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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE MODEL FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME STUDENTS IN PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES



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CHOUDHRY SHAHID MAHMOOD

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DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at developing a communicative competence model for undergraduate programmes students in Pakistani universities. This study has used structural equation modelling (SEM) statistical approach to analyse the relationships of the predicting variables in model development. The random cluster sampling method was used to collect the data using a survey questionnaire from a sample of 599 respondents. The SEM two-stage method from the measurement to the structural model was used to develop and test the model. The proposed model has achieved the fit indices ($\chi^2=1.588$; $df=1$; $\chi^2/df=1.588$; $p=.208$; $CFI=.999$; $SRMR=.002$; $RMSEA=.031$, $Pclose=.492$). The results of the regression indicated the predictors explained 62% of the variance and have significantly contributed to competence ($R^2=.38$, $F(6, 592) = 61.03$, $p < 0.001$). The independent variables motivation ($\beta=.39$, $p<.001$), attitude ($\beta=.34$, $p<.001$), strategy ($\beta=.17$, $p<.001$), style ($\beta=.08$, $p<.009$), belief ($\beta=.10$, $p<.001$) have a significant contribution to dependent variable competence. Significant correlation was found between motivation ($r=.49$, $p<.001$), attitude ($r=.44$, $p<.001$), strategy ($r=.17$, $p<.001$) and competence. The paths from style and beliefs to competence were significantly mediated by strategy ($b= 0.02$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.04], $t= 2.12$, $p<.05$), motivation ($b= 0.04$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.02], $t=2.32$, $p<.05$) and attitude ($b=0.05$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.07], $t=2.43$, $p<.05$). In conclusion, the observed data were found to fit the model and the results showed that the independent variables -- style, belief, attitude and motivation -- are the main predictors of the dependent variable which is communicative competence. The study also found that strategy is a significant mediator to the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In implication, the new model developed in this study is found to be robust to predict the undergraduate students' communicative competence.





PERKEMBANGAN MODEL KOMPETENSI KOMUNIKATIF UNTUK PROGRAM SARJANA MUDA DI UNIVERSITI DI PAKISTAN

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengembangkan model kompetensi komunikatif untuk pelajar program sarjana muda di universiti di Pakistan. Kajian ini telah menggunakan pendekatan statistik pemodelan persamaan struktur (SEM) untuk menganalisis hubungan pemboleh ubah ramalan dalam pengembangan model. Kaedah persampelan rawak kelompok digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data menggunakan soal selidik tinjauan dari sampel 599 responden. Kaedah SEM dua peringkat dari pengukuran hingga model struktur digunakan untuk mengembangkan dan menguji model. Model yang dicadangkan telah mencapai indeks yang sesuai ($\chi^2 = 1.588$; $df = 1$; $\chi^2 / df = 1.588$; $p = .208$; CFI = .999; SRMR = .002; RMSEA = .031, $P_{close} = .492$). Hasil regresi menunjukkan prediktor menjelaskan 62% varians dan telah memberikan sumbangan yang signifikan terhadap kompetensi ($R^2 = .38$, $F(6, 592) = 61.03$, $p < 0.001$). Pemboleh ubah bebas motivasi ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$), sikap ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), strategi ($\beta = .17$, $p < .001$), gaya ($\beta = .08$, $p < .009$), kepercayaan ($\beta = .10$, $p < .001$) mempunyai sumbangan yang signifikan terhadap pemboleh ubah bersandar kompetensi. Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara motivasi ($r = .49$, $p < .001$), sikap ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), strategi ($r = .17$, $p < .001$) dan kompetensi. Laluan dari gaya dan kepercayaan ke kecekapan dimediasi secara signifikan oleh strategi ($b = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.04], $t = 2.12$, $p < .05$), motivasi ($b = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.02], $t = 2.32$, $p < .05$) dan sikap ($b = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.07], $t = 2.43$, $p < .05$). Sebagai kesimpulan, data yang diperhatikan didapati sesuai dengan model dan hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa pemboleh ubah bebas -- gaya, kepercayaan, sikap dan motivasi -- adalah peramal utama pemboleh ubah bersandar yang merupakan kompetensi komunikatif. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa strategi adalah perantara yang signifikan terhadap hubungan antara pemboleh ubah bebas dan pemboleh ubah bersandar. Secara implikasinya, model baru yang dikembangkan dalam kajian ini didapati kuat untuk meramalkan kecekapan komunikatif pelajar sarjana muda.





“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

(Ludwig Wittgenstein)

“Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.”





The completion of this study would not have been possible with the Grace of Allah (SWT)

In dedication to

My beloved mother, sister, brothers and wife



In honour of

My teachers and mentors for their contributions





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DECLARATION OF PUBLISHED WORK

The researcher has published the following referred papers during the academic year 2019-2020 at Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia.

Shahid Choudhry, Ong Eng Tek, Wong Kung Teck & Asma Perveen (2020). Academic Motivation and Self-Efficacy of Teachers and Students in Higher Secondary Level in Pakistan: *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Sciences* <http://hrmars.com/index.php/papers/detail/IJARBSS/6739>

Shahid Choudhry, Ong Eng Tek, Wong Kung Teck & Asma Perveen (2019). EFL Learners Communicative Competence in Undergraduate Programmes in Pakistan: A case of two universities in Pakistan: *The International Journal of Advance Science and Technology* 28(20).

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Shahid Choudhry, Ong Eng Tek, Wong Kung Teck, & Asma Perveen (2020): Expectations and Reality of Learner Autonomy and Communicative Competence in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions - A review: *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 5(34), 91-101. doi: 10.35631/IJEPC.534007



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AMTB	Attitude Motivation Test Battery
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
ASV	Average Shared Squared Variance
CC	Communicative Competence
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CLF	Common Latent Factor
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CR	Composite reliability
Df	Degree of Freedom
D ²	Mahalanobis Distance
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
GFI	Goodness-of-Fit Index
HEC	Higher Education Commission
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
KMO	Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin





MI	Modification Index
MSV	Maximum Shared Squared Variance
NNFI	Non-Normed Fit Index
NFI	Normed Fit Index
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PLS	Partial least squares
R^2	Coefficient of Determination
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SD	Standard Deviation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SE	Self-Efficacy
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SRMR	Standard Root Mean Residual
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SMC	Squared Multiple Correlations
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
χ^2	Chi-Square
χ^2/df	Normed Chi-Square





APPENDICES

- A Summary of Constructs Conceptual and Operational Definitions
- B Student Survey Questionnaire
- C Teacher Survey Questionnaire
- D Summary of SEM Analyses Results (Model Fit Indices in detail)
- E Cover Letter
- F Expert Panel Rating Scale





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a general background of the study including the higher education, pedagogy of English in Pakistan, and importance of communicative competence for the university graduates and use of communicative language approach in English language teaching. Additionally, this chapter also highlights the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, conceptual model, research hypotheses, research design, delimitations, a summary of contribution, and definitions of the terms.





1.2 Cognitive and Affective Factors in Language Learning

The learning aims are to prepare the learners to possess the knowledge, develop understanding, and be able to demonstrate the learned skills and have the right attitude to contribute to society after completing their education. The learning experiences have been explained differently by theories about the teaching and learning contexts. The well-known theories of the last century were cognitivism and behaviourism (Bigge & Shermis, 2004). According to behaviourism, learning brings permanent change “hierarchical, observable, and measurable behaviours” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 133), and cognitivism defines learning “as an internal change in mental associations” (Pritchard, 2008, p. 32). Learning is multifaceted and not simply memorising of rules (Reid & Petocz, 2004). Thus, learning has different meanings for different theorists.

According to Bloom (1956), the concept of learning relates to three main domains, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive abilities are helping in structuring the knowledge whereas the psychomotor abilities help to synchronise the physical movement and coordination of motor skills. Affective domain involves students’ beliefs, attitudes, values, and emotions. In the taxonomy of effective learning, learners move in stages to master their learning (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964, as cited in Savickiene, 2010). Effective learning directs the actions of learners (Smith & Ragan, 1999). Cognitive learning is highly focused on language learning. This area mainly focuses on the learners’ preferences, strategies, and processing of language. The affective domain has the variables: attitude, motivation, beliefs, and emotions. Motivation is a vital factor in language learning





(Sharma, 2015; Sun, 2010), as it decides the level of learner interest (Warden & Lin, 2000). The motivation to learn a language depends on students' attitude, beliefs and efficacy to use various approaches (Gardner, 2005). After motivation, attitude is a vital variable in language learning (Eagly & Chaiken, 2005). As stated by Bohner and Wanke (2002), learners may dislike, love or oppose any learning activity or task "when individual behaviours turn into public opinions then these attitudes determine the social, political, and cultural climate in a society, which in turn affects the individual lives of the people in that society" (Bohner & Wanke, 2002, p. 4).

In the language learning and teaching context, the cognitive and affective domains are not different from other fields of studies. The ultimate objective of English language learning is to acquire communicative competence. Communicative competence is an individual's ability to use the language fluently and appropriately to create meaning (Tarvin, 2014). This study is mainly focusing on the influence of cognitive and affective factors in developing communicative competence in language learning at tertiary level in Pakistan

1.2.1 Communicative Competence and Tertiary Education in Pakistan

A key relationship exists between autonomous learning and communicative competence (Benson, 2011). Autonomous learners are more capable (Littlewood, 1999; Oxford, 2008) and achieve high academic success and have more career opportunities (Boud, 1988). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report (2013), regular university education does not ensure





communication skills, self-directedness, and critical thinking. Ultimately, it becomes the responsibility of the students to find out 'how to learn' (Little, 1996). Communicative competence and learner autonomy are included in the category of lifelong skills, namely technological expertise, numeracy, literacy, planning, self-confidence, leadership, and team building (Knapper, 1988; OECD, 2007, 2016; Selvadurai, 2012).

Little (1991) believes to enhance language learning, students ought to have authority over the objectives and substance of their learning. Students with a high meta-subjective awareness, which is an absolute necessity in encouraging student autonomy, can address their more fragile focus effectively and can likewise avoid potential risk in an increasingly fruitful manner to succeed in their academic careers (Cakici, 2015). Researchers on learner independence in Pakistan such as Rehman (2002), Mahmood (2016) and Yasmin and Sohail (2018b) have concluded that the concept of self-learning and evaluation is new to the teachers and the students in Pakistan, but of high significance to prepare them to become self-reliant and responsible for their learning. More research is required in the Pakistani context to explore and pave the path of self-learning (Yasmin & Shail, 2018c). Innovative teaching strategies can help to overcome the hurdles to develop the students' communicative competence in English language learning context in Pakistan to promote the idea of self-learning.

Motova (2014) highlights the crucial role of university education in developing society and contributing to the economy. Brown and Carasso (2013) also assert that teachers and their good teaching practices play an important part in higher





education. Sayed (2010) argues that only professionally trained teachers have the potential to use innovative methods and new techniques to impart lifelong learning at the university level. Student motivation and classroom involvement can be further developed with an innovative teaching strategy (Tomcho & Foels, 2008). The National Framework of Qualifications Pakistan (2015) has set the aims to achieve the following objective for knowledge and skill application for undergraduate students:

“Communication skill to represent a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas, and application with responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters”

(National Framework of Qualifications Pakistan, 2015, p. 16)



Thus, the present study is in line with the educational objectives of the National Framework of Qualifications Pakistan (NFQP, 2015). Communicative competence promotes learner autonomy which helps the learners in their whole life (Knapper, 1988) and after the industrial revolution and globalisation, competence and autonomy are the prime skills sought after in the corporate world by potential employers (Benson, 2011). The ever-growing popularity of English language in the global context has made communication skills a prerequisite for getting higher education, starting a business or working as a professional (Block & Cameron, 2002; Johnson, 2009). The communicative paradigm of language learning has made teachers and the learners revisit the learning practices and focus more on communication skill development. In Pakistani society, English is regarded as a symbol of power and success (Mansoor, 2002) and students in the English as a medium of instruction at





higher education level need strong communication skills and self-directedness (Dar & Khan, 2015; Sadia et al., 2018; Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). Higher education and employability success largely depend on the students' communicative competence (Abbasi et al., 2018; Saeed & Rashidi, 2017) and there is a positive correlation between language competence, efficacy and student motivation (Abbas et al., 2018).

The communicative language teaching approach is recommended for developing student competence (Ahmad & Rao, 2013; Panhwar et al., 2017; Savignon, 2007). Hameed and Tahir (2016) assert that teaching beliefs, approaches, and syllabus designing are the key elements in language teaching, and teachers should set high objectives to meet learner demands. Shamim (2017) observes that a systematic evaluation of the teaching methods is needed. The interactive nature of the language is in favour of teachers using the CLT approach to integrate language form and function in the classrooms to develop learner communicative competence (Savignon, 2017). This study has explored the literature related to the CLT approach and one of its objectives is to propose a pedagogical framework to teach the English language at a higher education level with a focus on the selected variables.

Employers mostly seek graduates who are good team players, independent, decision-makers, adaptable, confident and have strong communication skills (Suastra et al., 2017). Yet the majority of candidates have “failed to secure jobs because of their lack of competence in the English language, which becomes evident particularly during interviews” (Chan & Tan, 2006, p. 5). Omar et al. (2012) reflected that the unemployment rate would increase if the higher education institutes fail to redesign





their courses and take remedial measures to help graduates in the professional degree programmes to develop their interpersonal and personal communication skills.

1.3 The Problem Statement

In the Pakistani context where the English Language enjoys a very high academic and social status (Mansoor, 2002), little has been done to ensure students achieve the desired competence in English even after studying it for more than 16 years from grade one to graduation level. Students lack communicative competence in English; hence the national qualification framework has set a priority to focus on this area (NFQ, 2015). In the Pakistani education system, English is taught as a subject and there is no specific criterion to decide student success or failure in English language learning. Majority of the students pass examinations each year; they are promoted to next classes, and this does not guarantee their actual ability to use English for communicative purposes for academic and professional success in higher education (Dar & Khan, 2015; Sadia et al., 2018). The following facts are important to consider in the English language teaching and learning context in Pakistan:

- Pakistan ranks 50th out of 86 countries in English skills and proficiency index in the world and 12th out of 21 countries in Asia (EPI, 2018)
- Students' communicative competence is claimed by the teachers but past studies have shown that students lack communicative competence in English language learning (Dar & Khan, 2015)





- Teachers in Pakistan mainly focus on language contents and traditional teaching styles and assessment (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018a)
- Students in Pakistani universities are struggling to acquire the needed communicative skills for academic and career success (Sadia et al., 2018)
- The cognitive and affective variables are overlooked and teachers want students to be fluent in the target language (Savickiene, 2010)
- Communication skills are the prerequisite for higher education, research and business (OECD, 2016)

These facts show that English language learning and teaching is a problematic area in Pakistani universities and students face difficulties in language learning and their low competence in the English language further:



- Results in achieving an average of 2.5 CGPA in their degree programmes and some cases failure
- (Khattak, 2013)
- Causes de-motivation and highest dropout > 40% in institutions

(Alam & Uddin, 2018)

- Increases unemployment to 17% as graduates fail to meet the standard of communication skills required by the potential employers

(Bureau of statistics Pakistan, 2018)

- Increases failure rate to 97% in the competitive examination due to lack of English language competence

(CSS Results Report, 2019)





- Causes students to face language obstacle in higher education in Pakistan and most of the students fail to secure band 6 score in IELTS and have B1 level proficiency

(British Council Report, 2015)

- Results in inability in the English language that leads to illiteracy in the globally changing world where English is a lingua franca

(Coleman, 2010; Shamim, 2008; Zubeida, 2012)

- Affects student achievements in higher education

(Akbar et al., 2013; Tata & Rabiun, 2014)

- Causes anxiety and stress among students in Pakistan in higher education institutes

(Khan et al., 2016; Usman, 2016)

- Restricts the students' academic, career and social success



All these facts support the proposition that communicative competence is often a prerequisite to getting higher education, starting a business or working as a professional (Block & Cameron, 2002; Johnson, 2009). To address the problem of low communicative competence among Pakistani university students, an analysis of the factors determining the competence development is required to build student competence to make them academically successful, grow professionally and effectively achieve their personal and interpersonal communication goals in multicultural societies.

If higher education institutes fail to design their courses according to industry needs and the students are unmotivated to acquire the skills highly demanded by





professional bodies the unemployment rate will increase (Omar et al., 2012). Developing students' communication skills in the English medium of instruction is one of the aims set by the National Qualification Framework of Pakistan (NQFP, 2015). To achieve the NQFP objective and ensure that graduate students can use the English language effectively for academic and professional development, some tool or instrument is needed that could measure communicative ability at the academic level in the nationwide network with reliability and validity. To develop and test the hypothetical model to measure the predictability of communicative competence was one of the main objectives of this study to fill this gap.

The studies by Ahmad and Rao (2013), Akram et al. (2011), Ahsan and Anjum (2012), Panhwar et al. (2017) and Sadia et al. (2018) are among the few which have investigated communicative competence in the Pakistani context but the cognitive and affective factors have rarely been studied. Motivation to learn a language is affected by the integrativeness, ability, attitude, emotional intensity, learning styles and strategies (Gardner, 2005; Sharma, 2015; Sun, 2010). According to Byrnes (2006), 'Communicative competence' as a theoretical construct may also be a primary learning goal, a pedagogical approach, and even a measure for assessment, all in one. Most of the previous studies in the Pakistani context (Abbas, 1998; Ahmad & Rao, 2013; Mansoor, 2003; Nasir et al., 2013; Panhwar et al., 2017) have used hierarchical regression for the analysis. This study has used the SEM to analyse the latent variables to fill this research gap.





1.4 Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to develop and test the proposed model of communicative competence and determine the relationships, direct and indirect effects, mediation of main variables and moderation of demographic characteristics in the development of communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan. This study is a contribution to the mainstream literature in suggesting a way to develop communicative competence in bringing more understanding of the predicting factors in achieving English language learning success at the tertiary level in Pakistan. Through the model, relationships of cognitive and affective variables were tested in developing communicative competence.



This study would help researchers in the field to adapt this model for predicting language learning competence. This study has adopted a six-factor model from the social education model of Gardner (1985, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007) to explore and test the factors using structural equation modelling (SEM) in predicting tertiary level learner communicative competence in Pakistan. The given study aimed at analysing the teachers' and students' self-reported perceptions about the influencing factors in developing communicative competence in the Pakistani university context. Many studies have explored the teachers' views in various contexts on communicative language teaching and competence development (Alqarni, 2017; Asmari, 2015; Bekele, 2014; Jaferi et al., 2015; Liu, 2005; Manzano, 2015; Sherwani, 2017; Sreehari, 2012). This study has included the tertiary level teachers and students to analyse the predicting factors in developing communicative competence model. The proposed model would be helpful to fill the gap to achieve



the required competence level in English language learning in undergraduate programmes in Pakistan.

1.5 Research Objectives and Questions

The following Table 1.1 represents the objectives and questions articulated for this study.

Table 1.1

Summary of Research Objectives and Questions

#	Objectives	Questions
1	To analyse the main influencing factors in the development of communicative competence in Pakistani universities	What are the main influencing factors in the development of communicative competence in Pakistani universities?
2	To analyse the self-reported main predicting factors and their influence on the development of communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan	Do all the key predicting factors have a significant and positive influence on communicative competence?
3	To analyse the relevant key factors that should be adopted for developing communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan	What are the relevant key factors that should be adopted for developing communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan?
4	To analyse up to what extent the four demographic characteristics, namely teachers/students, gender, public/private university and urban/rural background influence the relationships between the predicting variables in the proposed communicative competence model	To what extent do the four demographic characteristics, namely teacher/student, gender, public/private university and urban/rural background influence the relationships between the predicting variables in the proposed communicative competence model?
5	To understand the role of the CLT approach in the Pakistani language teaching and learning context	What is the role of the CLT approach in the Pakistani language teaching and learning context?
6	To propose a pedagogical framework and plausible recommendations to Pakistani institutions based on the CLT approach in developing students' communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan	What is the practical relevance of the proposed pedagogical framework based on the CLT approach in developing students' communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

A proposed model based on the hypotheses has its foundation in the past literature. The proposed model in this study presents a graphical picture of the relationships of the predicting variables to the dependent variable. The data analyses will further explain the observed and latent variables relationships. The hypothesised paths are tested by goodness-of-fit indices calculations. Structural equation modelling provides the details of latent variables, which lie under the main observable variables. This study used the SEM analyses and the following is the detail of the proposed hypotheses to determine the direct relationships, mediation, and moderation of the observed variables paths.

Hypotheses Related to Direct Relationships:

H1: The learning style has significant direct relationships with endogenous variables:

H1a	Strategy	<---	Style
H1b	Competence	<---	Style
H1c	Motivation	<---	Style
H1d	Attitude	<---	Style

H2: The learning efficacy has significant direct relationships with endogenous variables:

H2a	Strategy	<---	Efficacy
H2b	Motivation	<---	Efficacy
H2c	Competence	<---	Efficacy
H2d	Attitude	<---	Efficacy

H3: The learning belief has significant direct relationships with endogenous variables:

H3a	Strategy	<---	Belief
H3b	Motivation	<---	Belief
H3c	Competence	<---	Belief
H3d	Attitude	<---	Belief

H4: Motivation has a significant direct relationship with strategy, attitude and competence:

H4a	Strategy	<---	Motivation
H4b	Attitude	<---	Motivation
H4c	Competence	<---	Motivation

H5: Strategy has a significant direct relationship with competence:

H5	Competence	<---	Strategy
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H6: Attitude has a significant direct relationship with competence:

H6	Competence	<---	Attitude
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Hypotheses Related to Mediation

The following hypotheses relate to mediation:

H7: Strategy has a significant mediation in style, efficacy, belief, motivation and competence

H7a	Style	----->	Strategy	----->	Competence
H7b	Efficacy	----->	Strategy	----->	Competence
H7c	Belief	----->	Strategy	----->	Competence
H7d	Motivation	----->	Strategy	----->	Competence

H8: Motivation has a significant mediation in style, efficacy, belief and competence:

H8a	Style	----->	Motivation	----->	Competence
H8b	Efficacy	----->	Motivation	----->	Competence
H8c	Belief	----->	Motivation	----->	Competence

H9: Attitude has a significant mediation in style, efficacy, belief and competence:

H9a	Style	----->	Attitude	----->	Competence
H9b	Efficacy	----->	Attitude	----->	Competence
H9c	Belief	----->	Attitude	----->	Competence

Hypotheses Related Multi-Group Analyses: Moderation

These hypotheses are associated with moderation:

H10: Demographic variables moderate in IVs* and DV* in multi-group path analyses:

H10a	Demographic Variable Gender moderates the paths from style, efficacy, belief, strategy, motivation and attitude toward communicative competence
H10b	Demographic Variable teachers/students moderates the paths from style, efficacy, belief, strategy, motivation and attitude toward communicative competence
H10c	Demographic Variable Public/Private university moderates the paths from style, efficacy, belief, strategy, motivation and attitude toward communicative competence
H10d	Demographic Variable background Urban/Rural moderates the paths from style, efficacy, belief, strategy, motivation and attitude toward communicative competence

*IVs: style, strategy, efficacy, motivation, belief and attitude. *DV: Competence
(*for further references see Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework for the detail of the path)



1.7 Proposed Theoretical Model and Research Framework

A problem under investigation in a study is known as a “well planned and interrelationship of the variables that fulfil all the requirements to fully comprehend the phenomenon under study” (Jabareen, 2009, p. 51). All components form a good picture of the problem under investigation. The given study aimed at investigating the predicting variables in developing communicative competence model in the Pakistani university context. The study focused on the relationship of the predicting variables in developing the communicative competence model for the tertiary level students. The communicative competence theoretical model is grounded on the Canale and Swain (1983) Murcia et al. (1993), and Bachman and Palmer (1996) models of communicative competence. The theoretical model is reflecting the research objectives and questions articulated for this study. The theoretical model further explains the setting of the variables that highlight the main issues in the context of the study and the contribution to the body of knowledge in the relevant field (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Chapter 3 has more description of the research framework this study followed from the start until the end. This study has a research framework based on structural equation modelling as suggested by Garson (2012). A proposed model is a predicted model with certain paths supported through the past literature; it can be a tentative model as the exact fit between the data and theorised model is rarely going to be the same and there are always chances that some paths may be insignificant though supported in the past literature (Byrne, 1994). Byrne (1994) presented a model through the equation: “Data= Model + Residual”, where residual is the difference between the proposed model and the actual empirical model.



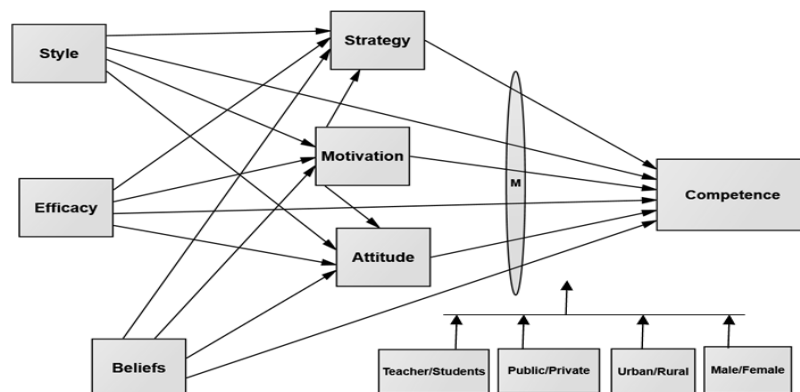


Figure 1.1. The Proposed Theoretical Model.

Figure 1.1 shows the proposed theoretical model in this study and the arrows show direct and indirect relationships (Meyers et al., 2013; Schrieber et al., 2006). The theoretical model of communicative competence in this study has six direct correlations, three exogenous variables, three endogenous variables and one dependent variable. There are seven variances. Four weights are fixed and 17 weights are unlabelled. The model is recursive and overall there are 31 parameters in the model. The proposed model has seven observed and four latent variables. This model is adapted from the six factors model of Gardner (2007). The dependent variable influencing factors in the model are style, strategy, efficacy, motivation, beliefs, and attitude. These are the main predicting variables and the four demographic characteristics are proposed as moderators in developing communicative competence in Pakistani higher education institutions.

1.8 The Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework structures and defines the variables, organisation and flow of the study to achieve the research objectives. The following Figure 1.2 illustrates the conceptual framework used in this study.

The Conceptual Framework

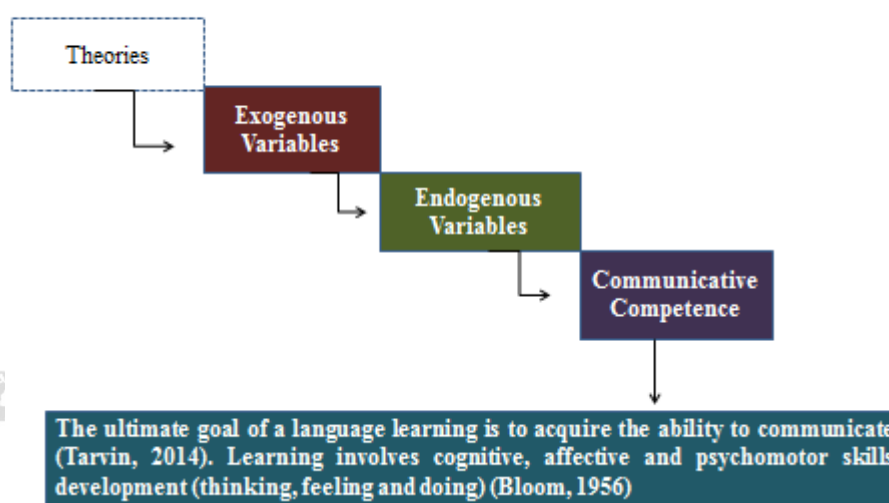


Figure 1.2. The Conceptual Framework for the study.

The proposed conceptual framework of the study shows that the predicted relationships are taken from the past literature and all the constructs are supported through the language learning theories. The predicted variables are exogenous and mediators and the dependent variable are endogenous. The primary aim of the study is to analyse the influencing factors in communicative competence development.



1.9 An Overview of the Research Design and Methodology

This study has used a non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional, and ex post facto survey method. The research nature and context of the study made it appropriate to use the positivist approach using quantitative analyses for research hypotheses and questions. The purpose of the study is to predict the main factors contributing to the communicative competence and test the hypotheses, proposed relationships, and mediation/moderation of the factors.

Chapter 2 provides the details of constructs and model structure based on the theories. A survey method was used to collect the data from the population compared with other methods such as interviews and observations suggested by various researchers (Bryman, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2011; Zikmund, 2009). The survey approach is considered suitable from the ontological, epistemological, and methodological aspects for this study.

A self-administrated questionnaire was used in this study for data collection using two-stage cluster sampling; the researcher has tried to ensure the privacy, and confidentiality of the respondents. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2011), a study based on the survey design helps the respondents to ask questions for clarity to better understand the concepts, which reduce the outliers later in the data analyses. The questionnaire was pretested in the pilot study and its reliability and validity were determined (see further details in Chapter 3). The structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the data following the suggestions of Hair's (2010) two-step approach (measurement model to structural model). Moreover, multiple group





analysis was applied to evaluate the moderation effects of the demographic factors in the proposed theoretical model.

1.10 Gap in the Research

This study provides new literature on communicative competence and data analysis would help to enhance the scope of the study. The given study has focused on the university context in English pedagogy and has used a cluster stage sample of teachers and students from different undergraduate programmes. This study has filled the gap in the literature for the following reasons:



Anjum (2012), Panhwar et al. (2017) and Sadia et al. (2018), there is limited research on communicative approach in the Pakistani context, especially on an evaluation system and investigation of tertiary-level English language teaching (British Council Report, 2015). Research on self-directedness can help teachers and students to translate theory into practice in the classroom (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018c). The research on learner autonomous skill development is limited to theoretical knowledge (Little et al., 2003). That is why the application of skills-based teaching is not visible and the majority of the students rely solely on their teachers (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018b). More research is needed on the learner skill development in language learning at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Fotiadou et al., 2017); more research can help to determine the learning development and differences in language





learning (Ou, 2017). The in-depth research on communicative competence in Pakistan at tertiary level would help to fill this gap.

Second, language-teaching context always matters. Many studies in other parts of the world have been conducted on the communicative approach. This study is conducted in new settings and with different respondents. Collentine (2009) concludes, “One of the most important variables that affect the nature and extent to which learners acquire a second language (L2) in the context of learning...” (p. 218). The context in language research can be an important aspect that helps the researchers to compare and contrast the variables in different language learning settings. As indicated by Hussain (2017), the communicative approach is familiar in the Pakistani context and further research can help to promote it.



Third, the dynamic nature of language teaching motivates researchers to fathom the predicting factors in developing communicative competence to better prepare learners to take responsibility for their language learning (Panhwar et al., 2017; Yasmin & Sohail, 2018c).

Fourth, teachers and learners use traditional strategies to master the language and develop familiarity with new approaches is needed. Fifth, in the Pakistani context at the tertiary level, there is a significant gap regarding communicative competence development. This study provides a model for exploring the students’ and the teachers’ beliefs, attitude, strategy, styles, motivation and efficacy in developing communicative competence in English language learning. All these reasons provide





justifications for the practical relevance of this study to fill the literature gap in competence development.

1.11 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study is within the aims and objectives of the research and the available resources. The main objective is to determine the predicting factors influencing communicative competence development at tertiary level in Pakistan.

The following are the main areas that cover the scope of this study:

- The focus of the study is communicative competence development in English language learning using the predicting factors, and the results of the study are applicable in English language learning in the Pakistani context.
- The respondents of the study are teachers and the students of higher educational institutions in Pakistan. Teaching methods, learning environment, and demographics of the context of the study are important in teaching language; the proposed model in this study is helpful to the teachers, trainers, and policymakers in language teaching to consider the predicting factors to improve student communicative competence.
- The investigations are limited to the Pakistani context, where the English language is compulsory from grade one to graduate-level programmes in an EFL context. Pakistan as a developing country has similar conditions with other developing countries in English language teaching and learning in the region. The proposed model is more suitable for developing countries.





- This study is grounded on Gardner's (2005) six-factor model in applying the cognitive and affective factors as predicting variables for communicative competence. The communicative competence models of Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1983), Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Celce-Murcia (1993) are widely discussed in the study. This study has also explored the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach as a method of developing student language competence at the higher education level.

This study is significant as English language learning is highly important in the Pakistani context. Teachers work hard to make students acquire the ability to use English effectively for academic success. Even potential employers also demand good skills in English when hiring candidates. The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the proposed model and the factors contributing to developing communicative competence. A better understanding of the factors would likely help the teachers, students, trainers, and managerial personnel in language teaching and learning contexts. In the Pakistani context, despite efforts made, there has been no change in the outcomes of students' competence in English language learning during the last 50 years. Teachers are using various approaches and methods, which have shown no positive results in language learning. How to improve student language skills in developing countries is a problem for many teachers. The proposed model would offer great help in promoting the factors helpful in English language learning.

Language learning is highly affected by attitude, motivation, beliefs and strategy use. From the academic perspective, this study has developed an integrative model, which has an amalgamation of cognitive and affective factors. Few studies





have attempted to measure these factors at the undergraduate level in the Pakistani context using a quantitative method. This study would help the teachers and researchers to decide how English language learning is influenced by individual differences based on the cognitive and affective factors in the Pakistani context at the tertiary level.

This study has not investigated the teachers and students' communicative competence based on the four components, namely linguistics, strategic, social and discourse; rather it evaluated only the discourse competence in the academic context in English language teaching at tertiary level in Pakistan. The study also determined only the six factors and demographic characteristics influencing the communicative competence in the Pakistani university context. The discourse factors are relevant to the academic context and the six factors: style, strategy, self-efficacy, motivation, belief and attitude are the important factors influencing language learning (Brown, 1994; Maddux, 2016; Oxford, 2001; Savignon, 2005; Wendon, 1998).

As language teaching and learning is a complex process, every teaching approach or model is a means to achieve the end and not an end in itself. This study investigated students' and teachers' impressions of their commitment when the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach viably coordinated in the language learning procedure to improve communicative competence. The researcher has experience of working in the university context as a lecturer. Thus, teacher-researcher has profitable access and understanding while investigating to help students learn a language (Babkie & Provost, 2004). The sample and the site of this study were selected from one district only. The researcher selected four





universities (University of Punjab; University of Sargodha, University of Lahore, and Superior University) in the urban setting of Lahore situated in different locations; students in the selected undergraduate programmes learn at least three English courses at tertiary level.

1.12 Contribution of the Study

The given study is aiming at developing a conceptual and empirical model while predicting the relationships of various factors and analysing the effects of their mediating/moderating paths to develop communicative competence at tertiary level in Pakistan. The following Table 1.2 summarises the contribution of this study.



Table 1.2



Summary of the Contribution of this Study

Area of contribution	Replication	Extension
Conceptual	Highlighted and clarified the aspects of communicative competence and usefulness of the communicative approach. Hypothesised the relationship between cognitive and affective variables in developing the communicative competence model	Theoretical model
Methodological	Verified the reliability and validity of the scales to measure communicative competence and the predicting variables	Designed research, operationalised variables, tested reliability and validity of the instrument and verified the hypothesised communicative model by achieving SEM assumptions
Empirical	Verified the interconnection between communicative competence and the predicting variables	Achieved model fit, verified the interdependent role of cognitive and affective variables in communicative competence development in the pedagogy of English
Pedagogical	Provided comprehensive guidance on how to develop communicative competence by focusing on the affective and cognitive variables along with the communicative language teaching approach	Provided a tool (validated scale + theoretical model) to evaluate and a pedagogical framework to develop communicative competence of the students in higher education





1.13 Definitions of Terms

Communicative Competence (CC): According to Pallotti (2010), competence is “an efficacy – an ability to reach one’s communicative goals and fluency – ability to communicate smoothly, quickly and effortlessly” (p. 173). Communicative competence is an individual ability to use the language fluently and appropriately to create meaning (Tarvin, 2014). This study uses discourse competence as communicative competence in the academic context based on the survey responses. Discourse knowledge is receptive and relates to the productive skills of the language. It is an ability to speak and write coherently. According to Trujillo and Ortega (2010), discourse competence is regarded as the language learner’s ability to put sentences in a logical order to make coherent and cohesive use of the target language.



Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): It is a process-oriented, task-based, and inductive or discovery-oriented teaching approach (Savignon, 2005). This study has reviewed CLT as an approach toward the development of learner communicative competence based on strategies, roles of teachers and students, classroom activities, and dealing with challenges related to its implementation in Pakistan.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): This term is widely used in the context where learners/speakers do not use English as the first language as a medium for education, business and government, and so forth (Brown, 2007). Students who study English during their study programmes in Pakistani universities are called EFL learners.





Learning Styles: Keefe (1979) has explained, “the characteristic of cognitive, affective and physiological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment” (cited in Brown, 2002, p. 10). According to Dunn et al. (1978) learning style refers to “how each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills; regardless of how that process is described, it is dramatically different for each person” (p. 11).

Learning Strategy: According to Rubin and Wenden (1987), learning strategy is “Any set of operations, plans, or routines, used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (p. 19). Oxford(2001) defines it as “operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information; specific actions were taken by the learner to make learning easier,



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new situations” (p. 166). In this study, the learning practices definition includes strategies and styles of the teachers and the learners in developing communicative competence. These are the main predicting variables of the communicative competence model in the study.

Learning Beliefs: According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002), belief is a stative verb related to cognition and it shows a mental picture or attitude based on emotions and sensations. The concept of belief is a bit complicated and only possible to define in an educational framework with relation to certain tasks and activities in language learning.





Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is an individually perceived capacity to perform a task (Maddux, 2016). Self-efficacy is the ability to do work (Dornyei, 1994). “Self-confidence--the belief that one can produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently--is an important dimension of self-concept, it appears to be akin to self-efficacy, but used in a more general sense” (p. 277). This study considers self-efficacy as a belief in one’s ability to develop communicative competence and put efforts to enhance language learning based on the survey.

Attitude: According to Wenden (1998), attitudes are “learned motivations, valued beliefs, evaluations, what one believes is acceptable, or responses oriented towards approaching or avoiding” (p. 52). Attitudes and beliefs are two main areas of the language learning process toward assessing self-ability in language learning (Wenden, 1998). Attitude and beliefs are two constructs used in the study to enhance learner communicative competence based on the survey questionnaire.

Motivation: Gardner and Lambert (1972) have defined motivation as “the learner's overall goal, orientation or attitude.” Motivation is also “the persistence shown by the learner in striving for a goal” (Ellis 1985, p. 117; Lightbown et al., 2000, p. 56). According to Deci (1975), “Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination” (as cited in Brown, 1994, p. 155). This study has used motivation as an overall goal in learners’ competence development based on the survey.





1.14 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised in the following way:

- **Chapter 1:** Presents the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the conceptual framework, research question and hypothesis, the purpose, significance of the study, a definition of key terms, and delimitations of the study.
- **Chapter 2:** Provides a review of theoretical and empirical literature related to the independent and dependent variables.
- **Chapter 3:** Presents the methodology used in the study. Sections include a description of the population, sampling procedures, description of the variables, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures.
- **Chapter 4:** Reports on the response rate of the survey, presents descriptive statistics of the sample and the variables used in the study, and presents inferential statistics, which address the research hypothesis using structural equation modelling
- **Chapter 5:** Summarises the research findings, research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and interprets them in light of relevant findings and literature, discusses in detail the implications and limitations of the study, makes recommendations for applying research findings, and suggests directions for further research.





1.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter has given an overview of the tertiary education in Pakistan and the main objectives for the undergraduate students to achieve during their study programme. It explained the challenges facing the higher education commission in Pakistan related to quality assurance, research, and faculty training. The problems with English language learning and teaching are significant to the students' low proficiency and its relationship with career and employability in the globalised world. This study aimed at exploring the university language-teaching context to find out to what extent the cognitive and affective factors influence language learning. This research has a primary objective to test the hypothesised model and determine the relationships of the constructs in predicting communicative competence. English has universal acceptance and students in higher education in Pakistan need strong competency in the English language and the proposed model will contribute to achieving this. This entire chapter has summarised the purpose, research objectives, questions, hypotheses, practical relevance, and contribution of the study. The next chapter will give a review of the literature based on the research objectives.

