

The Impact of Controlled Repetition On English Pronunciation and Lexical Acquisition in Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how drilling and word repetition influence the improvement of English pronunciation and vocabulary among rural students. Students in rural areas encounter difficulties in enhancing their English skills due to limited input and a lack of teaching resources. Specifically, there was a high rate of pronunciation problems and low confidence in speaking English, which calls for teaching methods that address their needs. The research used a qualitative descriptive design to investigate the role of drilling and word repetition in aiding rural Grade 6 students. The sample consisted of 50 students from a Government Higher Secondary School. Data was collected through structured interviews to understand the students' perceptions and observable progress in their English skills after the intervention. The results show that drilling and repeating words significantly boosted students' confidence in speaking English and improved their pronunciation and vocabulary. The study concludes that drilling and word repetition are effective in enhancing the fundamental English language skills of students in rural areas.

KEYWORDS: Drilling technique, rural students, pronunciation improvement, students' perception, speaking proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

English is required for global communication, education, and work, however rural children frequently struggle owing to a lack of exposure, resources, technology, and opportunity to practice outside of the classroom. By using strategies like repetition, drilling, contextualized learning, and peer interaction, teachers may help students overcome these obstacles and develop their vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills. Vocabulary and pronunciation are essential elements of communicative ability. According to Dell Hymes, communicative competence includes both the capacity to use language effectively in context and grammatical understanding. Intelligibility is guaranteed by clear pronunciation, and meaningful communication is made possible by a sufficient vocabulary. Learning vocabulary and pronouncing words correctly are essential parts of learning English, particularly for non-native speakers who want to become communicatively competent (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020; Saito, 2021; Vančová, 2019). In the context of second language acquisition, pronunciation and vocabulary are pivotal because they form the foundation for clear, intelligible communication (Susanto & Nanda, 2023). While a strong vocabulary base enables learners to express themselves more accurately and with greater variety, proper pronunciation helps learners be understood, minimize misunderstandings, and promote a more natural flow in conversations (Lysenko & Nesterenko, 2024). When combined, these abilities improve oral and written communication, which is crucial for social engagement, professional advancement, and academic success. Being proficient in them increases the self-esteem and productivity of non-native English speakers.

Drilling and word repetition approaches are two of the many instructional strategies that have long been acknowledged as useful for enhancing language competency, especially when it comes to pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition. The behaviorist theory of language acquisition, which emphasizes habit building through stimulus-response reinforcement, has long been linked to conventional methods like drilling and word repetition. Even though mechanical repetition is frequently criticised by contemporary communicative approaches, systematic drilling can be especially helpful for pupils who are just starting or have

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little exposure to spoken English. Behaviourist theories of learning, which highlight the importance of practice, reward, and habit building in the learning process, serve as the foundation for these tactics.

Skinner's (1957) behaviourist theory states that learning is essentially a conditioning process in which learners internalize new language structures and patterns through repeated exposure and reinforcement. In order to strengthen proper pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical usage, drilling entails repeatedly practising particular language forms or structures. By repeating new words in a variety of settings, word repetition, on the other hand, aims to strengthen vocabulary acquisition and help learners remember and apply them successfully. These methods support the notion that brain connections are strengthened by repetition, which eventually improves recall and fluency (Nation, 2022). By using these techniques, language teachers can assist students in improving their linguistic correctness and fluency, which are crucial for understanding and using the target language. Additionally, these methods offer a methodical approach that meets the needs of language learners in terms of practice and regularity.

Drilling is the systematic, repeated practice of language patterns, such as grammar, sentence structures, and sounds, with the primary goal of increasing accuracy and fluency. Through repetition, students are better able to absorb these patterns and employ them in everyday speech with greater assurance and ease. Because rehearsing sounds, stress, and intonation enhances the production of natural language, it is particularly helpful for pronunciation (Mendrofa & Wijaya, 2022). Additionally, it fosters automaticity, which enables students to apply language structures in writing and speaking with minimal mental strain (Abrar & Widiati, 2024). By exposing students to new words in various situations regularly, word repetition improves long-term memory, recall, and comprehension of meaning and usage (Nation, 2022). By enhancing memory and encouraging precise use, drilling and repetition both aid in cognitive development. These straightforward techniques can help students' vocabulary and pronunciation in rural schools with minimal resources. Therefore, this study investigates how word repetition and drilling can enhance rural kids' vocabulary and pronunciation while also examining how they see these methods.

1.1 Problems faced by Rural area students in learning English

Basri et al. (2023) used teacher interviews and classroom observations to investigate rural pupils' challenges with speaking English. The results indicated that issues pertaining to knowledge were more prevalent than issues pertaining to skills. The biggest obstacle was "lack of confidence (80%)", which was followed by shyness, low motivation, trouble pronouncing words correctly, a limited vocabulary, and a lack of general knowledge. Students' speaking performance was also impacted by ambient distractions, fear of peer ridicule, mother-tongue influence, and inhibition (60%). Time constraints frequently led to inadequate explanation of objectives and evaluation, even when the teacher adhered to traditional speaking-teaching practices. To enhance rural students' English-speaking abilities, the study suggested interactive teaching techniques that placed more of an emphasis on vocabulary, pronunciation, motivation, and confidence-building (Basri et al., 2023).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent research highlights the ongoing relevance of drilling and repetition techniques in English language classrooms, especially in contexts similar to rural EFL settings. A qualitative study by Ihsani, Nanda, and Susanto (2025) found that drilling and word repetition significantly enhanced pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary retention, and learner confidence among secondary students, as the repetitive practice provided repeated opportunities for articulatory adjustment and lexical reinforcement. Similarly, classroom action research demonstrates that integrating drilling techniques—even with low-tech interventions like structured repetition—can substantially improve students' vocabulary mastery and motivation during English lessons (Djuhari & Faridah, 2026). Studies on pronunciation practice also support repetitive methods; for instance, research using communicative drilling showed significant gains in students' pronunciation ability and classroom engagement, affirming that consistent oral repetition reinforces both segmental and suprasegmental features of English speech (Kasim & Buhari, 2025). In line with these findings, repeated reading as a phonological practice tool was effective in enhancing phoneme articulation, stress patterns, and overall pronunciation clarity among EFL learners, indicating that repetition supports deeper phonological awareness beyond rote memorisation (Wintarsih & Hermawan, 2024). Beyond drilling alone, strategy research confirms that repetition and pronunciation practice are among the most frequently used and perceived useful vocabulary learning strategies by secondary EFL learners, suggesting that repetition remains an essential cognitive and memory strategy (Dewi & Fahmi, 2024). Collectively, these studies emphasise that structured repetition and drilling methods remain effective pedagogical tools for improving pronunciation accuracy and vocabulary acquisition, especially for learners with limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Among the most traditional and popular methods for teaching English are word repetition and drilling. These methods, which have their roots in behaviourist learning theory and the Audio-Lingual Method, are based on the fundamental idea that regular, controlled practice enhances vocabulary and grammatical form memory and increases automaticity in language production. Both classroom-based drilling methods and the cognitive science of repetition-based learning have been the subject of research over the past 20 years, which has produced a body of evidence supporting their efficacy, but with significant limitations on how, when, and for whom they are most effective.

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Drilling is the regulated, repeated practice of language patterns, such as functional sentences, grammar rules, or pronunciation, usually under the supervision of a teacher. Repetition drills, substitution drills, chain drills, transformation drills, and question-and-answer exercises are among the eleven categories of drills that Larsen-Freeman (2000) identified. According to classroom observation research, the most popular exercises in Indonesian EFL settings are chain drills and question-and-answer drills, while repetition drills are also widespread (Anprayana, 2017). In comparison to a control group, a study of 60 fifth-grade students revealed that replacement practice dramatically raised their English-speaking scores, with the experimental group performing noticeably better on the post-test (Mulyadi, 2024). In a similar vein, based on an action study conducted with 22 Indonesian high school students, drill approaches increased speaking proficiency to 83% after the second cycle of instruction (Ikhsan, 2021). Fransiska and Jurianto (2016) confirmed a quantifiable difference in vocabulary retention by showing that seventh-grade students who were taught vocabulary utilising the drilling technique had considerably higher post-test scores than those who were not. In a controlled study including Indonesian high school students, drilling was successful in teaching the basic present tense at a 95% confidence level (Suriyani, 2016). Drilling proved effective in teaching past participle forms for TOEFL preparation, according to a different study. Drilling considerably increased test takers' comprehension and usage of idioms in academic speaking circumstances, according to a 2025 quasi-experimental study (n=40) conducted at an IELTS preparation Centre (Kadiatmaja, 2022). These quantitative results are supplemented by qualitative findings. Drilling in an EFL course has three benefits, according to Yonathan (2009): it boosts student confidence, fosters a relaxed learning atmosphere, and, when used with the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) paradigm, it can be learner-centred. It seems that there is a critical threshold. Repetition during explicit aural vocabulary training was examined by Zhang (2022, n=98), who discovered that "at least seven repetitions were needed for significant gains to take place." Additionally, the study found that the repetition impact was modified by learners' listening skills and prior vocabulary knowledge, with better learners benefiting more from fewer repeats (Zhang, 2022).

2.1) Research Objectives

- To determine how drilling and word repetition enhance students' vocabulary and pronunciation.
- To identify the obstacles encountered by the rural students while implementing these teaching techniques.
- To examine how these techniques improved students' self-confidence and comprehension in the English language.

2.2) Research Questions

- How successful do students think word repetition and drilling methods are at enhancing their vocabulary and pronunciation?
- What effects do these methods have on students' self-esteem and general English comprehension?
- What difficulties do students in rural areas encounter while using these teaching techniques?

2.3) Significance of the Study

The significance of this research stems from its capacity to contribute to the broader conversation on language teaching approaches, with an emphasis on the educational context of rural schools in India. Since English literacy is increasingly necessary in India for both academic and professional purposes, it is crucial to assess the effectiveness of different teaching methods to improve learning outcomes. This study intends to educate teachers about the useful advantages of using repetitive learning strategies in their lesson plans by examining how word repetition and drilling might enhance language proficiency. The study also emphasises how crucial it is to take students' viewpoints into account when creating language learning initiatives. Teachers can establish a more flexible and encouraging environment that promotes enhanced self-assurance, drive, and eventually improved language proficiency by recognising the attitudes, motives, and difficulties students encounter during their educational journeys. In addition to improving students' language proficiency, this method gives them the tools they need to interact with English more successfully in everyday, professional, and academic settings.

III. METHODOLOGY

To understand more about how students feel about the use of word repetition and drilling in English language learning, this study used a qualitative descriptive research approach. By its very definition, qualitative research provides a deep methodological approach to exploring intricate human experiences, yielding rich, in-depth insights that are impossible to obtain from numerical data alone (Isik, 2025; Oranga & Matere, 2023). This method is especially good at revealing the subtleties and contextual elements that influence social phenomena, providing a more profound comprehension of viewpoints and motives (Lim, 2024). By concentrating on the "what," "why," "when," "where," "who," and "how" underlying social constructions, it is an essential tool for breaking down complex real-world issues in a variety of fields, such as education, healthcare, and social sciences (Lim, 2024; Usman et al., 2025).

Students in the sixth grade at Government Higher Secondary School, Virudhunagar, participated in the study. 50 students who were enrolled in the class voluntarily participated. In order to gather pertinent and significant insights, purposeful sampling was employed to guarantee the inclusion of individuals actively involved in learning activities involving drilling and word repetition techniques. A standardised questionnaire with 25 questions was used for data collection to analyse different facets of students'

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educational experiences. These included self-assurance in one's ability to comprehend English, motivation in learning vocabulary and pronunciation, the perceived efficacy of drilling and word repetition methods, and the significance of pronunciation in language learning.

Five-point Likert scale items were included in the questionnaire to gauge agreement levels. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the data from the Likert-scale items. Frequencies and percentages were computed for each of the five response options—"Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree"—based on the replies' degree of agreement. This made it possible to spot patterns in the perceptions of the students. The questionnaire was given out during regular class hours to guarantee convenience and reduce interruption. In order to promote candid answers, participants were informed of the study's goals and given confidentiality guarantees (Isik, 2025). For analysis, the gathered data were methodically coded and categorized. To find patterns and themes in the qualitative replies, a thematic analysis was conducted using Lysenko & Nesterenko's (2024) approach.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' opinions on word repetition and drilling in English learning were gathered using a standardized 25-question survey. It evaluated their confidence, linguistic motivation, perceived efficacy, and pronunciation. To find important patterns and how different tactics affected students' English learning outcomes, the data was arranged into themed tables.

4.1) Self-confidence and desire for learning English

The information presented in Table 1 reveals information about students' self-assurance and motivation to learn English, especially in relation to the application of drilling and word repetition strategies. The findings show that these methods have a favourable impact on students' involvement with learning English as well as their self-confidence. With 46 answers (96%) strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement, students demonstrated a high level of confidence in their ability to understand and speak English following word repetition practice (Question 4). By repeatedly reiterating vocabulary and grammatical structures, effective language learning strategies like drilling are believed to improve understanding (Nation, 2022).

According to the overwhelmingly positive responses, students who engage in word repetition exercises feel comfortable speaking. In response to Question 5, 49 respondents (98%) stated that drilling difficult words repeatedly enhances the pronunciation of rural pupils. This repeat technique helps them spell the words without hesitation because they lack the resources to pronounce them correctly. This result is consistent with language acquisition principles, which state that mastering pronunciation requires repeated practice (Mulyadi, 2024). Additionally, it bolsters the idea that repeated repetition improves vocabulary learning. The high degrees of agreement with both statements imply that students believe these strategies improve their language abilities and give them a sense of success in learning English.

Based on (Question 6), drilling techniques help 44 respondents (88%) recall new English terms with ease. Many pupils 37 (74%) indicate in Question 9, that they don't mind making mistakes during drilling. Drilling and word repetition help rural kids overcome their phobia of speaking English. 49 students (98%) confirmed that they actively participated in pronunciation drills in response to Question 11. This supports the idea that self-confidence is essential to learning a second language since it is a crucial affective factor that affects a learner's willingness to speak and general language proficiency (Fadilah, 2022). Higher self-confidence learners are more likely to participate in communicative activities without the limiting effects of fear, according to research (Aponno, 2025; Inada, 2023). They also show better persistence in language learning tasks.

46 students (92%) said that after repeating things multiple times, they were able to spell them more accurately in Question 13. Many pupils (49,98%) indicated in Question 15 that they were very motivated to study English through drills. This supports the claim made by Yeni Triani et al. (2025) that the drill strategy, which involves repeated practice, improves long-term memory, speeds up subject mastery, and increases accuracy and speed. 47 students (94%) stated in (Question 24) that word repetition increases their comprehension of the culture and way of life of English-speaking communities, indicating that language learning is not just about developing linguistic proficiency but also about cultivating cultural awareness. Accordingly, repetition helps students retain vocabulary and improves their capacity to relate to the cultural background of the language they are learning (Syaputri et al., 2021).

Table 1. Self-confidence and desire for learning English

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	I feel more confident in speaking English after word repetition practice	18	20	8	4	0
5	Repeating difficult words improves my pronunciation	21	19	9	1	0
6	Drilling helps me remember new English words easily	14	17	13	4	2

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9	I am not afraid of making mistakes during drilling activities	13	17	7	8	5
11	I participate actively in pronunciation drilling sessions	33	8	8	1	0
13	I can spell words better after repeating them several times	24	16	6	3	1
15	I feel motivated to learn English through drilling exercises	36	8	5	1	0
24	I understand the culture and the way of life of English-speaking communities through the word repetition approach	30	7	10	3	0

4.2) Efficiency of Drilling and Word Repetition Techniques

The information in Table 2 offers conclusions about the effectiveness of word repetition and drilling strategies. Each of the fifty students enthusiastically participated in completing the questionnaires. All 50 students (100%) said that drilling exercises make their English classes more engaging in response to Question 3. The term fluency describes having the ability to communicate swiftly, confidently, and without excessive pauses or hesitations. Because repeating well-known phrases fosters the confidence needed for a fluid delivery, repetition practice has a “remarkable effect” on pupils’ fluency. According to recent research, communicative drilling is an effective way to raise student enthusiasm and engagement levels while simultaneously improving pronunciation. Communicative drills, as opposed to strictly mechanical ones, help students make the connection between form, meaning, and use.

In Question 7, 48 students (96%) stated that after repeated practice, they are better able to comprehend the meaning of new terms. Through word repetition and drilling, kids were able to understand new words that they had previously struggled to understand. The greatest percentage of students (47, or 94%) who answered “yes” to Question 11 felt that drilling exercises help them speak English more fluently. Word repetition significantly affects students’ effectiveness in enhancing their English language proficiency, as seen by the 45 students (90%) who answered “yes” to the statement that they practice repeated words at home after school. According to this viewpoint, language acquisition is a process of habit formation in which learners pick up language by practice, imitation, and reinforcement as opposed to cerebral processing or rule-based comprehension. On the other hand, 49 students (98%) claimed that group drilling exercises increased their effectiveness as learners. Regarding fixing pronunciation errors (Question 18), 48 students said that with teachers’ help, they can fix their own pronunciation errors following frequent word repetition. This is consistent with the Stimulus-Response-Reinforcement model, in which a teacher gives a stimulus (a model or instruction), the student reacts (a response or repetition), and the teacher gives reinforcement (praise for accuracy or prompt correction for mistakes).

Table 2. Efficiency of Drilling and Word Repetition Techniques

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3	Drilling activities make English classes more interesting	28	13	9	0	0
7	I can understand the meaning of new words better after repeated practice	25	18	5	2	0
11	Drilling helps me reduce my mother tongue influence while speaking English	14	20	13	2	1
16	I practice repeated words at home after school	17	22	6	5	0
17	Group drilling activities improve my learning	8	31	10	1	0
18	I can correct my pronunciation mistakes after repeated practice	19	17	12	2	0
20	I feel comfortable answering in English after drilling practice	27	13	8	2	0
22	I find it easy to learn new vocabulary through repetition	25	18	6	1	0
25	Drilling and repetition make English learning easier for me	36	8	6	0	0
21	Drilling improves my listening skills in English	16	25	5	4	0

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Following drilling exercises, 48 students concurred that they feel comfortable responding in English to Question 20. Drilling helps students recognize the proper form or pronunciation by giving them extensive practice hearing and reciting specific word phrases. It works especially well for teaching conversation lines and assisting students in mastering challenging intonation patterns or sounds. Drilling has a profound effect on the learner's psychological state in addition to skill improvement. Because they lack confidence or are afraid of making mistakes, many L2 learners stay inactive in class. Repetition lowers fear and promotes engagement by offering a "safe environment" for language experimentation. Drilling is generally seen favourably by pupils, according to research (Mulyadi, 2024).

When people observe instant improvements in their ability to pronounce words correctly, they say they feel happier and more excited. In response to Question 22, 49 students said that using word-repetition strategies makes learning new terms easier for them. Learning a language requires practicing phonological knowledge in working memory. By creating connections between cells, repetition exercises give the brain the essential "wiring" it needs. By lessening the cognitive load needed to absorb new vocabulary within a phrase, oral practice dramatically improves fluency, according to studies. All 50 students responded to Question 25 by saying that they find learning English easier when they practice and repeat words. All students, including the shy or "passive" ones, are encouraged to participate actively in drilling. It guarantees that each student has a chance to speak during class activities. 46 students responded to Question 21 by saying that drilling practice actively enhances their listening abilities. Vocabulary and structural patterns are transferred from short-term to long-term memory through constant repetition. This is often likened to learning an instrument, where "drill and practice" are crucial to achieving automaticity (Dewi & Fahmi, 2024).

4.3) Significance of Pronunciation and Word Repetition

Table 3. Significance of Pronunciation and Word Repetition

No.	Questions	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1	I enjoy learning English pronunciation through drilling activities	12	32	6	0	0
2	Repeating words helps me pronounce English words correctly	17	28	5	0	0
8	My teacher's pronunciation drills help me speak clearly	20	25	5	0	0
10	Repetition practices improve my English-speaking skills	9	20	16	3	2
14	Word repetition helps me use new vocabulary in sentences	14	19	15	2	0
19	Repetition helps me remember vocabulary for a long time	18	23	9	0	0
23	I can improve my ability to recognize key information in English texts by using the word repetition strategy.	15	23	12	0	0

The information in Table 3 offers conclusions on the importance of word repetition and pronunciation. All 50 students (100%) who responded to Question 1 said they liked doing drills to acquire English pronunciation. In response to Question 2, all 50 students (100%) concurred that practising words improves their ability to pronounce English words. This is consistent with the purposeful practice concept, which holds that skill gain results from repeated exposure to and practice in particular domains (Hambrick et al., 2020). All 50 students responded in Question 8 that their teacher's pronunciation exercises improve their ability to communicate clearly. Regarding Question 10, forty-five students responded that practising in English helps them speak the language more fluently.

By automating linguistic patterns through repetition, learners may concentrate on higher-order cognitive functions like understanding and interpretation. Additionally, studies show that repetition eases the cognitive strain of processing new language components, which facilitates language feature internalisation and retrieval. In response to Question 14, 48 students (96%) stated that word repetition strategies enable them to employ new vocabulary while constructing sentences. According to all 50 students (100%) in Question 19, word repetition in the classroom aids in long-term vocabulary retention. Again, all 50 students agreed or strongly agreed in Question 23 that using the word repetition strategy makes it easier for them to find important information in English literature. By reinforcing lexical and syntactic patterns in context, repetition improves comprehension in addition to helping with pronunciation. Students have a stronger comprehension of how words and structures work in the language when they are exposed to them frequently in reading and listening exercises (Peters & Webb, 2018; Rahul & Ponniah, 2023; Webb & Chang, 2015). This is in line with input processing theories, which emphasise how crucial repeated, purposeful exposure to language

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input is for understanding and learning (Vanpatten, 2007). As students select and internalize important information through repeated practice, repetition also improves active learning processes.

V. CONCLUSION

Drilling and word repetition are successful methods for enhancing English language competency, especially when it comes to internalizing grammatical patterns, expanding one's vocabulary, and improving pronunciation. The strongest evidence suggests that majority of rural students' exposure to a target word are beneficial for vocabulary acquisition, and that spaced repetition, as opposed to massed practice, results in more permanent learning. Speaking performance and student confidence in a variety of subskills are enhanced by drilling in the classroom. The adoption of these strategies was well received by the students, who emphasised how well they worked to increase fluency, spark interest, and boost confidence. The results imply that consistent practice promotes deeper comprehension of grammatical structures and reading comprehension in addition to improving pronunciation. This demonstrates how important it is to use interactive and repetitive techniques in English teaching approaches in order to increase student engagement and learning impact. Although the advantages of the drilling technique were largely accepted, many drawbacks were also noted. Due to the intricacy of the English language and their sporadic lack of confidence when performing in front of the class, students reported having trouble pronouncing words correctly. However, just as important as quantity is the quality of practice. Mechanical pattern drills are probably inferior to repetition that involves learners in deeper semantic processing. Despite these difficulties, the constructive criticism given during drilling activities was seen as crucial to increasing their confidence and proficiency. The focus on a small sample size and the use of self-reported data, which could introduce subjectivity, are the study's limitations. Comparative studies that compare drilling to communicative alternatives, use bigger and more varied samples, and assess many aspects of language knowledge over longer time horizons should be given priority in future research.

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