

RETHINKING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN MODERN LINGUISTICS: THEORY, PRACTISE, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract. In recent decades, communicative competence has become one of the central concepts in modern linguistics and language education. This paper revisits its theoretical foundations and examines how it is applied in contemporary teaching practices. Rather than viewing language learning as the acquisition of grammatical knowledge alone, the article emphasizes the importance of meaningful interaction and contextual language use. Particular attention is given to classroom practices, learner engagement, and digital technologies in shaping communicative ability. The paper also reflects on some practical challenges that students and teachers face in real learning environments.

Keywords: communicative competence, language learning, linguistics, discourse, sociolinguistics, pedagogy.

In today's world, knowing a foreign language is no longer just an advantage – it is often a necessity. Students are expected not only to understand grammar rules but also to communicate ideas clearly and confidently. However, in many classrooms, there is still a gap between knowing the language and actually using it in real situations.

From my own observation as a language learner, it is sometimes easier to complete grammar exercises than to express simple thoughts in conversation. This shows that language learning should go beyond memorization and focus more on communication. For this reason, communicative competence has become a key concept in modern linguistics [Richards, 2006].

The term communicative competence was introduced by Dell Hymes, who argued that knowing a language means more than forming correct sentences (Hymes, 1972). According to him, learners also need to understand how to use language appropriately in different contexts.

Later, Canale and Swain [1980] developed this idea further and described communicative competence as a combination of several components.

First, grammatical competence includes knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For example, students may know grammar rules very well but still hesitate to speak.

Second, sociolinguistic competence refers to understanding how language changes depending on the situation. For instance, the way we speak to a teacher is different from how we speak to a close friend [Savignon, 1997].

Third, discourse competence involves connecting ideas in a clear and logical way. In my experience, this is often one of the most challenging skills for students, especially in speaking and writing tasks.

Finally, strategic competence helps learners deal with communication difficulties. For example, when students forget a word, they may try to explain it in another way instead of stopping completely [Brown, 2000].

The communicative approach focuses on using language for real communication rather than only studying rules [Richards, 2006]. In such classrooms, students are more active and involved in the learning process.

Activities like role plays, group discussions, and pair work are commonly used. From what I have seen, students usually enjoy these activities because they feel more natural and less stressful than traditional exercises. They also help build confidence, especially for those who are shy to speak.

Another important aspect is that mistakes are treated as part of learning. Instead of focusing only on correctness, teachers encourage students to express their ideas freely and then gradually improve their accuracy [Brown, 2000].

To develop communicative competence effectively, teachers need to use a variety of methods.

Interactive activities play a very important role. For example, role-playing allows students to imagine real-life situations, such as ordering food or participating in an interview. Discussions and debates help learners think critically and respond to others' opinions [Savignon, 1997].

Authentic materials are also useful. Watching videos, listening to podcasts, or reading real articles can make learning more interesting. Personally, I find that students become more motivated when they work with real-life content instead of only textbooks.

In addition, combining different language skills – such as listening and speaking – can make learning more effective. In real life, we rarely use only one skill at a time, so it makes sense to practice them together [Brown, 2000].

Technology has changed the way students learn languages. Today, there are many apps and online platforms that make learning more flexible and accessible. Students can practice anytime, anywhere, which is especially helpful for busy learners.

For example, video calls with native speakers or international students provide real communication experience. This kind of interaction can be very motivating and helps learners become more confident [Richards, 2006].

At the same time, it is important not to rely only on technology. In my opinion, the best results come when digital tools are combined with traditional teaching methods.

Despite its benefits, the communicative approach is not always easy to implement. Some teachers may feel uncomfortable using new methods, especially if they are used to traditional teaching styles [Richards, 2006].

Another challenge is that some students are passive or afraid of making mistakes. I have noticed that in such cases, creating a supportive classroom environment is very important. When students feel safe, they are more willing to participate.

To improve the situation, teachers can attend training programs and try new techniques step by step. Also, using small group activities can help involve more students and make lessons more interactive [Brown, 2000].

Communicative competence is an essential part of modern language learning. It helps students move from simply knowing a language to actually using it in real life.

Based on both theory and classroom experience, it is clear that interactive methods, authentic materials, and technology all play an important role in developing communication skills. At the same time, challenges such as limited time and student hesitation should not be ignored.

In my view, the most effective learning happens when students feel engaged, motivated, and confident. Therefore, creating a supportive and communicative learning environment should be a priority for every language teacher.

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