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Pedagogical Implications of Shadowing for the EFL Classroom

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RESUMEN:

Esta síntesis investigativa tiene como objetivo reportar los resultados sobre la investigación acerca de la reciente técnica llamada *Shadowing* al igual que su influencia en el aula EFL. La presente síntesis incluye estudios cuantitativos, cualitativos y de método mixto los mismos que fueron seleccionados en base a criterios de inclusión y exclusión, tales como año de publicación, método de recolección de información, nivel de los participantes, etc. Un total de 15 estudios se analizaron para explorar los efectos de *Shadowing* en la habilidad escucha, de habla y en los factores psicológicos de los alumnos. Los resultados revelan que (1) *Shadowing* mejora las habilidades básicas de escucha en los estudiantes de nivel bajo e intermedio, (2) *Shadowing* mejora los elementos prosódicos y acelera el dominio del habla en los alumnos de alto nivel y (3) que esta estrategia tiene una influencia significativa en el potenciamiento de las actitudes por parte de los estudiantes hacia el inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL).

Palabras clave: *Shadowing*. Escucha. Habla. Actitudes. EFL learning.



ABSTRACT:

This research synthesis aims to report on research about the recent technique called *Shadowing* and its influence on the EFL classroom. The study includes quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method primary research which was selected based on an inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as publication date, data collection method, level of participants, etc. A total number of 15 studies were analyzed in order to explore the effects of Shadowing on listening, speaking and the learners' psychological factors. Findings reveal that (1) Shadowing improves listening bottom-up skills in low and intermediate-level learners, (2) Shadowing enhances prosodic elements and accelerates speaking proficiency in high-level learners and (3) this strategy has a significant influence in upgrading students' attitudes towards English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Keywords: Shadowing. Listening. Speaking. Attitudes. EFL learning.



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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Muy Bonilla', written over a horizontal line.

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I am deeply grateful to God for guiding me throughout my life, blessing me every day
and giving me strength to achieve my goals.

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Jenny



DEDICATION

To my beloved family, especially to my mom, Celia, for being the support and strength in those moments of difficulty and weakness.

Jenny



INTRODUCTION

Learning English as foreign language (EFL) becomes a complex task when the opportunities to be exposed to the target language are highly restricted. Moreover, in terms of oral communication, where listening and speaking skills are essential, the chances of becoming a proficient user of the target language are very low. Additionally, in the Ecuadorian educational context, English is not given the due importance it requires as being a language of international communication. Therefore, being able to communicate orally in a new language can be considered hard to achieve.

To aid this process, a technique called Shadowing has been recently explored in academic contexts where interaction to English is limited. Since this strategy involves the use of listening and speaking, it has been considered potentially advantageous for the improvement and acquisition of such skills. Therefore, and under these circumstances, this research synthesis aims to explore the advantages or disadvantages of this technique on different academic aspects and to report the most useful information that could be used in future educational enquiry.

The report of this study consists of the following chapters:

Chapter I. In this chapter, the topic and description of the research are introduced. The background, statement of the problem and justification are contextualized. Moreover, the research questions are stated.

Chapter II. This chapter encompasses the theoretical framework in which some key terms are defined and explained to ease the comprehension of this study.

Chapter III. In this chapter, the review of the literature is presented. The fifteen papers chosen for this research are described.

Chapter IV. The methodology of the study is specified in this chapter. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used for the data collection process is explained.

Chapter V. This chapter includes the analysis of the results obtained through the revision of the literature.

Chapter VI. The conclusions and recommendations drawn from the analysis are presented in this chapter.



Chapter I

Description of the Research

1.1 Background

There have been several research projects that have addressed each of the English micro skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) individually. Lately, a teaching strategy known as Shadowing has been recognized as a powerful practice for developing listening and speaking skills (Sumiyoshi, 2017). Originally, Shadowing was part of the basic training process for concurrent interpreters in Japan (Hamada, 2011a). In interpreting, the elucidation is given as quickly as the polyglot hears the speech in the first language and translates the message into the target language (Horiyama, 2012). Therefore, Shadowing is defined as “a paced, auditory tracking task which involves the immediate vocalization of auditory presented stimuli” (Hamada, 2011a, p. 140).

Twenty-five years have passed since this procedure, shadowing, was introduced to EFL contexts, but only recently it has gained popularity around the world (Hamada, 2018). During this time, Shadowing has been used in language education as an approach to improve students’ communicative language skills, especially listening and speaking (Shiki, Mori, Kadota, & Yoshida, 2010).

Research on Shadowing has advanced enormously. Many studies have been conducted on this topic regarding academic terms of foreign language learning (Shimomura, 2018; Zuhriyah, 2016; Hamada, 2011a; Matsumoto, 2014). However, the affective domain of students towards Shadowing has not been given the adequate importance. Only few authors have addressed this issue (Hamada, 2016; Sumiyoshi & Svetanant, 2017) which is considered of great importance for academic success (Hamada, 2011b).

Today, Shadowing is considered a strong and effective exercise to be integrated into the EFL teaching and learning process. For this reason, this paper explores the effects of this recent strategy on foreign language learning (FLL). To have a deeper understanding of these implications, this paper examines primary research with an especial focus on the key findings of 15 studies which will be analyzed regarding the learners’ attitudes towards Shadowing and the extent to which it influences on listening comprehension and speaking performance.



1.2 Statement of the Problem

When learning English as foreign language, all students are expected to master the four micro skills. Among those skills, listening and speaking become the most important ones. In line with this, it has been found that good listening comprehension and speaking performance are the most significant skills since they form the basis for succeeding in communicating in a foreign language (Ghanbari and Hashemian, 2014). Additionally, it is said that a person who learns a second or foreign language will first hear, then, talk, and after that read and write (Shiota, 2012). Based on this, it is possible to say that listening is important because it becomes a tie when learning to speak, read, and write.

In the past several years, there has been a growing interest in the study of listening and speaking which according to Matsumoto (2014) are pondered as two of the most difficult skills to learn. He states that for the 43.9 % of EFL university learners in Japan, listening is considered the most difficult skill followed by speaking because the mastering of such skills relies mainly on authentic interaction. However, in countries where English is learned only as a foreign language, the exposure to it is considerably poor. As a matter of fact, in Ecuadorian schools, teaching English has become a merely grammatical issue. The main focus is to make students learn grammar and improve their writing skills (Calle et al., 2012). Little attention is given to the enhancement of listening and speaking which are the key factors for successful communicative competence (Ghanbari and Hashemian, 2014).

Several research studies have facilitated the process of teaching and learning a foreign language. However, in our context, there exists a gap for speaking and listening which has not been fulfilled yet (Calle et al., 2012). Given these circumstances, it is essential to approach this disparity. For this reason, shadowing, a method initially used to train beginner interpreters (Hamada, 2015) should be taken into consideration since it involves learning how to listen and speak simultaneously. Also, listening and speaking require careful perception and cognition which matches the functions of Shadowing since it is a highly cognitive activity (Oghyanous & Khabiri, 2017) in which learners track speech they hear and vocalize it as clearly as possible while simultaneously listening (Hamada, 2014). Therefore, in order to aid the development and improvement of listening and speaking which have been left behind in research especially in the Ecuadorian context, this recent technique called Shadowing appeals for study.



1.3 Justification

This study focuses only on two of the four English micro skills which are listening and speaking. The mastery of such skills depends mainly on social interaction (Horiyama, 2012). However, due to communicative restrictions of the Ecuadorian EFL environment, where people have few chances to use English in natural contexts, the opportunities to be exposed to the target language are limited. As explained by Cutler (2012), the ways in which natives and non-natives listen are fundamentally different. As a result, non-native learners need effective ways to compensate for the imparity. In order to address this issue, the implementation of Shadowing has been proposed. This technique has proved to be an efficient practice to learn English as a foreign language. In fact, the effectiveness of Shadowing has been evidenced by several research studies in the EFL context (Hamada, 2011a; Shimomura, 2018; Zuhriyah, 2016; Matsumoto, 2014; Hamada, 2014; Horiyama, 2012; Hamada, 2016; Sumiyoshi & Svetanant, 2017).

Shadowing can provide students the chance to familiarize with English and get accustomed to it, at the same time of improving listening and speaking. As mentioned before, this procedure is defined as the act or task of vocalizing speech as clearly as possible, while listening attentively to the incoming information (Zuhriyah, 2016). Hence, through this technique, EFL learners may benefit by having the opportunity to focus specifically on the mentioned skills. Among with this, EFL teachers may also benefit because this strategy facilitates the process of teaching such skills in a more centered way. If Shadowing is well applied it can denote a great aid in the EFL teaching and learning process.

In the Ecuadorian EFL environment people have few chances to interact or use English in natural contexts. Therefore, being able to listen and speak proficiently in English can be a difficult task. However, to meet this same necessity Shadowing has been introduced to the EFL context. This technique has shown positive results in contexts where contact with English is also restricted (Hamada, 2011a; Shimomura, 2018; Zuhriyah, 2016; Matsumoto, 2014). Thus, it is worth conducting research on the topic due to the fact that Ecuador is a country that is behind in terms of educational research (Fabara, 2012). Furthermore, a more general concern is that in terms of proficiency, the overall level of English of this country is ranked as low by the EF EPI (Education First, 2018). Taking into consideration the fact that listening and speaking are the



most difficult skills to acquire (Ghanbari and Hashemian, 2014), it can be inferred that one of the reasons for such ranking refers to the arduousness to master those skills.

1.4 Research Questions

This research synthesis will address the following questions:

1. What is the reported impact of Shadowing on listening?
2. What are the reported aspects regarding speaking that Shadowing influences?
3. What are the reported perceptions of students towards Shadowing as a strategy for foreign language learning?

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This research synthesis is based on a relatively new technique. Therefore, the definition and relevant aspects about Shadowing and its connection to the EFL environment will be presented first to provide the necessary background to the readers.

2.1. Shadowing

2.1.1. Definition

According to Hamada (2018) and Horiyama (2012), Shadowing basically comprises an auditory follow-up task that involves the instantaneous vocalization of any heard speech. Likewise, De Guerrero and Commander (2013) consider it as the trend in which the listener tends to replicate or imitate as exactly as possible what the speaker is saying. Additionally, Horiyama (2012) claims that one of the most important characteristics of Shadowing is that no space or intervals of time are allowed, meaning that the reproduction of the heard stimulus has to be immediate. Hamada (2019) explains this by the use of a metaphor. He argues that this process resembles the same process of the shadow of a person that is against any source of light. In such case, the shadow follows every step and movement performed. Likewise, Shadowing requires the simultaneous spoken reproduction by the listener.

2.1.2. Historical background

Shadowing emerged as a method to train simultaneous interpreters in East Asia, specifically in Japan (Hamada, 2019) and it continues to be part of the program for developing interpreting skills (Wiltshier, 2007). It all dates back to an experiment that was carried out by a linguist named Cherry in 1953 about speech recognition. In such study, the participants had to



listen to two passages at the same but in order to ensure the recognition of certain input they were asked to repeat concurrently only one of the passages. As a result, a practice which involved a repetition process called parrot style arose (Hamada, 2018). Furthermore, this study yielded the idea of exercising beginner interpreters in a parrot style (Hamada, 2016). This new technique involved listening and speaking at the same time but differed from repeating. Repetition is considered an off-line task because it only requires mechanical processes. On the other hand, Shadowing is an on-line task because it involves cognitive processes such as recognition, perception, and discrimination. Therefore, due to the fact that it simulates the process of a shadow it was referred to as shadowing.

2.1.3. Shadowing in the EFL context

According to Tateuchi, the initial interest for researching about Shadowing began in the psychological field because of its relation to cognitive processes (as cited in Wiltshier, 2007). Nevertheless, this technique was not only considered helpful for beginner interpreters and psychological developments (Hamada, 2019) but also for the educational field. Twenty-five years ago, Shadowing was integrated to the EFL context as a medium to improve students' English micro skills such as listening and speaking (Hamada, 2019). Horiyama (2012) states that due to the success that Shadowing presented in terms of enhancing and upgrading interpreting skills, this technique was contemplated as an effective method to develop EFL learners' conversational skills because it connects two English micro skills which are essential for oral communication, listening and speaking (Zuhriyah, 2016).

Wiltshier (2007) states that this technique called the attention of educational researchers because in the past, the pedagogies applied to develop and enhance listening skills were weak compared to the methods employed for improving reading, writing, and speaking. Besides this, according to Lambert (1992), Shadowing was considered a worthy alternative to be implemented into the English teaching process because it makes use of certain cognitive processes, like attention and perception, which consequentially improve the ability of recognition. Similarly, Shimomura (2018) affirms that Shadowing can be a promising strategy to improve EFL learners' communicative skills since it strengthens the working memory system. Based on this, Hamada (2019) indicates that Shadowing can benefit the identification and later production of sounds.



2.1.4. Shadowing: rules and process

As Hamada (2019) explains, Shadowing is a relatively new procedure to teach and learn English as a foreign language. Since this technique appeared and was introduced to the EFL context, many studies have been conducted on this topic (Hamada, 2011a; Shimomura, 2018; Zuhriyah, 2016; Matsumoto, 2014). However, none of the mentioned authors has reached to a final agreement on how Shadowing should be conducted in the EFL classroom. For this reason, there is not an established and universal protocol to be followed when shadowing. Nevertheless, several important contributions have been made by different authors.

For example, Hamada (2019) provides some rules to be taken into account beforehand.

- a) The mechanism of shadowing should be carefully explained and introduced to students.
- b) Teachers should be aware of the students' level before applying shadowing and selecting the material.
- c) Shadowing should be used first as a listening practice before it is used as a speaking activity.
- d) The shadowing process must be intensive only for a short period of time. Only 10 to 15 minutes per lesson are suggested.
- e) The material should be shadowed only from five to six times. After that, it has to be changed in order to maintain the students' attention.

As for the process of shadowing, Kadota and Tamai (2004) propose the following steps:

1. **Listening.** Listening to the audio material deprived of the script intending to understand the content and register.
2. **Mumbling.** Practice shadowing first without using the written material, concentrating only on the sounds.
3. **Synchronized reading.** Shadowing using the script as a guide. This time the focus has to be on the meaning.
4. **Prosody shadowing.** Practice shadowing emphasizing the prosodic elements of speech such as stress, rhythm, intonation, speed, and pause.
5. **Synchronized reading.** Using the script to shadow giving greater importance to the parts considered difficult or problematic by the listeners.



6. Content shadowing. Emphasizing the content at the moment of shadowing without the script.

2.1.5. Types of Shadowing

Since Shadowing was introduced to the EFL context, it has been used in many different ways in this field. As Hamada (2012) explains, this technique has the advantage of being flexible. Therefore, several types or variations of this strategy have emerged according to the classroom needs.

Wiltshier (2007) and Murphey (2001) have classified or divided Shadowing into different categories.

Part shadowing. According to Wiltshier (2001) it is also known as echoing and consists of repeating only the last word or only the stressed word in the speech produced by the speaker. The researcher considers that this type of Shadowing can be used with beginner students since it does not demand a great implication of cognitive processes. In fact, it is considered as one of the easiest variations of Shadowing since as its name says, only part of the input is shadowed.

Slash shadowing. Wiltshier (2007) indicates that in this type of Shadowing intervals of time are allowed. The speaker conveys the message deliberately making pauses after phrases. Hence, the listener receives more time to recognize the meaning of the input by connecting it to what has been already stored in the long-term memory. This particular type of Shadowing as explained by Wiltshier (2007) can be carried out by students of any level since the pauses can be adjusted to their degree of understanding.

These last two kinds of Shadowing match with the type of Shadowing that Murphey (2001) calls *selective shadowing*.

Full shadowing. According to Wiltshier (2007) it refers to the process in which the listener is expected to replicate as exactly and as soon as possible, without intervals of time, what the speaker has uttered. Of course, in this variation the input is complex, meaning that isolated words are not allowed but only complete sentences. Murphey (2001) calls this type of Shadowing *complete shadowing* and argues that it is intended for proficient or high-level students since it requires complex mental processes.

Interactive shadowing. It is another variation recognized by Murphey (2001). The author explains that this type of Shadowing requires additional participation of the listener. In



other words, aside from the speech shadowed the listener has to contribute with extra comments or questions in order to make Shadowing less mechanic and thus, more collaborative and engaging. This interactive Shadowing can be considered as an umbrella term for the further classification done by Wiltshier (2007) which correlates to the names of *shadowing + comment* and *shadowing + question*.

2.2. Baddeley's Multi-component working memory model

Based on its definition, some language teachers may consider Shadowing to be a passive task or it may be seen as simple repetition. However, as Hamada (2016) mentions, this technique comprises complex active processes. Therefore, it has its theoretical roots on Baddeley's multi-component working memory model which refers to the provisional storage and manipulation of information that is required for carrying out a wide variety of cognitive activities (Baddeley, 2012). According to Kadota (20017) this model consists of 4 elements: a phonological loop, a visuospatial sketchpad, an episodic buffer and the central executive. Baddeley (2012) explains that in this system the central executive is the most important component and the rest of elements are units of storages which are firmly connected.

As explained by Repovš and Baddeley (2006) each element has its role in this working memory system.

Central Executive. It is considered a control system of attentional limited capacity. It is in charge of the manipulation of information in the working memory and of directing the three units of storage.

Phonological loop. This unit of storage retains phonological information temporarily by means of maintaining it by vocal or subvocal rehearsal. This loop is able to retain incoming phonological information for approximately two seconds in the phonological short-term store.

Visuospatial sketchpad. It is capable of retaining and manipulating visual and spatial information. This procedure is very important at the moment of developing cognitive tasks.

Episodic Buffer. "It holds information that is integrated from a range of systems including other working memory components and long-term memory into coherent complex structures: scenes or episodes." (Repovš & Baddeley, 2006, pp. 15). This buffer has a limited capacity and it links the working memory to perceptions because it is able to store multidimensional representations.



According to Hamada (2016), the phonological loop involved in this working memory systems provides theoretical explanation to the learning process developed through Shadowing. Hamada (2016) states that the phoneme perception of the majority of EFL learners does not appear automatically as when learning an L1. This hinders the correct functioning of the phonological loop. Consequently, the author claims that EFL learners tend to have difficulties in identifying incoming sounds and phonemes due to an undeveloped phoneme perception. Thus, the range of information that can be retained in the phonological store is limited as well as the amount of information that can be rehearsed in the subvocal rehearsal. The poor performance of the phonological loop causes a malfunctioning in the working memory which affects foreign language acquisition.

2.3. Key Terms

Following, a list of key terms considered essential for the overall understanding of this research synthesis will be presented.

2.3.1. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

According to Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003), it refers to the English taught in non-speaking English countries. The authors consider it as an additional language learned for diverse purposes uniquely related to the speaker. The same source states that English as a foreign language is not the primary medium of interaction or communication in the environment in which it is taught or learned. Therefore, it is not needed for regular, professional, or social contexts. Besides that, Broughton et al. (2003) argue that EFL learners have the option of studying any of the English varieties, such as American English, British English, or Australian English because it is not geographically connected to the environment in which it is acquired.

2.3.2. Listening

Broughton et al. (2003) state that in terms of oral communication, listening is the first skill to be acquired; thus, it comes earlier than speaking. These authors define listening as the capacity to receive incoming information and decipher it. In line with this, Sariçoban and Metin (2000) claim that this skill involves apprehending and giving meaning to the utterances produced by a speaker taking into consideration the phonological, prosodic and grammatical features the speech.

Moreover, Yonezaki argues that “a person commonly experiences three stages in the listening process: perceiving sounds (perception), decoding sounds to recognize them as certain



linguistic forms (recognition), and comprehending the meaning of the forms (comprehension)” (as cited in Zuriyah, 2016, p.32). Accordingly, Murjani (2010) explains that listening is not only a receptive skill but also an active one since many cognitive processes are involved at the moment of connecting the input with what was previously stored in the brain.

2.3.2.1. Types of listening

According to the purpose, Harmer (2010) argues that listening can be either intensive or extensive.

Intensive listening. It is defined as the process in which individuals listen explicitly to develop or improve listening skills in academic context. This type of listening is practiced in schools or any educational institution and is held in a controlled manner.

Extensive listening. This type of listening is held in a free fashion because the listener has the control over what he or she wants to listen to. It is mainly done for pleasure or personal purposes of the listener. It can involve music or any enjoyable audio material for the individual.

Listening can be also divided according to the approaches intended to define it.

Bottom-up. As stated by Wilson (2008) it makes reference to the process of building or giving meaning to the spoken message sound by sound. It comprises deciphering the language by phonemes or syllables. The focus of bottom-up listening is the understanding of the smallest units of speech. According to Yeldham (2018), the bottom-up skills are those intended to appreciate the prosodic elements of language such as rhythm, stress, intonation, and general patterns of speech. Wilson (2008) claims that this approach precedes the top-down process because it first develops the basic processes of recognition and discrimination.

Top-down. Wilson (2008) states that it refers to the use of the previous knowledge of the listener as a scaffolding tool to understand the target message. It strongly relies on the background knowledge of the individual and what has been stored formerly in his or her mind in order to aid the process of comprehension. Yeldham (2018) states that this approach is considered complex because “it involves teaching learners to use cognitive strategies, such as predicting and inferring meaning” (p.805).

2.3.3. Speaking

According to Thornbury (2005) being able to speak has been long confused with the ability to build and utter sentences with grammatical accuracy. Instead, speaking is a bilateral skill which takes places in authentic contexts and is under a self-governing principle. This means



that, it is not necessarily connected to the knowledge of grammar (Thornbury, 2005).

Additionally, Torky (2006) considers that speaking encompasses the capacity to convey messages, feelings or thoughts verbally in a real time and making use of all the sub competences which are *Linguistic competence, Discourse competence, Pragmatic competence and Fluency*.

Furthermore, Kadota (2007) claims that speaking consists of two phases. In the first phase, the syntactic structures are arranged and sent to the language production center.

Meanwhile, in the second phase all the speech muscles are used to actually speak using the given phonological system.

As a complement of the previous claim, Thornbury (2005) suggests that there are three stages that precede speech production.

Conceptualization. This stage involves mentally analyzing a received message according to the type, topic, and purpose.

Formulation. In this phase, decisions about the semantic and syntactic structures of speech are carried out.

Articulation. At this level, the speech organs are used to generate sounds or phonemes. Thornbury (2005) emphasizes that speakers can produce over 40 phonemes which are nearly evenly divided into vowels and consonants.

2.3.3.1. Types of speaking

According to the purpose, Torkey (2006) argues that speaking can be either transactional or interactional.

Transactional Speaking. It refers to the oral performance intended only to convey any type of information as well as being aware that it was understood. The main focus is on the action of sending verbal messages.

Interactional Speaking. It involves using the spoken language relying on the desire to form or preserve social relationships. The emphasis is on maintaining social interaction.

Chapter III

Literature Review

Mastering or acquiring listening and speaking skills in an EFL context may be a complex to achieve because many factors hinder this process, one them is related to phonological



identification (Hamada, 2016). Consequently, since Shadowing works and is related to phonological features, several prior research studies have been conducted in this area associating Shadowing with listening and speaking skills. For the sole purpose of answering the research questions, the following chapter will report how Shadowing is used to help language learners in terms of listening and speaking. Also, various studies will be described to have a sense of the effectiveness of Shadowing according to the level of English, the procedure and material used for shadowing, what elements are influenced by this technique and finally what students think of this method.

3.1. Shadowing and the learner's level of English

According to Hamada (2016), Tamai was one of the pioneers who introduced Shadowing research in EFL contexts arguing that it improves language skills. However, lately, there have been many studies that have led to the hypothesis that Shadowing improves specifically listening and speaking skills. The assumption that this technique improves such skills is debatable in terms of the learners' level of English. For instance, Hamada (2016) and Shimomura (2018) carried out a study with 43 freshmen EFL Japanese university students and 65 EFL students of a private women's college, accordingly. The two authors divided the participants into two groups: a low-level and a high-intermediate-level group. In both studies, Shadowing was practiced during sessions of no more than 20 minutes. The methodological procedure of the studies was similar as well since both research studies used pre- and post-tests to collect the data which was later statistically analyzed through ANOVA (analysis of variance) methods.

Nevertheless, the key findings of such studies differed significantly. In Hamada's (2016) study, the participants had to listen and shadow audios from the book Reading Explorer 2 and to collect the information needed for the study, they were given two types of multiple-choice tests. The results of the statistical analysis revealed that Shadowing improved listening skills only in low-proficient learners while for intermediate-proficient learners there was no statistically significant change. Therefore, Hamada (2016) deduced that Shadowing is only suitable for improving low-level learners' listening skills. The author stated that the process held for Shadowing allowed the low-level students to identify sounds better which also improved their bottom-up skills. On the other hand, no improvement was found in the high-intermediate learners because they already possessed bottom-up listening skills.



Contrary to what Hamada (2016) found, the study performed by Shimomura (2018) revealed that both groups improved in the post-test; however, the high/intermediate group reached a major enhancement than the lower group. Therefore, the author stated that Shadowing can aid the development of listening skills in high-proficiency learners as well as low-proficiency learners because it allows them to carefully pay attention to the articulation of each sound which improves their understanding of the spoken language.

In terms of speaking, the studies performed by Kuo and Chou (2014) and Hsieh, Dong and Wang (2013) also contribute to the debate about the efficacy of Shadowing according to the level of proficiency presented by the learners. These authors developed an experimental research study to examine the effectiveness of Shadowing on oral performance. In the two studies, the participants of the experimental groups were divided into levels of proficiency; low, intermediate and high. In Kuo and Chou's (2014) study, three entire classes of students participated and they were asked to take a read-aloud-test to collect the data before and after the 15 weeks of shadowing lessons. The tests were graded by two Taiwanese EFL teachers at word and sentence level emphasizing the articulation of each phoneme, stress, and intonation. Then, by means of descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-tests, the results demonstrated that the experimental group surpassed the control group in terms of pronunciation. It was also evidenced that intermediate learners improved the most, followed by low-proficiency and high-proficiency learners. Therefore, Kuo and Chou (2014) reinforced the assumption that Shadowing has the potential to improve or even accelerate a native-like pronunciation in intermediate-level learners.

Likewise, Hsieh, Dong and Wang (2013) arrived to a similar conclusion arguing that through Shadowing intermediate and high-level learners can adjust their speech assimilating a better speaking performance of the target language. To do so, the authors reported the effects of Shadowing on 14 Taiwanese EFL students from the National Taiwan University. The participants attended a course of English in which they shadowed audio and text materials appropriate for their levels. To collect the information needed for the research, the two groups took pre and post-tests and were also asked to record themselves in both tests. The data collected was analyzed statistically using Independent Sample t-test and the recordings were evaluated at a sentence-level by comparing them to the patterns uttered by native speakers. The results revealed that the mean score of the participants for pronunciation, fluency, and intonation increased



statistically significantly. Therefore, the effectiveness of shadowing on oral performance on these levels of English was confirmed.

The debate about the effectiveness of Shadowing according to the levels of English may have raised due to the fact that some authors argue that this technique only improves bottom-up skills (Hamada, 2016; Zurihya, 2016) while others argue that Shadowing is a highly cognitive task which can address both bottom-up and top-down skills (Sumarsih, 2017; Hamada, 2011a; Zakeri, 2014; Saito, Nagasawa, & Ishikawa, 2011); hence, transforming Shadowing into a technique that can be suitable for low intermediate and high-level learners.

3.2. Cycles of induction to Shadowing

Furthermore, research on the efficacy of Shadowing is not only related to the level of the participants. Some studies have been also conducted on the basis of cycles. For instance, Sumarsih (2017), Zakeri (2014) and Zurihyah (2016) carried out different research studies to examine the possible advantages of Shadowing on language skills. Curiously, the methodological procedure of such studies was divided in two cycles. The first shadowing cycle was used particularly to familiarize the learner to this strategy and thus access to better outcomes. Therefore, the results of the first cycle were not taken into account to draw conclusions. After the statistical analysis of the information gathered through pre- and post-test, the results of the second cycle were positive for the three studies.

In Sumarsih's study, the outcome of 60 freshmen students of the University of Medan, who practiced shadowing using the *Focus on IELTS* book, was analyzed and it was found that Shadowing has the potential of upgrading and improving listening skills since it allows students to work in a systematic and contextual form which resembled the way in which language is attained. For his part, Zakeri (2014), who aimed to confirm the effectiveness of Shadowing on the fluency of 40 Iranian EFL students, also obtained positive results. As part of the author's methodological procedure, the participants had to shadow passages and audios from the *Total English* and at the end of the sessions, each participant had to answer following question *What do you usually do in your free time?* as they were recorded. To analyze the fluency of each participant, the recordings were transliterated and graded based on the amount of words uttered per minute. Using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test, it was found that the fluency of the experimental group grew significantly in comparison to the control group. Based on the results found, Zakeri (2014) argued that if students are aware of what shadowing is, it



becomes a fruitful technique to enhance EFL learners' oral expression since the regular practice allowed them to identify, articulate, and connect sounds more easily. In addition, Zurihyah (2016) arrived to a similar conclusion claiming that Shadowing is a useful strategy to improve listening since this technique improved the recognition and discrimination of similar sounds of 18 Indonesian EFL students of the third semester of the University of Hasyim Asy'ari. It is worth mentioning that the methodological procedure of Zurihyah's (2016) study also involved observations—field notes— which after a descriptive analysis revealed that in cycle one, most of the students were confused and nervous. Nevertheless, in cycle two all of the students felt more confident and prouder of their progress. In line with this, Hamada (2012) states that the learners' attitudes are a key factor for EFL learning.

3.3. Shadowing Material

The empirical evidence of Shadowing demonstrates that it has a positive influence in the development of listening and speaking skills (Hamada,2016; Kuo and Chou, 2014; Zakeri, 2014; Shimomura, 2018) in terms of levels of English and cycles of induction to shadowing.

Nevertheless, another factor that is covered in several research studies refers to the type of material used for practicing Shadowing.

There are many studies in which only academic English books are used as the shadowing material (Zakeri, 2014; Hamada, 2016; Sumarsih, 2017; Shimomura, 2018). However, a different type of material has been applied in other studies under the belief that it stimulates and engages the learner to shadow in a more active way (Hamada, 2011a; Nakayama, 2016; Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa, 2011). Such material corresponds to the name of *authentic material*— content found in real life not intended for EFL learners (Gilmore, 2007). In this line, Hamada (2011a) conducted an experimental study with 73 Japanese high-school students aiming to determine the influence of Shadowing on listening skills. In his study, the participants shadowed 17 passages of *Obama Speech Collection* during three weeks. In addition, Nakayama (2016) carried out a study about the usefulness of Shadowing for developing speaking skills. In this study, 16 EFL Japanese students used a song called *As long as you love me* by Martin Sandberg and its printed lyrics as the shadowing material. Moreover, Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa, (2011) examined the implications of Shadowing on the affective domain of 41 Japanese high-school students. In this study, the participants were asked to shadow the last scene of a movie called *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.



In Hamada's (2011a) and Nakayama's (2016) studies, there are no personal perceptions by the participants to know if the type of material influenced or not on the effectiveness of Shadowing. However, the statistical results do reveal positive outcomes. For instance, after a statistical analysis using sample t-tests and the ANOVA method, the overall results from Hamada's (2011a) study revealed that the experimental groups increased their scores on the post-test mainly on the questions related to comprehension of short passages. Therefore, Hamada (2011a) claimed that Shadowing can be a useful technique to upgrade listening comprehension skills of short texts. Likewise, in Nakayama's (2016) research study the participants were asked to read aloud the transcript of the song and record themselves before and after shadowing. The two recordings of each participant were graded by one Japanese English teacher and one native speaker teacher emphasizing the accent and unambiguousness of their speech. After the analysis, it was found that in the second recording, 56% of the participants improved their accentedness, while 44% improved their intelligibility.

On the other hand, the study conducted by Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa, (2011) does focuses on the personal perceptions of the students towards shadowing. In such study, the methodological procedure encompassed a questionnaire which included eight questions about the experience of the students with shadowing, the evaluation of their progress, and the materials used. The results revealed that, in general the experience of the majority of students was positive mainly because of the kind of material that was used. Most of the participants stated that they felt confident because they were familiar with the material used for shadowing.

3.4. Shadowing and Prosody

According to Horiyama (2012), Shadowing basically comprises an auditory follow-up task that involves the instantaneous vocalization of any heard speech. Due to the vocalization involved, twenty-five years ago Shadowing was introduced to the EFL context as a medium to improve students' speaking skills (Hamada, 2019). The empirical research on Shadowing has evidence its positive influence on this area in general (Kusumoto, 2015; Zakeri, 2014; Kuo and chou, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013; Nakayama, 2016). Besides, it is said that prosody is one of the most relevant elements in oral communication because up to 40% of meaning is apprehended through it (Sumarsih, 2017). Therefore, numerous research studies have been carried out to analyze the effects of Shadowing on several prosodic elements such as fluency (Zakeri, 2014; Kusumoto, 2015), pronunciation (Kuo & Chou, 2015; Hsieh, Dong & Wang,



2013) intonation and rhythm (Kusumoto,2015; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013) and accentedness and intelligibility (Nakayama, 2016). Research on this particular dimension has been primarily quantitative (Zakeri, 2014; Kuo & Chou, 2015; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013; Nakayama, 2016; Kusumoto, 2015). The most common instruments have been descriptive statistics (Kusumoto, 2015; Zakeri, 2014) and independent and paired samples t-test (Kuo & Chou, 2015; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013). Additionally, participants of the five mentioned studies were all EFL learners from Japan (Kusumoto, 2015; Nakayama, 2016), Taiwan (Kuo & Chou, 2015; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013) and Iran (Zakeri, 2014).

As for the results, the findings of the reported studies cited in this section were positive. Kusumoto (2015), Hsieh, Dong & Wang, (2013) claimed that Shadowing enhances prosody but not as to resemble the speech of a native English speaker. The authors also agreed on the assumption that pronunciation is the most influenced element of prosody. As a complement of the previous claim, Kuo and Chou (2014), Zakeri (2014) and Nakayama (2016) found out that Shadowing is a powerful technique to ease the articulation of sounds because through this technique it is possible to concentrate on distinguishing and identifying single phonemes, especially vowels. In the same line, Nakayama (2016) also argues that from all the elements of prosody, intelligibility is said to be more difficult to improve because of the differences between the phonological systems between English and Japanese, in this specific case. Nevertheless, the upgrade on this aspect was evidenced.

The empirical research on this area suggests that Shadowing has a positive influence on speaking but it does not replace any method to achieve a native-like pronunciation.

3.5. Learner´s insights towards shadowing

As mentioned before, the learners' attitudes are a key factor for EFL learning (Hamada, 2012) and Shadowing has proved to have a positive impact on this area. Several research studies have been conducted to analyze the perspectives of the learners in terms of their affective domain. Therefore, research on this dimension has been primarily qualitative (Horiyama, 2012; Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hamada, 2011b; Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa, 2011) with the exception of Teeter (2017) and Sumiyoshi and Svenatant (2017) whose research studies were quantitative. The instruments used to analyze the data varied among surveys (Teteer, 2017; Sumiyoshi & Svenatant, 2017), questionnaires (Horiyama, 2012; Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hamada, 2011b; Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa, 2011) and field notes (Kuo & Chou, 2014). The sample sizes also vary in



the reported studies. The majority of them analyzed the responses of 25 to 40 participants approximately (Sumiyoshi & Svenatant, 2017; Horiyama, 2012; Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hamada, 2011b; Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa, 2011), with the exception of Teeter (2017), who analyzed the results of 1001 students. Moreover, since the focus of such studies was on the learners' attitudes, no major description about the process and material used for shadowing was found. Nevertheless, regarding the findings obtained through the analysis performed, all the studies drew only positive conclusions about Shadowing. In general, the results revealed that Shadowing influences different psychological aspects of the learners.

One of those aspects corresponds to motivation since it was found that students considered Shadowing as a very useful and satisfactory activity which generated eagerness to participate (Sumiyoshi & Svenatant, 2017; Horiyama, 2012). Likewise, Shadowing was perceived as an encouraging strategy because as stated by Kuo and Chou (2014), the learners reacted in a positive way due to the perception of their improvement. Also, according to Hamada (2011b), Shadowing proved to be a strategy that boosts motivation since learners perceived it as a friendly strategy. Furthermore, Teeter (2017) and Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa (2011) asserted that through Shadowing students can obtain an instantaneous view of their progress since it is worked by sessions. Therefore, the authors stated that when students are aware of their progress, their self-confidence increases which makes them perceive Shadowing as an advantageous strategy. According to the result of these studies, Shadowing is a technique intended to improve and enhance. However, it can also decrease and lessen. As reported by Teeter (2017), shadowing can also reduce the anxiety levels of learners. The author reached this conclusion since through the analysis performed, the statement that indicated that shadowing decreased anxiety prevailed among the others.

In general, the empirical evidence on this area affirms that Shadowing aroused only favorable perceptions and attitudes in the participants.

As any method or strategy for EFL learning, Shadowing has its advantages and disadvantages if seen from different perspectives. However, through the described studies the contributions of Shadowing in many areas and field have been evinced. Moreover, the feelings and attitudes of the participants included in the revision indicated that Shadowing not only aids the acquisition of listening and speaking skills but also the affective domain of students. This



means that Shadowing goes beyond the academic processes only. Therefore, a deep analysis of all the contributions must be made.

Chapter IV

Methodology

For the purposes of this research synthesis, existing studies were collected to be later analyzed in regard to the research questions that guided this study. The material found concerning Shadowing was selected based on certain inclusive and exclusive criteria, such as the date, research design, etc. Furthermore, the references of these sources were explored for additional studies.

The databases Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Taylor & Francis and Google Scholar were searched for locating studies on Shadowing. Additionally, search was conducted on several journals in the field such as *The Asian EFL Journal*, *Journal of Bunkyo Gakuin University of Foreign Studies*, *Language Teaching Research*, *Journal of the Japan Association for Developmental Education*, *Register Journal*, *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *Taiwan Journal of Linguistics*, *International journal of English linguistic*, *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *ExLing*. The key terms included combinations of the following: (a) shadowing, (b) pedagogical, (c) implication, (d) perception, (e) improvement, (f) skills, (g) development, (h) relationship, (i) experimental, (j) listening, and (k) awareness.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The studies that were selected for this study were analyzed to check if they were pertinent and relevant to the research questions. Therefore, only the studies that met the following criteria were included:

- a. The study was published between 2011 and 2019. This time frame was chosen because it represents a significant period of time to offer updated evidence of the impact of shadowing.
- b. The study was published in a peer-reviewed journal. This criterion was included in order to ensure the quality of the information gathered.



- c. The approach used within the primary research papers was not taken into account; meaning, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method researches were accepted. As for the research method of the study, it had to be experimental, quasi experimental or action research. These designs were selected because they allow the reader to know if a treatment applied works or not.
- d. The study measures the impact of Shadowing on either listening or speaking. These two skills were chosen because of the lack of research upon them as explained above.

On the other hand, some studies had to be excluded due to the following reasons.

- a. Studies published before 2011 were not included because this research attempted to provide only the most recent and updated information.
- b. Studies that used correlational or descriptive designs were excluded because they did not address the purpose of the research questions.
- c. Unpublished studies were not used because the reliability of the information could be questioned.
- d. Papers involving the skills of reading or writing were excluded because they do not address the research questions.

Chapter V

Analysis

The analysis of this study was divided in two stages in order to provide a background or context for the readers.

5.1. Stage 1

The first part of the analysis focused on the characteristics of the studies that were analyzed. The 15 analyzed studies in this research were coded according to several categories. Some categories served for determining a study's suitability for inclusion and their characteristics and others served as a basis for answering the research questions.

Table 1

Publication dates of primary studies

Year of publication	N° of publications	%
2017-2018	4	26.67%
2014-2016	6	40%
2011-2013	5	33.33%

N= 15

Table 1 indicates that 10 (66.67%) of the 15 primary studies examined in this research were published over a five-year period, between the years 2014 and 2018. This suggests that Shadowing is a relatively young field of research. Even though most of the primary research found is relatively new, there is a significant amount of information about shadowing, which indicates that it has been gaining popularity among EFL contexts as Hamada (2019) ascertained.

Table 2

Research design applied on the study

Research design	N° of studies	%
Quantitative	7	46.67%
Qualitative	3	20%
Mixed method	5	33.33%

N=15

Table 2 shows that, out of the 15 studies included in this research, 7 (46.67%) are quantitative. This is an essential factor at the moment of providing answer to the research questions because the results of this design are thought to be largely generalizable (Brown, 2014). Nevertheless, there is a conviction that social science rejects generalization (Hellström, 2008). Moreover, it is worth remarking that one of the questions of this study involves a subjective sense, *what are the reported perceptions of students towards Shadowing as a strategy for foreign language learning?* Therefore, the occurrence of qualitative studies was required. As shown, qualitative studies are not predominant; however, they are one of the most crucial elements at the moment of interpreting the results since they yield “data that is relatively deep in terms of human experiences” (Brown, 2014, p.92). Additionally, a significant amount of studies (33.33%) combine qualitative and quantitative designs. According to Brown (2014), the most appropriate design to be used in research of teaching English to speakers of other languages



(TESOL) is Mixed Method because it binds strengths of qualitative and quantitative designs to balance their weaknesses. Besides that, it connects numerical proved hypotheses and their impact on real life.

Table 3

Data collection method

Data collection Instrument	N° of studies	%
Multiple-choice test	6	40%
Read-aloud test and questionnaire	1	6.67%
Recording	2	13.33%
Recording and questionnaire	1	6.67%
Survey	2	13.33%
Questionnaire	3	20%

N=15

The information presented in table 3 indicates the instruments used in the 15 primary studies. Multiple-choice tests were the predominant instruments appearing in a total of 6 studies (40%). This shows that there is a preference for this type of tests since it avoids biased results and is not time-consuming (Haladyna, 2004). Questionnaires as well as recordings were used in 3 of the 15 studies (20%), becoming in that way in the second most used data collection instruments. The remaining percentage (60%) was divided into read-aloud tests and surveys. The choice of the data collection instrument matches the research design and the focus of the study. For this reason, objective tests prevailed over subjective instruments.

Table 4

Level of participants in primary studies according to skills

Skill	Level	N° of studies	%
Listening			
	Low and intermediate	1	10%
	Intermediate	1	10%
	Low and High	1	10%
	Not specified	2	20%
Speaking			
	Low, intermediate, and high	1	10%
	Intermediate	1	10%
	Intermediate and high	1	10%
	Not specified	2	20%

N=10

The exact number of primary studies in this table is 10 because only the studies that focused on listening and speaking skills are accounted for. The studies that focused on the learner's attitudes are not part of this table because information such as the level was missing.

Table 4 indicates that, in the experimental studies that involved listening and speaking, the most common level of English that participants had was intermediate. High and low levels of English were not prevalent among the primary studies which evidences that the effectiveness of Shadowing might be correlated to the level of the EFL learner. In this way, table 4 indicates that, this strategy is suitable for intermediate-level learners since this was the predominant level in the studies.

Table 5

Types of shadowing materials used in primary studies



Type of material		N° of studies	%
Instructional			
	Books	8	53.31%
	Tests preparation	1	6.67%
Authentic			
	Magazines and online apps	1	6.67%
	Songs	1	6.67%
	Movies	1	6.67%
	Online Apps	1	6.67%
		1	6.67%
Isolated	Sentences-questions		
Mixed	Books and formal speeches	1	6.67%
N=15			

Table 5 makes reference to the type of material that was used to practice Shadowing on the primary studies. The majority of studies used books as the source for shadowing which shows the preference for ready-made material. Additionally, it can be seen that the use of authentic material was not predominant. It is important to mention that the selection of the material may have been performed according to the level of the participants and the purpose of the study. For this reason, there is a wide variety of material. Moreover, since academic English books were the predominant shadowed material, the previous claim regarding the effectiveness of Shadowing according to the level may be confirmed. In the analyzed studies, the books that were used for shadowing were the same used for the academic instruction of the participants. Therefore, the material matched the level of the students, evidencing again the possible correlation between Shadowing and the proficiency level.

5.2. Stage 2

After analyzing the main characteristics of the primary studies, the major findings will be discussed on the basis of the research questions that directed this study.



5.2.1. What is the reported impact of Shadowing on listening?

All the studies that were analyzed regarding listening reported positive outcomes. In five research studies (Hamada, 2011a; Shimomura, 2018; Zurihyah, 2016; Sumarsih, 2016; Hamada 2016), Shadowing is reported to be an effective and efficient technique for improving listening skills. Shimomura (2018) and Zurihyah (2016) state that Shadowing is beneficial for listening because it helps students to distinguish phonemes. The authors state that the success of this technique relies on the opportunities to practice listening in real time which allows learners to intensify their degree of concentration. As a complement, Hamada (2016) argues that while shadowing, the learners enter a process of complete awareness which allows them to recall sounds easier and thus, improve their sound recognition. In addition, Sumarsih (2017) reports that the absence of intervals of time also plays an important role in the effectiveness of this technique because it forces the learners to hastily grasp and store the phonemes to be later memorized while shadowing. In such way, the ability of recognition is being enhanced through extensive practice. In line with this, Hamada (2011a) explains that sounds recognition improves gradually.

Furthermore, the type of material also plays an important role in the effectiveness. As shown in table 5, a wide range of material can be used to practice shadowing. Nevertheless, the majority of studies (53.31 %) that yielded positive results employed academic English books as part of the shadowing material (Hamada, 2016; Sumarsih, 2016; Zurihyah, 2016). Nonetheless, Hamada (2011a) demands that authentic material can also engage the learner into shadowing to produce better outcomes. Additionally, the effectiveness of Shadowing is also challenged based on the levels of English that the students have. As it was mentioned, many authors debate on which level is the most benefited by Shadowing (Hamada, 2016; Shimomura, 2018; Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013). However, in terms of listening, the results of the studies included in this research synthesis (Hamada, 2016; Shimomura, 2018; Sumarsih, 2017; Hamada, 2011b; Zurihyah, 2016) indicate that Shadowing displays better accomplishments with participants of low and intermediate levels as shown in table 5. As a complement, Hamada (2016) states that Shadowing works in a more effective manner with bottom-up skills which are indeed developed in the first stages of the process of acquiring listening proficiency (Wilson, 2008). Besides, as shown in table 6, sound recognition is the listening sub-skill that improved the

most (80%) and according to Wilson (2008), it belongs to the bottom-up skills. In this way, the assertion that Shadowing operates to a major degree with low and intermediate levels is reinforced.

Table 6

Benefits of Shadowing for listening

Skill	Improvement area	N° of studies	%
Listening			
	Sound recognition	4	80%
	Recognition and discrimination	1	20%

N=5

Note: *The exact number of primary studies is 5 because only the studies that focus on listening skills are being accounted for.*

5.2.2. What are the reported aspects regarding oral performance that Shadowing influences?

Kuo and Chou (2014), Hsieh, Dong, and Wang (2013) and Kusumoto (2015) explain that through Shadowing students get the opportunity to focus on the phonological characteristics of speech from a direct source. Therefore, different prosodic elements of speech are upgraded through this technique such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, fluency, accentedness and intelligibility (Kusumoto, 2015; Zakeri, 2011; Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013; Nakayama, 2016). Nevertheless, as shown in table 7, pronunciation is the element that has been primarily analyzed in this dimension. Actually, Kusumoto (2015), Kuo and Chou (2014) and Hsieh, Dong, and Wang (2013) argue that Shadowing improves this component of prosody principally because through Shadowing learners develop phonological awareness when trying to replicate the speech as exactly as possible in a fast manner. In this way, students are able to identify, articulate and connect sounds better which according to Nakayama (2016) also implies an improvement of intelligibility. In the same line, this last author mentions, that the enhancement of intelligibility depends on the similitude of the English phonological system to the L1, meaning that the benefits of Shadowing may be stronger if it is practiced with languages that share linguistic similarities. Besides, Zakeri (2014) and Hsieh, Dong, and Wang (2013)



argue that the rapidity involved in Shadowing helps students to be aware of the flow of oral language which also improves fluency, intonation, and rhythm.

Furthermore, according to Hamada (2019) Shadowing works sequentially; thus, it should be used first for listening and then for speaking. In the same line, Hamada (2019) claims that Shadowing is not used for oral performance at the beginning because it involves complex processes. This explains why as shown in table 4, most of the participants of the studies that were analyzed to answer this research question had intermediate to high levels of English (Zakeri, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013) with the exception of the study performed by Kuo and Chou (2013) which included participants of low levels of English. As a complement, Kuo and Chou (2013) assert that in terms of speaking, this technique works better with higher levels of English because it addresses top-down skills.

Table 7

Benefits of Shadowing for speaking

Skill	Improvement area	N° of studies	%
Speaking			
	Pronunciation	1	20%
	Fluency	1	20%
	Pronunciation, intonation and rhythm	1	20%
	Pronunciation, intonation and fluency	1	20%
	Accentedness and intelligibility	1	20%

N=5

Note: The exact number of primary studies is 5 because only the studies that focus on speaking skills are being accounted for.

5.2.3. What are the reported perceptions of students towards Shadowing as a strategy for foreign language learning?

As mentioned before, in educational research, the affective domain of students is a factor that has not received due attention (Iida, 2011). However, according to Brown (2014), it can be considered one of the most important elements for interpreting results since it provides an outlook from a personal scope. Therefore, to have a deep insight and to give the statistics an emic value such factor was included in the study. As shown in table 8, the majority of insights



reported by the students are positive which suggests that Shadowing may be an effective and encouraging strategy.

Horiyama (2012) affirms that, after using Shadowing as a strategy to enhance listening and speaking, the perceptions towards this technique were favorable because the students felt satisfied with their progress. Besides, Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa (2011) state that the experiences of the participants in their study were gratifying. In the questionnaires that were administered in both studies, the participants reported that their perceived improvement made them consider Shadowing an effective strategy. Furthermore, Sumiyoshi and Svetanant (2017) and Kou and Chou (2014) argue that Shadowing has the potential of increasing motivation in the learners. The authors explain that this conclusion was established in their study because after shadowing the participants showed an increment in their enthusiasm to participate in class. Moreover, according to Teeter (2017), another factor that the learners reported to be improved is their self-confidence and anxiety control. In line with this, Sumiyoshi and Svenatant (2017) found that the constant practice of shadowing eradicates timidity build and helps to shape a stronger self-assurance on what has been grasped.

Aside from this, throughout the analysis it was evidenced that the material used for shadowing may play an essential role in the learners' perceptions towards this technique. As a complement of the previous claim, Hamada (2011b), Kuo and Chou (2014) and Saito, Nagasawa and Ishikawa (2011) used authentic materials in their studies (chants, songs, movie scripts) and the experiences of the students were all satisfactory.

Table 8

Affective domain aspects improved according to participants' perceptions

Aspects	N° of studies	%
Motivation	4	66.68%
Anxiety reduction and self-confidence	1	16.66%
Self-confidence	1	16.66%

N=6

The exact number of primary studies is 6 because only the studies that intended to examine the students' attitudes are being accounted for.



Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This research synthesis attempted to analyze the impact of Shadowing on that listening and speaking, two areas which have been considered two of the most difficult skills to master (Matsumoto, 2014) and have received less research attention in our context (Calle et al., 2012). Besides, the students' perspectives were also taken into account in this study due to the importance of the affective domain in the learning process (Hamada, 2012). The analyzed studies have provided enough information to assume that the implications of Shadowing are almost all beneficial towards the EFL learning process. This assumption is done because the examined studies in the literature review yielded only positive results which suggest the efficacy of this technique on the EFL context. Therefore, applying this strategy in EFL classrooms may generate many benefits.

In terms of listening, after analyzing the studies included in this research synthesis, the impact of Shadowing on this skill was found to be positive. In EFL learning, to develop listening skills, phoneme perception is an essential but complex factor to acquire. (Hamada, 2016). However, through Shadowing, this difficulty may be overcome since among the many benefits of it, the improvement of sound recognition and perception was the most prevalent. This technique activates and enhances bottom-up skills which facilitates the discrimination of sounds (Kadota, 2007). Therefore, to improve and aid the acquisition of listening skills in an EFL context, Shadowing can be applied and adjusted to obtain the needed outcome. Furthermore, the constant reproduction of heard speech and the relatively high levels of concentration that Shadowing demands also allow students to retain and recall sounds easier. (Hamada, 2016; Sumarsih, 2017; Shimomura, 2018; Hamada, 2011a; Zuriyah, 2016). Consequently, Shadowing may be as well used as a strategy to intensify the degree of concentration in EFL learners and ensure that the input received does not go in one ear and out the other (Shimomura, 2018; Zuriyah, 2016). In line with this, as mentioned in Zakeri (2014), according to Atkinson and Shiffrin, if not attended to, any input is likely to be forgotten.



Furthermore, this relatively new strategy has been evidenced as a flexible technique. The many advantages and benefits that Shadowing provides make it a solid option for EFL contexts not only to improve listening skills but also for speaking. Therefore, another focus of this study was to examine the influence of Shadowing over speaking skills. Natural interaction with the target language can be never replaced. However, since Shadowing represents a reliable alternative to the limited opportunities of contact with the L2 due to the opportunities that it offers to be connected to the target language in a real time (Zuriyah, 2014), students also get the chance of working their speaking skills. Through the analysis performed in this study, the advantages of Shadowing on oral performance were also evinced. Therefore, in the EFL context, teachers and learners may be benefited because it is well-known that EFL learners struggle with accomplishing good speaking skills either for the differences among the phonological systems between the L1 and the target language or due to self-confidence issues (Gudu, 2015). Nevertheless, this technique can contribute to the improvement of several prosodic aspects of speech such as intonation, pronunciation, fluency and intelligibility (Kusumoto, 2015; Nakayama, 2016; Zakeri, 2014). Actually, learners may benefit even more because they can use Shadowing as a strategy to adjust their pronunciation or even accelerate a native-like speaking (Kuo & Chou, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013).

Another important implication of Shadowing has to do with its connection to the phonological loop. While shadowing students are expected to reproduce any heard speech simultaneously in a visible way which means they have to pay attention to the incoming sounds to rehearse them orally (Sumarsih, 2017). By storing and absorbing the received input temporarily when shadowing, learners can train the phonological loop since it is being forced to store more information (Hamada, 2016). This increase in the input and the constant rehearsal leads to the improvement of the overall performance of the phonological loop, meaning that more information can be successfully processed in this unit of storage (Hamada, 2016). Based on Baddeleys' multi-component theory, the phonological loop plays an important role in foreign language acquisition, specifically for listening skills, due to the fact that it helps with the storage of verbal information (Hamada, 2016). Therefore, through Shadowing learners can access to better listening performances, which in consequence, promotes FLA since the working memory as a whole is being implicitly improved (Hamada, 2016). Taking into account all the information discussed above, Shadowing can be a fruitful technique to be implemented in EFL contexts if it



is well applied and adapted to the classroom needs. Furthermore, as it was formerly mentioned, this unit of storage retains verbal information through a vocal rehearsal process (Baddeley, 2007), which means that vocalization of sounds is essential to the correct development of such procedure. Hence, an appropriate functioning of the phonological loop may also contribute to better speaking performances since it provides students the chance to rehearse any heard stimulus (Repovš & Baddeley, 2006). It is worth mentioning that when the information is stored in the phonological loop, it must have undergone a prior vocal rehearsal process in which all the prosodic elements of speech need to be considered to lead to an exact and precise storage of verbal information (Baddeley, 2007). Therefore, speaking skills are also influenced under Baddeley's multi-component model. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that its effect on listening is more prominent and outstanding.

In general, Baddeley's multi-component working model does not resemble a theory of language acquisition itself. However, as previously explained, it supports certain ways in which listening and speaking can be acquired successfully if the verbal input is well-absorbed in the short-term memory (Hamada, 2016). Therefore, in EFL learning, Baddeley's model can signify a substantial aid for teaching and acquiring receptive— *listening* and productive— *speaking* skills when used properly according to the student's needs and probably if combined with other relevant theories of FLA, but most importantly without absolutisms.

In the analyzed studies, the authors compared the effectiveness of Shadowing on listening and speaking focusing on different groups which were divided based on their levels of English. Still, all groups showed a different pattern of improvement, which reinforces and contributes to the assumption of Shadowing being an advantageous technique. The only suggestion made by some authors is that Shadowing should be used first for listening and then for speaking (Horiyama, 2012; Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa, 2011), meaning that to obtain better results by the use of Shadowing, learners should improve their bottom-up listening skills to a certain level to later work on the top-down process as well.

Finally, the connection of Shadowing with cognitive processes such as bottom-up and top-down skills (Hamada, 2016) represents the influence that it has over academic aspects of learning. Nevertheless, Shadowing goes further than being only instructional which is why another focus of this study was on the reported perceptions of the students towards this technique. Throughout the analysis, it was found that Shadowing influenced the affective domain



of students in a positive way (Sumiyoshi & Svenatant, 2017). Therefore, who may benefit from this particular dimension are EFL teachers since it was proved that Shadowing increased specifically motivation, self-confidence and reduced anxiety in learners (Teeter, 2017; Horiyama, 2012; Hamada, 2011b). Thus, learners adopt a different position at the moment of learning, showing willingness and readiness, which in turn smooths the classroom environment (Fraser & Goh, 2003). Such improvements may facilitate the EFL learning and teaching processes in general. However, such assumption cannot be made on the basis of only a few articles. The experiences of the participants of the analyzed studies were all satisfactory (Sumiyoshi & Svenatant, 2017; Teeter, 2017; Horiyama, 2012; Hamada, 2011b; Saito, Nagasawa & Ishikawa, 2011) indicating that by the use of Shadowing objective and subjective elements of foreign language learning can be addressed.

6.2 Recommendations and Limitations

Based on the positive outcome obtained through Shadowing, this technique is highly recommended to applied in an EFL classroom. If it is applied in a local context, students should be first familiarized with this technique to avoid confusion. Moreover, EFL teachers should first analyze the students' needs to adjust Shadowing to their preferences. However, the procedure proposed by Kadota and Tamai (2004) is suggested since it is systematic and may allow learners to adapt and get accustomed to this technique. Additionally, to achieve better results, authentic material or acknowledged content for students should be used to engage the student in the shadowing task and make it enjoyable.

Furthermore, this study was conducted to trigger further research. In addition to the advantages mentioned throughout the study, it was found that vocabulary acquisition is also influenced by this Shadowing. Therefore, a recommendation that could be made is to focus further research on this area to have a deep understanding of the impact that Shadowing can have on vocabulary. This area has relatively little research; therefore, the advantages on this field are worth of being exploited. Additionally, all the primary research that was analyzed in this study has been conducted only with eastern languages and English. For this reason, another recommendation is to apply this technique with different languages and in local contexts. For instance, using this technique with Spanish as the L1 and English as the L2, in order to prove the allegation that suggest that Shadowing is more effective when working with languages that are



phonologically similar. Likewise, future research should include large numbers of participants in order to open the probability of generalizing results. Additionally, the possibility of working with different age groups should not be discarded.

Finally, since this technique was born in Japan, some studies were only found in Japanese. There were no official translations of such studies which posed a limitation for the data collection process of this study.



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Appendix 1

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