



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens

# Applied Linguistics to Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

## Unit 4: Foreign Language Knowledge and Course Planning

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# Questions/issues addressed in this unit

- What kinds of knowledge does a language user need to have in order to use the language effectively?
- What is competence and performance?
- What is communicative competence?
- What is declarative and procedural knowledge?
- Is competence related to performance?
- What is participatory and official knowledge?
- What is our starting point in language course design?



# Our goal as language teachers

- To help students learn a second language in the classroom setting and become proficient in that language.
  - What does proficient mean?
  - How does one achieve proficiency?
  - What does “knowing” a language mean? What knowledge/skills does one need to have in order to be proficient in a language?



# What proficiency is not...

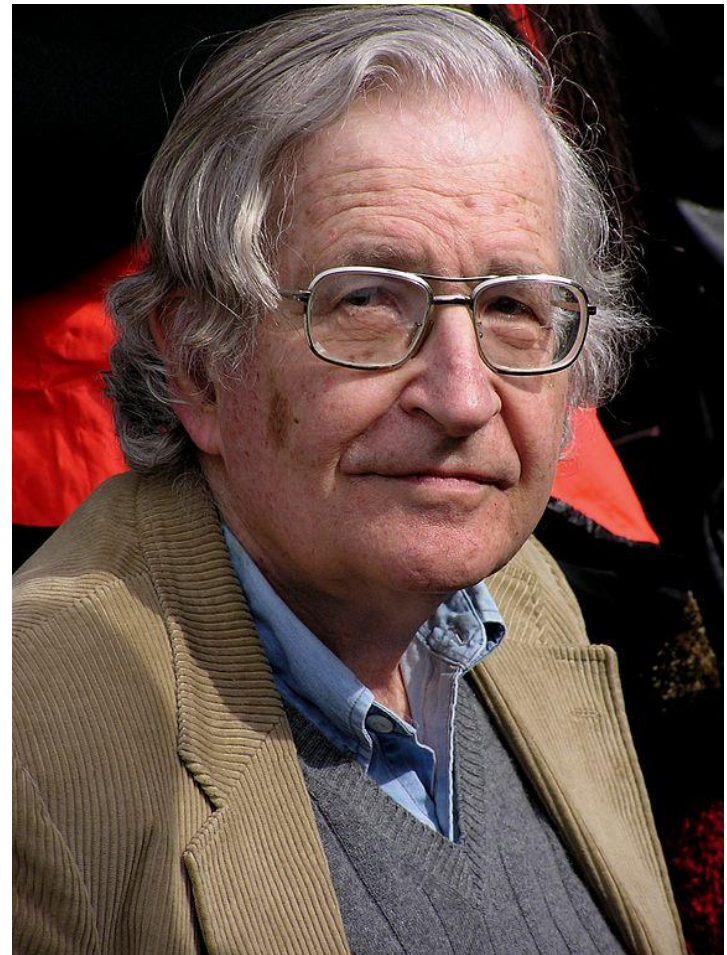
- What proficiency is NOT:
  - It is not a theory of language acquisition.
  - It is not a method of language instruction.
  - It is not a syllabus or an outline to inform our curricula.
  - It is not a preoccupation with grammar or accuracy.
- So, what is it?



# Competence and performance: Historical developments

Chomsky (1965) was the first to distinguish between a speaker's competence and his/her performance:

- **Competence** is what you **know**.
- **Performance** is what you **do**.



[1]



# Competence

- **Competence** refers to the implicit knowledge a native speaker has of linguistics rules (usage) of his language.
- This knowledge has been internalised in childhood.
- This knowledge enables a native speaker to produce and understand grammatically correct sentences.



# Performance

- **Performance** refers to the actual use of the language.
- Performance is contaminated and impure (influenced by memory limitations, distractions, errors, false starts, etc.) and does not reflect a speaker's underlying competence.



# Communicative competence (1/2)

- Hymes (1960s) regarded Chomsky's definition of competence as restrictive.
- He introduced the distinction between “sociolinguistic (or contextual) competence” and “linguistic (or grammatical) competence”.
- Linguistic competence is part of one's communicative competence.





# Communicative competence (2/2)

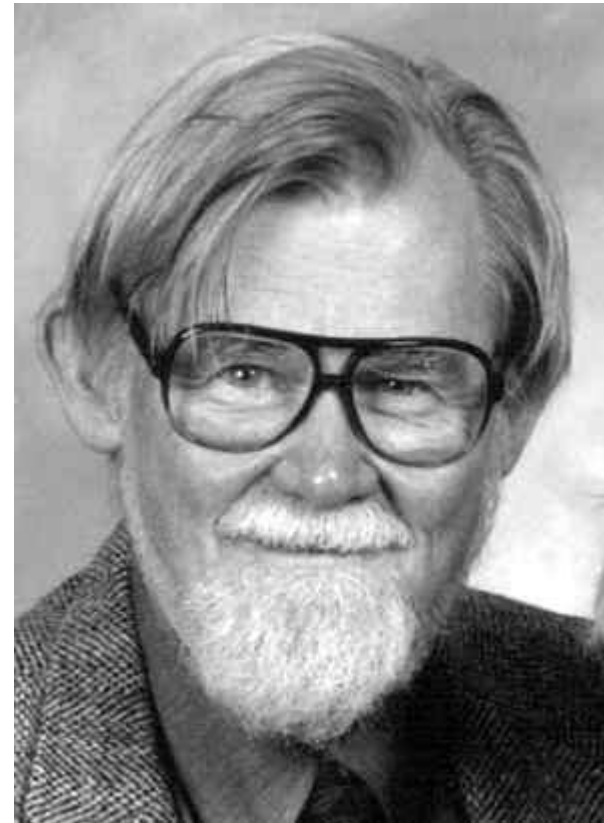
- Hymes maintains that a proficient speaker has internalised linguistic rules (what is grammatical and what is not).
- S/he has also internalised social rules of language use; s/he knows when to speak or write, to whom and how, s/he knows how to talk and write appropriately.
- A proficient speaker knows that his/her linguistic choices depend on the context of situation (setting, participants, purpose, channel and topic).



# Hymes and Communicative Competence

## **Communicative Competence**

encompasses both knowledge of usage and use of language.



[2]



# Communicative competence language teaching (1/2)

- The concept of communicative competence was introduced into language teaching.
- Communicative competence refers to the different kinds of knowledge a learner needs to develop in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language.



# Communicative competence language teaching (2/2)

- Canale & Swain (1980) attempted to clarify the notion of communicative competence by establishing a framework that consisted of four major components:
  - Grammatical competence,
  - Sociolinguistic competence,
  - Discourse competence,
  - Strategic competence.



# Components of communicative competence (1/2)

<b>Linguistic or Grammatical competence</b>	Knowledge of language forms and their meaning; i.e. knowledge of the form and meaning of words, how words form grammatically correct (and meaningful) sentences, as well as knowledge of how to pronounce and spelling words.
<b>Sociolinguistic or Pragmatic competence</b>	Knowledge of the social rules of language and discourse. Language users' ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• select language which is contextually appropriate,</li><li>• understand the intended meaning (illocutionary force) of utterances.</li></ul>

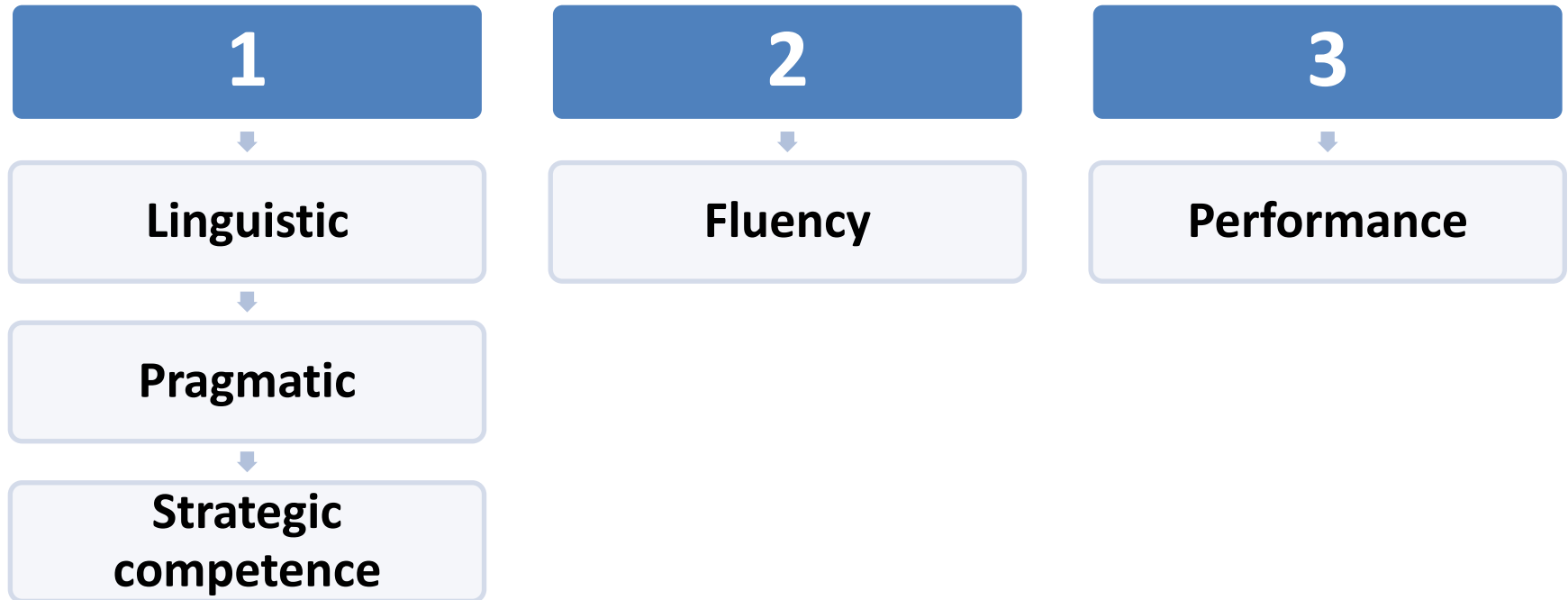


# Components of communicative competence (2/2)

<b>Discourse competence</b>	Knowledge of how to use language, given the discursive context to articulate socially meaningful speech or writing (e.g. political discourse, legal discourse, advertising discourse), which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is cohesive and coherence,</li><li>• follows the rules of use of a specific text type (genre) .</li></ul>
<b>Strategic competence</b>	Knowledge of communication strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for communication breakdowns (e.g. use of paraphrase, word-coinage, repetition, appeals for help).



# Faerch, Kasper and Phillipson (1986)



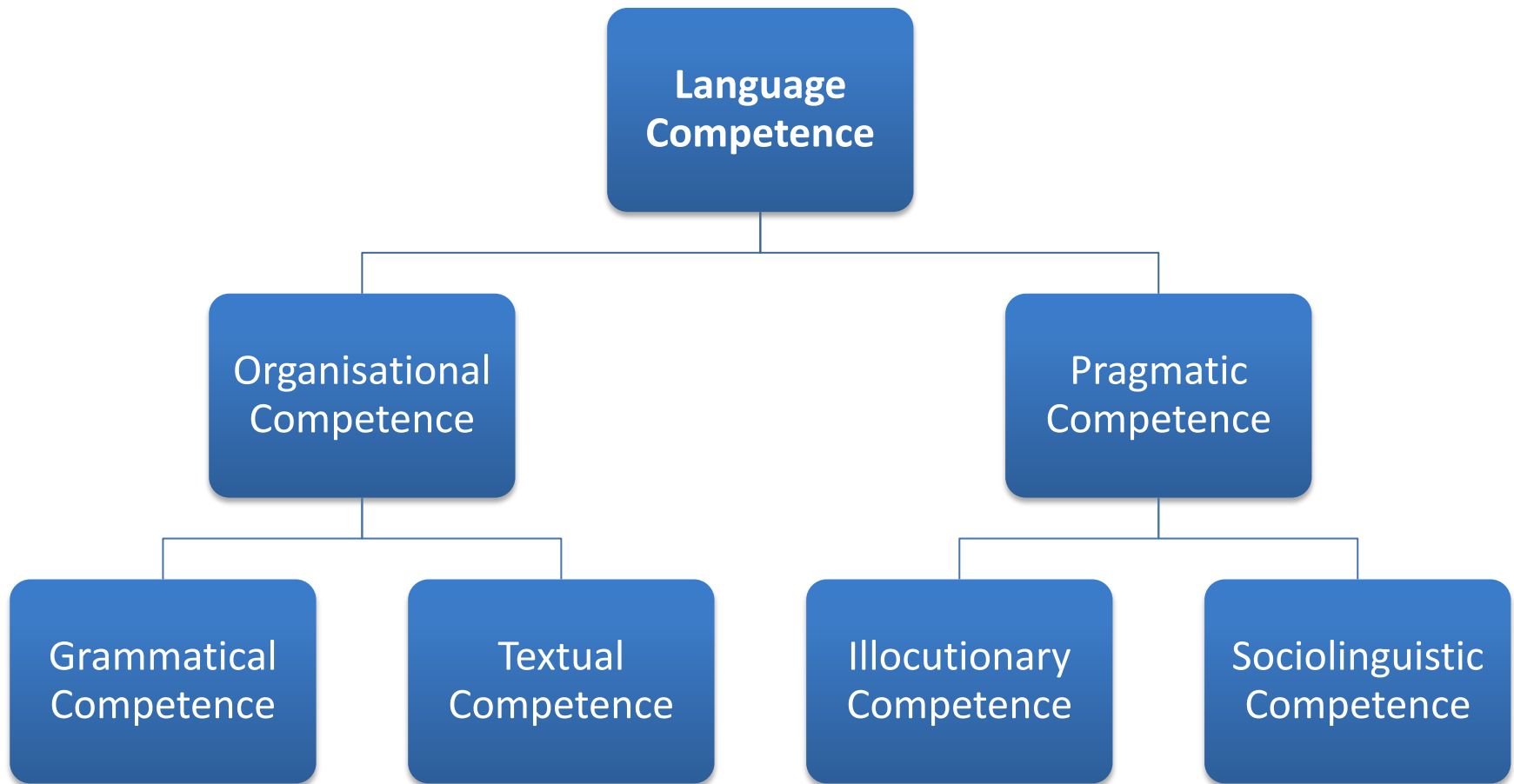
# Fluency vs. Accuracy

- **Fluency:**
  - Ability to produce written and spoken language with ease.
  - Ability to communicate ideas effectively.
  - Ability to produce continuous speech without tiring the listener, without causing comprehension difficulties or breakdown in communication.
- **Accuracy:**
  - Ability to produce grammatically correct sentences.





# Framework of Communicative Language Ability



# Framework of Communicative Language Ability

- **Organisational knowledge:**
  - how utterances/sentences and texts are organised.
- **Pragmatic knowledge:**
  - relationships between the forms of utterances, sentences and texts and the user's communicative goals and the setting of language use.

(Bachman, 1990)



# Bachman's Model: Pragmatic Competence

- **Illocutionary knowledge** (functional knowledge).
- **Ideational function**: intended to convey ideas and express people's experiences of the real world.
- **Manipulative function**: intended to persuade or dissuade (used to affect the world around them).
- **Heuristic function**: intended to explore ideas and feelings and to extend people's knowledge of the world around them.
- **Imaginative function**: where language is used creatively for aesthetic or humorous purposes.



# Bachman's Model: Sociolinguistic Competence

- Sensitivity to register and genre.
- Sensitivity to dialect or variety.
- Sensitivity to “naturalness” (i.e., appropriateness).
- Cultural references and figures of speech.



# Declarative and Procedural Knowledge (1/2)

- **Declarative knowledge:** Knowing **about** something.
- **Procedural knowledge:** Knowing **how** to do something.



# Declarative and Procedural Knowledge (2/2)

- Does knowing about a language mean that we are able to use it?
- Is one type of knowledge more important than the other?
- Is the goal of foreign language teaching to produce users of the language or literate users of the language (who can also talk about the language and its use)?



# Competence and performance

- **Competence:** knowledge of; ability to do something.
- **Performance:** actually doing it.
- Does having the ability to do something mean that we can actually do it?
- What do we assess in tests?



# Starting points in course design (1/4)

- In order to decide what knowledge is to be included in a course, the course designer has two options to start from:
  - **The language:** looking at the totality of language and trying to identify what needs to be taught and learnt.
  - **The learner:** who the learner is and what s/he needs to use the language for.





# Starting points in course design (2/4)

- Depending on the starting point the course, the designer will ask two different questions.
  - **Question 1:** What must EFL learners know about English and which skills must they have developed in order for them to communicate successfully?
  - **Likely answer:** They must know how the English linguistic system operates and they must have developed the skills to understand and produce spoken and written English.



# Starting points in course design (3/4)

- **Question 2:** What will the EFL learners/users need to do with the language; that is, what will they be using English for?
- **Likely answer:** It depends on who the learners/users are and what their sociocultural context is.



# Starting points in course design (4/4)

- How will the starting point affect what gets included in a course?
- There is no universal conception of what knowledge in a foreign language entails. It all depends on what your starting point is – the language or the learners.



# References

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End of Unit

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Notes

# Note on History of Published Version

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# Reference Note

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