CASE STUDY: APPLICATION OF THE DIDACTIC MODEL OF SOCIO-COGNITIVE THEORY OF LEARNING IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. TEACHING IDIOMS «USED TO – WOULD»

Abstract. The linguistic and cultural diversity within the European Union has created new demands for multilingual European citizens. To meet the new requirements, it is necessary, educational strategies to be designed by those who actively involved in foreign language education in various countries in a new context, which will ensure the "productivity" of learning foreign languages in the implementation of foreign language education. This effort also includes this paper, which introduces the model of socio-cognitive learning theory in the context of the communicative approach to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Especially in this case study, the teaching and learning of the idioms Used to and Would Idioms will be presented by using the Socio-cognitive theory.

Keywords: Socio-cognitive learning, communicative approach, model of two-way determinism, Used to and Would Idioms.

1. General – Problematic - Aim

Language has generally been characterized as a tool of communication between people, the means by which man expresses his feelings and thoughts.

A highly multidimensional phenomenon (both individual and social, multifaceted and heterogeneous)¹, language has been the subject of research from various angles and methodological standards that largely reflect the variety of dimensions from which it can be studied (language theory, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophy), but also the prevailing analysis trends.

¹ Babiniotis (1998, p.19), states about language “Language as a whole is something multifaceted and heterogeneous. Pressing at the same time in various scientific fields - in the physical, the normal, the psychological - still belongs to both the individual and society. So we can't classify it in any category of human events, because we can't discover its unity.”
Thus, it has from time to time been treated as a system of contradictions and
differences in its oral and written form (systematic dimension) (Saussure, 1916 pp.9-15), as an innate mechanism genetically predetermined in man, which is activated in the given language community (genetic, biological dimension) (Chomsky, 1979 p.206), and as a social phenomenon in the context of the social sciences and anthropology in its relation to social parameters and which regulate its forms and uses (sociolinguistic dimension) (Labov, 1971 p.105). At the same time, the language is treated in relation to purely philosophical and cognitive issues that signal its basic dimension of transmitting and decoding messages.

However, new requirements for multilingual European citizens have been created, by promoting and managing linguistic and cultural diversity within the European Union. Satisfaction of the created needs presupposes on the one hand the implementation of a specific language policy plan at the supranational level, and on the other hand, the formation and implementation of a separate foreign language educational policy which ensures the "productivity" of learning foreign languages in the educational institutions of the various states.

This paper is the fruit of raising awareness and addressing these new demands. Satisfaction of these needs has arisen from the design of educational strategies by those actively involved and engaged in foreign language education in various countries. In light of the design of educational strategies to meet the new requirements, the purpose of this article is to introduce the educational model of socio-cognitive learning theory for teaching and learning foreign languages, presenting the case of the teaching of the idioms “Used to” and “Would” where English is taught as a foreign language in the classroom.

2. Goal of foreign language teaching

A foreign language learner² has already developed the ability to think and speak in his/her mother tongue³. It is necessary for him/her to interact with the culture of the foreign language in order to learn to express its ideas, perceptions and opinions.

² Richards (1985, pp. 4-10) gives a brief overview of the nature of foreign language teaching and learning (Language policies and goals, Language curriculum development).
³ Regarding the learning of a foreign language as a second code of communication, see Pappas (2004, p.p. 18-23).
There is an urgent need to promote the process of communicative teaching, so that the student who learns the specific foreign language transmits his own concepts, in the cases, interacting and trying to adapt to the common knowledge and even the linguistic ability of a person that this language is his/her mother tongue.

The approach to the service of the communicative type of teaching, emphasizes the communicative function of the language and tries to create in the students opportunities for functional use of the language code, similar to those they will encounter outside the classroom.

Starting with the gradual approach of communication in teaching, the socio-cognitive theory of learning serves the following purposes in teaching - learning a foreign language:

"a. It offers models for a gradual approach and gradual familiarization with the ideas, values, perceptions, attitudes, ways of thinking and acting of the community that have as a mother tongue the foreign language that the student learns.

b. Directs students to build the mechanisms that contribute to the assimilation of knowledge of the new language system.

c. It helps them with the internal symbolic coding to acquire the ability to deduce from the data of the senses (recruitment of stimuli - information from the sensory organs) in the area of abstract thinking and in programmatic action.

d. With the internal-symbolic representation and the practical repetition, they manage to acquire the ability to use oral and written speech correctly and to conquer all the structures and textures related to semantics, morphology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, phonetic-phonology of the new language system.

e. Finally, with the self-knowledge that students can acquire, they will be able to self-strengthen and feed back through individual and collaborative acquisition and utilization of knowledge” (Pappas, 2004 p.p. 139-140).

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4 The general context of the communicative approach to teaching and learning foreign languages is given by Yule (1985, p. 154).

5 Albert Bandura holds a special place in the psychological theory of "social learning”. This is the learning that is carried out by the observer after monitoring the behavior and the consequences of the actions of the person-model. The social conditions in which this form of learning takes place and the personal-cognitive factors of the individual-observer are components of the so-called "socio-cognitive learning” as formed after the newer research of A. Bandura (Pappas 2004, p. 92).
3. **Basic stages of transition for data conversion into teaching practice**

The formation of the didactic model of socio-cognitive learning\(^6\) requires the transition (Paparizos, 1989 p.26) of linguistic elements and other data to various stages during which their gradual transformation into a didactic act will take place. These successive stages are theory, method and technique, as shown by the following diagram (Mitsis, 1999 p.102):

![Diagram of transfer stages]

The teaching of the second language is based on the theoretical basis of the socio-cognitive theory of learning, the background and philosophy of which is the constant indicator of course and determines the physiognomy of the whole teaching model.

It is noted that, the individual, the behavior and the environmental conditions interact and are determined according to the model of two-way determinism\(^7\).

Given that language is a code by which various functions are implemented, the most important of which is communication, the socio-cognitive theory of learning includes the following positions: first, communication is made with language, and second, the main goal of language teaching is to develop students’ ability to communicate effectively in the new code, that is, students will be able to adapt their speech to the environment and the conditions under which they communicate. Language is also seen as a social process, as a way of creating interpersonal

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\(^6\) Regarding the transition from the didactic model of the socio-cognitive theory of learning to the teaching of a foreign language, see Pappas (2004, p.p. 134-208).

\(^7\) For the model of two-way determinism or tripartite reciprocity, see Bandura (1986).
relationships and expressing emotions. Therefore, integrated language teaching takes into account the social character of the language and relies on it. Students need to connect with each other, to build friendly relationships within the classroom that becomes a student community.

According to the above diagram, the stage of the transition from theory to method follows. The method is the result of the background defined by the theory and includes the organization in a systematic set of principles of the data of the theory. The method includes the following data, which are analyzed according to the data of socio-cognitive learning:

“a. The general and specific objectives of language teaching.
   b. The selection and prioritization criteria of the language material.
   c. The teaching activities, ways and means by which the principles of theory could be implemented (e.g. dialogue, communication activity, group work, individual, etc.).
   d. The role of the teacher and the student in the whole teaching process.
   e. The audiovisual media, their choice, use and role” (Mitsis, 1999 p.103).

The last stage of transition to teaching practice is the technique, which is interwoven with the specific method and is implemented with specific activities during the teaching process.

The technique includes:

“a. The teaching phases.
   b. The observed behavior and reactions during the application of the method.
   c. The interaction of teaching factors (students-teacher-material).
   d. The media used and their effectiveness (material-manuals-audio-visual media).
   e. The evaluation of teaching (assessment of teaching work - gaps - possible adjustments and improvements)” (Mitsis, 1999 p.104).

4. Application of the teaching model of socio-cognitive learning in teaching English: Idioms ‘used to’ - would’

4.1. Class

The course is given to students of the 3rd Regular Class (5th year of study). The students are aged 12-14 and all have the same mother tongue. In the previous
years, the time system of the past (Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, Present Perfect Continuous and Past Perfect) have already been taught to a large extent, which they use with relative ease. Also, they have recently learned the difference between State and Activity verbs. Although they speak English fluently, they have difficulty understanding audio text if they do not see it written in front of them. They also have room to improve their pronunciation. There are no significant level differences between students.

4.2. Teaching Objectives

a. Grammar
I. Teaching: used to and would + infinitive.
II. In which cases they are used. Comparison with other past tenses.
III. Differences between the two idioms

b. Skills
I. Oral Speech: Difference “used to” from “use”.
II. Written Speech: Practical training in the use of these phenomena.

4.3. General idea

The problem of the use of the idioms “used to” and “would + infinitive” will be approached through an autobiographical excerpt, in which the author (comedian Groucho Marx) recalls his childhood. The text, which is part of a more general section on literary genres, is expected to arouse students' interest because it is humorous. Working on the basis of the text, the general principles of the use of idioms will be taught first (Problem A) and then their differences (Problem B). At the same time, the goal is to practice the acoustic comprehension of text.

4.4. General principles of use of idioms "used to - would"

Present Simple and Present Continuous tenses have been repeated with several exercises to clarify possible gaps and recall details about the use of these tenses.

4.4.1. Before the lesson

The Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect Tenses have been repeated with several exercises, in order to clarify possible gaps and to recall details about the use of these Tenses.
4.4.2. **Link to the previous ones**

In a previous lesson, the types of literature were discussed. The teacher asks the students to tell him what their favorite species is, and to justify their answer. In this way the consolidation of the taught vocabulary is checked.

The teacher directs the discussion in the humorous short story - or autobiography - and asks the students if they know Groucho Marx. Following their expected negative response, he cites some biographical information. It would be ideal to present in the Video short excerpts from comedian works, such as Duck Soup (1933), or A Night at the Opera (1935), although this is difficult, given the time constraints presented in teaching practice. However, it offers an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the American accent in a pleasant way.

4.4.3. **Introduction**

a. After the discussion, students are given a photocopied booklet containing an excerpt from the comedian's autobiography. This excerpt is also contained in the students' book, but in the photocopies it is given slightly modified. In particular, selected keywords are deleted, including several used to and would + infinitive, as well as the infinitive that follow these clauses. Students are asked to fill in these blanks by listening to the text on a tape. After students have listened to the tape once, they are divided into groups of four and compare their answers. Then the answers are checked and the team with the fewest mistakes is praised.

b. General text comprehension questions are asked and vocabulary is explained.

4.4.4. **Phase 1 (The problem is posed)**

The teacher points out some answers in which there is the idiom used to or would + infinitive and asks the students to interpret it.

4.4.5. **Phase 2 (Solution of the problem)**

a. Students are divided into groups of four, and are encouraged to find similar idioms in the text, which they emphasize. During this process the teacher walks around the classroom, helping and guiding. An attempt is made, through the praise of the model-students, for the discussion to take place in second communication Code (C2) (English in our case), although this is not always easy in a linguistically
homogeneous classroom. At the end, the findings are read in class by a representative of each group.

b. The teacher asks the students if they can explain the use of idioms. In case the students find it difficult to formulate even a rough rule, he directs their thoughts by formulating the following questions:

I. Is the writer talking about the past or the present?

II. Is the writer describing something that happened once or more frequently in the past?

III. Is this activity continuing in the present, or has it stopped?

4.4.6. Phase 3 (Formulation of Principle)

Based on the above questions, or other valid remarks of the students, the first rule regarding the use of idioms is formulated. It is pointed out to students where they can find this rule in their books. Idioms are contrasted with other past tenses, especially Past Simple. Students are asked questions to see if they understand the rule.

4.4.7. Phase 4 (Induction verification)

Students, working again in groups, look up the previously highlighted examples and verify the rule. The differences with other past times are explored again. The teacher asks each group to turn some examples into other tenses and the other students are asked to identify differences in usage.

4.4.8. Phase 5 (Application)

a. Students are given a multiple choice exercise, in which they must choose the appropriate type of verb each time, depending on the meaning of the sentence. The selection criteria should be the questions mentioned above (Phase 2b). The exercise is done individually, but does not take the form of an examination. The teacher walks around the classroom helping the students. Students who finish early undertake to help others. Of course in this role can be used only students who inspire confidence who have consolidated the subject and who are also accepted as role models by the rest of the class. The teacher makes sure that these students do not give the answers as they are, but guide the others. At the end, the exercise is checked.
b. After this exercise, the students, working in pairs, write five sentences about activities they had previously engaged in, or about their memories. If difficulties arise, the teacher can direct the activity, asking students to write 5 sentences that begin with the phrase "When I was a baby...". This variant of the exercise is more enjoyable for students, but limits their initiative, and is not appropriate unless there are serious difficulties with the other form. Again the teacher walks around the classroom helping the students to express their thoughts. In general, it provides them with vocabulary, acting as a source of information (teacher as a resource center), but at the same time encourages them to express themselves in a simple and clear way, using their knowledge. Then groups of four are formed (in pairs), and the best four sentences are chosen, which are read one by one. There is a short critique by the teacher and the students based on the grammatical and phonetic correctness of each sentence. These suggestions are recorded for future use. The same goes for sentences in which would + infinitive is used incorrectly instead of used to.

4.4.9. Phase 6 (Evaluation / Feedback)

a. Students are given an exercise similar to that of paragraph 4.4.8.a, which they must solve on their own. This can be done either in class, if there is time, or at home. Students are asked to write down their answers on separate pages, which are collected by the teacher. Then the exercise is checked as above and possible problems are identified.

b. On the same page, students are asked to rate the new grammar phenomenon on a scale of 1 to 5 based on its difficulty, and to explain which points they have not understood well. This assessment can also be done anonymously, at the discretion of the teacher.

4.5. Similarities and differences between idioms “used to – would”

4.5.1. Before the lesson

The distinction between State and Activity verbs has already been taught. If time allows, it would be good to do a short repetition of the two phenomena, in the form of an exercise in which students are asked to fill in the blanks of a sentence, placing the verbs at the appropriate time.
4.5.2. Introduction - Link to the previous ones

In a previous lesson the general principles of use of the idioms used to and would + infinitive have been taught, through an autobiographical text. The teacher asks general comprehension questions of the text, which the students are asked to answer using the idioms used to and would + indefinite. At the same time, the taught vocabulary is examined. Students' answers are checked based on their grammar and pronunciation. Students' answers are recorded.

4.5.3. Phase 1 (The problem is posed)

The teacher gives the students the correct answers and compares them with sentences in which the would + infinitive has been used incorrectly instead of the used to. In this phase it is possible to use suggestions produced by the students themselves during the implementation phase in the previous lesson. It is pointed out that the two idioms are not interchangeable in all cases and students are asked to identify the differences.

4.5.4. Phase 2 (Solution of the problem)

Students are divided into groups of four and encouraged to circle the idioms contained in the examples. They are also asked to underline the verbs that follow. Next, they are asked to put the verbs in two columns, depending on the idiom with which they are written. These tasks can be done in parallel by different members of each group, if students have experience in group work. This exercise does not present particular difficulties, so the teacher can focus on the correct use of C2.

4.5.5. Phase 3 (Formulation of Principle)

Using the tables they have drawn up, students should have no difficulty in formulating the following rule: "State Verbs cannot follow + infinitive", or some other equivalent. By giving appropriate examples, the teacher helps the students to clarify that the idiom "used to" can be used with all verbs. Students are instructed where in their books they can find these rules. The following are questions for students to understand the rule.

4.5.6. Phase 4 (Induction verification)

Students, working in groups, refer to Groucho Marx's autobiographical text in which they have already highlighted a large number of examples and verify the rule.
The teacher assigns a paragraph to each group for the students to explore whether each case would + infinitive be replaced with used to and vice versa.

**4.5.7. Phase 5 (Application)**

a. Students are given an exercise in which 10 grammatically incorrect sentences are listed and asked to correct them and justify their answer. The students work in pairs and then each pair compares their answers with another. The presence of at least one good student per fours is expected to serve as a model. The teacher walks around the classroom intervening and helping the students in the places where they have difficulty. However, at this stage the teacher does not correct any mistakes, a task which he assigns to the model-students. At the end, the exercise is checked by the whole class.

b. Students are then presented with two photographs depicting the same subject, one from the past and one recent (e.g., two views of the city's main square, or two scenes from family life). This can ideally be done with a telescope or slide projector. If this is not possible, book photos can be used interchangeably. Students, working in pairs, are asked to compare the two images using idioms. If difficulties arise, the teacher can direct the activity by giving keywords around which the comparison will revolve. Otherwise, the teacher walks around the classroom giving vocabulary and helping students to express their thoughts in a grammatically correct way. It is pointed out to the students that the aim is not the elaborate style and the long speech, but simple and understandable sentences. Next, groups of four are formed (in pairs) and the best eight sentences are selected, which the students read. The sentences are evaluated by the teacher but also by the students based on their grammatical and phonetic correctness.

c. Based on the photos, there is a brief discussion with the students about the changes in society over time. Different eras are compared and students are asked to answer what period they would like to live in and why. The weakest students are encouraged to comment on the views of model-students.

**4.5.8. Phase 6 (Evaluation / Feedback)**

Students are given a multiple choice exercise, in which they must choose the appropriate type of verb each time, depending on the meaning of the sentence. The
correct answers include the idioms used to and would + infinitive but also past Tenses (Past Simple, Present Perfect). The exercise should be solved by the students themselves either in the classroom, if there is time, or at home. Students are asked to write down their answers on separate pages, which are collected by the teacher.

Students are asked to rate the new grammar phenomenon on a scale based on its difficulty as Simple, Moderate, Difficult or Very Difficult. Also, the main points of the unit are listed (distinction Past Simple-used to, used to-would + infinitive, state-activity verbs, etc.) and students are encouraged to say which of them they consider to be the most problematic. This assessment can also be done anonymously, at the discretion of the teacher.

Based on the control and self-assessment exercises, but also the general performance of the students in the classroom, conclusions are drawn regarding the consolidation of the phenomenon, which are communicated to the students. Also, it is repeated, where necessary.

References:
