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APPLYING THE SHADOWING TECHNIQUE IN ENGLISH CLASSES AT HANOI UNIVERSITY OF MINING AND GEOLOGY

Abstract

This paper discusses the use of shadowing in English classes for non-English-major students at Hanoi University of Mining and Geology. Many students find listening and speaking difficult because they have limited chances to practise, cannot easily follow natural speech, and are not confident about pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Shadowing is a technique in which learners listen to a recording and repeat the speaker with only a very short delay. When it is used with suitable materials and clear guidance, shadowing can help students recognize spoken English more easily, improve pronunciation, speak more smoothly, and become more confident. This paper explains the main benefits of shadowing and suggests a simple classroom procedure, including listening for meaning, studying the transcript, practising short phrases, shadowing the whole passage, recording, and self-checking. It also stresses that shadowing should be combined with discussion, summarizing, and other speaking activities so that students can use what they have practised in real communication.

Keywords:

English teaching; listening and speaking; shadowing; pronunciation; university students.

1. Introduction

English proficiency is crucial for technical students, making practical university courses essential for navigating professional materials and global communication. While listening and speaking remain challenging for non-majors, shadowing techniques—simultaneously listening and mimicking speech—can improve pronunciation and communication, provided that teachers select appropriate materials and foster communicative, meaning-focused practice.

2. Listening and Speaking Difficulties of HUMG Students

2.1. Common difficulties in listening and speaking

HUMG students span various majors with diverse English levels, facing limited individual practice in large classes. Speaking requires idea organization, interaction, and correct pronunciation, but fear of mistakes causes hesitation, leading students to read pre-written texts or give short responses due to low vocabulary. To boost participation, teachers should replace abstract or overly technical topics with familiar, career-related themes like safety, teamwork, and technology, bridging general English and major-specific English. Listening is similarly hindered by fast pacing, connected speech, and weak forms, causing students to lose the main idea and feel anxious. Poor classroom acoustics worsen this, highlighting the need for focused practice like shadowing to master natural spoken features like stress, linking, and intonation.

2.2. Pronunciation, stress, and intonation

English and Vietnamese utilize sound and pitch differently; Vietnamese is tonal, whereas English relies on stress, rhythm, and intonation, causing Vietnamese learners to often speak with equal stress or excessive pauses, reducing naturalness and intelligibility (Nguyễn Huy Kỳ, 2010). Additionally, navigating various English accents can confuse beginners, so instead of demanding accent perfection, teachers should aim for clarity and comprehension by starting with one clear model before introducing diverse accents. In this context, shadowing serves as a useful technique to help students notice how different speakers organize sounds, stress, and rhythm.