



A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis of The Impact of English Training Program in Improving the Trainee’s Communicative Competence

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Introduction

Can a teacher turn out to be an expert in English language through one or two training programs? Can these programs inspire teachers’ repertoire and enhance their skills to deal with the teaching process professionally as well as move their attention toward the real use of language? In order to develop professionally and be more effective in the classroom, it is essential that teachers improve their communicative competence. As Savignon (1997,1) often reiterated “Within the framework of viewing communicative competence as a prerequisite to linguistic competence, rather than vice versa”. In the context of communicative competence, (Crabbe,2003) agrees with Savignons’ speech that having communicative competence is an inspirational starting point and argues that an aptitude in using the language is essential to teach the language. Based on that, Richards (2005,2) commented that “People learn a language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules”.

The current study aims to examine English teachers’ perceptions of further training used with the goal of moving their attention from linguistic competence toward performance and the reality of communicative competence as well as its implications for second language teaching. It also aims to identify two axes: The extent to which the users follow the four communicative components and whether there is any impact of psychosocial factors on the teachers’ use of language. Hence, it should be noted that communicative competence is the result of grammatical and social knowledge. In this vein, (Banga ,2015) exposes the essential need for acquiring more than one language and goes beyond knowing the grammarian rules, to use the language naturally and appropriately in real situations.

In view of the essential need for change, Segueni (2016,155) substantiates the “important changes in how languages are taught and subsequently learnt”. With more emphasis, (Al-Obaydi & Iddagoda ,2022) surmise that there is a great trend toward modern processes of teaching which really differs from the traditional teaching process. To succinctly round up what just came before, it is essential to incorporate modern innovative ways of English teacher training to help learners acquire and use the language naturally since language needs to be a bridge to meaning and communication, rather than a set of rules to be learnt. To overcome these shortcomings, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the communicative components to be included in a teachers’ repertoire? How are these perceived and adopted in the classroom?



2. What are the teachers' opinions toward the importance of training programs and how do such programs contribute to enhance teachers' thinking and skills?
3. What are the obstacles and challenges that hinder teachers' ability to use the language? To what extent does age, gender, and/or background knowledge have an effect?

Literature Review

The success in any language is measured through the users' ability to use it effectively and successfully, but on the contrary, most teachers still focus their attention toward linguistic competence and do not give any attention to the importance of communicative competence. Therefore, it has become crucial to encourage teachers to manage the language appropriately and make their classroom environment more interactive to use the language effectively. Hence, English teachers need to go out of the linguistic box, to move forward to communicative competence and communicative language. The question raised here is, what is the difference among these three components of competence? Thornbury's (2006,37) research on this shows the great role of linguistic competence as the rules that govern the speakers' ability to design, produce and understand "well-formed sentences". On the heels of linguistic competence, communicative competence is defined by Abdulrahman and Abu-Ayyash (2019, 2360) as "a competence to communicate", all these challenges cannot be achieved unless the users acquire the essential communicative components. Therefore, it seems evident that both linguistic and communicative competence go hand in hand to enable the teachers to know the rules and recognize how to use them appropriately, but those two are not adequate without the ability to apply these rules in real situations and this is what is called "communicative language".

To give further detail, communicative language is the speakers' ability to apply what they know in real conversation more than knowing the rules and how to use them. In addition, Boudersa (2016,1) declares that successful educational institutions should take care of the process of preparing and supporting teachers' plans due to the fact that the "teacher is considered the professional agent and the most directly responsible person". At the same time, Al-Obaydi (2020,353) highlights the teachers' roles to encourage and inspire their learners "to be self-actualized and fulfill their satisfaction", via participating in effective training programs. Significantly, (Widodo ,2016) demonstrates that the training programs are an opportunity carried out before (preservice) or during (inservice) the job to enhance the teachers' skills and attitudes. The current study's data is an outcome of a number of training lectures conducted by the researcher to highlight the positive impact on the teachers' ability to manage the language as a hobby via "changing their thinking from traditional learning to a more innovative one" Idrees and Ibrahim (2020, 639). In relation to that, there are a few studies that deal with the role of the training programs' benefits and measure the effectiveness of these programs on teachers' achievement.

In an empirical study, Boudersa (2016) recommends that there is a persistent need for adequate educational and professional training of teachers to tackle any lack in teachers' professional skills. In this regard, it could conclude that there exists certain reasons behind the real need for training programs. The results found by Widodo (2016,1) prove that "Well-planned programs based on the needs for professional development of teachers are strongly needed to enhance teachers 'achievements.'" In relation to that, (Carroll et al. ,2003) define training as an umbrella for all types of activities which are prepared previously by experts pre or through programs to support their learners' skills and change their direction to be more efficient. Similarly, Naik (2008,6) clarifies training as any source of activity to enhance peoples' capabilities and motivation to be more effective and positive. Furthermore, there are three forms of activities "training, education and development." Training relates to learning which also relates to the participants 'current work. Meanwhile education refers to the future work of the participants and finally, developments involve holistic improvement. It should be noted that (Thomas, 1983; Boudersa ,2016& Naik ,2008) consider the process of enhancing the teachers' achievement is very essential since the results reflected directly on the students. The most persuasive teachers should seek knowledge towards superior performance besides the training. Noe & Kodwani, (2018,9) illustrate two types of knowledge "explicit

knowledge (the institutional professional development)” and “tacit knowledge (the individual professional development)”. What’s more, Goos et al. (2007,24) and Widodo (2016,3) add other sorts of training programs: (In-house professional development, organizational-wide professional development, institution-based professional development, professional inquiry group, coaching and technical training and skills training. In their contribution to the training programs, (Noe & Kodwani,2018) suggest that successful training programs should build on three components, the trainers’ ability to capture the attention, to be open minded and the desire to improve and be involved in the conversation. This provides evidence that training is essential to enhance teachers’ communicative skills. As such, Segueni (2016,19) comments that there is no doubt “the mere acquisition of rules or bits of the language is completely not enough”.

Therefore, a dominant framework for this problem is presented by (Farrah & Salah ,2012) who show that most teachers avoid using real language because they focus on grammatical rules only and they need time to think of how to prepare that. At the same time, it is important to consider the arguments of (Shehadeh & Farrah ,2016; Jang & Wood ,2019) who highlight the importance of being creative and innovative to be effective teachers. Based on the above discussion, there are three questions to raise here, what is linguistic and communicative competence? Does it enable teachers to use the language appropriately? Finally, is it possible to move from linguistic to developing communicative competence and then to communicative language? Abdurahman & Abu-Ayyash (2019,2600) came up with a quite comprehensive definition to distinguish between the two concepts, linguistic competence is the “static concept which is directed related to the grammatical rules” whereas, communicative competence “is the ability to comprehend and produce accurate sentences from the grammatical rules as well as appropriate to the context”. In relation to that, Sreehari (2012,1987) defines communicative language as “a social tool where speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose”. This proves that language is to communicate meaning to others more than just rules. In reference to the second question, Canale & Swain ,1980; & Savignon ,1997) revealed that the ability to use the language effectively is deeper than knowing the linguistic components and it is necessary to have the components of communicative competence.

Moreover, Savignon (1972, 8) demonstrated the term of communicative competence as “the ability to function in a truly communicative setting.” Hymes (2001,60) states that “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.” A framework was provided by (Richards ,2005) who describes communicative competence through four principles, the ability to use language, to use various forms of expressions through various situations, to produce various types of texts and to communicate despite a lack in one’s language information. Finally, to answer the third question, (Segueni ,2016) shows the fact that it is not easy to move from linguistic to communicative competence and then to use the language naturally. On the contrary, it takes hard work due to the belief that the communicative ability is influenced by the social status, social distance, degree of imposition and the socio-pragmatic rules. It is worth mentioning the idea of Hymes (1972,33) that acceptability of any utterances should be measured from two axes: the appropriateness and grammatically acceptableness, “If a sentence that is uttered is not properly contextualized, it will be judged linguistically odd and may even be uninterpretable”. Therefore, it is vital to raise teachers’ willingness to move toward communicative competence and the real use of language. It is for this reason that it is essential to raise teachers’ awareness toward the importance of communication components and the knowledge of grammar is useless if the teachers do not have the skills to use such knowledge in real situations.

Method

Participants and Setting

Teachers’ opinions and perspectives were collected via two instruments, interviews and an electronic questionnaire to examine their perceptions of further training to move their attention toward communicative competence. The number of teachers was forty. The questionnaire consists of three parts: the first part

shows the demographic information of the participants (Table 1), to analyse whether there is any impact of the psychosocial factors. The second deals with the reasons behind the actual necessity of training and the last clarifies the obstacles of teachers’ participation. Through the two instruments, the researcher observed the teachers’ ability to apply the four communicative competence components via checking their answers and the body movements. The results have been analyzed according to the model and Table 2 clarifies the number and the percentage of the components.

TABLE 1
 Demographic Information of the Forty Participants

	Gender		Years of Experience		Qualifications	
Male	20	50%	<5	15%	Bachelors	85%
Female	20	50%	6 to 20	70%	MA & PhD	12.5%
			>20	15%		

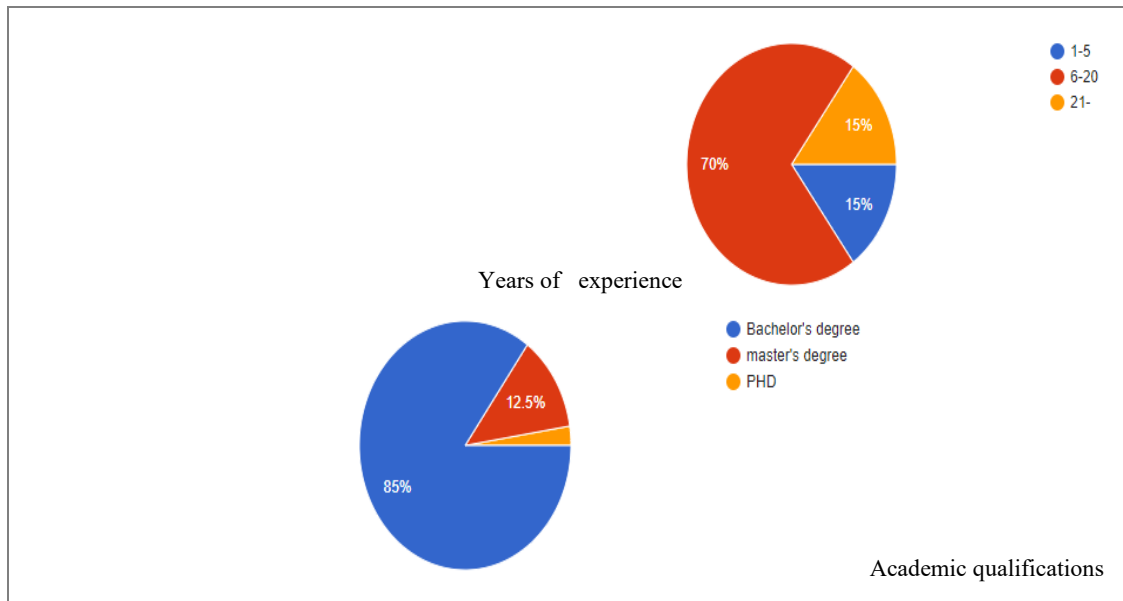


Figure 1. The demographic knowledge of the participants.

Model

Canale and Swain's Model (1980)

Canale & Swain (1980,28) clarify that “communicative competence minimally includes three main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence” then refer to discourse as the fourth component. (Savignon,1997) was largely dependent on this model with some clarification.

1. Grammatical (linguistic) competence The ability of the user to know the grammatical rules and the branches of linguistics.
2. Sociolinguistic competence (appropriateness). This shows the appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness and style according to certain situations.
3. Discourse competence (cohesion and coherence). The ability to know how to interpret the large context, build and arrange the words and sentences

4. Strategic competence The ability to use communication strategies (grammatical and lexical paraphrase, requests for repetition, clarification and slower speech).

Results

The results of this study's research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What are the communicative components to be included in a teachers' repertoire? How are these perceived and adopted in the classroom?

"Your question are great" 👍 the teacher here follows the linguistic component via preparing the words into phrases and follows the strategic component with nonverbal expressions. The sociolinguistic component has been followed and finally, the teacher fails with the discourse component because there is no clear message.

"I really, enjoyed attending this programs with (smile and raising hands) but, I can't change my way for certain reasons" the teacher uses grammar rules accurately, follows the linguistic and the sociolinguistic component with perfect words for certain situations. The words do not fit the strategic and discourse competences.

"yeah of course, do you know, to be fully proficient in the target language, it is useful to gain experiences about both" the teacher follows all the components.

"yes. I'd like". With little information, the teacher succeeds to follow the linguistic component but fails to follow the discourse component because of the difficulty to construct long sentences. There are two components used in this comment the sociolinguistic and strategic competences are needed to meet the commutative goals.

"never" the teacher shows complete refusal and fails to follow all the components.

"of course, it has benefits even if we have a lot of experience years, still need to enhance our information" the teacher follows all the components.

"It did not meet the ambition in terms of syllabus, time, type of questions and use of technological equipment" the teacher follows the linguistic component but fails to follow the sociolinguistic and discourse components because the words do not fit the setting and coherence of the sentence. The discourse shows the participant uses strategic competence.

"saying it easy, but application is difficult" the teacher follows the linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. via using the appropriate words. Besides that, the teacher fails to follow the discourse and strategic competencies.

"While I would much prefer focusing on grammarian points, but expanding our English communication skills is crucial" the teacher follows all the components.

"May I please, ask you this question" another comment expresses the teachers' ability to follow the linguistic and sociolinguistic components through the request, but fails in discourse and strategic components because of the difficulty to interpret the question nor express the opinion.

“No comment” the teacher here fails to follow any component.

TABLE 2
The Frequencies and Percentages of Canale & Swain's (1980) Components

Components	Number of teachers who follow the components	Percentage (%)	Number of teachers failed to follow	Percentage (%)
Sociolinguistic	9	64.28	5	35.7
Discourse	3	21.42	11	78.57
Strategic	6	42.85	8	57.14

Concerning Canale and Swain's components, Table 2 shows that the linguistic component is the most followed component. Fifty percent of participants show that the most difficult component to follow is discourse competence because, it requires high ability levels.

RQ2. What are the teachers' opinions toward the importance of training programs and how do such programs contribute to enhance teachers' thinking and skills?

TABLE 3
The Reasons of Attending the Training Program

Reasons	Number of Teachers	Percentage
To develop teachers' knowledge and achievement	24	60%
To breakdown the daily routine of the school	5	12.5%
To acquire modern techniques and strategies	10	25%
To work with a team	26	65%
To satisfy curiosity	3	7.5%
To get an opportunity to learn and communicate	9	22.5%
To satisfy certain needs and have interactions	4	10%
To obey the order	2	5%
To help in determining the topics of the next programs	4	10%
To meet other teachers	14	35%

Actually, Table three shows the significant differences in teachers' responses. As a result, the majority of teachers agree on the real need for training to overcome their difficulties such as shyness and anxiety.

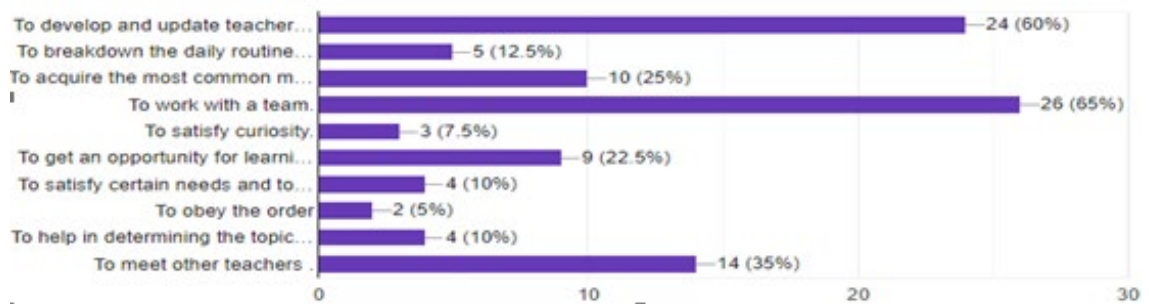


Figure 2. The teachers' reasons for attending the training programs.

RQ3. What are the obstacles and challenges that hinder teachers’ interaction to use the language? To what extent do age, gender, and background knowledge have an effect?

TABLE 4
The Reasons behind Teachers’ Unwillingness to Participate in the Program Conversation

Reasons	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Lack of linguistic competence	1	2.6%
Lack of sociolinguistic competence	14	35%
Lack of discourse competence	5	20%
Lack of strategic competence	14	60%
Psychosocial factors such as motivation and attitude	8	30%
Extrinsic factors, barriers in environment, age and gender	24	60%
Changes in the scope of communication needs	12	30%
Shyness and less confidence	22	55%
Lack of background knowledge	3	7.5%
Inability to translate linguistic to communicative competence	25	62.5%

As indicated in Table 4, most teachers prefer to choose more than one reason. The results show that the common reason behind the inability to interact is lack of certain skills. Moreover, the essential reasons are not the lack of linguistic rules, but, on the contrary the social rules.

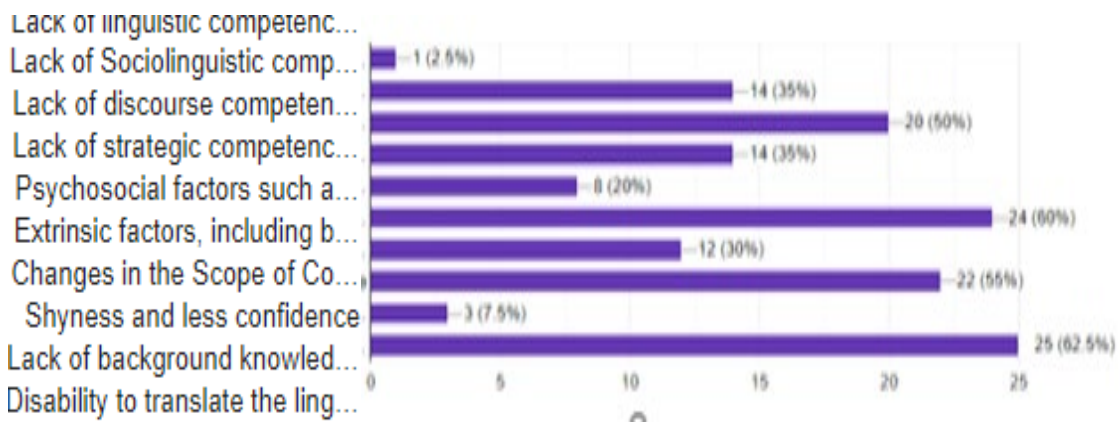


Figure 3. The reasons behind teachers’ unwillingness to participate in conversation.

Discussion

Highlighting the findings, this study examines teachers’ perceptions on favoring communicative competence more than linguistic competence which requires further training. Intrinsic motivation is highly supported among teachers who seek to use language in real situations. The study exhibits a tendency for teachers to want to develop a repertoire and seek advanced methods to communicate successfully. This study identifies that most English teachers have the required linguistic competence but they need to apply

the four communicative components. The results are similar to the findings of (Savignon,1972) who confirms the dissatisfaction toward focusing at the idea of linguistic competence and neglect the role of communicative competence especially in the field of learning and teaching languages. It is proven that the teacher's psychosocial factors which represent 20% of the participants' opinion, affects the teachers' motivation to use the language effectively. Furthermore, this paper focuses on certain problems including gender and age for example, female teachers' shyness and lack of confidence to speak in public. Moreover, some of the old teachers do not encourage a change in teaching methods and stay focused on grammar rules only.

These results agree with Canale & Swain (1980,36) who recommend that the "Description of the communication needs of a given group of second language learners is based both on factors particular to the learners (e.g. their age, background of instruction in the second language) and is particular to the speech community". The results prove the importance of the change in the scope of communication topics, the curriculum changes and the rapid development in methods of teaching. However, most teachers fail to apply their knowledge in real situations. Besides that, teachers need to break out of the conventional methods of teaching. In another paper which is in line with the present study (Domsy, et al.,2022) describe the necessity to improve teachers' skills and own self-awareness to evolve both professionally and personally. In order to check the teachers' perceptions of further training, they were asked certain questions. Results indicated that the desire to go over the linguistic competence and to develop teachers' knowledge and achievement are the most common reasons with an average of 60%. Results also show that most of the male participants intensify the need to work in teams to communicate in real situations. While, most females prefer the option of refreshing their knowledge. On the other hand, there are no statistically significant differences between the participants due to their years of experience to show that novice and experts diverge in their need for training programs and the real desire to focus on the real use of language more than on the grammatical aspects. Admittedly, teachers need a special kind of treatment since learning is an ongoing process with no reachable limits. Therefore, there is a tremendous need for training programs.

Conclusion

The current study comes to prove that building efficient teachers who are able to apply the three communicative components in English or are aware of such components besides the linguistic component is an aim that teachers struggle to achieve. These results are manifested in teachers' responses and show that language needs to be a bridge to meaning and communication, rather than a set of rules to be learnt. The results prove that there are linguistic and psychosocial reasons behind the teacher's inability to communicate, but with the training plenty of benefits are awaiting teachers. The participants show a more positive acceptance of training to enhance their skills and deal with the teaching process professionally as well as move their attention toward the real use of language. This provides evidence that teachers need more training, innovative curricula and methods of teaching to use the language appropriately with a balance among the communicative competence components. However, we should not mandate that teachers follow certain strategies, but on the contrary, leave them to acquire suitable skills. Above all, using the language cannot be programmed, it is a personalized and spontaneous action.

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