



DEFINING LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN EFL TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

In the field of foreign language learning and teaching “linguistic competence is defined as the learner’s knowledge of the structures and vocabulary of the language and his ability to produce and comprehend well-formed sentences in the language. This article explores the meaning of linguistic competence and components of linguistic competence for effective communicative competence.

KEYWORDS: *linguistic competence, communicative competence, language learning, teaching*

INTRODUCTION

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) is an international framework within which the language ability of learner is explained and assessed identically (assessment). However, CEFR is not limited to assessment. It is also about teaching and learning. Within CEFR, teaching and learning are based on CLT within which four competences are taught during the class.

Communicative competence – an ability and knowledge of a language user about how, what and where to speak appropriately from the view point of culture, traditions, shared rules and norms. It is an ability of understanding social meaning and being understood within a social context. CEFR model of communicative competence is divided into four fundamental competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic/discourse, and strategic competence. Each one of these competences is interpreted as knowledge of its content and the ability to use it. For example, Linguistic competence involves language users’ knowledge of and their ability to use different resources of language to develop well-structured messages, whereas sociolinguistic competence refers to knowledge and skills required for appropriate use of language in social situations (Bagaric & Djigunovic 2007). Pragmatic competence is subdivided into functional competence (e.g. production of language functions, speech acts) and discourse competence (cohesion and coherence).

Unlike the models discussed above, the CEFR model does not include strategic competence as a component of communicative competence.

Instead, strategic competence focuses not only on compensating for breakdowns in communication, but also a wide variety of non-compensatory communication strategies. Other two differences are that the CEFR model separates sociolinguistics and pragmatics competences, and regards discourse competence as a part of pragmatic competence (Furkó 2016).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user’s grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology as well as social knowledge. Communicative competence includes not only linguistic knowledge but also the knowledge of a set of sociolinguistic rules and the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. Precisely, it combines (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use” the language. The desired outcome of the language learning process is the ability to communicate competently, not the ability to use the language exactly as a native speaker does.

Communicative competence is made up of four competence areas: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic.

- Linguistic competence means to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?
- Sociolinguistic competence means –how to use and respond to language appropriately in



the society. Sociolinguistic competence asks: Which words and phrases fit the setting and the topic? How can I express a specific attitude (courtesy, authority, friendliness, respect) When I need to?

- Discourse competence means to interpret the larger context .Discourse competence asks: How are words, phrases and sentences put together to create conversations speeches, email, messages, newspaper articles.
- Strategic competence is how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns.

Linguistic competence allows us to form and interpret words and sentences of the language. There are the components of linguistic competence in the followings:

Phonetics -the articulation and perception of speech sounds.

Phonology- the patterning of speech sound

Morphology- the formation of words

Syntax- the formation of phrases and sentences

Semantics- the interpretation words and phrases

The studies over the term “competence”, communicative competence, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence was argued by many scholars such as Chomsky and Hymes, Canale and Swain, Bachman and Palmer, Richards Jack, John Platt and Heidi Weber and many others.

Dell Hymes was the first who pointed out that Chomsky’s linguistic competence lacks consideration of the most important linguistic ability of being able to produce and comprehend utterances which are appropriate to the context in which they are made. Hymes claimed the notion of competence defined by Chomsky, dealing with the ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous speech community which provides no place for competency for language use. He claims that Chomsky’ theory fails to account for the whole socio-cultural dimension. Canale and Swain defined communicative competence in the context of second language teaching. Their views of communicative competence are: a ‘synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse.’

Richards Jack, John Platt and Heidi Weber: “Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics” Longman (1985) includes communicative competence as:

- Grammar and Vocabulary of the language.
- Rules of speaking.
- How to use and respond to different types of speech- acts such as request, apologies, thanks and invitation.

- How to use language appropriately.

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies done on linguistic and communicative competences, researchers have found a strong correlation between linguistic (grammatical) competence and four important language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking skills; and still investigate the ways of developing linguistic and communicative competences in the classroom. Thus, each one of these competences has its own merits. For example, linguistic competence enables students to produce accurate spoken and written language as well as helping them improve their receptive skills. Communicative competence, on the other hand, provides the knowledge and skills an individual speaker requires to communicate effectively.

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