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THE ROLE OF CONTEXTUALIZATION IN TEACHING DISCOURSE COMPETENCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY COURSE AIMED AT ACQUIRING PROFICIENCY

The article focuses on the importance of teaching a language in full contextual perspective, not single lexical or grammatical units, but certain texts in the context of real-life communication, which contributes to discourse competence. The article outlines basic communicative strategies and examines teaching methods and techniques for developing academic skills required by the Common European Framework of Reference for Language.

The article aims to prove the importance of context in teaching general discourse competence, which is a prerequisite for acquiring proficiency at the university level. The authors present the main outcomes of their teaching experience in the course of English language for Philological specialties for third year students at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The topics suggested to students are complex academic or professional issues withing such abstract themes as World English, Business Communication, The Mind, News and Media, Global Issues, Time, Technology and Innovation. The syllabus for the course is designed in a contextual approach, which implies wide use of authentic materials of various genres and themes, instead of concentrating only on one textbook.

The authors argue that discourse competence should be acquired through a number of receptive and productive methods by pattern practice drills, listening, speaking and writing. Among the types of authentic materials suggested by the authors are newspaper and magazine articles, TED Talks, discussions, news, documentaries, interviews, parts of the books and other types of texts. The authentic texts should be brought to the classroom not only by teacher, but also by students. The research suggests learning objectives for four communicative language strategies: reception, production, mediation, and interaction, which should be clearly stipulated in the syllabus and considered when designing particular tasks. The results of the study can be employed by university teachers for a language course design.

Key words: *discourse competence; context; communicative language strategies.*

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РОЛЬ КОНТЕКСТУАЛІЗАЦІЇ У НАВЧАННІ ДИСКУРС-КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ: ДОСВІД ВИКЛАДАННЯ УНІВЕРСИТЕТСЬКОГО КУРСУ АНЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ, НАЦІЛЕНОГО НА ДОСЯГНЕННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО РІВНЯ

Стаття наголошує на важливості вивчення мови у повній перспективі контекстуалізації; не окремих лексичних або граматичних одиниць, а певних текстів у їх контексті, що значною мірою сприяє набуттю дискурсивної компетенції. Стаття наводить основні комунікативні стратегії, а також оцінює методи і способи викладання мови для розвитку академічних навичок, що вимагаються Загальноєвропейськими рекомендаціями з мовної освіти.

Стаття має на меті довести важливість контексту при навчанні загальної дискурсивної компетенції, що є передумовою набуття професійного рівня володіння мовою на університетському рівні. Автори наводять основні висновки зі свого досвіду викладання курсу англійської мови для філологічних спеціальностей для студентів третього року навчання в НаУКМА. Теми, що пропонуються до вивчення є складними або академічними аспектами таких абстрактних тематик, як Світ англійської мови, Ділова комунікація, Розум і мислення, Новини і медіа, Світові виклики, Час, Технології та інновації. Програма курсу побудована з урахуванням контекстного підходу, який передбачає широке залучення автентичних матеріалів різних жанрів та тематики, а не використання одного базового підручника. Дослідження пропонує цілі навчання для чотирьох комунікативних стратегій у мові: сприйняття, продукування, медіація та взаємодія.

Автори доводять, до дискурсивна компетенція має досягатися шляхом повторення продуктивних методів у типових практичних завданнях на слухання, говоріння й письмо. Серед автентичних матеріалів, що пропонуються викладачами є газетні й журнальні статті, дискусії на каналі TED Talks, обговорення новин, документальних фільмів, інтервю, частин книги та інші матеріали. Автентичні тексти мають обиратися не лише викладачем, але й студентами. Дослідження пропонує цілі чотирьох комунікативних мовних стратегій: сприйняття, продукування, медіація і взаємодія, які мають бути чітко зазначені у програмі курсу й братися до уваги при розробці окремих завдань. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані викладачами університетів при розробці своїх власних мовних курсів.

Ключові слова: дискурс-компетенція, контекст, комунікативні мовні стратегії.

Problem statement. In recent years, there has been an extensive discussion about the importance of teaching language within the broad context of real-life communication. Learning a language is viewed as a creative form of cognitive development which engage numerous mental skills and activates mind processes. This is the concept of communicative language teaching with the goal of teaching communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). The rules are acquired implicitly through productive and receptive methods by pattern practice drills, listening, speaking and writing. The study of the relationship between language and its contexts of use based on genre is the study of discourse organization. Put in a different way, discourse is concerned with extended stretches of language produced in a particular context, and this approach takes into account a variety of factors: felicity conditions, goals of the communication, as well as the relationship between the speakers. It is in the classroom that most students get their main exposure to the target language, both general purpose language and language for specific purposes. When producing discourse or communication, what matters is not only the knowledge of words and sentences as segmental text elements (language thesaurus) but also cultural and world knowledge as text representation (subject thesaurus). In order to communicate successfully, it is important to see the relations between the sentences and the paragraphs in writing discourse and relations between the utterances and transactions in speaking.

Review of recent research. Being a rather controversial issue, context is often understood as a mental representation (Van Dijk, 2009) or as elements of the social world. In close combination, they contribute to understanding texts as informative traces of the discourse and communicative acts as strategic and tactic moves within the broadest contexts. This evidence has transformed discourse studies into a multidisciplinary field of inquiry.

Nowadays, language teaching tends to be done through real discourse which resemble or simulate real-world communication, which is supposed to prepare the language learners to be exposed to using English outside the classroom in real life situations. A particular mention should be made of two important approaches to the study of discourse in recent years that have influenced language teaching and brought a focus on real language into the classroom: exchange structure and conversational analysis.

Advancements in discourse studies (Zernetsky, Kucherova, 2021; Riabokon, 2016; Zernetsky, Riabokon, 2019; Riabokon, 2020) and in text analysis (spoken and written discourse and text linguistics) shed light on the ways in which lexical and syntactic elements combine in order to make a text coherent and allow it to be understood. Spoken and written discourse share common features that need to be examined in systematic ways. Discourse competence implies the knowledge of cohesion and coherence and close observation of these rules in communica-

tion. It is important to present information in a way in which it can be easily perceived, processed and thus comprehended. The ability to arrange information in a logical order is a key feature of Coherence and Cohesion as basic text categories.

There have been already several attempts to apply the field of Discourse Analysis based on functional linguistics to the study of how to teach language in classroom. The concept of discourse strategies is rooted in the very definition of a language as system of signs used for storing, processing and exchanging of information in the process of human interaction.

In addition to semiotic nature of language, it is necessary to consider its semantic and pragmatic dimensions, which altogether create the context of communication. That has been emphasized by the scholars of various disciplines that teaching based on drilling and memorizing is abstract and disconnected from real-life scenarios when schools ignore the interdependence of context, situation, and cognition. Likewise, effective and meaningful learning can be achieved only in authentic context (Kukulska-Hulme, Viberg, 2018).

The concept related to teaching discourse is basically the exchange of set structures. That approximates this approach to structural analysis developed by two British linguists, John Sinclair and Malcolm Coulthard (1975), it describes 'rules' underlying well-formed discourse. Roughly, it enables teachers to model spoken language in the world outside the classroom, suggesting ways of constructing dialogues and role-plays for practicing conversation. Some important principles and patterns underlying discourse have been discovered. The discourse analysts explained the difference between a coherent piece of discourse and a random collection of utterances. Just as students are taught the rules of how to construct grammatically correct sentences, they need to be taught how to construct a coherent discourse.

In Discourse analysis, Brown and Yule (1983) highlighted the importance of knowledge of the world in interpreting and constructing discourse. The role of text and discourse in communication was thoroughly described in the work of van Dijk (1985, 1997), in which principles of discourse analysis are presented as intertwined with the fundamental frameworks of society and culture. Discourse analysis encompasses mutually dependent domains of construction, that is, macrostructures, such as logical progression and purpose of ideas, then moves down to micro levels that reflect contextual and social features of text, and then back again when microstructures affect the macrolevel of the discourse whole.

The principles of cohesion and the interaction of grammar and lexicon were investigated. Halliday and

Hasan's (1976) analytical approach to text construction outlined/explained linguistic and lexical means by which intertextual semantic relationships are established. The intuitively identified relationships between propositions in text and text flow were formalized and defined in terms of the linguistic and discoursal functions of elements. According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion occurs 'when interpretation of some element in discourse is dependent on another' (p. 4). The authors investigated how discourse organization and logical structure contributes to overall cohesiveness of text and the role that contextuality plays in that text. Halliday and Hasan indicated that linguistic cohesion has three main functional and semantic components: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Ideational cohesion deals with the content (ideas) expressed in text (including the context of culture); the interpersonal component includes the social, expressive, and contextualized functions of language use, as well as the writer's attitudes, judgements, and tone; and the textual element is concerned with the linguistic means of constructing text and making it cohesive, for example, phrases and clauses used functionally (metatext markers, linking words) within the purpose of discourse.

The objective of this paper is to report the authors' experience in teaching the course of English for Philological specialties for third year students at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in contextual perspective, critically examine the construct of discourse production and to suggest approaches to discourse teaching in an increasingly globalized world. Thus, the findings of the study can be employed in the development of topics and tasks for the purposes of final evaluation or control of residual knowledge. The article advises on the techniques of how discourse features can be taught in English for advanced undergraduate students, suggesting learning objectives.

Statement of basic materials. Departing from the statement that the main function of the language is communicative, we teach communication in English, which is expression of thoughts and ideas in spoken and written language. Rules, norms, and regulations for conversational interaction (communication) vary from culture to culture and language to language, and the main objective of teaching a language in context is to supply the students with typical lexical, grammatical, and syntactic structures used in live communication. This necessity determines the extensive use of authentic materials that enable us to meet the above-mentioned objective and teach 'discourse' as language put to use in actual situations.

Language functions or communicative intentions made it possible to use the target language effectively in situations that involved communication. Introdu-

cing oneself, asking for directions, ordering a meal, and purchasing a train ticket are typical examples found in textbooks. These functions take place within notions such as time, space, social relations, and so forth. We can say that language is used to accomplish speech acts in given contexts and situations. Through a speech act, a speaker seeks to act upon a listener through his or her words. Examples of speech acts include asking, instructing, affirming, and begging; each of these intentions can be expressed differently – through direct or indirect speech acts. Moreover, the word choice for completing every speech act is immensely diverse. The words and expressions vary depending on the message, the context, and the situation. What is more, the same words and expressions can be used to convey different messages. Learners must learn the language, not just about the language (Piccardo 2014, p. 11). Language is a complex phenomenon and language teaching must take this complexity into account. Language cannot simply be presented as a set of rules to be learned, and language learning cannot be reduced to imitation.

In applied linguistics nowadays and language teaching people tend to equate the term function with situational use. People use language to make meanings in specific situations and the form of the language they use in discourse is influenced by the complex aspects of those situations. The situation affects not only the choice of words but also the grammar that is used. Relevant to the context of situation is the notion of domain (or register, or genre) to refer to the range of meaning potential within a particular variety of the language.

In accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is an international framework for language learning, teaching, and assessment, which provides detailed descriptions of what people can do in a language, at different levels. These levels are widely used to organize English language courses. CEFR has shifted its focus from the description of traditional modes of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to communicative language activities and strategies in order to capture the complex reality of real-life communication. CEFR promotes four modes of communication that contribute to overall language proficiency: reception, production, interaction and mediation.

We adopted CEFR as a guideline for language assessment. Consequently, the course had to adopt its objectives in terms of language competence. With orientation on real-life tasks, the CEFR proposes a broad definition of language use and learning, including general competences, communicative language competences, and an understanding of the specifics of the contexts of language use, as well as general cognitive capabilities (Council of Europe, 2020). According to CEFR, 'proficiency' corresponds to "ability to perform communicative language activities, whilst drawing upon both general and communicative lan-

Table 1

Learning objectives for communicative strategies

Reception	Production	Mediation	Interaction
Can identify similar and contrasting opinions, including inferred meaning, across a range of texts.	Can justify a point of view, argue a case, giving reasons and explanations for their opinion.	Can evaluate the extent to which a work follows the conventions of its genre.	Can manage the participants in a fast-moving discussion to keep it on course.
Can understand in detail discussions among the speakers with a variety of accents and dialects.	Can give complex information using appropriate register and conventions.	Can recognize the finer subtleties of nuanced language, rhetorical effect and stylistic language use (e.g. metaphors, abnormal syntax, ambiguity), interpreting and 'unpacking' meanings and connotations.	Can confidently take a firm but diplomatic stance over an issue of principle while showing respect for the viewpoints of others.
Can critically evaluate the structure, content and style of a text using linguistically complex language.	Can write essays and reports synthesising information from a number of sources.	Can interpret and present clearly and reliably in writing the salient, relevant points contained in complex diagrams and other visually organised.	Can intervene supportively in order to focus people's attention on aspects of the task by asking targeted questions and inviting suggestions.
Can compare and critically evaluate a summary against the original text.	Can compare, evaluate and prioritize different ideas, as well as analyze and synthesize them in new texts (summarizing).	Can develop the interaction and tactfully help steer it towards a conclusion.	Can contribute to group discussion even when speech is fast and colloquial.

guage competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic), and activating appropriate communicative strategies. While linguistic competence is concerned with language resources or language usage, pragmatic competence is concerned with the student's knowledge of the principles of language use. Three types of competence are distinguished: discourse competence, functional competence and design competence. Discourse competence concerns the ability to organize texts and includes such aspects as coherence and cohesion.

CEFR takes an innovative stance in seeing learners as language users and social agents, and thus seeing language as a vehicle for communication rather than as a subject to study. We align the syllabus with CEFR's core principles, C1 descriptor of which entails the ability to understand and produce linguistically complex texts. The topics we suggest to the students are complex academic or professional withing such abstract themes as World English, Business Communication, The Mind, News and Media, Global Issues, Time, Technology and Innovation. The engaging topics, which are relevant to the students' interests, motivate the students and contribute to communicative competence. Within each topic we develop four communicative strategies and focus on learning objectives for each of them. This can be seen in Table 1.

Among the types of authentic materials suggested by the authors are newspaper and magazine articles, TED Talks, discussions, news, documentaries, interviews, parts of the books and other types of texts. The authentic texts should be brought to the classroom not only by teacher, but also by students.

Conclusions. Overall, teaching some important principles and patterns that underlie different discourses is vitally important. That is what can help students gain mastery of sophisticated and natural language in order to manage communication in a wide variety of encounters, including international exams. The use of authentic materials of different themes and genres makes the process of teaching more applied and adjusted to real life situations. The method of contextual learning has been successfully approbated and implemented for teaching students of philological specialties in the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" and thus can be recommended for a wider practice for students of non-linguistic specialties as well. Through authentic models of effective communication, students build fluency in their production skills needed to achieve academic and personal success.

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