Language Competence

Competence is observed in the following four parameters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Competence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLUENCY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to converse fluently, with ease.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LITERACY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to read and write.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACCURACY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to use the standard rules of language for speaking and writing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROFICIENCY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to function with that language in all possible real life settings</td>
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One’s native language, the language of the ethnic heritage, is not always one’s first or primary language.

First language is the language first acquired and spoken as a child. One may have two first languages if raised bilingual in family. The first language is the mother tongue(s).

Any other language is a foreign language.

A foreign language acquired in its country, the native setting of that language becomes the second language. The concept of a second language does not depend on a chronological definition. One may have several second languages, which are foreign languages but acquired in their native environments. The language one studies currently is usually called a target language.

Depending on life circumstances, a second language may become one’s primary language and replace the first one.

Also, one may become proficient in a foreign language through systematic studies in that language. However, this kind of proficiency, typical of scholars, usually lacks familiarity with common conversational styles, dialect variations, live intonations, etc., that is, it still remains cut off the language ground, its real life. A foreign language turns into a second (and perhaps primary) language if one moves to that country.
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

To convey, interpret, negotiate meaning within specific contexts.

The crucial element in linguistics interactions for social relations is to convey, interpret, and negotiate meaning within specific contexts.

Language performance is the appropriate use of language in social settings expanding from communication into social and cultural interaction.

1. Grammatical competence—correct forms, sentences, and pronunciation.
2. Discourse competence—build meaningful whole: texts, speech, dialogues, written discourse.
3. Sociolinguistic competence—appropriate to the purpose, participant, norms, conventions of interaction, refers to meaning and form.
4. Strategic competence—enhance effective communication, compensate breakdowns.

Speakers’ errors arise from misjudging the relative importance of the speech event components against society’s expectations; that is, misjudging the weight of setting, participants, topics and goals in framing one’s speech style, words, and nonverbal cues.

Discourse in SL is constructed by the knowledge:

1. about the SL;
2. CC in L1;
3. language functions;
4. about the world in general; thus producing interlanguage.


Halliday, 1975, Learning How to mean: Explorations in the Development of Language, London, UK: Edward Arnold


CC for negotiating meaning:

* face to face interaction is the key to second language acquisition.
* more talk, more CC
* interaction with native speakers
* variety of situations
* interview on common topics (My favorite…,
* cross-age and peer interaction
* confining to special classrooms and tracking is negative

How to increase CC: involve students in
- solving problems; - exploring areas of interest;
- designing projects; - acting, playing;
- using their CC in L1;
- communicative tasks (reader’s theater, write letters, go buy it, go find out).

See also:
SCHUMANN’S PIDGINIZATION HYPOTHESIS AND ACCULTURATION MODEL


Processes underlying pidginization and the early stages of naturalistic SLA are analogous and universal.

Pidgins and early IL function for referential-communicative needs, refraining from the integrative (language and social identity or ego) and expressive functions of natural languages.

SOCIAL DISTANCE FACTORS: GROUP LEVEL
1. Social dominance/non-dominance, subordination.
2. Integration pattern: assimilation, adaptation, acculturation, biculturation, preservation.
3. Enclosure: member of a group with its own clubs, churches, schools, newspapers, trades and crafts, stores, etc.
   Cohesiveness: member of a cohesive group mitigating against contact with the TL group.
4. Size: large groups facilitate intra-group contacts versus inter-group contacts.
5. Cultural congruence with the TL group.
6. Attitude: friendly, neutral or hostile inter-group attitudes.
7. Intended length of residence (the shorter, the bigger social distance).