

Communicative competence essay sample

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



COMMUNICATION: Communication is commonly defined as “ the interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs”.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: Ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. 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. (English Varieties).

History and development of different Theories:

Noam Chomsky (1965):

The idea was originally derived from Chomsky’s distinction between competence and performance. Language is a psychological process that is born with the person who has innate knowledge of grammar. (performance and competence) Performance and competence:

Performance:

A person’s actual use of language; how a person uses his knowledge of a language in producing and understanding sentences. Competence:

A person’s knowledge of a language; People may have the competence to produce a long sentence but when they try to use it, they restrict it. For example, listeners might forget what has been said if the sentence is too long. Due to performance factors such as lack of attention, nervousness or excitement, their actual use of language may not reflect their competence. The errors they make are described as examples of performance. Dell Hymes (1972):

Chomsky's view too narrow to describe language. Communicative competence is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings through behavior as a whole. Language is based on the communicative competence that includes form and function. People learn the language by using a social-linguistic knowledge. Form vs. function:

Form:

The physical characteristics of a thing in language use, a linguistic form is like the imperative. Function:

A linguistic form that can perform a variety of different functions:

Come here for a drink-> invitation

Watch out-> warning

Turn left at the corner-> direction

Pass the salt-> request

Canale and Swain (1980):

Canale and Swain defined communicative competence in terms of four aspects; 1. Linguistic competence: Knowing how to use the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?. 2. Sociolinguistic competence: Knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic and the relationships among the people communicating. Sociolinguistic competence asks: Which words and phrases fit this setting and this topic? How can I express a specific attitude (courtesy, authority, friendliness, respect) when I need to? How do I know what attitude another person is expressing?

3. Discourse competence: Knowing how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole. Discourse competence asks: How are words, phrases and sentences put together to create conversations, speeches, email messages, newspaper articles? 4. Strategic competence: Knowing how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language in the context. Strategic competence asks: How do I know when I've misunderstood or when someone has misunderstood me? What do I say then? How can I express my ideas if I don't know the name of something or the right verb form to use? BACHMAN'S VIEW:

A more recent survey of communicative competence by Bachman (1990) divides it into the broad headings of "organizational competence," which includes both grammatical and discourse (or textual) competence, and "pragmatic competence," which includes both sociolinguistic and "illocutionary" competence.

John Searle and J. L. Austin:

They believe that language is closely related with the Speech Act which includes such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting and congratulating. Conclusion: Through the influence of communicative language teaching, it has become widely accepted that communicative competence should be the goal of language education. This is in contrast to previous views in which grammatical competence was commonly given top priority. The understanding of communicative competence has been

influenced by the field of pragmatics and the philosophy of language concerning speech acts as described in large part by John Searle and J. L. Austin.