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INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE OR COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: OVERVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

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ИНТЕРАКЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЬ ИЛИ КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЬ: ОБЗОР СВЯЗАННЫХ ТЕОРИЙ

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Abstract. The article analyses the relationship of communicative and interactional competences by providing chronological evolution of the terms and discussing contrasting and similar approaches the language scholars presented earlier. Besides, relevant examples for issues of testing and assessing these two competences are illustrated to show the gaps between communicative teaching and testing.

Аннотация. В статье анализируется взаимосвязь коммуникативных и интеракционных компетенций, приводится хронологическая эволюция терминов и обсуждаются противоположные и похожие подходы языковых ученых, представленных ранее. Кроме того, проиллюстрированы соответствующие примеры вопросов тестирования и оценки этих двух компетенций, чтобы показать пробелы между коммуникативным обучением и тестированием.

Keywords: competence, interactional competence, communicative competence, communicative language teaching, CEFR, communicative language testing, model of communicative competence

Ключевые слова: компетенция, интеракционная компетенция, коммуникативная компетенция, коммуникативное обучение языку, CEFR, коммуникативное языковое тестирование, модель коммуникативной компетенции.

In the history of language learning and teaching, a number of approaches have been suggested and applied. The introduction and preference of communicative approach triggered many scholars to research and focus on communicative competence, which is indispensable constituent of the current approach. All the modern publications state and justify the importance of developing language learners' communicative competence. Common European Framework of Reference for languages, global document stating the requirements for language learning, teaching and assessing also revolves around the term communicative interactional competences. (The table will be discussed further)

There are many different approaches to the notions of communicative and interactional competences. That is, some scholars (Canale&Swain, Celce-Murcia) consider that interactional competence is a part of communicative competence, while others (D. Sun, 2014; Young, 2011) define these two terms by contrasting and prioritizing one over another. In the article, the author

presents an analysis of different approaches to abovementioned notions, illustrating some examples for raised issues.

If one wants to understand the role of communicative and interactional competences in modern conditions of language learning, Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) should be of great assistance. Having been put together in 1990s by Council of Europe to promote collaboration among teachers of different languages, CEFR contains valuable data which give understanding of what a particular level language learner should be able to do in the target language.

In the table below, some statements from the document are illustrated where you can see how these two competences are reflected in each level of language learning

Table 1.

Level	Requirements	Link to communicative competence according to different scholars
C2	...can express himself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely <i>differentiating finer shades of meaning</i> even in more complex situations ...	According to Celce-Murcia, discourse competence, (which is a part of CC, being able to understand culturally distinctive meanings of the words)
C1	...can use language flexibly and effectively for <i>social, academic and professional purposes</i>	Termed as sociocultural or sociolinguistic competence by Celce-Murcia, it is being able to appropriately choose the words acc.to different contexts
B2	...can <i>interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity</i> that makes <i>regular interaction</i> with native speakers quite possible without strain on either party ...	According to Young, D.Sun, interactional competence is co-constructing the meaning together, not alone
B1	...can <i>deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling</i> in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce <i>simple connected sentences</i> on topics which are familiar or of interest...	According to Swain&Canale, Canale, Celce-Murcia, strategic competence is being able to know what to do and say in different real-life situations to avoid misunderstandings and gaps.
A2	...can <i>communicate in simple routine tasks</i> requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters ...	
A1	...can <i>interact in simple way provided the other person speaks slowly</i> and clearly or is prepared to help ...	

(fragments from CEFR requirements are taken from Jalolov)

This was a brief overview to justify how the issue is topical in present language learning and teaching and show its link to globally recognized document. More detailed analysis of various scholars' viewpoints throughout history of language learning and teaching is given further.

It was Chomsky (1957) who introduced the term competence, defining it as the knowledge of language and separating it from the term performance (actual, real world use of language) However, this belief was rejected by Hymes (1967) who introduced the term “communicative competence” claiming that it is beyond the knowledge of grammar and lexis the speakers apply in normal communication.

The term communicative competence was later developed by Canale and Swain (1980). They considered communicative competence is the combination of three competences — grammatical (the skill of using grammar rules to make meaningful utterances); sociolinguistic (the ability to use

language properly according to particular social or cultural context); and strategic (the ability to apply communication strategies to avoid or deal with misunderstandings or ambiguities). Discourse competence, which was defined as the ability to provide coherence and cohesion, was also added by Canale (1983) later as another constituent of communicative competence.

Although there are a variety of definitions suggested by scholars for the term ‘communicative competence’, D. Sun (2014) points out that two key competences (how correctly learners can use foreign language and how appropriately learners can use the foreign language) make up communicative competence. The former was defined as organizational competence and the latter as pragmatic competence by Canale (1980). The ability to use the language appropriately was also called as sociolinguistic competence by Savignon (1983) and intercultural competence by Wen (1999).

Another research on communicative competence has been carried out by Celce-Murcia (2008) who created, developed and adapted a model of this competence. One of the crucial contributions of the researcher is to justify interrelation of different parts of communicative competence and importance of these interrelationships to understand whole construct of communicative competence. In the table below, you can see evolutionary classification of the term communicative competence developed by different scholars.

Table 2.

CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE ACCORDING TO CELCE-MURCIA

(Chomsky, 1957,1965)					
Linguistic competence					
Hymes (1967,1972)					
Linguistic competence		Sociolinguistic competence			
Canale and Swain (1980)					
Grammatical competence		Strategic competence	Sociolinguistic competence		
Canale (1983)					
Grammatical competence		Strategic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Discourse Competence	
Celce-Murcia et al (1995)					
Linguistic competence		Strategic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Actional Competence	Discourse Competence

Celce — Murcia develops a model of communicative competence twice. In the first model, putting discourse competence at the center of a pyramid and showing its link to all other three (linguistic, sociocultural, actional) competences, she sets strategic competence in the circle outside the pyramid. Strategic competence in the model means communicative, cognitive and metacognitive strategies used to resolve and compensate for deficiencies in any of other competences located in pyramid.

In the first model of Celce-Murcia, Canale`s sociolinguistic competence was replaced with sociocultural competence and is said to mean speaker`s knowledge in pragmatics that is being able to make appropriate utterances within overall social and cultural context of communication.

In the second proposed model of communicative competence two new competences (formulaic and interactional) are added as discourse still staying in the center of four other competences. Strategic competence is also seen to carry out the same functions in the first model as its location is not changed.

Unlike other researchers who opposed interactional competence or separated it from communicative competence, Celce-Murcia considered interactional competence as bottom –up counterpart of sociocultural competence and constituent of communicative competence and gave detailed construct of it. With reference to her, it comprises of actional competence, conversational competence and non-verbal competence

Actional competence is the knowledge of how to hold speech acts such as information exchanges, interpersonal exchanges, feelings, opinions, problems related to complaining, blaming, regretting; future scenarios;

Conversational competence is mainly about turn taking matters but can be extended into other dialogic procedures as:

- how to open and close conversations;
- how to establish and change topics;
- how to get, hold and relinquish the floor;
- how to interrupt;
- how to collaborate and backchannel.

Nonverbal competence includes the following:

- body language, non-verbal turn-taking signals, gestures, eye contact;
- use of space by interlocuters;
- haptic behavior (touching);
- non-linguistic utterances with interactional import;
- silence and pauses.

Similarly, to Hymes, D. Sun names the ability to use the language correctly as linguistic competence and puts forward the idea that linguistic competence has always been under great attention compared to strategic competence (above called as sociolinguistic), which still needs to be focused more in language teaching. To justify his opinion, he looks back to the hierarchy of language teaching approaches. Indeed, many of the approaches until communicative approach, including audio-lingual, direct and grammar-translation method focused on developing learners` linguistic competence. Overdue bias of linguistic competence than strategic (pragmatic) competence may cause gaps in language learning and use. That is, learners with adequate level of English may not be aware of how to respond to particular questions and hold a successful interaction, which in turn will decrease their level of fluency and pace of speaking.

Yun talks about conversational loop and how communicative incompetence may affect it. He believes simulated communicative situations cannot replace real situations, because in real life conversation does not happen discretely but come as conversational loops. Therefore being able to respond one or two question in simulations may not help learners to adjust to new challenges, or in other words to develop their strategic competence to achieve communicative goals.

While Young, admitting that interactional competence has been defined by different scholars in different ways, outlines certain undeniable features of this competence.

They are as follows. It is non-monologic that is “...characterized by a focus on the co-construction of discursive practices by all participants involved rather than on a single person”.

Another feature of IC agreed by most of the scientists is that there is never sufficient list of elements to achieve successful interaction. Below we can give some of these elements provided by Hall, Hellerman and Doehler to prove the infinity of the necessary elements

Knowledge of social –context specific communicative events, activity types, their typical goals. Trajectories of actions by which goals are realized. Conventional behaviours by which participant roles and role relationships are accomplished. Ability to deploy and recognize context

specific patterns by which turns are taken, actions are organized and practices ordered. Prosodic, linguistic, sequential and nonverbal resources which are used to. Produce and interpret turns and actions. Construct so that they are recognizable for others. Repair problems in maintaining shared understanding of interactional work. J. Campbell-Larsen also states that IC is difficult to define as ‘the difficulty in narrowing down what precisely constitutes IC in any given interaction and the fact that it is not measurable as a stand-alone competence of an individual. J. Campbell-Larsen refers interactional competence as the ability to co-create a turn or series of turns in immediate (spontaneous) unfolding interaction which can accommodate speaker’s intention and recipient’s design [1]. J. Campbell-Larsen (2014) gives a list of features of IC. Speaking dominates over other language skills reading and writing. The main form speaking is interaction, not monologues. Preference and frequency are given to everyday conversations rather than speeches, presentations, interviews etc.

Conversation is spontaneous, co-constructed by participants without rehearsing. Utterances are formed according to previous speakers utterances and planned toward future utterances of another speaker. Speakers are not involved in the exchange of neutral, objective statements about external world. Accuracy on the usage of grammar and rules of written language is not strict. Key unit of conversation is not a sentence, but a turn at talk. Conversational language is considered as a disordered and messy form of written language, instead written language is ideally and abstractly systematized form of language which cannot be used in teaching spoken language.

In terms of teaching and assessing speaking in the classroom we can discuss a number problems. For example, the first gap between classroom teaching of speaking and how it is used in real world is topic management with reference to J. Campbell-Larsen. He points out that many of the classroom speaking activities are mono-topical, being chosen by the teacher (who is not participant of the interaction. This is not the case in outside the classroom. I agree with this finding as it decreases the authenticity level of the activity, authenticity being one of the essential factors of communicative language teaching. Indeed, in real life “topics are proffered, taken up, rejected, changed, changed back, closed, developed, or abandoned by any and all participants...”, says J. Campbell-Larsen

Another controversial issue can be related to the way how speaking skills of language learners are usually assessed. IELTS, globally accepted qualified testing system, does not fully respond to the requirements of CEFR or does not reflect the theories scholars put forward about communicative competence. Let’s look at speaking part of the examination. First of all, it is not authentic as it does not simulate real-life conversations. In real life, conversation is held almost equally by two speakers, not like one only asking and the other only answering. Although descriptions of IELTS exam claim it as informal talk, the format is more formal rather than informal because it is in interview form, not conversational style. In this matter, Cambridge level based exams better represent communicative language learning and assessing because two candidates take speaking exam at the same time and the speaking examiner is able to check candidates interactional strategies such as turn taking, dealing with misunderstandings, different accents and keeping conversational loops etc. Secondly, in everyday lives, even in academic sphere, question is not selected by only one speaker – both speakers can make up their related questions, which is not allowed in IELTS. Thirdly, if we analyse how listening is checked in IELTS, in real life we do not always have a chance to see the questions of what we are going to hear beforehand. In real life we first listen and then have to make decisions or respond or show our reactions according to what we heard. In this perspective TOEFL test represents what IELTS cannot test. Candidates first listen and then do general comprehension based questions, which is really authentic way of communicative

language testing.

In terms of developing interactional competence, J. Campbell-Larsen suggests to raise students' awareness about centrality of interaction, to shape the language to coincide with local, context-bound interactional needs and he thinks in interaction co-construction and intersubjectivity are to be pursued more rather than abstract, idealized and easily testable model.

To conclude, although there are diverse approaches to the notion of communicative and interactional competence, it is certain that interactional competence has evolved as a part of communicative competence and become a concern for many scholars because of promotion of communicative language teaching and learning. In this matter, the author agrees with Celce-Murcia's viewpoint that interactional competence is a constituent of communicative competence for the following reasons. Communicative competence is logically wider and more global understanding rather than interactional competence as interactional competence is specific only about speaking (conversational) skill, while communicative competence can be demonstrated through reading, writing and listening as well. Besides, the theories regarding interactional competence do not and should not contradict what is related to communicative competence, but complete/fulfill. I consider more concern should be spared for how language is tested whether it responds the requirements of communicative language teaching, including development of learners' communicative and interactional competence. In fact, communicative teaching without responsive testing and assessment may hinder success of teachers and learners.

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