

**ГРАММАТИКА: ОПИСАНИЕ ПРИВЫЧЕК В ПРОШЛОМ ПРИ
ПОМОЩИ USED TO И WOULD НА УРОВНЕ А2-В1**

**GRAMMAR: TEACHING A2-B1 LEARNERS TALKING ABOUT PAST
HABITS WITH *USED TO* AND *WOULD***

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Аннотация: статья освещает особенности обучения слушателей уровня А2-В1 описанию привычек в прошлом, подробно описывая варианты значения, формы, произношения и употребления *past simple*, *used to* и *would*. Статья также затрагивает возможные проблемы усвоения данных конструкции у русскоговорящих слушателей и возможные пути их решения.

Ключевые слова: обучение, низкий уровень, привычки в прошлом, грамматика английского языка, простое прошедшее время.

Abstract: the article deals with helping lower level learners with talking about past habits with *used to*, *would*, *past simple*; focusing on meaning, form, function and use of these structures. It also describes possible problems of acquiring these structures by Russian speakers and possible solutions to these problems.

Key words: teaching, lower level, past habits, English grammar, *past simple tense*.

The main topic of this assignment is one of the systems – grammar. The focus is on helping lower level learners share past habits. In this assignment I will describe the *past simple tense*, *would* and *used to*, however, Parrott states that ‘We often teach *used to* at an elementary level, introducing it as a way of talking about discontinued past habits. We usually teach the use of *would* (to refer to past events) at a much later stage.’ [10: 252]. Lower level learners comprise learners from elementary to intermediate levels.

From my experience of teaching lower level learners in different contexts (from pre-A1 to C1 levels, Business English, Academic English, General English), I can say that the simple past tense in general and *used to/would* in particular present difficulties for lower level learners, as they tend to avoid using *used to/would* even if they know them. Even students who have good control of the language and tend to be accurate lack a natural element and their speech becomes less interesting. Parrott also emphasizes the fact that ‘Many learners avoid using

used to and *would* to refer to the past even when they are confident about how to do this.’ [10: 250].

Challenges students generally face with *used to* / *would* will be examined and practical classroom suggestions for these challenges will be discussed.

ANALYSIS

General information

Meaning of the past simple tense (short overview)

Past time (as a philosophical entity) exists in most of cultures and therefore languages, however, past tenses (as a linguistic entity) exist not in all languages (e.g. there is no past tense in Chinese). The past simple tense describes actions that happened before now and is used to talk about a lot of things, e.g. simple completed actions, a series of events before now, story-telling, narratives and **past habits**. The last of these is of primary interest to us.

In English the past simple tense is used ‘to talk about many kinds of past events: short, quickly finished actions and happenings, longer situations, and repeated events.’ [6: 416]

The simple past is used

- in story-telling,
- when we are telling people about past events
- with reference to finished periods and moments of time. (ibid.)

FORM OF THE PAST SIMPLE TENSE

The past simple tense is inflected with *-ed* for regular verbs, irregular verbs have their own past forms.

The affirmative form of the past simple tense:

Subject + base form of the verb + -ed

I worked yesterday.

The question form:

Did + Subject + Base form of the verb.

Did you go out yesterday?

The negative form.

Subject + Did + not + base form of the verb

He did not (didn't) want to come.

The past simple tense is one of the most common forms in English and it must be taught as soon as possible [8]. This form is used in all genres of writing (from news to fiction) as well as in conversations (e.g. to tell stories, speak about past habits).

Students at lower levels still have problems with the simple past tense, although they are aware of its meaning, form and function. In my experience they might still have problems with forming interrogative and negative forms, or avoid using the past simple completely in fluent speech.

PRONUNCIATION

Lower level learners still have problems with pronunciation of the endings for past simple tenses (/d/, /ɪd/, /t/) for regular verb endings. This is especially true for Russian learners, who are used to pronouncing voiceless consonants at the end of the words.

Learners also need training in pronunciation of connected speech.

e.g. I lived in France 10 years ago.

*/aɪlɪfɪnfra:ns[...]/

Correct: /aɪ'lɪvdɪn'fra:ns'tenjeəzə'gəʊ/

Liaison of the sound /ʒ/ in question forms.

e.g. Did you live in France?

/'dɪdʒju:lɪvɪn'fra:ns/

Elision of sounds /d/ and /t/ in negative forms and liaison of the sound /j/ between *eat* and *apples*

I didn't eat apples.

/aɪ'dɪni:t'jæplz/

USED TO AND WOULD

Both *used to* and *would* are used as ways of referring to the past.

MEANING

Parrott says that 'we use *used to* and *would* as alternatives to the past simple in describing habits and repeated actions which took place over a period of time (and which often then ceased)'. [10: 250-251].

Lewis gives one of the most complete descriptions of the meaning of *used to* in the following way:

'[...] the defining characteristics are:

- (i) the statement *was true* for a *period* in the past.
- (ii) For a period subsequent to that during which the statement was true, the statement was *not* true.

In most cases this second period will include the point now, but this is not necessarily the case. It is, for example, possible for an elderly person who has just moved back to the town of their childhood to say: *It's so nice to be back. I used to live here when I was a child, you know.* The form differs from the remote form in

that examples of *used to* refer to two times – that during which the statement was true, and that during which it was not. [9: 73]

There are some limitations of the use in statements referring to the past:

Used to is mainly used to describe ‘actions, temporary/repeated states, permanent states’ [10: 251].

e.g. *I used to go skiing* (action)

I went. It was a habit. I stopped going skiing at some point in the past. I don’t go skiing now.

I used to have a Citroen C5 (state)

It was true in the past that I had Citroen C5. At some point I sold it. Now I don’t have Citroen C5.

Used to is used for a non-specific time and introduces a new topic.

I used to buy that stuff but it’s a waste of money, you know. (ibid).

Would is used ‘to describe repeated states which are temporary and related to a particular context, even if they continue over an extended period of time.’ [10: 251]

e.g. My friends and I would go to dances on Saturday nights.

FORM OF USED TO

First of all we have to point out that *used to* has no present form (and no progressive, perfect, infinitive or –ing forms). To talk about present habits the simple present tense is usually used.

Although some linguists present it as *used+infinitive* most linguists refer to it as *Used to + base form*. This may be explained by the way we pronounce the whole phrase /ju:stə/ and not */ju:st tə/

The affirmative sentence structure may be presented in the following way:

Subject + used to + base form of the verb

I used to go skiing.

This modal auxiliary occurs only in the past tense.

The negative and question forms are:

Subject+ didn’t use to + base form

I didn’t use to go abroad a lot.

Here it should be mentioned that linguists do not state this clearly, but the most common way of expressing negation is through using *never used to* rather than *didn’t used to* [2: 113].

Did + Subject + used to + verb in a base form

Did you use to wear fur coats?

Swan, however, emphasizes that in formal style , *used to ...* can have the forms of modal auxiliary verb, especially in British English.

‘*I used not to* like opera, but now I do

Used you to play football at school?’ [5: 604]

Sometimes negative and question forms are spelt

Didused to?

..... didn’t used to

‘But many people consider these spellings incorrect’ (ibid).

FORM OF WOULD

Would functions as a modal auxiliary and its form is the following

Subject+ would + base form of the verb

It does not change with number or person. Very often in spoken language *would* is contracted to ‘*d*:

I’d go to the forest in summer to pick berries.

The question form may be presented as

Would + Subject + base form of the verb

Would you invite boys to your birthday parties when you were at school?

Negative sentence:

Subject + would + not + base form of the verb

I *wouldn’t* stand up in front of the class in my Physics lessons.

PRONUNCIATION OF USED TO AND WOULD

With respect to phonology, *used to* is reduced to /ju:stə/ in connected speech. It is different from the pronunciation of the verb to use /ju:z/ even though the spelling is the same

Would is often reduced to /d/ as in *I’d* /aid/ or /wʊ/ as in *I would go* /aiwʊgəʊ/

Both *used to* and *would* are not stressed in connected speech.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WOULD AND USED TO

- In meaning

Would is used to convey psychological ‘remoteness’, with a feeling of nostalgia and longing. *Used to* emphasizes the repetitive aspect of a regular activity. [10]

- In usage:

	Used to	would
Actions	√	√
Temporary/repeated states	√	√

Permanent states	√	
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We see that according to Parrott [10: 251] the use of *used to* and *would* is almost interchangeable, except for permanent states.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Avoidance

From my teaching pre-intermediate learners I can say that learners usually avoid using *used to* or *would* even if they know these structures, due to the convenience of using the simple past for descriptions of past habits or lack of awareness of the differences between the past simple and *used to*.

Solutions

- Creating the need for the use by raising awareness and contrasting past simple and *used to*. I give them two texts about different people one of whom lives in France and the other *used to* live in France, and then I ask learners questions like ‘Who used to live in France?’ and ‘Who lives in France’ This activity helps learners realize the need to use *used to* and the difference between past simple and *used to*. They have to look back into the texts to find the proof for their answers. At the end of the activity Ls may distinguish between the meaning of the past simple and *used to* [7].

- I like all guided discovery activities where learners are given some sentences with *used to* and the past simple tense and they answer questions on meaning and form of these two structures where they have to attribute the question with a definite structure, by doing this they start discriminating the target structures. This activity works well for raising awareness and practicing *used to* and the past simple tense, especially with adult mature learners who like grammar to be logical and comprehensible. [2]

- ‘School Reunion’ activity works well [3], it is a role play, where they all left school many years ago, they meet and try to find out the changes in their lives, by remembering who used to do what in their school years. This activity is aimed at practicing *used to*, drawing learners’ attention to the correct use/misuse of the structure. This will help learners become aware of their personal use/misuse of the structure and will trigger cognitive use of it. This type of activity works well with General English learners whose main aim is communication or speaking. As learners will use the target structure many times talking about different people, they will practice the pronunciation of it as well.

Over-use of *used to*

Once learners are confident with the use of *used to* we face another problem – overuse of this structure.

Solutions

- Present students with a narrative where *used to* is used, and ask them to count how many times they meet *used to*. (depending on the text they will meet *used to* once only). This activity will raise awareness in learners about the quantity of *used to* in a story/ text. This activity is suitable for any learning context and works quite well.

- One of the ways that my pre-intermediate University students love and which is helpful is Cheating dictation. The main idea is similar to that of the Dictogloss, the difference is that in the cheating dictation learners get the text with dashes for every letter in a word (e.g. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _). Which stands for *I used to go to school*). T reads the text twice and students should reconstruct the text. The variation of this activity could be putting the first letters in words containing more than three letters. This activity will help learners become aware of the spelling and get more practice in coping with the overuse of the structure, because the target structure is used in the text only once [1].

Pronunciation of *used to*

This problem is quite a common one for lower level learners, who tend to pronounce it as /ju:st tə/ or /ju:stu:/, the latter one is typical of Russian speakers.

Solution

The best solution for this problem is drilling. It works well. I use different types of drills

- choral repetition of model sentences. This works well if it is drilled from the end of the sentences, students find this way of doing things funny, it helps learners build confidence as they feel secure not being caught on spot. Work on pronunciation works better with University students, however Business English adult learners find it childish, so in a BE context I use individual work on pronunciation.

- “Mumble” drilling, when students repeat the model sentence together with the teacher. This helps learners to keep the rhythm of speech and focus on connected speech. Then this kind of repetition may be followed by individual repetition.

Substitution of *used to* by *be used to V-ing*.

My students very often do not differentiate between these two structures. This problem may occur if these two structures were taught at the same time or at some time distance from each other and learners forgot which is which. This

problem needs regular attention as it may emerge again with time. This problem occurs mainly with stronger students or at a 'higher level' of the lower level learners, who are aware of *be used to + -ing*.

Solution

- Provide additional practice for one of the structures (*used to* and *be used to V-ing*) without mixing it with the other at one lesson and the other one at some other lesson. The most important thing in these lessons should be the context, so that fossilization happens within the right context. Expose students to different contexts exemplifying this or that structure as much as possible to provide the reinforcement movement input -> uptake -> output. This type of practice will raise learners' awareness of the differences between the contexts and as a result the difference in use.

- For my intermediate Russian learners I dictate learners sentences for oral translation with the mixture of both structures for students' to translate. This type of activity will help them associate the structure with meaning in their mother tongue and will reinforce the use of both structures.

- With my adult Business English learners I use CCQs which help them analyse and compare the structures [5].

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СОЦИАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНАЯ АДАПТАЦИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ СТУДЕНТОВ В МЕЖДУНАРОДНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОМ ВУЗЕ

SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONALLY-ORIENTED GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Аннотация: Статья посвящена вопросам студенческой академической мобильности и привлечению иностранных студентов в российские вузы, а также обеспечению их межкультурной адаптации через формирование культурно-образовательного пространства вуза.

Ключевые слова: учебная миграция, академическая мобильность, социально-культурная адаптация, поликультурное образование, культурно-образовательное пространство вуза.

Abstract: The article deals with the student academic mobility and attraction of foreign students to Russian universities, as well as ensuring their intercultural adaptation through the formation of cultural and educational space of the university.

Key words: educational migration, academic mobility, socio-cultural adaptation, intercultural education, cultural and educational space of the university.