# Unlocking Oral Proficiency Through the Shadowing Technique Combined with VOA: The Experimental Impact on Undergraduate **Speaking Abilities**

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# ABSTRACT

Speaking is a skill that presents substantial challenges for students and incorporates a variety of different aspects. This study examined the influence of the Shadowing technique, which employed Voice of America (VOA) special English as a modern media in teaching and learning process. A comparison was conducted between two groups of undergraduate students in their fourth semester: an experimental group that received instruction using the Shadowing technique through VOA media and a control group that received no training. The research was considered to be quasi-experimental. Twenty students majoring in English were included in the study's sample. An analysis of the results of the pre-test and post-test scores was performed using a nonparametric test, namely the Man-Whitney U form. The results of this analysis revealed that the experimental group had significantly improved their speaking abilities. The implementation of the Shadowing technique can be a highly supportive method for improving students' pronunciation skills when used with VOA Learning English as a modern media, providing educators with valuable material to enhance language proficiency. Consequently, adopting this approach could lead to significant advancements in the teaching and learning of speaking skills. However, doing further study in diverse settings and over prolonged durations is necessary to have a more profound understanding of the efficacy and durability of the approach.

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#### Introduction

Language plays a crucial part in the communication that occurs in everyday life. Speaking is the most important of the four language skills, according to Rao (2019), when it comes to effectively communicating in this present day and age of globalization. According to Jannah and Niati (2022), speaking is how ideas and messages can be communicated verbally between two or more individuals. The meaning of this is that speaking is an essential instrument for human communication since it enables individuals to express themselves and communicate their thoughts via the use of spoken language.

However, there are a few typical obstacles that children frequently experience when learning to speak, such as memorizing terminology, articulating concepts vocally, and ensuring that their linguistic coherence is maintained (Nawir, 2022). Affectiverelated problems, socially-related problems, and linguistically-related problems are the three categories that can be used to classify the significant difficulties that students have when it comes to speaking (Jaya, 2022). The issues that were associated with affective functioning included self-confidence and motivation. The issues that were related to social interactions included a lack of comprehension regarding the practice of English outside of the classroom as well as a lack of comprehension regarding speaking in class. A lack of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are among the linguistically linked



issues that need to be addressed. In light of the challenges that are encountered when attempting to improve students' speaking abilities, one method that teachers can use to accomplish this goal is implementing a variety of learning strategies that are specifically geared to overcome these challenges.

As a result, it has been proved that the Shadowing technique offered by Voice of America (VOA) can increase students' excitement about speaking English. It was pointed out by Sari (2018) that teachers of foreign languages consider shadowing to be a training strategy that can assist students in becoming proficient speakers. According to Zhang (2021), the learning tools provided by the VOA provide thorough training in speaking, writing, and listening, which motivates students to further their English language skills. Therefore, students can enhance their speaking abilities by combining the shadowing technique with VOA as a learning material and integrating it with a teaching strategy. This allows students to improve their speaking talents.

The shadowing method, when combined with the VOA learning English media, encourages students to imitate the native pronunciation, which in turn boosts their drive, improves their fluency, and significantly boosts their confidence. According to Tamai (1997), as mentioned in Salim et al. (2020), shadowing in language learning situations is characterized as an action that is both active and extremely cognitive. Its purpose is to demonstrate students' learning track through the audio speech that they hear and copy as clearly as possible. It was said by Qian and Diana (2023) that shadowing can assist students in paying greater attention during the learning process. This is because students are required to listen and grasp to repeat what the speakers say.

Shadowing can be defined as a timed, auditory tracking activity that requires immediate vocalization of auditorily presented stimuli. This is the fundamental basis for the definition of shadowing. According to Leonisa (2020), the shadowing approach can be regarded as a prompt process of verbal expression repetition. On the other hand, repeating is considered off-line work because it provides students with silent pauses to generate the noises.

Astuti (2020) demonstrated the benefit of shadowing techniques in some aspects including articulation, pitch, and proficiency. Thus, shadowing applied to the aspect of students' speaking fluency. Nguyen et al. (2020) found that there was a link between shadowing and the fluency of EFL learners' speaking performance. Cabrera (2020) stated a connection between pronunciation and listening comprehension. When the listeners engage in listening activity, their brains automatically proceed with each sound. To learn the pronunciation skill, the students need to be familiar with the sounds and able to produce them verbally. Based on those criteria, the shadowing technique was acceptable because it was composed of repeating and comprehending the audio content seriously (Cabrera, 2020).

As a medium of instruction, the VOA learning English offers a wide variety of tools and lessons that are designed to assist students in enhancing their skills in the aforementioned areas of language acquisition. VOA assists students in learning English by providing them with vocabulary, hearing, and comprehension lessons. These lessons are delivered through daily news and interactive English learning activities. According to Zhang (2021), VOA Learning English provides a thorough education in the areas of speaking, writing, and both listening and speaking. The fact that their reports are so comprehensive, entertaining, and educational inspires pupils to improve their English language skills. It is strongly suggested that students acquire a large number of words and



expressions from relevant materials that are tailored to satisfy their requirements for communicating effectively.

In educational contexts, particularly when it comes to teaching English speaking abilities, the usefulness of Shadowing techniques and VOA learning media has been backed by a variety of research findings. There are a few English language learners who present several obstacles, which are addressed in these studies. Teachers can alleviate these problems by arranging pupils in shadowing procedures and instructions that correspond to the subject matter of VOA learning media. As cited in Putri (2020), VOA learning English consists an audio audio-visual content that helps students create a conversational atmosphere without a monotonous impression.

Some studies positively highlight the strategy's outcomes after applying the shadowing technique. The first research came from Aini (2022), who reported enhancements in first graders' speaking comprehension abilities and justified the strategy's impact on speaking proficiency. Rosyidi et al. (2020) aligned with the current research, which observed improvements in students' speaking skills at the university level, especially in boosting students' pronunciation skills. In addition, Inayah (2022) underlined the fact that the experimental class witnessed a considerable improvement in the student's speaking abilities when compared to the control class, which did not make use of any learning intervention.

The shadowing technique using VOA media proved to be fairly helpful in enhancing English speaking skills, according to the major input gathered from a range of research studies (Hajar et al., 2022). This was demonstrated by the fact that the strategy yielded positive results. The fact that this method has been proven to be helpful across a wide variety of learning domain disciplines is evidence of the applicability of this strategy in the context of language training. The purpose of this research is to investigate the usage of VOA to implement the Shadowing technique in enhancing the student's ability to communicate verbally. To assess whether or not the Shadowing technique is successful in enhancing the degree of speaking practice proficiency among undergraduate students, the purpose of this study is to investigate the matter. A significant improvement in the speaking abilities of undergraduate students in their fourth semester can be achieved by the use of the Shadowing technique, according to the hypothesis that was developed for this inquiry.

In a previous review of existing literature, many studies have explored the efficacy from both of shadowing techniques and VOA learning media in teaching speaking. However, no one studies have investigated the combination use of shadowing technique with VOA learning media in teaching speaking. Additionally, these studies often lack a specific focus on the context of trainee English language teachers at particular universities. By adapting the synergistic relationship between multimedia broadcasting and English language teaching, the researcher is interested in using the Shadowing technique and VOA as learning techniques and media in teaching speaking for undergraduate students at Hamzanwadi University.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the use of the shadowing technique in conjunction with VOA Learning English media to improve the speaking skills of undergraduate students. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how the implementation of the shadowing technique can enhance pronunciation quality, overall effectiveness, and fluency in spoken English. By integrating shadowing with carefully selected prospective English learning materials from VOA, the research aims to provide



a comprehensive analysis of the potential benefits and improvements in speaking proficiency for students at the undergraduate level.

# **Research Method**

The research method that was utilized for this study was experimental. According to Ledyard (2020), the purpose of experimental research is to attempt to determine whether or not the variable that is being investigated has an effect. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that this study utilized a quasi-experimental design, which compared the results of the pre-test and post-test for both the experimental and control groups. To recognize the inherent limitation in managing all of the variables, which was a challenge that Eckerd et al. (2021) pointed out, this design intended to simulate the condition that would be present in a real experiment. The literature that was relevant to the decision was taken into consideration while deciding to use random sampling and to concentrate on the practical components of the actual experimental design.

This study was conducted at Hamzanwadi University in East Lombok, which was selected because of its emphasis on enhancing student abilities and competencies, particularly in the development of speaking skills. The study was carried out to investigate the aforementioned topic. In the context of this one-of-a-kind educational setting, the purpose was to assess the effectiveness of the Shadowing method, which is a method that makes use of voice-over-audio (VOA), in terms of improving speaking abilities. Every single one of the twenty students who were majoring in English and were in their fourth semester came together to take part in the research. A control group and an experimental group were formed from the individuals who were divided into two groups. To provide a shadowing strategy that utilized VOA as a treatment, the Experimental group was chosen, while the control group did not receive any therapeutic intervention. This was done to provide the shadowing strategy.

The primary instrument that was utilized for data collection was an oral speaking exam that was developed specifically for both the experimental group and the control group. The proficiency of students in speaking was tested using the rubric scoring developed by Arthur Hughes, which was adapted by Adam and Frith as cited in Amir and Adijaya (2023). This scoring system evaluated the students' accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Classifying student scores into seven levels which consist of the category of excellent (92-99), very good (83-92), good enough (73-82), good (63-72), enough (53-62), poor (43-52), and very poor (<43). This structured assessment methodology targeted to measure the Shadowing technique using VOA effectiveness in fostering speaking skills among the fourth-semester undergraduate students in the university.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not the Shadowing method, which makes use of VOA, is successful in improving students' speaking abilities at the classroom level. The intervention consisted of six sessions, each of which lasted for 35 minutes. In the first segment of the session, students were given an introduction to the topic that would be covered, and the researcher provided an explanation of the Shadowing technique as well as VOA as a learning medium. After that, the researcher set the stage for the activities that were to follow. Through the formation of smaller teams, the experimental group, which consisted of ten students, participated in the Shadowing approach that utilized VOA. Following the selection of a topic, they proceeded to examine visuals that were associated with their objective of imitating the original speaker. The purpose of this was to encourage a more profound comprehension and to develop content

that was more specific for their speaking assignments. Documenting their strategies and providing a succinct summary of their observations was the next step for the students after the conversations.

Otherwise, the control group, which consisted of 10 students, did not take part in any medical treatment. Instead, they were given a list of themes from which they could choose on their own and then write paragraphs that did not contain any topics from the material that was provided by the VOA. Their assignment came to a close with them providing a summary of the themes that they had selected, having a structure that was similar to that of the assignment given to the experimental group but lacking the collaborative component.

# **Result and Discussion**

The results of the research project, which was carried out between April and May in the year 2024, are reported in this section. In the fourth semester, it concentrated on two groups of English students: Group A, which consisted of ten students and functioned as the control group, did not get any training. Group B, which consisted of fourteen students, was the experimental group. In addition, there were 10 students in Group B, which acted as the experimental group. The Shadowing approach was utilized with VOA to provide speaking instruction. A more in-depth explanation of the findings of the research may be found in the following description. To obtain these results, a comparison was made between the pre-test and post-test outcomes of both the experimental Group and the control Group.

The purpose of this study is to assess whether or if the Shadowing method, which is a method that utilizes VOA, is useful in increasing the speaking ability of students. Following the presentation of the shadowing method that makes use of VOA in the context of teaching English-speaking skills, the findings are organized in such a way as to allow for a comparison to be made between the results of Group A and Group B in terms of their speaking abilities.

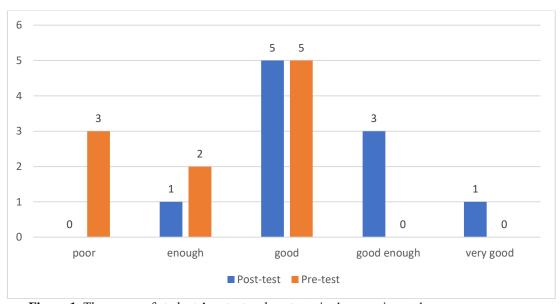


Figure 1. The scores of students' pretest and post-test in the experimental group

After implementing the Shadowing technique utilizing the VOA approach, the study of post-test results, which is depicted in Figure 1, reveals that there was a

considerable improvement in the student's ability to communicate verbally. With the greatest score being 72 and the lowest score being 52, the data revealed that the mean score on the pretest was 62.40 among the ten students who were part of group B. The majority of the students in Group B demonstrated poor speaking abilities before the intervention, as indicated by this.

There was a discernible rise in scores shortly after the implementation of the Shadowing strategy through the utilization of VOA media. During the post-test, the mean score increased to 71.70, which indicates a significant improvement in the ability to communicate verbally. A student in particular obtained the maximum possible score on the post-test, which was 83, while the lowest score ever recorded increased to 61. This change demonstrates that the Shadowing technique, which makes use of VOA, helps develop students' speaking abilities and shows that it has the potential to considerably improve students' baseline competency in composition. The findings demonstrate that the Shadowing technique, which emphasizes the use of VOA, has a positive impact on the students' ability to communicate verbally.

Table 1. The distribution scores in the experiment group

Interval Score	Category	Pretest		Post-test	
		Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
92-99	Excellent	0	0%	0	0%
83-92	Very Good	0	0%	1	10%
73-82 63-72	Good Enough good	0 5	0% 50%	3 5	30% 50%
53-62	Enough	2	20%	1	10%
43-52	Poor	3	30%	0	0%
<43	Very Poor	0	0%	0	0%

Source: Adapted by Adam and Frith from Hughes book "Testing for Language Teacher"

The results of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group are presented in Table 1. These findings highlight the changes that occurred in the students' speaking proficiency both before and after the implementation of the shadowing strategy that utilized VOA intervention. In the beginning, the results from the pretest showed that five students were classified as good (50 percent), two students (20 percent) got sufficient scores, and three students (30 percent) were classified as low. Because of this dispersion, it is clear that the pupils first struggled with their speaking abilities.

Immediately after the intervention, the post-test results revealed a significant change; not a single student was rated as poor (zero percent), and a stunning shift revealed that three students (30%) achieved the good enough category, and five students (50%) accomplished good. One student (10%) hit very well, while the other one (10%) achieved enough category, displaying a significant improvement in speaking proficiency induced by the Shadowing technique using VOA. An illustration of a comparable viewpoint of the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group is presented in the following figure. This figure highlights the effectiveness of the shadowing approach using VOA by distinguishing it from the speaking performance of students who did not receive

intervention. This comparison sheds even more light on the positive impact that Shadowing techniques have on the listening and speaking abilities of students who are learning English through VOA.



Figure 2. The pretest and post-test scores of students in the control group

As shown in Figure 2, there was a modest difference between the scores on the pre-test and the post-test for the control group, which suggests that there was some improvement in speaking abilities even if the treatment was not administered. The data revealed that the 10 students who were part of Group A had a mean score on the pretest that was 58.40, with the greatest score being 72 and the lowest score being 52. This indicated that the students in the control group had a speaking skill that was comparable to that of the experimental group before the therapy.

**Table 2:** The distribution scores in the control group

Interval Score	Category	Pretest	Post-test		
		Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
92-99	Excellent	0	0%	0	0%
83-92	Very Good	0	0%	0	0%
73-82	Good Enough	0	0%	2	20%
63-72	good	3	30%	3	30%
53-62	Enough	2	20%	5	50%
43-52	Poor	5	50%	0	0%
<43	Very Poor	0	0%	0	0%

Source: Adapted by Adam and Frith from Hughes book "Testing for Language Teacher" (2003)

The results of the control group's performance on the pre-test and post-test review are presented in Table 2. The table also included a distribution of perceptions on the students' speaking skill levels both before and after the intervention that did not involve the Shadowing technique and VOA learning media. The initial results of the pretest indicated that three students were considered to be good (30%), two of them obtained



sufficient status (20%), and five students were placed in the low category (50%) of the classification system.

The post-test results, which stem from the teaching stage, revealed that no student had improved their competence level to the point where they could be classified as excellent or very good (0%). There was a small shift in the distribution of the students within the current categories, though two students (20%) were placed in the "good enough" group, three students (30%) in the "good" category, and five students (50%) in the "enough" category.

The control class observed a slight gain in the average post-test score, which was 65.20, despite the lack of shadowing with the VOA learning materials. There was a modest shift in the distribution of post-test scores, with two students achieving the maximum score of 78 and two signing the lowest mark of 59. This slight improvement in the control group's post-test results highlights the significant influence of the Shadowing technique with VOA shown in the experimental group, highlighting the approach's ability to improve students' speaking skills.

In English language learning, the combination of the shadowing technique using VOA learning media has positive evidence in enriching speaking instruction. This strategy enables the students to practice and improve their speaking skills whereas the shadowing technique occupies students in listening and imitating activities. Considering its potential benefits, this study was formulated to evaluate the effect of the experiment and control used, providing a pretest and post-test to verify the equivalent of speaking abilities from both groups. The pretest discovered different scores: 62.40 for ten students in the experimental group and 58.40 for the control group which consists of ten students as well. Despite this, the result of the post-test indicated a substantial enhancement in a group of experiments with a significant score of 71.70 which is extensively higher than the control group score of 65.20.

These results synchronized with previous studies, bolstering the Shadowing technique potential. Sari (2018) found that shadowing will help students become proficient speakers and listeners. This activity aims to make students active in learning to speak, express ideas, master vocabulary, and be confident in speaking. This study confirmed that the shadowing technique using VOA actively impacts students' speaking skills, involvement, and confidence in articulating ideas. Hamda (2016) said that shadowing is beneficial for students at lower proficiency levels because it improves their perception of phonemes, which helps them with listening comprehension.

Incorporating the shadowing technique into modern learning methods, particularly in language learning, marks a notable shift from traditional approaches. By conducting the shadowing technique in teaching speaking skills, students engage in realtime mimicry of a native speaker's speech, focusing on intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation (Le et al., 2022). This innovative approach leverages technology and interactive platforms to provide some feedback and foster active learning.

Furthermore, the shadowing technique was particularly pertinent at the university level, where competence in the English language was essential. This technique engages students in closely mimicking native speakers' speech patterns, intonation, and rhythm in real time; students immerse themselves in the authentic sounds of the language. This practice allows learners to find their articulation and develop a more native accent. Mercer (2017) and Rahman et al. (2023) emphasize that one of the important skills for undergraduate students is communication, encompassing verbal and non-verbal abilities.



Mastering these skills is essential for academic success and significantly shapes their future professional and personal lives.

Additionally, Combining VOA materials with the shadowing technique has emerged as a highly effective method for enhancing English-speaking skills. The authenticity of VOA content, ranging from news reports to cultural features, exposed learners to real-life English usage, including diverse accents and vocabulary (Barella & Linarsih, 2022). Thus, the combination of VOA materials and the shadowing technique offers a comprehensive and practical approach to developing English-speaking skills at the university level.

Integrating the technique of shadowing deeply into the university learning module importantly advances students' speaking proficiency, analytical thinking, and problemsolving skills, sustaining their educational and success competencies. According to Qian and Diana (2023), Shadowing allows students to engage in repetitive practice, resulting in demonstrable improvement. As a result, students can prioritize their education more than before. In conclusion, shadowing can help students pay more attention during the learning process because they must listen and comprehend to repeat what the speakers sav.

Nevertheless, this technique has potential drawbacks. Dollerup and Loddegaard, as cited in Nafs (2023), refer to shadowing exercises as mechanical activities that educate students to mimic phrases, which may reinforce their innate inclination to listen excessively intently to the speaker. Stated differently, the argument against the shadowing approach is that it only teaches students to mimic the speaker. Thus, they are unable to communicate in their way. These limitations suggest the teacher should be more receptive when employing this method. It indicates that the instructor provides the students a chance to improve at speaking. In addition to perfectly mimicking the native speaker, they should also work on their speech pattern, as long as the grammar and pronunciation are correct.

Finally, the research investigated at Hamzanwadi University showcased the improvement of students' speaking skills after using shadowing techniques combined with VOA learning English. This approach was purely efficient in elevating students' speaking performance. According to Sari (2018), delivering an interactive and supportive learning ecosystem could tackle the general problem of speaking. The findings of the prior study and this recent study demonstrated that using the shadowing technique with VOA was substantially successful in teaching English speaking, specifically in enhancing students' fluency.

# Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, there were substantial differences in the level of speaking proficiency between the experimental group, which utilized the shadowing technique, and the control group, which did not. Particularly, the mean score of the post-test from the experimental group was 71.70, whereas the score from the control group was 65.20. This result indicates that the shadowing approach is beneficial in improving student speaking ability, which was aided by VOA learning material. According to the findings of this study, the implementation of shadowing strategies that make use of VOA materials in the context of the English language is strongly supported to be used. This had a beneficial impact on the enhancement of the students' ability to communicate verbally. This method fosters active student involvement in learning to create an environment that is conducive to learning and cooperative, and it also

encourages student motivation to be more excited about the process of learning a language.

However, it is crucial to consider the study's constraints, despite the fact that the researcher has demonstrated the efficacy of the shadowing method in instructing fourth-year undergraduate students on how to enhance their speaking abilities. The practical application of this to other aspects of learning English is something that still needs to be investigated. Additionally, the fact that the research was conducted in a particular educational environment may restrict the findings' applicability to a wide range of settings. Additionally, the focus of this research was on immediate outcomes, and it is still unknown whether or not the benefits will be sustainable over the long run. It is necessary to do additional research in a variety of settings and over extended periods to achieve a deeper knowledge of the effectiveness and longevity of the technique.

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