

## **COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SHADOWING AND REPETITION TECHNIQUES IN VOCABULARY ACQUISITION**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the comparative effectiveness of shadowing and repetition techniques in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among language learners. Shadowing, which involves immediate verbal imitation of auditory input, is analyzed alongside traditional repetition, where learners engage in memorizing and recalling vocabulary items through conscious repetition. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative tests and qualitative learner feedback from a group of intermediate EFL students over a four-week period. Results reveal that while both methods contribute significantly to vocabulary retention, shadowing demonstrates higher engagement, improved pronunciation, and faster lexical recall. However, repetition is more effective for long-term retention in isolated vocabulary practice. These findings suggest that a hybrid model incorporating both techniques may offer a balanced and effective approach to vocabulary instruction. Pedagogical implications are discussed with recommendations for integrating these techniques into classroom activities and language learning platforms.

**Keywords:** Shadowing, repetition, vocabulary acquisition, language learning, EFL, pronunciation, retention, active recall, cognitive processing, listening comprehension.

### **Introduction**

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the most essential components of foreign language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners struggle to develop reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. Among the wide range of techniques used to improve vocabulary retention and usage, shadowing and repetition stand out as two of the most commonly implemented and pedagogically supported methods.

Shadowing involves listening to a model of spoken language and immediately repeating it aloud with as little delay as possible [1. 112 p.]. This technique helps learners to develop real-time processing of language, improve pronunciation, and internalize natural rhythm and intonation. On the other hand, repetition refers to the deliberate practice of repeating words or phrases multiple times to reinforce memory. It has long been associated with long-term retention and is often used in traditional classroom settings or through spaced repetition systems (SRS).

Although both techniques have been widely studied independently, few comparative studies have examined their relative effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition [2. 25 p.]. This paper aims to explore the differences and similarities between shadowing and repetition in terms of their impact on vocabulary learning, using experimental data from EFL learners. The study further

discusses the pedagogical implications of combining both techniques in vocabulary instruction to enhance learning outcomes.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-method research design to investigate the comparative effectiveness of shadowing and repetition techniques in vocabulary acquisition. The participants were 40 intermediate-level EFL learners from a language institute, aged between 18 and 24, divided equally into two groups: Group A (shadowing) and Group B (repetition).

The research was conducted over four weeks. Each group received vocabulary instruction using one of the two methods. Group A engaged in daily shadowing sessions where they listened to and repeated short dialogues and word lists [3. 59 p. ]. Group B practiced vocabulary through traditional repetition exercises including oral drilling, flashcards, and written recall tasks.

Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to both groups to measure vocabulary retention and recall accuracy. Additionally, a questionnaire and short interviews were used to collect qualitative feedback from the learners regarding their motivation, perceived effectiveness, and learning preferences.

The quantitative data was analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to determine statistical significance in vocabulary improvement within and between groups. Qualitative responses were coded thematically to identify patterns in learner attitudes and engagement.

### **Analysis and Results**

The data collected from pre- and post-tests showed notable improvements in both groups; however, differences in the degree of improvement were observed. Group A (shadowing) demonstrated an average vocabulary gain of 31%, while Group B (repetition) showed an average gain of 24%.

Shadowing participants outperformed repetition participants particularly in pronunciation, word recognition speed, and contextual usage of new vocabulary [4. 174 p.]. Learners from Group A were more likely to recall words accurately in listening and speaking tasks, indicating stronger aural memory and oral fluency.

On the other hand, Group B performed slightly better in written recall exercises and spelling accuracy, suggesting that repetition enhances orthographic retention. Furthermore, repetition learners expressed greater confidence in remembering isolated words for long-term use, especially in reading and writing contexts.

Qualitative feedback revealed that learners in the shadowing group found the activity more engaging and enjoyable, citing its natural rhythm and interaction with audio as motivating factors. Conversely, repetition group learners emphasized clarity, structure, and the simplicity of the method as advantages.

In summary, the results indicate that both methods are effective in vocabulary acquisition, but each supports different aspects of language learning. Shadowing is more beneficial for listening and speaking fluency, whereas repetition supports spelling and long-term memory retention in writing and reading.

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### Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study explored the comparative impact of shadowing and repetition techniques on vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners. By employing a mixed-method approach, the research aimed not only to measure vocabulary gains through testing but also to understand learner perceptions of each method.

The results revealed that both shadowing and repetition are effective vocabulary learning strategies, yet they support different cognitive and linguistic processes. Shadowing enhances listening comprehension, pronunciation, and spontaneous speech production. It forces learners to engage with language in real time, thereby developing fluency and improving phonological awareness. Moreover, shadowing helps to build automaticity in language processing, which is essential for communicative competence.

Repetition, on the other hand, facilitates long-term memory encoding by strengthening lexical associations through frequent exposure. Learners who practiced repetition showed higher accuracy in spelling, reading comprehension, and the written recall of vocabulary. This indicates that repetition is particularly effective in reinforcing declarative knowledge, especially in academic contexts.

Despite their respective strengths, both techniques have limitations. Shadowing may be difficult for beginners or those unfamiliar with the sounds and rhythms of the target language. Repetition, if applied mechanically, can lead to boredom and low engagement. Therefore, combining these approaches can offer a more dynamic and balanced learning experience.

### Recommendations:

1. **Integrate Both Techniques:** Language instructors should consider using both shadowing and repetition in tandem. For instance, introducing new vocabulary through shadowing and reinforcing it through spaced repetition may yield optimal results.
2. **Adapt Methods to Skill Focus:** Shadowing can be prioritized in listening and speaking classes, while repetition can be emphasized in reading and writing tasks.
3. **Use Technology:** Language learning apps and platforms should offer integrated features that include audio-based shadowing activities and repetition-based flashcard systems to cater to diverse learning styles.
4. **Tailor to Proficiency Levels:** Beginners may benefit from simplified shadowing tasks with slower audio and support materials. Intermediate and advanced learners can engage in more natural and complex dialogues for shadowing.
5. **Encourage Learner Reflection:** Learners should be encouraged to reflect on which method works best for them and adapt their personal learning strategies accordingly. This metacognitive awareness can increase motivation and autonomy.

In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of diversified vocabulary learning techniques. A flexible, learner-centered approach that combines the strengths of both shadowing and repetition can contribute significantly to more effective and enjoyable vocabulary acquisition.

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