

GENERAL CONCEPT OF SHADOWING IN TRANSLATION

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Annotation: This scientific article provides a comprehensive analysis of the general concept of shadowing in translation. Shadowing refers to a technique used by translators to enhance their language skills and improve their ability to produce accurate and natural translations. Drawing on the fields of translation studies, linguistics, and cognitive psychology, this article examines the theoretical foundations, methodologies, and practical applications of shadowing in the translation process. Through an in-depth exploration of relevant literature and case studies, this article aims to deepen our understanding of shadowing and its implications for translator training and professional practice.

Key words: Shadowing, translation, application, practice, linguistic, study, methodology, language.

Shadowing is an advanced language learning technique, which can be used by learners independently to improve their intonation and pronunciation.

It is quite a simple concept - you listen to a model (i.e. a video or audio of someone speaking) and you repeat what they say in real time. Note that this is different from the listen-pause-repeat of yesteryear! The idea is that you repeat, word for word, sound for sound, what you hear, with as little delay as possible.

While the concept is easy, the practice is cognitively quite challenging. It's the kind of activity that conference interpreters use to hone their skills. When employed regularly, as a part of a broader learning programme, it can be very beneficial and something your students can practise anywhere, anytime.

The technique and practice of shadowing is an indispensable tool for both the budding and the experienced simultaneous interpreter, but it is a controversial technique and is often misunderstood or discounted. In my opinion, however, all interpreting professionals would gain greatly from spending time both considering and practising the art of shadowing.

Shadowing is useful into all the interpreter's active languages, 'A' and 'B', and can be employed to correct and refine a multitude of interpretation weaknesses – accent, delivery, voice quality, vocal range, emphasis, 'cleanliness' of rendition, confidence etc.

etc.

However, it is important that shadowing:

- be carried out in a graduated, thorough and reasoned way
- be regularly supervised and/or assessed by both the practitioner and his or her teachers, supervisors or colleagues
- be carried out over many hours and in each of the linguistic combinations that it is desired to enhance
- be coupled with more conventional training techniques

The technique consists of spending many hours in a real or virtual booth shadowing an able and fluent speaker of the target language. As the goal is to replicate the neurological and intellectual demands of simultaneous interpretation, a simple laptop/ipod/headphone combination will suffice, in the absence of a true booth. Using MP3/MP4 or flash files, DVDs, CDs or audio cassettes, choose speakers who are expressing themselves in their mother tongue and who have an excellent mastery thereof, without strong regional accents, and with a gift of oratory which allows full expression of the native cadences of the language. It cannot be over-emphasised that your chosen speaker must be carefully selected, as a function of accent, elocution, delivery, register etc. This is an excellent technique at many levels, as (this being a marked trend among recent neuro-linguistic and neurological expert studies) shadowing involves some 80% of the neuro-linguistic operations involved in simultaneous interpretation, the only factor missing being that of language transfer. Shadowing initially involves repeating the words of the speaker without modification. This allows the interpreter's brain, ears and mouth, working as they do in concert, to begin to reproduce the sounds and rhythms of the target language, without conscious mental effort, and begins to create the 'linguistic muscle memory' naturally acquired by children learning their own tongue. This will require many tens of hours of actual speech production – it is essential that the language actually be voiced, or the exercise is useless.

It is also recommended, in the case of an actual or potential 'B' language, to shadow with a text, as it is true to say that we cannot hear or apprehend what we do not know, and if we do not hear all the articles, prepositions, and smaller sounds that make a native speaker sound native, we will not reproduce those sounds in our shadowing, and will lose much of the potential benefit. Here again, it is useful to record your shadowing, and then replay it, comparing it to the text.

The prime goal of the exercise is to accustom brain, ears and mouth to the flawless and (eventually) effortless production of the sounds and cadences of what may be (in the case of a 'B') a foreign language. The goal here is to establish a new network of synapses and neuronal pathways, this being an essential stage in the interpreter's acquisition of each new language combination. It should not be thought that all lessons learned in the successful mastery of one combination can simply and instantaneously be

transposed to another – many hours of actual practice are required for each language pair, and there are no shortcuts!

It is also useful to spend time shadowing fast speakers, as it is true to say that many (usually inexperienced) interpreters have difficulty in simply delivering even their native language rapidly, clearly and without stumbling, especially when obliged to adopt a cadence which is not their own. It goes without saying that this difficulty is exacerbated into the 'B' language.

The accumulated research provides implications for using shadowing in the classroom. A key implication is that beginner level learners should start from standard shadowing for listening. Once learners achieve the upper-intermediate or advanced level, they are ready for shadowing for speaking. The review of the research reveals what has been found and what still remains to be investigated. Learners' attention when shadowing should especially be further examined, and the foundation of a theoretical model for speaking skill development by shadowing needs to be developed. To strengthen the findings that past studies have found and to expand the idea of shadowing for the sake of language learners, more research in different contexts and are needed. Research on shadowing should be directed towards examining more variations and exploring ways to develop speaking skills.

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