



A REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE MODELS: FROM HYMES TO CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

Abdullakhujaeva Madina Hojimuhammad qizi

E-mail: madina6623@icloud.com

English Teacher Academic Lyceum of Westminster

University in Tashkent

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20070198>

Abstract: The concept of communicative competence has fundamentally reshaped foreign language instruction since its emergence in the 1960s and 1970s as a reaction to traditional grammar-translation and audiolingual methods. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the theoretical evolution of communicative competence, detailing the various frameworks developed by influential linguists and educators. The discussion begins with Dell Hymes (1972), who challenged purely linguistic views by introducing social appropriateness and feasibility as core parameters of language use. It further explores the seminal models of Canale and Swain (1980/1983), which categorized competence into grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic dimensions. The review also details Bachman's (1990) Communicative Language Ability (CLA) and its subsequent refinement with Palmer (1996/2010), highlighting the integration of organizational, pragmatic, and strategic processes. Additionally, the paper examines the Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) model, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction of discourse, actional, and sociocultural competencies for classroom application. Finally, it discusses the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) as an operational synthesis of these theories, focusing on communicative proficiency within practical social contexts. By analyzing these frameworks, the paper identifies the essential knowledge and skills required for learners to achieve the ultimate goal of foreign language learning: the ability to communicate both correctly and appropriately.

Key Words: Communicative Competence, Hymes' Model, Canale and Swain's Model, Bachman, Bachman and Palmer's Model, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell's Model, Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Introduction.

The idea of developing communication skills in language classes has been around for a long time and is not new in this field. It got its first popularity in the 1960s and 1970s when communicative approach was initially adopted. This approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who were dissatisfied with the audiolingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They believed that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language; they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the target language. The paper tries to provide a review on the kind of knowledge and skill needed to be mastered in foreign language learning, that is, the communicative competence. Linguists often emphasize different components in their description of communicative competence. This discussion will cover the categorization of the knowledge and skill involved in language use offered by different scholars such as Dell Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1980), Bachman and Palmer (1986) Celce-murcia et al. (1995), and Pawlikowska-Smith (2002).

Hymes' Model

The notion of communicative competence was first coined by Hymes' (1972) as a reaction to Chomsky's (1965: 4) notion of competence and performance. What is "Communicative Competence"? It is the ability to use language not just accurately, but **appropriately** within a specific social context. While "linguistic competence" focuses on knowing the rules of grammar and vocabulary, communicative competence is about knowing *how* to talk to *whom*, and in *what* situation.

Hymes was an anthropological linguist who was interested in expression within speech communities and the interaction between social norms and communication. For Hymes, communication was more than speakers' regurgitations of grammar, "how something is said is part of what is said" (Hymes, 1986: 41). Speakers must have more than simply linguistic competence in order to successfully and appropriately communicate in any given situation.

Hymes introduced the broader, more elaborated and extensive concept of communicative competence, which includes both linguistic competence or implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of grammar, and contextual or sociolinguistic knowledge of the rules of language use in context. Hymes' model can be explained in the table below:

Parameter	The Goal	Example of "Success"	Example of "Failure"
Formally Possible	Grammatical Correctness	"I am going to the store."	"I store to the going am." (Violates syntax rules).
Feasible	Mental Processability	"The cat that the dog chased died."	"The cat that the dog that the boy owned chased died." (Grammatically okay, but too complex to follow).
Appropriate	Social Suitability	Saying "Good morning, Professor" in a classroom.	Saying "Hey, what's up, buttercup?" to a judge in a courtroom. (Grammatically correct, but socially wrong).
Actually Performed	Real-world Usage	"How are you doing?"	"In what manner does your physical and mental health persist today?" (Possible, but nobody actually says this).

Canale and Swain's Model

Canale and Swain developed theory of communicative competence based on Hymes' work. Their initial framework was proposed in 1980 and included three main components: (1) grammatical competence: sentence-level semantics, morphology, syntax, and phonology; (2)

sociolinguistic competence: socio-cultural rules of use, such as politeness and appropriateness, and rules of discourse including cohesion and coherence; and (3) strategic competence: the verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies a speaker uses to achieve a desired end result (Canale & Swain, 1980: 29 – 30). Canale later revised this framework in 1983 by breaking sociolinguistic competence into two separate components: (1) sociolinguistic competence (appropriateness of register, vocabulary and politeness norms) and (2) discourse competence (cohesion and coherence).

Dimension	Focus	The Question it Answers
Grammatical	Vocabulary, spelling, and syntax.	"Is this sentence formed correctly?"
Sociolinguistic	Social rules, politeness, and cultural nuances.	"Is this appropriate for the setting?"
Discourse	Connecting sentences to create a coherent flow.	"Does this make sense as a whole?"
Strategic	Using verbal/non-verbal tools to fix gaps in talk.	"How do I clear up this misunderstanding?"

Bachman, Bachman and Palmer' Model

Bachman (1990) proposed the term communicative language ability (CLA) to replace the term communicative competence, claiming that this term combines in itself the meanings of both language proficiency and communicative competence. Bachman's model can be described as below:

Primary Component	Sub-Component	Elements / Specific Focus
1. Language Competence	A. Organizational Competence	Grammatical: Vocabulary, syntax, morphology, phonology. Textual: Cohesion and rhetorical organization.
	B. Pragmatic Competence	Illocutionary: Language functions (Ideational, Manipulative, Heuristic, Imaginative). Sociolinguistic: Dialects, register, naturalness, and cultural figures of speech.

Primary Component	Sub-Component	Elements / Specific Focus
2. Strategic Competence	The Mental Capacity	Assessment: Evaluating the communicative goal and resources. Planning: Deciding how to use language to reach that goal. Execution: Carrying out the plan.
3. Psychophysiological Mechanisms	Physical Execution	Neurological/Physical: The actual "hardware" of communication (e.g., sound production, visual processing).

In 1996 Bachman and Palmer revisited this model and made minor changes. In short, Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) seem conceptually equivalent, aside from differences in labels and minor changes in the description of strategic competence. The terminology in the works of Bachman and Palmer from 1996 and 2010 is more consistent with that used in other models than was the terminology proposed by Bachman (1990). Bachman & Palmer's model of language competence (2010) is undoubtedly multidisciplinary and complex in nature.

Category	Bachman (1990): Language Competence	Bachman & Palmer (1996/2010): Language Knowledge
Organizational	Organizational Competence	Organizational Knowledge
<i>Grammatical</i>	Vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology/graphology.	Vocabulary, syntax, phonology/graphology.
<i>Textual</i>	Cohesion, rhetorical organization.	Cohesion, rhetorical or conversational organization.
Pragmatic	Pragmatic Competence	Pragmatic Knowledge
<i>Functional</i>	Illocutionary: Ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions.	Functional: Knowledge of ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions.

Category	Bachman (1990): Language Competence	Bachman & Palmer (1996/2010): Language Knowledge
<i>Sociolinguistic</i>	Sensitivity to dialects, register, naturalness, and cultural references/figures of speech.	Knowledge of genre (2010) , dialects/varieties, registers, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references.
Strategic	Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence
<i>Process</i>	Assessment, Goal setting, Planning.	Assessment/Appraising (2010), Planning, Execution .

Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell's Model

In 1995 Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell proposed a communicative competence model which represents an elaboration of the previous models. The major issue in this model is its sensitivity to discourse competence. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) give emphasize on the dynamic aspect of the model and indicates that the different components in the model interact with each other. Celce-Murcia's model of communicative competence provides a comprehensive view of linguistic and cultural issues that may affect students' academic performance. The model suggests that some components can be employed more effectively in the classroom situations and according to the communicative needs of the specific learner group. This model is meant to inform syllabus design in communicative language teaching which includes five competencies: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

Competence	Core Focus	Key Elements & Skills
Linguistic	The "Code"	Mastery of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, phonology, and morphology.
Discourse	The "Flow"	Connecting sentences into a coherent whole; using cohesion, deixis, and conversational structures.
Actional	The "Function"	Using language to perform speech acts (e.g., complaining, greeting, or persuading) and assigning functions to utterances.

Competence	Core Focus	Key Elements & Skills
Sociocultural	The "Context"	Understanding social roles, settings, and topics; involves non-verbal cues and cross-cultural understanding.
Strategic	The "Repair"	Using coping strategies to start, maintain, or fix communication when breakdowns occur.

Pawlikowska-Smith (2002)

Based on adaptation and synthesis of research on the acquisition of English as a second language and the previous research such as Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; and Celce-Murcia, et al., 1995, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks developed an in-depth and operational model of communication proficiency for English as a second language. The framework is called Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and was used as a companion to the earlier publication: Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second

Language for Adults. It was called Canadian Language Benchmarks because the framework also included levels of performance that students must meet in order to be considered "satisfactory" or "adequate" in any of the competencies (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002: 26). CLB is based on a functional view of language, language use, and language proficiency. Such a view relates language to the contexts in which it is used and the communicative functions it performs. The focus of CLB is on communicative proficiency in English as a second language. Communicative proficiency is the ability to interact, express, interpret meaning, and create discourse in a variety of social contexts and situations (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000: 5). The communicative proficiency consists of

five distinct competencies with linguistic competence as one, yet fundamental, component of overall communicative proficiency.

Competency	Core Definition	Critical Elements
Linguistic	The formal code of language used to produce well-formed sentences.	Syntax, morphology, lexicon, phonology, and orthography.
Textual	The ability to organize and connect language into a meaningful whole.	Cohesion, coherence, deixis, genre structure, and conversational structures.

Competency	Core Definition	Critical Elements
Functional	Using language for specific purposes or intents.	Humour, teaching, warning, self-expression, and persuading.
Socio-cultural	Knowledge of social rules and cultural appropriateness.	Politeness, idioms, figurative language, non-verbal cues, and social relationships.
Strategic	The management of communication to ensure success.	Planning for situations, avoiding difficulties, and recovering from breakdowns.

Summary and Conclusion.

A central concern for foreign language practitioners is identifying the specific knowledge and skills required for effective language learning. This paper demonstrates that these requirements are best captured by the concept of **communicative competence**, which encompasses not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately according to social context, purpose, and audience. Therefore, the ultimate goal of foreign language learning is the development of learners' ability to communicate meaningfully and effectively in real-life situations.

The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) as a reaction to Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between competence and performance. Hymes expanded this view by incorporating sociocultural norms, appropriateness, and actual language use. Building on this foundation, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980/1983) proposed a more structured model consisting of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences, offering a clearer framework for language teaching and assessment.

Further refinement was provided by Lyle Bachman (1990) and later by Lyle Bachman and Adrian Palmer (1996/2010), who introduced the model of Communicative Language Ability, integrating organizational and pragmatic knowledge with strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms involved in language use. Additionally, Marianne Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) proposed a pedagogically oriented model that emphasizes the interaction between discourse, linguistic, actional, sociocultural, and strategic competences, making it particularly relevant for classroom instruction.

Finally, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks developed the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) as an operational framework that translates these theoretical models into measurable proficiency levels. The CLB focuses on learners' ability to perform communicative tasks effectively across a range of real-life contexts.

In conclusion, the progression of communicative competence models reflects a shift from abstract linguistic theory to practical, application-oriented frameworks. Despite variations in

terminology and structure, all models consistently highlight that successful language learning requires more than knowledge of grammar; it demands the ability to communicate appropriately, strategically, and effectively in diverse social and cultural contexts

References:

- Bachman, Lyle F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, Lyle F., & Palmer, Adrian S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, Lyle F., & Palmer, Adrian S. (2010). *Language assessment in practice: Developing language assessments and justifying their use in the real world*. Oxford University Press.
- Canale, Michael, & Swain, Merrill (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
- Canale, Michael (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2–27). Longman.
- Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Dörnyei, Zoltán, & Thurrell, Sarah (1995). Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 5–35.
- Chomsky, Noam (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. MIT Press.
- Hymes, Dell (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269–293). Penguin.
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2000). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000: English as a second language for adults*.
- Pawlikowska-Smith, Grazyna (2002). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000: Theoretical framework*. Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- RADJABOVA, G. G. (2018). The role of assessment in teaching English. *Иностранные языки в Узбекистане*, (3), 74–80.
- Otakhon Rustam Ugli Radjabkulov, & Gulnoza Giyosiddinovna Radjabova (2023). IMPACT OF CORPORA ON TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE. *Academic research in educational sciences*, 4 (5), 48–52.
- Gulnoza, Radjabova. "The Development OF Writing Competence Through Data-driven Learning (on the Basis OF Coca)." *Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, vol. 12, no. 3, 27 Mar. 2024, pp. 480–483