

The Role of Communicative Competence in L2 Learning

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Introduction

It has been well over three decades since communicative approach to language teaching first appeared in print in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). In various types of language institutions in Japan, including universities and colleges, language teachers and curriculum researchers have implemented communication-oriented teaching syllabi to seek for more effective ways for improving students' communication skills to replace the traditional, grammar-oriented approach of the past. To some Japanese teachers of English, however, a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is challenging to adopt in their classroom, for the current model of communicative competence, which is viewed as the basis of CLT, has been developed on native-speaker norms that are different socioculturally and educationally from those of the Japanese (Komiya, Samimy, and Kobayashi, 2004; Wolfson, 1983) and that there has been much confusion regarding what CLT actually requires teachers to do in their communicatively functional syllabus (Brown, 1994b). There is no doubt, however, that, in learning an L2, it is necessary for students to acquire, in addition to phonological and lexico-grammatical knowledge, ways to communicate with others using their target language. The problem is how. In this paper, I will, first, look at how the notion of communicative competence has come to play an important role in the fields of sociolinguistics and SLA

over the years. Then, I will discuss how communicative competence should be incorporated into L2 teaching at the college level in Japan.

Chomsky's Perspective on Competence

The conception of communicative competence came about in reaction to the following assertion made by generative-grammarians Norm Chomsky:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965: 3)

Chomsky clearly distinguished the description of language form (competence) and language use (performance) and established that the speaker-listener's internal grammar that judges the grammaticality of sentences should be the main object of investigation for linguists.

Perspectives from Sociolinguistics

Communicative Competence: Hymes

It was not long before Chomsky's notion of idealized linguistic competence came under attack. Dell Hymes, a sociolinguist as well as ethnographer of communication, was the first, among many distinguished language scholars, to introduce the idea of communicative competence in terms of the "appropriateness of sociocultural sig-

nificance of an utterance” (Canale and Swain, 1980). Hymes (1974), retaining the idea of Chomsky’s underlying grammatical competence, looks at contextual relevance as one of the crucial aspects of one’s knowledge of language and claims that meaning in communication is determined by its speech community and actual communicative event in question, which consists of the following components he calls SPEAKING (a mnemonic code word): Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms of interaction and interpretation, and Genre (see Hymes, 1974; Coulthard, 1985; Jaworski and Coupland, 1999; Kramsch, 1993; and Wardhaugh, 1998, for detailed descriptions of SPEAKING). These are broadly considered speech contexts in which real verbal interaction takes place. For a person to say he or she knows a language, therefore, he or she must know “when to speak, when not, ... what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (Hymes, 1972: 277), in addition to how to make a sentence grammatical. In other words, he maintains that the knowledge of language that Chomsky associated with competence should be taken more comprehensively to include knowledge about the above-mentioned components, namely the rules of language use.

Furthermore, in addition to the knowledge of appropriateness a speaker is presumed to have in using his or her language, Hymes brings into discussion the issue of occurrence (whether and to what extent something is done) and feasibility (whether and to what extent something is possible under any given circumstance), which makes not only one’s knowledge but also expectation part of his or her competence (Duranti, 1988; Hymes, 1972; Saville-Troike 1989, 1996). This more elaborated concept of communicative competence has broadened the definition and treatment of language competence

for linguistic inquiry.

The Ethnographical Point of View: Saville-Troike

Saville-Troike, another ethnographer who is fundamentally in line with Hymes' notion of communicative competence, considers the issue from the viewpoint of second or foreign language contexts. She distinctly divides a central construct of communicative competence into three types of knowledge: linguistic, interactional, and cultural knowledge (Saville-Troike, 1989, 1996). The first one roughly corresponds to what Chomsky formulated as competence, with one lucid difference: the inclusion of linguistic features that may transmit social messages as well as referential meanings, in linguistic description. Citing her own experience with a Japanese learner of English who used the phrase on her term paper "and all that clap" to mean "etc.", Saville-Troike argues that recognizing linguistic variations that carry certain social meanings sometimes pose serious problems even for advanced students of English. Therefore, knowledge of the full range of the linguistic code, including those features that transmit social information, she concludes, needs to be viewed as part of one's communicative competence.

The second property she considers necessary for communicative competence is interactional skills, namely the knowledge and expectation of social norms and conventions. Native speakers of English know how to execute their talk appropriately in a given communicative setting, such as how to do turn-taking naturally when talking to a friend or how to ask someone of a higher status to do something for them. These interactional skills are difficult for students to learn because in many cases they are not taught explicitly in the classroom. Besides the pronunciation of words, grammatical

construction of sentences, and the use of vocabulary that learners are presented and learn, according to Saville-Troike, the interaction patterns are an essential part of communicative competence they need to acquire.

Cultural knowledge, especially the social structure of the speech community and the values and attitudes attached to language use, is the third component for Saville-Troike's communicative competence. For example, a native speaker of English can readily identify ways of speaking that are appropriate for men and women, for children and adults, and for the educated and uneducated. For English learners, however, it may not be so easy, and if they are not able to recognize how a group of people "speaks well" in a conversational exchange, and hence fail to act accordingly, they might make themselves a target of ridicule or imputation or simply offend their conversation partner. As we can see, these three areas of knowledge Saville-Troike proposes as basic constituents of one's communicative competence are all related to Hymes' appropriateness in communicative events in which interlocutors conduct verbal acts.

Interactional Aspects: Gumperz

Perhaps more anthropologically inclined, Gumperz, citing Goffman's (1981) "Interactional Order," which is the organization of discourse functioning to bridge the linguistic and social elements, argues that one should look at talk in context as one form of communicative practice. Talk is not "just a matter of individuals' encoding and decoding messages" (Gumperz, 2001: 218), but also something by which conversationalists attempt to attain their communicative goals in real-life communicative exchange. Gumperz questions whether theoretical linguists should use judgment of grammaticality as the

basis for syntactic analysis. He points out that whether a sentence is grammatical or not cannot be determined without a speaker's ability to imagine a context in which the sentence is interpreted. He is also aware that the scope of sociolinguistic research on an interlocutor's communicative competence has become somewhat narrower, as many sociolinguists simply preoccupy themselves with finding the occurrence and distribution of uttered items or verbal strategies in speech situations based on such external variables as speakers and hearers, audience, settings, and so on (Gumperz, 1997). According to Gumperz, this approach runs the risk of making sociolinguistics research on competence "highly particularistic" (1997: 40).

Discussing meaning creation and interpretation at a more general level than the mere sentence level, Gumperz emphasizes the importance of how interlocutors share signaling conventions necessary to carry on their conversations. One aspect of the productive and interpretive processes he calls contextualization cues has been of special interest to him. Contextualization cues, defined as linguistic, paralinguistic, or interactive features habitually used and perceived by interlocutors in order to realize this signaling effect, take many different forms such as the selection of a certain style or code, the use of certain syntactic or lexical forms, and strategies involving conversation openings and closings, just to name a few (Gumperz, 1982). The following brief dialog has a number of contextualization cues and other discursive structures contributing to the establishment of a shared understanding of what is actually happening between the two interlocutors:

A: Are you going to be here for ten minutes?

B: Go ahead and take your break. Take longer, if you want.

A: I'll just be outside on the porch. Call me if you need me.

B: OK. Don't worry.

(Gumperz, 1997: 41)

Gumperz argues that if these two interlocutors' knowledge about their language is limited to a sentence-level, grammatical correctness, such a simple message as a request and its acceptance can not be interpreted and therefore not successfully exchanged. For example, B's understanding of A's first utterance as a request was possible because B was aware of the illocutionary force of A's question and used conversational inference to arrive at a correct interpretation of A's intention. Conversational inferences such as this are cued contextually, according to Gumperz (1997), by rhythmic organization, utterance prominence to highlight some elements, the signaling of turn-taking, the choice of discourse strategies that influence their interpretation, and so on. In summary, Gumperz's view of a person's language competence is that it is a matter that always has to be discussed in relation to interaction, and the appropriate contextualization to mark communicative conventions is an indispensable factor for the success in conversational exchange. This runs parallel to the notion of competence developed by Hymes and Saville-Troike, although the focus is different.

Perspectives from Second Language Acquisition

Four Areas of Communicative Competence: Canale and Swain

In their often-cited article on communicative competence in relation to second language pedagogy, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical framework in which they outline the contents and boundaries of three areas of communicative competence: gram-

matical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Sociolinguistic competence was further divided by Canale (1983) into two separate components: sociolinguistic and discourse competence. He defines communicative competence as “the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication” (Canale, 1983: 5). What is intriguing about their framework of communicative competence is that even the aspects of skills that are needed to employ the knowledge are now assumed to be part of one’s competence. The communicative competence is, then, distinguished from what Canale calls “actual communication,” which is defined as “the realization of such knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions, and interfering background noises” (Canale, 1983: 5). If we are to compare Canale and Swain’s construct of communicative competence with that of Chomsky’s in a broad sense, Chomsky’s “competence” is equivalent to the “grammatical competence” mentioned by Canale and Swain, and all other areas of their framework are lacking in Chomsky’s definition. As far as performance is concerned, Chomsky’s performance and Canale and Swain’s actual communication point to roughly the same phenomenon of uttering sentences in real communicative situations. The four areas of communicative competence they identified are briefly outlined below:

Grammatical competence. The mastery of L2 phonological and lexicogrammatical rules and rules of sentence formation; that is, to be able to express and interpret literal meaning of utterances (e.g., acquisition of pronunciation, vocabulary, word and sentence meaning, construction of grammatical sentences,

correct spelling, etc.)

Sociolinguistic competence. The mastery of sociocultural rules of appropriate use of L2; that is, how utterances are produced and understood in different sociolinguistic contexts (e.g., understanding of speech act conventions, awareness of norms of stylistic appropriateness, the use of a language to signal social relationships, etc.)

Discourse competence. The mastery of rules concerning cohesion and coherence of various kinds of discourse in L2 (e.g., use of appropriate pronouns, synonyms, conjunctions, substitution, repetition, marking of congruity and continuity, topic-comment sequence, etc.)

Strategic competence. The mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in L2 used when attempting to compensate for deficiencies in the grammatical and sociolinguistic competence or to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g., paraphrasing, how to address others when uncertain of their relative social status, slow speech for rhetorical effect, etc.)

As it is clear from the way their framework is described, their intention was to discover the kinds of knowledge and skills that an L2 learner needs to be taught and to develop the theoretical basis for a communicative approach in the second language teaching based on an understanding of the nature of human communication (Canale and Swain, 1980). In addition, their framework indicates

that it is the rules that an L2 learner must learn for accumulation of their knowledge and skills to be communicatively competent in the use of their target language and that these rules are not confined to systematic rules of grammar only but are also applied to all aspects of a language. Since they put forward their first framework of communicative competence in detail, there have been numerous studies that have analyzed it more comprehensively or employ it in SLA research (Bachman and Palmer, 1982; Kasper and Rose, 2002; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Swain, 1985; Skehan, 1995; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Verhoeven, 1997).

Communicative Language Ability: Bachman

Ten years after Canale and Swain had introduced the influential framework of communicative competence, a more comprehensive, stratified model was proposed by Bachman, who stressed the importance of describing “the processes by which [the] various components interact with each other and with the context in which language use occurs” (Bachman, 1990: 81). He pointed out the fact that earlier theories on language proficiency, particularly the frameworks constructed by Lado (1961) and Carroll (1961, 1968), apparently failed to take into account the distinction between linguistic knowledge and the four basic language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), arguing that it was difficult to see whether the knowledge components were understood in their theories as simply manifested in the language skills in different modalities and channels, or whether they are fundamentally different in quality (Bachman, 1990).

Using a different terminology for the object of description (Bachman calls it “communicative language ability,” which is abbreviated

as CLA), he developed three central components for CLA that are essential to define one's competence in communicative language use: language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. Of the three, though, only language competence is dealt with here. The first component he termed as language competence consists of two parts: organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The organizational competence is further divided into grammatical competence and textual competence. Bachman's grammatical competence is consonant with Canale and Swain's grammatical competence, in that it comprises abilities to control the formal structure of language. The second one, textual competence, pertains to the knowledge of conventions for cohesion and coherence and rhetorical organization. It also includes conventions for language use in conversations, involving starting, maintaining, and closing conversations. Bachman's textual competence can, thus, be said to have both the part of Canale and Swain's discourse competence and the part of their strategic competence.

Bachman's pragmatic competence, the other element in language competence, mainly focuses on the relationship between what one says in his or her communicative acts and what functions he or she intends to perform through his or her utterances. This concerns illocutionary force of an utterance, or "the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language function" (Bachman 1990: 90), which he embodies as illocutionary competence under the pragmatic competence. Illocutionary competence enables a speaker to use his or her language to serve a variety of functions and a hearer to interpret the illocutionary force of an utterance or discourse required of him or her. One needs, however, more than illocutionary competence to successfully execute an act to intend a

certain communicative function; he or she must have knowledge of appropriateness based on the language use context in which he or she finds themselves when engaging in a communicative exchange. Bachman calls it sociolinguistic competence and this is the other component for his pragmatic competence. To be more precise, Bachman discusses four abilities pertaining to sociolinguistic competence: ability to be sensitive to regional and social language varieties, ability to be sensitive to differences in register, ability to produce and interpret utterances based on naturalness of language use, or what Pawley and Syder (1983) refer to as a native-like way of communication and ability to understand cultural reference and figures of speech (Bachman, 1990: 95-98). In his framework, sociolinguistic competence and illocutionary competence are put together to form a speaker's pragmatic competence, which, in turn, composes, along with grammatical competence, his or her language competence.

The Role of Communicative Competence in L2 Teaching

The Importance of a Communication-oriented Framework

Adoption of the communication-oriented foreign language teaching, popularly known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in English classrooms has been repeatedly stressed by SLA researchers, and indeed, there have been many studies attempting to determine its effects on L2 learners (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Canale, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980; Fillmore, 1979; Kasper and Rose, 2002; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Swain, 1985; Skehan, 1995; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Widdowson, 1978). In discussing syllabus design, for example, Canale and Swain (1980) justify the application of CLT by defending it against the claim that the communicatively oriented syllabus tends to be disorganized in terms

of acquisition of grammar. They believe that there are no empirical data to support it and that the functionally organized communicative approach is more likely than the grammar-based approach “to have positive consequences for learner motivation” (Canale and Swain, 1980: 32) as it provides a form of in-class training that makes learners feel more comfortable, confident, and encouraged, with a clear, visible purpose for L2 learning, namely successful communication. With respect to the use of strategies in learning a target language, Rubin (1979) describes seven learning strategies typically employed by a “good language learner” in a second language classroom. While many of the strategies seem to be rooted in the cognitive processes for language learning, she claims that a learner’s intent behind the use of the strategies is a strong drive to communicate, and not effective understanding of grammatical items presented, and consequently there is much relevance and value in throwing light on what a learner does to develop his or her communicative competence in classroom activities.

Developing Communicative Competence as a Primary Focus of L2 Teaching

Brown (1994a), viewing CLT as an approach (that is, a theoretical position about the nature of language and of language teaching), rather than a specific method of teaching, describes four underlying characteristics in defining CLT in a second language classroom, which are summarized below:

Focus in a classroom should be on all of the components of communicative competence of which grammatical or linguistic competence is just part.

Classroom activities should be designed to engage students in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

Both fluency and accuracy should be considered equally important in a second language learning classroom. And they are complementary.

Students have to use their target language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts under proper guidance, but not under the control of a teacher.

(Brown, 1994a: 245)

It is clear from these characteristics that CLT is a major departure from earlier pedagogical approaches, particularly grammar translation methods that pay special attention to overt presentation of grammatical rules and translation. And yet there seems to be a little consensus as to what actually to present to the learners or what lesson “techniques”¹ (Brown, 1994a) to use to enhance their communicative competence and not just their grammatical commands through CLT. Moreover, Brown (1994b) lists six key words of CLT to better understand what it aims at: learner-centered, cooperative (collaborative), interactive, integrated, content-centered, and task-based. They indicate supposedly ways in which language teaching is conducted communicatively, and so reflect the abovementioned characteristics of CLT.

I presume that many teachers of English at the college level

across Japan are currently employing techniques or methods based on at least some of these key CLT words, if they are given a place to do so. Indeed, I myself always try to structure the required English classes I teach at Sophia Junior College as communicatively as possible, by taking these interconnected features of CLT into consideration. It is difficult, however, to ensure that my students become communicatively more competent through classroom activities I provide for them. Given that in Japan the students are learning English as a foreign language, the very fact that their communicative use in English outside the classroom is bound to be limited, their success in acquiring communicative competence in their target language is not as easily obtained as understanding of grammar. In the following section, a few suggestions are offered for foreign language teachers to help make their syllabus communicatively oriented, which can be applied most effectively to integrative English classes. They are the use of audiovisual recordings, role-playing, and explicit teaching of speech acts.

Use of Audiovisual Recordings

L2 learners can benefit from viewing and reviewing audiovisual recordings such as videotapes and visual hypermedia software of their own communicative interactions and model interactions by native speakers. In learning how to make requests, for example, the students can not only participate in, say, pair work as part of their function-building exercise, but also film their actual performance to collect data for analysis. The data ideally cover a wide range of situations in which they make or receive requests, in terms of social status and role of interlocutors, degree of imposition internal to the act of the request being made, and so on. Through close examination

of their recordings and introspection, the students will have a chance to reflect on what they said to make requests (grammatical competence). To measure the success of the students' performance, the teacher can, then, play a video clip that shows model performance by native speakers of the target language, in order for them to see how different or similar their communicative performance of requests is, when contrasted with how native speakers execute the same act. Here, the students can both review their grammatical precision in use and learn about the sociocultural appropriateness of the communicative event. Moreover, the very nature of the audiovisual material enables the students to see and analyze their own and native speaker's nonverbal communication as well. It is, thus, advisable that the students study their own communicative experience and the nature and characteristics of social interaction in their target language so as to develop their L2 sociolinguistic competence (Erickson, 1996).

One major difficulty facing the use of videotapes this way, however, is the lack of availability of sources of the model interaction. Unlike the environment that surrounds students learning English as their second language in English speaking countries, which most likely provides them with lots of language input, whether they be communicative or not, outside their classroom, for the majority of Japanese college students learning English as a foreign language, the access to such sources is quite limited outside the classroom. This limitation makes it difficult for the teacher to collect audiovisual data on video. One way to compensate for that problem is to ask native speakers of the students' target language to perform the relevant acts and film them, although what the students look at is then no longer a naturally occurring conversation. Or, the teacher

may turn to existing audiovisual materials, such as TV talk shows, TV dramas, or movies. We may not be able to draw a direct comparison between the students' performance and that of TV personalities, in terms of the contents of request and social situations in which the act of request is made. Nevertheless, these are valuable visual and auditory stimuli for the students, and there is much to be gained through reviewing reflectively their own communicative performance and recognizing how different it is from the way the native speakers of their target language perform.

Role-play

Role-play is an effective way to develop students' communicative competence, especially the sociolinguistic and strategic competence discussed in Canale and Swain's (1980) framework. It also helps the students acquire what Saviile-Troike (1996) describes as interactional knowledge. Learning a language for a wide range of social and expressive functions requires more than just learning word- and sentence-formation, correct pronunciation, and orthography; rather, one learns "a system of use whose rules and norms are an integral part of culture" (Schiffrin, 1996: 323). In other words, language learning should be a dynamic process and a means to acquire knowledge to act appropriately in a cultural group. For this end to be met, a teacher needs to provide the students with chances to act and interact verbally in the classroom. In the discussion of the use of audiovisual recordings above, it was suggested that the students tape-record their own communicative performance for introspection and reflection. Their performance to be recorded can best be analyzed for this purpose through spontaneous role-plays. Usually, role-plays are properly framed, yet open-ended, bilateral, interactive,

and above all, highly contextualized in nature. However, Clark (1987), acknowledging the value of role-plays in a foreign language classroom, cautions us that a form of role-play in which the students simply act out a predetermined script made by someone else would result in mere memorization of stereotypical expressions that may or may not have real-life application in actual communicative exchange. Instead, the teacher must structure his or her role-plays in a way that their students engage in “role-making” and “role-negotiating” as they interact.

Going back to Brown’s (1994b) list of the six key words of CLT, we can say that role-plays that encompass the role-negotiating aspects in them have, though in a loose sense, all six characteristics. They are learner-centered activities that call for collaboration of the interacting participants, and there are invariably communicative goals to be accomplished by the participants, who produce and interpret sentences for the exchange of social as well as referential meaning. This approach makes role-plays one of the most effective or even crucial techniques to be employed in CLT to build one’s sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

Speech Acts

The speech act, or performative use of language, is an area that many Japanese students have trouble dealing with. It is because speech acts are generally difficult for L2 learners to realize in terms of grammar and vocabulary, formulas and conventionalized expressions, and sociocultural difference between their L1 and L2, and because in many cases Japanese students are not taught explicitly in the classroom how to signal their intent in performing an illocutionary act, beyond the semantic meanings of syntactic structures.

The knowledge needed to perform and understand illocutionary acts constitutes part of communicative competence and is included in Canale's (1983) sociolinguistic competence and in Bachman's (1990) illocutionary competence under pragmatic ability. When a learner fails to make or respond to an appropriate speech act, it is said that sociopragmatic failure has occurred. Likewise, a learner's deviation from the standard patterns of executing the act is called pragmalinguistic failure (Thomas, 1983). Below is an example of communicative failure in an act of apology that I have come across.² Here, two students, playing the role of classmates, are instructed to perform the speech act, according to a pre-selected situation in response to the Discourse Completion Task. Student B borrowed Student A's notebook for an upcoming exam, but accidentally ruined it. Now, Student A asks Student B to return it to her.

Student A: I need the notebook I lent you. Do you have it now?

Student B: *I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I was bad. I'm sorry. Can you excuse me?*

Student A: Well ...

There is clear evidence of pragmalinguistic failure in Student B's apology, namely a linguistically inappropriate way of making an apology that fails to conform to the native-speaker norm. First, B does not respond to the question "Do you have it now?" with a yes or no. Then, B repeats "I'm sorry" three times with a semantically incorrect sentence of "I was bad" (the student may have meant "I did a bad thing") followed by, again, semantically and pragmatically inappropriate "Can you excuse me?" at the end. Student B's apology,

if used in a real communicative situation with a native speaker of English, will most likely be unacceptable under normal circumstances. It is clear that students will not be able to make an apology or a request, or express gratitude by learning discrete grammatical items. There will be very little room in a grammar-focused syllabus to offer the students a chance to know that Americans more or less tend to include an explanation of why and how something happened that leads them to apologize (Yoshida et al., 2000).³ Moreover, the number of “I’m sorry” uttered in their act of apology does not determine how sincerely they are apologizing. Also, in this example, we can note a clear-cut case of L1 transfer in the repeated use of “I’m sorry” and the lack of explanation, which are often seen in the Japanese style of apology. All this indicates that the students do not necessarily “pick up” complex speech behavior and sociocultural strategies and sociolinguistic forms. Therefore, explicit teaching of speech act strategies will be needed for students to gain illocutionary competence (Cohen, 1996).

One thing that the teacher must keep in mind when incorporating the practice of speech acts in the form of, say, role-play, into his or her syllabus is that students should not be drawn by the teacher to blindly accept the native-speaker norms of performing an act. Speech acts are culture specific and some students consciously avoid “imitating” native-speaker norms and choose to stick with their own styles. After all, language learning is very much reflected in the degree to which one identifies with the target culture, and if we would like language learning to be communicative, the learner’s autonomy should be maintained as much as possible. As foreign language teachers, our contribution will be to inform the students what native speakers in general tend to say to apologize, for

example, and how and why they say it, as a mere fact. Then, it is up to them to adopt the native-speaker norms of apology and practice them on their own. As we have seen, the ability to perform speech acts is an important aspect of one's communicative competence. But at the same time, because it is deeply related to the cultural values of speakers, the teacher should deal with it with care.

Conclusion

Communicative competence have been defined and discussed in many different ways by language scholars of different fields. There is, however, one thing in common that is seen in the writings of all these scholars: linguistic, or grammatical competence, should be considered just one aspect of overall competence an individual has with language. With the change of focus from grammar to communication within linguistic theories (as the field of sociolinguistics developed), L2 language teachers and researchers, too, have shifted the object of their linguistic analysis accordingly. Although teachers and researchers are aware of the need to improve students' communicative competence and try out new ideas to contribute to meeting that need, there seems to be still a long way to go. In this paper, three suggestions were made to add extra communicativeness to the teaching syllabus. They are not new ideas for L2 teaching, but each one of them has a place in CLT and will help language learners acquire the knowledge of appropriateness in all facets of their target language.

End Notes

1. According to Brown (1994a), "techniques" refer to all forms of exercises, activities, or even devices used in the language

classroom for realizing lesson objectives.

2. This conversational data was based on a low-level student's response to the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) administered in one of my English skill classes.

3. Yoshida et al., in writing an English textbook for college students in Japan for the purpose of raising their pragmatic awareness, discovered an interesting comparison between Americans and Japanese as to how to apologize. Among the four semantic formulas of apology-apology (e.g., "I'm sorry"), make-up (e.g., "Can I make it up to you?"), care (e.g., "Please don't be mad") and explanation (e.g., "There was a train accident [and that is why I am late]"), the explanation formula ranked the highest for Americans, whereas Japanese predominantly used the apology formula, with only half the number of explanations compared to Americans.

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