



WORKPLACE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION

Dr.N. Ramani * T. Pushpanathan**

*Senior Professor of English, School of Social Sciences & Languages, VIT University, Vellore.

**Ph.D., Scholar, Research & Development Centre, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

Abstract

Along with the process of globalisation, standardization emerges as a course of action in the field of language learning particularly in the developing countries. As a result, English language has grown out to be the dialect of the international business and the use of English becomes mandatory at a large scale. This paper attempts to trace the account of language standardizing agencies such as CEFR, ACTFL and CLB and their competency levels in the use of English for a personal and professional advancement which provides comprehensive documents for the employers to adjust their training modules, language practitioners to prepare tools of assessments and so on.

Key Words: Competencies, Globalisation, Standardisation, CEFR, ACTFL, CLB, Etc.

INTRODUCTION

The process of globalisation has brought new challenges to education for schools, universities and lifelong training. There is an urgent need after globalisation to understand and analyze both the intended and the unintended effects of globalization on educational systems, the state, and relevant policy changes as they affect individuals, educational bodies, policy-makers, and powerful corporate organizations across the globe. The evolving and constantly changing notions of national identity, language, border politics and citizenship which are relevant to education policy need to be critiqued by appeal to context-specific factors such as local-regional-national areas, which sit uncomfortably at times with the international imperatives of globalization. It has made transformations of similar scale: in how people live, work, identify and aggregate, communicate and engage - locally, nationally, and internationally as well. Globalisation has undoubtedly had great impact in all spheres of human life. As a result, communication skills emerge as an important criterion for the survival of professionals in various domains. Consequently, multinational companies are looking for individuals who can work in a challenging environment as they have offices all over the world or may work with other organizations in order to get innovative products or services to market at the fastest possible speed. These employees will need to know how to work successfully in international, multicultural, and interdisciplinary teams.

Globalization establishes faster linkage among nations, which aids in shared knowledge and information that are generated at particular part of the countries to other part of the countries. Global exchange (communication) is now taking place as the market of ideas, culture, and beliefs expand through the use of technology. As a result of the global exchange of goods and ideas, a common way of talking is expected to take place for national communities. Accordingly, English has occupied the position of international language as it dominated international business, politics and culture more than any other language in human history.

English has become one of the most frequently used international languages for various purposes in the recent years. Proficiency in English language skills determines the eligibility criteria for the job seekers as well as employees of the industries and they are expected to possess excellent communication skills. Seeing this necessity, Employers from various domains seek to employ people who are good at using English to fulfill their requirements. Hence, it becomes essential that the employees of various domains to be communicatively competent to meet those requirements.

COMPETENCE – DEFINITION

Competence is about turning knowledge into action. They are indicators from the industries to the individual of the areas and levels of performance that the organization expects. They provide the individual with a map of the skills that will be valued, recognized and in some organizations rewarded. As such, one of their main benefits is to drive up performance in the organization. In the 1990s, as the United Nations looked at how it should be organized in the 21st century, competencies played an important role in the area of human resources development. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan defines competence as “a combination of skills, attributes, and behaviors that are directly related to successful performance on the job.” The United Kingdom’s Institute of HealthCare Development defines it as “the ability to perform according to job standards, through a wide range of circumstances and to respond to changing demands.”

Countries, organizations, and companies have defined competencies for particular occupations, or abilities that can be applied across occupations. For example, the United Kingdom and Mexico have national systems to define competencies in manufacturing, construction, health and social protection, and other areas. Each system has levels of competence, as well: for



example, the United Kingdom differentiates among five levels of competencies that are applicable across occupations. Level 1 refers to competence in mainly routine and predictable activities, while Levels 2–5 deal with progressively higher-order skills culminating in competencies such as management of others, resource allocation, planning, and evaluation.

STANDARDISATION OF COMPETENCIES

Globalization interconnects people in all domains of contemporary life around the world. The issues of social and technical interdependence among the countries are resolved by implementing Globalization. There is a need for improved communication among countries to enhance these interconnections. English is the prominently used language in almost every field of study. It is used as a language for international communication in many countries and so it could be used as the global language too.

After globalisation, language standardization is a much needed process and also it is necessary development in the present scenario because the use and need of languages are quite different in 21st century. The process of globalisation leads to standardisation of communicative competencies in terms of proficiency levels such as ACTFL, CEFR, CLB, NOS, ILR and others.

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines describes what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. This guideline has identified five major levels of proficiency for each skill, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. The major levels Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels.

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were first published in 1986 for the academic purposes. They are intended to be used for global assessment in academic and workplace settings. For the past 25 years, the ACTFL Guidelines have had an increasingly profound impact on language teaching and learning in the United States. The 2012 Proficiency guidelines are the recent version of ACTFL and it also describes what individuals have to do with a language in terms of the four skills in the practical world. They are intended to be used in academic and workplace settings at the international level.

CEFR is yet another standardising agency published by Council of Europe in 2001 CEFR is the first language policy tool in the history of all modern languages. The objective of CEFR is to encourage modern language teaching professionals to think about their practices. The CEFR distinguishes the general competencies of an individual from communicative competencies. It is often used by policy makers to set minimum language requirements for a wide range of purposes. It is also widely used in curriculum planning, preparing textbooks and many other contexts.

CEFR aims to provide transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis" (CEFR,

1).The levels of proficiency are measured in terms of speaking, reading, listening and writing at six reference level. CEFR describes the levels of proficiency from beginning level through mastery level, in which there are six stages arranged in three bands – A1 and A2 (basic user); B1 and B2 (independent user); C1 and C2 (proficient user). These standards are framed for every individual, who wants to learn language from beginning through mastery levels.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) was published in 2000 for the immigrants of Canadian workplace. It is a descriptive scale of language ability in English as a Second Language (ESL). It is written as 12 benchmarks from basic to advanced levels. CLB is a description of a person's ability in a specific language skill. The 12 benchmarks are organized into three stages as:

Stage-I Basic language ability	Benchmarks	1-4
Stage-II Intermediate Language ability	Benchmarks	5-8
Stage-III Advanced language ability	Benchmarks	9-12

These twelve levels are arranged in a sequence, in which less difficult skills occupy the lower levels and skills that are more difficult occupy higher levels.

As international business is escalating and inter-cultural communication and relationship is raising high; especially in the domain of industry, Communication emerges as an essential skill that can be the pathway to a successful career in any field.



More than ever before, the acquisition of linguistic competencies is given high priority in job market in the beginning of the 21st century as the multinational companies require excellent communication skills from the entrants as well as employees to complete their routines as well as to stay competitive. It is indeed requisite for the employees to be communicatively competent.

CONCLUSION

After globalisation, it has become much competitive that the multinational companies involved in manufacturing electronic goods competing with others in terms of their human resource management policy. These industries choose to infuse a common way of communication in a language throughout the organization that it assists faster communication flows within the industry in terms of formal and informal reports. So, there is a need felt for the effective communication skills for the employees at the workplace. Hence, it is necessary to identify the communicative competencies required for a particular profession.

The 'can do' statements of CEFR and ACTFL or the 'ability descriptors' of CLB can be used to assess the communicative competencies of the employees. Similarly, these descriptors can be converted into 'have to' statements in order to identify the required communicative competencies for a particular profession as well. The identified competencies of the employees can be arranged hierarchically in terms of the most and the least. The findings of the studies can be used to recommend for preparing training modules, tools of assessments, recruitment packages for the industries. Studies can be

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