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Unit 3

Unit 3 discusses the constructs and some relatively remarkable models of language testing. According to Davidson & Fulcher (2007), constructs are selected from models which are situated at the top levels of documentation in test architecture. All models of language ability have three dimensions: model of knowledge (what it means to know a language), model of performance, and actual language use. These dimensions help articulate the "theoretical rationale". The first model that was introduced was Canale and Swain's (1980), which took the concept of communicative competence as their focal element in forming a framework for language ability. In their orientation, Canale and Swain focused on sociolinguistics and its interaction with other components of the model as grammatical and strategic competences. Later on, Canale's (1983) refinement of the model determined two components for communicative competence: conscious and unconscious knowledge and the skills needed to use this knowledge in actual communication. Third, Bachman's model of CLA introduced a more comprehensive model of language ability. It attempts to characterize the processes and the interaction of various components and the context in which language use occurs. Fourth, Celce-Muria, et.al (1995), proposed a model which is an elaboration of Canale's (1983) model. Attempt to characterize the processes and the interaction of various components and the context in which language use occurs. Lastly, Kramsh's (1986) interactional competence model, presupposes that successful interaction is not only a shared knowledge of the world but also the construction of a shared internal context. Kramsh refers to this knowledge as interactional competence: an ability to process and negotiate the intended meaning. Interaction is a dynamic process of matching between intended meanings. Models of communicative competence and performance form an important basis for what test scores may mean, and they help us decide the extent to which the score can be generalized to other performances.

This is my first proper lesson with the discussed models and their characteristics, but I know I encountered these already as a second language learner not-knowingly, specifically, Canale and Swain's model. It mainly focuses on grammatical competence (lexical items, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology) and sociolinguistic competence (social rules of language, cultural references, etc.) of a learner and not so with the learner's actual performance. This is the model that was most used by my English highschool teachers before. In college, I think Canale's (1983) model is the closest model that our foreign language course is using, both in

terms of teaching and testing. The course is concerned about the learner's communicative competence in terms of grammatical, socio-cultural rules, strategies that enhance the effectiveness of communication, and actual communication which tests the learner's instances of language use.

Models of communicative competence form an important basis on how a teacher teaches and tests the learner, however, I think that's just it. I had a hard time internalizing the lesson as the models are all confusing in nature and they also have subtle distinctions (e.g. Canale, 1983 and Bachman and Palmer 1996, 2010). Most models, as inevitable as it is, have some limitations and areas that they all can't cover. They all have tried to consider what the other model failed to tap and elaborate on it. It's a never-ending cycle and it feels redundant, but that is how it should be. We all are learning every day and would eventually need an improved model to catch on us. Moreover, these models perform how 'models' are expected to do and help teachers to an extent. At the end of the day, the teacher will still have to identify what course of action they need to do in a classroom.

I said above that these models are just a basis for language testing, and as a future teacher, if I ever be one, it is certainly a thing that could help me to some extent. I could visualize incorporating and exploring these in my future classroom. As future educators, it is our responsibility to prepare and create a classroom that knows what it is doing and helps students to actually learn. We shouldn't risk our student's learning experience and give them the best education they could ever have.