

I had never thought about communicative competency before doing this reading. I'm not sure how I thought it happened, but it was very interesting for me to read about the development of communicative competence and especially its effect later in life. I was struck by the importance of pragmatics. The fact that they can impact the "popularity" of a child during their time in school is fascinating. I guess I just assumed that part of learning a language was when to say what, how to say it, and who to say it to. It's very interesting to me that it's actually a separate skill. At the beginning of the chapter, the book provides a great example of saying "You look weird." to a stranger in a mall. I found it fascinating that a child could have mastered many of the other areas of language from syntax to pronunciation and beyond but yet still not be able to communicate well because they have an inability to understand context. I would assume based on the reading that a lack of communicative competency would be the reason for the child who shares too much information about private matters. The child understands what they are saying, but not necessarily that in the context of being with strangers, or people outside of their family, it's inappropriate.

I found it particularly interesting that the simple concept of taking turns is part of communicative competency. However, after reading about it, it makes perfect sense. I've noticed little children who are in "conversation" with each other and there is a long unnatural pause present. Or, like the book says, the child uses "and" and "y'know" to fill the gaps to maintain their turn. Additionally, maintaining the topic is important to communicative competency, something I wouldn't have guessed. Often with young children, even toddlers you can ask them a question but you rarely get an answer to that question, and the response is usually an observation of their surroundings. I would attribute this to pragmatics because it would seem that this child just hasn't developed the communicative competency to stay on topic. The words or phrases they are saying are simply what they are thinking instead of being related to the conversation at hand.