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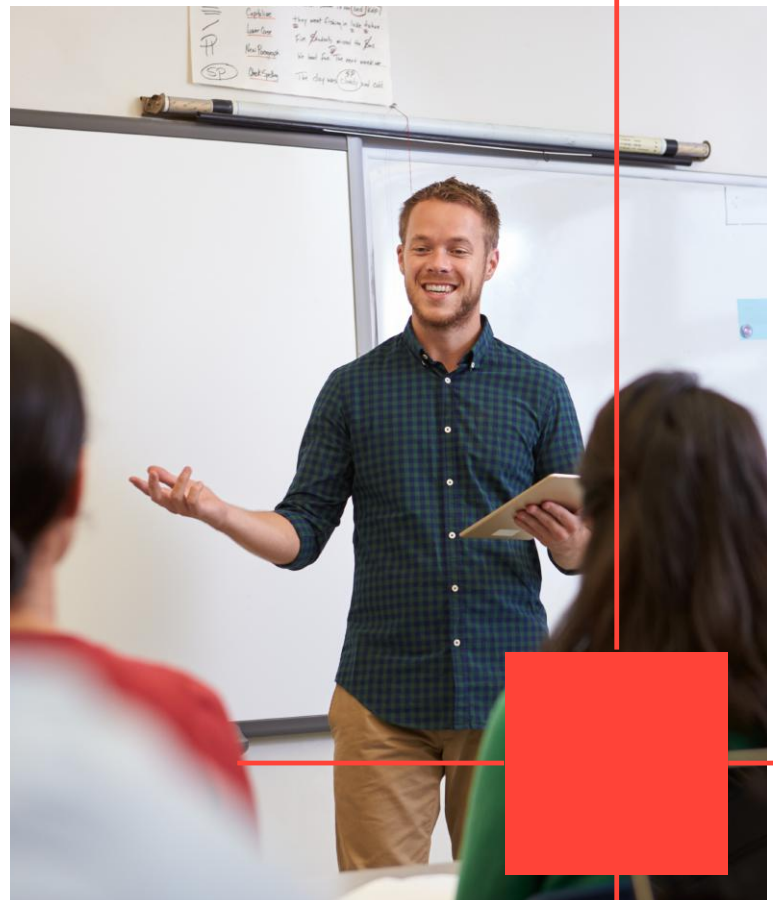
Should teachers ever use repetition to practise language?

Repetition is very much associated with the direct method where students were exposed to controlled chunks of language. An integral part of the process of language learning was repetition of target structures echoing the model provided by the teacher.

With the advent of the communicative approach, repetition fell out of favour. It was seen as artificial and was regarded as impeding communication. It is probably also the case that with more student-centred teaching, repetition did not really have a role to play. Nowadays, technology means that students can also access pronunciation models online using their cell phones.

In spite of all this, targeted use of repetition still has a role to play in language learning, especially in contexts where students are not exposed to the target language outside class and the teacher provides the main model for pronunciation.

We know that crucial elements for learning a language include exposure to the language and opportunities to use it. Repetition does not interfere with this process but ensures students have the opportunity to practice saying new language and avoid errors at the start of the learning process.





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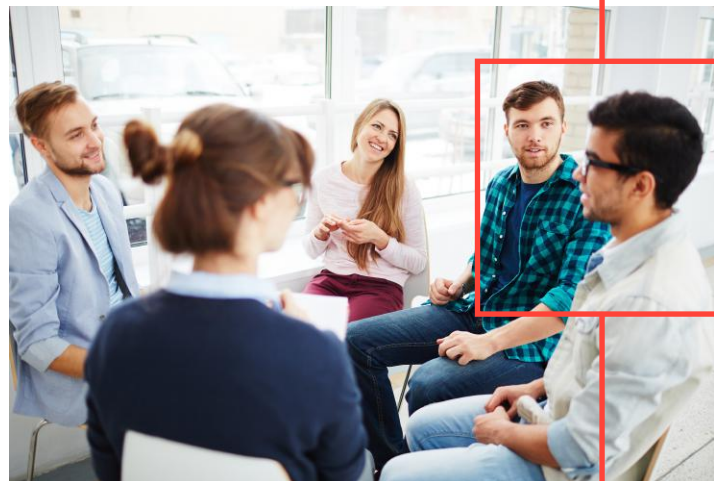
So, when should a teacher use repetition?

Here are some suggestions:

- 1** When presenting new language where they will benefit from hearing and practicing saying this.
- 2** When the teacher detects an error of pronunciation, which interferes with communication and, after unsuccessfully trying to prompt a correction, decides to model the correct pronunciation and have students repeat this.
- 3** When contrasting differences between the way cognates are pronounced in L1 and L2.
- 4** When the lesson is targeting words or structures, which involve intonation and stress. A good example of this is question tags, which are frequently mispronounced: 'That was a good film, wasn't it?', 'You're not going to buy that car, are you?'
- 5** When you wish to test comprehension and pronunciation with a listening and get students to repeat parts of a dialogue.

How should a teacher handle repetition drills?

- 1** Once you have decided what you want students to repeat, get their attention by saying 'Listen!'
- 2** Repeat the word or sentence 3-4 times clearly marking the stress with your hand.
- 3** Ask the students to repeat together by saying 'Now you' or something similar.
- 4** Then choose individual students to repeat by signaling individuals and saying 'Can you say it?'
- 5** Give positive feedback and correct errors by echoing them and then repeating the correct model.



If you are teaching a listening comprehension activity, you can ask students to repeat 'chunks' of the language after they have heard a section of the listening. This shouldn't be done for extended amounts of time but is a good way of testing listening comprehension and pronunciation.

It will probably be the case that repetition will be more frequent with students at lower levels but there is nothing to stop a teacher using repetition at higher levels where this is considered to be a useful activity.