A Study on the Efficacy of Shadowing on Listening Comprehension

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Ryu, Ran & Hwang, Seon-Yoo. “A Study of the Efficacy of Shadowing on Listening Comprehension.” Modern Studies in English Language & Literature 55.3 (2011): 249–71. This study examined effects of shadowing practice on listening comprehension and was conducted with 58 participating freshmen at a university in Daejeon area. All participants were taught an intensive course for TOEIC listening for 15 days in the winter of 2010. 36 students out of the 58 practiced shadowing and was classified as the shadowing group. The non-shadowing group consisted of 22 students and didn’t practiced shadowing. Both groups were given two simulated tests of TOEIC before and after the instruction, and only listening comprehension scores were used for the study. At the end of the instruction, questionnaire survey was carried out only for the shadowing group to find out their perception on shadowing. Results of the post-test showed that shadowing students performed better than non-shadowing students, demonstrating that shadowing practice contributed to improving listening comprehension. For the perception of the students toward shadowing, more proficient students showed positive attitude toward shadowing, increased self-confidence, and low anxiety level, all of which are beneficial for improving their listening comprehension. It is thus suggested from the results that shadowing be an operative and helpful listening strategy that L2 learners control and use when needed, especially for more proficient learners. (Woosong College, Woosong University)

Key Words: shadowing listening ability, listening strategy teaching

I. Introduction

With an emphasis on spoken language in CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), listening comprehension is recognized as a prerequisite for

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oral proficiency as well as a fundamental skill. In the past, listening, along with reading, was regarded as a passive skill. In the mid-1960s and early 1970s, however, more attention was given to listening comprehension than before. Rivers points out that teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is of primary importance if the communication aim is to be reached (1966, p. 204). Nida also states that “Learning to speak a language is very largely a task of learning to hear it” (1953, p. 53). Aural comprehension has been then regarded as establishing a base for the development of oral language within the 'speech chain' of listening and speaking (Denes & Pinson 1963, p. 1). Besides, listening is the language skill that can transfer to other skills in that it helps facilitate learners' vocabulary and grammar constructions through decoding process that involves lexical recognition and syntactic parsing to understand oral text.

Currently, listening comprehension is viewed theoretically as an active process in which individuals focus on selected aspects of aural input, construct meaning from passages, and relate what they hear to existing knowledge (O'Mally & Chamot, 1995). Therefore, listening comprehension changed from one of neglect to one of increasing importance (Morley, 2001) and the main focus has been given to listening instruction, how to teach listening comprehension, emphasizing pragmatic skills.

A number of instructional frameworks for listening have been developed slowly and steadily over the years, and shadowing has become one such listening instructional method. Shadowing is defined as repeating speech as learners hear it, and shadowing practice has been utilized in many areas. In psycholinguistics, shadowing is used as a means of studying speech perception, selective attention and word recognition (Cherry, 1953; Goldinger, 1998; Nye & Flowler, 2003). Also, it is frequently used for beginner interpreters who need to listen