

# **Repetition– A Classroom Activity: Tool To Improve Listening And Speaking Skills For English Language Learners**

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## **Abstract**

*Listening and Speaking are the primary step in any learning activity even if it is the acquisition of mother tongue or second language. Listening is the first and the basic step to learn a language. It is a natural phenomenon that listening activity starts to happen from the mother's womb. As a matter of fact, listening is a natural skill that is imbibed in every human being. The same theory applies in the acquisition of the second language as well. The tool that is applied to make them to listen and speak the language with ease is "Repetition". The methodology applied is "Class room Activity" and the time taken to perform the task was two hours. The students are exposed to a set of repeated questions throughout the task which enables the learners to listen to the right grammatical sentence structure, pronunciation and improved vocabulary. The results build confidence among the second language learners with improved speaking ability.*

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Listening, repetition, acquisition, image*

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## **I. Introduction**

English language acquisition seems a Himalayan task for the Second Language Learners. Learning a language requires time and it is important to apply LSRW skills to master any language. Patricia Kuhl, co-author and co-director of the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences at the University of Washington states that "The mother has first dibs on influencing the child's brain... The vowel sounds in her speech are the loudest units and the fetus locks onto them." (Molly McElroy). Basically a language could not be taught, it has to be learnt with ease and the teacher is one of the best people to help them. The teacher acts as a scaffold in the students' learning process and helps them to achieve their goals. On the first hand, it is important to create a strong trust between the teacher and the learner in the teaching - learning process. Play way method or Activity based teaching methodology are one among the best ways to learn any language.

The activity was experimented with one hundred and twenty first year college students whose first language being their mother tongue. The paper is about how the students' learn how to ask question for Yes or No type answer with this activity. The methodology applied was "Class room Activity" and the tool used to make them to listen and speak the language was "Repetition". Repetition is one of the best methods to learn a language with ease. Gideon states that Repetition is "a major rhetorical strategy for producing emphasis, clarity, amplification, or emotional effect. Within the history of rhetoric terms have been developed to name both general and very specific sorts of repetition". The logic behind the application of repetition is that the students are exposed to the same sentence structure repeatedly and the learning process happens naturally. The activity was done for two hours with amazing results.

## **The Activity And The Rules**

Without prior knowledge about the level of the students, their level of understanding and fluency in the English language, the teacher tries to gain the students' trust by announcing an activity in the classroom. "Identify Me" is the name of the activity used here at first. The students' task is to identify what the hidden picture is. The hidden pictures can be popular personalities, animals or things. The class is divided into two groups – Group A and Group B. One volunteer on turn picks a picture from the teacher and understands what the image is about. The task is that his/her group members should identify the image by asking questions from their group volunteer. But the volunteer is only allowed to answer either "yes" or "No". 10 questions are allowed to identify the hidden image with the time set for two minute. (Number of questions and time can be adjusted by the teacher depending upon the adaptability of the students' capacity in asking questions). For example, if the student audience or the volunteer is able to find out the hidden image easily, the teacher can

minimize the time limit from two minutes to one minute or the questions asked to find out the image can be minimized from ten questions to seven questions. The activity follows few strict rules. Each question asked to identify the hidden image has to be only in English. Allotted number of questions has to be definitely asked. Even if the group finds the hidden character in the fourth or fifth question, they are not allowed to reveal the answer. They have to continue asking questions till the allotted question. The last question which is the identified image will also be asked in the form of the question. Marks will be allotted for the winners. The activity ends when each one in the group participates as volunteers. The activity has two parts in it. In the first half, the image will be revealed to the volunteer and not to the student audience. In the second half, the image will be revealed to the student audience and not to the volunteer. In the first half, the student audience of the team has to ask the questions to the volunteer to find the hidden image and in the second half; the volunteer has to ask the same set questions to his fellow student audience to find out the hidden image.

### **How It Works**

In the first half of the activity, the student audiences hesitate to ask questions in English due to lack of speaking activity. But the teacher encourages them to ask questions in the way they know whether broken English or paraphrased sentences but assures that she/he will help them in the task. With the aim to win the task, and with limited time, the students' make efforts to frame the sentence and start to ask questions to their group volunteer. As the students starts to ask, the teacher repeats the question, in the right sentence structure and makes the students repeat the same question in the right format. Ultimately, the entire class listens to the right sentence structure and right pronunciation by the teacher. The teacher repeats the right sentence structure each time whenever the questions are raised. The same kind of questions is repeated several times in the class by the teacher and the students. In the second half of the activity, the same activity gets switched over from the audience to the volunteer. Now the audience is announced about the hidden image except the volunteer. It is the turn of the volunteer to shoot the same set of questions asked by the student audience to identify the hidden image. The teacher helps the volunteer in framing the questions if necessary. By the end of the class, the students will have learned how to frame the right sentence structure while asking a question.

### **Listen – Speak - Repeat**

In this activity, listening plays a vital role which is the basic requirement in acquiring a language and Repetition plays the key role in practicing a language. The basic skills required for acquisition of any language is LSRW skills where Listening is the foremost skill that can kick-starts the other skills. In this case, the students listen to the same sentences several times in both the sessions. As the sentences are repeated almost every minute, the sentence pattern gets naturally registered in their mind with the right pronunciation (the teacher helps the students with the right pronunciation as and then they wrongly mispronounce), and the student repeats the questions when he gets his turn.

### **Vocabulary And Pronunciation**

Repetition helps in better listening and the students will be able to speak the language fluently in the correct sentence pattern and with the right pronunciation. The activity is set in such a way that as a team they work, discuss with their team members and participate. With lack of time, and with lack of words to express their thoughts, the students try to paraphrase the term. Eg. If the hidden word is tiger and the team wants to know if the hidden animal is a flesh -eating animal, they ask the questions in their simple language, but taking it as a chance, the teacher introduces the word "Carnivorous" and registers in their mind. The teacher explains the meaning of the word, its synonyms and introduces plenty of words related to Carnivorous like Herbivorous, Omnivorous etc. So the next time, when they understand that the hidden image is an animal, they try to use the above words to make their understanding better. This method helps the students to learn new words and practice them immediately with the right pronunciation.

### **Competitive Spirit**

The activity is designed for young minds where the competitive spirit is naturally imbibed in them. Since they are divided into two groups and the competitive spirit rises as they continue to play, the need for the right word becomes essential. Even the incorporative student will be forced to play the activity as he/she watches. The teacher motivates the inactive students if any to participate in the activity by helping them with few questions.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

The Teacher is the important person who runs the show. At the outset, it appears as if the students are only involved in the activity, but the master brain behind the show is the teacher. The ultimate aim of the teacher is to win the confidence of the students by helping them at the time of need. Throughout the activity, the teacher

balances both the group, helps both the group to achieve their goals. The teacher creates a win- win situation where both the students and the teacher win simultaneously. The students come out of their shells and start to speak in English with ease trusting that their teacher is there to help them even if they make mistakes in framing the questions. The ice between the student and the teacher is broken and a bond of trust is created between them. By the end of the session, the students become confident in framing the question which is the ultimate aim of the teacher.

Let's assume the hidden image is a Personality. For example, Indian cricket player Sachin Tendulkar. The following questions are asked to identify the character. As and when the questions are asked, the character gets revealed.

1. Is the hidden image a human being? If YES (meaning, the image is not animal or thing)
2. Is the human being a male? If Yes ( meaning not a women)
3. Is he from south India? If No (meaning from north India)
4. Is he a sports person? If YES (meaning games related personality)
5. Is he a cricketer? If YES (scrutinizing popular people in cricket)
6. Is he a batsman? If YES (scrutinizing all popular batsman)
7. Is he a coach for any team in IPL? IF YES (Thinking about the coach of different teams)
8. Is he called master blaster? If YES (there is only one person called master blaster in cricket & confirmation )
9. Does his son also play cricket? If YES (Re - confirmation)
10. Is the hidden image – Sachin Tendulkar? If YES (the image is identified)

Let's assume the hidden image is an animal - Lion

1. Is the hidden image a human being? If NO (meaning it is either animal or thing)
2. Is the hidden image an animal? If YES (meaning it could be domestic or wild)
3. Is it a domestic animal? If NO (meaning it is a wild animal)
4. Is it a carnivorous animal? If YES (meaning it is a dangerous animal)
5. Does it roar? If YES (Think which animal roars)
6. Does it live in dens? If YES (confirmation)
7. Will it hunt for food? If YES (Re - confirmation)
8. Can it run fast? If YES (Re - confirmation)
9. Is it called the king of the forest? If YES (Re - confirmation)
10. Is it lion? If YES (the image is identified)

Let's assume the hidden image is a thing - Pen

1. Is the hidden image a human being? If NO (meaning it is either animal or thing)
2. Is the hidden image an animal? If No (meaning it is a Non-living thing)
3. Is it used daily by students? If YES (scrutinizing everyday things used by students)
4. Is it big in size? If NO (meaning it is small)
5. Is it handy? If YES (scrutinizing all handy things eg., mobile, pen, handkerchief, pencil, bag etc.,)
6. Is it a very essential thing for students? If YES (scrutinizing all essential handy things)
7. Is it a costly thing? If NO (scrutinizing essential less costly things)
8. Does it need a sharpener to sharp its edges? If No ( confirmation)
9. Does it use nib for writing? If YES (Re - confirmation)
10. Is it lion? If YES (the image is identified)

### **Analysis**

The first few questions are almost the same and it is repeated throughout the entire activity. The students are exposed to same set of questions several times in the right sentence pattern. Listening plays an active role in this activity even if they are not intended to listen. Repetition of the same sentence makes them to ask the questions confidently when they had to ask since they had been listening to the same question throughout the session. They cannot speak the wrong accent or wrong sentence structure, since the teacher corrected their mistakes wherever they made by making them speak the right pattern and pronunciation. Thus the activity is a successful method to make a second language learn how to ask questions for yes or no type questions.

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the Activity, the students were able to

- Learn how to frame questions for Yes / No type answers
- Learn the right pronunciation of words
- Learn the right sentence structure while asking a question

Learn new words (Eg. Carnivorous, Herbivorous, Omnivorous etc.)  
Learns how to ask questions in an organized manner.  
Participate in team work  
Learn how to speak fluently

## **II. Conclusion**

From the mother's womb to till the higher education, Repetition is the most used tool consciously or unconsciously and that helps in developing and supporting LSRW skill. It also promotes them to participate in team activities and also sets them to their way for fluency in a language. In considering with the words of Gideon highlighting repetition as a major rhetorical strategy, Repetition must be encouraged among the students in order to function efficiently among the team members. Learning a new language accelerates the memory, concentration, creativity which further leads to improved problem solving skill and ability to handle tough situations than a person who knows a single language. Being teacher centric, it seeks the necessity of teacher and it could be solved by digital tools of Web 3.0 and 4.0 such as Google Meet. After all these, it is concluded as repetition remains with a positive result.

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