

## A TYPOLOGY OF STRUCTURAL PATTERN DRILLS

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The impetus for this article comes from the occasional confusion in our teacher training courses when some students find it difficult initially to distinguish between *classes* and *types* of structural pattern drills. In some earlier articles (Paulston 1970, 1971) we claim that the function of drills in the learning process should be the overriding consideration in their classification. We still maintain<sup>1</sup> that drills should be classified as mechanical, meaningful and communicative and that each pattern taught needs to be cycled through such an MMC sequence in order to approach the point of free communication in a foreign language.<sup>2</sup>

But we also see the need for teachers to recognize the type of language manipulation a student is asked to perform. *Types* of drills refer to the type of restructuring of a cue, what Frank Johnson has named the "restructuring range".<sup>3</sup> The restructuring range indicates the type of restructuring and the complexity of this restructuring which the learner must go through to arrive at a response.

There exist several typologies of structural pattern drills (Brooks 1964: 156, Dacanay 1967: 107—151, Finocchiaro 1964: 60—65, Hök 1964: 222—226), but they are all at least ten years old and simply will not account for some of the more imaginative drills found in recent textbooks. Teachers need a typology for two reasons: one, in order to identify the source of difficulty students have

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<sup>1</sup> At the English Language Institute, University of Pittsburgh, we are in the rare situation of having national comparative TOEFL scores which attest to the efficiency of our methods.

<sup>2</sup> As for the place and role of drills in language teaching, see Paulston and Bruder (1975).

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Francis C. Johnson, Professor of English, University of Papua and New Guinea. In personal communication, 31 July, 1970.

with some drills; and two, in order to supplement their materials. Most textbooks need to be supplemented with extra drills, the audio-lingual textbooks typically with communicative drills, the cognitive code texts with mechanical drills. When one knows the function of the needed drills, a typology is a useful guide to constructing one's own drills.

What follows is a discussion of our typology of structural pattern drills. The basic criterion for assigning drills to the various types is in terms of the restructuring range.

Here is an overview of the total typology:

- I. Repetition Drills
  - A. Verbatim Repetition
  - B. Open-ended Repetition
  - C. Dialogue Repetition
- II. Discrimination Drills
  - A. Pattern Recognition
  - B. Context Recognition
  - C. Function Coding
- III. Alternation Drills
  - A. Morpho-lexical Drills
    - 1. Single slot substitution
    - 2. Double slot substitution
    - 3. Multiple slot substitution
    - 4. Moving slot substitution
    - 5. Correlative substitution
      - a. simple
      - b. complex
  - B. Syntactic Drills
    - 1. Expansion
    - 2. Completion
    - 3. Reduction
    - 4. Transformation
    - 5. Integration
- IV. Reply
  - A. Two Stage Drills
    - 1. Short answer
    - 2. Comprehension Questions
    - 3. Rejoinder
    - 4. Comment
    - 5. Free Response
  - B. Three Stage Drills

## I. REPETITION DRILLS

Repetition drills are just what they sound like, plain repetition of the cue. By varying the nature of the cue, one can achieve different subtypes of repetition drills.

One might well question the justification for including mindless parroting in a language class. In the first place, the teacher must make very sure that it is not mindless parroting. Students can do some of these drills without understanding them and the teacher therefore has to make extra sure that they do understand. As for justification, these drills serve two purposes. At the beginning stages of language learning, repetition drills are very useful in building up "kinetic memory", i.e., for the training of the perceptual-motor skills. We have forgotten the rules for the word order of the French oblique personal pronouns but we can still use them correctly, the tongue trips along its memorized path, as it were. We suspect that the function of kinetic memory in language learning is more important than it presently is given credit for, and repetition drills are excellent for its development.

As Frank Johnson has pointed out (personal communication, 1970), part of language learning is also the ability to control increasing amounts of language in mechanical manipulation. Beginning students can remember and repeat only relatively short sentences. Repetition drills of steadily increasing lengths are very useful for developing auditory memory, for increased competence in recognition and recall of long utterances of language.

### A. Verbatim Repetition.

The students repeat the cue exactly as given. The drills are useful in teaching subject-verb agreement, adjective-noun order, and word order in general.

Verbatim repetition tends to be very boring for more advanced students; but by increasing the length of the utterances as the students increase in proficiency, the students' memory is challenged and the drills seem to be regarded as games.

Perfect Modals — Negative

(Mechanical)

Listen: I didn't see Judy at the party.

Repeat: She may not have been there -- she had to finish a paper.

Listen: John wasn't in class when it began.

Repeat: He might not have been on time — he overslept this morning.

Listen: I got up late, so I didn't go to the store for a *New York Times*.

Repeat: They might not have had any during the truckers' strike (Bruder 1973:447)

### B. Open-ended Repetition (Chain Drills)

These drills are done individually and each student repeats all the responses prior to his own and adds his own piece of information. Since the students tend to regard them as games, they work well for extra practice on complicated patterns when verbatim repetition might be rejected. The drills also require the students to listen to each other, and attention is diverted from the fact that they are drilling and toward actual use of the language.

*going to future* (Meaningful)

Teacher presents situation: You have \$ 50.00. The stores are having "end-of-season" sales. What are you going to buy?

S1: I'm going to buy (a coat).

S2: I'm going to buy a coat and (a hat).

S3: I'm going to buy a coat, a hat and (a scarf). (Bruder 1973:57).

The following example is a variation of a chain drill in that each student repeats only part of the previous student's answer, as he adds to the information concerning the proposed situation.

*Conditional* (Meaningful)

T: Imagine a situation where it is possible for you to go to New York. Make a series of statements, each of which is based on the preceding one.

S1: If we receive some money, we will go to New York.

S2: If we go to New York, we will go by plane.

S3: If we go by plane, we will arrive at Kennedy Airport.

S4: If we arrive at Kennedy Airport, ... (Krohn 1971:259).

### C. Dialogue Repetition Drills

In these drills a sequence of specified patterns is repeated with minor variations. They are excellent for practice in the changing of tenses, formation of questions and changing word order, as well as for practice in conversational exchanges. The students concentrate on the exchange and forget they are drilling.

*Irregular Past* (Meaningful)

T: He teaches the class every day.

S1: Then he taught the class yesterday.

S2: No, he didn't teach it yesterday.

S1: Why not?

S2: (He was sick).

S1: When *did* he teach it?

S2: He taught it (the day before yesterday).

T: She makes a cake every week.

S1: Then she made a cake last week.

S2: No, she didn't make one last week.

S1: Why not?

S2: (She was busy).

S1: When *did* she make one?

S2: She made one (the week before last).

T: Bill catches up on his sleep every Saturday.

Nancy has a date every weekend.

Chen makes a long distance phone call every Sunday

(Bruder 1973:229).

It is important to recognize drills of this type for what they are, i.e. simply repetitions. However, well done they look impressive and can easily delude an observer into thinking that actual communication is taking place.

## II. DISCRIMINATION DRILLS

Discrimination drills are by nature testing drills, i.e., drills where the correct answer (there is only one) depends on the conscious choice by the student. Discrimination drills are useful when introducing new patterns which vary only slightly from previous patterns (e.g. singular/plural; third person, present perfect/present continuous), and the students must recognize subtle differences for accurate encoding. Very little time should be spent on this type of drill since the students are talking about language rather than using it. However, these drills do reduce the necessity for grammatical explanations; they assure students' grasp of the function of the pattern; and they give valuable practice in listening comprehension in that they serve to focus the students' attention on syntactic cues.

### A. Pattern Recognition

The "same-different" responses are most often found in pronunciation exercises, but can be helpful in determining discrimination of grammatical patterns as well. More common in grammar drills are those in which the student is required to identify the patterns on the basis of some specified feature.

BE — Singular/Plural

(Mechanical-testing)

T: If you hear a sentence in the singular, raise one hand; if plural, raise two hands.

The girl is tall.

S: (1)

The girls are tall.

(2)

The boys are lost.

(2) (Bruder 1973:11).

In order to avoid the linguistic terminology, examples of the patterns are sometimes written on the board and labeled A and B. The students then respond by saying the appropriate letter.

Adjective/Noun	(Mechanical-testing)
A	B
He's an American.	He's American.
You're Brazilians.	You're Brazilian.
She's a Thai.	She's Thai.
We're Arabs.	We're Arab. (Rutherford 1968:4)
(etc.)	

### B. Context Recognition

Similar surface structures may have different underlying deep structures, i.e., similar sounding words and phrases may have different meanings (ex: *whose/who's*). These drills ascertain whether the students have grasped the various functions of such words and phrases, a determination not always possible in drills requiring encoding.

<i>Who's/whose</i>	(Mechanical-testing)
T: Whose book is this?	S: Possession
Who's going downtown?	Person
Whose is this?	Possession
Who's a doctor?	Person
Whose is the VW?	Possession (Bruder 1973:71)

<i>Could</i>	(Mechanical-testing)
T: Could you tell me the time?	S: Request
Could you speak English before you came?	Ability
Could you go tomorrow?	Possibility
Could he come later?	Possibility
Could she cook before she was married?	Ability
Could you lend me a dime?	Request
	(Bruder 1973:384).

### C. Function Coding

Modal Verbs	(Mechanical-testing)
T: go to our friends' party.	(possibility)
S: We might go to our friends' party.	
T: write to my parents	(good idea)
S: I should write to my parents.	

T: pay his bills by Monday	(obligation)
S: He has to pay his bills by Monday	(Bruder 1973:261—262)

These drills might be said to be the reverse of the context recognition drills. Rather than decoding a specific function, the student here has to encode it. Our students find them useful for sorting out the meanings of the various modals.

### III. ALTERNATION DRILLS

These are the drills familiar to all who have used the audio-lingual texts: substitution, transformation, expansion drills and so on. They are all encoding drills which provide the students with practice with the *rules* of the grammar where the purpose is to internalize the structure by practicing the pattern.<sup>4</sup>

#### A. Morpho-lexical Drills

The teaching point of these drills focuses on morphological structure or lexical items like frequency adverbs, prepositions, etc. Some drills combine practice of more than one grammatical feature, and such drills are much more difficult. All of these drills involve manipulation of a single sentence utterance where the constituents<sup>5</sup> remain in the same order and of the same number as in the cue.

##### 1. Single slot substitution

Negative Modal	(Mechanical)
Repeat: I might not go to class today.	I might not go shopping
Substitute: go shopping	S: today.
do the laundry	
finish the lesson	
see John	
have time to do the assignment	(Bruder 1973:259).

Only one constituent is changed throughout the drill. The drills are useful for practicing the word order of difficult patterns or for function words like the frequency adverbs. They also lend themselves to teaching vocabulary. At the beginning stages of language learning, the substituted constituent is likely to be

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the discussion we use Rivors' (1968:100) useful distinction between structure, "the underlying system of principles which determine the observable interrelationships of language elements" and pattern, "a typical combination of interrelationships".

<sup>5</sup> "Constituent" refers to slot and filler in the tagmemic sense.

a single word, but the drills should steadily be made more difficult by increasing the length of the constituent:

- If Clauscs — Condition* (Mechanical)  
 Repeat: John would help the students if he knew the answers to their questions.  
 Substitute: if he could  
 S: John would help the students if he could.  
 Substitute: if he had time  
 S: John would help the students if he had time.  
 Substitute: if he didn't have so much to do  
 S: John would help the students if he didn't have so much to do.  
 Substitute: if he wanted to  
 if someone asked him to  
 if he could understand their English (Bruder 1973:473—474).

## 2. Double slot substitution

- Count Nouns* (Mechanical)  
 Repeat: We don't smoke many cigarettes.  
 Substitute: eat...vegetables S: We don't eat many vegetables.  
 use...eggs tables.  
 read...books  
 (Bruder 1973:121).<sup>6</sup>

In these drills the student changes two constituents from the cue. The drills are for practicing comparison, and for highlighting many structural contrasts.

- Comparison (the same NP as)* (Mechanical)  
 Repeat: My coat is the same size as yours.  
 Substitute: city/size S: My city is the same size as yours.  
 book/price  
 hat/shape  
 car/color (Bruder 1973:395).  
*BE-past+going to+Verb* (Mechanical)  
 T: fly to Paris/fly to London  
 S: I was going to fly to Paris; I'm going to fly to London instead.  
 T: study English/study French  
 S: I was going to study English; I'm going to study French instead.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this kind of drill can cover many more items than a single slot substitution which would be restricted to smokable or edible vocabulary items.

- T: read a novel/read a biography  
 buy a VW/buy a Chevrolet  
 work all day/sleep all day (Bruder 1973:243).

## 3. Multiple slot substitution

Three or more constituents are replaced in the model with each student response. These drills are excellent for practicing comparisons and can be used as problem-solving activities even for quite advanced students, especially if the order of the cues is different from that expected in the response.

- Comparison (the same NP as)* (Mechanical-testing)  
 T: VW/Volvo — size S: My VW is the same size as her Volvo.  
 hat/coat — color My hat is the same color as her coat.  
 novel/short story — length  
 Ford/Oldsmobile — width (Bruder 1973:396).

## 4. Moving slot substitution

With each student response one constituent is changed but it is a different constituent in each response. The drills are very useful for extended practice on verb tenses or virtually any pattern on which the students need extra practice, since the drills are usually regarded as games.

- Past Perfect Continuous* (Mechanical)  
 Repeat: I'd been travelling for three months when I met him.  
 Substitute: working  
 S: I'd been working for three months when I met him.  
 Substitute: two months  
 S: I'd been working for two months when I met him.  
 Substitute: saw  
 S: I'd been working for two months when I saw him.  
 Substitute: her  
 S: I'd been working for two months when I saw her.  
 Substitute: we  
 S: We'd been working for two months when we saw her.  
 Substitute: studying  
 two days  
 them (Bruder 1973:422)

## 5. Correlative substitution

The cue triggers a morphological or syntactic change in the pattern. The drills are excellent for testing the students' ability to encode grammatical relationships such as subject-verb agreement, indefinite article choice, count/

/mass nouns, pronoun forms; in short, any structure which contrasts minimally in its various patterns. All correlative drills are by nature testing drills.

a. Simple

These drills are single slot substitutions which require the student to make some adjustment in another part of the pattern in order to respond correctly.

Indefinite Article (Mechanical-testing)

Repeat: The girl is a student.

Substitute: teacher	S: The girl is a teacher.
artist	The girl is an artist.
-spy	(Bruder 1973:17)

b. Complex

If the student must replace more than two constituents correlative changes add greatly to the complexity of producing the expected response. In the following example, note that a lexical change is also required:

Relative Clauses (Mechanical-testing)

Repeat: The boy who is coming is my brother.

Substitute: boys	S: The boys who are coming are my brothers.
girl	The girl who is coming is my sister.
girls	The girls who are coming are my sisters.
woman	
man	(Bruder 1973:348)

In the following example the students must know the semantic relationship between the items in order to do the drill successfully.

Comparison (*like/the same as*) (Mechanical-testing)

T: Pepsi/Coke	S: Pepsi is like Coke.
autumn/fall	Autumn is the same as fall.
frozen water/ice	Frozen water is the same as ice.
VW/Volvo	A VW is like a Volvo. (Bruder 1973:283).

In the next example, Student 1 must infer from the double cue the expected response in order to postulate the correct question form.

Question Words and Time Expressions (Mechanical-testing)

T: Paris/three weeks	S1: <i>How long</i> were you in Paris?
	S2: I was in Paris <i>for</i> three weeks.
Paris/1965	S1: <i>When</i> were you in Paris?
	S2: I was in Paris <i>in</i> 1965.
Paris/April 5	S1: <i>When</i> were you in Paris?
	S2: I was in Paris <i>on</i> April 5.

London/July 14

Caracas/a month

(Bruder 1973:166)

B. Syntactic Drills

In syntactic drills the student manipulates either the number or the order of the constituents in the cue. The teaching point of these drills tends to involve syntactical relationships of features, such as question formation, formation of negative statements, word order, changes from phrase to clause and from clause to phrase.

1. *Expansion*

Frequency Adverbs (Mechanical-testing)

T: The baby cries. (often)	S: The baby often cries.
He's hungry. (always)	He's always hungry.
There's a nurse in the hall. (usually)	There's usually a nurse...
The girls fight. (never)	The girls never fight
	(Steigletz 1970:32)

Adjective Phrase (Mechanical-testing)

T: The napkins are on the table.	
S: The napkins are on the table.	
T: two	
S: The two napkins are on the table.	
T: paper	
S: The two paper napkins are on the table.	
T: pretty	
yellow	(Dacanay 1967:121)

The student's response contains more constituents than does the model but their relative word order remains the same. These drills are useful for practice on word order in adjective phrases and of frequency adverbs, and for tag questions.

Expansion drills can combine with various kinds of substitution drills, as in the example below in which the student is required to expand the basic NP+BE+NP pattern by adding an adjective of his choice to each NP.

Adjective+Noun (Meaningful)

T: man/lawyer	S: The (big) man is a (bad) lawyer.
women/students	The (thin) women are (good) students.
woman/actress	
men/hairdressers	
children/actors	(Bruder 1973:21)

2. *Completion*

As with the expansion drills, the student's response will contain more constituents than the cue, but in these drills the cue is always just part of an utterance which the student must complete.

- Since/ago* + time expression (Meaningful)
- T: They had an election.  
S: They had an election (a year ago).
- T: They haven't had an election \_\_\_\_\_.  
S: They haven't had an election (since 19—).
- T: She hasn't smoked a cigarette \_\_\_\_\_.  
We saw the new movie \_\_\_\_\_.  
Nancy has read three books (Bruder 1973:320).

## Conjunctions (Meaningful)

- T: He smiled but  
S: He smiled but (refused).
- T: They were laughing and  
S: They were laughing and (telling jokes).
- T: He usually eats here or  
S: He usually eats here or (in a restaurant).
- T: I'll take sugar but  
She went to the door and  
We'll see you on Thursday or (Rutherford 1968:78).

These drills are useful for moving the student away from the extremely structured nature of most of the preceding types of drills to a point where he can begin to express his own thoughts. Completion drills can be used with virtually any pattern, but they are particularly useful for contrasting such structural patterns as conjunctions and time expressions which occur with specific tenses. In the examples above, note that the teaching point of the first drill is the structural relationship, in the second the semantic relationship of the features in the pattern.

3. *Reduction*

These drills are the converse of expansion drills, that is, the order of the constituents remains the same, but the number is fewer in the response than in the cue. They are most common in the practice of pronoun forms and are frequently accompanied by correlative changes as in the second example below.

- Subject Pronouns (Mechanical-testing)
- T: The car is small. S: It's small.  
The girl is beautiful. She's beautiful.

- The man is tall. He's tall.  
The house is big. It's big (Bruder 1973:6).

## Indefinite Pronouns (Mechanical testing)

- T: All of the people are coming. S: Everyone is coming.  
All of the people like Coke. Everyone likes Coke.  
All of the people want clean air. Everyone wants clean air. (Bruder 1973:106).

4. *Transformation*

In transformation drills the order of constituents in the cue is changed in the response. The number of constituents in the cue may also vary from that in the response. The drills can be used to practice tense formations, question and negative formations as well as many noun modifications.

- BE — Question Formation (Mechanical-testing)
- T: You're lost. S: Are you lost?  
He's a good student. Is he a good student?  
She's lost. Is she lost?  
They're good instructors. Are they good instructors? (Bruder 1973:22).

## Noun Modification (Mechanical-testing)

- T: the club for the faculty S: the faculty club  
a room in the dormitory a dormitory room  
delivery of the mail  
the people in the office  
a frame for the picture (Rutherford 1968:46).

## Irregular Past (Meaningful)

- T: They're beginning the program promptly at six today.  
S: (Yesterday) they began it at (five).
- T: She's singing with an orchestra this time.  
S: (Last time) she sang with (only a piano).
- T: The bells usually ring every Sunday at eleven.  
This semester he's sitting in the front of the room.  
They're throwing a big party at their place this weekend. (Rutherford 1968:3).

Of all the types of structural pattern drills, transformation drills vary the widest in degree of difficulty, from very easy ones as in the examples above to the very difficult (from the students' point of view) question formation types found in most audio-lingual texts on any language.

T: John wrote *the letter*.  
S: What did John write?

It seems fairly obvious that the degree of difficulty is directly proportional to the number of changes performed on the cue in order to arrive at the response. Consider the following examples from drills on WH question formation:

a. One change required (movement of the WH word)

T: Did John drive somewhere?  
S: Where did John drive?

b. Two changes required (formation of past question; supply and movement of WH word)

T: John drove somewhere.  
S: Where did John drive?

c. Three changes required (formation of past question; supply and movement of the WH word)

T: John drove home.  
S: Where did John drive?

In all three examples, the student response is the same, but the last is the most difficult because it involves the most operations. In our experience, when a transformation drill has gone astray, it has been because the number of transformations is beyond the ability or training of the students.

### 5. Integration

All of the previous types of drills have involved a single sentence utterance; integration drills require the students to combine two utterances into one, a manipulation which frequently requires some transformation or correlative change in the pattern. Integration drills are useful in practicing conjunction and subordination, relative clause formation and other rather complex structures.

BE + Adj/Adv + Present Participle (Mechanical-testing)

T: Is he busy? Is he doing his assignment?  
S: Is he busy doing his assignment?

T: Are they in the kitchen? Are they eating?  
S: Are they in the kitchen eating?

T: Is she outside? Is she waiting?  
S: Is she outside waiting?

T: Is he sitting? Is he reading?  
Are they at the bank? Are they cashing a check?  
Is she back home? Is she watching TV? (Rutherford 1968:11)

Adjective Phrase (Mechanical-testing)

T: This apartment is cheap. She can rent it.  
S: This apartment is cheap enough for her to rent.

T: This car is big. ( ) can't drive it.  
S: This car is too big for ( ) to drive.

T: These chairs are heavy. We can't lift them.  
S: These chairs are too heavy for us to lift (Bruder 1973:466).

## IV. REPLY

We consider all types of drills which consist of a conversation-like exchange to belong to this category. With these drills it is especially important to keep the class of the drill in mind for it is easy to mistake mechanical manipulation for communicative activity (this type of drill does, however, lend itself well to communicative drills). The drills are important in training the students to interact with others in the foreign language.

### A. Two-stage Drills

In two-stage drills, the exchange is complete following the teacher cue and the student response. The cue may consist of a question or a statement which requires an appropriate controlled or free reply by the student. The reply types of drills are grouped according to the nature of the expected response and the degree of control by the teacher.

#### 1. Short Answer

Much natural language exchange consists of partial utterances or short answers in responses to inquiries. The students must be trained in this usage if they are to sound natural in real conversation and not as if they are still doing language classroom drills.

Tag Question Responses (Mechanical-testing)

T: Big cars increase pollution, don't they? S: Yes, they do.  
He has a VW, doesn't he? Yes, he does.  
You come from Libya, don't you? Yes, I do.  
The weather gets hot, doesn't it? Yes, it does.

Conjunctions (Meaningful/Communicative)

T: Do you have to make a lot of money?  
S: { Yes, I do. { But (I can't).  
          {                   { And (I will).  
          { No, I don't. { But (I hope to).  
                                  { And (I won't).



T: Do you overeat?

S: { Yes, I do. { But (I shouldn't).  
          { And (I like to).  
      { No, I don't. { But (they're always encouraging me to).  
                  { And (I don't ever expect to).

T: Do you ever eat in American homes?

Did you enjoy yourself?

Did they go out of their way to give you a good time?

(Rutherford 1968:157)

## 2. Rejoinder

These drills are useful for training the students in the use of phatic language, the conversational formulas which serve as introductions, leave takings, change of topics, etc.

"By the way" (Meaningful)

T: With an F visa you have a Temporary Entry Permit.

S: By the way, (will they order us to do military service?).

T: Jim Barlett wrote me a nice letter.

S: By the way, (I saw his wife's name in the paper).

T: (Christmas) will soon be here.

I have to see my advisor tomorrow (Rutherford 1968:130)

## 3. Guided Comment or Reply

The student replies to a comment or a question by the teacher, using a specified structure.

Prenominal Modification (Mechanical-testing)

T: What's a service for cashing checks?

S: It's a check-cashing service.

T: What's an operation that consumes time?

S: It's a time consuming operation.

T: What's an operating cost that's high?

S: It's a high operating cost.

T: What's an expert in reading minds?

What's a display that catches the eye? (Rutherford 1968:273)

Comparison (Meaningful)

T: She's 35, but he's 45.

S: He's older than she is.

T: The Hudson is an important river, but the Mississippi is very important.

S: The Mississippi is more important than the Hudson.

T: He made some progress, but she made a lot of progress.

It's easy to go by train, but it's very easy to go by bus  
(Rutherford 1968: 44)

Modals (Perfect) — *must* (Meaningful/Communicative)

T: John slept in until 10:00 this morning.

S: (He must have stayed out late last night.)

(He must have been tired.)

T: Bill and Jim had to break a window to get into their apartment.

S: (They must have lost their key.)

T: When the professor returned the exams, Jane looked sad.

Nancy's mother was angry with her. (Bruder 1973:441—442)

## 4. Comprehension Questions

Questions which test the student's understanding of material he has read or heard are usually more common in reading exercises, but they can be used in the grammar class to check on the comprehension of a dialogue or narrative used to introduce the grammar patterns.

Grammar drills which contain alternative questions are really tests of the student's comprehension.

*in order to/for* (Meaningful/Communicative)

T: What do you go to the post office for, stamps or envelopes?

S: You go to the post office for stamps.

T: What do you go to the bank for, to take out money or to buy tickets?

S: You go to the bank to take out money.

T: Why do you go to school, to study or to have a good time?

S: You go to school to study.

Neither. You go to school to (get an education).

T: What do you go to school for, an education or a good time?

What do you study English for, to get a better job or to be able to communicate? (Rutherford 1968:160)

## 5. Free Response

Free response drills are just that, the student is free to respond as he wants. They lend themselves particularly well to being communicative; although such drills are designed to practice a specific pattern there is no guarantee that the student will actually use the target pattern in his response. As often as not he does, as Rivers points out, because he is uncertain in his knowledge of the language (Rivers 1972:75).

Reflexives (Communicative)

T: What kinds of things do you like to do by yourself?

S: (I like to study alone, but I don't like to eat by myself.)

T: Do you always type your own papers?

Did you come here by yourself?

Do you live alone or do you have a roommate? (Bruder 1973:430)

### B. Three Stage Drills

The cue, either a question or a statement by the teacher, sets up a conversational exchange among the students. The most common of these are the directed dialogues, the "Ask him..." type of exercise. These tend to be in the meaningful and communicative classes of drills, but it is possible by using pictures or objects to construct mechanical-testing drills of this type.

Tenses/time expressions (Mechanical testing)

#### Practice 25 Chart II

1. always Student A: Is he always thirsty?

Student B: No, he isn't always thirsty.

now Student A: Are they busy now?

Student B: No, they aren't busy now.

last night Student A: Was he hungry last night?

Student B: No, he wasn't hungry last night.

tomorrow

always

now

last night

(Lado and Fries 1958:59)

The relative difficulty of these drills depends on the nature of the manipulation from the cue to first response. The example above is an expansion, but note the increased complexity caused by the required transformations in the next example.

Subordinators (Meaningful)

T: Was (Cecelia) standing near the door when you came in?

S1: (Jose), (do you recall) whether (Cecelia) was standing near the door when we came in?

S2: I (didn't notice) whether she was or not.

T: Did today's weather report say anything about rain?

Were you sitting in the right laboratory booth yesterday?

Do New York City and Long Island have different area codes?

(Rutherford 1968:278).

Communicative drills result when the structures for the exchange are not specified in the model. The student gets the information by use of any patterns at his command.

Simple Past (Communicative)

T: Find out when (Ali) called long distance and what kind of call it was?

S1: (When did you call long distance?)

S2: (Last weekend I called Iran.)

S1: (Did you call person-to-person?)

S2: (No, station-to-station.)

T: Find out when ( ) called long distance and who dialed the number, ( ) or the operator.

Find out if ( ) ever called a wrong number long distance and what happened (Bruder 1973:192)

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

We presume that drills can be found which do not fit exactly into any of the categories discussed, but if so, we are reasonably certain that such drills will be combination of the basic types in our typology.<sup>7</sup>

Typologies are boring but so is writing supplementary drills for a bad text. Our intention in this article has been to alert teachers to potential troublespots in different types of drills so that such drills can be avoided or changed and to provide models for facilitating the writing of supplementary drills.

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<sup>7</sup> The drill on p. 144 on Time Expressions is a good example. Actually it belongs with the reply drills, but it is also a double slot substitution.

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