

**ANALYZING THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A
REVIEW OF DIVERSE SCHOLARLY APPROACHES*****Yoqubov Odil Mengliyevich****Teacher, English Department,**'Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers'**National Research University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Annotation: Communicative competence is one of the most essential skills for foreign language teachers, as it plays a central role in achieving fluency and effective communication in the target language. This competence not only enables learners to use the language naturally, as native speakers do, but also contributes significantly to successful language instruction. Numerous scholars have studied communicative competence and proposed various models outlining its components. This article aims to explore and compare different theoretical frameworks of communicative competence through a model-based analytical approach.

Keywords: communicative competence, language teaching, competence models, communicative frameworks

INTRODUCTION

The term «communicative competence» is comprised of two words, the combination of which means «competence to communicate». This simple lexicosemantic analysis uncovers the fact that the central word in the syntagm «communicative competence» is the word «competence». And «Competence» is one of the most controversial terms in the field of general and applied linguistics. Its introduction to linguistic discourse has been generally associated with Chomsky who in his very influential book «Aspects of the Theory of Syntax» drew what has been today viewed as a classic distinction between competence (the monolingual speaker-listener's knowledge of language) and performance (the actual use of language in real situations)¹

METHODOLOGY

In the research process, we used methods of analysis, synthesis and modeling (in order to reveal the importance of communicative language learning in the process of language teaching and to highlight the components of communicative competence). We also used the classification method (in order to highlight the internal components of the communicative competence introduced by the scientists), the system method (to collect research materials). Induction and deduction methods were also partially used.

¹ According to many general and applied linguists, Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance is based on the fundamental linguistic distinction between langue and parole which was made by de Saussure.

The phrase “communicative competence” was first coined in 1967 by the American sociolinguist and anthropologist Dell H. Hymes in reaction to Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence. He defines communicative competence as what “enables a member of the community to know when to speak and when to remain silent, which code to use, when, where and to whom, etc. (Hymes, 1967, p. 13). Since then, the concept has developed over years and different models of communicative competence have been offered by different scholars.

RESULTS

Before explaining the concept of communicative competence as presented by Hymes, the word “competence” itself requires some clarification. The word competence or linguistic competence was first used by Chomsky to refer to knowledge of language as different from performance which he sees as the actual use of language. Although this dualism² between knowledge and use of language was not new and it was already noticed by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1817-1913), who distinguished langue “the linguistic competence of the speaker as a member of a speech community” and parole “the actual phenomena or data of linguistics” (Robins, 1997, p. 225), Chomsky is known for “reinterpreting in a psychological context the comparable sociological distinction that de Saussure had drawn between langue and parole” (Howatt, 1986, p. 270).

More explicitly, Chomsky’s competence is concerned with “an ideal speaker–listener, in a completely homogeneous one of the turning points in the history of foreign language teaching is the development of the National Curriculum, based on the Fundamental Reform Document in Education, in which foreign language teaching has found a position speech community who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3). In other words, Chomsky’s competence is a decontextualized notion and the ideal speaker–hearer he is talking about, is “an artificially constructed idealized person; not an actual language user”. Hymes (1972), while accepting the superiority of Chomsky’s terminology over de Saussure’s, contends: “Such a theory of competence posits ideal objects in abstraction from sociocultural features”.

A linguistically competent person, who is master of fully grammatical sentences, is at best a bit odd because “some occasions call for being appropriately ungrammatical” (p.277). Hymes adds, in addition to knowledge of grammatical sentences, a person should acquire the knowledge of appropriate sentences that is, he or she should know “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when; where, in what manner”. He continues, “There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”.

Grammatical competence described by Chomsky, Hymes believes (see figure 1), is only one sector of communicative competence, the other ones mentioned by Hymes are the psycholinguistic (i.e., implementational feasibility), sociocultural (contextual appropriateness) and de facto (i.e., actual occurrence) sectors. In summarizing

A normal learner acquires knowledge of sentences not only grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to

² The theory that there are two opposite principles in everything.

talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others.(Hymes,1972)

According to Hymes frame there are four main components of communicative competence. They are linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

Linguistic competence is the knowledge of the language code, i.e. its grammar and vocabulary, and also of the conversations of its written representation.

Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of socio-cultural rules of use, i.e. knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately.

Discourse competence is the knowledge of how to produce and comprehend oral or written texts in the modes of speaking/reading respectively. It's knowing how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent oral and written text of different types.

Strategic competence is the ability to recognize and repair communication breakdowns before, during, or after they occur.

Another model of communicative competence was presented by the two Canadian applied linguists, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain in 1980 in the first issue of Applied Linguistics. Referring to the weak or neural and strong versions of Chomsky's competence recognized by Campbell and Wales, Canale and Swain agree with Hymes' criticism of Chomsky's notion of competence –performance distinction in that it “provides no place for consideration of the appropriateness[emphasis is original] of socio-cultural significance of an utterance in the situational and verbal context in which it is used” (Howatt, 1986, p.4). Furthermore, referring to two views regarding the relationship between grammatical competence and communicative competence, they advocate Munby's stance which sees grammatical competence a subpart of communicative competence and not something separate from it. However, they do not incorporate the notion of ability for use into their definition of communicative competence. Reviewing theories of basic communication skills, sociolinguistic perspectives on communicative competence, and integrative theories of communicative competence, Canale and Swain, suggest five guiding principles for a communicative approach. These include:

1. Communicative competence is composed minimally of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and communication strategies, or what we will refer to as strategic competence.
2. A communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner's communication needs.
3. The second language learner must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language, i.e. to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations.
4. Particularly at the early stages of second language learning, optimal use must be made of those aspects of communicative competence that the learner has developed through acquisition

and use of the native language and that are common to those communication skills required in the second language.

5. The primary objective of a communication-oriented second language programme must be to provide the learners with the information, practice, and much of the experience needed to meet their communicative needs in the second language. (Hymes,1972)

Prior to introducing new model, Canale reminds the reader that in the communicative competence model, communication is meant to be “the exchange and negotiation³ of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual modes, and production and comprehension processes” (Hymes,1972). The four components of the revised framework are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Another model of communicative competence was proposed by Bachman, which has been presented for measurement purposes. This framework includes three components of language competence, strategic competence, and psycho-physiological mechanisms. Language competence includes organizational and pragmatic competences. Organizational competence, in turn includes grammatical and textual abilities or competences, which are involved in producing and comprehending language. In other words, textual competence corresponds to discourse competence in Canale’s model. Pragmatic competence is concerned with “the relationship between utterances and the acts or functions that speakers (or writers) intend to perform through these utterances” (Bachman, 1990, p. 89).

Pragmatic competence in Bachman’s model encompasses illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence entails knowledge and skill in using language functions proposed by Halliday such as ideational, manipulative, heuristic, instrumental, regulatory and imaginative functions. The second major component of communicative competence in Bachman’s framework is strategic competence. Unlike Canale and Swain’s and Canale’s model, where strategic competence is at the same level as grammatical and sociolinguistic competences, in Bachman’s model, strategic competence is a major component at the same level as language competence. The reason, as Bachman states, is that previous models imply that communicative strategies are necessarily linguistic or verbal ones but his model shows that strategic competence is a competence at the level of language competence not a subpart so it may include strategies which are not linguistic.

One of the important contributions of Celce-Murcia et al. (Murcia.1995) was to specify that the various components of communicative competence were interrelated and that it was important to properly describe the nature of these interrelationships in order to fully understand the construct of communicative competence. To this end they offered in their 1995 publication, which made the interrelationships explicit: This 1995 model is a pyramid enclosing a circle, surrounded by another circle. The circle inside the pyramid is discourse competence, the core or central competence. The three points of the triangle⁴ are the top-down socio-cultural

³ Negotiation is term that is formal discussion between people who are trying to reach an argument

⁴ Three straight sides of communicative competence

competence and the bottom-up linguistic competence and action competence. The arrows indicate that the various components are constantly interacting with each other and the discourse component. This construct thus placed the discourse component in a central position where the lexicogrammatical resources, the action organizing skills, and the socio-cultural context all come together and shape the discourse. The circle surrounding the pyramid is strategic competence, an available inventory of communicative, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies that allow a skilled interlocutor to negotiate meanings, resolve ambiguities, and to compensate for deficiencies in any of the other competencies.

The final model of communicative competence reviewed here is the one presented by Littlewood (2011). He also takes Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) model as the initial model and develops it by adding a fifth component as well as adapting the terminology. The components of communicative competence in Littlewood's model are as follows:

-Linguistic competence includes the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, semantics and phonology that have been the traditional focus of second language learning.

-Discourse competence enables speakers to engage in continuous discourse, e.g. by linking ideas in longer written texts, maintaining longer spoken turns, participating in interaction, opening conversations and closing them.

-Pragmatic competence enables second language speakers to use their linguistic resources to convey and interpret meanings in real situations, including those where they encounter problems due to gaps in their knowledge.

-Sociolinguistic competence consists primarily of knowledge of how to use language appropriately in social situations, e.g. conveying suitable degrees of formality, directness and so on.

-Sociocultural competence includes awareness of the cultural knowledge and assumptions that affect the exchange of meanings and may lead to misunderstandings in intercultural communication(p.547).

This last component introduces psycholinguistic aspects of second language proficiency that are not included in the Canale and Swain's framework but are fundamental to communicative language use.

DISCUSSION

The first scientific work on communicative competence was conducted by Chomsky, who included only Linguistic Competence in communicative competence. He perfected his scientific work from 1957 to 1965 and based his opinion on facts and examples. Hymes, Canale, and Swain later used this of his scientific research and divided it into components of communicative competence. In the 1990s, Bachman also worked on Communicative Competence, but his work was slightly different from models of Canale and Swain. Bachman also proved them with his substantial components.

Five years after Bachman's work, American professor Celce-Murcia worked on Communicative Competence, introducing Actional Competence as a separate component in

addition to Canale's Communicative Model. By 2011, Littlewood Communicative had perfected its competence. That is, earlier scholars included "socio-cultural competence" in the internal structure of "Sociolinguistic competence". However, Littlewood singles out "Socio-Cultural Competence" as a particularly important competency, describing it as the most fundamental component of communicative competence. (You can also see this in the figure 3 below.) That is, over the years, communicative competence has been brought to perfection, and its components have increased.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the essential point is that all models agree that communicative competence includes a grammatical or linguistic component, which entails knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and vocabulary or lexis. In that case, teacher who aims to help learners develop communicative competence, should first and foremost have already developed these components of his or her communicative competence. That is to say, teachers need to have good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary as well as good pronunciation. In other words, a Communicative Language Teaching teacher needs to be a skillful proficient teacher who can serve as a model of communicatively competent speaker for the learners. This is important because there exists a misconception among some teachers. In addition to grammar knowledge for Communicative Language Teaching, teachers are required to have a good knowledge of society and its using of language.

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