

# Shadowing in Simultaneous Interpreting



Some exercises for beginners which do not consist in interpreting as such may be used. Their primary goal at the initial stage of SI training is to teach speaking and listening at the same time. The best known of such exercises is probably shadowing, which also raises a lot of controversies among interpreter trainers. Shadowing is the repetition of the source text in the same language, which is supposed to facilitate simultaneous listening and speaking.

Shadowing sometimes constitutes a basis for other pre-interpreting exercises. Lambert (1992:266) defines shadowing as a paced, parrot-style auditory tracking task, conducted with headphones, however, it is an active and highly cognitive activity in which learners track the heard speech and vocalize it as clearly as possible at the same time that they hear it. SI necessitates that the interpreters need a special types of training in order to enhance their performance gradually because SI demands attention and accuracy as they interpret the SM.

Shadowing is important to experiment with differing levels of time lag (say from 0.5 to 5 seconds), introducing a certain elasticity to reflect the fluctuating demands imposed by the speaker and to train the brain to cope with larger or smaller linguistic buffer spaces in the language combination being employed. 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 a foreign language.

Shadowing was originally used for training interpreters. it has also long been used explicitly as an exercise to improve simultaneous interpreters' timing, listening, and short-term memory skills before they even start interpreting. It is clear that this technique is very important in the aspect of interpreter's training program because it supports her/his memory and listening skills in managing this task.

When it comes to speaking fluently and accurately, practice makes perfect. Think about your native language. How old were you when you started to speak? How many hours do you spend a week speaking this language? Your *articulators* (e.g. tongue, lips, teeth) have had thousands of hours of practice, moving around and making the specific sounds of your native language.

Typically, in formal school settings – with many students in a class and limited hours per week – not much time is dedicated to speaking. This is one reason why a learner may not have very clear pronunciation, nor a good level of spoken fluency.

So what can you do? It's true that there are plenty of opportunities to practise your interpreting, but there are also some possible barriers. Maybe your schedule doesn't allow you to go along to language exchanges or maybe you just don't feel comfortable starting up a conversation with a complete stranger.

With shadowing, you have none of these issues. You can do it at home, in the office, even in the taxi driving you from or into university! You can do it on your own – all you need is your mobile and some earphones.



## Step by step guide to shadowing

Shadowing allows you to train your articulators to produce sounds more accurately. In a real conversation, you have to organise your ideas, find the right words and formulate phrases. But by imitating someone else's speech, you can just focus on the sounds of the language. That's the theory, now it's time to put it into practice:

### 1. Select a piece of audio

Find a short piece of audio (max. 5 minutes) with just one person speaking.

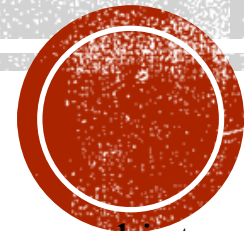
It doesn't have to be a native speaker, but they should be proficient.

Your Audio Selfie playlist is a good place to start.

### 2. Listen

Before you start shadowing, listen to the audio at least once to get used to the speaker's accent, rhythm and intonation.

Don't worry if you don't understand every word, but if it's too fast or complex, look for an alternative.



### **3. Practise shadowing**

It can be challenging to begin with, but try to repeat what the speaker says as quickly and as accurately as possible.

Start by doing 20-30 seconds and if you get stuck, just stop the audio and start again.

Remember, we're not really concerned with meaning, you're just trying to mimic the speaker's voice.

### **4. Record yourself**

Once you've practised and you feel more confident, try recording yourself.

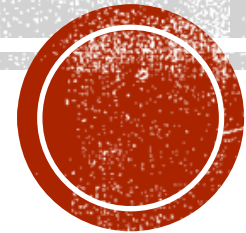
Listen to the audio through your headphones and record your voice using your computer or smartphone.

### **5. Listen back**

Listen to your recording and compare your speech to the original audio.

So, give it a go and let us know how you get on!

<https://mislinguistic.com/shadowing-exercise/>





**Thank You**