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## **FACULTAD REGIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARIA, FAREM Estelí**

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#### **Título**

How can students develop listening and speaking skills through strategies like shadowing and gestures?

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## **I. Introduction**

This research is the result of the need to develop listening and speaking as fundamental skills for young English language learners. This necessity has become clear because of the implementation of the new project to teach English in elementary school. Considering that first-grade students find themselves learning the rudiments of reading and writing in their first language, Spanish, we wanted to test our shadowing and gestures as techniques to help children to develop listening and speaking skills due to their characteristics.

We conducted this research at school, Sotero Rodriguez in Estelí. We observed how students could improve their listening and speaking skills through the strategies shadowing and gestures. We verified the implementation of these techniques through observation..

Shadowing [is] a paced, parrot-style auditory tracking task, conducted with headphones. Rather than a passive activity, shadowing is an active and highly cognitive activity in which learners track listened to verbal speech and vocalize it while simultaneously listening (Hamada, 2018). And Gestures are conscious movements which describe a richer meaning than what can be given by speech alone” (Patroli, 2013).

Some advantages that shadowing offers to help students are that children took part in the activities with motivation and enthusiasm. It strengthened the vocabulary, and they learned it easier, shadowing allowed the teacher to correct when the student mispronounced a word and the students increased their confidence at the moment that they spoke.

By using gestures children understood vocabulary better by doing physical activities, it facilitated the comprehension of a new vocabulary, teachers replaced words with gestures instead of speaking Spanish, and they got funny when they did it.

The desire to help our students motivated us, since we are working as English teachers in primary education. From our perspective as teachers, we can say that our research is of great importance for teaching English language, because in first grade English is thought

communicatively, in which the use of different strategies, such as shadowing and gestures are fundamental.

Children do not comprehend abstract ideas such as grammar since we cannot teach grammar rulers or use writing or reading techniques with first-grade students, we have to depend on the imitation and listening in the same way that we all learn the mother tongue.

However, teachers are neither trained to teach children nor help them learn another language. The methods and techniques we use in our context, particularly in Nicaragua, are those to teach adults and the ways to work with children are still unknown by many, or we are just beginning to explore them, for example, in Nicaragua, there is not yet a university with a specialty for teacher training in what we know as Teaching English to young learners.

Given the characteristics and advantages of shadowing and gestures, we wanted to test, to what extent these techniques can help children to learn; taking into account listening and speaking skills as the best option for teaching the new language.

For the purpose of this research we posed the question: What advantages do shadowing and gestures offer teachers help their students to develop listening and speaking skills?

## **II. Literature review**

Total Physical Response (TPR) method, because of some characteristics of shadowing and gestures. Total Physical Response or TPR is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor). (Richard, 2010). Gestures are related to the Total Physical Response Approach because it is performed through different dynamics and commands and the technique of which “consists of giving commands to students and having them act out what the teacher says (Terrel, 1998). In addition, we should implement gestures to develop speaking skills in a creative and innovative way that motivates children to learn this language every day.

According to Cameron (2010), Vygotsky theory underpins the notion that development and learning take place in a social context in a world full of other people who interact with the child from birth onwards. The relevance of interaction with other people has inspired us to use shadowing and gestures, since these allow students to interact with each other and the teacher becomes the student's main helper, despite having the opportunity to learn from his classmates.

Yo Hamada (2018) “shadowing was originally used for training interpreters. It is in the current decade that shadowing has captured language instructors’ attention and been incorporated into teaching a foreign language” Shadowing has become an effective technique for learning a new language.

For Patroli (2013) “gestures are conscious movements which describe a richer meaning than what can be given by speech alone” (p.1). Even when teachers may use gestures rather than words, from the position of students their brain represents those movements. In teaching a second or foreign language, it is known that the use of verbal and nonverbal communication can help teachers to transfer the message to the students. But for the purpose of this research, we will focus this work on one of the main elements of nonverbal communication, gestures.

### **III. Materials and methods.**

The population of our study was an English teacher and thirty-two students. The sample was five students, selected by convenience.

For this study, we used two qualitative instruments for data collection. The selected instruments were: an observation guide and interviews.

We used observations and interviews to students and teachers of Sotero Rodriguez School with the purpose of observing the advantages that shadowing and gestures offer teachers to help their students.

## **IV. Analysis and discussion.**

This chapter describes the results of our investigation, and it also provides information about discussion and finding.

The advantages of the strategies were measured by observing students' performance and interviews. As well, we interviewed five students and all of them answered that they liked English class, and they also mentioned that they would like to learn to speak English.

Regarding the interview with the teacher, she answered that she had heard about shadowing, therefore she used it in all the classes. Using shadowing by the teacher provides some direction to keep the child focused.

We could contrast this with observations, in which we could see that the teacher uses gestures and shadowing in different activities, like songs, games, tracks, audios, flashcards, and the students were integrated happily and learning by doing.

Using shadowing and gestures by the teacher provide some directions to keep the child focused and also help the students to interact with each other. At the same time they learned as a team, as scaffolding theory refers, that developing and learning take place in a social context, in a world full of other people who interact with the child.

Through the observation we could see that students enjoyed the class at all, using gestures and shadowing. Using gestures is of great significance for our research since TPR-method assert that children learn given commands and haven them act out what the teacher says.

Having observed the integration of the students in the use of shadowing and gestures, we can deduce that both strategies are of great help to the students. These strategies can be used in any school, whether public, private, urban or rural; since it does not require any expense by the teachers and can only be applied with the material that MINED provides and the creative attitude of the teacher.

They are also strategies in which all the students can be included regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

## V. Final words

The importance of this research resides because, as it refers to the use of shadowing and gestures in primary education; this being a pilot project implemented by MINED, in which teachers have needed developing new strategies for teaching a new language.

This research paper also provides new terms such as "Shadowing"; since many teachers practice it empirically, without having previous knowledge of that word.

In this research process, we learned different concepts and theories related to our daily work and also the importance of applying them in the classroom.

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