



**BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA**

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**FACULTAD DE LENGUAS**

**LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

**Using readers theater as a technique to improve LEI students'  
pronunciation**

**A thesis submitted to the faculty of languages for the degree of**

**LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

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**Puebla, Pue.**

**March 2019**

**USING READERS THEATER AS A TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE LEI STUDENTS'**  
**PRONUNCIATION**

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for the degree of**

**LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

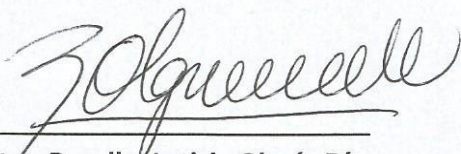
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**Puebla, Puebla.**

**Marzo, 2019**

## DEDICATIONS

FIRST OF ALL, TO GOD, WHO GAVE ME THE WISDOM, THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE CAPACITY TO CONCLUDE SUCCESSFULLY MY CAREER.

TO MY MOTHER GEORGINA ROJAS WHO SUPPORTED ME AT ALL TIMES, FOR HER PIECES OF ADVICE, HER VALUES, FOR THE CONSTANT MOTIVATION THAT HAS ALLOWED ME TO BE A GOOD PERSON WITH DREAMS AND THE MOST IMPORTANT, HER LOVE.

TO MY FATHER EVARISTO HUERTA WHO GAVE MY EXAMPLES OF PERSEVERANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY THAT CHARACTERIZE HIM AND HE ALWAYS TAUGHT ME, FOR HIS COURAGE SHOWN AND HIS LOVE.

TO MY BROTHER VICTOR ENRIQUE HUERTA WHO GAVE ME TWO IMPORTANT REASONS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, MY LOVELY NEPHEW VICTOR ISAAC AND MY BEAUTIFUL NIECE DANNA VICTORIA.

TO MY FRIENDS LOLITA, JORGE AND CINTHIA, WHO ALWAYS TRUSTED ME, FOR THEIR UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT AND GAVE ME THE BEST PIECES OF ADVICE.

TO MY GRANDPARENTS, WHO ARE MY BEST STARS AND I KNOW THEY ARE PROUD OF ME.

TO MY FRIEND IVONNE ROJAS, WHO HELPED ME TO ACCOMPLISH THIS IMPORTANT PROCESS AND FOR GIVING ME EXCELLENT MOMENTS WITH HER FRIENDSHIP.

TO MY TEACHER LEONEL OJEDA, WHO GAVE ME HIS SUPPORT AND MOTIVATION FOR THE CULMINATION OF THIS PROJECT, FOR HIS TIME AND FOR PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

SANDY.

## DEDICATIONS

DEAR GOD, YOU GAVE ME THE PATIENCE, THE KNOWLEDGE TO GUIDE ME IN A CORRECT WAY, AND THE MOST IMPORTANT, THE LIFE TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

TO MY GREAT PARENTS ERICA MORALES Y RAFAEL ROJAS, MY SUPERHEROES WHO ENCOURAGED, SUPPORTED, TRUSTED, AND DEDICATED TIME TO FORM MY LIFE AND EDUCATION, FOR ALL THE WORK THAT THEY DID TO GIVE ME THE RESOURCES TO STUDY.

TO MY SIBLINGS KAREN Y ROBERTO WHO TRUSTED ME TO ACHIEVE THIS IMPORTANT SUCCESS.

TO MY LOVELY BOYFRIEND ARMANDO WHO TOOK MY HAND AND WALKED WITH ME IN ALL THE STEPS TO DO THIS A REALITY.

TO MY DEAR FRIEND SANDRA HUERTA WHO SUPPORTED ME, TRUSTED AND MADE ME LAUGH IN THE STRESSFUL MOMENTS.

ALSO, FOR MY TWO ANGELS THAT ARE EXTREMELY PROUD AND HAPPY BECAUSE OF ME, MY BEAUTIFUL AUNT GISELA AND MY GRANDFATHER ALEJANDRO, WHO REALLY SUPPORTED ME WHEN THEY WERE WITH ME.

TO THE BEST TEACHER LEONEL OJEDA WHO GUIDED US, ENCOURAGED US TO NEVER GIVE UP.

IVONNE.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEART TO ALL PEOPLE WHO ENCOURAGED US TO DO THIS POSSIBLE. FIRST OF ALL, TO THE MOST IMPORTANT, GOD WHO GAVE US THE ENERGY, KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE.

TO OUR BEAUTIFUL PARENTS WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE, WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE WORDS, TIME, ECONOMIC SACRIFICES AND SUPPORT. WE LOVE THEM AND THEY WILL BE ONE OF OUR PRIORITIES FOR OUR WHOLE LIFE.

TO THE TEACHER LEONEL OJEDA RUIZ, A GREAT PERSON, WHO ENCOURAGED US, SUPPORTED US AND DEDICATED TIME TO MAKE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE. GOD BLESS YOU DEAR TEACHER.

TEACHERS JUAN ALBERTO AMADOR CRUZ AND ROSALBA LETICIA OLGUÍN DÍAZ, WHO GAVE US THE TIME TO READ AND ANALYZE TO IMPROVE THIS PROJECT, AND FOR GIVING US THE BEST PIECES OF ADVICE TO MAKE POSSIBLE OUR PROJECT.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Dedications</b>	- 1 -
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	- 1 -ii
<b>Table of Contents</b>	iv
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Introduction to the problem	1
1.2 Aims of the study	2
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Justification	3
1.5 Significance of the study	4
1.6 Key terms	4
<b>CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Introduction to the chapter	6
2.2 Importance of pronunciation in learning EFL	6
2.3 Defining pronunciation	7
2.3.1 Teacher's pronunciation role	8
2.3.2 Student's pronunciation role	10
2.4 Factors that affect pronunciation learning	10
2.4.1 The native language	10
2.4.2 The age factor	11
2.4.3 Amount of exposure	12
2.4.4 Motivation	12
2.4.5 Attitude and identity	13
2.4.6 Phonetic ability	14
2.5 Approaches in teaching pronunciation	15
2.6 Techniques in teaching pronunciation	16

2.6.1 Readers Theater	16
2.6.2 Using Readers Theater in EFL classes	18
2.6.3 Advantages of Readers Theater	18
2.7 Conclusion	19

### **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Introduction to the chapter	20
3.2 Participants	20
3.3 Instruments	20
3.4 Materials	21
3.5 Research desing	21
3.6 Data collection procedure	22
3.7 Data analysis procedure	23
3.8 Conclusions	23

### **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 Reseacrh Questions	24
4.3 Findings from Reader Theater activity	25
4.4 Findings from the questionnaire	25
4.5 Conclusion	34

### **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Introduction to the chapter	35
5.2 Summary of the study	35
5.3 Limitations	36
5.4 Suggestions for future research	36
5.5 Implications	37
5.6 Conclusions	37

References	38
Appendix A	41
Appendix B	43

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction to the problem**

Pronunciation is the way to produce the sound of a word that involves stress and correct intonation and it is an essential component in the process of learning English inside and outside the classroom (Dalton & Seidholfer, 1994). Dale and Poms (1985) point out that there are many students that are afraid to use some words because they are not sure of the correct pronunciation. Because of this, Spanish learners of English have further problems at the time to learn pronunciation because there are a lot of phonetic symbols that they do not have in their language and also its foreign accent, so it causes confusion, misunderstandings in communication and requires more effort to understand. The importance of sounds for effective communication means that foreign language teachers need to emphasize pronunciation teaching in their classes (Hariri, 2012). On the other hand, the use of techniques plays an important role to teach pronunciation, because if they are used in an inappropriate way, the students may feel shy and they have lack of motivation to participate.

Westphal (2007)) claims that “a technique is an individual instructional activity as it occurs in the classroom... the main techniques used are drilling, minimal pairs, listening activities, reading activities, role plays, peer mentoring and tongue twisters, but they only practice the pronunciation in 45%”. Kelly (2000) argues that there are two key sides to pronunciation teaching: the teaching of productive skills on the one hand and the teaching of receptive skills on the other. This is the case of Readers’ Theater, which at the beginning was designed for native speakers of English. It is a classroom technique that incorporates 3 skills such as reading, listening and speaking. It builds students’ confidence and gives them

motivation to participate. Students only read a script, they do not memorize lines, using some facial expression and gestures. This kind of technique can be used in an easy way in the classroom, it is easy to create and provides important background knowledge that helps students to understand vocabulary. In EFL classes students look like nervous with the activities as role plays or explain a topic in front of the class. They are afraid to pronounce a word incorrectly and their peers may laugh at them, they do not want to participate having as a consequence poor pronunciation. The lack of knowledge is a factor that affects the participation in class because sometimes students do not have enough vocabulary, or they do not have the experience to produce correct English sounds. Most language teachers implement the typical techniques, mentioned above, and the role of pronunciation in EFL classes seems to be insufficient. Thus, using other alternatives is suitable to help students in this learning process. This is basically the reason why this thesis project is aimed at using Readers Theater as a technique to improve LEI students' pronunciation.

## **1.2 Aims of the Study**

This study is focused on the area of Phonetics and Pronunciation. This research has two aims: the first one is to apply Readers Theater as a technique in Target Language 2 in the Language Faculty at BUAP, in order to see its impact on students' pronunciation. The second is to analyze the effectiveness of Readers Theater in the EFL classes, according to the participants' perceptions.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The following are the questions which guided this research:

1. What are the students' opinions about the use of Readers Theater as a technique to improve their pronunciation?
2. According to the participants, what are the advantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2?
3. According to the participants, what are the disadvantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2?

#### **1.4 Justification**

Many students in the faculty of languages seem to have problems with pronunciation. This may be the result of different factors that have caused this situation. It seems to be that students may not pay sufficient attention to the area of pronunciation; for this reason, they lack confidence to speak and they have very few opportunities to practice. Using the correct techniques in EFL classes is a convenient way of improving not students' pronunciation but also to learn grammar and vocabulary. According to the authors' experience, students in the last semester of the BA program or even graduated students do not have a good pronunciation because of the lack of practice in English or they do not have the confidence to speak in front of others.

Due to this situation, this project is focused on helping Target Language students to improve their pronunciation with Readers Theater. Readers Theater is a reading strategy used for improving pronunciation and it is also a way to connect literature in the classroom and increase vocabulary, as well as help students feel more confident in their pronunciation. Little or no research has been conducted by using this kind of technique; for this reason, it would be useful to explore deeper the application of Readers Theater and the impact it has on students' development of pronunciation. This paragraph has a different format.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

As a result of researching this topic, it is expected that the use of Readers Theater is helpful to students and their pronunciation improves in a satisfactory way, where students feel comfortable at the time of speaking and recognize the advantages that Readers Theater brings to improve pronunciation in order to increase the knowledge and vocabulary. In addition, teachers may find the Readers Theater as a strategy to be useful in improving pronunciation and to have a better progress in their EFL classes.

## 1.6 Key Terms

**Readers Theater:** It is a rehearsed group presentation of a script that is read aloud rather than memorized. No attempt is made to hide the scripts that the performers hold in folders or place lecterns in front of them. Lines are distributed among individuals, pairs, small groups, and the whole group. The emphasis is on spoken words and gestures, not on staged action or blocking (Flynn, 2004).

**Pronunciation:** It refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, and rhythm, how the voice is projected and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language (Fraser, 2001).

**Phonetics:** is the branch of linguistics that deals with the sounds of speech and their production, combination, description and representation by written symbols (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000).

**Phonology:** is the study of the properties of sound systems, the principles that govern the ways in which speakers of different languages organize speech sounds to express meanings. (Kreidler, 1997)

**Technique:** an individual instructional activity as it occurs in the classroom (Westphal, 1979)

**Fluency:** ability to read the words in a text with sufficient accuracy, automatic, and prosody to lead to good comprehension (Young & Rasinski, 2009)

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction to the chapter**

This chapter reviews the importance of pronunciation in a classroom, factors which affect pronunciation learning, the roles of the teacher and students, as well as approaches and techniques that help to improve students' pronunciation and increase their confidence at the time of speaking.

### **2.2 Importance of pronunciation in learning EFL**

Many students who are studying English do not pay attention to their pronunciation because they may think that grammar and vocabulary are more important than pronunciation. Nowadays pronunciation, inside and also outside of classroom, has increased its importance because it is the largest obstacle when students are trying to achieve fluency in a second language and some cases of misunderstandings are caused by the incorrect way to pronounce words.

Pronunciation has come to be recognized as an essential component in most EFL/ESL instructional programs. In addition, teachers should be aware of formal oral proficiency instruments that include an assessment of pronunciation skills in their overall proficiency profile. The way we speak immediately conveys something about ourselves to the people around us. Learners could have good grammar but if their pronunciation is difficult to understand they will have problems to communicate. People judge the incorrect way of pronunciation, so learners may be judged as incompetents or lacking in knowledge. (Morley, 1994).

Grammar and vocabulary are an essential part when students are learning English but useless if students are unable to pronounce words correctly, having as a consequence feel fearful at the time of speaking. Kelly (2000) states that “Western philologists and linguists have studied grammar and vocabulary much longer than pronunciation”. For this reason, grammar and vocabulary have been much understood by most language teachers than pronunciation.

### **2.3 Defining pronunciation**

According to Dalton and Seidlholfer (1994), pronunciation can be defined as “the production of significant sound in two senses. First, sound is significant because it is used as part of a code of a particular language. Second, sound is significant because it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use”. On the other hand, Fraser (1999) assumes that pronunciation is one of the most difficult areas for learners, as well as for teachers. In quest of effective teaching, it is worth diagnosing carefully the nature of the difficulties that they face.

There is a significant skill component for learners. Pronunciation is not just a cognitive 'knowing-that', it is also a physical 'knowing-how'. Learners need motivation and time to really practice pronunciation. It is very much worth spending class time discussing with learners their own ideas about what is involved in learning pronunciation. They are often surprised by the suggestion that they should practice speaking (Fraser, 2000). This skill component, however, is only that: a component. There is also a significant cognitive component in pronunciation learning, which is much less often acknowledged. Indeed we believe it is useful to think of learning to pronounce a new language as involving a kind of concept formation, about which there is a large literature in psychology and education,

rather than as a purely physical skill. Both teachers and learners themselves generally assume it is the latter, and can benefit greatly from a better understanding of the conceptual aspects of pronouncing a new language. For example, very often a sound that causes great difficulty to a learner is one that they can produce quite acceptably in a different context (Fraser, 1999).

Also, Fraser (2001) states that pronunciation refers to the production of sound that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to particular sounds of a language, aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, how the voice is projected and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language.

### **2.3.1 Teacher's pronunciation role**

Teachers play an important role in a classroom because they have a huge responsibility to help students to understand English sounds and create a harmonious environment. Also, they have the mission to find certain types of exercises or techniques that will be helpful to improve students' pronunciation. If the teacher can only exemplify pronunciation by his or her own speech performance, the learners are left to work out what is significant for themselves. Learners of a second language will not readily discern crucial phonological distinctions (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994).

The teachers must focus on two areas. According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992) "firstly, learners must be made aware of aspects of their pronunciation that result in other people being unable to understand them. Secondly, learners must be given the opportunity

to practise aspects of the English sound system which are crucial for their own improvement”

Kenworthy (1987) offers hints that a teacher needs to take into account in pronunciation learning process:

- *Helping learners hear*: one main purpose in teacher’s role is to help their learners to perceive sounds of which some are unknown in their native language. Teachers need to check that their learners are hearing sounds according to the appropriate categories and help them to develop new categories if necessary.
- *Helping learners make sounds*: this part is important because teachers will help students to imitate new sounds or give them a guide how to make the new sound.
- *Providing feedback*: in each activity it is appropriate that the teacher tells students how they are doing in a correct way in order to increase their confidence.
- *Pointing out what’s going out*: learners, at the time of speaking, do it unconsciously and they do not identify if the word is voiceless or voiced. Teachers need to make learners aware of the potential of sounds and how this can affect the message that is sent to the listener.
- *Establishing priorities*: learners need to be aware when their pronunciation is incorrect and teachers will help them in establishing activities to help them to correct it.
- *Devising activities*: teachers need to take into account the different learning styles that each student has and select the correct activities or exercises.

### **2.3.2 Student's pronunciation role**

Students in their process to improve their pronunciation need to make a great effort and take responsibility for their own learning without depending all the time on the teacher. They can build more confidence increasing their pronunciation skills.

The students' primary roles are not only to pay attention to what they are doing in the classes or to be active participants of the learning process but also they need to be able to observe their progress (Macháčková, 2012). In other words, all learners need to do is respond (Kenworthy, 1987).

### **2.4 Factors that affect pronunciation learning**

There are many factors that affect pronunciation learning, such as native language, age, amount of exposure, motivation, attitude and identity, phonetic ability, (Kenworthy, 1987). However, one important point is that students need to be aware of how these factors can affect in their process to learn English. These factors will be explained in the following sections.

#### **2.4.1 The native language**

The native language has been an important factor in the process of learning because it is part of personal, social and cultural identity of a person and influences acquisition of the foreign language (Kenworthy, 1987). Whether our students are from a homogeneous language group, we need to consider their native language in deciding on pronunciation priorities (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, M, D and Goodwin, M, J, 1996)

Because of the role that native language plays, there has been a great deal of research in which the sound systems of English and other languages are compared and the problems and difficulties of learners predicted. This applies not only to the individual sounds but also to combinations of sounds and features such as rhythm and intonation. To put it very crudely, the more differences there are, the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English (Kenworthy, 1987).

#### **2.4.2 The age factor**

We commonly assume that children can pronounce better a foreign language than adults. Scovel (1978) and Krashen (1983) claimed that along with the lateralization, or the assigning of certain functions to the different hemispheres of the brain is completed, which occurs as early as age 5, comes an increasing loss of brain plasticity, which renders an individual incapable of achieving nativelike pronunciation in a second language after puberty. Teachers need to redefine the goal of pronunciation class as comfortable intelligibility rather than accuracy (Scovel, 1978).

If adults are capable of acquiring a high degree of pronunciation accuracy in a second language but are more impeded in their acquisition of target language phonology by nonlinguistics factors than are children, then we need to build into courses for adults more fluency and confidence-building activities; we should also have our adult learners seriously examine their personal goals in the pronunciation class (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, M, D and Goodwin, M, J, 1996).

### **2.4.3 Amount of exposure**

Another important factor is the amount of exposure to English. We can think as a hypothesis, if a student has constant exposure to English, it could affect pronunciation skills, but if a student does not have it, there is a disadvantage about her or his opportunities to improve pronunciation skills. When in EFL students do not have the opportunity to get involve a native input in the target language, the teacher has a big responsibility in order to encourage them to use the language the most they can.

In EFL settings, especially those where students have little opportunity to surround themselves with native input in the target language, the burden will fall more on the teacher to provide an adequate model of the target language, and to ascertain that students have opportunities outside of class to experience samples of authentic oral discourse of native speakers; similarly, it will fall to teachers to encourage out-of-class conversational use of the target language. (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, M, D and Goodwin, M, J, 1996)

### **2.4.4 Motivation**

Motivation is a very important factor that affects pronunciation learning because it influences in the classroom atmosphere and some students are more concerned about how bad their pronunciation is and their frequent pauses that they make during speech. According to Brown (2001) there are motivational factors that make learners work on their pronunciation:

- Learners want to improve themselves
- Learners want to become a part of the target language community
- Learners need their speech to be intelligible to their children's teachers

- Learners want to improve their employment prospective
- Learners want to improve their everyday communication skills

There are two types of successful acculturation, the first type is a desire to be socially integrated in the target culture called “*integrative motivation*” (Schumann, 1978) and the second type implies a desire on the part of the learner to become an indistinguishable member of the target speech community, that is, “*assimilative motivation*” (Graham, 1984).

In addition, “*instrumental motivation*” in which an individual learns a second language to attain a certain goal, for instance a job promotion, does not contribute to successful acculturation (Schumann, 1978).

#### **2.4.5 Attitude and identity**

When a student is learning a foreign language, attitude and identity are two important factors to establish a suitable balance between his or her mother tongue and the target language, since they have an emotional and intellectual relationship with both languages. The identity of a person and the way they interact is a main key that language needs to have a better result about pronunciation; when people are getting more confidence, the accent helps to have an improved communication.

It has been claimed that factors such as a person’s sense of identity and feelings of group affiliation are strong determiners of the acquisition of accurate pronunciation of a foreign language. It is difficult to predict whether people will modify their accent or not, and, if they do, to what extent and in what ways. Some seem to be impervious and even after long time will absorb only some turns of phrase and the pronunciation of a few

individual words; others seem very receptive and begin to change their accent almost as soon as they step off the plane (Kenworthy, 1987).

According to Schumann's *acculturation model* (1986), it delineates the role that social and affective variables play in language acquisition in which there are two important factors:

1. This first factor is concerned with the language learning of a group of people, or sociocultural variables such as dominance patterns, size of the foreign language population, amount of congruence between the foreign and target language cultures.
2. The second factor is concerned with individual differences, or affective variables such as permeability, personality, type of motivation, degree of culture shock.

#### **2.4.6 Phonetic ability**

In 1989, Skehan noted that "phonetic ability is the language aptitude trait that relates least to one's general intelligence. This suggests that having an ear for language may be qualitatively different from other language aptitudes or traits"

According to Carroll (1973), Phonetic ability or Phonemic Coding ability is the capacity to discriminate and code foreign sounds so that they can be recalled. Some people are able to discriminate between two sounds better than others, and/or able to mimic sounds more accurately (Kenworthy, 1987).

Learners weak in phonetic ability would therefore have much more difficulty achieving a readily intelligible pronunciation than those with high aptitude in this domain (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, M, D and Goodwin, M, J, 1996)

## 2.5 Approaches in teaching pronunciation

According to Kelly (2000) in the field of modern language teaching two general approaches to teaching of pronunciation have been developed:

1. *An intuitive-imitative approach*, used before the 19th century, occasionally supplemented by the teacher's or textbooks writer's impressionistic (and often phonetically inaccurate) observations about sounds based on orthography. It depends on the learner's ability to listen to and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language without the intervention of any explicit information and presupposes the availability, validity, and reliability of good models to listen to.
2. *An analytic-linguistic approach*, on the other hand, utilizes information and tools such as a phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, charts of the vocal apparatus, contrastive information, and other aids to supplement listening, imitation, and production and explicitly informs the learner of and focuses attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. It was developed to complement rather than to replace the intuitive-imitative approach, which was typically retained as the practice phase used in tandem with the phonetic information.

On the other hand, Dalton and Seidholfer (1994) assume that there are two approaches aimed at pronunciation teaching:

1. *The bottom-up approach* with a focus on the smaller elements, such as phonemes first.
2. *The top-down approach* starting with attention to larger chunks of language.

## **2.6 Techniques in teaching pronunciation**

After that, it was known that pronunciation is an integral part of the teaching process, to know that two key sides to pronunciation teaching exist. On the one hand, the teaching of “*productive*” skills in which students need to carry that knowledge through into their production and on the other hand, the teaching of “*receptive*” skills where students need to learn to hear the difference between phonemes (Kenworthy, 1987).

Some examples of techniques that commonly teachers used are:

- Drilling: teacher says a word, structure or phrase to the group and the class has to repeat it.
- Minimal pairs: it is focused on sounds, which have been causing difficulties for students in the classroom.
- Listening activities: they are designed to sound as realistic as possible, with the participants talking at a normal speed and using natural language (Kenworthy, 1987)
- Reading activities: they are a receptive activity and students receive the language rather than produce it.

### **2.6.1 Readers Theater**

In teaching pronunciation, teachers must consider not just two skills, but three skills, such as listening, reading and speaking, known as “three Ps.” That is, in addition to training in “*perception*” (provided through attention to listening) and “*production*” (provided through attention to speaking), teachers must add “*prediction*” with attention to rules for judging how to pronounce words and sentences (Dickerson, 1984)

Readers Theater is a communicative classroom strategy that incorporates stories and other texts with oral Reading and drama (Shepard, 1997; Worthy and Prater, 2002). One technique that allows the use of these three skills is Readers Theater, since it builds students' confidence, it is easy for teachers to create and can be used in literature as well as nonfiction and content-based texts.

Readers Theater scripts include parts for characters and narrators. The narrators play a big part in telling the story, providing the necessary background information about the setting and action of the story. Presentations can take the form of students reading the script in an informal setting (Farley, 2009).

According to Flynn (2004), Readers Theater is a rehearsed group presentation of a script that is read aloud rather than memorized. No attempt is made to hide the scripts that the performers hold in folders or place on lecterns in front of them. Lines are distributed among individuals, pairs, small groups, and the whole group. The emphasis is on spoken words and gestures, not on staged action or blocking (the official theater term for stage movement).

The goal of Readers Theater is aimed at improving prosody and meaning. Six characteristics of reading with prosody are: correct pauses, length of phrases, appropriateness of phrases, final phrase lengthening, intonation changes and stress (Dowhower, 1991). In addition, it is an integrated approach for involving students in reading, writing and speaking activities. It involves students in the following activities: sharing literature, reading aloud, writing scripts, performing with a purpose and working collaboratively (Cornwell, 2012).

### **2.6.2 Using Readers Theater in EFL classes**

Readers Theater offers a useful opportunity to use English in EFL classroom. Teachers in EFL classes know how difficult it is to motivate their students to reread texts more than once. But in the case of Readers the students show active attitude and cooperate in a good way, at the same time they are practicing and improving their reading. Including this kind of technique in classroom is easy also for teachers to do.

According to Farley (2009), “in a mixed-proficiency class, beginning students can read words or simple phrases, lines that are repeated, or be part of a group or chorus. Higher level proficiency students can help to support their peers by partner-reading or even help to write scripts”

Kuhn & Stahl (2003) and Samuels (1979) assume that Readers Theater is a good ability to recognize more easily the meaning of a word and to read the text with appropriate rhythm, stress, intonation, and pause.

### **2.6.3 Advantages of Readers Theater**

Readers Theater as a technique in the classroom, has many benefits. According to O'Donnell and O'Kelly (1994), using Readers Theater in the classroom can:

- Foster a deeper understanding of character, setting, and plot through the reading, interpretation, and experience of dramatic performance.
- Create a deeper understanding of content and a sense of identity and personal validation by making students responsible for their own learning.
- Encourage better interpersonal interaction through the body, language, voice control, and empathy inherent in the group acting experience.

In Readers Theater, students receive a script which they are to read aloud; no memorization is necessary. This program allows them to realize reading success and truly understand the power and importance of reading in their lives. In addition, Readers Theater taps the multiple intelligences of a reader and allows for multiple ways of understanding (Gardner, 1993).

Students use intonation, facial expression, and gestures in order to express their character's emotions and actions rather than acting out the script in a traditional way Farley (2009). Motivation is a key result of Readers Theater. Students are excited about every component of Readers Theater, especially the performances. They realize that practicing by rereading is necessary for a successful performance. Students remain engaged and attentive during Readers Theater, whether they are speaking their parts or listening to their peers (Flynn 2004; Moran, 2006).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The use of Readers Theater in the EFL classes allows opportunities for students to use English in an appropriate way because students find it a meaningful, challenging, entertaining, and creative technique to increase their pronunciation. Students are excited especially in the performance, because they realize that practicing by rereading is more useful and easier to memorize a dialogue or script.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction to the chapter**

The goal of this chapter is to detail the procedure that this research used to investigate the effectiveness of using Readers Theater as a technique in English classes and if Readers Theater would have a positive impact on student pronunciation that incorporates three skills: reading, listening and speaking.

### **3.2 Participants**

A total of 24 students, 3 boys and 21 girls, in Target Language 2 subject at a public University in Puebla participated in this research during 2 weeks. Their ages were between 19- 23 years old at the time of the study. The Target Language 2 subject is one of the five Target Language subjects that these students have to accomplish and this subject is inside of the school program. Most of students have a pre-intermediate level of English. They received five classes of 30 minutes in order to introduce and use creative Readers' Theater scripts. The research was conducted during the spring 2015.

### **3.3 Instrument**

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire for students. Questionnaires encompass a variety of instruments in which the participant responds to written questions to elicit reactions, beliefs, and attitudes. In 1996, Millin claimed that “the researcher chooses or constructs a set of appropriate questions and checks the response. A questionnaire was constructed for the student’s opinions about Readers Theater as technique to improve their pronunciation. The questionnaire used in this research consisted of 5 questions with multiple choice and 3 open questions added in appendix A.

### **3.4 Materials**

Three kinds of scripts of different stories were implemented to perform the Readers Theater activities in classes (see Appendix B).

### **3.5 Research Design**

Qualitative research was used for this research to know participants' perceptions through their experience by working with Readers Theater. Qualitative research "values participants' perspectives on their worlds and seeks to discover these perspectives" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

According to Denzel and Lincoln (2005) "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them"

"The goal of a qualitative research is to capture the richness and complexity of behavior that occurs in natural settings from the participant's perspective. Once collected, the data are analyzed inductively to generate findings", according to Millin (1996).

The approaches used were Case Study, this kind of approach studies an activity or an event and uses multiple sources as observations, which provides insights to the researcher.

Analysing a case study requires you to practice applying your knowledge and your thinking skills to a real situation. To learn from a case study analysis you will be "analysing, applying knowledge, reasoning and drawing conclusions" (Kardos & Smith, 1979).

### **3.6 Data collection procedure**

The research took 5 sessions for 30 minutes. In session 1, the topic Readers Theater was introduced to students with some videos and a set of copies about the topic students were divided into teams to start working with the Readers Theater activity. The Readers Theater scripts were chosen on familiar stories. In session 2, the entire group read the scripts to understand better and check the correct pronunciation. In session 3 students made a draft performance about the scripts. In session 4 students performed their scripts in front of the group, some students were characterized. In session 5 they decide to present another performance in order to increase their skills. Finally, the questionnaire was piloted with 10 people getting a good acceptance. Then it was applied to the participants to know their opinions or perceptions about the Readers Theater in their classes, if this kind of technique helped them, how they felt and some advantages or disadvantages they could identify.

In the first session, students were a little confused about the topic and they had some doubts about activities. In the second session, students joined in teams and we gave them a story. After that, they had to divide the characters and look for some unknown words. In the third session, students read aloud their stories to check the pronunciation of each team. In the fourth and fifth session, students practiced their stories in front of the group to gain confidence in them and felt comfortable. In the last session, students did the last Readers activity in where they had to performance their stories.

### **3.7 Data analysis Procedure**

The information taken from the questionnaire was collected and analyzed. After that, the information obtained from the questionnaire was divided: the 5 multiple choice questions were analyzed and transferred in graphs to see the percentage of each one. The data gathered from the 3 open questions was analyzed and divided into 3 tables. One with similar answers and in another table the different answers of students' perceptions. This information will be further explained in the following chapter.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, it was presented our participants and the instruments that we used for carrying out the research methodology. In addition, it was described the procedure it was followed and the analysis that was made in order to obtain results for answering the research questions.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the results are presented and then discussed in order to answer the three research questions about Readers Theater as a technique to improve students' pronunciation. Firstly, the data from the Readers Theater activity was used with the participants for 2 weeks. Then, data from the questionnaire is divided in two parts. In the first section, the 5 multiple choice questions that respond the first research question are presented. In the second section, the 3 open questions that respond the second and third research questions are presented.

### **4.2 Research Questions**

The following research questions were asked:

1. What are the students' opinions about the use of Readers Theater as a technique to improve their pronunciation?
2. According to the participants, what are the advantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2?
3. According to the participants, what are the disadvantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2?

### **4.3 Findings from Readers Theater activity**

According to Bafile (2011) “Reader’s theater is a strategy that combines reading practice and performing. Its goal is to enhance students’ reading skills and confidence by having them practice reading with a purpose. Reader’s theater gives students a real reason to read aloud” (page 25).

Readers Theater activity was presented in 5 sessions of 30 minutes. The students were divided in teams to perform the Readers Theater activity. Readers Theater scripts chosen were based on familiar stories.

Finally, Reader Theater helped us to identify the most common pronunciation problems that students have in a classroom, as well as a lack of confidence by reading aloud to a group. On the other hand, we could see the changes that the students had through the activity, like better pronunciation in unknown words and they were not afraid to read aloud and act in front of their partners.

### **4.4 Findings from the questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this research consisted of 5 multiple choice questions and 3 open questions and their answers are represented in graphs for insight into the results. Firstly, the 5 multiple choice questions are presented and analyzed in graphs, where the percentage obtained from the results can be seen. The first question was:

Had you worked with Readers Theater in your classes?

- a) Always    b) Sometimes    c) Never

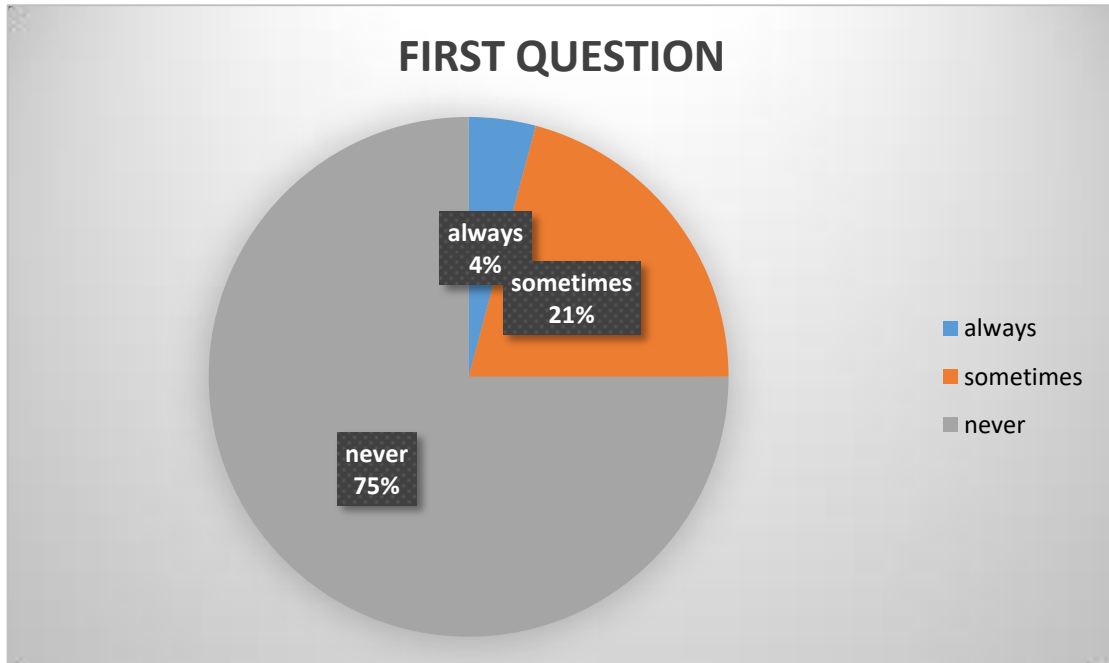


Figure 4.1 FIRST QUESTION

This first graph shows the percentage on using Readers Theater in a classroom. In the first place, it is notable that “never” has the highest percentage with 75%; it means that 18 students out of 24 chose this answer. This shows Readers Theater is a technique that many students do not know and it was the first time that they did this kind of activity. In the second place, the choice “sometimes” is located with 21%; this means that 5 students out of 24 have worked with Readers Theater. Finally, “always” is the choice with the lowest percentage with 4%, it means that only 1 student has always worked with this activity.

As it can be seen, Readers Theater is not well known, much less applied in the classroom, so students do not have previous knowledge of this activity.

The second question was:

Do you think Readers Theater is a useful technique to improve pronunciation?

- a) A lot          b) a little          c) nothing

This question is one of the most important because it responds the first research question previously asked: What are the students' opinions about the use of Readers Theater as a technique to improve their pronunciation?

#### Figure 4.2 SECOND QUESTION

This second graph shows now the percentage on how students felt that Readers Theater helped them to improve their pronunciation. In the first place, 10 students chose the answer “a little” that it is represented with a percentage of 42%. In the second place with a percentage of 58% is the answer “a lot”; that means 14 students. Finally, the answer

“nothing” obtained 0%, it means all students felt that Readers Theater helped them on their English pronunciation. The information provided in this figure seems to suggest that Readers Theater as a technique to improve LEI students’ pronunciation had a good impact on students according to students’ perceptions.

The third question was:

How do you rate this activity?

- a) Good      b) Fair      c) Poor

Figure 4.3 THIRD QUESTION

As in the previous graph coincidentally, this third graph shows the same percentages and it shows how students rated the Readers Theater activity. Firstly, the choice “poor” obtained 0%, it means that none of the students disagree with this activity. Then, 10 students rated the activity as “fair” represented with 42%. Finally, the choice “good”

obtained 58%, it means that 14 students rated Readers Theater as a good activity. Also, this graph suggests that although Readers Theater was an unknown activity, students responded with a good attitude and they liked it.

The fourth questions was:

Did you feel comfortable by not having to learn the scripts?

a) A lot      b) a little      c) nothing

#### Figure 4.4 FOURTH QUESTION

This fourth graph shows how students felt by not having to learn scripts and this question is important because students' reaction about the activity and if it had a positive impact in their process to improve their pronunciation. In the first place it shows the answer "a little" with the highest percentage of 58%. It means that 14 students chose that answer. In the second place with 42% is the answer "a lot", it means 10 students chose this answer.

At latest, the answer “nothing” did not have any percentage, so it means that the entire group felt comfortable by reading the scripts rather than learning them.

The fifth question was:

Would you like that teachers work more with Readers Theater?

a) Always    b) Sometimes    c) Never

#### Figure 4.5 FIFTH QUESTION

This last graph confirms that students agree to work with this activity in their classes. It also shows how the majority of students, to be more precise 21 students, would like to work “sometimes” with Readers Theater in their classes, obtaining a percentage of 88%. Two students chose “always”, this is represented with a percentage of 8%. Finally, only one student chose “never” represented with 4%. This answer called the attention, so it

was asked her and she told us that she did not like this activity because she is too nervous and has stage fright.

### Open questions

These three last open questions it was chosen the common answers that students wrote and they are represented in tables.

The first open question in the instrument responds the second research question that is: According to the participants, what are the advantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2?




READERS THEATER ADVANTAGES	
Correct pronunciation of words	
Practice speaking and reading	
Learn vocabulary	

Table 4.1 READERS THEATER ADVANTAGES

This table specifies the common answers that students provided in the instrument as advantages for using Readers Theater. With 15 students is located in the first place “correct pronunciation of words”; in the second place is located with 5 students “practice speaking and reading” and at latest is located “learn vocabulary” with 4 students.

Second open question in the questionnaire responds the third research question:

According to the participants, what are the disadvantages of using Readers Theater in Target Language 2

READERS THEATER DISADVANTAGES	
Nothing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People did not come to class	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nervous	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This table specifies the common answers that students provided in the questionnaire as disadvantages for using Readers Theater. In the first place is located “nothing” with 11 students; in the second place is located with 7 students “people did not come to class”. At latest is located “nervous” with 6 students, but being nervous is so common in this kind of activities where students have to perform in front of the group.

The last questions was: What is your opinion about using Readers Theater?

According to the questionnaire, from 24 answers there are 22 positive answers and 2 negative answers. Some of the positive answers agree that the activity is very useful, students have a positive opinion about their vocabulary, grammar and also, they got more confidence; nevertheless, two negative answers express they did not like the activity because they felt shy and they did not like acting. Based on the results, that the activity was useful, and it can help participants to improve and develop their skills (speaking and reading).

The following table, the results show the answers gathered:

Positive answers	
<b>Student 1</b>	They are very useful, I can improve my vocabulary.
<b>Student 2</b>	I got more confidence using them.
<b>Student 3</b>	I got some vocabulary when I used them
<b>Student 4</b>	You can learn about grammatic [sic], vocabulary and some other topics.
<b>Student 5</b>	Using Readers theater I can improve my confidence and my vocabulary.
<b>Student 6</b>	I can improve my reading comprehension.
<b>Student 7</b>	You can improve your pronunciation.
<b>Student 8</b>	I really liked the activity I think that the teacher should implement it.
<b>Student 9</b>	I corrected some words about vocabulary and writing.
<b>Student 10</b>	The activity helps us to get confidence and about reading.
<b>Student 11</b>	For me it was a great idea to implement in class.
<b>Student 12</b>	Reader's theater is a good activity to help us to correct our pronunciation and increase vocabulary.
<b>Student 13</b>	It was a good activity.
<b>Student 14</b>	I think Readers theater can help me to increase vocabulary.
<b>Student 15</b>	I felt motivated to participate.
<b>Student 16</b>	I liked because I love the stories.
<b>Student 17</b>	I liked this activity because I didn't have to learn the scripts. I only had to read.
<b>Student 18</b>	It helps to know new vocabulary.
<b>Student 19</b>	For me it was creative and funny.
<b>Student 20</b>	I felt confidence because I didn't learn the scripts.
<b>Student 21</b>	I can learn more vocabulary.
<b>Student 22</b>	I understand how to pronounce new words.
<b>Negative answers</b>	
<b>Student 23</b>	For me the activity was not good because I am shy and I can't express myself in front of the class.
<b>Student 24</b>	I didn't like the activity because I don't like to act so much.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

With the information provided in the figures and tables of this chapter, it was possible to obtain the answers of the research questions that guided this investigation. The results of this research are very clear. 24 questionnaires were analyzed, in which the responses were detected, discussed and analyzed

All the research questions were answered, and the results were significant encouraging for this research. Readers Theater turned out to be both encouraging and promising since students were able to identify this technique as an option to increase their pronunciation.

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction to the chapter**

This research study was designed to help students improve their pronunciation. The study was also conducted to analyze the effectiveness of Readers Theater in the EFL classes, according to the participants' perceptions. This chapter outlines the conclusions of the study.

### **5.2 Summary of the study**

This research was to investigate the effectiveness of Readers Theater in EFL classes and the impact on students' pronunciation. First, it conducted a literature review highlighting the importance of pronunciation, factors that affect pronunciation learning and how Readers Theater is used in EFL classes. A total of 24 students from a public University in Puebla during spring 2015 participated in this study. They received 5 classes in order to introduce Readers Theater. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for the data collection process to know student's opinions about Readers Theater, which consisted of 8 questions, 5 were multiple choice and 3 were open questions. In addition, it was implemented 3 kinds of scripts to perform Readers Theater in classes where students participated. The data gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed and presented in figures and tables. Quantitative research was used for this research, Case Study and Exploratory were used as approaches.

### **5.3 Limitations**

The length of time of the study was too short which created several limitations. There was not enough time for students to adapt to a new technique. Students only had 5 sessions, these sessions were not consecutive, and the time of each session was of 30 minutes which was a little time for students to improve their pronunciation, because they could not practice new words in class due to time.

Another major limitation was that some team members missed classes, as a result the other members lost confidence and the order obtained from the beginning. They were unmotivated and had the concern how it would work out without having practiced. Overall, all these limitations are so important that can help to future research.

### **5.4 Suggestions for future research**

Very few studies focused on improving pronunciation with Readers Theater have been conducted. It would be interesting to carry out more research where we can see different environments and the differences or the benefits that this kind of technique can help in a future to students. Moreover, it would be interesting to find if Readers Theater is effective at different grade levels and what is the impact that it could have in the last grades.

Furthermore, this research took place only 5 sessions, due to the short time available. It could have more benefits if it could extend the time period. Extended length of time would provide more information to the impact of Readers Theater on students' pronunciation. It would be interesting to see how the study helps and what the learning progress of each student is by using this technique. In addition, it would be interesting that

the students could feel more real the characters and they could help with some kind of scenario to perform better. Another recommendation for future research involves the use of technology in classrooms using Readers Theater, not only read scripts, students are motivated when technology is involved. It would be a great experience to use a cannon type to project the scenes of history.

### **5.5 Implications**

This research suggests that Readers Theater can be a motivating technique to use in classroom, not only in Target Language 2, for improving pronunciation and also to help students grow their confidence at the time to speak in front of others. Also, it might be a flexible and easy technique that teachers can use in a good way and provide materials in order to help students in their pronunciation. Another important aspect that is important to mention about this technique is that the use of Readers Theaters has a positive impact in most of students and teachers due to it seems as a meaningful and an easy way (technique) to develop and improve the pronunciation in English classes as it is mentioned before. However, this technique not just improves the pronunciation, there are three skills more that are related with this technique and it makes it a good (whole) technique. The speaking, listening and reading skills are essential for improving the students' pronunciation.

### **5.6 Conclusions**

This research defines Readers Theaters as an important and great tool that allows students to improve and increase their pronunciation in English classes through different scripts where students develop the speaking, listening and reading skills in an easy and creative way. With this, the investigation has been successfully conducted.

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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer the next questions below by circling the best answer for you.

1. Had you worked with Readers Theater in your classes?

- a) Always    b) Sometimes    c) Never

2. Do you think Readers Theater is a useful technique to improve pronunciation?

- a) A lot            b) a little            c) nothing

3. How do you rate this activity?

- a) Good            b) Fair            c) Poor

4. Did you feel comfortable by not having to learn the scripts?

- a) A lot            b) a little            c) nothing

5. Would you like that teachers work more with Readers Theater?

- a) Always    b) Sometimes    c) Never

What are the advantages that you found using Readers theater?

What are the disadvantages that you found using readers theater?

What is your opinion about using Readers Theater?



NARRATOR 3: He had been home the whole time.

NARRATOR 4: It seemed like a shame to leave a perfectly good ham dinner lying there in the straw. So the wolf ate it up.

NARRATOR 5: Think of it as a big cheeseburger just lying there.

NARRATOR 6: He was feeling a little better. But he still didn't have his cup of sugar.

NARRATOR 1: So he went to the next neighbor's house.

NARRATOR 2: This neighbor was the First Little Pig's brother. He was a little smarter, but not much. He had built his house of sticks.

NARRATOR 3: He rang the bell on the stick house.

NARRATOR 4: Nobody answered.

NARRATOR 5: He called:

WOLF: "Mr. Pig, ... Mr. Pig, are you in?"

NARRATOR 6: He yelled back:

2ND PIG: "Go away wolf. You can't come in. I'm shaving the hairs on my chinny chin chin."

NARRATOR 1: He had grabbed the doorknob when he felt another sneeze coming on.

NARRATORS 1-2-3-4-5-6: He huffed. And he snuffed.

NARRATOR 2: And he tried to cover his mouth, but he sneezed a great sneeze.

NARRATOR 3: And you're not going to believe it, but this guy's house fell down just like his brother's.

NARRATOR 4: When the dust cleared, there was the second Little Pig -- dead as a doornail.

WOLF: "Wolf's honor!"

NARRATOR 5: Now you know food will spoil if you leave it out in the open.

NARRATOR 6: So the wolf did the only thing there was to do. He had dinner again.

NARRATOR 1: Think of it as a second helping.

NARRATOR 2: He was getting awfully full. But his cold was feeling a little better.

NARRATOR 3: And he still didn't have that cup of sugar for his dear old granny's birthday cake.

NARRATOR 4: So the wolf went to the next house. This guy was the First and Second Little Pigs' brother.

NARRATOR 5: He must have been the brains of the family. He had built his house of bricks.

NARRATOR 6: The wolf knocked on the brick house. No answer.

WOLF: "Mr. Pig, . . . Mr. Pig, are you in?"

NARRATOR 1: And do you know what that rude little porker answered?

3RD PIG: "Get out of here, Wolf. Don't bother me again."

NARRATOR 2: Talk about impolite!

NARRATOR 3: He probably had a whole sackful of sugar.

NARRATOR 4: And he wouldn't give the wolf even one little cup for his dear, sweet old granny's birthday cake.

NARRATOR 5: What a pig!

NARRATOR 6: The wolf was just about to go home and maybe make a nice birthday card instead of a cake, when he felt his cold coming on.

NARRATORS 1-2-3-4-5-6: He huffed. And he snuffed. And he sneezed once again.

NARRATOR 1: Then the Third Little Pig yelled:

3RD PIG: "And your old granny can sit on a pin!"

NARRATOR 2: The wolf was usually a pretty calm fellow. But when he heard somebody talk about his dear, sweet old granny like that, he went a little crazy.

NARRATOR 3: When the cops drove up, of course he was trying to break down this Pig's door. And the whole time the wolf was huffing and puffing and sneezing and making a real scene.

NARRATOR 4: The rest, as they say, is history.

NARRATOR 5: The news reporters found out about the two pigs he had for dinner.

NARRATOR 6: They figured a sick guy going to borrow a cup of sugar didn't sound very exciting.

NARRATOR 3: So they jazzed up the story with all that "huff and puff" and "blow your house down" stuff.

NARRATOR 4: And they made him the Big Bad Wolf.

NARRATOR 5: That's it.

NARRATOR 6: The real story.

WOLF: "I WAS FRAMED!"

NARRATORS 1-2-3-4-5-6: But maybe you could loan him a cup of sugar.

---





Little Red: "A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below. You surely must know it."

Narrator 3: The wolf thought to himself,

Wolf: "What a tender young creature. What a nice plump mouthful, she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both."

Narrator 4: So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood; then he said,

Wolf: "See, Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here. Why do you not look round. I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing. You walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry."

Narrator 1: Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought,

Little Red: "Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay. That would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time."

Narrator 2: And so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Narrator 3: Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

Grandmother: "Who is there?"

Wolf: "Little Red Riding Hood "I am bringing cake and wine. Open the door."

Grandmother: "Lift the latch,"

Narrator 1: called out the grandmother,

Grandmother: "I am too weak, and cannot get up."

Narrator 2: The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Narrator 3: Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

Narrator 4: She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself,

Little Red: "Oh dear, how uneasy I feel to-day, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much."

Narrator 1: She called out,

Little Red: "Good morning,"

Narrator 2: but received no answer. So she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

Little Red: "Oh, grandmother,"

Narrator 3: she said,

Little Red: "What big ears you have."

Wolf: "The better to hear you with, my child,"

Narrator 4: replied the wolf.

Little Red: "But, grandmother, what big eyes you have,"

Narrator 1: Little Red Riding Hood said with surprise in her voice.

Wolf: "The better to see you with, my dear."

Little Red: "But, grandmother, what large hands you have."

Wolf: "The better to hug you with."

Little Red: "Oh, but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have."

Wolf: "The better to eat you with."

Narrator 2: And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Little Red Riding Hood in one bite.

Narrator 3: When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. A huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself,

Huntsman: "How the old woman is snoring. I must just see if she wants anything."

Narrator 4: So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it.

Huntsman: "Do I find you here, you old sinner?"

Narrator 1: said the huntsman.

Huntsman: "I have long sought you."

Narrator 2: Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

Narrator 3: When he had made two snips, he saw the Little Red Riding Hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying,

Little Red: "Ah, how frightened I have been. How dark it was inside the wolf."

Narrator 4: And after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Little Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Narrator 1: Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Little Red Riding Hood had brought, and revived, but Little Red Riding Hood thought to herself,

Little Red: "as long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.

Narrator 4: It is also related that once when Little Red Riding Hood was again taking cakes to her old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Little Red Riding Hood, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and said to her grandmother,

Little Red: "Grandmother, I met another wolf, he had said good-morning to me, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if we had not been on the public road she I am certain he would have eaten me up.

Grandmother: "Well,"

Narrator 1: said the grandmother,

Grandmother: "We will shut the door, that he may not come in."

Narrator 2: Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried,

Wolf: "Open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red Riding Hood, and am bringing you some cakes."

Narrator 3: But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Little Red Riding Hood went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the Little Red Riding Hood,

Grandmother: "Take the pail, Little Red Riding Hood. I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough."

Narrator 4: Little Red Riding Hood carried the water until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. But Little Red Riding Hood went joyously home, and no one ever did anything to harm her again.