

# CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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## CASE STUDY: THE DIDACTIC MODEL OF SOCIO-COGNITIVE THEORY OF LEARNING IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. TEACHING STATE AND ACTIVITY VERBS

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### ABSTRACT

*Language has generally been characterized as a tool of communication between people, the mean by which man expresses his feelings and thoughts. It 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 but also the prevailing analysis trends. Language is also seen as a social process, as a way of creating interpersonal relationships and expressing emotions. Therefore, integrated language teaching takes into account the social character of the language and relies on it. 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. 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 the opportunities for functional use of the language code, similar to those they will encounter outside the classroom. Students need to connect with each other to build friendly relationships within the classroom that becomes a student community. 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.*

**Key Words:** *socio-cognitive learning, communicative approach, model of two-way determinism, State and Activity Verbs*

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## INTRODUCTION

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

A highly multidimensional phenomenon (both: individual and social, multifaceted and heterogeneous)<sup>1</sup>, 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.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Babinotis (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”.

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 State and Activity Verbs where English is taught as a foreign language in the classroom.

## GOAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

A foreign language learner<sup>2</sup> has already developed the ability to think and speak in his/her mother tongue<sup>3</sup>. 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. 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 the opportunities for functional use of the language code, similar to those they will encounter outside the classroom<sup>4</sup>.

Starting with the gradual approach of communication in teaching, the socio-cognitive theory of learning<sup>5</sup> 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

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<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the learning of a foreign language as a second code of communication, see Pappas (2004, p.p. 18-23).

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

<sup>5</sup> 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).

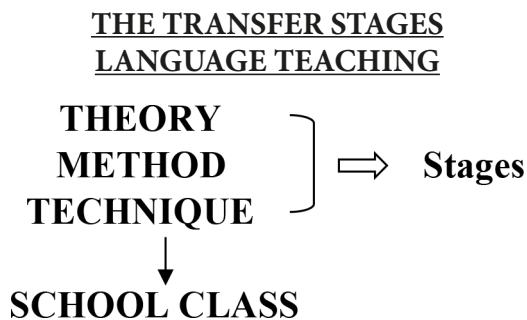
from the sensory organs) in the area of abstract thinking and in programmatic action.

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 feedback through individual and collaborative acquisition and utilization of knowledge” (Pappas 2004, p.p. 139-140).

### **BASIC STAGES OF TRANSITION FOR DATA CONVERSION INTO TEACHING PRACTICE**

The formation of the didactic model of socio-cognitive learning<sup>6</sup> 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):



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<sup>7</sup>.

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

<sup>6</sup> 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).

<sup>7</sup> For the model of two-way determinism or tripartite reciprocity, see Bandura (1986).

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 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 (eg 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).

## **APPLICATION OF THE TEACHING MODEL OF SOCIO-COGNITIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH: TEACHING STATE AND ACTIVITY VERBS**

### ***1. Class***

The course is held for students of the B' Class (4th year of study). Students are 11-13 years old. It is noted that most students know their mother tongue empirically. So far, several tenses have been taught (Present Simple / Continuous, Past Simple / Continuous), which students use without significant difficulty, but often form incorrect types by putting State verbs in Duration tenses (e.g. \* Mother is having a headache), on the grounds that it is a temporary situation. The Class is relatively homogeneous in terms of knowledge, although there are few exceptions in both directions.

## **2. Teaching Objectives**

### **a. Grammar**

- I. Distinction between State and Activity Verbs.
- II. Proper use of these verbs at appropriate tenses: Past Perfect. Comparison with other past tenses.

### **b. Skills**

- I. Oral Speech: Practice the correct use of the / ŋ / phoneme at the end -ing.
- II. Written Speech: Practical practice in the use of verbs.

## **3. General Idea**

The problem of using State and Activity Verbs can be approached through a text that contains a large number of verbs of both types in both Present Simple and Present Continuous. Students are asked to point out the peculiarities in the use of each verb. The text, which deals with holidays in the Himalayan Mountains, is expected to arouse students' interest, as it will be taught in mid-December. At the same time, with the distinction between State and Activity Verbs, the large number of verbs in Present Continuous will be used to practice the use of the vowel / ŋ / in the suffix -ing, a vowel problematic in the majority of students, who are taught English as foreign language.

## **4. Before the Lesson**

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.

## **5. Connection with the Previous Lessons**

In previous lessons, there has been talk of various sports and leisure activities. The teacher asks the students to talk to him about the activities they are involved in. In this way, the taught vocabulary is repeated and its consolidation is checked.

The teacher directs the discussion to mountaineering and asks if some students have dealt with it. There is a brief discussion about the difficulties of the sport, the emotions it offers and the equipment required. As part of the discussion, keywords of the text are taught. Moreover, some questions are posed, he answers to which will be found in the text.

## **6. Introduction**

After the discussion, the students are divided in groups of 2 people, with the criterion that there is a weak but willing student in the group, and that the second student is someone more capable so that he can help the weak student of the group. With the class divided in this way, students are asked to read the text, answer the questions and put italics in each paragraph. It is explained to the students that the aim is not to understand every word of the text, but

the general meaning. During this activity, the teacher walks around the classroom and explains keywords, where required. He also intervenes correctively in places where he believes there is a risk of misinterpretation of the text.

The students then read the text in paragraphs, while the teacher intervenes in moderation to correct the students' pronunciation, insisting on the phoneme / η / . At the end of each paragraph the teacher asks general understanding questions, explains the essential vocabulary and solves any questions. Then, the students read the italics of the paragraphs and the best one is chosen, based on its grammatical correctness, completeness and brevity.

### ***7. Phase 1 (The problem is posed)***

The teacher divides the class into groups of four people, making sure that they are as homogeneous as possible and that there is at least one good student in each of the groups that serves as a model-student. In each group, he assigns two paragraphs of the text and asks them to underline all the verbs and classify them into two columns depending on the time in which they are (Present Simple or Continuous). If it is a simple task, it is possible to save time if these two tasks are performed in parallel by different members of each group.

The teacher then asks the students to replace the verbs in Present Simple, turning them into Continuous. Motivations are given to the team that will finish first without mistakes. Again, it is advisable to divide tasks within each group. The teacher checks for errors in the formation of tense (e.g. \*They are going), but does not intervene if a state verb is used in Continuous tense (e.g. \*He is understanding).

Students are asked to read the sentences and check pronunciation. Suggestions containing State verbs are listed on the board and students are told that these verbs cannot be placed in Duration tense. Students who are always working in groups are asked to classify verbs into categories and guess why they cannot be used in Duration tense.

### ***8. Phase 2 (Solution of the problem)***

Students, working in groups of four, place verbs in categories. During this process the teacher walks around the classroom helping and guiding. If necessary, the teacher, guide students' thought, by telling them to classify verbs into the following categories: Feelings, Thoughts, Being, Having and Senses. He also encourages them to consider whether these verbs describe an act or a situation. At the end, the findings are read to the class by representatives of each group.

### ***9. Phase 3 (Formulation of Conclusions)***

With the help of the teacher, the students are led to formulate the following conclusions:

I. In English, Verbs can be divided into two groups: Verbs of Activity and Verbs of State.

II. Activity Verbs can be found in all tenses, but State Verbs are usually not found in Continuous tenses.

III. State Verbs can describe the following things: Feelings, Thoughts, Being, Having, Senses

The teacher checks the comprehension of the rule, asking the students to give him examples.

#### **10. Phase 4 (Induction verification)**

Students, working again in groups, return to the text and check the correctness of their conclusions in the other paragraphs. At the same time, students are enriching their boards with other State Verbs. The teacher moves from group to group, assigning in each one, time substitutions for different verbs of both categories.

#### **11. Phase 5 (Application)**

Students are given an exercise in which 10 grammatically incorrect sentences are given and they are asked to correct them and justify their answer. The exercise is done individually, but each student is asked to check the answers of his neighbor. The correctness of their answer is checked, based on the rules formulated above. The teacher walks around the classroom helping the students and solving any questions that may arise in practice. Students who finish early and are accepted in the role of the student-model, by the rest of the class can help the teacher in this task. In the case that these students are used in this way, the teacher makes sure that these students do not give the answers as they are, but only to guide the others. The exercise is then checked, during which the students read the correct answers.

After this exercise, the students, working in pairs, solve an exercise in which they have to complete some sentences by placing the verb in the appropriate case tense. Alternatively — and if required by the class level — this exercise can take the form of multiple choice. The exercise is done and checked in the same way. The pronunciation is checked uninterrupted throughout the application phase.

#### **12. Phase 6 (Evaluation / Feedback)**

Students are given a series of exercises similar in form to those in the above paragraph. These exercises should be solved by students individually either in class or at home, depending on the time available. In any case, students are asked to write down their answers on separate pages that the teacher collects. Then the exercises are checked as in the application phase and possible problems are pointed out.

On the same page, students are asked to classify the new grammatical 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 made anonymously, at the discretion of the teacher.



Based on the check and self-assessment exercises, but also the general performance of the students in the classroom, conclusions are drawn about the consolidation of the phenomenon, which are communicated to the students. Furthermore, it is repeated at the points where this is deemed necessary.

## CONCLUSIONS

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.

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, it is introduced the educational model of socio-cognitive learning theory for teaching and learning foreign languages, presenting the case of the teaching of State and Activity Verbs where English is taught as a foreign language in the classroom.

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## **КЕЙС-МЕТОД: ДИДАКТИЧНА МОДЕЛЬ СОЦІАЛЬНО-КОГНІТИВНОЇ ТЕОРІЇ НАВЧАННЯ ПІД ЧАС ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ. ВИ- КЛАДАННЯ ДІЄСЛІВ СТАНУ ТА ДІЇ**

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*Спілкування — це зв'язок між людьми, а мова — його інструмент, що допомагає людині виразити свої почуття та думки. Саме мову досліджують з різних сторін та методологічних засад, які значною мірою відображають різноманітність вимірів, дозволяють краще досліджувати мову та проаналізувати її основні тенденції. Мову розглядають як соціальний процес, що створює міжособистісні стосунки а також є засобом вираження емоцій. Тому інтегроване навчання в процесі вивчення мови враховує та спирається на соціальний характер мови. Мовне та культурне різноманіття в межах Європейського Союзу створило нові вимоги до багатомовних європейських громадян. Для того, щоб відповідати новим принципам, необхідно, розробляти освітні стратегії тим, хто бере активну участь у навчанні іноземних мов у різних країнах та у новому контексті. Це забезпечить «продуктивність» вивчення іноземних мов при впровадженні іншомовної освіти. Таким чином, існує нагальна потреба сприяти процесу комунікативного навчання, щоб студент, який вивчає іноземну мову, у процесі взаємодії з іншими студентами, ділився своїми ідеями. У окремих випадках, такий підхід дозволить адаптуватися до практичних знань та засвоювати іноземну мову як рідну. Комунікативне викладання іноземної мови підкреслює комунікативну функцію мови та дозволяє студентам в процесі спілкування побудувати дружні відносини. Стаття містить модель теорії соціально-когнітивного навчання в контексті комунікативного підходу до викладання та вивчення іноземних мов.*

**Ключові слова:** соціально-когнітивне навчання, комунікативний підхід, модель двостороннього детермінізму, дієслова стану та дії.

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