

The Effect of Shadowing-Reading on EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| Article History | |
| Received: February 03 ,2026 | <p><i>The current study investigates the effect of shadowing-reading on developing reading comprehension of undergraduate students who studied English at Al-Balqa Applied University. The researchers selected 100 EFL learners from Ajloun University College to participate in the study. They were selected randomly and distributed into the experimental and control groups (51 students enrolled in the control group and 49 students enrolled in the experimental group). To test the equivalence between both groups, the researchers applied a pre-test after applying the experiment. Besides, the researchers conducted a post-test to find out if there are significant differences between both groups. After analyzing the obtained data, the results indicated that shadow reading affected reading comprehension positively. In other words, the use of the Shadow Reading strategy is more effective than the traditional way used inside the normal English classes to enhance students' reading comprehension. The present study is very important for learners, researchers, teachers, and syllabus designers. For the English learners who study at university, the researchers encourage them to use effective strategies like shadow-reading to improve their reading comprehension so they need to try it and know how to use it inside the class. On other hand, the teacher should take courses and workshops to use shadow-reading better inside their reading classes and they should practice using it inside the class. Officially, the syllabus designers and decision-makers should include such strategies while designing reading curricula in particular if they prepare the curricula at the school level. Finally, the researchers urge other researchers to conduct similar studies on other populations and samples to get benefit from. The present study is also significant because no studies have been conducted to find out the effect of using shadowing-reading on improving the students' reading comprehension In the Jordanian context. Thus, similar studies are needed to achieve more logical and reliable results in the Jordanian EFL context.</i></p> |
| Accepted: May 06 ,2026 | |
| Keywords : EFL; shadow reading; Reading comprehension; undergraduate students; Reading skills | |
| DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20072183 | |

Introduction

The purpose of reading is to comprehend the written text by understanding its meaning. Among several definitions of reading comprehension, Grabe (2009) defined reading comprehension as an ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows. The process of reading comprehension was divided into lower-level (linkages between orthographic forms and the sounds of the language) and higher-level (building semantic and syntactic networks) (Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

Reading comprehension depends on the readers' pre-knowledge and the text itself so the active readers should link the pre-knowledge with the information of the text to understand the meaning in a context. Many EFL students in English Language Departments have problems in understanding the academic reading texts in their classrooms because they haven't enough pre-knowledge related to the given texts. To solve the problem above and to improve their reading comprehension, students may build vocabulary, create motivation, read more and more, recognize the structure of the text, use a reading method.

The readers can use their strategies to understand what they read but the best reading strategies are often taught by teachers and utilized by students. There are several strategies used in the EFL classrooms for comprehending the text, such as asking and answering, top-down and bottom-up reading, and extensive and intensive reading. One of the methods is shadow-reading (SHR).

Kadota & Tamai (2004) defined shadowing as a strategy that uses the listening skill in which the learner practices speech by repeating it directly as exactly as possible without looking at a text. Shadowing is a useful technique used in learning a second language because it provides learners with aural input. Déjean Le Féal (1997) claimed that using the shadowing strategy has advantages in learning the foreign language because it improves learning the foreign language by drawing the focus on the heard words that are not recorded. When the

learners use shadowing, it has positive effects on brain processing.

SHR strategy is effective, useful, and important in teaching and learning reading. When the learners apply SHR, they repeat what the readers read completely or selectively or they engage in conversational interaction (Commander and de Guerrero, 2012, p. 8). SHR can help the students to comprehend the text by interacting with themselves because each of the students acts as a reader and shadower or pairs by repeating what their pair's read.

To apply SHR effectively, the teacher should train the students on how to use it. The teachers ask students to read the text aloud; repeat the sentences and read it again as whole paragraphs or passages. Then, the students are asked to summarize the text in spoken or written form. The oral interaction between learners helps them comment on the text and build meaning. In applying SHR, the shadower imitates what the reader orally so one partner (Reader) becomes the oral input for the other partner (Shadower) then the learner summarizes the repeated text (Commander and Guerrero, 2013)

1.1. Statement of the problem

Many students face several problems in comprehending the texts. Most of the students do not enjoy reading so they need to utilize suitable strategies, activities, and techniques that have an important role in meaningful learning. Most of the students still use the dictionary to find unfamiliar words and do not save time and effort to improve their reading comprehension. Thus, the current paper suggests using shadow-reading because it is based on meaningful repetition which leads to meaningful learning. Also, Shadow-reading encourages students to use interactive learning by using summarization.

1.2. The main question of the study

The study attempts to answer the following main question:

- What is the effect of shadow-reading strategy on improving students' reading comprehension?

1.3. Research hypothesis

To answer the question of the study, the following null hypothesis was tested:

- There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0,05$) between the mean post-test scores of the experimental group who learn reading comprehension via shadow-reading and the control group who learn reading comprehension by using the conventional method.

1.4. The objective of the study

The main objective of the current study is to find out whether shadow-reading is more effective than the conventional strategy in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

1.5. The importance of the study

The study is beneficial for teachers, students, and researchers. For teachers, the study shows the importance of using shadow-reading in learning reading comprehension to them and introduced a practical application for using shadow-reading. For students, they can imitate and think critically to understand the texts easily when they use shadow-reading. Finally, the study is considered as a guide for other researchers to conduct similar studies to get benefits from using shadow-reading.

1.6. Definitions of terms

- Shadow-reading is a reading strategy that focuses on imitation to improve reading comprehension. In this strategy, students work in pairs as readers and shadower so both of them become active readers and listeners to understand the text in their ways.
- Reading achievement is the total marks that the students gained in the post-test which was prepared by the researchers themselves to find out the difference between the control taught by the traditional way and the experimental groups taught by shadow-reading.
- Reading comprehension is the ability of students to find out the meaning of the text according to literal, inferential, and critical Comprehension.
- Reading comprehension achievement: The scores in the pre and post-test.

Literature review

In recent years, various studies concentrated on examining the impact of shadow-reading on students' reading comprehension. Zarei& Alipour (2020) conducted a study that aimed at comparing three selected scaffolding techniques with three types of shadow-reading. He selected (120) EFL learners as a sample of the study and divided them into six groups of (20) members per group randomly. After analyzing the data, the most important result related to the current study indicated that among the three shadow-reading types (complete shadowing, partial shadowing, and interactive shadowing), interactive shadowing was the most effective technique and had a significant statistical effect on students' reading comprehension.

Another modern study investigated by Babapour, Ahangari& Hour (2018) aimed at exploring the impact of two reading strategies (collaborative strategic reading and shadowing-reading) on EFL students' reading comprehension. The sample of the study consists of (72) participants distributed into three groups (two

experimental groups and a control group). The instrument of the study was a reading comprehension test to assess the student's achievement in reading comprehension. The researchers of the study used two-way ANOVA to analyze the obtained data. One important finding of the study revealed that shadowing-reading had a positive role in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension.

In a study conducted by Zarei and Jahanbakhsh (2016), shadowing-reading was compared with the other two methods (multimedia and traditional) to find out its effect on improving EFL students' reading comprehension ability. The participants of the study randomly assigned and divided into three groups according to three methods. After completing the three different treatments, the researchers used a reading comprehension test as an instrument of the study to explore the impact of the three methods on Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension. The collected data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA. The result of the study showed that shadowing-reading had a positive effect compared with the traditional method although its effect was not statistically significant.

Sadeghi, Afghari & Zarei (2016) investigated a study to find out the effect of using shadowing-reading on improving reading comprehension according to a Vygotskian view. The sample of the study which consisted of (52) EFL students at the university level was divided into two groups (experimental and control). The instrument of the study is a reading comprehension test which was used as a pre-test to be sure that both groups were equivalent and post-test to find out the effect of using shadowing-reading after applying the treatments. The result of the study indicated that shadowing-reading had a positive influence on the students' reading comprehension.

All of the previous related studies showed a positive influence of using shadowing-reading in improving students' reading comprehension either at the school level or university level in the Iranian context. Thus, there is a need to conduct similar studies in different contexts to get benefits from using shadowing-reading in teaching and learning reading comprehension.

In the Jordanian context, no studies have been conducted to find out the effect of using shadowing-reading on improving the students' reading comprehension. Thus, similar studies are needed to achieve more logical and reliable results in the Jordanian EFL context. As a result, the current study investigated the impact of Shadowing-reading on EFL students' reading comprehension in Jordan.

Methods

1.7. The population of the study

The population of the study will be English students at Jordanian universities. The researchers will select a sample from the first and the second year to achieve the purpose of the study. The sample of the study will be distributed into the experimental and control groups to apply the study. Two treatments (shadow-reading and traditional) were used in each group as follows:

1. Group one (shadow-reading strategy)

The group consists of (49) students who were formed into 25 pairs included the teacher to play the roles of the readers and shadowers. The teacher divided each text of each class into small units (words, sentences, and paragraphs) to ensure that every pair read and shadowed at the same time. The teacher used a CD player as a tool to listen to the text and asked the students to repeat selectively (repeating the keywords) and interactively (adding comments or clarifying ideas). Then, the shadower should produce oral summaries of each text. Next, the teacher asked the partners to change their roles as readers and shadowers then they focused on the unfamiliar words.

2. The second group (Traditional method)

The group consists of (51) students. Firstly, the teacher read the text then wrote the unfamiliar words on the board then asked the experimental group to guess the meaning. After giving the meanings of the new words, the students started reading individually. The teacher follows the three stages of reading (pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading) and asked the students to answer questions in every stage to be sure that students understand the text.

1.8. The instrument of the study

The instrument of the study was a reading comprehension test designed by the researchers and used before the treatment as a pre-test to be sure that both groups were equivalent and used after the treatment as a post-test to find out the effect of the treatments on the students reading comprehension. The reading comprehension test included a group of different passages followed by 50 multiple-choice items. The main purpose of the test was to find out the meaning of the text according to different levels (the literal, inferential, and critical

Comprehension). After answering the test by the students, the researchers used a rubric to correct the answers of the students.

1.9. The validity and reliability of the instrument

The researchers made the validity of the test by using the content-validity. A group of experts, who are professors specialized in English language and assessment, were selected by the researchers to read and have comments on the test. He followed the comments suggested by the experts and produced the final draft. On the other hand, the researchers also used the pretest method to achieve the reliability of the test.

1.10. Design of the study

The study used one of the quasi-experimental designs that contain an experimental and a control group with pretest and posttest. The students in the experimental group learned reading comprehension by using the shadowing-reading strategy, while the students in the control group learned reading comprehension through the traditional way. Both groups were tested by using pre and posttest. The variables of the study were the independent variable (shadowing-reading strategy) and the independent variable (reading comprehension).

1.11. Statistical treatment

The researchers will use suitable measures to analyze the data.

Results

1.12. The results of the pre-test

The study used a t-test to find if the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups are equivalent. The results of the t-test were shown in Table 1.

Table (1): Means, Standard Deviation, and t-test results of the Control and Experimental Groups on the pre-test.

| | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------|--------------|----|-------|----------------|------|----|-----------------|
| PRE TEST | Experimental | 49 | 35.31 | 7.898 | .475 | 98 | .636 |
| | Control | 51 | 34.49 | 9.192 | | | |

Table 1 reveals that the linguistic knowledge of both groups was almost equivalent in the pre-test since there are no significant differences between the scores of both groups in the posttest. This reveals that the two groups were equivalent, before conducting the study.

1.13. The results of the post-test

Table (2): Means, standard deviation, and t-test results of the control and experimental groups on the post-test.

| | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------|--------------|----|-------|----------------|-------|----|-----------------|
| POST TEST | Experimental | 49 | 44.76 | 5.872 | 5.212 | 98 | .000 |
| | Control | 51 | 35.88 | 10.434 | | | |

Table 2 shows there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) between the means of both groups on the post-test, in favor of the Experimental group.

Discussion of the results

Based on the study results, it can be stated that the results of the study showed a significant statistical impact of applying shadowing-reading on reading comprehension for Jordanian EFL learners. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study approved that using shadowing-reading in the English classrooms improved the students' reading comprehension. In line with the finding of the study, all results of the mentioned related studies (Zarei& Alipour,(2020), Babapour, Ahangari& Ahour (2018), Zarei and Jahanbakhsh (2016), and Sadeghi, Afghari & Zarei (2016)) showed that implementing different types of shadowing-reading enhanced students' reading comprehension.

The result of the study is expected because of shadow-reading characteristics. It is based on social and cognitive factors. Several types of research such as Kern (2000) claimed that social interaction helped students to comprehend the text. Besides, shadowing-reading is based on imitation which is considered a beneficial technique in teaching reading comprehension. Murphey's (2002) reported that repetition helped the learners to be controlled by others' language and to control their language. While using shadowing-reading, the process of learning comprehension becomes enjoyable because understanding the text is not a matter of recognizing the words' meaning but also related to psychological, social, and cultural functions.

Shadowing-reading makes the learning environment more pleasant and more cooperative so it motivates the

students to comprehend the text easily. Most of the students listen and repeat in a relaxed way without fear because they work cooperatively.

Another reason why shadowing-reading affected positively improving students' reading comprehension was using three types of shadowing-reading (interactive, partial and selective shadowing) The reader and the shadower helped each other to understand the text by sharing elaboration, paraphrasing, or repeating selective words so all levels of the text comprehension can be achieved when the readers used all three types of shadowing-reading.

By using shadowing-reading, the role of the teacher was changed. His role became easy; he didn't need to read the text deeply as in the traditional way. Besides, the class was changed from a teacher-centered class to a student-centered class. So, the students as readers are more active than the teachers and the teachers become facilitators and directors.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at exploring the effect of shadow-reading strategy on improving students' reading comprehension. The participants of the study include an experimental group (49 students) and a control group (51 students). The study used post-test to find if the shadow reading affected positively the students' reading comprehension. The result of the study indicated that the students who are taught by using the Shadow reading strategy improved their reading comprehension than those who are taught by using the traditional way. In other words, the use of the Shadow Reading strategy is more effective than the traditional way used inside the normal English classes to enhance students' reading comprehension at the university level in the 1st year.

The present study may have suggestions for the learners, researchers, teachers, and syllabus designers. For the English learners who study at university, the researchers encourage them to use effective strategies like shadow-reading to improve their reading comprehension so they need to try it and know how to use it inside the class. On other hand, the teacher should take courses and workshops to use shadow-reading better inside their reading classes and they should practice using it inside the class. Officially, the syllabus designers and decision-makers should include such strategies while designing reading curricula in particular if they prepare the curricula at the school level. Finally, the researchers urge other researchers to conduct similar studies on other populations and samples to get benefit from.

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