# ASPECTS OF INTEGRATING COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES

*Nusratullayeva Farzona*
*Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages 2-course master*
*Supervisor:* **Sattorova Feruza**

**Annotation:** This paper is an attempt to explore the term communicative competence in foreign language. It goes through the various definitions and models of the communicative competence and shows how the term 'communicative competence' has become a major aim for teaching English as a foreign or second language in many countries. It is very important to use communicative competences in lessons, this article will discuss this issue.

**Keywords:** Communicative competence, English as a foreign language, method.

## INTRODUCTION

The field of second and foreign language teaching and learning has been an issue of debate since long time. Various theories and various methods of language learning have been introduced. Grammar translation method occupied the field of foreign and second language teaching for many decades and is still of use today. The field has also been dominated by the behaviorist theory and the idea that language is nothing but a social behavior that can be learned as any behavior through the process of habit formation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Communicative competence means having 'a competence to communicate'. This competence can be oral, written or even non verbal. It is an inclusive term that refers to possessing the knowledge of the language as well as the skill to use the language in real life situations for fulfilling communicative needs. Language as many linguists defined it, is a means of communication, and it comprises four main skills vis, listening, speaking, reading and writing. To acquire these language skills one needs not only to learn grammatical rules but to practise such skills till he gets used to all of them. Whenever s/he acquires the skills of the language and manages to use them effectively and appropriately according to the context in which s/he is involved, we can say that s/he acquires the required level of the communicative competence.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In his contribution to the Research Planning Conference on Language Development Among Disadvantaged Children, Hymes introduced the term 'Communicative Competence' in his lecture that was later on published as a paper

entitled 'On Communicative Competence' to become a prominent term and an issue of debate in the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning. Hymes introduced the concept 'Communicative Competence' in contrast to Chomsky's distinction between 'competence' and 'performance'. Chomsky argued that the focus of linguistic theory is to characterize the abstract abilities of a speaker which enable him to produce grammatically correct sentences, whereas Hymes reacted that linguistic theory with its primary focus on linguistic abilities should be viewed as a part of a more general theory that incorporating communication with sociocultural settings. He adds that coping with the realities of the children as communicatingbeings requires a theory within which sociocultural factors have explicit and constitutive role [4].

Based on his above mentioned discussion, Hymes reaches a point that for the theory of language users and language use to be developed, the judgments and abilities must be recognized not only in grammaticality and acceptability as in Chomskyan model of competence and performance, but in four levels. He suggests this framework for integrating linguistic theory with theory of communication and culture; and raised these four questions on which his framework based on:

– Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;

– Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of means of implementation available;

– Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; and

– Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, andwhat its doing entails.

In the following lines, the components of communicative competence in the framework introduced by Canale and Swain will be presented:

Grammatical competence: This competence includes knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, grammar and phonology. This knowledge is similar to Hymes' linguistic competence and considers as a part of the communicative competence as it represents the underlying system of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of the utterance.

Sociolinguistic competence: This component of the communicative competence is made up of sociocultural rules of language use. This knowledge is very important in interpreting and producing utterance in social context, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between literal meaning and of an utterance and the speaker's intention. The knowledge of social rules is essential for producing and understanding utterances that are appropriate to context in which language is used. It is similar to sociolinguistic competence in Hymes' model of communicative competence.

Strategic competence: This component is made up of the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns

in communication. This communication breakdowns may be due to insufficient grammatical or sociolinguistic competence. (Canale and Swain, 1980: P. 31)

Discourse competence: A component added by Canale (1983) that represents the ability to combine language structures and language functions into a coherent and cohesive text.

Based on this model proposed by Canale and Swain, these components of communicative competence should be reflected in syllabus design, teaching methodology, teacher training and materials development if we seek to equip our students with the communicative competence required for achieving communicative goals and accomplished communicative needs in real life situation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper is an attempt to define the term 'communicative competence'. It goes through the various definition of the term in order to highlight its meaning in foreign language learning and teaching. 'Communicative competence' is viewed as the knowledge of the rules of language and language use and the ability to use such knowledge effectively and appropriately in real life situations. Communicative competence has become a major aim for second and foreign language teaching and learning. Linguists and methodologists suggest communicative language approach and its activities for the purpose of achieving the communicative competence in the target language.

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