The Effectiveness of Shadow-Reading With and Without Written Script on Listening Comprehension of Iranian Intermediate EFL Students.

Meisam Shafiei (M.A)
Dr. Ramin Rahmani (PhD)
Dr. Ataollah Maleki (PhD)

Abstract

Listening comprehension is at the heart of language learning (Kurita, 2012). It is an important language skill to develop in terms of second language acquisition (SLA) (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007).In spite of its importance, L2 learners often regard listening as the most difficult language skill to learn. In this study, shadowing as an act or task in listening, in which the learner tracks the target speech and repeats it immediately as exactly as possible, is recommended to enhance the students' listening comprehension skills. More specifically, this study aimed at investigating the effect of shadowing with and without written script on the Iranian EFL students' listening comprehension. Seventy seven participants out of a population of ninety nine students were randomly picked through the administration of Preliminary English Test (PET). The participants were three groups of intermediate level. The First group, did shadow-reading as the first experimental group with written script (group A); the second group, who did shadow-reading as the second experimental group without written script (group B); and the third, who acted as the control group (group C or non-shadowing). The data were collected through the administration of a pre- test and a post-test. The analysis of the test scores, using a one-way ANOVA, revealed that the experimental groups (A & B) performed statistically better in the test. It also revealed that the shadowing with written script group performed statistically better than the without written script group.

Key words: Shadow-Reading, Listening Comprehension, Written Script, Non-Written Script, Intermediate EFL Students.

Introduction

English may not be the most spoken language in the world, but it is the official language in a large number of countries; it is estimated that the number of people in the world that use English to communicate on a regular basis is 2 billion **(**Delian, 2014). It is also the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers. Throughout the world, when people with different languages come together they mostly use English to communicate.

Of the different skills concerning English, listening comprehension is at the heart of language learning (Kurita, 2012); since learners are willing to understand second language (L2) speakers and want to comprehend a variety of L2 multimedia such as DVDs and the Internet. At the same time, listening is an important language skill to develop in terms of second language acquisition (SLA) (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). Among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), foreign language learners often complain that listening is the most difficult to acquire (Vandergrift, 2007). Yet listening remains one of the least understood processes in language learning despite the recognition of the critical role it plays both in communication and in language acquisition (Morley, 1999). Nunan (1998) states that, listening is the basic skill in language learning. Without listening skill, learners never learn to communicate effectively. Students spend 50% of the time operational in a foreign language is dedicated to listening.

ELT practitioners, researchers, teachers and teacher trainers are continuously seeking for new techniques to improve learner's proficiency. Shadowing is one type of the oral training to promote students repetition of English sounds and which has been used to enhance listening comprehension and oral performance recently (Hamada, 2012). Several studies have pointed out the positive effect of shadowing on different areas of language especially listening performance (Tamai, 2005; Murphey, 2001) and much emphasis has been placed on "shadowing for listening".

As the experts in this area argue the basis of this technique is audio in the language that learners are learning. In a simple term, the shadowing refers to "repeating", or "shadowing" what learners hear as quickly as they hear it while listening (Tamai, 2005; Murphey, 2001). As Kadota and Tamai (2004) asserted, the basis of this technique is audio in the language that learners are learning. While listening, the learners attempt to "repeat", to "shadow" what they hear as quickly as they hear it.

Déjean (1997) maintains "Shadowing is a good way to improve a foreign language precisely in that it draws attention to every single word of an utterance, especially structure words which normally do not even register when heard" (p. 621). It also provides students with sufficient input aurally.

The study was motivated by previous findings showing that shadowing had a positive and significant effect on EFL learners' listening comprehension (as cited in Hamada, 2012). The study was, therefore, an attempt to find out whether such findings could be confirmed in a different listening situation such as a lecture with EFL learners from a Persian linguistic background. Our research focused on real-time reading as the students interacted with each other while shadow-reading to solve difficulties and to discuss viewpoints, opinions, and doubts. This study has been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of shadow reading *with and without written script* on listening comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL students.

This is the so called feature that makes the present study different from other studies of its kinds.

1.2 Research Questions

Q.1. Is there any statistically significant difference between shadow reading with written script and non-shadow reading?

Q.2. Is there any statistically significant difference between shadow reading without written script and non-shadow reading?

Q.3. Is there any statistically significant difference between shadow reading through written scripts and without script in terms of listening?

Methods

2.1. Participants and Research Settings

The participants of this study were a total of 77 students picked out of 93 Persian-speaking studying English as a foreign language (EFL) course at a language institute in Zanjan-Iran. They were all male with the age range of 17 to 20. The estimated proficiency level of participants was determined to be intermediate.

However, to ensure the participants' proficiency level, the Oxford Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered and based on the results they were randomly assigned into three groups; the first containing 27 students, who did shadow-reading as the experimental group (group A) with written script; the second entailing 25 students who did shadow-reading as the next experimental group (group B) without written script; and the third consisting of 25 learners, who acted as the control group (group C or non-shadowing). Table 1 shows the students' background information**.**

Table 1: Students' Background Information

Properties	Group A	Group B	Group C
-Age	17-20	17-20	17-20
-Gender	Male	Male	Male
-Institutional level	Intermediate.	Intermediate.	Intermediate.
-Native language	Persian	Persian	Persian
-Target language	English	English	English
-The length of studying the target language	5-6 years	5-6 years	5-6 years
- Treatment .	Shadow reading (with script)	Shadow reading (without script)	Non-Shadow reading

In order to check the homogeneity of the learners as the participants of this study, a proficiency test taken from PET by Jenny Quintana (Cambridge University Press, 2012) was administered to confirm that there was no significant difference between the language knowledge levels of the selected participants.
The listening comprehension pre-test was used to check the learners' preliminary listening comprehension level of English. The listening comprehension posttest is to determine learners' progress after treatment

2.2. Data Collection Procedures

For the first step, a proficiency test taken from PET (Test one) was administered to homogenize the participants. Therefore, 77 students out of 93 were picked out.
After running the homogeneity test, 77 learners out of 93 were randomly assigned to three groups (two experimental and one control) to receive different treatments. The first experimental group contained 27 participants who did shadow-reading with written script (group A). In the second experimental group which consisted of 25 participants, the participants did shadow-reading without written script (group B). The third groups containing 25 participants were those who acted as the control group, and received non-shadowing instruction (group C).
In the third session of the course the listening comprehension pretest was administered to the groups. The participants' initial language knowledge was determined by this test and the results showed no significant difference among their performance.

Both groups A and B did shadowing namely group A with written script and group B without written script for fifteen sessions.
When the treatment was over, the listening comprehension posttest was administered to assess the participants' progress on the two types of shadowing compared to non-shadowing condition.

2.3. Data Analysis

In order to test the hypotheses formulated in this study, different statistical procedure were used. The process of data analysis began with the analysis of the data obtained from the test of homogeneity. Then, the row data of the pretest and posttest were collected. In order to analyze the data, it was fed into SPSS and through running the one-way ANOVA, the descriptive statistics was used to find out any statistical significant differences between these three groups mean scores. In the next chapter the results of the study are displayed in the forms of explanation, graphic, and tabular representation.

Results and Discussions

3.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest Scores across the Groups

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to evaluate the relationship among the three groups' scores on pretest. Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of these groups. In each case, the number of participants (N), mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) are given.

Cronbach's alpha (α) represents the percent of reliable or consistent variance in each group. For example, Cronbach's alpha suggests that the pretest can be viewed as 77% reliable.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest across the Groups (α= 0.77)

Groups	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*Std. Error*	*95% Confidence Interval*		*Min*	*Max*
					Low	*Up*		
S.R (with script)	27	16.70	2.44	.47	15.7	17.6	11	21
S.R (without script)	25	17.64	2.44	.48	16.62	18.65	12	22
Non-shadowing	25	17.6	1.93	.38	16.8	18.39	14	23
Total	77	17.29	2.30	.26	16.77	17.82	11	23

ps are presented in the table 3. As the results indicate, there was no significant difference among the three groups, F (2, 74) = 1.40, p = .25, meaning that this study met the assumption that all groups were equal in terms of proficiency at the outset. Once this assumption was met, the posttests were administered after the treatment.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA Results for the Pretest

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	14.74	2	7.37	1.40	.25
Within Groups	389.39	74	5.26		
Total	404.13	76			

Note: p > .05

The graphical representation (Figure 1) of the comparison among the mean scores of the groups' pretest, accompanies the tables above. The mean difference among the groups was lower than just 1 point (*MD≤1*). This is another witness to emphasize the equality among the groups' initial proficiency at the beginning of the study.

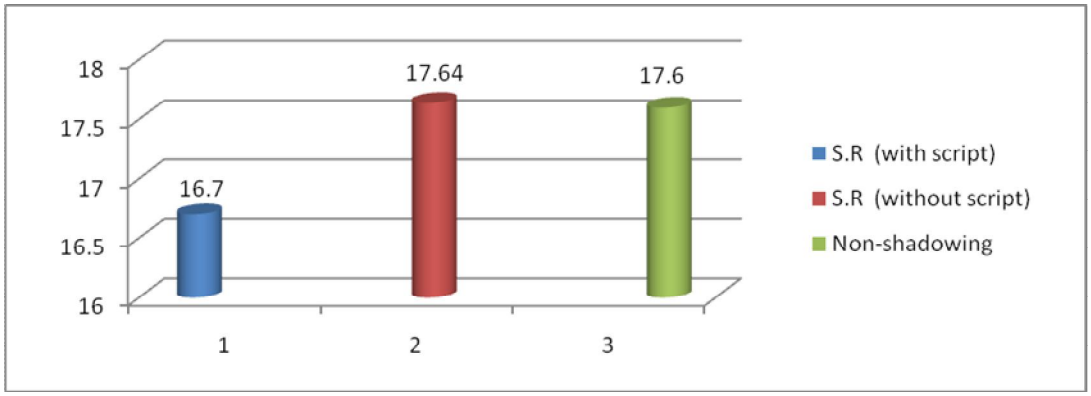


Figure 1: Mean Differences among the Groups at the Pretest.

Further analysis was performed to have a multiple comparison of three groups at the pretest. To do this a Post-Hoc Scheffe test was run. The necessary data has been illustrated in Table 3.

Table 4: Multiple Comparison of Three Groups at the Pretest

LSD

Groups	**Tr**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error.**	**Sig**	**95% Confidence Interval**	
					Lower	**Upper**
(I)	**(J)**	**(I-J)**			**Bound**	**Bound**
Group A	Shadowing					
Shadowing	Without script (B)	-.93	63	.14	-2.20	.33
With script	Non-shadowing(C)	-.89	63	.16	-2.16	.37
Group B	Shadowing					
Shadowing	With script(A)	.93	63	.14	-.33	2.2
Without script	Non-shadowing(C)	.04	64	.95	-1.25	1.33
Group C	Shadowing					
Non-shadowing	With script(A)	.89	63	.16	-.37	2.16
	Shadowing Without script(B)	-.04	64	.95	-1.33	1.25

*. Note: *p>.05*.

As it can be deduced from the table above, the difference among the groups at these three levels is not significant (*p>.05*). In addition, the mean difference among the levels of the treatment is lower than 1 point (MD<1). It means that all groups were equal in terms of language proficiency before the treatment.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Posttest Scores across the Groups

A One-way ANOVA between subjects was conducted to determine the effect of treatments on the students' listening comprehension progress. The first statistical analysis was the descriptive statistics of the posttest across the groups (Table 5). Cronbach's alpha (α) represents the percent of reliability was 0.81. It means that the posttest can be viewed as 81% reliable.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Posttest across the Groups (α= 0.81)

Groups	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	*95% Confidence*		*Min*	*Max*
					Low	*Up*		
S.R (with script)	27	24.07	.72	.14	23.78	24.63	23	25
S.R (without script)	25	20.72	2.22	.44	19.80	21.63	16	25
Non-shadowing	25	18.13	1.94	.37	20.41	19.12	15	21
Total	77	21.54	3.27	.36	20.78	22.28	15	25

This descriptive statistics is followed by graphical representation of the groups' means at the post test. Figure 2 shows the mean differences among the groups at the posttest.

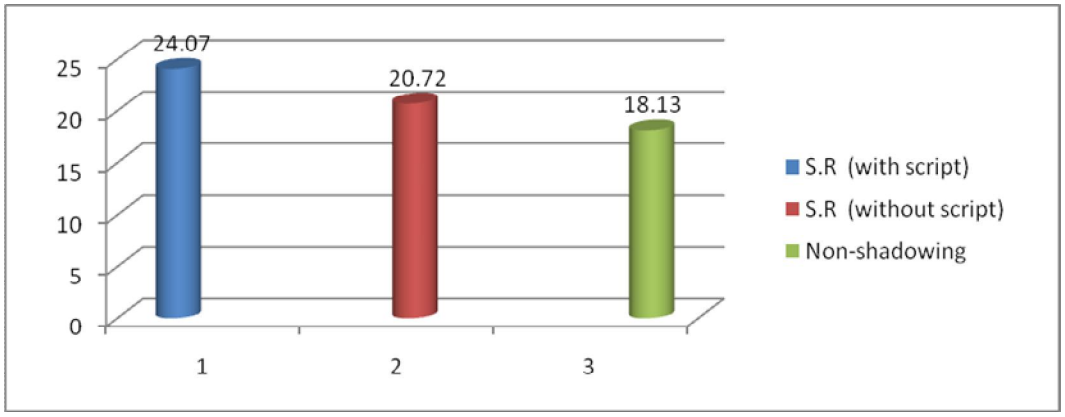


Figure 2: Mean Differences among the Groups at the Posttest.

A one-way between/within groups' analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the effect of shadowing with and without scripts on listening comprehension at the posttest. This statistical tool was employed to determine to what extent the observed differences among the groups are statistically significant. Descriptive statistics of the results for one-way between and among the groups are displayed in Tables 6.

Table 6: One-way ANOVA Results for the Posttest

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	533.11	2	266.55	90.04	**.**00
Within Groups	211.69	74	2.86		
Total	744.81	76			

Note. $p < .05$

The between-groups factors were instruction methods with three levels (shadowing with script, shadowing without script, and control). The test main effect was significant, F (2, 74) = 93.17, p = .00, indicating that there was a significant difference among the groups. In other words, it was confirmed that shadowing with and without written script had a considerable and significant influence on the students' listening comprehension compared to non-shadowing condition at the posttest.

Table 7 : Multiple Comparison of Three Groups at the Posttest

LSD

Groups	**Tr**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error.**	**Sig**	**95% Confidence Interval**	
					Lower	**Upper**
(I)	**(J)**	**(I-J)**			**Bound**	**Bound**
Group A Shadowing With script	Shadowing Without script (B)	3.35	.47	.00	2.40	4.30
	Non-shadowing(C)	5.94	.43	.00	5.15	6.91
Group B Shadowing Without script	Shadowing With script(A)	-3.35	.47	.00	-4.30	-2.40
	Non-shadowing(C)	2.59	.39	.00	3.87	3.37
Group C Non-shadowing	Shadowing With script(A)	-5.94	.43	.00	-6.91	-5.15
	Shadowing Without script(B)	-2.59	.39	.00	-3.37	-3.87

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of this further analysis are shown in Table 7. Based on the table above, it can be argued that there is a significant difference between the group instructed through shadowing with, without written script and the non-shadowing group.

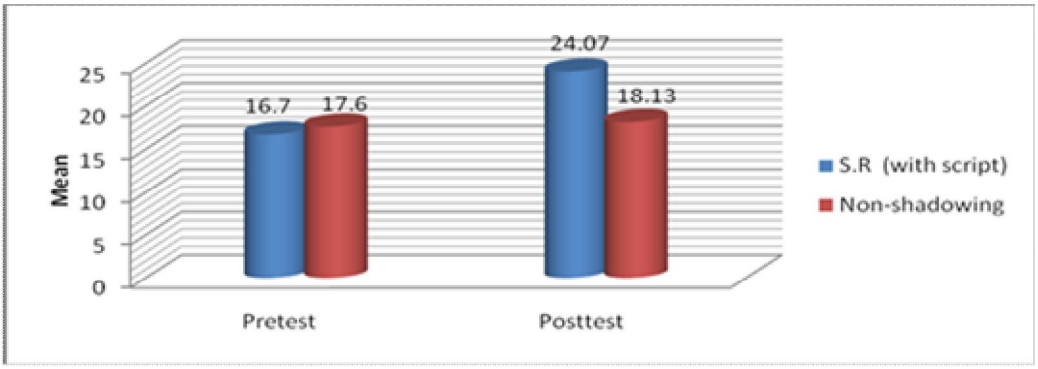
3.3. Answering the First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question addressing the effectiveness of shadow reading with written script compared to non-shadow reading, the data were analyzed and descriptive statistics for the tests of the results were displayed in Table 8.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of the Pre/Posttests of the First and Third Groups

Groups (treatment)	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD
S.R (with script)	27	16.70	2.44	24.07	.72
Non-shadowing	25	17.60	1.93	18.13	1.94
Total	52	17.15	2.18	21.10	1.33

As this table shows, the participants in group A instructed through shadowing with written script had the better performance at the posttest. The average mean score of their performance on the post- test (24.07) was better than the mean of their performance on the pre- test (16.70). The graphical representation (Figure3) of these two groups performance supports the positive effectiveness of shadowing on the EFL learners' listening comprehension.



Through conducting a One-way ANOVA according to Table 7, it can be argued that there is a significant difference between the groups instructed through shadow reading with written script compared to non-shadowing group where F(2,74)=90.4 and *p*=.00).

3.4. Answering the Second Research Question

For answering the second research questions addressing the effectiveness of shadow reading without written script compared to non-shadow reading, the statistical analysis of the data was run. The descriptive results were displayed in Table 9.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the Pre/Posttests of the Second and Third Groups

Groups (treatment)	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD
S.R (without script)	25	17.64	2.44	20.72	2.22
Non-shadowing	25	17.60	1.93	18.13	1.94
Total	52	17.62	2.18	19.42	2.07

The group B who instructed through shadowing without script had a mean score of 20.72 at the posttest and a better performance than the group C that did not shadowing instruction. This information is illustrated in the Figure 4 too.

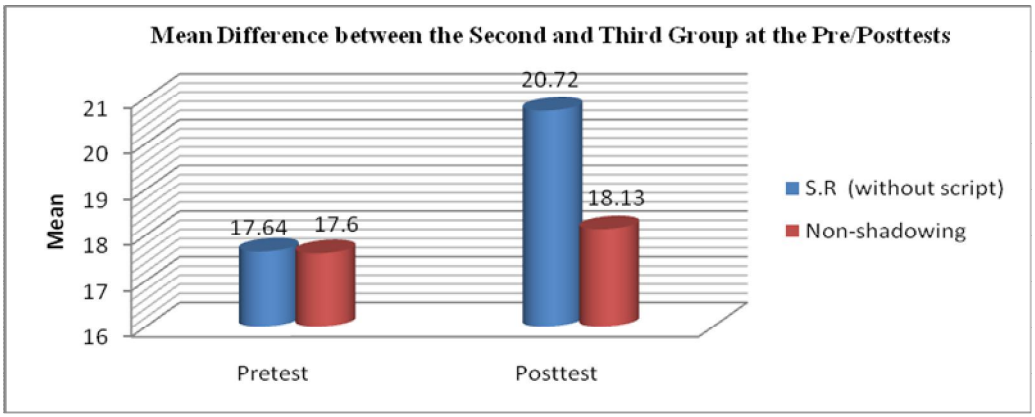


Figure 4: Mean Differences of the Second and Third Group at the Pre/Posttest .

3.5. Answering the Third Research Question

The last question of this research was concerned with the effectiveness of the shadowing with written script and shadowing without written script on the EFL students' listening comprehension. For answering this question, a one-way ANOVA test was run between the post-test scores of the participants. The results pertinent to this question and descriptive statistics of these two groups are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of the Pre/Posttests of the First and Second Groups

Groups (treatment)	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		M	S	M	SD
S.R (with script)	27	16.70	2.44	24.07	.72
S.R (without script)	25	17.64	2.44	20.72	2.22
Total	52	17.17	2.44	22.39	1.47

By comparing the students' gain on their posttests and having a look at their mean on the pretest, it was revealed that the participants of the group A have performed significantly better than the participants of the group B. The group who instructed through shadowing with written script has a mean score of 24.07 and has a better performance than the group instructed through shadowing without written script. This information is illustrated in the Figure 5.

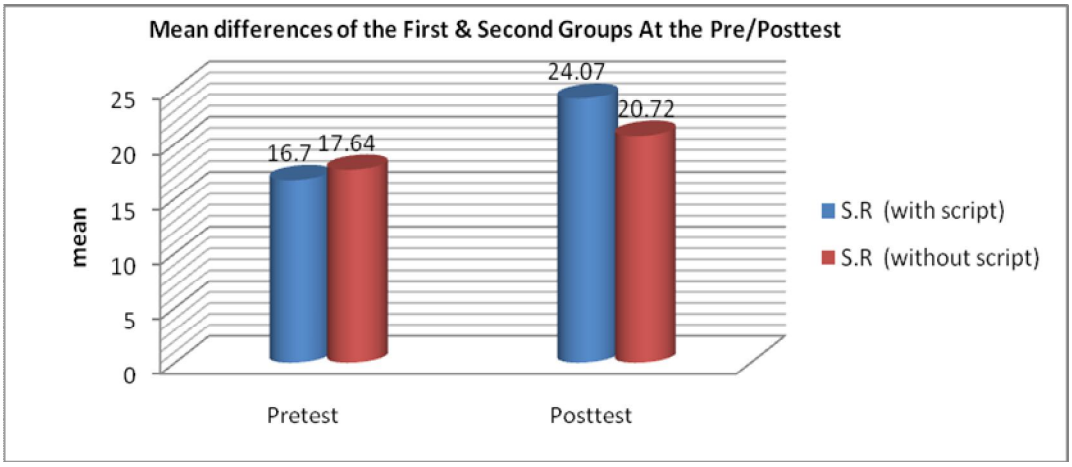


Figure 5: Mean Differences between the First and Second Groups at the Pre/ Posttest

In sum, regarding our research questions and hypotheses, the result of the analysis showed that both types of shadowing had an effective and had positive influence on the students' listening comprehension. It should be taken in to consideration that shadowing with written script is more than without script.

3.6. Discussions

The present study attempted to investigate the effects of shadowing with and without written script on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level.

The first research question sought to investigate the effectiveness of shadow reading instruction with written script on EFL learners' listening comprehension compared to non-shadowing condition. Through running a One-Way ANOVA, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between the first group learners' performance after and before the treatment. In other words, shadowing with written script had a positive effect on EFL learners' performance.

The second research question investigated the effectiveness of shadowing instruction without written script on EFL learners' listening comprehension. The results of One-Way ANOVA revealed that there was a significant difference between second group EFL learners' performance compared to non-shadowing group after the treatment.

To answer the third research question, group A using written scripts has performed better than group B without scripts. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment taught through shadowing with written script was more effective than shadowing without written script.

All in all, the findings of the study answered the research questions by employing shadowing in the teaching and learning procedure as the main variable of the study. All the details related to the results of the pre-test and post-test proved the effectiveness of using shadowing in teaching listening comprehension.

Conclusions

The current study was based on the belief that the English language learners would benefit from shadowing practice to improve their listening comprehension skills. Specifically the aim of this study was to investigate the amount of shadowing influence with and without written scripts on listening comprehension. The results in the previous chapter revealed that shadowing by the help of written scripts in listening process is more effective than following the script silently while listening without looking at it.

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows. The first research question was whether or not shadowing with written script would be capable of improving students' reading comprehension as compared to control group. According to the posttest scores, shadowing with written script improved students' reading comprehension significantly.

The second research question was whether or not shadowing without written script could enhance the effects of listening comprehension. The comparison of this group with the non-shadowing group showed more gains on the posttest scores, indicating that this type of shadowing seemed to enhance the learners' listening comprehension. This was reflected through a comparison of posttest scores in which the gain of the shadowing class was higher than that of the non-shadowing class.

The next controversial point rose when the amount of shadowing with script influence was compared to its counterpart, shadowing without written script. Data analysis revealed that the combining shadowing practices with written scripts is more effective than the second. Although the two types of shadowing were significantly effective, but the first group's posttest scores showed substantial improvement. Hence, following Kuramoto's (2007) assertion that the incorporation of written texts increases the effectiveness of shadowing rather repeating written scripts after listening without looking at, it is necessity to use scripts to have more progressive listening experiment.

References

Brown, H.D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Delian, N. (2014).English language, the most important language in the world. Retrieved from https://prezi.com/ewm7fys7mjuv/.

Déjean Le Féal, K. (1997). Simultaneous interpretation with training wheels. *Meta, XLII, 4(42),* 616–621.

Dunkel, P. (1991). Listening in the native and second/ foreign language: Toward an integration of research and practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 25(3),* 431-457.

Hall, K., Higgins, S., & Smith, H. (2005). The visual helps me understand the complicated things: Pupil views of teaching and learning with interactive whiteboards. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 36(5),* 851–867.

Hamada, Y. (2011a). Improvement of listening comprehension skills through shadowing with difficult materials. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 8(1),* 139–162.

Hamada, Y. (2012). An effective way to improve listening skills through shadowing. *The Language Teacher, 2(1),*85-96.

Koda, K. (2004). *Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kadota, S., & Tamai, K. (2004). *Ketteiban Eigo Shadowing[Shadowing in English]*.Tokyo: Cosmopier Publishing Company.

Kuramoto, A., Shiki, O., Nishida, H., & Ito, H. (2007). Seeking for effective instructions for reading: The impact of shadowing, text-presented shadowing, and reading-aloud tasks. *LET Kansai Chapter Collected Papers, 11(1),* 13–28.

Kurita, T. (2012). Issues in second language listening comprehensionand the pedagogical implications. *Accents Asia, 5(1),* 30-44.

Morley, J. (1991). Listening comprehension in second/foreign language instruction. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language (2nd ed.)* (pp. 81-106). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Murphey, T. (2001). Exploring conversational shadowing .*Language teaching research, 5(2*), 128-155.

Murphey, T. (2001b).Tools of recursion, intermental zones of proximal development, and critical collaborative autonomy.*JALT Journal, 23(1),*.130–150.

Nunan, D. (1998). Approaches to teaching listening in language classroom. *In proceedings of the 1997 Korea TESOL Conference.* Taejon, Korea: KOTESOL.

Rost, M. (2001).*Teaching and researching listening.* London: Longman.

Tamai, K. (2001). Strategic effect of shadowing on listening ability. In J. White (Ed.), Proceedings of the 4th international conference on foreign language education and technology (FLEAT IV). *Association for Language Education and Technology* (pp. 620–625). Kobe: Japan.

Tamai, K. (2005). Strategic effect of shadowing on listening ability. In J. White (Ed.), Proceedings of the 4th international conference on foreign language education and technology (FLEAT IV). *Association for Language Education and Technology* (pp. 620–625). Kobe: Japan.

Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research. *Language Teaching, 40(3),*191-210. doi: 10.1017/S0261444807004338

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.