# Communicative Compentences in EFL Learning

**Rama Dwika Herdiawan**

*English Language Education, Universitas Majalengka*
*Dwikarama605@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** In terms of communication, it requires a number of competences that develop the cognitive as well as metacognitive skills. This deals with the communicative competences which lead to the effectiveness of not only having communication but also acquiring the knowedge inside it. Thus, this study is concerned with how the communicative competences (Celce Murcia, 2007) influence the students' cognitive and metacognitive skills in terms of learning English. The findings reveal that they way they communicate should reflect the socio-cultural norms of the target language (English) and they also have different background in terms of learning English as well as knowledge in understanding how to communicate using English politely. In addition, the students closely engage with how to construct the written or spoken text. In this case, they need to have the relevant schemata in terms of selecting, sequencing, and also arranging the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and also utterances in order to create unified information to convey in the context of communication. In brief, communicative competences reflect a number of cources in order to educate learners to be leading and professional.

**Keywords: communicative competences, EFL Learning**

**Introduction**

Regarding the aims of our curriculum, it is closely in line with how to use the language as a means of communication as well as medium instruction in the context of English language teaching and learning. This happens because the language particularly English has been a strategic way of teachers as well as students in terms of communicating and also transferring their knowledge to the others. In addition, it deals with how the teachers as well as students' competence generate the outcomes of the communication. It is related to the communicative competence which must be posssed not only by the teachers but also the students particularly. in other words, it has become the basic principles in terms of the implementation of English pedagogy. It is also in line with Celce Murcia (2007) who states that the model of communicative competence suggests a number of principles for the design and implementation of language courses that aim at giving learners the knowledge and skills they need to be linguistically and culturally competent in a second or foreign language. In fact, the students' competence does not represent the communicative competence which used for their academic purposes as well as communication in general.

The model of communicative competence has been shifted over years for the purpose of creating the new insight into it. At the beginning, the communicative competence only contained linguistics competence which was proposed by Chomsky in 1957. The other linguists put their own notions on Chomsky's concept. For example: the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes (1967, 1972) put forward this notion in response to the theories of the formal linguist Noam Chomsky (Chomsky 1957; 1965), who focused on linguistic competence and claimed that any consideration of social factors was outside the domain of linguistics. Hymes (1972) also opposed to Chomsky that linguistic competence (the rules for describing sound systems and for combining sounds into morphemes and morphemes into sentences), one also needed notions of sociolinguistic competence (the rules for using language appropriately in context) to account for language acquisition and language use. The other linguists who developed

as well as revised the model of communicative competence in relation to teaching and assessment were Canale and Swain (1980). They added strategic competence (i.e. the ability to resolve for problems or miscommunication and did various types of planning) to the linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence that Hymes (1972) had proposed; however, they related to 'linguistic competence' as 'grammatical competence'. In 1983, Canale inserted discourse competence (the ability to produce and interpret language beyond the sentence level) to the model. Afterwards, Celce Murcia et. al. (1995) proposed that actional competence (the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets) should also be part of communicative competence. Finally, Celce Murcia (2007) revised the model of communicative competence in which actional competence is inside interactional competence. Here is the illustration how the model of communicative competence has been revised and updated time to time:

1. Chomsky (1957, 1965) proposed linguistics competence.

2. Hymes (1967, 1972) proposed linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

3. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed grammatical, strategic, and also sociolinguistic competences.

4. Canale (1983) proposed grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic, and also discourse competence.

5 Celce Murcia et. al (1995) proposed linguistic, strategic, sociolinguistic, actional, and discourse competences.

6. Celce Murcia (2007) proposed linguistic, strategic, sociolinguistic/socio-cultural, formulaic, interactional and discourse competences.

Communicative comptence was firstly proposed by Celce Murcia et. al. (1990). It had been shifted over years, and eventually they revised as well as updated the model of communicative competence in 1995. The previuos model consisted of 5

competences such as socio-cultural comptence, linguistic competence, actional comptence, strategic competence, and also discourse comptence. Meanwhile, the new model contained six competences in which actional comptence was a part of interactional one, and formulaic competence was included in it. According to Celce Murcia et.al. (1995), communicative competence is divided into six competences, as follows:

a. Socio cultural competence

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995: 23–24) classify some sociocultural variables,three of them are most prominent in terms of the current model.

1. social contextual factors: the participants' age, gender, status, social distance and their relations to each other: power and affect.
2. stylistic appropriateness: politeness strategies, a sense of genres and. registers.
3. cultural factors: background knowledge of the target language group, major dialects/regional differences, and cross cultural awareness.

b. Discourse competence

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995: 13–15) elaborate a number of types of discourse competence, four of them are most important in relation to the current model:

1. cohesion: conventions regarding use of reference (anaphora/cataphora), substitution/ ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical chains (i.e. Halliday and Hasan l976).
2. deixis: situational grounding achieved through use of personal pronouns, spatial terms (here/there; this/that), temporal terms (now/then; before/after), and textual reference (e.g. the following table, the figure above).
3. coherence: expressing purpose/intent through appropriate content schemata, managing old and new information, maintaining temporal

continuity and other organizational schemata through conventionally recognized means.

4. generic structure: formal schemata that allow the user to identify an oral discourse segment as a conversation, narrative, interview, service encounter, report, lecture, sermon, etc.

c. Linguistic competence

Linguistic competence includes four types of knowledge (Celce Murcia et.al, 1995)

1. phonological: includes both segmentals (vowels, consonants, syllable types) and suprasegmentals (prominence/stress, intonation, and rhythm).
2. lexical: knowledge of both content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and unction words (pronouns, determiners, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries, etc.).
3. morphological: parts of speech, grammatical inflections, productive derivational processes.
4. syntactic: constituent/phrase structure, word order (both canonical and marked), basic sentence types, modification, coordination, subordination, embedding.

d. Formulaic Competence

There are at least four areas in line with the formulaic comptence, as follows:

1. routines: fixed phrases like of course, all of a sudden and formulaic chunks like How do you do? I'm fine, thanks; how are you?
2. collocations: verb-object: spend money, play the piano adverbadjective: statistically significant, mutually intelligible adjective-noun: tall building, legible handwriting
3. idioms: e.g., to kick the bucket = to die; to get the ax = to be fired/terminated
4. lexical frames: e.g., I'm looking for _____. See you (later/tomorrow/ next week, etc).

e. Interactional competence

Interactional competence has at least three sub-components relevant to the current model:

1. actional competence: knowledge of how to perform common speech acts and speech act sets in the target language involving interactions such as information exchanges, interpersonal exchanges, expression of opinions and feelings, problems (complaining, blaming, regretting, apologizing, etc.), future scenarios (hopes, goals, promises, predictions, etc.) See Celce-Murcia et al. (l995) for more detailed information regarding actional competence.
2. conversational competence: inherent to the turn-taking system in conversation described by Sachs et al. (l974) but may be extendable to other dialogic genres:
   a. how to open and close conversations
   b. how to establish and change topics
   c. how to get, hold, and relinquish the floor
   d. how to interrupt
   e. how to collaborate and backchannel, etc.

f. Strategic Competence

Strategic Competence According to Oxford (2001: 362), strategies for language learning and use are "specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning." Such behaviors are either (1) learning strategies or (2) communication strategies. We know that learners who can make effective use of strategies (i.e. who have strategic competence) tend to learn languages better and faster than those who are strategically inept. Of Oxford's learning strategies, three are most important for our purposes:

1. cognitive: these are strategies making use of logic and analysis to help oneself learn a new language through outlining, summarizing, notetaking, organizing and reviewing material, etc.

2. metacognitive: these strategies involve planning one's learning by making time for homework or for preparation, and engaging in selfevaluation of one's success on a given task or on one's . This is achieved in part by monitoring and noting one's errors, learning from teacher and peer feedback, etc. Compensating for missing or partial knowledge by guessing the meanings of words from context or the grammatical function of words from formal clues are also aspect of metacognition.

3. memory-related: these are strategies that help learners recall or retrieve words through the use of acronyms, images, sounds (rhymes), or other clues. The other crucial strategies, which are the ones we highlighted in CelceMurcia et al. 1995: 26–29), are communication strategies; they include the following:

4. achievement:    strategies    of    approximation,    circumlocution, codeswitching, miming, etc. - stalling or time gaining: using phrases like Where was I? Could you repeat that?

5. self-monitoring: using phrases that allow for self repair like I mean…. - interacting: these are strategies that include appeals for help/clarification, that involve meaning negotiation, or that involve comprehension and confirmation checks, etc.   - social: these strategies involve seeking out native speakers to practice with, actively looking for opportunities to use the target language.

Based on the illustration above, it is assumed that the linguists had a number of considerations in relation to the development of the model of communicative competence. In addition, they added the new competences in order to recreate the role of communicative competence in language teaching. Therefore, the researcher will initiate to conduct the research which

concerned with how the communicative competence affects the students' knowledge as well as skills in EFL learning.

In brief, the concept of communicative competence has been shifted many years because a number of scholars had formulated as well as reconstructed it into different perspectives. In addition, it is created based on a series of experiments conducted by the scholars with various propositions and also coverage. At last, Celce Murcia et.al formulated the final model of communicative competence into six namely linguistic, strategic, sociolinguistic/socio-cultural, formulaic, interactional and discourse competences.

**Research Problem**

in terms of formulating the research problem, it leads to creating the research question which focuses on "How does the communicative competence affect the students' cognition in EFL learning?"

**Reasons for choosing the topic**

In relation to the background of the study, the current research will generate a number of recommendations which reflect the result of the research particularly.

moreover, it will contribute to the improvement of English pedagogy which focused on the concept of communicative competence. This is also in line with McGroarty (1984) claims that 'communicative competence' can have different meanings depending on the target learners and on the pedagogical objectives in any given context.

### Objective of the study

Based on the research problem, the researcher concern with the objective of the study which is to explain the role of communicative competence that affects the students' metacognitive skills in EFL learning.

### Methods

Based on the objective of the study, it closely deals with the qualitative research which employs interpretative research design involving observation, and also semi-structured interviews. it is also in line with Mack, N. et.al (2005:1) who state that Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that (1) seeks answers to a question, (2) systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, (3) collects evidence, (4) produces findings that were not determined in advance, (5) produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. The partcipants were the fifth year students of English language education department in Universitas Majalengka which consisted of 10 students. They were selected purposively in order that the researcher could gather data objectively. In addition, they had different academic competence as well as achievement in English language education department. The data were gathered not only from the interview but also from the observation, and then

analysed based on the proposed model of communicative competence (Celce Murcia, 2007) which contain linguistic, strategic, socio-cultural, formulaic, interactional, and discourse competences. In case of observation, the researchers conducted it to investigate how the students' communicative competence helps them communicate as well as transfer the content of their communication inside the classroom.  After collecting the data, the researcher directly analyzedthe data qualitatively based on a number of tringulation. Stake (2010) states that much qualitative research is based on the collection and interpretation of episodes. Episodes are held as personal knowledge more than as aggregated knowledge. Thus, the study was started collecting the data and then interpreting them based on its activities, sequence, place, people, and context.

**Findings and Discussion**

In this section, the researcher would like to elaborate as well as narrate down the answers based on the research problem proposed. The descriptions were narrated down in relation to model of communicative comptence (Celce Murcia, 2007) such as linguictic, strategic, socio-cultural, formulaic, interactional, and discourse competences.

Based on the soci-cultural competence, the curriculum must be based on the students' pragmatics knowledge which enable them to convey the information or messages in the context of socio-cultural communication appropriately. In addition, they way they communicate should reflect the socio-cultural norms of the target language (English). The evidences reveal that the student from English language education department in Majalengka University have different background in terms of learning English as well as knowledge in understanding how to communicate using English politely. an important purpose of higher social work education is to support students in the process of acquiring and developing social-communicative competencies, because these competencies play a major role in the Higher Education field of social work

(Winkelaar cited in Agbatogun, 2014 ). Furthermore, they are not aware of the importance of the cross culture in communication particularly. In this case, the socio cultural competence can be found from certain subject courses such as internship which focuses on building the students' social cultural comptence through teaching the students.

In dicourse competence, the studenst closely engage with how to construct the written or spoken text. On one hand, they need to have the relevant schemata in terms of selecting, sequencing, and also arranging the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and also utterances in order to create unified information to convey in the context of communication. In this case, the students mostly create spoken or written texts which are not coherent because they have lacks of discourse competence in which is very crucial in terms of communication in relation to daily lives as well as teaching and learning activities. It is in line with Fern L. Johnson (1979) who points out that The perspective of communicative competence, stipulating situational parameters as central in the determination of appropriateness of language use, allows one to theorize about the cognitive organizing principles underlying communicative life. In  terms of discourse comptence, there are several subject courses which are related to it, for instance: writing, speaking, listening, and reading. Those main subjects are learnt through the students' understanding in relation to grammar, vocabulary, and also pronunciation.

The linguistic competence is also a prominent thing that must be acquired by the students particularly for the purpose of making meaning in having communication. It deals with how to produce the appropriate sounds, differentiate the words function, and also form the words,  phrase, clause, and sentence. Therefore, the curriculum need to consider this competence in order to expand the students' knowledge linguistically. In relation to this, the students in our department have been taught related to the whole aspects of linguistic competence but some of them do not fully implement most of the aspects in terms of ways of communication using English. Therefore, the subject courses which contain linguistics competence such as English phonology, morphology, and also syntax.

In terms of formulaic competence, the students have already obtained it since they started learning English. They are also familiar with certain expressions because they mostly use while communicating to each other. However, they sometimes neglect the use of fixed phrases, collocations, and also the idioms when conveying the messages to the others. Consequently, they must be recognised a number of aspects in relation to formulaic competence so that they know them explicitly. In this case, the sucbject courses are related to formulaic competence such as vocabulary which is divided into two subjects, they are instructional, and various context vocabularies. In these subjects, the students are taught various expressions which are relevant to teaching and other purposes.

In interactional competence, they are not accustomed to perform a number of speech acts in their daily communication because they always tend to use the local languages to make meaning in having conversation to each other. Thus, they must be given the appropriate strategies which are attached on the curriculum in order that they are able to deliver the messages through the target language in their own interactions.

Mostly, the students are not aware of how the turn taking systems are important to support the flow of their conversations such the way to open as well as close the discussion, presentation, and also speech. They should be able to employ the conversational competence for the purpose of building a good conversation using English in the context of instructional processes particularly. In relation to interactional competence, the related subjects are daily context speaking, working context, and also debating speaking.

Regarding strategic competence, some of the students are able to employ their cognitive as well as metacognitive skills in which they outlined, made a summary, and also reviewed the materials in any courses. In addition, they indirectly employ their metacognitive skills in which they conducted peer review guided by the teachers. In this case, they actively engaged in the activities which focused on peformative assessment such as making demonstration, having group presentation, and also reviewing the

material directly. As a result, the students dominantly run the activities meanwhile the teachers became facilitator who guided and facilitated them in doing the activities in pairs or in group.

**Conclusion**

Communicative competence can be the measurement on how well one communicate particularly in English. By considering it, we are capable of creating an effective and beneficial communication which affects our cognitive, metacognitive, and also communicative skills. Moreover, this has become prominent aspects which develop their own paradigm in terms of conveying messages to everyone else well. On one hand, communicative competence is regarged as the heart of doing communication particularly in English because it significantly changes our way of thinking on how to start and end the conversation politely and also how to understand every single information obatined from it. Based on the findings, it is indicated that some courses represented the communicative competence model which could be seen from the main courses such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Therefore, it is assumed that mastering communicative competence can contribute to some related significances of transferring, and  transforming information inside our communication. Not only that, it is also the main requirement in relation to how to create a professional English teachers which have been taught a number of courses which contain communicative competenc. One course is integrated to others in order that the students are able to understand as well as implement them in their social practices such as teaching internship where they engage in some activities with different people that requires various competences such as sociultural, discourse, linguictics, interactional, strategic, and formulaic.

**References**

Alaba Olaoluwakotansibe Agbatogun .(2014). Improving communicative competence
            with 'clickers': acceptance/attitudes among Nigerian primary school

teachers, Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, 42:1, 39-53, DOI: 10.1080/03004279.2011.637942

Canale, M .l983. *From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy*. In: Richards J, Schmidt R (eds) Language and Communication. Longman, London, pp 2–27

Canale M, Swain M .l980. *Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to Second language teaching and testing*. Applied Linguistics 1(1): 1–48

Celce-Murcia, M .l995. *The elaboration of sociolinguistic competence: Implications for teacher education. In: Alatis JE, Straehle CA, Ronkin M (eds) Linguistics and the Education of Language Teachers: Ethnolinguistic, Psycholinguistic, and Sociolinguistic Aspects*. Proceedings of the Georgetown University, Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 2005. Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, pp 699–710

Celce-Murcia M, Dörnyei Z, Thurrell S .1995. *A pedagogical framework for communicative competence: A Pedagogically motivated model with content specifications*. Issues in Applied Linguistics 6(2): 5–35

Celce-Murcia, M, Olshtain, E .2000. *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Chomsky, N. l957. *Syntactic Structures*. Mouton, The Hague

Chomsky, N. l965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA

Hymes, D .l967. *Models of the interaction of language and social setting*. Journal of Social Issues 23(2): 8–38

Hymes, D .l972. *On communicative competence*. In: Pride JB, Holmes J (eds) Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings. Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp 269–293

Fern L. Johnson (1979) Communicative competence and the Bernstein perspective, Communication Quarterly, 27:4, 12-19, DOI: 10.1080/01463377909369346

Mack, N. et.al. 2005. *Qualitative Research Method: A data Collector's Field Guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International.

McGroarty, M .l984. *Some meanings of communicative competence for second Language students*. TESOL Quarterly 18: 257–272