



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VARIOUS LEVELS OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE AND HOW THEY ARE USED IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive article explores the significance of different levels of English competence in language classes, emphasizing the crucial role each proficiency level plays in the language learning journey. From laying the foundation at the beginner level to achieving fluency and mastery at the proficiency level, the article underscores the importance of tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners. It delves into the role of each proficiency level in English classes, providing insights into how educators can adapt their approaches to promote a supportive and inclusive learning environment. By acknowledging the unique characteristics of each level, educators can foster holistic language development, ensuring learners progress through the language learning continuum with confidence and proficiency.

INTRODUCTION. Acquiring English as international language is the main indicator of English learning success for students. Generally, the competences in English learning are cognitive, psycho-motorist, and affective competences acquired by them students related to the competences in learning English. Specifically, the competence in the mean of language learning is communicative competence between students and teachers in the form of interaction inside and outside the classroom as the realization of language use for communication. Based on some experts, communicative competence is the competence in using language correctly based on the rules of language use in society. The use of language contextually based on the mean of language use in the society and theoretically based on the rules of language pattern, so that the students must acquire the use of language contextually and theoretically. To reach those competences, the students must be taught and trained English language in written and oral language skill. Oral language skill is the skill in using the English language as the verbal or direct communication tool. This oral language skill is developed through listening and speaking skills. In this skill, the students are involved in the direct communication in the use of language as lingua franca so that there is an interaction between the teacher and the students. Meanwhile, the written language skill is touse English



as a non verbal or written communication tool. The written communication is built from reading and writing skills such as reading and writing a sentence, paragraph, and text to deliver a message from the sentence, paragraph, and text.

English proficiency is a multifaceted journey, encompassing various levels of competence that play a crucial role in language acquisition. This article explores the significance of different proficiency levels and how they are utilized in English classes, emphasizing the importance of tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners at each stage.

Based on that background, the people get the communicative competence if they acquire the four language skills and components. The four language skills are listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills. Those four language skills can be classified into two main language skills. They are receptive and productive skills. The receptive skills are listening and reading skills and the productive skills are writing and speaking skills. Basically, those four skills cannot be acquired well if the students do not acquire English components. The students must acquire the English components as the supporting language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This article discusses kinds of English competences divided into two main competences. They are organizational and pragmatically competences. The component of organizational competences is grammatical and textual competences, while the component of pragmatically competences is illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences. In this article also discusses about the English language skills and components of English language use as the indicator of the student's competence.

Communicative Competence. In 1960, Chomsky introduced the concept of communicative competence in his well-known transformational-generative grammar theory. Chomsky identified between performance and competence. Performance is the ability of a native speaker to produce language by employing it, whereas competence is defined as implicit and explicit knowledge of the native speaker's language system. Using his well-known notion of communicative competence, Hymens (1972) broadened on Chomsky's theory of competence and performance. Hymes pointed out that a native speaker's implicit knowledge of a language's system is only one aspect of language competence; another is the sociolinguistic context and other aspects of language. Appropriateness in language is very important aspect because Hymes firmly stated that there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. It means that there are many rules in language use and without the rules, the grammatical rules will be useless. It can be concluded that the grammatical rules required by native speaker of English will useless if the speaker ignores the grammatical rules in using the language. Larsen-Freeman firmly stated that communicative competence is learner's competence using language appropriately in the certain social context. In order to accomplish this goal, language learners need to possess integrative knowledge in three fields: forms, meanings, and linguistic form. Canale & Swain expanded on Hyme's communicative competence by proposing four competencies as the fundamental communicative competence: discourse, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies. The first definition of grammatical competences is the ability to use the language system, which encompasses word formation, pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and structure. Put differently, phonology, morphology, and syntax are included in the scope of



grammatical competences.. So, the grammatical competences relates to the accurateness in the language accuracy. Second, sociolinguistic competence is the native speaker's ability in adapting the language use with the social environment where the language used. So, the sociolinguistic competence relates to the appropriateness in the social context as Hyme's theory that the language rules will useless if the language user ignores all the grammatical rules. Discourse competence tends to the ability of the language user in composing a discourse cohesively and coherently. Cohesively means that the idea or courses delivered in written or orally should be structurally using appropriate cohesive devices while coherently means that the idea or courses delivered should reflected the mind setting so the idea or courses delivered are easy to be understood. Third, strategic competence is an ability related to the use of verbal or non-verbal communication strategy in communicating caused by language knowledge limitation or other performance disruption such as lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors, incomplete utterances, etc. Component of English competences Bachman in Hadley (2001) elaborated two main components of language competences; they are organizational and pragmatically competences. The organizational competence includes grammatical and textual competences while pragmatically competence includes illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences. Specifically, grammatical competence includes vocabularies, morphology, and phonology. While textual competence includes cohesively, rhetorical, and organizational knowledge. Illocutionary competence refers to the language use in expressing idea, manipulating idea, using language to teach, studying, problem solving, and imagination. While sociolinguistic competence refers to dialect sensitivity, language neutrality, culture understanding and figures of speech. As noted by Ferril, proficiency in a language is correlated with both conscious and unconscious learning as well as an awareness of both productive and receptive abilities. The learner gains these abilities by way of the development of four levels of literacy: performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. Learners are expected to be able to read, write, listen, and speak using language symbols at each formative level. At the functional level, scholars should be able to read newspapers, follow instructions, and follow directions, among other everyday tasks. Learners are expected to be able to access knowledge and information at the informational level by using their proficiency. Learners are expected to be able to communicate their knowledge in the target language at the epistemic level. As stated by Goweret al, language skills are acquired through integrative learning. Orellana and Brown referred to it as a whole language approach. Gower mentioned that there are many advantages from teaching English integratively;

(1) occurring meaningful language practice to develop learner's competence;

(2) teaching two or more competences integratively;

(3) occurring many material subjects;

(4) giving teacher and learners an opportunity to explore the topics and practice the language more often; and (5) doing efficiency in the learning time.

Despite the integrative nature of English language learning, one competency must take center stage, with the other qualifications serving as auxiliary skills. The English language competencies that are described below can be set up through the integrated language competencies and components in language learning. The first and most fundamental skill that a learner develops when learning a first language, English as a second language (ESL), or



English as a foreign language (EFL) is listening skills. A learner gains a great deal of language knowledge through listening, which serves as the basis for other language abilities like speaking, reading, and writing. According to Helgesen, hearing is an active process that aims to provide context for what we hear. According to Cameron, listening is essentially the active use of language in order to comprehend what other people are saying. Wilson argued that listening is an active process rather than a passive one, since every thought and emotion occur in the brain. Therefore, it can be said that active listening involves the listener's brain guessing, predicting, verifying, critiquing, and interpreting what they have heard. According to Richard, there are two ways to look at listening: as acquisition and as comprehension. One common way to conceptualize the nature of listening is as comprehension. According to the aforementioned perspective, listening and listening as comprehension are interchangeable. Buck distinguished between two stages in the process of listening comprehension: application toward broader linguistic information and apprehension toward linguistic information from the message. Richards distinguished between two processes in listening: bottom-up and top-down. While bottom-up processes place more emphasis on learners' comprehension of language components, top-down processes use prior knowledge to convey important points. According to Harmer, hearing comprehension helps ESL and EFL students improve their spelling and pronunciation by having them listen to words alone or in whole sentences. According to Brown, the foundation of speaking ability is listening skills. The students would have to practice listening before they could speak. The language can be internalized by the students through listening, and then they ought to can use it in speaking lessons.

Speaking Skill. Speaking is a productive oral ability. Speaking, according to Brown, is any activity involving two or more people in which participants must act on what they hear and contribute meaningfully as both speakers and listeners. It denotes that speaking requires the participation and contribution of two or more individuals, acting as both the speaker and the listener. Speaking proficiency is an essential factor for ESL and EFL students' success in learning English, according to Richards. According to Harmer, an ability to process information and language all at once, as well as past knowledge of linguistic features, are prerequisites for speaking fluently. This indicates that speaking fluently is not based on how much or how little vocabulary is learned, but rather on the most important the speaker can speak their words, idea, or utterances spontaneously. Fulcher explained that the elements of speaking ability are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. Grammar is important in composing sentences correctly. Vocabulary is the basic composition in arranging sentences, the more vocabularies, the more expressive the learners. Pronouncing words correctly aids the listener in comprehending what the speaker is saying. To ensure that the conversation flows smoothly, fluency is crucial. When there is inconsistency in the communication, there currently will be distractions. Speaking accurately is crucial because a conversation involves two or more people who must understand one another. As stated by Harmer, speaking genres are scarce. They are planned and unplanned, transactional and interpersonal, interactive and non-interactive. Interpersonal genre seeks to preserve and grow the relationship between the speaker and listener, though transactional genre seeks to convey the message and facilitate services or things. While non-interactive communication occurs when someone leaves a message on the phone, interactive genres involve two-way



communication. Next, booked genre takes place in the class or speech, while unplanned genre happens spontaneously when the people meet in the street. The process of speaking generally divided into four steps. They are pre-speaking, while speaking, post-speaking, and extension practice. First step is pre-speaking. In pre-speaking, the students are given a sequence time to prepare their speaking and teacher gives the correction on their speaking. There are three ways in doing pre-speaking; pre-task planning, pre-speaking support, and authentic input. In pre-task planning, the students are given the time to formulate the idea for their speaking. In pre-speaking support, the students are given the advise in vocabulary and information used for their speaking. While in authentic input, the students are given the example to speak through authentic media to make their speaking easier such as videos, audios, or audio visual media. Second step is while-speaking. In the while-speaking activities, there are few activities that can be carried out such as speaking task, fluency technique, and forming automaticity. In speaking task, there are three activities; information gap, problem solving, and social monologue. In the information gap, the students can bridge the differences and do brainstorming. In the problem solving, the students can solve the problem collaboratively using English. Students can talk about a particular social issue in the social monologue. One way to implement the fluency technique is to have the students recount the subject being covered multiple times. Students must commit teacher-provided vocabulary to memory in order to acquire automaticity. It is anticipated that the students will automatically use the vocabularies through this memorization. After speaking is the third step. Three tasks measuring students' speaking accuracy are included in the post-speaking phase. They are corrective feedback, self-repair, and language focus. Language focus activities assess students' proficiency in using the target language accurately through observation, determining similarities and differences about their mother tongue, and integrating the new language into English language. In the self-repair activity, the students are directed to analyze and evaluate their own speaking based on their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabularies used.

Reading Skill. In order to formulate meaningful information presented in a text, reading is a receptive skill. According to Nunan, reading is the process of taking in information from written texts and connecting it to what you already know to create a text that makes sense. According to Kosak, reading is a skill for conveying meaning, deciphering written symbols, comprehending important text, and teaching pronunciation. Reading has to do with techniques. They are recognizing and understanding the content. Determining the text is the process of determining the written symbols associated with spoken language. On the reverse hand, agreement the text means identifying its meaningful words, sentences, and content. Proficiency in reading is a crucial ability that learners must possess, as it enables them to properly understand the texts they are reading. The act of reading is the key for the learner to get many knowledge. Based on Kosak, there are types of reading such as skimming, scanning, and close reading. First, skimming is a reading activity aims to introduce a material to the reader through fast reading to get general information. Second, scanning is a fast reading activity since the beginning until the end of text aims to get the specific information from the text. Third, close reading is a detailed reading activity aims to get the implicit and explicit meaning from the text. In Woolley, there are four aims of reading activity; code-breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text-analyst. First, code-breaker is an activity to understand a



code and symbol in a semiotic system in a text, movie, etc. Second, meaning maker is an activity to give the text meaning by concluding the text from prior knowledge, the social and culture background. Third, a text user is a student who understands the text's objectives by applying various strategies depending on the reader's social and cultural background. Fourth, a reader who draws a conclusion from the text under analysis is a text-analyst. Similar to listening, reading is a receptive skill. Thus, reading can be approached from both a top-down and bottom-up a different light. When reading is done in a bottom-up manner, the smallest units of language—letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammar, and punctuation—are read first. Top-down reading refers to the method of reading that makes use of what the reader knows and background to comprehend the text.

Students must learn how to write in order to gain proficiency in the target language. Writing is an essential skill for ESL or EFL learners, according to Harmer, and it can be considered a communication tool because it allows people to express their thoughts and feelings. Those who are unable to verbally communicate their thoughts and feelings can do so in writing. Through writing, people can convey ideas to readers via the traditional sense—using paper and pencil—and in the modern sense—using technology. The process of writing involves ideation, organization, composition, and revision. Creating is a useful ability. It implies that a person's writing is more qualified the more had experience they have with it. Improved through practice. Hence, constant practice and instruction in this writing technique is required to get the better writing. There are many reasons in writing for daily life such as listing, informing, pursuing, maintaining relationship, documenting, expressing feeling, experiencing, and observing. Next, Chitravelu et. al classified types of writing into three classification. First, personal writing is such as shopping listing, note taking, diary, daily journal, message and card. Second, transactional writing is such as business correspondence, memo, instruction, report, proposal, and advertisement. Third, creative writing is such as poem, poetry, short story, anecdote, fiction story, and humors.

Conclusion: Definition of Competence . The ability to successfully achieve goals based on one's knowledge and experiences is the simplest definition of competence. According to Colman's definition of competence in the psychology dictionary, competence is the ability to perform a task correctly and efficiently. In agreement with Colman, Beams described competences as the caliber of aptitude brought about by training and task-solving skills. According to Richards and Rodgers, competences are the essential knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors needed to carry out a task or activity in the real world. Therefore, competence is defined as the useful ability that students acquire through the completion of real-world assignments or duties in the form of social media use. These tasks or activities include knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. The significance of various levels of English competence in language classes cannot be overstated. Each level represents a critical stage in the language learning journey, and their proper acknowledgment and integration into instruction contribute to a holistic and effective language education. By understanding the unique needs and capabilities associated with each proficiency level, educators can tailor their approaches to foster a supportive and inclusive environment, ultimately paving the way for learners to achieve fluency and mastery in the English language.



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