
Learning English through Pattern – Practice Drilling Approaches

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Abstract

The real objective of learning English is for communication with English speakers. Therefore, the speaking skill is the most important for Thai students, who are English new comers and should be the first step in learning process. There are many effective approaches of learning English speaking skills. The Pattern - Practice Drill Approach is one of all the best techniques for English beginners, especially for Thai students who have spent over 15 years learning English but cannot use it for communicative purposes.

"The Pattern - Practice Drills Technique aims at establishing the patterns or the mould of a structure so that the learner can make the right choice in the pattern as a matter of automatic habit." (*Baruamh, T.C 1995: 181*)

By using this technique, students will learn English by drilling on whatever the teacher is emphasizing. Mere repetition of a particular sentence, word stress, sentences intonation or phrase may help learners to develop the habit of saying them correctly and fluently. And students themselves will perform the interactive activities among their groups such as a role-play, group interactive conversations, etc.

Because of Thai society not using English for any kind of communication, Thai students rarely have an opportunity to improve their English. They can use English only in the class environment which restricts them from gaining the natural flow of everyday conversational English. So in speaking English they tend to lean to robotic English. So, to avoid this, we can use the Pattern - Practice Drills to teach students to practice repeatedly the natural ways of speaking from the use of daily conversational language. And also by this technique, the drilled English conversational patterns will be students' concrete foundation of their advanced English in the future.

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Introduction

The speaking skill is one of four English skills, and one that is rather difficult for Thai students. The reason is that they have been taught with an emphasis on grammatical rules and also by the bilingual method: that is, Thai and English. The problem is that when Thai students are thinking about speaking English, English grammatical rules, structural patterns, and meanings in both the Thai language and the English automatically lead them to become confused causing a delay in their thought patterns. It destroys their ability to use English with any degree of fluency. A communicative language must be uttered naturally, from heart to heart and not subject to thinking and translating before speaking.

There are several approaches in learning speaking skills, such as the Communicative Approach, the Community Language learning Approach, and the Audio - Bilingual Method among others. Compared to the so - called approaches above, the communicative approach is most popularly used. "For the Communicative Approach, when we communicate, we use the language to accomplish some functions, such as arguing, persuading, or promising. Moreover, we carry out these functions within a social context" (*Larsen - Freeman 1986 : 123*). As mentioned above, the Communicative Approach is suitable for native - speaking students or students who live in the society where people have used English as a second language for many years.

For Thai students, however, it is like a tortoise crawling up a mountain without any directions. So in my opinion, *The Pattern - Practice Drills Approach* is one of the best techniques for Thai students.

By using this technique, students will have the opportunity to drill on pronunciation, sentence intonation, word stress, functional patterns, etc. until they feel familiar with them and can produce them confidently. They also to rotate the pattern drilling with their group, and do other interactive activities for fulfillment of learning aims.

What is the Pattern - Practice Drill Approach?

Pattern - Practice Drills are used in several ways. Each of them emphasizes different aspects of the target language based on the given dialogue such as intonation, word stress, grammatical structures, etc. But the technical aspects that all of the methods have in common is to have students drill on whatever the teacher wants them to practice.

"The drill : Students are asked to repeat the teacher's model as accurately and as quickly as possible. This drill is often used to teach the lines of the dialogue." (*Larsen, Freeman 1986: 46*)

How to organize the Pattern - Practice Drills :

"Before beginning the pattern - practice drills the pupils should be given an opportunity

to study the grammatical rules and the rules themselves (until they will formulate in nature and to modify them be enable them that they can a matter of (1995: 182)

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to study the pattern and formulate their own grammatical rules. This step should be brief and the rules as simple as possible. Since pupils themselves (under the guidance of the teacher) will formulate the rules, they will be *ad hoc* in nature and pupils will be in a position to modify them later. The primary aim should be enable the pupils to learn the patterns so that they can make sentences on its models as a matter of automatic habit." (Baruamh, T.C. 1995: 182)

The Pattern - Practice Drills usually require the pupils to make rapid changes after the teacher gives a cue. This cue may be oral or visual. In an oral cue the teacher utters a word or a phrase and the pupils make an appropriate response in accordance with the cue. In visual cues, this command is given by showing actual objects, words in the textbook, words on flash cards, gestures, etc. The drills may be of various types. What suitable for students is chosen by the teacher. In organizing this technique the following points should be followed.

- a. Pupils should understand the meaning of the sentences, which are being practiced.
- b. Each drill should aim at mastering a problem and this should be clear to the teacher and the pupils.
- c. The problem and relevant rules should be brought to the notice of the pupils before beginning the drill.
- d. The drill should be planned thoroughly and the pupils should know

exactly what they are required to do.

e. Pupil's responses should always be in complete sentences.

f. Drills should be short but repetitive, and a duration of five minutes seems to be the optimum time for one drill.

The types of the Pattern - Practice Drills

A few types of drills are provided. A resourceful teacher is expected to invent more such drills to meet his or her needs and to introduce variety.

(1) Imitation Drills :

As already mentioned, mere repetition of a sentence has only limited value. However, such repetition may be found useful to create self - confidence in the pupils before starting the actual drill. They may also be used to memorize certain basic structures and to improve pronunciation. These drills are known as MIMICRY - MEMORIZATION or MIM - MEM Drill, e.g.

(1.1) Structure

A : (holding up a book) This is a book.

B : (holding up a book) This is a book.

(1.2) Phonetic Contrasts

A : sip, ship, and chip

B : sip, ship, and chip

(1.3) Rhythm

A : "Show me the way."

B : "Show me the way."

(2) Substitution Drills

Substitution drills are more effective than imitation drills. They may be made progressively difficult by increasing the number of substitutions. The substitutions are made by cued sentences orally or visually.

(2.1) Single substitution

A : (showing a picture of a car) That is a car.

B : That is a car.

A : (showing a picture of a bird) This is a bird.

B : This is a bird.

(2.2) Multiple Substitution

A : Her mother is a teacher.

B : Her mother is a teacher.

A : Uncle, soldier

B : Her uncle is a soldier.

A : sister, dentist

B : Her sister is a dentist.

(3) Substitution forcing a change

A : (Showing a picture of a boy) He is Jack's brother.

B : He is Jack's brother.

A : (Showing a picture of a girl) sister.

B : She is Jack's sister.

(4) Addition Drill

A : Jack came to school.

B : Jack came to school.

A : at 9 o'clock

B : Jack came to school at 9 o'clock.

(5) Transformation Drill

(5.1) Transformation only

A : Jack killed a snake.

B : Did Jack kill a snake?

(5.2) Substitution and transformation

A : kill, a bird

B : Did he kill a bird?

(6) Integration Drills

In these drills, students combine two or more sentences in a given pattern.

(6.1) A : That is the woman.

She came to our house yesterday.

B : That is the woman who came to our house yesterday.

(6.2) A : The coffee is very hot. I cannot drink it.

B : The coffee is very hot for me to drink it.

(7) Concord Drills

In these drills pupils substitute cue words in a sentence and at the same time make necessary changes in the sentence to meet grammatical requirements, e.g. the agreement between the subject and the verb, etc.

(7.1) Model sentence on the white board : He is singing.

A : He

B : He is walking.

(7.2) Model sentence on the white board : That is Linda. That is her car.

A : (pointing to a wall-picture) Ladda, bike.

B : That is Ladda. That is her bike.

(8) Ques

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(8) Question - Answer Drills

(8.1) Yes or No Question Drill : To practice a yes or no question.

A : Have you got a house in Bangkok?

B : Yes, I have. Have you got a house in Bangkok?

C : No, I haven't. Can you sing?

D : Yes, I can. Do you like Thai food?

(8.2) Wh - Question Drills:

A : Where do you live?

B : I live in Bangkok. And where do you live?

C : I live in Khonkaen Province.

(9) Bench - Wise Drills

That is a group drill. The students of two benches can sit facing one another and ask question from one's sheets. To make the drill more interesting it may be turned into a bench - wise competition by answering several points on the questions. The cue sheets may also contain interesting information, e.g. the longest river in the world, the highest mountain ranges, the fastest runners and so on.

(10) Contextualised Drills

(10.1) Picture Drill : The walls of classroom are added the informative pictures for students to drill.

A : Where is the weekend market?

B : It is on Phahonyothin Road near the Depart

ment of Land Transportation.

(10.2) General Knowledge Drill : It is based on students' knowledge.

A : What sport does your sister like ?

B : She likes swimming.

(10.3) Sentence - Sequence Drill :

A : Jack is taller than John.

B : Peter is taller than Jack.

C : David is cooking now.

D : He is a chef.

(10.3) Role - Play : A group of student set a careful planning, situations and approximating free conversation and then plays the roles in the class. (Baruam T C 1995 : 184-188)

The types of Pattern - Practice Drills as mentioned above are all suitable for English new comers. The resourceful teacher would select some of them that are matched with his or her students' backgrounds.

How small should each class be?

To learn the target languages, especially by the Pattern - Practice Drills, a small sized class is necessary. There should not be more than ten students in each class. And they should be divided into groups of 5. Each group has to sit around table with seats up right. In front of the class, there is a white board and some markers together with audio - visuals such as a video and tape recorder. Everybody has got a textbook.

a. The first step : The teacher introduces him/herself to students. After that the teacher tells the students what they are required to do.

b. The second step : The teacher tells students to open their books and tells them to pronounce words or short sentences after the teacher for two or three times.

c. If there are some words that are quite difficult for the students to pronounce, the teacher should repeat them and tells students to follow him or her two or three times until they can produce the sounds accurately.

d. The teacher need not explain grammar points but lets students drill on the complete phrases or short sentences.

e. After that following the above steps does the interactive drilling : the first student says a statement sentence from the cued sentence, and then the second one changes that sentence into an interrogative sentence. After that the third one answers a yes - sentence. The fourth student changes the cued sentence into an interrogative sentence and the fifth one gives a no - sentence. The second one from the first round finds a new word to substitute into the cued sentence and the third from the first round practices offers an interrogative sentence and the other students go back and forth rotating the drills in the same way.

The following are some examples of The Pattern - Practice Drills :

The first step of the technique :

A. Verb - To Be - Sentences :

(The first class: two hours)

Step one :

The teacher tells students to open their books.

Step two :

The teacher pronounces the verb to be - sentences two or three times, emphasizing correct accents and giving sentence intonation. Students are then urged to repeat after him positively, interrogatively and negatively until students utter them accurately.

Step three : (Pattern - Drilling)

Teacher : Now! Let's start. Say after me "He is a students".

Student A : He is a student.

Student B : Is he a Student?

Student C : Yes, he is.

Student D : Is he a student?

Student E : No, he isn't.

Teacher : Now! "A carpenter"

Student B : He is a carpenter.

Student C : Is he a carpenter?

Student D : Yes, he is.

Student E : Is he a farmer?

Student A : No, he isn't.

Teacher : What is he?

All students: He is a carpenter.

Teacher : Now find a new word to substitute, C!

Student C : He is a ..a ..a policeman.

Student D : Is he a policeman?

(The teacher tells the students to find some nouns to substitute into the drilled sentences)

(The second class : two hours)

Teacher : Good! Next is "A good student".

Student C : She is a good student.

Student D : Is she a good student?

Student E : Yes, she is.

Student A : Is she a good student?

Student B : No, she isn't.

Teacher : O.K."a skilled carpenter"

Student A : John is a skilled carpenter.

Student B : Is John a skilled carpenter?

Student C : Yes, he is.

Student D : Is John a skilled farmer?

Student E : No, he isn't.

Teacher : What is John?

All students : He is a skilled carpenter.

(Students find other nouns and some adjectives modifying the nouns to substitute into the drilled sentences)

(The third class: two hours :)

Teacher : Now! "In Bangkok"

Student A : My parents are in Bangkok.

Student B : Are your parents in Bangkok?

Student C : Yes, they are.

Student D : Are your parents in Bangkok?

Student E : No, they don't. They are in the country.

(The teacher teaches students how to

use prepositions such as in, on, at, opposite, beside, behind, after, etc)

(The fourth class: two hours :)

Teacher : Now use "Where"

Student B : Where are your parents?

Student C : They are in Bangkok. And where are your parents, D?

Student D : They are in Bangkok. Where are your parents, E?

Student E : They are not in Bangkok. They are in Chaingmai. And where are your parents, A?

Student A : They are in Chonburi.

(The teacher teaches students to drill Wh - questions)

B. Verb To Do - Sentences

The teacher tells students repeat the verb to do - sentences.

(The fifth class : two hours)

Teacher : Now! We'll practice how to use the verb To Do. Everybody repeats after me.

Teacher : I do my homework.

Students : I do my homework.

Teacher : Do you do your home work?

Students : Do you do your home work?

Teacher : Yes, I do.

Students : Yes, I do.

Teacher : Now! Your turn!

Student A : I do my homework.

Student B : Do you do your home work?

Student C : Yes, I do.

Student D : Do you do your home work?

Student E : No, I don't.

Teacher : I have a class. Now drill sentences.

Student B : Do you have a class?

Student C : Yes, I do. And do you have a class?

Student D : No, I don't. Do you have a class today?

Student E : Yes, I do. I have an English class. Do you have a class?

Student A : No, I don't. I have one tomorrow.

(The sixth class: two hours :)

Teacher : Now! "What", say after me "What subject do you like?"

OK. Practice it.

Student A : What subject do you like, B?

Student B : I like French. And you, C? What subject do you like?

Student C : I like mathematics. And you, D? What subject do you like?

Student D : I love Japanese. And you, E? Do you like

English?

Student E : No, I don't. I like singing.

Teacher : Now! Use "How"

Student A : How do you come to school?

Student B : I usually come to school by bus. And you, C? How do you come to school?

Student C : By car. By my car! And you, D? How do you come?

Student D : I come to school on foot. My house is beside our school. You, E? How do you come to school?

Student E : I often come to school by taxi.

The second step of the technique :

When students are fluent, the teacher tells the groups to interact with each other by having two students from group A join the group B and two from group B join the group A. The teacher lets them practice interactively what they have studied from their own groups.

The third step of the technique :

The teacher gives students 10 - minutes of preparation time for a role-play, having them discuss among themselves the topic they want to do. The teacher's role is only as a facilitator.

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The above examples are one of the Pattern - Practice Drills. The advantage of this technique is that students have the opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills, which are the most important skills in learning the basics of the target language. And also by drilling the pattern often, students can produce the sentences automatically. By this way, Thai students should be able to use English more fluently and communicate with foreigners more confidently.

Conclusion

As we know that the purpose of any language is for communication; therefore, learning English is for communicative purposes. It is waste of time spending over 10 years learning a language when, at the end of that time; the learners cannot communicate to meet the specific objectives. Learning the grammati-

cal rules, answering reading comprehension questions might be suitable for advanced English but not in learning the basics or become more fluent initially.

In my opinion, the **Pattern - Practice Drills** is the best technique, especially in teaching speaking skills to Thai students who have just started learning English as a foreign language. The class activities look more exciting to them. They enjoy drillings, rotating the sentences among themselves, and performing role - plays. Apart from repeating after the teacher, the teaching aids : audio - visuals; such as a tape, video and computer programs on simple English structures can make a class more active and exciting as well. It is high time for us at this time to find a better way of teaching this new generation of students. □

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พุทธศ

Buddhist

บทคัดย่อ

พระพุทธรูป
ของสังคมไทยและ
ตะวันตกของคนรู้
พร้อม ๆ ไปด้วย
ใหม่จะยั่งยืนได้
เป็นรากฐานแห่ง
สำคัญในการพัฒนา
มีความสุขอย่างสม

Abstract

Buddhist
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การที่วิ
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