

EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

AKRAMXODJAYEVA DILFUZA ABDUGANIYEVNA

Lecturer of the Department of Western Languages. Tashkent state University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT: The implementation of teaching English productive skills using Context approach consisted of two cycles. Each cycle consisted of two meetings for presenting the material. Each meeting took 60 minutes. For the first cycle, the researcher used context approach to teach writing and speaking with a topic "Personality". For the second cycle, the topic was "Sport". Every cycle consisted of a series of steps: identifying the problem, planning the action, implementing the action, observing and monitoring the action, reflecting and evaluating the result of the observation, and revising the plan.

Key words: Social distance, interview skills, giving feedback, part, verbal, function, picture, foreign language, text, handouts.

Introduction

Before implementing the action in cycle one, the researcher had conducted a pre-test to know students' prior knowledge. This was aimed to measure students' knowledge of the topic before the treatment and to make a comparison with the post-test to know whether or not the student's skills improved. After finishing the action, the researcher conducted a post-test to measure students' improvement after having the treatment. The topics of pre-test and post-test were Personalities and Sport. Each test comprised short interview about their hobbies and writing a short essay about strange hobbies they had learnt about.

Before the implementation of the research, there was conducted a pre-research through observation. Students and the teacher were interviewed. Based on the result of pre-observation, it was found that the class was very active, students' level varied from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate. However, most of them had difficulties with fluency in speaking and vocabulary, spelling and grammar accuracy problems with writing.

Considering student's level, the researcher would implement an action that is suitable and interesting for the students. The researcher would implement contextual teaching and learning, a method which relate subject matter content to real world situations and motivate students to make connections between knowledge and its applications in their lives as family members, citizens, and workers and to get engaged in the hard work that learning requires. The researcher believed that contextual teaching and learning is appropriate method to improve the students' productive skills.

The researcher has to prepare the lesson plan before implementing the action. The researcher also has to prepare the materials and students' worksheet consists of some tasks and other thing related to the action. There are three section in lesson plan: opening, main activities, and closing. Cycle one consisted of two meetings. Each meeting took 60 minutes.

Main part. The researcher planned different activities for each meeting. There were two topics discussed, "Personality" and "Sport". The objectives of the 1st lessons of each cycle were to teach students to use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary and syntax to talk about an increased range of general topics, and some curricular topics. The objectives of the 2nd lessons of each cycle were to teach students to plan, write, edit and proof-read work at text level with minimal teacher support on the given topics.

1. **Opening.** The lesson started at 8.00 a. m. the teacher entered the class. The teacher greeted the students and checked the students' attendance. Students were introduced the topic and the plan of the lesson. Students were asked to find out the objectives of the lesson by asking what they would be able to do after that lesson. After that students were introduced success criteria which included explaining their ideas clearly using opinion expressions, supporting ideas with at least two strong evidences and evaluating others' points of view by commenting and making conclusion. After formatting small groups, students were given the list of new vocabulary and list of their definitions. The task was to match definitions to the given words. After discussing the new vocabulary, students were given tables with two columns. First is How I see myself, and the second - How others see me. First, students had to write about themselves using new words. When they finished the teacher told them to interview their classmates about their characters as if they were real journalists. Students could use questions given on the power point presentation. When they had finished, students presented the information about their classmates.

In groups, students were given pictures of different rooms. The task was to make a description of the person who lived in that room. Students felt enthusiastic about acting detectives and gave various predictions. In the end of the lesson students were asked to prepare a short presentation about a person they admire. After each presentation other students gave their feedbacks according

to the success criteria. The teacher reviewed the lesson of that day by asking some questions to the students. The teacher gave a chance for the students to recall what had learned by their learning experience and then they took a conclusion together. The teacher asked to the students whether they had questions or not. But no students asked question. When the time given was over, the teacher asked the students whether they were happy or not in the lesson. The students answered "Yes". Then the teacher said goodbye and closed the lesson.

The researcher noticed that the students were very excited in doing some activities, for example: detectives and searching for key words. From the implementation of the method, there were some positive results that the researcher noted down. They are:

- 1) Learning by experiencing gave the students motivation;
- 2) Students learned how to write a summary and succeeded in it;
- 3) Group work gave them a chance to help each other
- 4) Making up objectives of the lesson made students feel responsible about the lesson
- 6) Giving feedback made students to support their speech by argumentation.

Those points showed a positive change of students' behaviour in joining the lesson. It was reflected from their active role in identifying the things around them. The students had enough courage to ask questions.

Besides, there were also several things which were considered to be weaknesses. Some students dominated the group and there was a group where students were very passive. For example: when the teacher supervised group two, only one or two students did their task. Another group, group five were not able to complete the task successfully. The reason is the fact that groups were not well balanced. It means that the researcher had to arrange a new plan to solve these problems.

Conclusion

Context is defined as the aggregate of linguistic, situational, social and cultural variables that surround linguistic units such as texts, discourses, utterances, words, morphemes, phonemes, sounds, and distinctive features.

Building upon this understanding, contextual learning theory focuses on the multiple aspects of any learning environment, whether a classroom, a worksite, or a

wheat field. It encourages educators to choose and/or design learning environments that incorporate as many different forms of experience as possible-social, cultural, physical, and psychological-in working toward the desired learning outcomes. 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.

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