TEACHING ENGLISH PRODUCTIVE SKILLS THROUGH CONTEXT APPROACH

Mashhura Davletova
Student, Department of English language and literature, Nukus state pedagogical institute, Nukus city, Karakalpakstan

ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Feb/13/2019
Received: Feb/20/2019
Accepted: Feb/24/2019
Available online: Feb/26/2019

JEL classifications:
УДК
Keywords:
productive skills, context approach, controlled oral work, guided oral work, free oral work, controlled writing, guided writing, free writing

ABSTRACT

The present article is devoted to teaching students productive skills through context approach. Most students do not able to master all four skills and usually they have a lot of problems with writing and speaking. Students usually are not able to analyze, do synthesis and summarize the information in writing or oral form. Moreover, they are not interested in doing exercises and find writing tasks too sophisticated and useless. One of the approaches that emphasizes the process and content of writing and speaking is a context approach.
Introduction
Writing is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Writing and speaking are considered to be productive skills that means, they involve producing language rather than receiving it. There are various ways how to define writing. Oxford Dictionary defines writing as: "the representation of language in a textual medium through the use of a set of signs or symbols (known as a writing system)." [1,722]

On the other hand, in The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writings Systems, Florian Coulmas defines a writing system as: "a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system." [1, 545]

Writing has served different functions in society. It is typically used for the transmission for cultural knowledge, keeping records of historical facts or scientific developments, codifying laws etc. In everyday life, writing is used for sharing information (newspapers), for entertainment (comics, computer games), for social contact (e-mails, SMSs) and for action (telephone directories).

While writing, we have to distinguish between accuracy and fluency. Writing accurately involves spelling correctly, forming letters correctly, writing legibly, using correct pronunciation, using correct layouts and choosing the right vocabulary [2,]. We also have to use grammar correctly, joining sentences correctly and using paragraphs correctly.

As it was mentioned earlier, when we write we communicate. To communicate means: e. g. express somebody's experience, respond to greeting or invitation. Therefore, we can state, that both accuracy and fluency are very important in writing and while teaching it we have to strongly focus on both of them.

The goal of a language teacher is to enable students to produce fluent, understandable, accurate and appropriate written English. But this is a hard work for English teachers in mixed ability classes where the students are on the different level.
According to G. Broughton, English teachers can use three stages of writing. They are controlled writing, guided writing and free writing [3,118].

Materials and Methods
Controlled writing
It is sensible to distinguish between writing exercises in which the final product is linguistically determined by the teacher and exercises in which the final content is determined. Thus, by controlled writing G. Broughton understands e. g. exercises in which a paragraph with blank is to be filled in which picture prompts or memory of a model presented by the teacher, leads to reproducing more or less exactly the same final product as each other.

Guided writing
A composition support in which the teacher provides the situation and helps the class to prepare the written work is guided writing. Each piece of work is different in the language used.
**Free writing**

By free writing we understand a writing in which the title is provided and everything is done by the students. Further, G. Broughton claims that to be successful in teaching writing skills it is necessary to make sure that the students start with controlled writing and when they become more confident in working with controlled exercises more and more guided writing exercises should be available.

Another aspect that English teachers should be aware of is functional style or register. Therefore, the teachers must select the conventions and style which are most likely to be useful to the students, if they want to be successful. But the great deal of sensitivity which students need in using language develops unconsciously from spinoff from reading.

In teaching writing skill teacher is an essential factor. Before giving a task to students, the teacher should check whether the task is appropriate for the needs of the students, the task is within the level of the students, the task is just above their level, so they will be really challenged or whether the task is enjoyable.

In dealing with written work G. Broughton suggest the teacher to grade the task in following ways (these strategies help the teacher to organize lesson and can be used in any combination):

a) limit the length of the written material to be produced;

b) increase the amount of class preparation for the task;

c) provide guidance on the final form of the written work, for example with picture prompts or memory prompt;

d) encourage students to collaborate in the actual process of writing;

e) allow cross-checking between the draft stage and the writing of the final product;

f) limit the complexity of the writing task itself;

g) demand that the task be completed either slowly or quickly [3,121].

On the other hand, Jeremy Harmer in his book How to Teach Writing distinguishes between writing for learning and writing for writing [4, 25].

In writing for learning students write predominantly to spread their learning of grammar and vocabulary of the language. Further Harmer divides writing for learning into reinforcement writing, preparation writing, activity writing and reinforcement writing [4, 29].

It is a simple form where students are asked to write sentences using grammar they have recently learnt, write paragraphs or longer compositions to practice recently focused-on aspects of language. Students also can be asked to write a story about something that happened in the past (to practise past tenses), or to write a description of someone they know to use the character and physical description vocabulary.

The aim of this phase is to give students opportunity to practise and remember new language they have learnt better. The act of writing these exercises makes them think about the new vocabulary or grammar.
When learning second language sometimes it is more useful to use writing as preparation for some other activities. J. Harmer suggests using preparation writing for example when students are asked to prepare discussion. Writing sentences "gives the students time to think up ideas rather than having to come up with instant fluent opinions, something that many, especially at lower level, find difficult and awkward." [4,33]

Another technique that Harmer suggests to use is for students to talk in groups to prepare their arguments. It is effective for students to make notes which they can use during their discussion. Preparation writing can be a vital help for weaker or shy students who are not so confident to speak immediately [4, 47].

Writing is frequently used with activities that focus on something else such as language practice, acting out or speaking. Activity writing is used with activities in which students are asked to write their dialogue before they act it out. It is helpful for students to plan and write the dialogue before they act it out. Other types are questionnaire-type activities. Groups of students design a questionnaire and then they circulate around the class asking their colleagues the questions they have prepared.

They write down the answers and later students report what they have found out. The aim of activity writing is to use writing to help students to perform other activity but "students need to be able to write to do these activities, but the activities do not teach students to write." [4, 33]

In writing for writing students are able to study written texts to become better writers. Writing for writing includes activities such are writing stories or poems, journals or creating dramatic scenarios. These tasks "force" students to express more personal and more complex thoughts. But this is not easy because most of students feel limited by knowledge of second language and they do not feel so ambitious and do not want to take risks.

When helping students to improve their writing or to become better writers, the teacher plays a very important role. He or she brings the language to the class, supports students when they are stuck or evaluates them. Among the teacher's tasks J. Harmer includes:

1. Demonstrating. When students are involved in writing activities they need to be aware of writing conventions and genre constraints. The task of the teacher is to draw these features to their attention.
2. Motivating and provoking. Sometimes students are stuck while writing and do not know how to start or continue. Then, the teacher's task is to help, stimulate or encourage students and persuade them that writing can be an enjoyable activity. When students do not know what to do, it is good to prepare suggestions for them, rather than having students to think for a long time.
   There are several ways how to get students going. One of them is to give students several words they need for starting writing the activity. From time to time, the teacher can give the students several words they need for starting writing the activity as a good way of getting them going.
3. Supporting. Supporting is one of the most important teacher's tasks. Students need a lot of help and reassurance and therefore teachers need to be very supportive when students are writing in the class and be prepared to help students to overcome problems.
4. Responding. By responding J. Harmer understands reacting to the construction and content of the students' written work. Teachers make suggestions for improvement but do not judge or grade the work. The aim is to
tell students how well they are doing. The teacher may also make suggestions and comments about the students' use of language.
The teacher might respond by saying how much he/she appreciates reading their work and enter a dialogue with the students. The teacher can also encourage students to look at each other's work and ask for advice or suggestions about how to improve their writing.

5. Evaluation and correction. Many teachers say that to evaluate their students is the hardest work. There are many situations when the students are evaluated. All students want to know how they are doing so far, what is necessary to improve and what standard they have achieved [4, 53].

6. When evaluating tests the teacher indicates what was written well and where the mistakes were made. When the teacher hands back marked work, he/she should get a student to have a look at the errors that are highlighted and try to put them right. By correcting J. Harmer means correcting syntax (word order), concord (grammar agreement), and collocation and word choice [13].

Feedback is also very important here. When the teacher corrects, he/she actually plays several roles [4, 109]: students see the teacher as the examiner, in fact the teacher takes a role of audience (responds to the ideas), he/she can act as an assistant (helps students with writing), a resource (is available when students need information), an evaluator (says how well the students have done so far) and an editor (helps to select and rearrange the students' writing).

The way the teacher corrects is also significant. Jeremy Harmer suggests seven ways of correction [4, 134]:

1. Selective correction. It means that the teacher does not have to correct everything. The teacher can correct only punctuation, verb tenses, grammar or to concentrate on using appropriate level of formality, using correct paragraphs and so on. It is important to tell students before the writing that the teacher will use this approach.

2. Using marking scales. The idea of this approach is to give marks out of 10 for each category the teacher chooses for students (e. g. grammar, vocabulary or verb tenses). With indications of mistakes this scale helps students to focus on the particular area they need to improve.

3. Using correction symbols. Many teachers use correction symbols. The advantage of this method is that it encourages students to think about the mistakes they have made, in fact, the students correct the mistakes themselves.

4. Reformulation. It is a way how the teacher can show the students to write something more correctly. The teacher shows how he/she would write the incorrect sentences or parts. The student then can compare his/her version with the teacher's one.

5. Referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book. When the mistake is made the teacher can ask a student to go and look the problem up in a dictionary of a grammar book. The advantage of referring students to use dictionaries or grammar books is that it is encouraging students to look at the information with a purpose in mind. The students learn as they correct.

6. Ask me. From time to time it is difficult to explain a mistake on paper. In this case the teacher can ask the students to talk about the problem in face-to-face interaction.

7. Remedial teaching. The aim of remedial teaching is to deal with the most common mistakes that students make. In this case, the correction is effective when the teacher points to the most common mistakes the students made and asks the students to correct the mistakes. The advantage of this way of correcting is that it is anonymous so nobody in the class feels ridiculous.
As it was mentioned at the beginning of this article, to be able to spell correctly is significant. English spelling is considered to be quite difficult for learners. The best way how to teach students to spell correctly is to have them read as much as possible.

Extensive reading (e.g. reading short articles) helps students to remember English spelling rules. But this is not the only way and teachers should be more proactive. Give students word formation exercises, let them find out spelling rules or to use many other activities help students not only to learn spelling but also improve it, so they become more familiar with English spelling.

J. Harmer suggests very interesting ideas how to prepare enjoyable tasks for students:
· to work out a rule by looking at the spelling of pair or groups of words;
· dictionary activities - are also suitable for lower level students e.g.: ask students to put a written list of words in an alphabetical order, focus on the spelling of the initial letters of words;
· dictations - there are many alternatives how to write dictation with students. The traditional way is to read a paragraph to the learners. Another version is to write words that students hear on a cassette or they can dictate to each other. running dictation is ideal for spelling practice. Harmer suggests giving points for the correct spelling for each and every word;
· cards - students at lower levels can be given cards with letters (individual letters, digraphs etc.); students have to make words as many as possible from these cards. [5, 48]

Discussion
To be able to write with correct punctuation is an important skill. Very often we are judged by the quality of what is written. If capital letters, commas, paragraphs bounders, full stops are not used correctly in our writing, we can make a negative impression and our writing can be easily misunderstood. "If we want our students to be good writers in English we need to teach them how to use punctuation conventions correctly." [5, 49]

It means to teach the system of writing at all types of schools. Harmer suggests these procedures for teaching punctuation:
1. Disguised word copying. Students are given a list of words randomly organized and they have to rewrite these words in an alphabetical order.
Other activities are: to give students a list of words they have recently learnt and ask them to write five most favourite and five least favourite words, or to give students several sentences which they have to write in an appropriate column (e.g. like dislike, advantage-disadvantage).
2. Copying from the board. It is probably the most common activity used in classes. But this activity can be turned into a game, too. For example, the teacher writes words or phrases with difficult spelling on the board. Students look at the board for thirty seconds and try to remember them. Then the teacher rubs the words off and the students have to try to write them correctly.
3. Making notes. During studies students write notes for many reasons. Because note taking involves copying it is a good activity for improving writing. Harmer suggests getting students to read encyclopedia about a country and write accurately as many places names as possible, or to read an extract about history and write
down the names of people mentioned there. It is essential to check these activities by the teacher and indicate where the problem is.

4. Whisper writing. In this activity students are given a written sentence. A student can read the sentence for a short time. He/she is told that the spelling matters. The sentence is taken away and the student has to write the sentence from memory and pass it to another student [4, 54].

Finally we can state, that writing is a difficult skill to learn. We expect the learner to be able to spell correctly and to use punctuation correctly too. To make the learning as easy as possible and to make learners successful, confident and willing to write the teacher should provide the students with information (it means that students have to be given clear and logical instruction what the teacher wants them to do and to be clear about the topic details), language (if students need any specific language they should be given it before the activity so they will not be stuck) and ideas (teachers need to be able to suggest ideas to help students when they do not know how to start or continue).[8]

Speaking belongs to productive skills; it is more frequently used than writing. The main function of spoken language is to socialize individuals. On the contrary to writing, spoken language is produced and processed in real time, the speaker and hearer have limited time to plan and produce what they want to say and understand what they hear. Speech is generally used in face-to-face conversations; it is temporary, spontaneous and variable. Spoken language is supported by body language such as gestures or facial expressions (often called non-verbal communication) [9].

Among other features of spoken language belong the opportunity for feedback: the hearer may ask for clarification, explanation or repetition of what sounds problematic. For speaking is typical different speed, false starts, pauses, unfinished sentences or hesitation.

The main aim of teaching speaking skills is to communicate efficiently. Learners of a foreign language should be able to make themselves understood while speaking the language. The goal is to avoid misunderstanding in the message due to faulty vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

To help learners develop communicative efficiency, the teachers can use activities based on language input, language output and communicative output.

Content-oriented input deals with information, it also includes description of learning strategies and example of their use. Form-oriented input deals with ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or source of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and then discourse competence (language used in specific context), sociolinguistic competence (turn taking, pause, length) and strategic competence (phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication).

Harmer says that some methodologies (e. g. Suggestopedia) demands on time, conditions and resources. [5, 38] Structured output deals with correct form. The aim is to make learners comfortable when producing language recently introduced sometimes with previously learned items. Structured output tasks are frequently used as the connection between the presentation stage and the practice stage [10].
Communicative output is focused on the learner's purpose to complete a task. To complete it the learners, use the language they have recently learned as well as items of language they have already known. "In communicative output activities, the criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across." [6, 29]

Finally, “in a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels, including beginners, benefit from this variety, it is more motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning." [6,143]

Form-focused Speaking goes deeply into details of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. This stage is suitable for beginners. An effective way how to start teaching foreign languages is to base speaking on some simple, useful phrases and sentences e. g. greetings, simple questions and answers or personal descriptions which are easy to remember. These can be practiced by repetition drills. By repetition drills the teachers can change speed, the learner who is to repeat, the content of the sentence and the way of choosing the substitution [7,14].

Result
Meaning-focused Speaking deals with the message of the communication. The activity develops learner's ability to speak. R. S Brown and P. Nation suggest several ways [7,25]:
1. The teacher presents new vocabulary or grammar (it is based on form-focused instruction) and then the students are given some practice.
2. Frequently, before the students start to speak they work in groups or pairs to prepare the activity. The activity gives learners the opportunity to learn form each other.
3. The students are given topics to talk about. They may prepare it for homework, use dictionaries or a reference text and then they present what they have prepared.
4. Often, the activities are supported by pictures or written texts. They appear in a Raking activity or a Problem solving activity where the text contains important data about the situation and so on.
5. Many speaking activities force students to ask each other. The pattern of these activities is that each learner receives different information for completing the activity. In these kinds of activities students discover different names, two-way tasks or information gap.

On the other hand, G. Broughton and his colleagues divide speaking activities into controlled oral work, guided oral work and free oral work [3,34].

Controlled oral work
Among controlled oral work the authors include the dialogue. The advantage of dialogue is that it can be used for controlled, guided or free work. It is also possible to use the dialogue for each level, starting with elementary level. The students prepare mini-dialogue in pairs even in the first lesson.

Controlled oral work can be supported by drills, especially substitution drills which are widely used. The advantage of drills is that the error is almost eliminated so the students feel more comfortable to speak, which is a very important point mainly at lower levels.
G. Broughton says that substitution drills: "demonstrate much more clearly to the class that this is not simply mechanical drill but language practice with a visually demonstrated communicative function in a real life situation in which the student can find himself”[3,35].

Guided oral work
The aim of the guided oral work is to give students a limited freedom and to practice what they have learnt. In this phase, making mistakes in learning is taken as a natural part. Among guided oral work the authors include role-plays. Here the students can learn some practical phrases used in everyday life (e.g. shopping in the supermarket). However, not only a role-play but also setting up a role-play situation is another way how to practise speaking skills in a guided way.

Free oral work
Is the last phase in which the students should be able to produce such an amount of language that they will be able to express themselves. This phase is typical for advanced students. The aim of the teacher in this phase is to create such situation and stimuli that all students will be actively involved in a communicative way. By the stimuli the authors mean: visual stimuli - pictures, maps, cartoon, films or photographs that are motivating for discussion starters. Another stimulus is written word - magazines, newspapers (excellent for developing skill of reporting), leaflets, book according to the level etc. and aural stimuli - sound on CDs or cassettes. Also games or puzzles play an important role in teaching speaking skills.

Further, the authors suggest group work as a good tool of free oral production activities. Most of the techniques are prepared in groups at the beginning and then they are brought back to the class, of course, there is automatically less teacher control and more pupil-centeredness. [3,83]

As we can see there are various activities that can be used for teaching speaking skill. More or less the authors follow the same pattern: to start with drills in lower levels, so the students become familiar with useful phrases or expressions, to such activities that challenge the learners to express themselves and to produce as much language as possible.

There are three basic reasons why teachers should provide students with activities:
1. Rehearsal: to organize e.g. a role-play for students in a shop or an airport offers them an opportunity to rehearse a real-life event and the students get the feeling of what is the communication in a foreign language like.
2. Feedback: having students to present what they know, that means, to use all the language they have learnt provides feedback for the teacher as well as for the students. The teachers can see what the students are doing well and what is needed to be improved.
3. Engagement: all speaking activities should be highly motivating so the students find them interesting to work on and to participate fully. Many tasks such as role-plays, discussion or problem solving are enjoyable even more if they copy the real life situations.

There are teachers that constantly correct mistakes made during speaking activities, either during pronunciation exercises or during discussion. But it is important for the teachers to realize when the right time to correct is [12].
J. Harmer claims that: "when students are repeating sentences trying to get their pronunciation exactly right, then the teacher will often correct (appropriately) every time there is a problem." [7, 94]

On the other hand, when students hold a discussion about a chosen topic the teacher should not interrupt the discussion by correcting. Jeremy Harmer says: "Constant interruption from the teacher will destroy the purpose of the speaking activity." [7, 94]

Many teachers, when talking about role-plays or discussion, prefer to watch or observe, listen and take notes. After the role-play the teacher asks students about their opinions and then the teacher presents his or her feedback [11].

Generally speaking, the principle of watching, listening and taking notes is considered to be the most appropriate.

**Conclusion**
In conclusion, contextual teaching and learning is a concept that helps the teachers and students relate the meaning through prior and new knowledge to get new understanding. It has five components comprising constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modelling, reflection and authentic assessment and based on three basic principles as principles of interdependence, the principles of differentiation, and the principles of self-regulation [14].

Various scientists defined different strategies used in context approach. Jonson delivers six strategies of Context approach in teaching English language. They are problem based, using multiple contexts, drawing upon student diversity, supporting self-regulated learning, using interdependent learning groups, employing authentic assessment [15].
References