THE USE OF SHADOWING TO TEACH ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Shadowing is a technique in which language learners repeat aural stimuli in a foreign language without a delay. Even though this approach has been used extensively in interpreter training programmes and language classes in Japan, it is still relatively unknown in the West. This technique has proven to be particularly beneficial in terms of pronunciation development: it was reported to lead to the improvement of articulation speed, word accent, pitch accent, intonation, comprehensibility, and imitation skills. In this study, the main focus was directed towards the acquisition of English pronunciation via shadowing by 29 Mexican learners in an online environment. The learners carried out two tasks (reading aloud and shadowing a fable by Aesop) at the beginning and at the end of a pronunciation course, following the pretest-posttest experimental design. This investigation may be particularly valuable since it was conducted in an exclusively virtual environment and combines the latest trends of information and communications technology and applied linguistics. In spite of the fact that the study is still in progress, the preliminary analyses of the audios and of the learners' questionnaires suggest that shadowing appears to be highly valuable in terms of comprehensibility development as it facilitates the acquisition of such prosodic features as sentence stress, rhythm, and intonation. Accentuatedness showed less improvement in most English learners for various reasons. Regarding the learners' attitude towards shadowing, the results of the final questionnaire indicate that this technique positively affects learners' motivation. The preliminary findings obtained in this investigation are reported in light of the past-to-present literature in the sphere of shadowing, Troubetzkoy's phonological sieve theory and the current models of language acquisition: Long's sensitive periods theory and Flege's Speech Learning Model.

Keywords: Teaching English as a foreign language, pronunciation, shadowing, technology, online teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is probably one of the most challenging and fascinating aspects in the field of Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL henceforth). Nonetheless, it has often been relegated to the periphery of English teaching. Some of the reasons behind this phenomenon are the following: the predominance of the focus in English classes on solely some aspects of language command (e.g. grammar or vocabulary), a general lack of time for pronunciation activities, the marginal importance of pronunciation in some teaching approaches (e.g. the communicative approach or the grammar-translation method) and an insufficient preparation of English teachers, who might not feel comfortable working on this skill.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to different alternative approaches to pronunciation teaching,

whose aim is to remedy this situation. Shadowing has been one of the most cited approaches in this respect. Firstly, one needs to define this term. According to Kadota (2019, p.1) shadowing is a technique “wherein learners track the heard speech and repeat it back verbally in as exact a manner as possible while continuing to listen attentively to incoming messages”. In other words, the learner has to imitate the incoming stimulus without processing the semantic message it contains. For example, if the learner hears the following utterance: “I’d like to speak to Jane... and, uhm, to him”. The learner must repeat the same exact words (including pauses and the speaker’s mannerisms) **without a delay**: “I’d like to speak to Jane and, uhm, him”. It needs to be said that this technique has often been employed to train simultaneous interpreters in order to help them get used to speaking and listening simultaneously in a foreign language. At the same time, shadowing has also been used in Japan and other countries as a technique to improve L2 learning in general, and there were reported some noteworthy findings regarding listening comprehension and speaking fluency (see Hamada, 2016; and Kadota, 2019; for further details). As far as pronunciation acquisition is concerned, major improvement has been identified in various areas: it was observed that shadowing helps learners achieve greater comprehensibility and improves their imitation skills (Hamada, 2016), enhances their articulation speed (Mori, 2011), leads to better intonation (Mori, 2011; and Hayashi & Kitamura, 2015, as cited in Hamada, 2019), improves overall comprehensibility and imitation skills (Hamada, 2016), and, finally, aids learners with word accent and pitch accent (Rongna and Hayashi, 2012).

These studies on the benefits of this technique suggest that shadowing can indeed aid learners of English as a foreign language (EFL henceforth) in pronunciation development. Nevertheless, it is still relatively unknown in the West and in Latin America, which means that more studies on the benefits of this technique in other cultures and educational contexts are urgently needed.

In addition, it must be noted that most of the aforementioned studies were carried out in a traditional classroom setting. However, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, traditional, “brick-and-mortar” classes came to a halt in certain parts of the world. As far as the National Autonomous University of Mexico is concerned, most of its classes were conducted online since March 2019 up to this very day. This enabled a great number of academics and educators begin to appreciate the existing Information and Communication Technology (ICT henceforth) and search for new and creative ways of employing them for the sake of providing their students with better-quality classes. The main contribution of the current research to the overall debate on shadowing lies in the fact that it was performed exclusively online and enables one to better understand the principal benefits of its use in this particular environment. Furthermore, it was performed in Mexico, a Latin American country, which means that the findings obtained here might be juxtaposed with those published in other countries. It may help one better understand whether shadowing works universally and is equally beneficial across borders or if some adjustments must be made due to cultural differences.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Action Research

The current study was performed within the framework of action research. There is a great number of definitions of this term. Nonetheless, the one offered by Ann Burns in her book *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners* will be employed here. According to this author, action research “is related to the ideas of ‘reflective practice’ and ‘the teacher as researcher’”. AR [action research] involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts”. To put it differently, any teacher can introduce research practice to their classroom by taking a more self-reflective view of their teaching. In order to do so, one must first detect a problem related to their own field of teaching, then they need to explore it by familiarising themselves with the past-to-present literature and the latest trends in the field in hand. Afterwards, the teacher intervenes in class to address the issue detected earlier in a new way and collects the necessary data. Finally, the teacher-researcher must share the new findings with their colleagues and other people interested in the problem by publishing the results in a relevant periodical and/or by presenting them at an academic conference (Wallace, 1998).

Concerning my own professional context, it must be said that when I started teaching online, I realised that pronunciation is incredibly hard to teach in this environment. One must transfer all their knowledge and skills to an unknown setting, which may affect the entire teaching-learning process in new and unpredictable ways. Since the interaction between the students and the teacher is affected by the medium of communication, one might feel that online pronunciation teaching may be very different from real-life interaction. For this reason, it is paramount to continue searching for alternative ways of teaching this skill that would better adjust to the new circumstances in the world education. This can be done by exploring different ICT and strategies, which

could be employed to improve EFL students' pronunciation both in traditional and online classes.

2.2. Shadowing

Let us now look at the term shadowing. There are numerous ways of defining it. In general terms, as it was stated earlier, shadowing consists in repeating an aural stimulus as precisely as possible without a delay, and it has showed some promising results in terms of foreign language teaching in Japan and other countries (see *Introduction* and *Previous studies on the use of shadowing* for further detail).

At the same time, it is crucial to understand how this technique works. As Kadota (2019) indicates, a language learner usually has to perform complicated mental operations before producing speech. They can be better understood by studying the L2 speech production model (based on Kormos's model, as reported in Kadota, 2019). It contains three stages: Conceptualisation, Formulation, and Articulation (see Figure 1). The Conceptualisation stage is a step in which the learner tries to comprehend their position regarding the subject in question and what they would like to say regarding it. In the Formulation stage, the speaker selects the words, phrases, and grammar they need to express the message. In the last stage, the message is encoded using the phonetic and the phonological representation of the language. Shadowing appears to be particularly beneficial in the last two stages of this chain, for they tend to be perceived as mostly subconscious and automatic, and shadowing seems to be especially effective in this kind of mental tasks (Kadota, 2019).

Figure 1. Simplified L2 production model. Kadota (2019, p. 105).

2.3. Theories of L2 acquisition

Turning to the theoretical frameworks of the current study, several theories of L2 acquisition were used. Firstly, let us turn our attention to the theory of the “phonological sieve” developed by Troubetzkoy (1939). Following this theory, learners of foreign languages tend to categorise the new phonemes of a foreign language according to the phonological system of their L1. Consequently, a Mexican learner of English, whose L1 does not contain, for example, the distinction between /i:/ and /ɪ/, will categorise these phonemes as /i/ in his newly acquired phonological system due to the phonological sieve acquired in their L1.

Interestingly enough, Flege's Speech Learning model lends additional support to Troubetzkoy's reflections. Flege also states that the more similar the phonemes of the L2 and the L1, the more likely they are to be assimilated under the same category. For example, such phonemes as /æ/ and /a/ are highly likely to be assimilated as one phoneme by a Hispanic learner of English (see Figure 2). Nonetheless, he also adds that new phonological categories can be developed through life, even though this process may become more problematic for adult learners.

Figure 2. Acquisition of the English vowel system by a Hispanic learner. Flege (2005, p. 91).

Similarly, Long (2014) notes that adult L2 learners seem to be affected by the so-called sensitive periods. According to his findings, a language learner with an onset of acquisition between 0 and 6 is likely to acquire native-like pronunciation, one with an onset of acquisition between 6 and 12 is decreasingly likely to do so, and it would be impossible for one with an onset of acquisition later than 12 to acquire native-like pronunciation.

To summarise, considering the three theories mentioned earlier, an adult Mexican EFL learner (their profile is explained in Section 3.1.) will have to create new phonological categories in his or her vowel space and change their usual phonological patterns to meet the requirements of the new phonological system. Nonetheless, it will be very difficult to do so for at least some of the learners due to various maturational constraints.

2.4. Previous Studies on the Use of Shadowing

Let us now turn our focus to the past-to-present literature on the use of shadowing to teach pronunciation. As it has been mentioned before, this technique has been employed in the field of L2 language acquisition and language teaching since the 1990s. The findings have mostly been positive and point to the general usefulness of this technique. The most noteworthy studies will be offered below.

In her research, Mori (2011) examined the acquisition of English prosody by Japanese EFL learners. Twenty learners took part in ten shadowing-based training sessions. A pre-test and a post-test were performed within the framework of the study. The principal focus was turned to prosody acquisition. Regarding the main findings of this research, it was observed that the learners' pronunciation of the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables improved due to the changes in the duration, the pitch and the intensity of each syllable. Moreover, it was reported that the learners also performed better in terms of intonation and final lengthening¹

In their turn, Rongna and Hayashi (2012) investigated the speech production of 15 learners of Japanese. The latter had to shadow a new dialogue ten times without seeing the script in every session. All in all, there were three weekly sessions over the course of seven weeks. As far as the main findings of this research are concerned, all the learners improved in their pronunciation of word accent and speech rate.

Regarding the study conducted by Hayashi & Kitamura (as reported in Kadoto, 2019), they worked with 8 learners of Japanese as a foreign language who had to read various sentences before and after shadowing sessions. The learners' pronunciation was reported to have improved in numerous ways: according to the native speaker assessors engaged for the study, the learners started to sound more natural due a more natural realisation of the lexical accent in Japanese.

Footnote and McDonough (2017) analysed the effect of shadowing on learners of English who were pursuing their studies in Canada. The learners had to use their iPods to shadow short dialogues over the course of 8 weeks (4 sessions per week). Overall, two tasks were performed at the beginning and the end of the course. Concerning the results obtained in the study, all the participants improved their comprehensibility, fluency and imitation skills, but not accentedness.

¹ Learners began to consistently lengthen the nucleus and the coda of a syllable immediately before major syntactic boundaries (Mori, 2011).

Finally, Hamada (2018) studied the difference between haptic-shadowing² and IPA-shadowing³ in a group of 58 university Japanese learners of English. They were divided in two equal groups for the purposes of the investigation (to compare the two approaches to shadowing). Each group was offered 15 lessons. At the end of the study, the students improved their comprehensibility and the pronunciation of segmental and suprasegmental features. Furthermore, the learners were reported to perceive very positively both approaches to shadowing.

Summarising the data presented above, one may arrive at the conclusion that shadowing appears to be a highly promising pronunciation technique. Additionally, as it was shown in the study by Foote & McDonough (2017), it may be easily combined with the latest ICT and offer educators new and creative ways of teaching pronunciation.

2.5. Research Questions and Predictions

Based on the studies and the framework offered in the previous sections, it was decided to focus on the following questions:

1. Will shadowing lead to the improvement of the Mexican learners' pronunciation in terms of *comprehensibility*?⁴
2. Will shadowing lead to the improvement of the Mexican learners' pronunciation in terms of *accentedness*?⁵
3. Will this technique be perceived positively by Mexican learners of English?

Considering the findings given in 2.4., one might expect Mexican learners of English to benefit from shadowing and show at least some improvement (not necessarily statistically significant one) in terms of comprehensibility and accentedness.

3. METHODS

3.1. Participants

Regarding the current study, 29 Mexican students in Applied Linguistics enrolled on the course entitled *The phonetic and phonological dimension of L2 (English)*. This course took place within the framework of the Bachelor's programme in Applied Linguistics of the National School for Languages, Linguistics and Translation (ENALLT in Spanish) of National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM in Spanish). The main objective of the course was to improve the students' pronunciation and provide them with the theoretical understanding of the English phonology. It must be noted that the students' English level was approximately B1+ according to the Common European Framework for Languages (350-400 hours of study), following the results of the entrance exam they had presented before entering the programme. Furthermore, the course took place exclusively online due to the epidemiological situation in Mexico and the measures taken by the university authorities.

Let us now turn our attention the general structure of the course. The following topic were covered in it: the international, regional, and national dialects of English; the International Phonetic Alphabet; vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs; consonants; word stress; sentence (utterance) stress; connected speech. All the topics, except the first two, combined both theory and pronunciation practice. The flipped classroom approach (see Santiago & Bergmann, 2018; for further details) was used in every class: the learners were asked to watch several short videos where the teacher explained the topic in hand and to write a comment in Google Classroom with their reaction to the video. Afterwards, the topic was revised in class using an interactive quiz, and practical exercises were completed. In order to carry out the practical tasks, the students were asked to work in small groups and shadow various texts related to the topic covered in class. To illustrate, if the professor taught the theory on the aspirated plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/ in English, the students had to shadow the audios related to these sounds in small groups in class and give each other feedback and encouragement. In general, the learners completed 24 shadowing tasks in a 14-week course (28 hours of study). The instructions for every shadowing task were as follows: "Read the text, listen to the

² Movement-based shadowing.

³ Shadowing combined with the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

⁴ Comprehensibility can be defined as the easiness with which one can understand someone's speech (Foote and McDonough, 2017).

⁵ Accentedness can be defined as the measure of the difference between the phonology of the language learner and that of an expert rater (Foote and McDonough, 2017).

audio several times, read the text while imitating the speaker as closely as possible, listen to the audio (without the text) while imitating the speaker as closely as possible and record yourself whenever you feel ready to do so". Therefore, the only practical exercises offered to the students in this course were shadowing-based activities.

As far as the students' profile is concerned, all the participants signed voluntarily the informed consent sheet via Google Forms and were eager to take part in the research. Their ages ranged between 17 and 26 years (with $\bar{x}=20.2$ and $s=2.4$). Regarding the students' gender identity, 42.9% described themselves as male, 53.6% as female, and one person preferred not to reveal their gender. All the participants were born in Mexico and raised in Spanish-speaking households. Most of them began learning English either at the primary-school or secondary-school level. Concerning their overall command of English, they assessed it rather positively, using a Likert scale (1-basic command of the language, 6-native speaker of the language): $\bar{x}=4.3$ and $s=0.5$. Approximately 69% of the students had studied another language at some point of their lives (e.g. French, Latin, Japanese, Korean, and German). Only one person had resided in an English-speaking country before the beginning of the study⁶.

In order to make the general findings of this research more consistent, it was concluded that its scope must be limited only to the students who handed in at least 85% of all the shadowing tasks (at least 20 tasks). Solely 25 out of 29 students managed to overcome this threshold. As a consequence, only these students' productions were analysed in the later stages of this project.

3.2. Materials

Most of the audios were shadowed in small groups in class, but the students' productions were recorded afterwards at home using either a mobile phone or a PC with a microphone. It must be said that most PC users utilised the voice recording online service Vocaroo or the free software Audacity, while the mobile-phone users preferred to employ voice note apps. Regarding student interaction, throughout the entire course, the learners actively listened to each other's audios and provided each other with feedback in Google Classroom. At the same time, the teacher and his teaching assistant also listened to the audios and gave feedback to the group as a whole via Telegram. As far as the audios used for shadowing are concerned, they either contained speakers of BBC English (18 audios) or speakers of Standard American Newscaster English (6 audios) (see Roach, 2009; and Ladefoged, 1999, for more details). Most of the audios used for shadowing were extracted from *Ship or Sheep?* by Ann Baker (2006) or *Whaddaya say?: Guided practice in relaxed speech* by Weinstein (2001).

3.3. Tasks

To assess the general improvement of the students' pronunciation, the pretest-posttest experimental design was employed. The students were asked complete two tasks at the beginning of the course and at the end. Firstly, they had to read the fable *The Shepherd's boy* and shadow the fable *the Travellers and the Purse* (both were written by Aesop). The audio for the shadowing task was extracted from the digital library LibriVox (Librivox, n.d.). It should be noted that the audio used was in the public domain, and it was recorded by a native speaker of Standard American Newscaster English. These materials were chosen to assess the students' performance they were already familiar to most students and the language used was accessible to the learners.

3.4. Data Collection

As explained earlier, the students recorded themselves using a mobile phone or a PC with a microphone. They used the same ICT in the case of the pre-test and the-post test too (see the previous section). Unfortunately, not all of the audios were of the expected quality. For this reason, the audios needed to be enhanced manually by the author of the study by making use of various effects in Audacity: for instance, some audios required a combination of noise reduction, normalisation or amplification procedures. Next, 20 seconds was extracted from each audio (from the beginning, middle or the end of the audio), saved as a separate file and uploaded to the online distribution platform Soundcloud. Afterwards, the links to the audios were posted in a Google Form, where Likert scale survey questions were used to measure the comprehensibility and the accentedness of the audio. Subsequently, the audios were randomly mixed with the distractors taken from other fables read by LibriVox volunteers. In general, 50 audios (one audio by each learner for the reading and the shadowing task) were mixed with 50 distractors in the first task. Afterwards, 50 audios obtained at the end of the course were mixed with 50 distractors in another Google Form (second

⁶ Since this learner's production did not differ from that of other participants, it was decided to keep her in the study.

task). It should be noted that the same extracts were employed in the case of all the students. Thus, if Student A read: "This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest..." in the first task, the same extract would be utilised at the second stage of the experiment. These tasks will be assessed by expert raters (experienced English teachers with excellent command of English) in the second half of 2022. The differences between the initial and the final score will be compared using Student's t-test in order to see if statistical significance has been reached.

4. PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questions 1 and 2

Will shadowing lead to the improvement of the Mexican learners' pronunciation in terms of comprehensibility?

Will shadowing lead to the improvement of the Mexican learners' pronunciation in terms of accentedness?

Unfortunately, the first two questions of the current research can hardly be answered at this time since this part of the project is still at the pilot stage of its development. Nevertheless, some preliminary observations may be provided by the author of this article, who contrasted short clips from the audios produced at the beginning and the end of the course by personally analysing them. Without a shadow of doubt, this technique is far less precise than the one offered in the previous section, but it may give at least some clue regarding the general development of the learners and the future assessment of their audios by the raters. To perform the aural analysis of the audios, the author of the article divided them into two categories: noticeable improvement and no noticeable improvement. In general, 72% of the learners showed noticeable improvement in comprehensibility and 44% in accentedness in the reading task. Regarding the shadowing task, 64% of the learners showed noticeable improvement in comprehensibility and 48% in accentedness. Interestingly enough, these findings coincide with those offered in Question 3, where the learners had to assess their own progress in the course. As far as the main improvement is concerned, most students showed remarkable progress in their rhythm, sentence (utterance) stress and intonation in general. Their speech sounded far more natural and native-like after the course. Concerning accentedness, the change was less prominent. It may be so for several reasons: firstly, the accent is extremely hard to change in adult learners in general due to maturational constraints; secondly, the accent is usually associated with one's identity, and one may be unwilling to change it; thirdly, some of the learners already had a native-like accent, which means that there could be very little improvement possible in this respect. However, those students who did modify their accent because of the course tended to show certain features of BBC English: e.g. the lack of rhoticity at the end of a syllable or the lack of t-flopping in the intervocalic position. This may be partly explained by the prevalence of the audios made by speakers of BBC English. In addition, it was also the variety employed by the teacher who taught the course (author of the article). These two factors may have influenced the accent change of these learners.

Regarding the results themselves, they confirm the findings of the studies mentioned in Section 2.4. Even though one cannot make any inferences with regard to the scale of improvement at this stage of research, it appears that most students have benefited from this course in terms of comprehensibility. These results lend support to the research made by Mori (2011), Hamada (2016), and Rongna and Hayashi (2012). These also seem to be in line with Foote & McDonough (2017) who reported that all factors except for accentedness had significantly improved in their learners' pronunciation.

Even though one must admit that the form of assessment offered in this article is quite limited and can hardly replace one conducted by expert raters, it may still be useful with regards to the overall understanding of the student improvement.

According to the theoretical framework selected for this work, in order to improve their pronunciation, an adult EFL learner needs to overcome various maturational constraints. Even though the effect of these constraints is undeniable, shadowing may lead to a major improvement in terms of comprehensibility by enhancing learners' sentence (utterance) stress, intonation patterns and rhythm. In other words, prosody appears to be the main beneficiary of the usage of this technique. For this reason, were one to explain these findings in light of Flege's (1995 and 2005) and Troubetzkoy's (1939) theories, they may conclude that shadowing can lead to the gradual creation of new prosodic patterns by replacing the ones stored in the L1. Nonetheless, this process is definitely hindered by the maturational constraints, which means that it is extremely difficult for some learners to acquire new pronunciation patterns. This could partly explain why shadowing does not necessarily lead to changes in terms of accentedness.

Therefore, returning to Question 1 and 2, one would have to say there was improvement in terms of comprehensibility, while an improvement in terms of accentedness was quite limited.

Question 3. Will this technique be perceived positively by Mexican learners of English?

As far as the overall perception of the shadowing is concerned, 25 students (those who successfully completed at least 85% of the shadowing tasks) completed a questionnaire in Spanish with Likert-scale questions at the end of the course, where 1 meant *I completely disagree with the statement* and 5 stood for *I completely agree with the statement*. The following results were obtained the questionnaire (Table 1).

Questionnaire statement	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard deviation (s)
1. My pronunciation has improved a lot.	4.3	0.6
2. I liked the shadowing technique.	4.8	0.5
3. Shadowing helped me understand the course theory.	4.8	0.4

Table 1. Perception of shadowing by EFL learners.

4. My accent has changed because of this course.	4.0	0.8
5. My pronunciation has become more natural.	4.3	0.9
6. I enjoyed the texts used for shadowing.	4.8	0.5
7. I would recommend this technique to my classmates.	4.9	0.3
8. I will continue working on my pronunciation using this technique.	4.9	0.3

In addition, some open questions were used so that the learners could express themselves freely regarding their experience with shadowing. Their comments were categorised according to the topic touched upon in their answer. The following observations were made: out of 25 students, 8 learners noted that they very much enjoyed shadowing; 6 students noted that they found it very practical and useful; 8 stated that it was extremely easy to record oneself; 9 students felt that their pronunciation had really improved because of this technique.

As it can be seen, the overall feedback has been extremely positive. Most students believe that shadowing *can* and *did* improve their pronunciation. Interestingly enough, this technique received the highest score in terms of the attitude towards it (see Questions 1, 6, and 7). One might conclude that shadowing may be extremely useful regarding the motivational aspect of pronunciation teaching. These findings appear to be in line with the study by Hamada (2008) who found that EFL learners equally enjoy different approaches to shadowing, and the general feedback from the learners was overwhelmingly positive.

Furthermore, as some students noted, this technique is extremely easy to implement both in traditional and online classes. One can begin practising shadowing by making use of either a mobile phone or a personal computer. For this reason, it offers a high number of advantages over more complex techniques and approaches. This is of crucial importance, considering the current epidemiological and educational context in the world.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Unfortunately, since this research is still in progress, one cannot fully answer the first two questions. However, according to the preliminary aural analysis carried out by the author of this paper, there appears to be a noticeable improvement in terms of comprehensibility owing to major changes in the learners' prosodic features. Nonetheless, the improvement was less substantial in the case of accent acquisition due to the reasons given in Section 4.

At the same time, shadowing was reported to be extremely positively perceived by Mexican EFL learners, particularly in terms of its effects on the students' motivation. It might indicate that this technique might be particularly beneficial with regards to students' motivation in an EFL class. Additionally, the learners noted that it was very practical and easy to use in an online setting.

Regarding the limitations of the study, it must be noted that owing to the general design of the current research, no control group was used, which means that there was no random group assignment. Therefore, the study had a quasi-experimental design, which may limit the scope and the replicability of some of the findings presented earlier. Furthermore, this research is still in progress, and a more robust analysis of the comprehensibility and the accentedness of the audios will be conducted in 2022 with the aid of expert raters. At the same time, one must recognise that this research was merely an exploratory study on the effects of shadowing. Nonetheless, it presents some valuable ideas regarding its use in an online environment. In addition, it is one of the first studies of the use of shadowing on Hispanic EFL learners.

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