

Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners

Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners:

*Understanding Communicative
Competence*

By

Klaudia Pauliková

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INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence is the invisible phenomenon that is present in every single piece of communication between individuals or groups of individuals. It refers to the ability to use language successfully in any situation under any circumstances. When it comes to foreign language education, it is understandable that the teaching process is aiming at providing a comprehensive basis for learners to reach the highest possible knowledge on both theoretical and pragmatic levels. Due to the fact that the modern, global world requires language users to have multiple competences and skills, as well as abilities to use language effectively in different areas, becoming fully communicatively competent has become one of the main goals of foreign language education. This requirement is also reflected in reference documents for teaching foreign languages, which, on both national and international levels, refer to developing communicative competence as key to mastering foreign languages comprehensively.

The aim of this study is to identify, examine, and understand the development of communicative competence at the 4th grade of primary schools in Slovakia. It focuses on both understanding the circumstances of formation of the phenomenon, as well as its position within education in the present day. Examining and understanding communicative competence is done by a qualitative inquiry, which uses three research methods applied within the scope of primary level. The study is concerned with English textbooks that are used in lessons of English, real teaching happening in the natural school environment, and teachers and their own reflections on the examined phenomenon. Triangulation of the three methods ensures trustworthiness of the collected and examined information and provides a holistic understanding on how communicative competence is developed in real life teaching.

The first chapter presents an overview on the fundamental concepts of our study. The most crucial terms are defined, which explain the importance of communication, language, and foreign language education (FLE). A short history of FLE is provided to understand how language teaching has evolved, what approaches and methods have formed and shaped it into what we refer to in modern-day education, and also what the current trends in the teaching process are.

Chapter two gives an introduction into communicative competence as a phenomenon. An overview of the most significant concepts and models

of communicative competence is provided, as well as their theoretical background given by authors such as Chomsky, Hymes,

Savignon, Widdowson, Canale and Swain, or Bachman, who laid the fundamentals for the phenomenon to become what it is today. The chapter provides detailed descriptions of different models of communicative competence, and gives an in-depth insight into how these and other authors have reflected on it in terms of its individual components.

Chapter three discusses the same phenomenon with regards to the study undertaken—education of English in Slovakia. General factors influencing formal education are described briefly along with an insight into how national and international reference documents relate to communicative competence at the desired level of proficiency. In this chapter, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (Council of Europe, 2001), the Breakthrough Manuscript (Trim, 2001), and National Curriculum (SVP, 2011) are described with regards to the primary level of education. Their individual understanding of communicative competence and a further comparison of the three documents provides us with a fundamental understanding on what exact components communicative competence at the given level should comprise.

The fourth chapter offers insight into the methodology of our study. The main research aims and questions are stated, which guide us through the whole research procedure of our qualitative inquiry. The choice of three methods—content analysis, observation, and interview—is done with the aim of gaining a deep insight into the process of developing communicative competence at the given level. The methods are described in detail, as well as the process of analysing collected information. The chapter also portrays sampling and the two kinds of research subject that appear in the study. An overview on achieving validity and reliability in our research is provided, and the most important ethical considerations are portrayed.

The fifth and the last chapter provides a detailed description of the research results accompanied by methodological triangulation and discussion. The individual subchapters let the readers sink into the detailed results of the three research methods and reveal how communicative competence is regarded in three selected English textbooks, how it is dealt with in 100 English lessons and what 15 teachers' standpoints towards its development are. The results reveal that some of the components of communicative competence are dominating the educational process, whereas some are rather neglected. Despite the fact that the gained results

are not generalisable, the short discussion portrays several other studies, which do have similarities in their research results with ours.

CHAPTER ONE

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY

"When language is used without true significance, it loses its purpose as a means of communication and becomes an end in itself."

Karl Jaspers

The development of communicative competence is one of the most important aims of modern foreign language education (FLE). As the study's main intention is to investigate this particular issue in Slovak primary education, it is vital to understand the fundamental concepts that shape the nature of the study. First of all, it is necessary to define the basic terminology—communication, language, and FLE. Within the phenomenon of FLE, there is a need to understand all the important changes that have occurred throughout time until the modern education trends were shaped. Therefore, special attention is paid to outlining FLE from a historical perspective as well as depicting modern education trends that form education today.

Communication and language

Communication is one of the most magnificent phenomena on the planet. Every living creature uses some way of communicating with the outside world, let it be through language, signs, sounds, gestures, or changes in their appearance. There are various branches of science and studies that deal with communication. Bio-semiotics, for instance, studies communication of living organisms on a general scale. There are several studies on information theory (which encompasses mathematics, physics, neurobiology, computer science, and others) that specialise in transmitting, quantifying and storing information. Communication studies, on the other hand, deal with the communication of humans.

Valentzas and Broni (2014) derive the word communication from the Latin *communis*, which means *common*. Therefore, communication must stand for sharing and making things common. If there is no common understanding, there is no successful communication (Lunenburg, 2010).

Humankind is considered the most evolved species on Earth. We use communication as a means of conveying information from one individual or group to another. It can be defined as “the exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual models and production and comprehension processes” (Canale, 1983, p. 111). It is generally known that the process of communication is formed by three basic means—sender (who initiates communication), message (what is transmitted) and receiver (who receives the communicated message) (Cheney, 2010). As a phenomenon, it has several characteristic features. It is a form of social interaction, which is highly unpredictable and creative in both form and message. It takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts and is purposive and authentic in its nature. Lastly, its success is judged on the outcomes (Canale, 1983). As well as that, when considering success, a great variety of factors need to be taken into consideration—the kind of communication, its functions, restricting factors, and its overall effectiveness (Lunenburg, 2010; Valentzas and Broni, 2014). For that reason, it is necessary to master it to the greatest degree possible.

Language is one of the basic means of human communication. We communicate through abstract sounds that are connected to various things, concepts, ideas, and thoughts. As well as that, we use signs, gestures, and verbal and non-verbal means. Language is a structured system comprising of signs, which are used to communicate (Oxford Learners’ Dictionary, 2020). To be more precise, it “denotes the biological capacity for oral communication through the production and reception of discrete, specific and repeatable articulated sounds that carry meaning” (Kamusella, 2016, p.166). It is considered to be the main medium of culture, which encompasses the fundamentals for forming groups and maintaining group cohesion, as well as sharing messages between individuals. It is an artefact, which has been present for such a long time that it has become completely natural (Kamusella, 2016). Moreover, it works as glue that holds society together (Dunbar, 1993).

The estimated number of languages on the planet is around 6500 (Krauss, 1992). Despite that, studies show that only a very small number, 75 languages, are spoken by almost 80% of the population (Romaine, 2007). This is partly because of the fact that some languages are becoming global and some extinct. According to Hamel (2006), a global language is highly connected to the historical existence of linguistic empires and the process of globalization by these empires. English, unsurprisingly, belongs to global languages. In fact, although it is not the largest language by

speakers and geographic spread, English is the language of the ‘global village’ (Romaine, 2007).

Communication and language are strongly interconnected. It is necessary to understand that in the current state of the modern, global world, communication without language and vice versa would be meaningless. Communication is the driving force and language is the vehicle for information exchange.

The history of foreign language education

Rising globalization causes different places on the planet to be connected. It is not only because of work that people are driven to understand and use multiple languages through their lifetime. Using a unified, global language is a great advantage for trade, science, international affairs, and general communication between groups of individuals. Acquiring such a language has therefore become one of the principal aims of education policies of multiple countries throughout the globe.

FLE has been present on the planet for a very long period of time. Naturally, it has gone through multiple changes since its existence. The short, yet very rich history of FLE provides numerous perspectives and theories on what an effective teaching process should look like. Until the 17th century, FLE was concerned with ancient Greek and Latin only. As these were the languages all of the literature was written in, their teaching was restricted to being able to read and translate writings only. After Latin became a dead language, teaching of other foreign languages became popular. For the first time in history, English was taught as a foreign language. The approach of teaching the language for translations and reading texts, however, remained the same for quite a long period of time.

Different periods of time in history marked FLE differently. Linguists and teachers, opting to make FLE as effective as possible, have developed various approaches and methods for language teaching through time.

Focusing on the individual approaches, methods, and even techniques, researchers were able to classify teaching English according to periods, which allowed them to get a deeper insight into the peculiarities and specific features of the given eras. One of the most significant works dealing with the issue is the long-term study of Howatt and Smith (2014), which, based on the results of their research, categorized teaching English into four main periods: the classical period, the reform period, the scientific period, and the communicative period. Their categorization serves as a basis for investigating teaching English throughout time in this chapter.

1. Classical Period

The classical period dates back to the years between the 1750s and the 1880s. The period itself is one of the most influential milestones in the history of English language teaching (ELT), as these were the times when the teaching of English as a foreign language expanded and gained popularity for the first time (Howatt and Smith, 2014). The era delivered the grammar translation method (GMT), which was merely influenced by the teaching methodology of Latin (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Learners were taught in their mother tongue with very little active use of the target language (Celce-Murcia, 1991). The method primarily focused on the development of reading and writing, especially in terms of translating passages of literary texts from the target language to the mother tongue, spelling patterns corresponding between the mother tongue and the target language or working with grammar rules by a deductive approach and the memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013). The method was extremely successful at developing learners' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Celce-Murcia, 1991). It did, however, completely suppress the development of communicative skills, especially speaking and listening (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

2. Reform Period

Between the 1880s and late 1920s, a new era of FLE, the Reform Period emerged. Reforms started as an answer to the formerly used classical translation methods, which were no longer considered efficient enough for balanced and adequate language education (Howatt and Smith, 2014). Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that the new era brought innovative understanding of FLE, especially in terms of developing spoken and written communication.

The reform movement brought forth a new method—the direct method. It “stressed the ability to use rather than to analyze a language as the goal of language instruction” (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.4). Spoken communication was considered to be the most important to be mastered. The teaching process completely banished any kind of translations or use of the mother tongue in classrooms and grammar was solely taught inductively (Palmer, 1959). Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013), moreover, add that in addition to explaining the target language directly via realia, pictures, or pantomime, the teachers directed the lessons rather to be topic-based than to be based on linguistic structures. Learners were expected to start

thinking in the target language as soon as possible. The teachers, as Celce-Murcia (1991) further explains, were required to either be native speakers or have native-like proficiency to be able to teach the foreign language.

3. Scientific Period

The 1920s-1970s brought a new way of considering effective foreign language education. Even though many of the Reform Period ideas remained influential, a new way of thinking emerged—connecting the methods and beliefs of scientific enquiry with psychology in order to create a unified methodology for language education in general (Howatt and Smith, 2014).

One of the approaches of the era was the Oral approach (or situational language learning). Its roots were based in the Direct method; the principles were, however, more structuralist (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). The ability to communicate was the dominant skill to master, hence great emphasis was put on speech and structure. Systematic principles of selection, gradation and presentation of the taught material in both theory and practice were introduced for the first time (ibid). The teaching syllabus was designed according to specialized word lists and structural activities and language was presented in situations. Teachers moved from the oral use of sentence patterns to their complete automatic use in speech, reading and writing (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013; Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

The 1940s then brought an extraordinary warlike situation, which initiated the development of the Audio-lingual method. Personnel were required to be as fluent and accurate in foreign languages as possible, therefore their aural-oral skills were trained for specific purposes and situations (Rivers, 1981). The teaching methodology emphasized the development of listening and speaking skills instead of reading and writing, which were postponed (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

4. Communicative Period

Around the 1970s, however, language education was hit by another linguistic change. The era brought new learner-centred approaches for the first time in the history of ELT (Howatt and Smith, 2014). Similarly, for the first time the notion of competences as keys to successful language learning was introduced. Hymes, in his 1967 and 1972 studies (discussed in the following chapter) proposed the importance of considering language learning as developing communicative competence (Hymes 1967, 1972).

These studies, as Kurteš (2012) explains, meant a true breakthrough in foreign language education, as it predestined an entire change in how the methodology of teaching was to be reflected in the succeeding decades. The phenomenon was then examined by numerous linguists and scholars who developed several theoretical and practical frameworks. This resulted in a revolution in language teaching, which caused the evolution of a new approach—communicative language teaching (CLT). Savignon (2007, p. 209) clarifies that CLT “... can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. The focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events”. The ability to communicate has become the first and foremost goal of FLE (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

The teaching process started to emphasise meaning and language use instead of understanding structure and form. Teachers used multiple kinds of activities and groupings of learners to initiate the successful acquisition of language. Learners became the centre of the teaching process. Most importantly, the approach aimed at developing all four communicative skills simultaneously and equally (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

The communicative period has brought a new perspective on language teaching, which initiated the appearance of numerous approaches and methods. Task-based learning, Multiple intelligences, or Competence based learning are all different variations appearing in the Communicative period and they all emphasize the development of a communicatively competent language user, one who is able to understand and use the language in real life (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Modern education trends

Naturally, the phenomenon of FLE is much more complex than is described in the subchapter above. Its evolution has been influenced by numerous theoretical movements, which shaped the formation of the formerly mentioned approaches a great deal. Moreover, there are many more existing approaches and methods of teaching that have emerged throughout the history of teaching languages. Despite that fact, Howatt and Smith’s definition of the history of teaching languages has provided us with a general overview on how the understanding of the important aspects of FLE has changed and what the distinctive features of these eras were. Based on the information above, it is assumed that every period of FLE with its distinctive features brought exactly what the society was in

need of. Certainly, every ‘new’ understanding of language education brought great findings and pushed the phenomenon to a newer, more evolved level.

The modern era of language education is highly influenced by the global world. The current needs and requirements of society are reflected in education, which flexibly adapts to all the changes that are happening. The demand on language users today is much higher than it has ever been before, as the basic philosophy of language policies of many countries in the world is to reach “communicative competence” in at least one or two foreign languages (Tandlichová, 2008). We are required to use language on almost all the existential levels. It is no longer enough to be able to read and translate written texts in order to label someone as having knowledge of language. Today’s world requires us to have multiple competencies and skills—communication, ICT, or even technical—all in the target language. Naturally, we need to master the language as efficiently as possible in order to become fully-fledged users of it.

Modern education trends are based on general learning theories, which, as Field (2004, p. 3) explains, are further “*promoted and supported by governmental backing in the form of reports and education acts*”. Curricular documents then shape the frameworks and guidelines for teaching with regards to the main objectives of education. However, very rarely do they give step by step instructions of how teaching should exactly be done (Harmer, 2012). Since the modern model of education does not follow any strict rule on what methodology is to be used, it is mostly up to teachers to choose the approaches and methods which they consider to be the most effective (Richards and Rodgers, 2014; Kováčiková and Gajdáčová-Veselá, 2016).

Modern FLE is constantly being dealt with by a great number of authors. Handbooks for teaching languages provide foreign language teachers with a great variety of information necessary for an effective education process. Teachers themselves are perhaps the most influential elements in the teaching process, as their main duty is to educate learners and develop their personalities (Kováčiková and Gajdáčová-Veselá, 2016). Learners and learning styles are also seen as significant aspects of education. They have become the centre of interest, which indicates far more possibilities for practical language use in communicative situations than in the past (Andrews, 2007). The great variety of methods and techniques that exist serve as an inexhaustible source for teachers; it is, however, important to apply them with regards to equal distribution between the four communicative skills (Harmer, 2012). Mastering both

productive and receptive skills has become a must in order to reach language proficiency on given levels (Council of Europe, 2001).

Becoming a proficient language user, however, does not solely lie in mastering the four language skills. Narrowing the teaching of foreign languages only to the acquisition of communicative skills would mean no certainty in learners becoming able to use the language in different contexts and situations. There would be a high risk of misunderstanding and failure not only in productive communication, but also in reception (Canale and Swain, 1980). Therefore, it is vital to consider language proficiency as the ability to understand and use language well in any situation under any circumstances. The key aspect of modern FLE is to provide learners with knowledge they can take advantage of when facing the challenges of the global world (ŠPU, n.d.). It is important to understand and respect diversity of cultures, which requires teachers to prepare their students for the ability to use language efficiently in intercultural measures (Tandlichová, 2008; Reid, 2014). Language users need to become fully-fledged in using language in various social contexts and function well in real communicative situations (Council of Europe, 2001). Developing communicative competence is therefore a vital part of language education. Peterwagner (2005) marks it as the pillar of communicative language teaching, as it encompasses both the correct use of communicative skills and the awareness of culture and its aspects. It has become the key factor to successful language acquisition and now is present in almost all national and international curricula and syllabi as one of the main objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: CONCEPTS AND MODELS

The historical outline on FLE has revealed that the concept of communicative competence has been present in the teaching environment only since the 1970s. From the formation of the term, it has gone through several changes, until it developed into what we now refer to in modern-day education. Being communicatively competent means having the ability to produce and understand messages in any situation under any circumstances. It encompasses the knowledge of and ability to use all four communicative skills as well as non-verbal means. To understand the term fully, however, it is necessary to investigate it from the very beginning of its evolution. This chapter therefore deals with the definitions of communicative competence that have been created by various significant authors, the most prominent models that have occurred since its conception and its understanding at the proficiency level suitable for young learners of English.

Understanding CC in its literal meaning is quite simple. If broken down into the two single words it represents, it can be said that it refers to the ability to communicate. Its definition by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2020) is very similar. According to it, communicative refers to the ability to communicate (especially in a foreign language), whereas competence is understood as the ability to do something well. Therefore, suggesting that communicative competence as a phenomenon in the field of studying language education is the ability to produce and understand messages in various situations is quite obvious.

The term competence was first dealt with by Noam Chomsky in 1965. Chomsky referred to competence as linguistic competence and defined it as the perfect knowledge of language. He understood language knowledge as consisting of linguistic competence (the theoretical knowledge a language user possesses) and linguistic performance (the ability to use that knowledge in practice). He believed that by mastering the rules of structure and grammar, one becomes a skilled user of language (in both

production and reception). Moreover, he claimed that any social factors were outside the importance of learning a language (Chomsky, 1957, 1965).

The term communicative was added to the notion only several years later. Hymes (1967, 1972), as opposed to Chomsky, considered the social setting and other factors to be an important part of foreign language learning, as well. He introduced the need to consider more than just perfect knowledge of structure and grammar for successful language acquisition. He pointed out that *"...a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner"* (Hymes, 1972, p. 277). The first model of communicative competence therefore consisted of Chomsky's formerly mentioned linguistic competence and Hymes' own sociolinguistic competence, which he defined as the ability to use proper language in various communicative settings and situations (ibid.). For better transparency, the following figure depicts the first true model of communicative competence defined by Hymes.

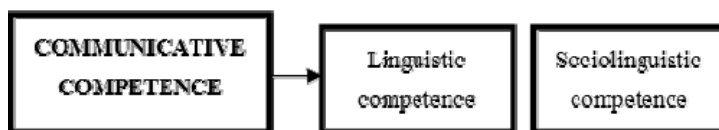


Fig. 2-1. Hymes model of communicative competence

In a practical teaching environment, Savignon (1972) understood communicative competence as the underlying ability to function in a communicative setting. Years of teaching foreign languages had shown that learners were unable to use formerly adopted language structures; therefore, there was a need to change the teaching methodology. Spontaneous interaction was offered to the learners and the results showed that they acquired the target language much faster than those who had not been offered the opportunity of spontaneous interaction. Savignon defined communicative competence as happening in a dynamic exchange, where all its components need to adapt themselves to the others. She described it as a dynamic, interpersonal and relative phenomenon, which is defined merely by context (ibid.).

Widdowson (1978), similar to Hymes and Savignon, viewed the successful acquisition of language as much more than mastering linguistic knowledge. According to him, there was a strong need to develop communication abilities along with linguistic competence, as even long

years of studying foreign languages would not guarantee that learners would be able to perform well in various situations. When defining communicative competence, he differentiated between usage and use of language. He referred to usage when learners demonstrated their knowledge of linguistic rules and use to make sure that learners would be able to use this knowledge in various situations effectively. He suggested that the classroom education of foreign languages should be divided between linguistic context and communicative context, where learners would acquire grammatical means of the language as well as recognise the communicative function their utterances fulfil (ibid.).

Canale and Swain (1980) then, building up their theory on the basis of Hymes' and Savignon's works, referred to communicative competence as the combination of fundamental knowledge and skill to use language for communication. Their concept of the phenomenon was of a pedagogical (methodological) nature and consisted of three basic categories of knowledge:

1. *knowledge of fundamental grammatical rules*
2. *knowledge of using language in a social context with the aim of fulfilling communicative functions*
3. *knowledge of combining utterances in order to fulfil the requirements of discourse*

Skill was reflected as the ability to use language knowledge in real communication. Canale and Swain proposed a model of communicative competence, which consisted of three main components—grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Their understanding of grammatical competence included the knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, and phonology. They emphasised the equality of all the components of grammatical competence and also the importance of developing grammatical competence itself in order to achieve favourable results in the FLE process. Within the sociolinguistic competence, they suggested considering two sets of rules—sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Sociocultural rules of use would define the appropriacy of produced and understood utterances and contextual discourse would mainly stand for cohesion (grammatical links) and coherence (appropriate use of functional language) of utterances. The authors, however, stated that they would prefer the focus of discourse rules to be on the combination of utterances and communicative functions, rather than the grammatical well-formedness of an utterance. Lastly, their strategic competence stood for both verbal and non-verbal means for

compensating breakdowns in communication. They defined two basic types of such strategies: grammatical competence-related and sociolinguistic competence-related (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Canale in his later study (1983), as also seen in the figure below, then introduced the need for adding another component to the communicative competence model and proposed a new, four-component framework. Discourse competence, as he referred to it, was considered as the ability to *“combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. [...] Unity of a text is achieved through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning”* (Canale, 1983, p. 9). The following figure depicts the models of communicative competence as proposed by Canale and Swain and then later Canale.

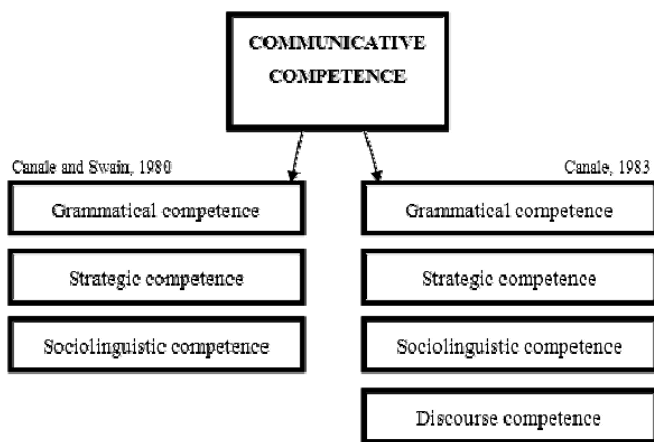


Fig. 2-2. Canale and Swain and Canale model of communicative competence

Bachman (1990) defined the phenomenon based on Hymes' and Widdowson's theories. He referred to communicative competence as a part of language ability. His understanding included both knowledge of language (or competence) and the ability to use it appropriately in context. Communicative, or as he referred to it, language competence, stood for the knowledge of language in every possible area. Bachman emphasised the importance of language use, i.e., how the language is used for fulfilling language goals in specific communicative situations. His model was proposed with regards to evaluation and testing and his framework comprised six components building up a hierarchy of competences.

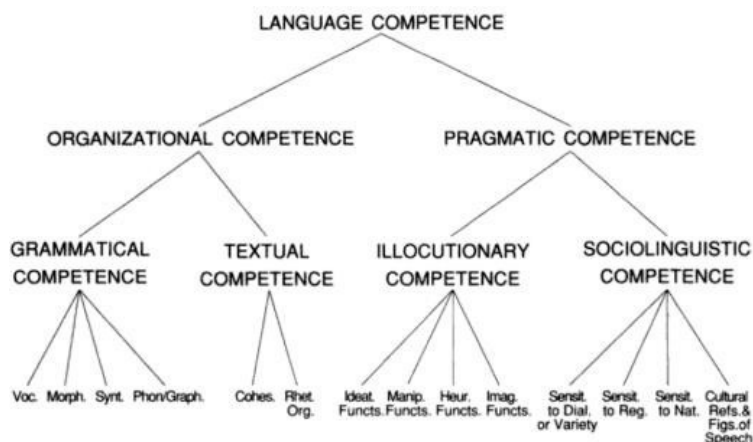


Fig. 2-3. Bachman model of communicative competence
(Bachman, 1990, p.87)

This model comprised two main components—organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence, as he defined it, involved the abilities for controlling the formal structure of language: grammatical competence and textual competence. Grammatical competence included vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology, and was very closely related to what Widdowson in his 1978 study called language usage. Textual competence stood for the ability to join utterances in order to form a spoken or written text. This included cohesion and rhetoric organization (Bachman, 1990), which corresponded with Canale's discourse competence definition introduced in 1983.

Pragmatic competence was understood as the ability to use language with regards to the users of language and the context of communicative situations, which included people, ideas, feelings and objects (Bachman, 1990). Bachman's pragmatic competence was very similar to what Hymes and afterwards Canale and Swain had defined as sociolinguistic competence. Bachman, however, divided it into two further components. Bachman's pragmatic understanding involved illocutionary competence, which represented different speech acts and language functions. These would stand for "*language to express a wide range of functions, and to interpret the illocutionary force of utterances or discourse, the appropriateness of these functions and how they are performed*" (Bachman, 1990, p. 94). The illocutionary competence was further divided into ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative functions. Sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, would be involved in performing language functions in such

ways that are appropriate for the context. This would include different dialects, register, nature, cultural references and figures of speech (ibid.).

Later, Bachman and Palmer (1996), in their handbook of test creation, went further with changing terms. Instead of language competence, they started referring to communicative competence as language ability, which comprised two main components: language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge was in fact completely correspondent with Bachman's formerly depicted 1990 model of language competence. The additional strategic competence was defined as the metacognitive strategies that provide cognitive management function in language use. The authors proposed three areas of metacognitive strategy: goal setting (deciding what to do), assessment (using what is needed and what one can work with), and planning (how to use what we have).

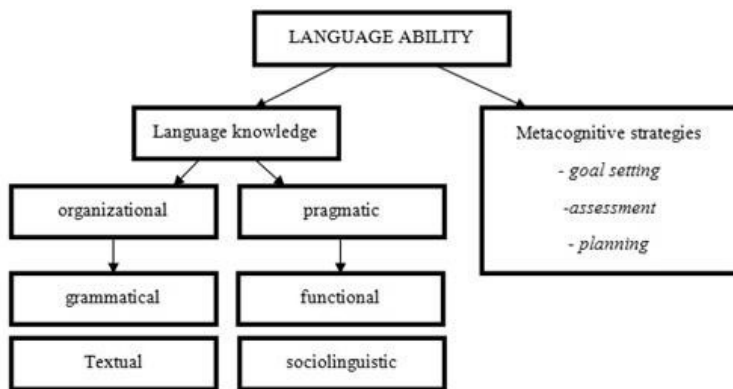


Fig. 2-4. Bachman and Palmer model of communicative competence

Another model of communicative competence was proposed in 1995 by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurell. The authors suggested these five main components to it: discourse competence, linguistic competence, strategic competence, sociocultural competence, and actional competence. They built their model upon Canale and Swain's models from 1980 and 1983 and included actional competence as an addition. They referred to it as an inevitable ability *"in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is, matching actional intent with linguistic form based on the knowledge of an inventory of verbal schemata that carry illocutionary force (speech acts and speech act sets)"* (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurell, 1995, p.17). The authors suggested several components of actional competence: knowledge of language functions in terms of interpersonal

exchange, information, opinions, feelings, suasion, problems, future scenarios as well as the knowledge of speech act sets (ibid.).

Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurell, however, represented communicative competence differently than the previous authors. They positioned discourse competence as the centre of communicative competence, surrounded by sociocultural, linguistic and actional competence in a triangle. The last component, strategic competence, was placed in an individual circle outside the four competences (see the following figure).



Fig.2-5. Fig. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurell model of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia et.al, 1995, p.10)

Their reasoning stated that “*the lexico-grammatical building blocks, the actional organizing skills of communicative intent, and the sociocultural context come together and shape the discourse, which, in turn, also shapes each of the other three components*” (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurell, 1995, p. 9). Strategic competence, on the other hand, was considered to be always present as an inventory of skills that could be used any time for the negotiation of messages, problem solving or compensating for deficiencies (ibid.).

Celce-Murcia in her later study proposed a revised version of the 1995 model. In the new version she defined communicative competence as consisting of discourse competence, sociocultural competence, interactional competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, and strategic competence. As opposed to the previous model, she added formulaic competence and replaced actional competence with interactional competence.

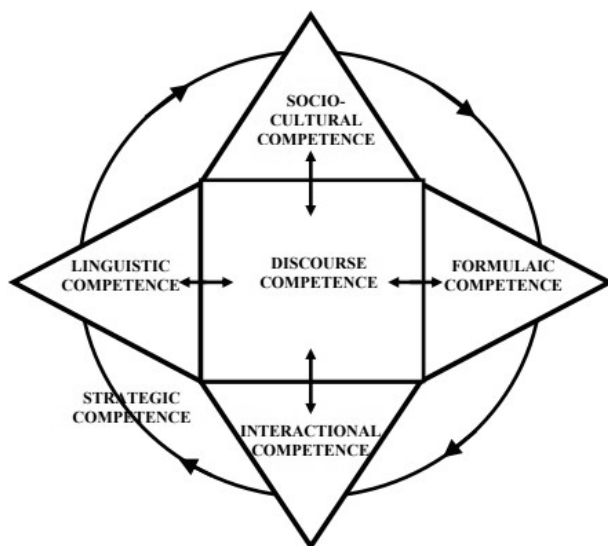


Fig. 2-6. Celce-Murcia model of communicative competence
(Celce-Murcia, 2008, p.10)

Very similar to the previous model, she considered discourse competence as the centre of communication. Within the sociocultural competence, she referred to the pragmatic knowledge of language, i.e., how to use it appropriately in social and cultural contexts. Its counterpart, interactional competence, was understood as a blend of actional competence (as defined previously), conversational competence (the ability to interact by opening/ending conversations, starting/changing topics, interrupting, collaborating, and others), and non-verbal/paralinguistic competence (including kinesics, behaviour, gestures, haptic behaviour, use of silence, proxemics, etc.). As the counterbalance to linguistic competence, she placed formulaic competence. *“Linguistic competence entails the recursive, open-ended systems listed above. Formulaic competence refers to those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions”* (Celce-Murcia, 2008, p.47). Formulaic competence would consist of fixed phrases for routines, collocations, idioms and lexical frames that fluent users of language use. The strategic competence remained as the ever-present inventory to use any time (ibid.).

The last and most recent model of communicative competence was designed by Littlewood in 2011, who also built his theoretical framework on the basis of Canale and Swain’s and Canale’s works. His model

consisted of five basic components: linguistic competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and sociocultural competence. Linguistic competence would comprise grammar, vocabulary, semantics and phonology, which is the main focus of traditional foreign language education. Pragmatic competence was understood as the ability of the user to use their linguistic knowledge in both conveying and interpreting messages in real-life situations. This competence would also encompass the ability to deal with difficulties and problems that are likely to occur due to a lack of knowledge in certain language areas. Very similar to the previously depicted models, Littlewood's discourse competence was also understood as the ability to participate in discourse, to take turns, or link ideas together to form longer spoken or written utterances. He did, however, include functioning language (opening and closing conversations, for instance) in this particular competence, as well. Sociolinguistic competence was understood (as well as in previous models) as the ability to use language appropriately in various situations. Sociocultural competence, lastly, would encompass cultural knowledge that influences the information exchange between individuals (including understanding messages of different cultures, dealing with difficulties and misunderstandings, and others) (Littlewood, 2011).

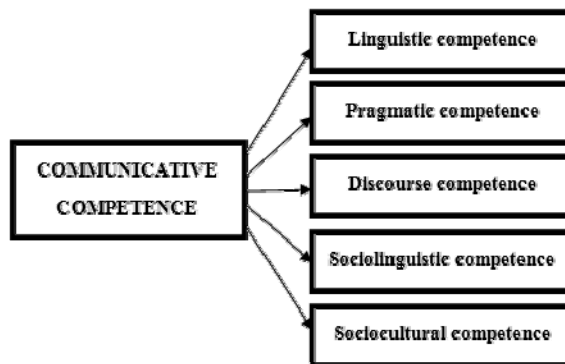


Fig. 2-7. Littlewood model of communicative competence

As a conclusion, it can be stated that although some authors mention less and some mention more components of communicative competence, the main aim—to produce a user of language who is able to communicate in the foreign language under any circumstances—is shared by all concepts and models. One of the main components is linguistic (or grammatical)

competence, which is present in every single portrayed model. Even though some of the authors present it as linguistic and some as grammatical competence, they all agree that communicative competence must include a component responsible for the knowledge of lexis, morphology, phonology and syntax.

Another common feature, especially for the more recent models, is discourse competence. This is again presented by different names (discourse competence or textual competence), but its definition as the importance of being able to use the language in various situations in discourse is equal in all the frameworks.

Sociolinguistic competence is present in every depicted model of communicative competence. Some of the authors refer to it as sociolinguistic competence and some as sociocultural competence. One of the models even portrays these as two different components of the phenomenon. Despite the fact that the authors have slightly different views on the term and what it in fact encompasses, they all agree that it is vital for users of language to use their knowledge appropriately in various communicative situations. Based on these models, sociolinguistic competence can be summarised as the correct use of sociocultural rules and rules of discourse in communication with regards to register, dialects, nature of language, cultural differences and functions of language.

Strategic competence is another component common in more works, which is also considered an important part of overall language knowledge. The significance of strategic competence lies in the ability to deal with various problems (including misunderstandings, lack of knowledge, and others) that can occur in communicative situations. It encompasses verbal and non-verbal strategies for compensating errors, problem solving, cognitive management in language use, and skills for negotiating messages.

Lastly, there is a component defining functional language use. It is either depicted as a component of pragmatic competence, or separately as actional competence. Even though the terminology the authors use is not unified, they agree on the need to acquire skills in using functional language of utterances in discourse, which include interpersonal exchanges, defining opinions, feelings, suasion, problems, and speech acts. To unify the terminology, it can be referred to as functional competence (this term is also used by Council of Europe, which is further described in the following chapters).

To conclude the previous lines, we can shape communicative competence as a phenomenon comprising five individual components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, functional competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence. The following figure is