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Age Group: 1st – 6th grade

Subject Area:

Language and Language usage

Motivation:

In a globalized world with free borders, it is important that you can communicate with all kinds of people and cultures. But how do you do this if you are from different countries and don't understand each other's? I find this question very vital, for the future communicative limits and possibilities. Because of the social medias' and big international medias' big impact on today's society, global wise, it is now more important, than ever, to relate these possibilities and problems. The internet is a way to communicate across borders and overseas within seconds, and it is much easier now than it was, for just 20 years ago. E-mails, Facebook, Twitter, Skype etc. makes it a necessity for many, to communicate in a foreign language. These different ways and needs are important to take care of for many people around the world, and teaching of languages, oral and written, from an early age is big step of the way.

Problem Statement:

How can I make my pupils communicative competent?

Theory:

In this synopsis, I will work with the term communicative competence. What is it? How do we acquire it? How do we teach it? Furthermore, I will have a look on Chomsky's view on linguistic competence and performance and compare it to Hymes theory on communicative competence. Finally, I will describe the communicative competence model for second language learners used by Lindhardsen and Christensen in *sprogfagenes didaktik*.

What is communicative competence?

It's hard to give a precise description of what communicative competence is. The reason why it is difficult is the many different components of which a language is built up by, and what is important in different situations. Maybe you need to write a business letter, or maybe you need to guide a chauffeur around your neighborhood, and you need a different linguistic skill to be able to do any of these two situations. This means we communicate different, based on which situation we are in, and who the receiver is? Now, what are the right tools then to communicate optimal? Is it perfect grammar? Is it vocabulary? Is it your pronunciation? Actually, it's all of these components, and even more. We handle interaction through 4 main skills, the *receptive skills* which are *listening and reading* and the *productive skills* which are *writing and speaking*. Within the term communicative competence, we work with many different competences. Grammar competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, strategic competence and fluency.¹ This is the theory of Dell Hymes as a disagreeing response to Chomsky's view on language². Noam Chomsky divides language in two terms, *linguistic competence* and *linguistic performance*. The competence is our knowledge of the language and the performance is when we use our knowledge to communication.³

Grammar competence:

The grammar competence is described as an important part in every communicative situation, and as some kind of linguistic code of understanding a foreign language. For a native speaker, this code is learned unconscious, whereas non-native speakers, more or less, learn this actively and conscious. Within the grammar competence, there are 4 other components, which is *phonetics, syntax, morphology and lexis*. Phonetics are pronunciation, morphology is word formations, syntax is sentence build-up, and lexis is the rules of how we can construct a correct sentence.⁴

¹ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. P. 31-32

² Richard Nordquist Grammar & Composition Expert. (2016, July 12). What Is Communicative Competence? Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://grammar.about.com/od/c/g/Communicative-Competence.htm>

³ . (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2017, from [http://staff.educ.ualberta.ca/olenka.bilash/Best of Bilash/competencyperformance.html](http://staff.educ.ualberta.ca/olenka.bilash/Best%20of%20Bilash/competencyperformance.html)

⁴ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. P. 41-42

Discourse competence

The discourse competence is how we understand the way ideas are linked across sentences and utterances. The discourse competence works with two components called *cohesion and coherence*. Cohesion is how we connect and understand written and spoken sentences. As an example, we use pronouns to refer to what or who has been mentioned previously. "Did you see dad?" "Yes, I saw him". We know that "him" refers to "dad", because we see a natural connection and cohesion between the two sentences. Coherence is when something is implied in a sentence. If somebody says "it's hot in here!" a natural response to this would be "I'll open the window". The person answering understands that the other person is expressing discomfort and reacts naturally.⁵

Pragmatic competence

The pragmatic discourse tells us something about, how we shall communicate due to the different situations. It could for example be the formality of the communication, if the receiver has greater status than the sender. Earlier we talked about how the language was a code and system, to create sentences based by rules. When talking pragmatic competence, it is how we use these sentences in different context. There's a big difference when asking someone to pass the salt, whether you're dining with your best friend or you're dining with the king. This is because of the social status and power distance.⁶

Strategic competence

This competence is how you plan to communicate in the target language. As a second language learner, you will experience sometimes when you would like to express yourself a way you would in your native language, but the level of your second language vocabulary hinder you to do this. Therefore, some people have different strategies to find a way to express themselves. If it's to find help elsewhere, or trying to describe it with other words. Maybe you would even draw it or point

⁵ Focus on Language: Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://elearning.la.psu.edu/aplmg/802/lesson-3/four-areas-of-communicative-competence-discourse-and-strategic-competence>

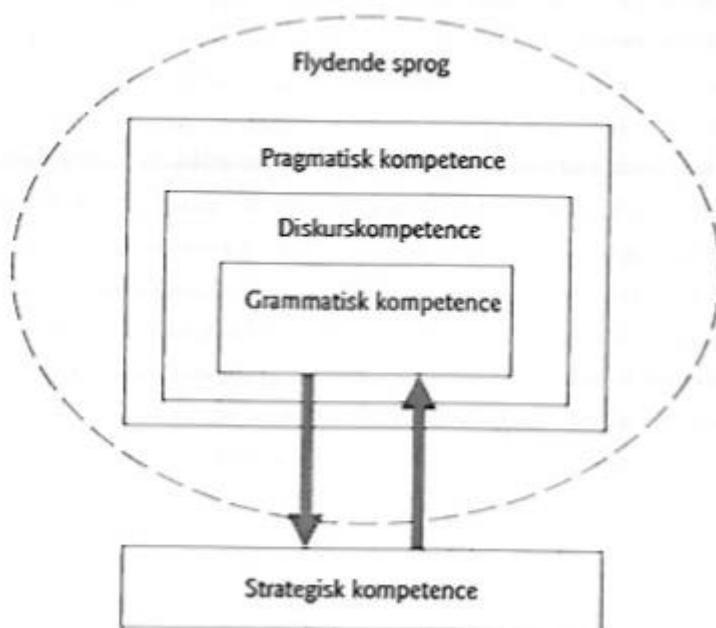
⁶ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. P. 79

to something that would be a help to express this word. These problems could occur, either as the receiver or the producer.⁷

Fluency:

The fluency of the second language is important for the receptive part. Too many pauses, and too much stutter, can decrease the understanding of what you're saying, for the receptive part. There's a lot of focus on the need of automatizing the competences in the second language, so these problems won't occur. For example, when you, in a combination of the 4 main skills, use the second language enough, some of the rules will just feel natural. Such things as, for example, adding an -s on the verb, when you mention a third person singular in the present tense, as the subject.⁸

Now how do all these competences interact with each other. Lindhardsen and Christense have a model in their book, which gives an example of how the different competences interact with each other.



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⁷ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. 101

⁸ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. P. 34-35

⁹ Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag. P 36, Figure 5

Practice element:

A way to make the pupils communicative competent, is, first of all, through grammar, and that is why I focus on this in the 2nd grade.

In this single lesson, the pupils must construct simple every day sentences, in 4 or 5 words. The reason why is because of the need to put words together and form sentences, that makes sense for a native speaker from a very early age. This is the foundation of every language.

In the end, we will correct some of the sentences and I, as the teacher, can see if there's a pattern of errors that continually occurs. If so, we will have a talk about some of the simple rules, so next time they form sentences, they are aware of not to do the same errors.

There are different opinions whether or not we should teach grammar actively in the classroom, or it should develop through your unconscious. I personally think when we exploit the pupils to different grammar schema's or models, they will remember the rules more. By working with grammar and using the second language, hopefully, they will achieve fluency in the end.

Literature:

Books

Lindhardsen, V., & Christensen, B. (2003). *Sprogfagenes didaktik*. Vejle: Kroghs Forlag.

Websites

Focus on Language: Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://elearning.la.psu.edu/aplmg/802/lesson-3/four-areas-of-communicative-competence-discourse-and-strategic-competence>

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Appendixes:

Lesson Plan:

Number of lessons	1 x 45 minutes
Competence goal	Written communication 1st – 4th grade The pupil can understand and write frequent words and expressions, also shorts texts about every day subjects in English.
Proficiencies – and knowledge goals	Writing (fase 2) Proficiency goal: The pupil can communicate with simple words and short sentences Knowledge goal: The pupil has knowledge about simple sentences
Learning goal	The pupil can construct meaningful sentences
Activity	The pupils will be handed a paper, where the task is to form every day sentences with either 4 or 5 words.
Evaluation	We will correct some of the sentences and talk about the simple grammar rules.

Interlanguage analysis (appendix)

Many years ago there was a girl with the name Zoella. Zoella was a **feary**, she was **a** queen **for** **flower-valley**. **There was pretty** and they **was** happy, but there was **a** evil queen from **blackness-forrest** **shes** name was Ellenal. Ellenal was jealous because **shes** forest **not was** as pretty as Flower-**valley**. So she chose to kill Zoella and conquer **flower-vally**. But **so** did not make it that far. Because Zoella built a wall of thorns so Ellenal could not come in and Ellenal **come never** again. **every bodys** from **flower-vally** live happy to **theres** days end.

Red = Mis-spelling, grammar, Danicism,

Yellow = Wrong use of word

Blue = Proper noun

Corrections:

- 1) Misspelling. = fairy
- 2) Wrong use of article = the queen. One country, one queen
- 3) Wrong use of the word "for" = queen of
- 4) Proper nouns starts with capital letter
- 5) Danicism = It was pretty
- 6) Concord-error = "They" is plural, and therefore "was" should be "were"
- 7) Indefinite article error = "evil" begins with a vowel and/or vowel sound, therefore "a" should be "an"
- 8) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 9) Misspelling = "Forest"
- 10) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 11) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 12) Danicism = "was not". Auxiliary verb before negative
- 13) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 14) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 15) Misspelling and proper noun, capital letter = "Valley"
- 16) Wrong use of the word "so" = "she"
- 17) Danicism and wrong tense (present) and adverb before the verb = "never came"
never is first because you can't say "neverly"
- 18) Misspelling = Everybody. No plural -s needed, it is already plural.
- 19) Proper nouns begin with capital letter and misspelling = "Valley"
- 20) Danicism = They lived happily ever after (De levede lykkeligt til deres dages ende)
- 21) Wrong use of word = There (Der er), Their (deres)