

## COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The main function of language is **communication**. The main aim of all speakers is to understand others and make themselves understood. So, **foreign language aim** must be provide students with a **communicative competence**, it's to say, teach a language and also teach to communicate in that language.

In 1957, a behaviourist psychologist called **Skinner** stated in his book "Verbal behaviour" language was learnt by **repetition and reinforcement**.

This year, **Chomsky** introduced the concept of **competence** in his book "Syntactic structures" as a reply to skinner's book. Competence is an unconscious knowledge of the rules of language that allows speakers produce grammatical sentences.

**Hymes** criticised something basic was left aside by Chomsky. Speakers need more than linguistic rules **to communicate**. They need the **rules of use**. It's to say, they need to know where, when and whom to speak to. So, in 1971 Hymes introduced the concept of **communicative competence** in his book "On Communicative Competence". It is the knowledge and ability of language use in a social setting.

Hymes distinguished **four aspects of this competence**:

- **Systematic potential**: speaker has a potential to create lot of language.
- **Appropriacy**: speaker knows what language is appropriate in each situation.
- **Occurrence**: speaker knows how often something is said in a language.
- **Feasibility**: speaker knows if something is possible in a language.

Canale and Swain adapted them for teaching purposes in **five subcompetences**:

- **Grammar competence**: ability to use the linguistic rules to produce sentences.
- **Discourse competence**: ability to adapt the discourse the specific situation.
- **Sociolinguistic competence**: ability to adapt the sentences to the context.
- **Strategic competence**: ability to correct, define... in the course of communication.
- **Socio/cultural competence**: awareness of the socio/cultural context.