

Approaches to Developing Communicative Competence in English Language in India.

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Abstract

Communicative competence is an essential concept in both language education and linguistics. It encompasses more than just the mastery of grammar and syntax, focusing instead on the ability to use language effectively and suitably in a variety of social contexts. This concept highlights the importance of not only linguistic knowledge but also the capacity to apply language appropriately in different situations. Over time, several teaching and evaluation methods for communicative competence have been developed, each focusing on distinct aspects of language use. The term communicative competence was first introduced by linguist Dell Hymes in the 1960s. It refers to a speaker's ability to communicate successfully and suitably in diverse social settings rather than simply being about grammatical proficiency, this concept involves an understanding of how to navigate various social and cultural contexts, interpret social cues, and engage in meaningful interaction. This paper probes into the importance of communicative competence in English language teaching, exploring various approaches to its development and highlighting its relevance in preparing learners for global communication.

Keywords: Communicative Competence, Functional-Notional Approach, Task-Based Language Teaching, Sociolinguistic Competence.

Introduction

Communicative competence is a crucial aspect of language learning that goes beyond just grammar and vocabulary. It is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in real-life situations. This concept, introduced by *Dell Hymes* in the 1970s, emphasizes the importance of not only knowing the rules of a language but also understanding how to use them in different social contexts. It has become a key component of modern language teaching and learning frameworks.

Definition and Concept of Communicative Competence:

The concept of communicative competence encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use language in a variety of communication situations. Dell Hymes introduced this concept as a response to Noam Chomsky's focus solely on the structural rules of language. While Chomsky's linguistic competence centered on grammar knowledge, Hymes emphasized the importance of considering situational appropriateness and context in communication. Michael Canale and Merrill Swain expanded on this concept by identifying four key components:

1. **Grammatical Competence** : Proficiency in the linguistic code, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
2. **Sociolinguistic Competence** : Understanding how to use language appropriately in different social settings, taking into account factors like politeness, formality, and cultural norms.
3. **Discourse Competence** : The ability to create coherent and cohesive spoken or written texts.
4. **Strategic Competence** : Using strategies to overcome communication obstacles, such as paraphrasing or seeking clarification.

These components emphasize that effective communication goes beyond just grammatical correctness; it requires a comprehensive understanding of how language functions in diverse social and cultural contexts.

Importance of Communicative Competence in English Language Learning

The significance of having strong communication skills in English language learning cannot be overstated. In today's interconnected world, English is the primary language used for communication in various fields such as education, business, and technology. The ability to effectively communicate in English is essential for personal, academic, and professional success. Traditional methods of language learning, which focused on grammar and translation, often left learners unprepared for real-life communication situations. On the other hand, developing communicative competence enables learners to navigate a wide range of communication scenarios, from casual conversations to professional interactions. It also helps them gain confidence in using the language in authentic and unpredictable situations, as well as adapt their

language use to different cultural and contextual demands. For learners in environments where English is not the native language, communicative competence is even more crucial. It helps bridge gaps in understanding, promotes intercultural communication, and equips learners for opportunities in a global marketplace.

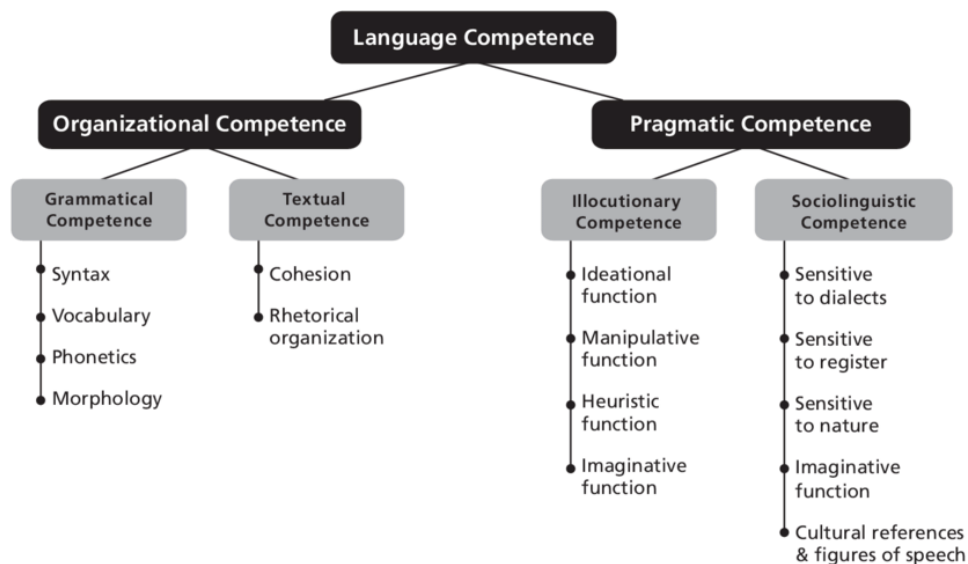
Distinction Between Linguistic Competence and Communicative Competence

Difference Between Linguistic Competence and Communicative Competence Linguistic competence focuses on the formal knowledge of a language system, including grammar, syntax, and phonetics. On the other hand, communicative competence goes beyond this basic knowledge to emphasize effective and appropriate language use in real-world contexts. The table below outlines the key differences between the two:

Aspect	Linguistic Competence	Communicative Competence
Focus	Grammar, vocabulary, and structure	Effective and appropriate language use in context
Objective	Accuracy in linguistic forms	Fluency and appropriateness in communication
Application	Idealized speaker-listener model	Real-world communicative interactions
Examples	Identifying grammatical errors	Negotiating meaning, resolving misunderstandings

This distinction highlights the importance of communicative competence in modern language education, as it equips learners with the skills needed to use language effectively in various situations. By understanding the theoretical foundations, practical implications, and key distinctions between the two competencies, educators can better support English language learners in developing this essential skill. Subsequent sections will explore different approaches and methodologies for fostering communicative competence in learners.

Language competence is a comprehensive concept described in various contexts in below flowchart that categorizes **Language Competence** into two primary components: **Organizational Competence** and **Pragmatic Competence**, both of which are integral to achieving overall communicative competence.



Language competence, a concept closely linked to the theoretical model introduced by Noam Chomsky, is generally broken down into several key components. These components represent various facets of how people comprehend and produce language. Language competence is often categorized into two primary types: **Organizational Competence** and **Pragmatic Competence**.

Organizational Competence

Organizational competence, in the context of language and communication, refers to the skill of arranging and structuring language in a way that is both logical and cohesive. It involves ensuring that ideas are presented in an orderly fashion and that different parts of a text or conversation connect seamlessly. This concept is divided into two main categories:

Grammatical Competence and Textual Competence.

Grammatical competence is the ability to understand and use the rules that govern a language effectively. It encompasses several critical areas:

1. **Syntax:** This refers to the rules that govern sentence structure, including the arrangement of words and phrases to create grammatically correct sentences. It involves understanding sentence patterns, word order, and different sentence types.

2. **Morphology:** This area focuses on the structure of words, including how they are formed and altered using elements like prefixes, suffixes, and root words. It also covers grammatical inflections, such as tense, number, and case.
3. **Phonology:** This involves the study of the sound system of a language, including phonemes (the smallest units of sound) and how they combine to form words and sentences.
4. **Semantics:** This pertains to understanding the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences, as well as how grammar influences meaning.
5. **Morph syntax:** This is the interaction between morphology and syntax, focusing on how changes in word forms, such as verb conjugations, affect sentence structures.

Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence refers to the ability to construct and understand sentences that adhere to the grammatical norms of a language. This foundational skill ensures clear and accurate communication, enabling speakers to convey their ideas effectively. It encompasses knowledge of sentence structure, word formation, and other linguistic elements essential for both spoken and written communication.

Textual Competence

Textual competence is the ability to create and interpret texts that are both coherent and cohesive. It involves structuring information logically and ensuring smooth transitions between ideas, whether in paragraphs, essays, or conversations. This skill is essential for successful communication in written and spoken forms.

Key Aspects of Textual Competence

1. **Cohesion:** Cohesion ensures that different parts of a text are connected seamlessly, making it easier for readers or listeners to follow the flow of ideas. Techniques for achieving cohesion include:
 - **Reference:** Using pronouns and other referring words to link back to previously mentioned ideas (e.g., “it” to refer to “the book”).

- **Substitution:** Replacing repetitive words or phrases with synonyms or similar expressions (e.g., using “one” instead of repeating “car”).
 - **Conjunctions:** Connecting ideas with linking words such as "and," "but," or "therefore."
 - **Ellipsis:** Omitting parts of a sentence when they are understood from context (e.g., “She can swim, and he can [swim] too”).
2. **Rhetorical Organization:** This involves arranging ideas strategically within a text to engage or persuade the audience. Key components include:
- **Introduction:** Capturing attention and presenting the main purpose or argument.
 - **Body:** Developing points in a logical order, supported by evidence or examples. Each paragraph often begins with a topic sentence, followed by supporting details.
 - **Transitions:** Using phrases to maintain the logical flow between sections.
 - **Conclusion:** Summarizing main ideas and reinforcing the key message.

Rhetorical organization also includes the use of persuasive elements, such as ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logic), to craft compelling arguments.

Pragmatic Competence:

Pragmatic competence involves the ability to use language effectively in various social settings to achieve communication goals. It includes understanding the context, social norms, and communicative purpose of interactions. Pragmatic competence is divided into:

1. Illocutionary Competence

This refers to the skill of performing specific functions or intentions through language, such as requesting, persuading, or informing. Its sub functions include:

- **Ideational Function:** Using language to represent and organize information about the world.
- **Manipulative Function:** Influencing or persuading others through strategic language use.
- **Heuristic Function:** Using language to explore, inquire, and solve problems.

- **Imaginative Function:** Engaging in creative or fictional scenarios through storytelling, poetry, or speculative discussions.

2. Sociolinguistic Competence

This aspect focuses on using language appropriately across different social contexts, recognizing factors such as cultural norms, relationships, and situational dynamics. It includes:

- **Sensitivity to Dialects:** Understanding and adapting to regional or social language variations.
- **Sensitivity to Register:** Adjusting formality or tone depending on the context and audience.
- **Contextual Awareness:** Tailoring language to fit the social setting, purpose, and participants involved.

Cultural References and Figures of Speech

Cultural references and figures of speech play a vital role in effective communication by adding depth and reliability to language.

- **Cultural References:** These include historical events, traditions, and shared cultural knowledge that provide context or nuance to communication.
- **Figures of Speech:** Creative language tools, such as metaphors, similes, and idioms, enhance expression and engage the audience.

Understanding and employing these elements enrich communication and ensure relevance to the cultural context.

Conclusion

Communicative competence is a multifaceted concept that integrates grammatical accuracy, contextual awareness, cultural sensitivity, and creative expression. It emphasizes the importance of navigating social contexts effectively while conveying messages in ways that are both meaningful and appropriate. Mastering communicative competence enables individuals to engage in impactful and respectful interactions across diverse settings and communities.

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