailed and reflective insights. Because of his advanced expertise and familiarity with the approach, he was deemed an information-rich case, capable of providing detailed and reflective insights into the use, benefits, and challenges of shadowing as a learning tool. While the findings are not intended to be generalized, they may offer transferable insights for learners or contexts with similar characteristics, particularly those involving self-directed language learning and advanced proficiency levels.

### ***Research Design***

The present study employed a qualitative case study methodology to investigate an individual learner's experiences and challenges in using the shadowing technique to improve English-speaking skills. A case study approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon—in this case, the use of shadowing—within its real-life learning context. This design aligns with the research objective of understanding both cognitive and affective dimensions of shadowing practice, with a particular emphasis on capturing detailed and nuanced insights from the participant's lived experience. Data were collected through a semi-structured, in-depth interview, in which the participant was encouraged to freely express personal experiences while responding to guiding questions related to the research objectives. The interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and was conducted in English/Indonesian.

The session was audio-recorded with the participant's consent and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in data analysis. The interview consisted of two main questions: (1) "How do students experience shadowing techniques in speaking learning?" and (2) "What challenges do they face during the process?" These questions were adapted from previous studies on learners' perceptions of shadowing techniques (Galeas Arboleda et al., 2023; Humaera Rusli et al., 2024), with adjustments to suit the current research context. In addition, follow-up probing questions were used to explore specific experiences in greater depth, such as examples

of improvement, difficulties encountered, and strategies used by the participant. The interview was conducted in a conversational format and audio-recorded with the participant's consent to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

As this study adopts an interpretive qualitative approach, the researcher acknowledges their role in interpreting the data. To minimize potential bias, the researcher maintained reflexive awareness throughout the analysis process by continuously reviewing interpretations and ensuring that findings were grounded in the participant's actual response

## RESULT | نتائج

The six-step thematic analysis approach developed by Braun & Clarke (2006)—data introduction, initial coding, theme search, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report preparation—was used to evaluate the interview findings. Three themes surfaced from the data to address the first research question about students' experiences using the shadowing technique: (1) Shadowing as an Intuitive and Enjoyable Practice; (2) Perceived Improvement in Speaking Fluency and Intonation; and (3) Independence and Assimilation of Learning Practices.

### Shadowing as an Intuitive and Enjoyable Practice

One of the most interesting findings was that shadowing occurred naturally through unstructured activities such as playing video games, rather than being introduced as a formal learning strategy at the beginning.

*"I didn't do it because I wanted to learn. I felt the words and phrases were cool, so I did it."*

This finding reflects intrinsic motivation, a crucial psychological aspect of language learning in which individuals engage in an activity because they find it enjoyable or personally meaningful (Nguyen & Vo, 2024). In this case, the participant's engagement with shadowing was not driven by external pressure or instructional demands, but rather by personal interest, which may have contributed to sustained and repeated practice over time. This suggests that shadowing can function as an informal yet effective learning mechanism when learners are emotionally engaged with the input. Additionally, participants said that shadowing was simple,

*"I mostly just listened and repeated. I didn't try to do it."*

This perception indicates that shadowing may reduce the cognitive burden typically associated with speaking practice, allowing learners to participate in language production without overthinking grammatical accuracy. As a result, learners may feel more comfortable experimenting with spoken language in a low-pressure context. Furthermore, the participant noted that shadowing contributed to the development of pronunciation and, in particular, intonation, even in the absence of a speaking partner:

*"Shadowing has helped me a lot, especially because I didn't have a speaking partner back then."*

This suggests that shadowing may serve as an alternative form of speaking practice in situations where interactive communication is limited. For example, the participant implicitly indicated improvement in reproducing natural speech patterns, such as stress and rhythm, which are often difficult to acquire without direct interaction. After practicing shadowing, the participant reported a sense of satisfaction and increased confidence, particularly when pronouncing words successfully:

*"After feeling satisfied. I will feel confident about my pronunciation."*

This indicates that positive emotional feedback plays an important role in reinforcing the learning process. The sense of achievement experienced after successful pronunciation may contribute to increased self-confidence, which in turn encourages continued engagement in speaking practice. This reflects a cyclical process in which enjoyment leads to practice, practice leads to improvement, and improvement enhances confidence.

### **Perceived Increase in Speaking Intonation and Fluency Through Shadowing**

After taking part in shadowing, participants showed significant improvements in their capacity to control intonation patterns and communicate more fluidly. Participants said that they were better able to integrate the natural rhythm, stress, and pronunciation patterns of English as a result of regularly listening to real speech and then promptly repeating it. Through this approach, they were able to talk more confidently and naturally while also becoming more conscious of how intonation affects meaning and emotion in spoken communication. Based on his opinion,

"Shadowing has helped me a lot, especially because I didn't have a speaking partner back then."

This indicates that shadowing served as a substitute for interactive speaking practice, particularly in contexts where opportunities for real communication were limited. For example, the participant implied an increased ability to produce more continuous speech with fewer pauses and improved pronunciation accuracy after repeated shadowing practice. In addition, the absence of real-time judgment from a speaking partner may have reduced performance pressure, allowing the learner to focus more on fluency development rather than accuracy concerns. This condition may contribute to lower speaking anxiety and encourage more frequent practice.

This claim highlights how shadowing is an effective replacement for direct interaction since it enables participants to imitate conversations in real time, lessen anxiety, and speak more naturally and fluently without the need for outside criticism.

### **Independence and Assimilation of Learning Practices**

The student's self-directed shadowing practice was another important feature of his experience. He disclosed that the habit developed naturally rather than as a result of official training:

*"I didn't do it because I wanted to learn. I did it because I thought the words and phrases sounded cool." He added, "It's not something I do consciously all the time. Sometimes it just happens."*

These responses indicate that shadowing became an internalized learning behavior, integrated into the participant's daily activities without deliberate effort. This suggests that the learning process extended beyond structured practice and evolved into a form of spontaneous language engagement. The unintentional nature of this practice may reflect a high level of learner autonomy, where the participant independently initiated and sustained learning without external guidance. Such assimilation of learning practices indicates that shadowing was not only used as a technique but had become part of the participant's habitual interaction with the language.

In the meantime, the thematic analysis identified three main topics to answer the second

research question on the difficulties students encounter when employing shadowing: (1) Assisting in Matching the Pace and Intonation of Native Speakers; (2) Lack of Confidence and Speaking Anxiety; and (3) Limited Access to Resources and Feedback. These challenges highlight that, despite the benefits of shadowing, the learning process is not without obstacles, and learners must continuously adapt their strategies to manage both linguistic and affective difficulties.

### **Assisting in Matching the Pace and Intonation of Native Speakers**

Participants' ability to keep up with the speed and intonation of native speakers during shadowing activities was one of the most commonly reported difficulties. A lot of people said that it was difficult to follow and precisely repeat the words because native speakers frequently spoke at a fast, conversational pace. He said,

*"Sometimes the speaker talks too fast, and I lose track of what is being said. It's hard to repeat correctly."* It's challenging to accurately imitate.

This challenge is typical of EFL learners, who frequently fail to coordinate speaking and listening in real time. However, considering these challenges, a number of participants stated that constant exposure to native speech through shadowing helped them progressively adapt to the naturalistic pace and tempo of spoken English. They improved their ability to recognize important words, anticipate future phrases, and modify their articulation to more closely match the speaker's speed. Additionally, they gained a more authentic sense of syntax by imitating the speaker's intonation patterns, which enhanced the naturalness of their speech overall. This suggests that although shadowing may seem taxing at first, it offers learners useful practice in processing language more naturally and synchronizing their speech patterns with those of native speakers.

### **Lack of Confidence and Anxiety in Speaking**

During the shadowing process, participants had psychological and personal challenges in addition to technical ones like maintaining accuracy and speed. When students had difficulties following the speaker or frequently mispronounced words, he frequently experienced worry and low self-esteem, as he said,

*"When I can't keep up, I feel frustrated. It's like I'm not good enough to speak English."*

This opinion serves as an example of how worries during language acquisition can lower students' motivation and sense of self, particularly when their performance falls short of their own expectations. According to the participants, interacting with native speakers at a rapid pace frequently causes stress and failure-related anxiety, which makes people hesitant or even avoid doing more practice. However, the participants ultimately gained a higher tolerance for errors and grew more at ease with imperfection as they continued shadowing. Because shadowing was repetitive, it seemed to help him feel more comfortable and in charge, which decreased his nervousness and increased their confidence when speaking. This implies that although shadowing may be emotionally taxing at first, it can eventually be a confidence-boosting activity by normalizing mistakes and strengthening participants' belief in his ability to get better with consistent effort.

### **Limited Access to Learning Resources and Feedback**

Based to the participants, most of the shadowing experiences were carried out on their own, often utilizing freely available internet resources, including podcasts, YouTube videos, and

brief English conversations. In the absence of official classroom instruction or peer cooperation, the participant usually chooses his own readings according to their interests or perceived level of difficulty.

*"I usually use videos on YouTube, but sometimes I don't even know if I'm doing it right or wrong,"* said the participant.

The absence of outside feedback and corrective input is a common problem in self-directed shadowing, as this statement highlights. Even while digital media makes it possible for students to practice at any time and from any location, the efficacy of practice may be limited in the absence of model-based assessment or teacher supervision. Since there was no quick way to check their performance, participant expressed doubt about their timing, intonation, or pronunciation correctness. Because participants were unsure of whether repeated exercise was reinforcing proper or incorrect behaviors, this ambiguity occasionally resulted in frustration or a plateau in progress.

However, participant emphasized the ease and adaptability of online shadowing, stressing that it allowed them to set his own learning speed and go over the content again as needed. A crucial element in fostering communicative competence in EFL situations is a rising sense of learner autonomy, which is reflected in this. The results imply that although self-paced digital shadowing provides beneficial exposure to real-world language input, its effectiveness primarily hinges on the availability of structured feedback or self-monitoring techniques to guarantee that learners' practice corresponds with proper pronunciation and the development of fluency.

## DISCUSSION

## مناقشة

The results of this study reveal significant insights into learners' experiences and challenges in using shadowing techniques. The first major theme, Shadowing as an Intuitive and Enjoyable Practice, demonstrates that the participants engaged in shadowing are driven by intrinsic motivation rather than external obligation. This aligns with Ryan & Deci (2000) who explains that intrinsic motivation sustains long-term learning behaviors. It also shows a low affective filter, allowing more effective language input processing (Nguyen & Vo, 2024). Therefore, the effectiveness of shadowing in this context may not only stem from the technique itself but also from the learner's positive emotional involvement, which encourages sustained practice over time.

The second theme, Perceived Increase in Speaking Intonation and Fluency, supports previous research by (Utami & Morganna, 2022) and (Hamada, 2016) indicating that shadowing improves prosodic features such as rhythm and stress, which are crucial for natural speech production. The participant's claim of improved fluency corresponds to (Newton & Nation, 2020) who associate fluency with automaticity and reduced hesitation. This suggests that repeated listening and immediate imitation may facilitate the gradual internalization of speech patterns, enabling learners to produce language more smoothly and with fewer pauses. In addition, the absence of a speaking partner, as reported by the participant, may have reduced performance pressure, allowing greater focus on fluency development rather than accuracy. As a result, shadowing appears to function not only as a linguistic practice but also as a low-anxiety environment that supports more confident speech production.

The third theme, Independence and Assimilation of Learning Practices, shows that shadowing became an autonomous learning routine integrated into daily activities, consistent

with (Sumiyoshi & Svetanant, 2017), who found that informal shadowing promotes learner autonomy and confidence. In this study, the participant's tendency to engage in shadowing unconsciously suggests a shift from deliberate practice to habitual behavior, indicating a deeper level of internalization. This process may reflect how repeated and meaningful exposure to language input can transform learning strategies into automatic routines. Therefore, this finding extends previous research by highlighting that shadowing can evolve beyond a structured technique into an embedded, self-directed learning practice shaped by learners' personal interests and daily experiences.

Regarding challenges, the first theme, Assisting in Matching the Pace and Intonation of Native Speakers, aligns with (Hamada, 2021; You, 2023), who notes that authentic speech rates can overwhelm learners and create cognitive fatigue. This suggests that shadowing requires learners to process and reproduce language simultaneously, which can be demanding when the input exceeds their processing capacity. The second challenge, Lack of Confidence and Anxiety in Speaking, highlights affective barriers similar to those described by (Utami & Morganna, 2022), suggesting that emotional readiness strongly influences shadowing performance. In this case, even self-directed practice does not fully eliminate anxiety, as learners may still experience uncertainty about their pronunciation and fluency. Finally, the third challenge, Limited Access to Learning Resources and Feedback, emphasizes the importance of teacher support and corrective feedback to prevent fossilization (Nguyễn, 2025; You, 2023)

The result of this study also have a number of practical ramifications for teaching English, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings where there are few opportunities for real-world speaking practice. Participants' experiences with the shadowing technique show that when given the freedom to choose their own pace, learners can acquire linguistic and affective competencies. These results support the notion that educators should adopt a learner-centered strategy that emphasizes sustained motivation, enjoyment, and personal engagement in place of a teacher-centered model. It is not always necessary to use advanced technology or reorganize the classroom in order to incorporate shadowing into speaking training; it can be introduced gradually through self-paced homework assignments, pronunciation drills, and listening exercises. This flexibility makes shadowing a practical and accessible strategy for a wide range of educational settings.

Shadowing can help teachers in Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, including those in Islamic educational institutions like madrasas or Islamic universities, close the gap between communicative ability and traditional teaching methods. To help students practice language rhythm and fluency, teachers might provide them with brief, real-world audio resources, such as dialogues, sermon snippets, or podcast parts, that they can mimic and repeat. The Freedom to Learn (Merdeka Belajar) principles, which support students' autonomous exploration and learning while preserving a meaningful connection with English, are in line with this integration. Because shadowing cultivates perseverance, self-awareness, and discipline—qualities that are crucial in Islamic educational concepts—it additionally supports spiritual and affective educational principles.

The experiences of the investigated participants show that when students integrate strategies like shadowing into their identities as language learners, meaningful learning takes place. This provides a reminder to teachers that practicing with emotion, reflection, and self-motivation is more effective than merely repeating words. Just as important as teaching grammar or vocabulary is encouraging students to appreciate the rhythm, sound, and flow of language. For this reason, when used carefully and consistently, shadowing techniques can make EFL

speaking training more relatable, integrative, and inspiring for students in a range of educational contexts.

## CONCLUSION

## خاتمة

This study sought to investigate students' experiences and challenges in using shadowing as a strategy to improve their English-speaking proficiency. A thematic analysis of interview data yielded numerous crucial insights. To address the first research question, participants described shadowing as an intuitive, pleasurable, and self-directed activity that fits seamlessly into their everyday routines. Shadowing was seen as a personal, meaningful learning strategy rather than a formal or forced task. The strategy improved pronunciation, fluency, rhythm, and confidence, particularly when no conversation partner was available. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of shadowing in increasing prosodic qualities and supporting independent learning.

While addressing the second research question, several important challenges were identified. These included difficulty in matching the pace and intonation of native speakers, emotional struggles such as frustration and self-doubt, and limited access to appropriate feedback and learning resources. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting both affective and cognitive barriers in shadowing practice. Without sufficient guidance, learners may experience stagnation or develop inaccurate perceptions of their progress. In conclusion, shadowing has the potential to be an effective strategy in EFL speaking development; however, its effectiveness should be interpreted with caution, as it depends on several factors, including learners' psychological readiness, the availability of feedback, and the alignment of materials with their proficiency level.

The results of this study have important implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in speaking development. The participant's experience illustrates how shadowing can function as a self-directed and intrinsically motivated learning approach. Therefore, rather than simply incorporating shadowing as a routine classroom activity, educators are encouraged to design self-paced shadowing modules using carefully selected audio materials that match learners' proficiency levels. Teachers may also guide students to gradually increase the complexity and speed of the input to support progressive development. In addition, integrating peer feedback sessions and encouraging learners to use reflective journals to monitor their pronunciation and fluency development may help make the learning process more structured and effective. When learners experience both autonomy and enjoyment in practice, they are more likely to remain engaged, which can support improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and speaking confidence.

More importantly, the study emphasizes that shadowing should not be used in isolation. To reap the full benefits, learners must have proper scaffolding, feedback mechanisms, and emotional support available. Without these, pupils may become frustrated, develop pronunciation faults, or lose confidence. Educators are encouraged to provide resources such as guided shadowing rubrics, self-assessment apps, and constructive feedback sessions. Instructors should also be sensitive to their students' affective requirements, encouraging and reassuring those who struggle with real-time repetition. Finally, curriculum designers and policymakers may consider including shadowing as part of an integrated speaking curriculum, especially in settings where peer contact or real-life speaking opportunities are limited.

The research included a single participant who had advanced English skills and substantial expertise with the shadowing approach. While this provided profound, reflective insights, future studies are encouraged to broaden the scope by including participants with varying competency levels, educational backgrounds, and learning contexts. Comparative research of beginner and expert learners could indicate how shadowing differs across developmental stages. Furthermore, additional qualitative or mixed-method research might investigate the long-term impact of shadowing when used in formal classroom settings or in conjunction with feedback-driven therapies. Future research should also look into how emotional and psychological aspects, such as motivation, anxiety, and learner identity, interact with shadowing as a language learning technique, providing a more complete picture of its pedagogical efficacy in various EFL contexts.

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