

### CTA3

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*Communicative competence is defined as “what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a language community.” How is this different from pure linguistic competence? Do you believe linguistic knowledge is sufficient for communication, or do you agree that communicative competence is necessary? Provide real-life examples to support your viewpoint, combined with theoretical explanations.*

Communicative competence encapsulates not only pure language knowledge, including proper use and understanding of vocabulary (what many mistakenly think is the only aspect of language competence), phonology, and grammar. Understanding social cues, and cultural values that are unique to the culture of the L2. For example, a learner of English can perfectly know how to form the sentence, "I'm so sorry for your loss", but if they use that at an inappropriate time like when congratulating someone for a new baby, it can lead to disaster.

Pure linguistic competence can be thought of as the textbook knowledge of a language. It is how many words you know, how well you can pronounce something, and how grammatical your sentences are.

The very extreme high level pure linguistic competence will be something like knowing every single vocabulary word in the language. First of all, this is near impossible since a language has a very long history with many outdated phrases and words. In addition a language is constantly changing every day so meanings of words are shifting and new words are being introduced. Anyways, having this extreme high level of pure linguistic competence is not equivalent to communicative competence. Most natives do not know super technical or highly specialized vocabulary, nor the old outdated words used 100 years ago. In fact, using obscure or complicated vocabulary may even confuse the native you are talking to!

Thus, we need to keep in mind that having high pure linguistic competence does not imply that you have high communicative competence. Along side our textbook understanding of a language, we need to make sure we get plenty of exposure to the actual culture, and most importantly, engaging in conversation with natives.

On the contrary, achieving native level competence also doesn't mean perfect linguistic competence, it just means that you are able to do anything a native should be able to do. In fact, your language competence should be more or less indistinguishable from a native. Whether this level of competence is achievable or not is another debate.

Another interesting consideration is a speakers accent from negative transfer. If you can still convey what you wish to convey, it doesn't matter in the real of communicative competence. However, it does mean that your pure linguistic competence is lacking a bit in the phonology department.

In conclusion, communicative competence is the end goal for most L2 learners, since they are either driven by personal interest (wish to consume media in L2, travel etc), or required by utility (work or school in foreign country). Although pure linguistic competence is important to an extent, at the end of the day, if your proficiency level doesn't matter if you can't do what you have set out to do.