

THE DISCOVERY OF SHADOWING: THE TECHNIQUE FOR DEVELOPING GERMAN SPEAKING SKILLS DURING AND AFTER THE COVID

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Abstract:

The present paper provides a comprehensive account of a practical illustration conducted within the challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic, from February to May 2021. This initiative was undertaken within the framework of the foreign language courses, namely German for Tourism II of the Tourism Degree, and German II of the Tourism Recreation Degree, hosted by the School of Tourism and Maritime Technology of the Polytechnic of Leiria - Portugal. The approach adopted in this project involved the utilisation of imitation and shadowing techniques, through the utilisation of diverse tourist promotional videos encompassing accommodation, transport, and gastronomy. This was not merely a linguistic exercise but a multifaceted approach to language learning that integrated technology, cultural exposure, and student engagement. The chosen strategy of imitation and shadowing, coupled with the selection of diverse tourist promotional videos, served as a dynamic platform to immerse students not only in the linguistic complexity but also in the cultural nuances inherent in the German tourism domain.

The primary objective of this initiative was to enhance and cultivate oral proficiency in the German language, focusing on aspects such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, fluency, and expressiveness. Achieving this goal was facilitated through the meticulous examination and individual editing of German promotional videos, exploiting a set of information and communication technology (ICT) tools and applications. The utilisation of these tools and applications played a pivotal role in enhancing the students' technological literacy. Through the process of individually editing promotional videos, students were not only refining their language skills but also developing proficiency in multimedia editing and content creation. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriched their language capabilities but also equipped them with practical, real-world skills that are increasingly valuable in today's digital landscape.

In addition to the emphasis on linguistic development, major importance was placed on assessing the students' perspectives regarding the execution of this activity, covering their perceptions of the learning process and the outcomes achieved. The findings collected from this inquiry reveal a noteworthy enhancement in students' competence, as evidenced by their adeptness in navigating novel video and sound applications, ultimately leading to substantial advancements in oral communication and speaking skills. The acquisition of skills beyond language proficiency aligns with the broader educational goals of preparing students for a technologically evolving and globally connected world.

Moreover, the exploration of students' opinions and feedback regarding the activity provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of this innovative pedagogical approach. Understanding the students' perspectives on the learning process, challenges faced, and the perceived outcomes adds a layer of qualitative assessment to the study. In essence, this initiative goes beyond the traditional boundaries of language education, enclosing a holistic and dynamic approach that not only complements linguistic skills but also fosters technological literacy, cultural awareness, and practical competencies, thereby enriching the overall educational experience for the students involved.

Keywords: *Tourism; Foreign Languages (FL); Speaking Skills; Shadowing; Information and Communication*

