PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

04

Communicative Competence. Analysis of Its Components

La competencia comunicativa. Análisis de sus componentes.

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NOVIEMBRE DE 2026

Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless." With these words, the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1972, p. 278) challenged a whole way of understanding what it means to know a language. A learner may produce flawless sentences and still fail to apologise, to refuse an invitation politely or to keep a conversation going. Welcome to Topic 4: Communicative Competence. Analysis of Its Components. For a teacher of English, this is not an abstract concept: it is the goal that gives meaning to everything we do in the classroom.

In order to address this topic, I will divide it into six main sections. Firstly, I will trace the origins of the concept, from Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance to Hymes's reaction and the birth of the communicative approach. Secondly, I will present the main theoretical models: Canale and Swain, van Ek, Bachman, and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell. Thirdly, I will analyse each component in turn: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic and actional competence, illustrating them with examples. Fourthly, I will examine how the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its Companion Volume have reshaped the notion. Fifthly, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications within our current educational framework. Finally, I will close with a conclusion that returns to the idea with which I began.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Canale and Swain's article "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing", published in Applied Linguistics in 1980; Bachman's Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing, published by Oxford University Press in 1990; Richards and Rodgers' Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, in its third edition from Cambridge University Press (2014); and the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2001) and its Companion Volume (2020). I have also drawn on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022, and Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, modified in 2023.