The Effectiveness of Shadowing on Students' Psychology in Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown the effectiveness of shadowing on English skills, but few have investigated its impact on learners' emotions. This study looks at how shadowing affects novice college students' psychology, which is typically low on intrinsic motivation in the Grammar-Translation Method and high on anxiety in the Communicative Approach. Data collected suggests that shadowing could be a useful technique to solve problems in students' attitudes towards second language learning.

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2002 survey on the state of English language education conducted at technical colleges (*Kosen*) in Japan, students at *Kosen* are generally not enthusiastic about learning English and their English language skills remain at the beginner level. In reaction to these results, the report reflects on English classes that have been conducted without paying attention to students' motivation and proposes to innovate English teaching methods in *Kosen*. It concludes that teachers should redesign English classes from a traditional teacher-centered style to a student-centered style where students use what they learn in class. This communicative aspect improves students' English skills and allows them to use English in practical situations. Students generally regard English as a subject which is outside their major. In addition, according to *Kosen*, teachers need to design language instruction that focuses on intrinsic motivation.

Since April 2005, I have been in charge of an elective-required class (all students were

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required to sign up for an elective class) for fourth-year students for which I could freely design the curriculum. I decided to design the class as a grammar class, but did not want to conduct it in a traditional way in which students are merely supposed to do exercises, translate them into Japanese, and be provided with grammar instruction from a teacher. I thought that such a teacher-centered way would prevent students from increasing their intrinsic motivation. According to "A Checklist of Intrinsically Motivating Techniques" (Brown, 2001, p.80), if a technique appeals to the students' genuine interests, it increases their intrinsic motivation. To begin, I asked students about their interests and asked them to evaluate their level in a preliminary questionnaire at the first class in April, 2005. I found that most students were interested in improving their communication skills, regardless of their level. Accordingly, I introduced an activity in which students were supposed to create a group consisting of three or four people and perform communication tasks (e.g. information gap, opinion-exchange task, and problem-solving tasks) to practice speaking English using a grammar-feature which they had just learned in the beginning part of the class. It was quite new for students who have been familiar only with the grammar translation method. It is commonly said that the communicative approach is weak at providing learners with accuracy. In addition, I knew that students lack basic skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary although they have already studied grammar extensively over the past six years. Therefore, I designed activities in which students were supposed to talk about simple daily topics. They received examples they could use as models and a list of possible words and phrases they could use in the activities. In addition to giving explicit instruction on a targeted grammar-point, I permitted students to use dictionaries and gave them plenty of time and power to control their conversations. I did not monitor their performance or evaluate the quality of it. I believed that students would surely increase their intrinsic motivation by collaborative learning in a small group consisting of familiar friends.

I expected that the students' performance would be at the junior high school level. This turned out to be an optimistic expectation. The activity showed a dichotomy. The students fell into two groups. Some students actively participated in conversation, while others withdrew from the group. It seemed that the problematic behavior came mostly from students who evaluated their level as low. The unfavorable behavior witnessed was as follows: keeping silent with an embarrassed expression, repeating gestures without speaking, withdrawing from conversation, and refusing of eye contact. They seemed to be extremely negative as well as to exhibit some of the signs of language anxiety (Oxford, 1999, p.66). I conducted a questionnaire at the end of the semester to investigate if the activity had contributed to improving students' intrinsic motivation, and found that there were both positive and negative comments. Some negative comments said only "Too difficult" or "Impossible for me."

Arnold and Brown (1999) suggest that "It is possible in some cases that the

methodology used can contribute to furthering anxiety" (p.9). In the traditional grammar-translation method that students have been familiar with, little anxiety occurs. On the other hand, in a methodology focusing on communication, anxiety easily occurs (Arnold &Brown, 1999). However, since the traditional teacher-centered method did not contribute to improving student motivation, I could not return to it. Moreover, I obtained positive results to some extent by the communication tasks that I conducted in the class, and thought that I should explore them further. Nevertheless, I realized that I needed to eliminate harmful factors from the activity, not only for students who showed anxiety, but also to avoid damaging the motivation of students who were already active. I finally decided not to continue the communication tasks.

Afterwards I considered how I should design the student-centered class based on their genuine interest in communication; and, how I could help to decrease students' anxiety and increase intrinsic motivation regardless of ability level. I decided to employ shadowing techniques. Shadowing is one of the training techniques used to improve interpreting skills, and studies report that shadowing has recently become popular as a teaching method.

I introduced shadowing as an activity for a number of reasons: (1) Students would be forced to listen and articulate sounds which in turn is close to communication, the students' genuine interest. I also expected that shadowing could raise students' intrinsic motivation. (2) There are a lot of marketed learning materials that focus on shadowing and vary levels and topics. It is easy to find materials appropriate to the students' levels. (3) Shadowing is easy to introduce even in a classroom with no special equipment. (4) Shadowing is not negatively impacted by class-size. I introduced shadowing into an ordinary classroom with 55 students.

In the next section, I examine 3 areas which are keys for the study to explore shadowing's possibility: (1) Learner psychology (intrinsic motivation, and learning anxiety), (2) People's negative attitude towards Communicative Approach, and (3) Shadowing (shadowing defined, and shadowing as a teaching method).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner Psychology

Intrinsic Motivation

Arnold and Brown (1999) define extrinsic motivation as coming "from the desire to get a reward or avoid punishment; the focus is on something external to the learning activity itself" (p.14). On the other hand, for students who have intrinsic motivation, "the learning

experience is its own reward" (p.14). In his "Intrinsic Motivation Principle," Brown (2001) writes that "the most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary" (p.59).

Regarding what kinds of situations promote students' intrinsic motivation, Brown (2001) lists class-content which relates to students' interests and their daily lives or future as one of the requirements to increase intrinsic motivation in "A checklist of intrinsically motivating techniques" (p.80).

A number of studies have shown that activities themselves impact whether people are intrinsically motivated (Deci, 1975), and have indicated the importance of enjoyment as a requirement to create an ideal situation which raises students' intrinsic motivation. Brown (2001) argues that if a task is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging, students increase their intrinsic motivation. Dornyei (2001) also suggests that teachers highlight and demonstrate aspects of L2 learning that their students are likely to enjoy, as one motivational strategy. Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) maintains that "the intrinsic reward from learning is the enjoyment one gets here and now, from the act of learning itself" (p.73). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Whalen (1993), if people regard a task as work, they are in a negative mood and have low self-esteem, and if they regard a task as play, they feel happy and have high self-esteem. For the sake of focusing on learning itself so that students can develop intrinsic motivation, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) posits that teachers should not highlight instrumental aspects of learning. Dewey (1938) also asserts the function of enjoyment in teaching. He maintains that teaching has to give students the experience of pleasure and knowledge that makes future growth possible. According to him, if a teacher can stimulate students with joyful experiences, students come to want to repeat the same experience by themselves.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) indicates that playfulness and concentration should be balanced: "Mere playfulness without concentrated work is just as inimical to learning as drudgery....How to integrate these two quite different aspects in the same experience is the main challenge that educators face" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p.81). According Deci, Kasser and Ryan(1996), "when intrinsically motivated, people engage in activities out of interest and enjoyment, out of the satisfactions that accrue spontaneously as they involve themselves in the activities" (p.60). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a good balance between challenges and skills in order to create enjoyment in learning. In a learning setting, students constantly ask themselves about what is going on and what and how well they can do it. He, therefore, regards an activity in which students can have the power of control as ideal.

Brown (2001) also asserts that a task should be reasonably challenging for learners and a teacher should provide learners with choices to create an enjoyable setting. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), "acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language" (p.19). Smith (1985) also insists that "learning, after all, takes place continually except in conditions of confusion, when there is no comprehension" (p.91). In addition to the above, that a teacher should have students clearly understand the goals of a task is emphasized (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Slavin, 1994; Brown, 2001). As for feedback, studies emphasize the importance of providing it to students clearly, immediately and frequently (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Slavin, 1994; Brown, 2001).

Various studies indicate the necessity of eliminating anxiety from a learning setting. Oxford (1999) maintains that anxiety can harm motivation, while Csikszentmihalyi (1996) argues that "unnecessary threat to the students' ego" (p.84) should be eliminated. Moreover, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) asserts that activities by which students can feel self-esteem (i.e. "growth" and "self-transcendence") contribute to increasing students' intrinsic motivation (p. 85). Brown (2001) also maintains that an activity in which learners can discover something by themselves is ideal.

Learning Anxiety

According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), learning anxiety is the unpleasant feeling that occurs when a learner is supposed to perform in a second or foreign language. Anxiety is a "constant companion" (Slavin, 1994, p.365) in language learning. Particularly, there are few other places in which learners increase anxiety more than a foreign language learning environment (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Specifically, Dornyei (2001) refers to the characteristics of pubescent learners. He points out that they are quite self-conscious and already have been spending a great deal of effort saving face. He warns that teachers should not forget that "the foreign language is the only school subject in which one cannot even say a simple sentence without the danger of making a serious mistake" (p.88). "Learners are forced to 'babble like a child' which might just be the last straw for some whose personal identity is already unstable or damaged" (Dornyei, 2001, p.40). Anxiety is a factor which occurs constantly in a language learning setting as well as a "highly ranked one among the factors influencing language learning" (Oxford, 1999, p.59). Therefore, it is essential that we consider the role of anxiety in order to create an ideal and successful learning setting. According to Oxford's classification (1999), "signs of language anxiety" (p.66) are general avoidance, physical actions, physical symptoms, and other signs which depend on the culture (see *Table 1*).

TABLE 1

Signs of Language Anxiety

General avoidance	'forgetting' the answer, showing carelessness, cutting class, coming late, arriving unprepared, low levels of verbal production, lack of volunteering in class, seeming inability to answer even the simplest questions
Physical actions	squirming, fidgeting, playing with hair or clothing, nervously touching objects, stuttering or stammering, displaying jittery behavior, being unable to reproduce the sounds or intonation of the target language even after repeated practice
Physical symptoms	Complaining about a headache, experiencing tight muscles, feeling unexplained pain or tension in any part of the body
Other signs, depending on the culture	overstudying, perfectionism, social avoidance, conversational withdrawal, lack of eye contact, hostility, monosyllabic or noncommittal responses, image protection or masking behaviors (exaggerated smiling, laughing, nodding, joking), failing to interrupt when it would be natural to do so, excessive competitiveness, excessive self-effacement and self-criticism ('I am so stupid')

adapted from *Affect in language learning* (Oxford, 1999)

There are studies which indicate the possibility that anxiety could have a positive impact, while a number of studies regard anxiety as negative for learners' motivation. Oxford (1999) argues "harmful anxiety can be related to plummeting motivation, negative attitudes and beliefs, and language performance difficulties" (p.60). Arnold and Brown (1999) also agree with this negative assessment of anxiety, "when anxiety is present in the classroom, there is a down-spiraling effect" (p.9). In addition, according to the Affective Filter Hypothesis （Krashen, 1982), the filter is low when a learner has strong motivation to learn a targeted language, and the learner will be prompted to acquire the language. One of the teacher's roles, therefore, is to lower the filter by eliminating learners' anxiety.

According to Oxford (1999), one of the factors which negatively correlate with anxiety is self-esteem, which is "based on feelings of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one's own environment" (p.62). McCombs and Pope (1994) also indicate that self-esteem could be a cause of students' unfavorable behavior: "Students, rather than being malicious, attention-seeking egomaniacs, are misbehaving because they're scared or insecure" (p.40). Dornyei (2001) states "people with a low sense of self-efficacy in a given domain perceive difficult tasks as personal threats; they dwell on their own personal deficiencies and the obstacles they encounter rather than concentrating on how to perform the task successfully. Consequently, they easily lose faith in their capacities and are likely to give up" (p. 87). In addition, Oxford (1999) lists "lack of tolerance of ambiguity" as a factor which positively correlates with anxiety. She maintains that there is a great amount of ambiguity in a foreign language learning setting, and successful learners accept it, and argues that if a learner feels

reluctant to accept ambiguity, her anxiety increases.

In sum, intrinsic motivation and anxiety are intertwined tightly and affect each other. To increase motivation, it is important to decrease anxiety which could negatively influence it. Besides, increasing self-esteem and eliminating ambiguity commonly play an important role in an ideal setting in which students are high on intrinsic motivation and low on anxiety.

People's negative attitude towards Communicative Approach

Torikai (1997) argues that the goal of English education in Japan has been clearly determined as developing communication skills to understand different cultures, while problems caused by communication-focused English classes are not small or can not be ignored. She reports that school teachers are embarrassed and confused with communication-centered curriculum, and some of them have even resistance towards communicative approach. Anderson (1993) also points out Japanese students' tendency in a classroom. According to him, Japanese students are silent in a classroom if they are not called on or provided with clear-cut answers.

MacIntyre (1999) reviews researches about language anxiety and introduces Price's argument in his paper:

> Price (1991) summarized several sources of language anxiety in the classroom. She noted that students seemed to be most concerned about speaking in front of their peers. Fear of being laughed at, embarrassed, and making a fool of oneself are major concerns of anxious language students. The more technical aspects of language learning also cause problems among students (i.e. making errors in pronunciation, communicating ineffectively). (p.31)

MacIntyre (1999) concludes that "the single most important source of language anxiety seems to be the fear of speaking in front of other people using a language with which one has limited proficiency" (p. 33), and argues that " language learning has more potential for students to embarrass themselves, to frustrate their self-expression, and to challenge their self-esteem and sense of identity than almost any other learning activity" (p.33). Arnold and Brown (1999) maintain anxiety caused by Communicative Approach, compared with the grammar translation:

> With the grammar-translation method one might assume a reduction of the possibility of anxiety, since the learners have relatively little of themselves invested in the activities required. However, with the advent of methods which focus on communication, and especially communication involving more personal aspects of one's being, such as feelings, if care is not taken to provide an emotionally safe atmosphere, the chance for the development of anxiety-provoking situations can

increase greatly. (p.9)

Leki (2001) also points out a possible problem of group work that it could cause negative consequences.

Therefore, it could be dangerous to apply Communicative Approach without careful consideration on students' psychology in a classroom. A psychologically comfortable and safe learning environment is important (Ely, 1986).

Shadowing

What is Shadowing?

Shadowing is known as one of the training techniques used to improve interpreting skills. According to Tamai (2005), there are five kinds of shadowing as teaching methods which can be divided into three kinds of shadowing (shadowing, delayed shadowing, and phrase shadowing) and two kinds of peripheral tasks (parallel reading and speed reading) (see *Table 2*).

TABLE 2
Classification of Shadowing

Kinds of shadowing	Task Contents
Shadowing	articulate the same sounds at almost the same time while listening to sounds of a text
Delayed shadowing	do the same thing as shadowing explained above, but not at the same time, rather, after a second
Phrase shadowing	do shadowing phrase by phrase. In this activity, a teacher has students listen to a targeted text with CD or a teacher's model reading phrase by phrase
Parallel reading	read aloud looking at a text while listening to sounds
Speed reading	read aloud as quickly as possible looking at a text. In this activity, the degree of understanding the text is not important, and the teacher has each student measure how long it took for an individual to finish reading the text

adapted from *Risuningu shidouhou to shite no shadouingu no koka ni kansuru kenkyu* [Study of effect of shadowing as a method to improve listening skills] (Tamai, 2005)

Shadowing as a Teaching Method

The number of universities which adapt interpreting training methods as teaching methods has been growing recently (Torikai, 1997). Torikai (1999) points out that various schools other than university-level have also begun to adapt interpreting training techniques:

> In view of the current direction of language teaching focusing on communication, it is not surprising to see many universities being interested in opening interpreter training courses. What is amazing, though, is more and more interpreter training techniques have been employed in classroom teaching of English at various levels and institutions. (p.122)

According to Torikai (1997), training methods for interpreting has two roles: the role to support communication-focused English education which has become mainstream in Japan, and to make up the deficits of the communicative approach. Tamai (1997) concludes that shadowing is an effective teaching method to improve the listening skills of high school and university-level learners. Torikai (1997) proposes that shadowing can make listening instruction, which tends to make students passive, more active. She insists that learning English through training methods for interpreting has great potential in the fundamental aspects of English education in Japan. Moreover, she indicates that in a communication-focused classroom, fluency is prioritized such that it tends to be difficult to provide learners with accuracy, especially in terms of phonetic aspects and argues that shadowing can help solve the problem. According to Someya (1996), for most learners, the biggest issue is to acquire the prosodic features of the target language accurately. Through his empirical study, Someya (1998) demonstrates that shadowing can help learners acquire prosodic features of a language, which creates a basis to improve listening skills.

Other than studies which argue for the effectiveness of shadowing on skills and classroom dynamics, there are some studies which refer to the potential effect of shadowing on learners' psychology. In marketed learning material using shadowing technique which Torikai et al. (2004) published, they basically focus on the technique's effect on skills, while they briefly describe its effect on learner psychology (i.e. shadowing can contribute to help learners focus on a task and increase motivation). Tamai (2005) gives evidence of shadowing's positive effect on listening skills in his empirical research. In addition, he assumes that learners begin to pay more attention to their learning process than before because the repetition feature of shadowing provides learners with clear progress. He concludes with the idea that it has not yet been explored but that it is meaningful to investigate learner psychological change in a language learning situation in which shadowing is applied.

CONCLUSION

The necessity of paradigm shift from the Grammar Translation Method towards Communicative Approach is not argued only in *Kosen*. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (1998) announced a National Curriculum Standards Reform making a foreign language a required subject. According to it, "great emphasis will be placed on the practice in the situations where a target language is actually used" (p.14). The Ministry (2002) again proposed that it would be ideal to have senior high school students to be able to command normal conversations on daily topics (a close level of reading and writing is also ideal). Communicative Approach itself became greatly popular in 1970s and has been supported by many researchers and teachers since then, while it has not been prevalent enough in Japan. Judging from the both statements by the Ministry, Communicative Approach will be regarded as important more and more than ever.

It is, however, quite difficult to approach directly to the ideal goal or jump to the conclusion. Changes into something new do not necessarily provide positive stimuli. The key to determine success or failure is students' psychology. For the sake of success, teachers should take not only intrinsic motivation but also anxiety into consideration as carefully as possible from all angles.

In the study, I explored the impact of shadowing on student's psychology: i.e. whether or not shadowing is effective to decrease their anxiety as well as increase students' intrinsic motivation regardless of their level. I obtained data showing that shadowing satisfied the required conditions to raise intrinsic motivation, and data showing that it also contributed to reduce anxiety. I concluded that shadowing could be an useful teaching method which solved problems in students' attitude towards Communicative Approach.

As reviewed above, shadowing as a teaching method has been gradually explored. Many studies have shown that shadowing has positive effects on English skills, especially on listening skills, yet there are not enough studies that focus on its impact on learners' emotions. I believe that it would be useful to discuss and explore further the effectiveness of shadowing in terms of students' psychology for English education in Japan which will be innovated further.

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