

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SHADOWING TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE ORAL  
ACCURACY IN YOUNG CHILDREN.**

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Proyecto de aula presentado como requisito para obtener el título de

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## 1. Resumen

El siguiente proyecto de aula fue realizado por dos profesoras practicantes de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira del programa Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, cuyo objetivo era ayudar a estudiantes del grado cuarto del colegio Instituto Técnico Superior sede primaria a articular con exactitud sonidos propios de la lengua inglesa a través de una técnica llamada *shadowing*. Durante la implementación del proyecto, una de las practicantes estuvo a cargo de desarrollar diferentes actividades de aula articuladas con la técnica, mientras la otra se encargó de observar y adjuntar información para obtener resultados.

Es válido decir que el proceso en términos generales fue exitoso, ya que los estudiantes entendieron sin mucha dificultad la finalidad de la técnica y mostraron gran disponibilidad al momento de implementarla. Los aspectos que facilitaron el desarrollo de las actividades fueron la edad de los estudiantes, las ayudas audiovisuales con las que contaba el salón y las actividades que las practicantes encontraron motivantes para los estudiantes tales como juegos, canciones y películas que siguieron aplicando durante el resto del proceso.

## 2. Abstract

This classroom project was conducted by two teachers practitioners from the *Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira*, English Language Teaching Program, whose principal aim was to help fourth graders students from the school Instituto Técnico Superior elementary school branch to develop L2 oral accuracy through Shadowing Technique. During the implementation of the project, one of the practitioners conducted the different classroom activities articulated with the technique, while the other one observed and attached information to obtain results.

It is worth to say that in general terms, the process was successful since the students understood easily the finality of the technique and were willing at the moment of the implementation. The aspects that facilitated the development of the activities were the students' ages, the audiovisuals gadgets available in the classroom and the activities that the practitioners found engaging for the students such as games, songs and movies that were applied during the rest of the process.

### 3. Justification

EFL instruction has been widely explored in order to develop and implement strategies related to the teaching and learning of all the components of this field. However, there are some areas that need a deeper understanding and more strategies to make suitable implementations in classrooms. One of these areas is concerned with pronunciation and the techniques used to teach it. According to Bartolí (2005) teachers fail in complement their classes with a pronunciation activity that can promote the oral development of EFL learners. A bad consequence of that is that the oral accuracy is affected due to the fact that learners do not have an appropriate instruction on the area and consequently it impacts the expected outcomes of the communicative approach. Moreover, Segura (2011) points out that pronunciation is not given the importance it deserves from EFL teachers.

In most of public schools in Colombia, the instruction of English is reduced to 3 or 2 hours per week, aspect that shows to be insufficient to the general learning of the foreign language carrying to poor performance in state assessments as stated by Sánchez (2013). “Documentos del Trabajo Sobre Economía Regional” which is a publication from Banco de la República, reveals that in 2011 only the 2% of high school students reached the B1 level of proficiency and 6,5% of university students reached the B+ level of proficiency in English language. Besides, the materials and strategies used need improvements to gain students’ attention. These results make us reflect on the strategies that teachers and learners use when it



comes to developing an accurate proficiency, a better learning environment and appropriate results in the aspect of pronunciation and the learning of English in general.

The previous problems do not help to achieve the objectives proposed by Proyecto de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras and this is why our project has a marked importance since it aims to contribute to fulfill the national standards and policies by implementing a teaching technique for the improvement of learners' performance, especially in terms of oral abilities

Many studies have shown that shadowing helps to raise awareness on the target language sounds as well as developing proficiency in pronunciation mainly in university students. In this case, we are directing this study to young children since as stated by Cameron (2001) "Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent" (p.1). These observations encourages the study to work with this specific audience. The contexts in which these studies have taken place differ from our context considering that shadowing technique is mainly implemented in Western countries like Japan and Iran.

The results of this project may contribute to the teaching of English as a foreign language and may provide EFL teachers with new views regarding oral production, making them consider the inclusion of pronunciation strategies. This project can also set a different perspective on students about the learning of a foreign language by implementing a teaching technique and selecting materials appealing to their interests and likes, in that way, they can feel that learning can also be a joyful and pleasant activity.

#### 4. Introduction

As future EFL teachers, we are always seeking for new and different methods, techniques, approaches or theories that can influence and help the students in the learning of English as a foreign language. In this situation, we aim to implement the shadowing technique to improve fluency and oral accuracy. This technique has been used to improve listening and oral skills in countries like Japan, Iran and others such as South Korea and China, showing positive results in the improvement of listening comprehension, production rate, and pronunciation.

For the implementation of Shadowing Technique in the Colombian context, we do not have yet any formal study or reference that can set a different point of view on this field, as well as the use of this technique with children, which is the principal concern of our classroom project. Since our Spanish phoneme system differs from the English phoneme system, we can find problems with pronunciation that can affect the meaning and interpretation of messages, causing problems with the communicative aspect of any language. Given the fact that the MEN plans to become Colombia a bilingual country and the future challenges to the students in terms of bilingualism, we as teachers to be, see the need that current and future teachers have to implement effective teaching techniques in order to help students to improve their language skills and satisfy their needs.

The first aspect to focus on is the definition of shadowing based on three different authors that expose the benefits and results of applying this teaching technique to the practice and teaching of listening and oral production. This technique also exposes the top-down and bottom-

up processing that is involved in the receptive skills such as reading and listening. All of the areas that are going to be presented on this paper are going to explain how we can use the shadowing technique in order to strengthen students' skills at the moment of implementing listening and improving the aspects related to oral production in the learning of English as a foreign language.

## 5. Objectives

For the implementation, we select objectives for learners and for the teacher practitioners in order to conduct a purposeful project. That is how the teaching objectives count with a general objective and two specific objectives related to the developing of professional aims during the implementation of the project. The same was made with the learning objectives, but in this case, related to the results and achievements we expect to see in learners.

### a. Teaching Objectives

- To foster teaching strategies to raise awareness on the implementation of spoken sounds in an English class.
- To implement a technique that help develop accuracy in young learners.
- To select appropriate and engaging material that promotes oral activities in young learners.

### b. Learning Objectives

- After being exposed to authentic input, learners will be engaged and will manage to copy the L2 sounds.
- After listening to spoken input, learners will be able to associate sounds and meaning.
- Learners will be able to duplicate spoken words by articulating appropriately the sounds of the target language.

## **7. Theoretical Framework**

### **7.1 What is Shadowing?**

Shadowing is a technique that was originally used to train interpreters in Europe, and nowadays is used specially in Japan for English classes in order to improve listening skills. As mentioned by Tamai (1997) and based on the work made by Hamada (2014) “Shadowing is defined as an active and highly cognitive activity in which learners track speech they hear and vocalize it as clearly as possible while simultaneously listening”. It means that you have to repeat what you have listened trying to imitate the exact sounds of the foreign language, in this case, English, so you can raise awareness for listening skills and develop the aspects involved in spoken English. Kadota (as cited in Hamada. 2012) highlights the benefits of shadowing by mentioning that it helps learners to automatize speech perception, raise their working memory’s capacity and enhance the rehearsal process in order to retain phonological information on the phonological loop for a longer period of time

According to Wiltshier (as cited in Zakeri, 2014) shadowing has broad scope of procedures to apply in EFL classrooms and all of them have their moment in the classes’ timeline and specific characteristics depending on the learning purpose. Various types of shadowing have been exposed such as full shadowing, slash shadowing, part shadowing (also known as echoing) and silent shadowing. Shadowing can be implemented in a complete form in which students repeat the complete sentence that they are given, in selective form in which they only shadow the important message and finally, the interactive form in which they add

comments or other words while still repeating some parts of the input. It is worth mentioning the principal exponents of this technique to broaden the concept.

## **7.2 Principal Exponents and Theories of Shadowing**

Shadowing technique has been discussed throughout the years, for this reason we take into account three principal authors that develop studies in this field. For Tamai (as cited in Hamada, 2012) shadowing is “the act or task of listening in which the learner tracks heard speech and vocalize it as clearly as possible, while listening attentively to incoming information”. Tamai also found that shadowing worked faster at the moment of improving learners’ listening proficiency rather than simple dictation. He also mentions the active cognitive process of shadowing and how it improves the listening skills in those who practice it. These aspects are reinforced by Kadota’s research that mentioned two important results. According to Kadota (as cited in Hamada, 2014) shadowing influences in the “automatization of speech perception” that consists in the repetition of English sounds uttered by the native speaker as quickly as possible, as well as the “internalization of new items” that is the exercise of memorizing and internalizing the linguistic items of a language such as intonation, pronunciation, lexis, grammar structure and vocabulary. Kadota also highlights the potential of shadowing to improve the learners’ listening comprehension skills taking into account the level of proficiency on the learners.

Finally, Arguelles, an American professor who described shadowing as a language learning technique, stated that the basis of this technique is the audio in the language that the

student is learning. While listening, the student attempts to repeat –to shadow- what he/she hears as quickly as he/she hears it. The two authors and the professor agreed saying that this process engages not only the language areas but various other large portions of listener’s brain.

### 7.3 Types of Shadowing

This technique has a broad scope of implementation for classroom activities; the following ones were proposed and implemented by Kadota (2007), Tamai (1997) and Arguelles (2011).

<b>Full shadowing</b>	Students have to listen to the input and then try to repeat the auditory input as soon as it is heard.
<b>Slash shadowing</b>	The speaker purposely delivers their speech with pauses between phrases to give to the shadower more time to recognize words.
<b>Silent shadowing</b>	Full shadowing done in the head, sub-vocalization.
<b>Part shadowing</b>	The shadower picks up the last word or the stressed ones and just shadows them.
<b>Shadowing + comment</b>	The shadower adds his/her own comments

<b>Part shadowing + question</b>	The shadower adds a question about his/her job
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The use of the shadowing technique involves the knowledge of how and when to use it. For this reason, it is very important to take into account that the types of shadowing depends on the level in which students are. The previous list evidences that the technique is flexible in terms of implementation and can be adaptable for students' abilities and needs.

#### **7.4 How to Implement Speech Shadowing**

When implementing shadowing in a classroom, the teacher needs to take into account the following steps:

First of all the teacher starts by selecting an audio text for the learners to work with, he/she needs to analyze the vocabulary in the transcript to identify which items he/she would need to clarify for the students. Secondly, the facilitator encourages the learners to listen to the audio text as many times as possible to become familiar with the speaker's pronunciation and give them instructions, so they can also focus on particular aspects of the voice speech, such as the way he/she pronounces certain individual sounds, the rhythm and the pace of his/her voice. For the next step the teacher must demonstrate to the students how the technique works and plays the role of a guide/example for them, it is important that they notice that the technique is not a listen and repeat exercise. If the teacher notice any problem related to articulation of sounds during the



practice, the participants will be asked to focus on those segments of the audio text and reinforce them until they have fixed these problems. To do this, learners should listen again to the audio as many times as necessary until they are satisfied with their pronunciation. Finally, when they feel that their pronunciation matches the audio text naturally, get them to record themselves or shadow the audio in front of the class. In conclusion, we can say that the implementation of shadowing is a step by step process, and we cannot force students to use it; we have to be patient enough to wait until they feel ready to do it.

### **7.5 Considerations**

When learners shadow the audio, they imitate the sounds, stress, pronunciation and intonation of the audio, it helps to raise awareness on the way they speak; furthermore, they will produce more accurate sentences in terms of pronunciation. In order to implement this technique, we can select the appropriate material for children such as songs, cartoons and movies. A chunk of audio from the previous materials is selected along with the scripts for the students to shadow, always considering their level of proficiency. Learners have to know in advance what they are saying, what is the meaning of the script because it has better results, as stated by Hamada (2014) “Shadowing training is effective when done after learning the target concepts”

## 8. Literature Review

Pronunciation has become a big concern in the area of teaching English, developing new strategies, methods and techniques to improve oral performance in speakers of other languages. Two studies guide us to a teaching technique originally used to train interpreters in Europe; these studies Zakeri (2014) and Hsieh, Dong and Wang (2013) implemented shadowing in order to find any relationship between this technique and the improvement of pronunciation, focusing on intonation and fluency. The studies were conducted in EFL contexts with students between 20 and 28 years old from the National Taiwan University and an Iranian institute. For data collection both studies divided the total amount of participants into two groups: control group and experimental group. For the analysis of data, they implemented software programs such as SPSS for statistical analysis and MyET for study pronunciation, purchased by the educational institutes. These studies will be reviewed in this section.

Zakeri (2014) conducted a study seeking for any relationship between shadowing and EFL learners' oral performance in terms of fluency. For this study, forty learners, between 20 to 28 (24 females and 16 males) from an Iranian institute were divided into two groups, one of them received the name of experimental group, this group made an introductory session in which they were asked to shadow anything they could get from their surroundings. The other one was the control group, which did not receive any kind of instruction related to shadowing. At the end of the study, the students received 8 sessions divided into 2 sessions per week during 4 weeks; at the end of the month and for future analysis, all the students' voices were recorded talking about

a question. The instruments used during this study were an interview and a questionnaire in order to know the participants' language proficiency in both groups. The findings of this study help to support the positive influence of shadowing technique regarding speaking skills. The study also states that exposing learners to the target language accelerates their learning process

Hsieh, Dang & Wang developed a study in 2013 that aimed to discover if shadowing technique could be applied to improve English intonation acquisition. Fourteen not native speakers students from the National Taiwan University (NTU) volunteer for this study hoping to find a new technique for the improvement of pronunciation, they were divided into two groups (control and experimental group); the first group did not receive any shadowing instruction letting the participants work with the traditional repetition techniques, whereas the experimental group, received shadowing instruction by the professor for eight hours. During pre- and post-tests students were given four texts to shadow, making 28 audios to analyze. The outcome of this study yielded positive results in terms of fluency, intonation and pronunciation for the experimental group after being in contact with shadowing technique. The most notable difference between shadowing and repetition is that repetition affects concentration whereas shadowing works and improves long-term memory.

The previous studies permit to evidence that the influence of shadowing in the improvement of oral skills has a possible result for young adults whose mother tongue is different from English. Although our study is mainly focused on young children, the findings shed light on the effectiveness of shadowing given the fact that children have the facility to learn faster and easier a new language.

## **9. Methodology**

### **9.1 Context**

This project will be conducted at Instituto Técnico Superior- Sede primaria located in Pereira. This institution belongs to a low-middle socioeconomic level. The school has 10 rooms divided as follows: 1 office room, 1 teachers' room, 1 room for kindergarten, 6 rooms for children from first to fifth grade and one room that is used as library. It also counts with bathrooms for boys and girls, a small cafeteria and a playground that is a soccer field made of concrete. It doesn't have any green area in which children can play.

The classroom in which the project is going to be implemented is equipped with a white board, 40 wooden chairs for 40 students and a teacher desk. This classroom also has a T.V., a big speaker and a video beam that belongs to the in-service teacher. The classrooms' space is the appropriate for the amount of students as long as they are seated in rows, the space doesn't allow grouping or elaborated kinesthetic activities. The Institutions' pedagogical model is based on the Humanistic approach. Including this school branch, the average number of teachers of The Instituto Técnico Superior is 105 and 2.700 students approximately.

The English curricula of the school is based on Guía No. 22 Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and Competencias Ciudadanas as a humanistic and social complement for the curriculum of English. The English subject is taught from first (1<sup>st</sup>) to fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade with an

average intensity of 3 hours per week. This course is taught by an average amount of 5 teachers in each institution who must have a bachelor's degree in EFL at least if they are supposed to work in a public school. In the case of secondary levels we can assume an average of 4 classes per week instructed by 6 teachers approximately. These teachers are also required a bachelor's degree at least to teach at any of these public schools.

## **9.2 Student-participants**

The participants involved in this project were 4th graders from 7 to 9 years old; there were 15 girls and 25 boys. They were able to read and write according to their age. None of them had a cognitive disability that affects their learning; however, there was 1 student with a physical limitation that did not allow her move around the classroom easily. Learners were active as it is expected in children of this age. If we wanted to have a successful lesson, they had to be engaged in the topics. Despite the fact that they did not have sufficient English background, they followed instructions easily and seemed to enjoy the sessions. At the beginning of the practicum learners showed certain knowledge about English, since they were exposed to previous teachers practitioners that helped them to reach an A1 level of proficiency. It was evidenced throughout the lessons when they recalled some words already learnt to support the learning of new topics.

### **9.3 Teachers' roles**

The teacher-practitioners for this study were two students of ninth semester from English Language Teaching Program; one was in charge of the implementation of the technique and the other one was in charge of the observation of it.

### **9.4 Instructional Design**

In this section the reader will have a picture of how this project will be implemented in one of the potential schools. The process of planning the sessions will be pictured in this stage as well as the implementation stage, the implementation of the technique, the assessment of the sessions and the resources needed to carry out this project. Finally, this section also presents the individual role of the practitioners during the implementation and what their functions are.

#### **9.4.1 Planning stage**

For the implementation of this Project the first step to take is the planning of the session. Recalling the theory of Shadowing as “a technique for training both listening and speaking skills by repeating sounds as accurately and quickly as possible” as stated by Mochizuki H. (2010). Taking as model the formats of usage proposed by some scholars like Hamad, Murphey, Takizawa and Kadota and Tamai (as mentioned in Hamada, 2012). The technique finds its place during the listening activity on an EFL classroom and must be complemented with other skills or activities like reading since it was found that it increases the

effectiveness of shadowing. This technique can be implemented during the awareness stage of the session.

The planning of this implementation will be based on Thornbury's model to teach speaking, that is the most appropriate to follow in our implementation. Following the awareness, appropriation an autonomy model students will raise awareness by paying attention, noticing and understanding the listening input and the features of spoken English. Then, learners appropriate the listening input by memorizing and drilling it, which in this case acts as a "fluency-enhancing technique" Thornbury (p.64)

Some problems that we could face at the moment of the implementation are: demotivating attitudes by students towards the class, disruptive behaviors that could threaten the development of the implementation, lack of speakers and audio devices in the institutions and programmed or unexpected cultural activities. The anticipated solutions for the previous setbacks are: Provide them with material related to their topics of interest (cartoons, T.V. series, sports, music, etc) in case we do not know their current issues of interest we can ask them what they would like to learn or explore in a foreign language. Immediate intervention and negotiation of problems i following the actions proposed by the school in cases of misbehavior and set the teacher practitioner's expectations during the development of the sessions. Provide speakers and technological devices in case the school does not have any or some of the material needed for the development of the sessions. Make sure these devices are rechargeable in case the school's electricity is not working and finally, ask the heads of the schools and in-service teachers for a

calendar or a program of the school's social and cultural activities to be aware of them in case they interfere with any of the sessions, so a plan B can be taken.

The implementation will be carried out in five sessions of ninety minutes approximately. Each session will have the same aim that is to improve fluency and oral accuracy on learners' oral production.

#### **9.4.2 Implementation stage**

The sessions for the implementation of shadowing technique will be developed with an amount of 30 to 35 students of primary level with a teacher practitioner and a participant observer.

For the beginning of the session, students will be presented the learning aim and the grammatical. Next the teacher practitioner will give the students the content that can be provided in worksheets, in a short video or developed during a group activity. This activity could take ten or fifteen minutes taking into account the questions that students elicit and the repetition of information that the teacher provides.

For the implementation of the technique, teachers will look for audio material that matches the learning aim and the content in the internet or other sources. The technique allows to use a wide variety of sources of authentic material like web pages, radio programs, apps, podcasts, T.V. programs, movies to mention some examples. After having the material to shadow, the teacher practitioner will serve as model of how to implement the technique. The content or script of the audio to shadow must be taught before the students start to practice the



technique. This task is known as post-shadowing that indicates that the content of learning must be learnt before shadowing training because it improves the performance of the learners and the effectiveness of the technique (Hamada, 2014),and considering the learners level of proficiency, is a very suitable step to follow.

The shadowing training will be divided into five stages:

**Awareness:**

- Listen to the audio: Do not shadow or read the text but only listen quietly.
- Mumbling: Students shadow, in a whispered way, the incoming sounds.

**Appropriation:**

- Complete shadowing: students shadow everything the speakers say.
- Synchronized reading: Students shadow the audio, reading aloud the text or script, emulating intonation and sound.
- Act out: Students will act out the conversation as they shadow it.

After the shadowing training, the teacher practitioner will review the text to clarify meaning, unknown words and pronunciation. When learners have all their doubts clear about the text/script or content, they will be given a task related to the topic of the session. A short reflection stage will be conducted at the end of the class to reinforce what they have already learnt, liked or misunderstood.

### **9.4.3 Assessment**

The assessment stage will be done during and at the end of every session to collect significant data for the results of the project.

The instruments of assessment will take form of learners' voice recordings, rubrics to measure the expected fluency according to their level of proficiency, checklists to measure students' motivation during the practice of shadowing and a survey to evaluate students' perception towards the class.

The voice recordings will be used as tests for teachers practitioners to assess the performance of the learners, these recordings will be taken at the end of each session to observe and set results based on the learners' oral production. For the previous test a rubric will be created based on the expected performance in A1 level of proficiency suggested by Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés. To assess motivation a checklist will be used based on the observations made by the participant observer. The checklist will include aspects referred to participation, behavior, receptiveness and questions elicited by the learners.

Taken into account the important role that students will take in this project, they will have the opportunity to assess the implementation and the overall performance of the sessions. In order to do it, they will be given a didactic checklist referring to how they felt during the class. Their responses could be an important reference to make changes or to apply some of the practices in our future English classes.

#### **9.4.4 Reflection**

The reflection stage is based on professional growth, students' responses and learners' linguistic outcomes. To reflect on the practitioner's professional growth, the objectives proposed on the professional development and the observations made at the end of the sessions will serve as a guide to this phase. To reflect about the students' responses the practitioners will rely on the final observations and the tests provided from the assessment stage to students. The observation reports take a big role in this activity since the performance of the students can only be observable during the time they spent in the classroom.

The reflection for the learners linguistic outcomes will use as main source of information the tests proposed on the assessment stage. These tests, voice recordings and rubrics will set the main results and will provide the backgrounds to make a strong reflection on this last aspect.

#### **9.4.5 Resources**

To carry out the sessions of the project, the atmosphere of a classroom will be needed with the aspects and facilities considered necessary and basic in a public school like a whiteboard, a teacher's desk and chairs for each student. The nature of the project requires electronic devices like a laptop or any other device that result comfortable to use and can reproduce audio easily like a tablet or even a cellphone. Good quality speakers will be also needed for the sound projection aside from any device that can record sounds that will be used to collect students' voices. As a complement for the learning aims and classroom activities the use

of worksheets, textbooks and other materials will be used for students to practice the content of learning. The practitioners will also need some materials like markers, rubrics and a notebook or agenda to write the observations made in the sessions.

## **10. Results**

### **10.1 Professional growth**

During the implementation of the project, it was important to highlight the results in terms of professional growth obtained throughout the sessions. According to the teaching objectives, the project aims to foster strategies to improve accuracy among students of primary levels. Some of the strategies used set negative results that affected learners' accuracy and other aspects such as discipline and motivation.

A clear example of a negative result was the use of a movie that decreased the interest of students and, therefore, was very challenging to rise up motivation after being exposed to the movie. Other material that created discontent among students, mainly boys, was a song from a current movie that was performed by a female character. Some children expressed boredom and rejection towards the song manifesting that it was a song for girls.

Based on these results, another type of material was used thinking on genre inclusion, students' likes, and active involvement to keep students motivation. The material used in this case was a song about following commands which includes the participation of boys and girls by turns. This song was used for all the implementation due to its success to keep students engaged and its fair inclusion of genre.

### 10.1.1 Strengths

During the implementation of the technique, a remarkable strength was the amount of available material that can be used with the technique, from songs to movies in authentic English, a considerable variety of material was appropriate to implement shadowing with young learners. When the first material was introduced to the children, most of them recognize the song “Let it go” and the song’s chorus which is the most repeated verse. As the song was presented along with the video and the lyrics, the children tried to follow them imitating the sounds of the words that they heard without being asked to do it. It proved that the technique would be one that they could follow with ease. The rhythm of the song has a repetitive chorus that is somehow “catchy” and at the time of presenting the song with the audio, most of the children already knew the chorus and started to sing along. The lyrics of the song were printed for each student to read them and follow matching the intonation and rhythm of the material used as the technique suggests. The technique was used in this time at the beginning of the class as an engagement activity and was linked with the topic of the class by teaching the children some adjectives found on the lyrics of the song like: good, funny, small, right, wrong.

The material was highly engaging due to the fact that it was from a very current movie that most of the children recognized along with the character that performs the song. This material was used during three sessions and two girls mentioned that they had studied the song at home. However, this material set some difficulties in terms of likes that led to change it for a movie more appealing for boys.

The movie implemented aimed to catch boys' and girls' attention equally and was an accurate material to present new vocabulary and expressions. This movie was also known by students because they also knew the characters and the topic of the film. As it included some aspects of fiction, warriors and martial arts, boys felt comfortable with it and girls also showed interest. The material resulted very useful to teach vocabulary like adjectives and professions; a fragment of five minutes of the movie was presented to implement the technique accompanied with the script of the characters that was composed by seven lines of dialogue. Each student had its own piece of script to follow it while listening to the audio of the movie that was performed by two characters. The movie chosen in this case was the animated movie "Kung Fu Panda" taking into account children's likes and language level. The movie was implemented to introduce expressions like *sorry*, *let's go*, *get up* and *you're late for work, school, etc.* This fragment of movie also gave the opportunity to introduce vocabulary found on the script such as *noodles*, *dream*, *noise* and *crazy*. Nevertheless, when the students realized that it was not possible to watch the whole movie their interest decreased quickly.

Trying to look for another type of material that could be fair in terms of likes, the song "If You're a Kid (dance around)" was used to continue with the implementation of the technique. The interesting aspects of this material were the easy way that children got involved with it, the use of commands that allows to use TPR and the repetitive rhythm that, in some way, helped students to memorize and produce accurate English sounds.

Another remarkable strength was the creativity that we developed during the implementation of the technique. Since it was applied with young children, most of the material

used had to be engaging, didactic, and colorful; moreover, the majority of the material had to be modified in order to be understandable for their level and ages. For example, we conducted a session of following instructions where they had to make a panda bookmark following the instructions given by the teacher practitioner as shown in appendix 1. According to the reflections made, this particular activity enlightened us about the activities they enjoy and the materials that call their attention. Keeping them occupied with purposeful manual arts was a good motivation for the practitioners to keep implementing these kind of tasks; it was evidenced that learners were engaged and tried to do their best during the session. Although the activity was completely conducted in L2, the children did not ask for translation given the fact that the practitioner made it very visual.

The last piece of material used regarding selection of materials, was a song called “If You’re a Kid” that implements instructions for children to perform. As made with the previous materials, the students were given copies of the lyrics of the song for them to follow. Once the students showed interest on this material, the song was used at different stages of the class since it was flexible enough to be used as an engagement activity or to adapt it for a study or activate activity. The vocabulary from the song was articulated with the class by teaching some body parts such as *hands, feet, head* and *belly* and teaching commands composed by a verb and a body part or another noun as follows: *clap your hands, stomp your feet, tap your head, rub your belly, raise the roof, jump rope, fly a spaceship, and go swimming.*

From these strengths we could learnt that authentic material helps develop teachers’ creativity because it needs to be carefully chosen, adapted and implemented with young children. We also



learnt that if you limit your classes with the same materials, students will lose interest on the sessions fastly.

### **10.1.2 Challenges**

During the implementation of shadowing technique the challenges faced were related to the learners' likes and classroom management mainly. The material used for the implemented sessions was selected taking into account the possible likes of the students and the most current materials in terms of movies, cartoons, and other audio-visual contents. However, some difficulties arose since it was not possible to cover all students' interests with the first material because it was more appealing for girls than for boys; this aspect was affecting the interest and behavior of some children while implementing the technique.

The second material used presented difficulties in terms of language. The script used to apply the technique was presented in a dialogue format; it means that the children had to listen two characters talking and to follow the script at the same speed and with the same intonation (see appendix 2). According to the reflections, the task resulted to be very challenging for their level of language which resulted in lose interest on the movie and the activity planned to practice the technique. From this challenge, we learnt to select material that is appealing for both gender and appropriate to the language proficiency of the population. Despite the fact Kung-Fu Panda was an appropriate movie for their ages and likes, the language was complicated for them to follow.

In terms of classroom management, we used happy and sad faces to control their behavior. They would receive a happy face for good behavior and participation, and they would receive sad faces for misbehavior and lack of participation. For instance, along the sessions we noticed that they tend to feel frustrated when they were given sad faces as a punishment and incremented their anxiety and disruptive behavior. On the other hand, it was shown that their attitude towards happy faces was positive which improved their behavior. We considered classroom management as a major challenge given the fact that the behavior control (happy/sad faces) only worked during the first part of the practicum, and for the rest of it, we had to figure out how to maintain control without using sad faces by keeping quiet until they noticed that they were interrupting teacher's instructions. We also counted loudly until ten giving them time to finish their chatting and other activities that were not related with the class, the last student standing should perform a penance imposed by their classmates. From this, we conclude that positive reinforcement (as proposed by Skinner) worked better than punishments in order to control discipline. Although it is relatively easy to find authentic input to implement shadowing, it is important to be aware of the students' preferences and likes and choose material appropriate for their previous knowledge and oral and listening abilities.

## **10.2 Students' responses**

On this stage we are going to present the students' attitudes towards the implementation of the technique. The students' ages and intrinsic motivation were established as strengths, while discipline and attention span were considered challenges.

### 10.2.1 Strengths

During the implementation of the project we found out two characteristics that helped us to conduct the technique successfully; those strengths were related to the students' ages and motivation.

Because of learners' early age, they were more receptive towards the learning of a second language, they demonstrated to be outgoing, enthusiastic, and risk takers. We considered this as a strength because the technique needed a lot of participation from them, if we had had an older group with attitudes like judgment, embarrassment, and shyness maybe the process could have been different in terms of time, application, and learners' responses. An aspect that supports their early age as a strength, was when we asked for volunteers for a specific task that included performance in front of the class. For these type of activities, most of them volunteered, showing that they are more likely to be free from prejudices and enjoy to participate on the tasks proposed by their teachers. Taking into account this strength, we learnt that young learners tend to be more open and optimistic about learning experiences.

In terms of intrinsic motivation, we noticed that they were curious about the new teacher practitioners and the new English classes, to reinforce this aspect, we also tried to motivate them extrinsically with the topics and materials presented. This was a strength because we did not have to force them to participate or do their duties. In the same way, this motivation helped us to develop the technique appropriately since it required positive attitude towards the tasks. The learners also showed interest in the class if they saw their classmates engaged on the tasks

proposed by the teacher; for example, they worked on the worksheets coloring them autonomously looking for teacher's approval. They had a positive response towards most of the material used during the implementation of the technique and during the sessions. From this, we could learn that they did not need highly elaborated material to get engaged with the activities planned for the classes. We can say that this happened due to their high intrinsic motivation and their willingness to do things.

### **10.2.2 Challenges**

The most salient challenges faced regarding students' responses were the class discipline and the students' attention span.

We considered the first challenge mentioned a big issue during the practicum because it affected the normal development, implementation, and pacing of the sessions since keeping all the students engaged at the same time in the same task was difficult. For instance, one of the most problematic discipline issues was the amount of noise in the classroom since they tended to be very active and enthusiastic as we mentioned before. We found that this aspect is sometimes difficult to control because at their ages they tend to express their emotions loudly resulting in a matter of discipline and misbehavior.

Another aspect to be remarked as a challenge was their short attention span. We consider this a challenge because they tend to reject what they did not find interesting or useful. It was evidenced that they lost their attention if they had to listen to the teacher while doing nothing, the purposeless tasks made them concentrate on another ones that they found more purposeful or

entertaining like chatting with their classmates, eating, drawing or playing. From this challenges we learnt that some stirring activities can end up being a discipline issue, so we must take those activities carefully, especially when working with young learners. We also learnt that children need activities that make sense and have a purpose for them since they feel more engaged when they find the tasks and the language useful to achieve something.

### **10.3 Linguistic outcomes**

On this session the language outcomes will be exposed by presenting the strengths: acquisition of the most repeated words and the L2 listening receptiveness, and for challenges we found silent period and a tendency to translate into Spanish. These were the language outcomes noticed during the practicum and the implementation of shadowing technique.

#### **10.3.1 Strengths**

As the most outstanding strength during the practicum, we noticed the acquisition of the repeated words and L2 listening receptiveness.

One of the most important results regarding language outcomes, was the acquisition of the most repeated words found in the song “If you’re a kid” as we can see on appendix 3. When students were asked about what they remember from the song, the majority of them answered “Boy”, “Girl”, “Dance around”, “Belly”, “Clap”, and “Stop!”. An important aspect of this strength is that, somehow, the technique achieved its goal given the fact that learners did not say the words using Spanish like sounds, but they tried to imitate the English sounds for each word

and phrase. For example, instead of saying /gɪrl/ they did their best to say /gɜ:rl/, the same happened with the previous words mentioned. In order to have an evidence of the children's achievements, they were asked if they remember something from the song; the questions were conducted in Spanish since they did not have enough background to understand a question in L2. The questions were asked by the teacher practitioner without previous notice in order to get natural answers and reduce the anxiety that tests provokes. The following is transcription of the recording of the children's voices.

Teacher: Hola niños!

Learner 1: Hola Teacher.

Teacher: ¿Que recuerdan ustedes de la canción que hemos estudiado? (What do you remember about the song we have been practiced?)

Learner 1: Boy, a boy, a boy-singing- y aplaudir, y esto( the learner starts to stomp their feet)

Teacher: ¡Ah! Stomp your feet

Learner 1: si (yes)

To a group of girls:

Teacher: Hello girls! ¿Ustedes que recuerdan de la canción "If You're a kid"? (What do you remember about the song "If you're a kid"?)

Girl 1: emmm boy[bɔɪ]... If you're a boy[bɔɪ], a boy[bɔɪ]

Girl 2 (interrupts): Belly['bɛli], head[hɛd].

Girl 3(interrupts). Tap your head[hɛd]!, rub your belly ['bɛli],clap your hands[klæp jʊər hændz], touch your belly[tʌf jʊər 'bɛli], swimming ['swɪmɪŋ]

This transcription is from the questions made to another group of girls.

Teacher: Hi girls! ¿Qué recuerdan ustedes de la canción que hemos practicado? (What do you remember about the song we have been practiced?)

Girl 1: Si! (yes!) eh...

Girl 1 and Girl 2 singing along: if you're a boy, a boy, if you're a boy clap your hands! [ɪf jʊə ə bɔɪ, ə bɔɪ, ɪf jʊə ə bɔɪ klæp jʊə hændz]

Teacher: ¿Qué más recuerdan? (What else do you remember?)

Girl 1 and Girl 2 singing along: If you're a girl, a girl, if you're a girl... [ɪf jʊə ə ɡɜːl, ə ɡɜːl, ɪf jʊə ə ɡɜːl]

Girl 1: stomp your feet [stɒm jʊə fɪt]. The [p] phoneme in the word stomp [stamp] is not pronounced.

Teacher: Very good, thank you!

This transcription is from questions made to a group of boys.

Teacher: ¿Qué recuerdan ustedes de la canción que hemos practicado?

Boy 1: Stop [stɒp]

Teacher: What else? ¿Qué más recuerdas?

Boy 2: if you're a boy, a boy, if you're a boy clap your hands! [ɪf jʊə ə bɔɪ, ə bɔɪ, ɪf jʊə ə bɔɪ klæp jʊə hændz]

Boy 3: Swimming ['swɪmɪŋ], stomp your head [stɒm jʊə hɛd]

Teacher: Stomp your feet [stɒm jʊə fɪt]

Boy 3: nods his head in agreement.

Teacher: Very good, ¿Algo mas?

Boy 2: Belly ['bɛli]

Teacher: Rub your belly?

Boy: Si (yes)

Teacher: ¿recuerdan algo más? ( do you remember something else?)

Boy 2: emmm... no, no recuerdo más palabras (ermmm... no, I don't remember more words)

This result gave us a light about how children learn words and phrases in L2 through repetition and constant exposure. We can also say that girls seemed to remember more words and pronounce slightly better than boys did.

The second strength observed during the implementation was the L2 listening receptiveness that the children developed. This aspect was considered a strength because the technique requires a lot of listening input and the practice improved it along the sessions. For instance, as long as the classes were implemented they needed less instruction and repetition in L2 to understand commands and words related to the song. The same happened with listening tasks implemented during classroom activities and tests. From this result we can conclude that learners at this age are capable of carrying out listening activities as long as the language used in the task is the appropriate for their level of proficiency and the instructions are clearly given. We also learnt that repetition and constant exposure to L2 is key on the learning of new words and English sounds, as stated by Tamai who mentions that the technique can help improve learners listening proficiency.



### 10.3.2 Challenges

During the implementation of the technique the most salient challenges were children's silent period and their tendency to translate into L1.

During the first sessions a tendency to remain silent was noticed on students. We conclude that they preferred to keep in silence because they were recognizing the new teachers and understanding their new methodologies to teach English. As all the lessons were conducted in L2, they were getting used to it while teachers tried to seek for participation and answers from them, maybe they did not fully understand what was being said and needed time to learn and recognize our expectations and instructions. For example, in the very first lesson, it was difficult to develop the presentation activity since any child wanted to volunteer, so we had to go to the attendance list to call them and make them talk. From this, we learnt that students need time to get familiar with a new language, at least, during the first sessions, so it is important to help their motivation with remarkable material.

The second challenge noticed during the majority of the sessions was their tendency to translate from L2 into L1 the vocabulary and commands that their classmates did not understand. It is important to clarify that only few students used to translate out loud when their noticed that their partners did not understand what the teacher said. Besides, the ones that did not understand very well the instructions, asked for help to their classmates rather than the teacher. We considered this a big challenge because translation did not help to develop effort to learn new vocabulary and made them lazy because they preferred to wait for the translation of their

partners. For instance, when in the lyrics of the song appeared the word “roof” that was very new for them, the students that already knew it started to scream “techo”. From this challenge, we could learn that the children can influence on the language learning of their own partners. They might be thinking that this practice was helpful for their classmates, but actually, they were affecting negatively their learning process and the development of the class. as mentioned by Cunningham,(2000) some of the cons of translating into L1 are to develop a dependency to it, the risk of not developing L2 thinking skills, an inefficient reading ability and the interference of speech errors.

## 11. Conclusions

The conclusions of this project will be made taking into account the teaching and learning objectives and will be explained on this session. One of the most important achievements was the selection of appropriate and engaging material that could promote oral activities in young learners. This project can guide English teachers to implement authentic material for their classes with young learners as well as using shadowing to raise awareness of spoken English sounds. It can also support other projects that have similar aspects or aims to go in depth with the exploration of the technique.

Taking into account the teaching objectives, it can be concluded that the fostering of teaching strategies to raise awareness of spoken English sounds was achieved. It was evidenced on the students' voices transcription in which they imitate the content words according to the original pronunciation heard in the song. During the sessions and especially the implementation of the technique the learners showed interest on the tasks and activities related to it as well as a production of English sounds closer to the original one. In relation to the implementation of shadowing technique to help develop accuracy in young learners, it was proved the efficiency it had with the target population of the project. The first time that the technique was applied, the children started to sing along because they already knew the song "let it go", that response gave us an insight that shadowing would not be that difficult for them as long as it was implemented and adapted according to their environment and likes. As supported with the investigation made by Zakeri in 2004, the shadowing technique influenced positively on the learners' speaking skills and showed that the constant exposure to the foreign language accelerates the learning process.

Although most of the studies conducted with shadowing had been made with college students, this time was made with a younger population that presented different challenges in terms of likes and classroom management.

From the previous aspects, this project can also set a light on the materials that are more appropriate for young learners and the treatment that must be given to misbehavior issues. In terms of the selection of appropriate and engaging material that promoted oral activities in young learners, it is necessary to mention that certain difficulties related to students likes were faced for the accomplishment of this objective. For example, when the transcription of “kung-fu panda” was used for them to shadow, the children lost interest on it since their level of English was lower than the one needed for this activity. Although all of them started to follow and sing “let it go” the first time it was applied, the boys complained because they did not feel identified with the characters of the movie and we had to change the material for one more appealing for both genres. However, those challenges helped us to learn more about students’ preferences and helped us to strengthen our professional profiles.

As a result, it can be considered that all of the teaching objectives were accomplished, overcoming difficult situations in one of them, but providing positive results that support the helpfulness of the technique applied to young learners.

Based on the learning objectives, many satisfactory outcomes were observed among the students. Those outcomes help to support the positive influence of the technique, not only in older population, but also in young learners. As a starting point, the project aimed to engage and

help learners to copy L2 sounds after being exposed to authentic input. This objective was accomplished since a variety of authentic material was presented to the students having negative and positive responses from them that helped us to select the appropriate and more appealing input in order to develop engagement. After being engaged, the children started to repeat the sounds of the words they could hear and were easy for them to catch and copy. The accomplishment of this objective was evidenced after exposing the children to the song “If you’re a boy”, in which the children showed a high involvement and approval towards it. In order to accomplish the next objective that establishes that learners will be able to associate sounds and meaning, different strategies were used for them to understand what they were saying, always avoiding translation. One of the strategies used was TPR, in which the learners used body movements to articulate with the words for example, if the song said “Go swimming” they moved their arms as if they were actually swimming, a task that resulted very useful for us to teach meaning and very fun for students to learn it.

The last learning objective states that learners will be able to duplicate spoken words articulating appropriately the sounds of the target language. It is worth mentioning that not all of the children could manage to duplicate and articulate the L2 sounds, but it also was very significant to see how many of them, especially girls, were able to do it. Although all of them were exposed to the same input at the same time, the results show how the girls were more aware of the sounds and could articulate more words than boys did. However, we consider that the objective was accomplished since it did not mention a specific gender or number of students achieving the goal to consider it valid.

In general terms, we can conclude that the learning objectives stated the capacity that young learners have to carry out classroom activities related to oral skills.

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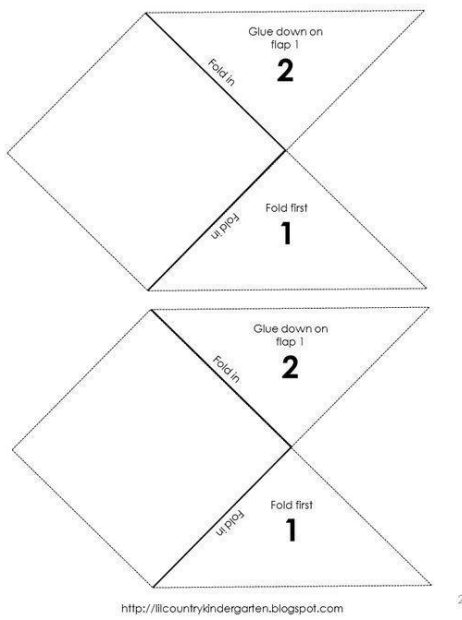


### 13. Appendices

#### 13.1. Appendix 1

#### 13.2. Appendix 2

#### Page Corner Bookmark Template



*Kung-fu panda. Dialogue.*

**Mr. Ping:** Po! Get up! – Po. What are you doing up there?

**Po:** Uh... nothing.

**\*Monkey! Mantis! Crane! Viper! Tigress! Rooaaaaa...**

**Mr Ping:** Po! Let's go! You're late for work.

**Po:** Coming. Sorry, Dad.

**Mr. Ping:** Sorry doesn't make the noodles. What were you doing up there? All that noise.

**Po:** Oh. Nothing. Just had a crazy dream.

**13.3. Appendix 3**

<p>Boys and girls this song is about following directions so listen closely and see if you can follow the directions that I give, and get ready because later on we're gonna dance.</p> <p>If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy clap your hands.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl stomp your feet.          If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy tap your head.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl rub your belly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHORUS</b></p> <p><b>If you're a kid dance around</b>  <b>Dance, dance around</b>  <b>And stop!</b></p> <p>If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy raise the roof.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl jump rope.          If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy fly a spaceship.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl go swimming.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHORUS</b></p> <p><b>If you're a kid dance around</b>  <b>Dance, dance around</b>  <b>And stop!</b></p> <p>If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy become a snake.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl become a frog.          If you're a boy, a boy          If you're a boy snap your fingers.          If you're a girl, a girl          If you're a girl run in place.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHORUS</b></p> <p><b>If you're a kid dance around</b>  <b>Dance, dance around</b>  <b>And stop!</b></p>
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