Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks | Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens
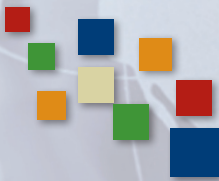
Theoretical Framework
for the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

Canadian Language Benchmarks

English as a Second Language for Adults

Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

Français langue seconde pour adultes

Citizenship and Immigration Canada   Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS AND *NIVEAUX DE COMPÉTENCE LINGUISTIQUE CANADIENS*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS AND NIVEAUX DE COMPÉTENCE LINGUISTIQUE CANADIENS

In 1992, the department now known as Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) introduced a language policy to address the needs of adult immigrants. CIC first funded a project to investigate the need for Canadian language standards and then held extensive consultations across Canada with field experts, instructors of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language, language program administrators and learners, immigrant-serving agencies and government representatives. The consultations confirmed the need for a nationally recognized set of language standards.

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS, WORKING DOCUMENT (1996)

As a result of the consultations, CIC established the National Working Group on Language Benchmarks in March 1993. The task of the Working Group was to guide the development of the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and support the writing team. In 1996, CIC published the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults (Working Document)*. This document became the basis for curriculum design, instruction, materials development and assessment. It has made learners' language credentials more transparent and portable across jurisdictions.

CENTRE FOR CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS (CCLB)

Soon after the introduction of the CLB in 1996, the need emerged for an institution outside government to take responsibility for CLB projects. Key federal and provincial funders and other stakeholders cooperated to establish the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), and in September 1997 the Board of Directors held its inaugural meeting. In March 1998, the CCLB received its charter as a non-profit corporation, and its doors officially opened in Ottawa in June of that year.

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS, 2000

When CIC introduced the CLB Working Document in 1996, the department made a commitment to revisit the document regularly to maintain its integrity and relevance, to address gaps and to enhance its accessibility. Beginning in 1999, the CCLB undertook a national consultation with users of the CLB Working Document. The CCLB commissioned the principal writer of the 1996 Working Document to undertake the revisions, which CIC published as the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Adults*. At the same time, CIC recognized that the field also needed standards to articulate and support the progress of ESL literacy learners, which led to the creation of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS 2000: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework* was the first document which articulated the theoretical concepts underlying the CLB and, later, the *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006*. This document presented the model of language ability used in the CLB framework and offered useful information on teaching, assessment and evaluation. It has since served as the foundation upon which were built a number of resources related to the CLB.

NIVEAUX DE COMPÉTENCE LINGUISTIQUE CANADIENS

In 2002, the CCLB Board of Directors agreed to take responsibility for the French counterpart to the CLB. Also funded by CIC, this document was meant to support French as a Second Language (FSL) training programs for immigrants. The first version, *Standards linguistiques canadiens 2002*, went out into the field and was then revised in 2005-2006. The second version, *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006, français langue seconde pour adultes* (NCLC), was released in 2006.

In 2005, to support FSL literacy, the CCLB published the document *Alphabétisation pour immigrants adultes en français langue seconde selon les Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens*.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION

In 2008, with funding support from the federal and provincial governments, CCLB conducted a national consultation to determine how the CLB and NCLC should evolve to better meet the needs of stakeholders. More than 1,300 people, representing multiple stakeholder groups, participated in the process. The findings of the consultations allowed the CCLB to plan for revisions and future directions.

REVISIONS TO THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS 2000

A small working group made up of CLB experts met in December 2009 to discuss the stakeholder recommendations and to determine a methodology and priorities for revisions to the CLB 2000. Soon after, a small team of writers and expert advisors was assembled to implement the revisions. Revisions were based on the following broad goals:

- To improve the layout and presentation of information, making the document more user-friendly and accessible.

- To revise, refine and supplement information, reducing redundancy and improving comprehensibility, clarity, consistency and relevance.

- To maintain the integrity of the three stages (basic, intermediate and advanced), the 12 levels (to ensure the CLB reflect the full range of language ability) and the theoretical bases of the CLB.

- To use plain language throughout the document, facilitating the use of the CLB for a broad range of users.

- To include information critical for a common understanding of the CLB.

The resulting draft document of the revisions to the CLB 2000 was reviewed by 10 external experts and three members of an advisory committee formed by CCLB.

REVISIONS TO THE NIVEAUX DE COMPÉTENCE LINGUISTIQUE CANADIENS

In December 2009, key stakeholders from the FSL community met to discuss the findings of the national consultation and to establish priorities for the revisions to the NCLC 2006 standard.

This action plan marked an important step in the evolution of the NCLC: for the first time, experts in the field of FLS and the NCLC established priorities that would help guide a major revision of the NCLC.

A key component of the revised NCLC was the development of an updated theoretical framework. This document presented up-to-date research pertaining to second language application as well as information about the contexts in which the NCLC standard is used.

A team of experts and academics developed a 12-level scale tailored specifically to the needs of practitioners working in the FSL context. Unlike the previous NCLC 2006 document, which was an adapted translation of the CLB 2000, the revised NCLC were developed independently by a group of experts in the field of FSL education.

Based on recommendations made by an NCLC advisory committee, the team focused on:

- providing better descriptions for the levels
- showing the distinctions among the levels more clearly
- closing the gaps identified in the NCLC continuum
- highlighting key content for each level
- providing authentic task examples for adults in learning or job search situations

VALIDATION

In 2010, as both scales were being revised, a pan-Canadian team of validation experts was tasked with suggesting a process to establish the construct validity and content validity of the CLB and NCLC, as well as their underlying theoretical framework. This team proposed a three-stage validation process to validate the CLB and NCLC for a multitude of uses in a variety of contexts, including high-stakes applications.

The first phase of the validation process was the development of a common theoretical framework for the CLB and NCLC.

To develop the common theoretical framework, researchers conducted a careful comparison and synthesis of the theoretical concepts presented in both CLB and NCLC theoretical frameworks, which enabled them to establish the shared core theoretical concepts.

They then studied the research cited in each theoretical framework and selected the most enriching contributions from the ESL and FSL fields. The resulting document takes into account not only the core research long recognized in the field of second language education as applying to most or all languages, but also the contributions to the field from research in the ESL and FSL contexts.

Independent experts reviewed and compared this document against the two source theoretical frameworks, as well as the literature, and the validation team revised and adapted it into a stand-alone document which served as a common theoretical framework for the CLB and the NCLC.

Then, a panel of independent experts established the congruence between the revised CLB and NCLC standards and the descriptors included in the standards and the underlying theory. This detailed mapping exercise allowed them to identify gaps in the scales in order to inform their continued revision.

For the second phase of the validation process, the common theoretical framework was then compared with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français des personnes immigrantes adultes* (ÉQ), and the proficiency guidelines of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). These comparisons showed a strong concurrent validity between the common theoretical framework and the CEFR as well as the ÉQ, but a low concurrent validity between the common theoretical framework and the ACTFL guidelines.

The third phase of the validation process was an extensive field validation by the documents' end users. A key component of this step was the development of exemplars to assess the validity, clarity, and reliability of descriptors. Content experts developed Reading and Listening texts and tasks for the 12 levels, as well as prompts which were used to collect exemplars of learner performance in Speaking and Writing. The tasks and exemplars were independently benchmarked by six experts, with inter-rater agreement confirming the validity and reliability of the descriptors. Then, along with the revised CLB and NCLC, the tasks and exemplars were field tested with more than 100 practitioners across Canada. These practitioners fulfilled two key roles: firstly, to confirm the level of the exemplars based on their experience with learners at specific levels, and secondly, to provide feedback on the clarity, completeness, and accuracy of the representation of these levels. This step informed the final fine-tuning of the standards.

In early 2012, the validation project leads, as well as two independent validation experts, confirmed that the revised and validated CLB and NCLC conform to the basic applicable standards for reliability and validity set out in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999). They also confirmed that the validation process and results support the use of CLB and NCLC as national standards of English and French for living, working and studying in Canada and as valid, reliable standards for use for a variety of purposes, including high-stakes applications, and in a variety of settings, including community, workplace and academic settings.
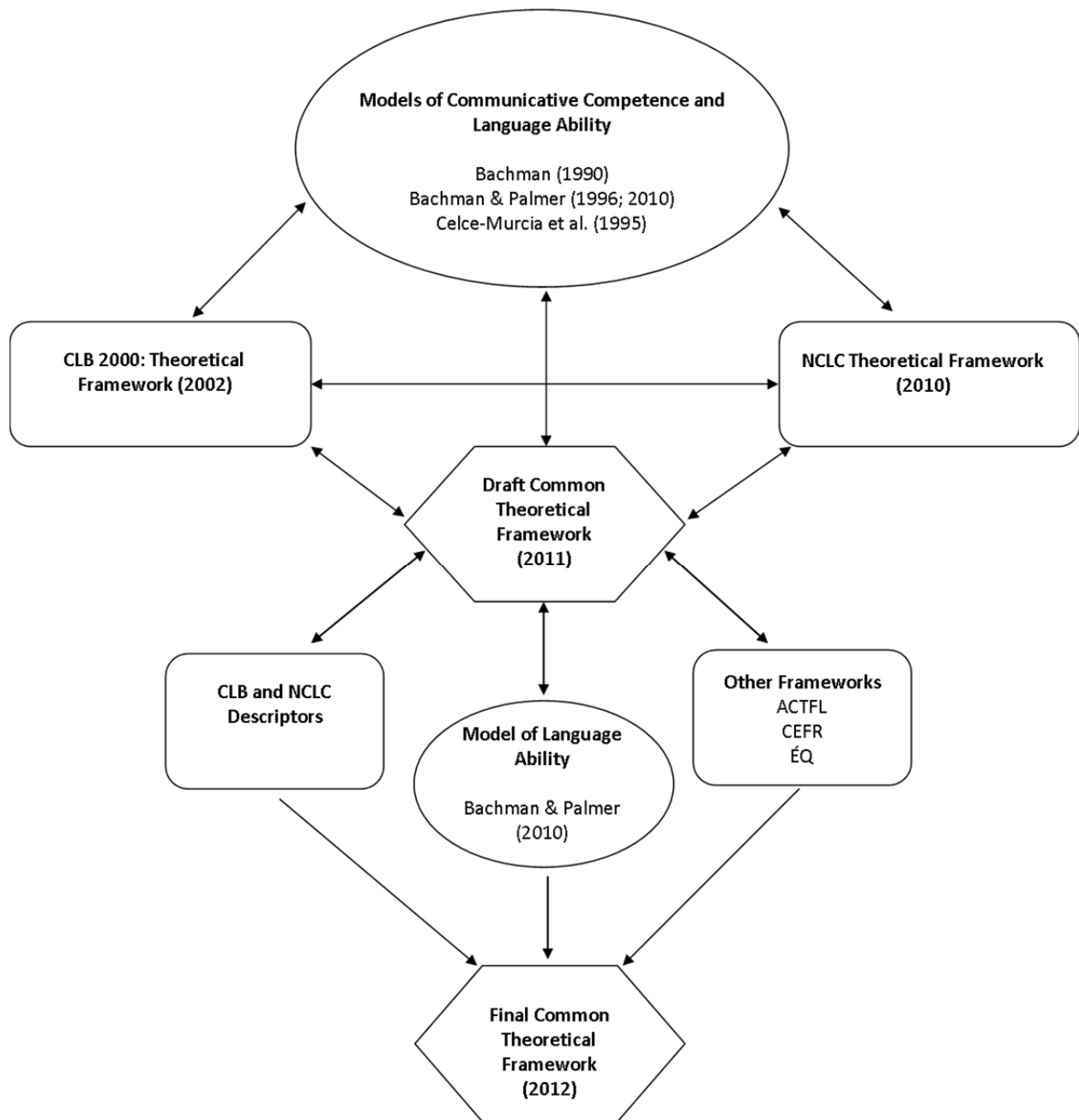
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework Validation Process

Note: Double arrows indicate a comparison.

Language ability[1] in a second language may be represented as evolving along a hypothetical continuum or scale. The CLB and NCLC frameworks capture 12 specified points that represent a progression of language ability along this continuum. Throughout the language learning process, the language ability of every learner can be located and described at some point on this scale.

The model used to develop the CLB and NCLC informed the process of developing the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA). The CLB model, later adopted for the NCLC, is conceptualized as follows:

	Benchmark	Interpretation of the benchmark
Stage I	1	Initial ability on simple tasks in non-demanding contexts
	2	Developing ability on simple tasks in non-demanding contexts
	3	Adequate ability on simple tasks in non-demanding contexts
	4	Fluent ability on simple tasks in non-demanding contexts

	Benchmark	Interpretation of the benchmark
Stage II	5	Initial ability on moderately complex tasks in moderately demanding contexts
	6	Developing ability on moderately complex tasks in moderately demanding contexts
	7	Adequate ability on moderately complex tasks in moderately demanding contexts
	8	Fluent ability on moderately complex tasks in moderately demanding contexts

	Benchmark	Interpretation of the benchmark
Stage III	9	Initial ability on complex and very complex tasks in demanding contexts
	10	Developing ability on complex and very complex tasks in demanding contexts
	11	Adequate ability on complex and very complex tasks in demanding contexts
	12	Fluent ability on complex and very complex tasks in demanding contexts

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[1] 'Communicative competence' has been equated to 'language ability' in the general literature. Bachman and Palmer (2010, p. 57) indicate that their work builds on the notion of communicative competence of many previous authors such as Hymes (1972). However, Bachman and Palmer note that this view is quite different from the view of proficiency. In this document, the term 'language ability' is used following Bachman and Palmer's usage.

This model reflects progression along a continuum on which the increments are not separated into individual compartments but rather flow along a continuous path. The 12 benchmarks represent points on the learner's path of progress as language ability builds from initial to fluent on simple to very complex tasks and as the context of language use increases from non-demanding to demanding. An important feature of this model is the fact that it is not based on the expectation that task progression will be structured in predictable ways within each stage. It is based on the assumption that the learner will progress in terms of his or her degree of ability to succeed on the tasks.

The CLB and NCLC model takes into account the intricacies of a task-based approach. Authentic communicative tasks vary in complexity and therefore cannot be grouped into 12 benchmarks. The CLB and NCLC documents are not designed to classify tasks or texts in this manner. Rather, they are designed to reflect the experience of language learners in dealing with authentic communication in day-to-day life.

For example, in Canadian society, there are no benchmark 2, 5, or 9 newspapers; there are only newspapers. Individuals all read the same newspaper, with different degrees of comprehension. Should two readers attempt to read the same newspaper article, a reader at a lower benchmark may be able to do little more than identify a name or address and locate a few concrete facts, while a reader at a higher benchmark might be able to summarize the story and to infer the writer's attitude. Note that reading the newspaper article is not the task; the task is what a reader is expected to be able to do in relation to that article. Readers at higher benchmarks are able to accomplish more complex and sophisticated tasks than those at lower benchmarks. Furthermore, it is important to note that a language task, in and of itself, is not a benchmark.

In the CLB and NCLC model, a language user is considered to be *at* a benchmark when he or she meets the criteria or expectations for that benchmark, based on definitions and descriptors in the CLB or NCLC framework. This means that this person has passed the distinct point on the continuum of language ability represented by that benchmark, but has not yet met the criteria or expectations represented by the next benchmark.

The CLB and NCLC are not simply blueprints for curriculum development or test development; they are independent standards that describe a broadly applied theory of language ability. This means that language users from around the world, regardless of whether or not they have completed any Canadian course of study or even any formalized language training, can have their language ability measured along the CLB or NCLC continuum.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CLB AND NCLC

The present theoretical framework is a synthesis of the *CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework* and of the theoretical framework developed for the NCLC,[2] augmented by additional research. This chapter describes the theories upon which the CLB and NCLC standards are based and provides an overview of the terminology used in the present document.

KEY TERMS AND USAGE

The debate about nomenclature when we speak about language and language acquisition has a long history and has been the topic of many academic articles. How can we differentiate and understand the following key terms: language competence, language knowledge, language ability, language proficiency, language performance and language capacity? For example, Widdowson (1978, p. 46) writes that,

> For Chomsky, competence is grammatical knowledge as a deep-seated mental state below the level of language. It is not an ability to do anything. It is not even the ability to compose or comprehend sentences, for knowledge may exist without its being accessible and, as Chomsky insists, actual behaviour is only one kind of evidence, and not a criterion for the existence of knowledge (Chomsky, 1980, p. 54)… [Whereas for] Hymes communicative competence, then, is defined as 'the capabilities of a person' and, as he says, 'it is dependent upon both [tacit] *knowledge* and [ability for] *use'* (Hymes, 1972, p. 282).

We do not attempt to resolve all terminology issues here. However, we can generally understand that the discussions about these terms are based on the assumption that performance consists of language behaviours that can be evaluated to make inferences about what is mentally known by the language user. 'Competence' and 'knowledge' are terms usually used to refer to what users know about language. 'Language proficiency', 'language ability', 'communicative competence', 'language capacity', and 'language performance' are normally used to refer to the capacity to use language knowledge to communicate. Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010), whose models were the basis for both the CLB and NCLC, define the term 'language ability' as "consisting of two components: language knowledge and strategic competence" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 33); thus, to them, 'language ability' is the overarching term to speak of both the 'what' and the 'how to' of language. In a note, Bachman and Palmer (2010, p. 57) indicate that their view of language ability "is consistent…with research in applied linguistics that has increasingly come to view language ability as consisting of two components: (1) language knowledge, sometimes

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[2] This document was developed as a step in the renewal of the NCLC but, unlike the *CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework* document, was not published as a stand-alone document.

referred to as 'competence,' and (2) cognitive processes, or strategies, which implement that knowledge in language use."

Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995), on whose model the CLB and NCLC also draw, use the term 'communicative competence'. Celce-Murcia et al. used the models proposed by Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) to develop a pedagogical model of communicative competence which serves as a bridge between theoretical models and pedagogical content. When discussing the term 'competence,' they state, "In spelling out our content specifications for communicative competence, we found certain competencies (e.g., linguistic competences) are more static, whereas others are more dynamic (e.g., strategic competences)."(Celce-Murcia et al.,1995, p. 6)

Therefore, it seems that 'language ability', used by Bachman and Palmer, and 'communicative competence', used by Celce-Murcia et al., both refer to similar, if not identical, concepts. To remain consistent with the central language model adopted in this framework, the term 'language ability' will be used in the present document to refer to this central construct.

RESEARCH INFORMING THE CLB AND NCLC

CLB and NCLC are both based on a situational approach to language use. The main tenet of this approach is that communicating in a language involves not just mastering the linguistic rules for proper language use, but also using language in accordance with its context of use.

According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence thus involves a link between mastery of code and usage standards. Since Hymes' work on communicative competence, a great deal of research has taken place and various theoretical frameworks have been put forward to describe the multidimensional nature of language ability. This includes the work of Canale and Swain (1980), Moirand (1982), Canale (1983), Bachman (1990), Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010). In all of these models, all of the components, and the interaction between them, define the construct of language ability. Frameworks of reference such as the CLB, the NCLC, the CEFR (2001) and the ÉQ (2010) have benefited from this seminal work.

In each model, language ability is made up of diverse components:

- grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic components in Canale and Swain (1979; 1980), to which the discourse component is added in Canale (1983)

- linguistic, discourse, referential and socio-cultural components in Moirand (1982)

- grammatical, textual, pragmatic (illocutionary and sociolinguistic) and strategic components in Bachman (Bachman, 1990)

- grammatical, textual, functional, sociolinguistic and strategic components in Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010)

- linguistic, discourse, socio-cultural, strategic and actional components in Celce-Murcia et al 42 (1995)

Whatever the model involved, language ability is never a simple adding up of components. Instead, the components interact with one another and work in a compensatory manner (Moirand, 1982). According to Canale and Swain (1980), this is exactly the role of the strategic component, which works to offset possible weaknesses in the other components. With his model of communicative language ability, Bachman (1990) goes further in this regard by making a distinction between *language competence* and *strategic competence*. The latter is presented, in this model and later works (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, 2010), as a metacognitive component which ensures performance management.

The model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) has a pedagogical orientation which allows the concepts developed by those works to be directly transposed into pedagogical contexts, mainly for oral communication. For this reason, the Celce-Murcia et al. model is included as an appendix to the present document and may be useful for deciding on teaching and learning objectives or evaluation criteria (see Appendix A).

The following section describes Bachman's (1990) and Bachman and Palmer's (1996, 2010) models, which are key references in the conceptualization of communicative language ability.

BACHMAN 1990 AND BACHMAN AND PALMER 1996, 2010

According to Bachman (1990), communicative language ability includes the following two competences:

- Language competence (see Table 1)

- Strategic competence, which includes the following components:

  ➢ assessment
  ➢ planning
  ➢ execution

Table 1: *Components of Language Competence According to Bachman (1990)*

Language competence			
	Organizational competence	Grammatical competence	Vocabulary
			Morphology
			Syntax
			Phonology/graphology
		Textual competence	Cohesion
			Rhetorical and conversational organization
	Pragmatic competence	Illocutionary competence	Ideational functions
			Manipulative functions
			Heuristic functions
			Imaginative functions
		Sociolinguistic competence	Sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety
			Sensitivity to differences in register
			Sensitivity to naturalness
			Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech

In 1996 Bachman and Palmer revisited this model and made minor changes, mostly in nomenclature. Table 2 shows the relationship between the model proposed by Bachman (1990) and that proposed by Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010).[3]

In their new model, Bachman and Palmer (1996) use the term 'knowledge' instead of 'competence'. They do not explain this change in terminology, stating only that

> The model of language ability that we adopt in this book is essentially that proposed by Bachman (1990) who defines language ability as involving two components: language competence, or what we will call *language knowledge* and *strategic competence* which we will describe as a set of metacognitive strategies. (p. 67)

Furthermore, 'sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety' became 'knowledge of dialects/varieties', 'sensitivity to differences in register' became 'knowledge of registers', 'sensitivity to naturalness' became 'knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions', and 'ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech' became 'knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech'. These changes are summarized in Table 2.

In addition, the category 'morphology' was eliminated. This change is due to the fact that lexical morphology is part of vocabulary and derivational morphology is part of

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[3] For a complete description of these models, see chapter 4 of Bachman (1990), chapter 4 of Bachman and Palmer (1996), and chapter 3 of Bachman and Palmer (2010).

syntax; it is therefore not necessary to include morphology as a category distinct from knowledge of vocabulary and knowledge of syntax.

They also slightly modify their definition of strategic competence, which is described in more detail on page 26.

Only a few changes in terminology were made between Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Bachman and Palmer (2010). The component 'assessment' within strategic competence was replaced with 'appraising', and 'knowledge of genre' was added to sociolinguistic knowledge.

In conclusion, Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) seem conceptually equivalent, aside from differences in labels and minor changes in the description of strategic competence.

The terminology in the works of Bachman and Palmer from 1996 and 2010 is more consistent with that used in other models than was the terminology proposed by Bachman (1990); therefore, the terminology of these more recent models has been adopted in the present theoretical framework.

Table 2: *Terminology and Conceptual Changes Between Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996 and 2010)*

Bachman 1990	Bachman and Palmer 1996/2010
LANGUAGE COMPETENCE	LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE
ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCE	ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE
Grammatical competence ➢ Knowledge of vocabulary ➢ Knowledge of morphology ➢ Knowledge of syntax ➢ Knowledge of phonology/graphology	Grammatical knowledge ➢ Knowledge of vocabulary ➢ Knowledge of syntax ➢ Knowledge of phonology/graphology
Textual competence ➢ Cohesion ➢ Rhetorical organization	Textual knowledge ➢ Knowledge of cohesion ➢ Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization
PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE	PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE
Illocutionary competence ➢ Ideational functions ➢ Manipulative functions ➢ Heuristic functions ➢ Imaginative functions	Functional knowledge ➢ Knowledge of ideational functions ➢ Knowledge of manipulative functions ➢ Knowledge of heuristic functions ➢ Knowledge of imaginative functions
Sociolinguistic competence ➢ Sensitivity to differences in dialects or variety ➢ Sensitivity to differences in register ➢ Sensitivity to naturalness ➢ Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech	Sociolinguistic knowledge ➢ Knowledge of genre (2010 only) ➢ Knowledge of dialects/varieties ➢ Knowledge of registers ➢ Knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions ➢ Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech
STRATEGIC COMPETENCE	*STRATEGIC COMPETENCE*
Assessment	Goal setting
Planning	Assessment / Appraising (2010)
Execution	Planning

Language evolves across time and words go in and out of fashion. Academic language is no exception and, as a result, different models have used different terms over time to speak about the same concepts; conversely, the same term may be used by different authors with a slightly different meaning.

Both the CLB and NCLC theoretical frameworks and the common theoretical framework are influenced principally by the models proposed by Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) which, as previously discussed, present differences in their choice of key terms to describe the components. The concordance tables provided in Appendix B show how the labels assigned to some concepts have changed in the models of language ability described earlier. Table 3 summarizes the key differences between these models.

In the common theoretical framework, the terminology adopted is that used in the model of Bachman and Palmer (2010).

Table 3: Key Similarities and Differences Between the Models of Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) and Bachman and Palmer (2010)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)	Bachman and Palmer (2010)
Based on Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) working copy	Based on Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996)
Applicable primarily to pedagogical contexts	Applicable to all instances of language use
Addresses listening and speaking	Addresses listening, speaking, reading and writing
Includes some components specific to English (e.g. special constructions, parallel structures)	Contains no components specific to any one language
Generally used by ESL curriculum developers and practitioners	Generally used in the broader fields of applied linguistics, second language acquisition and language testing

THEORIES ADOPTED IN THE COMMON THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Bachman (1990, p. 81), language ability is "the ability to use language communicatively". It includes language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge "can be thought of as a domain of information in memory that is available to the language user for creating and interpreting discourse in language use" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 44), while strategic competence regulates the use of that knowledge in communication. Within language knowledge, Bachman and Palmer (2010) distinguish between organizational knowledge, which includes grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge, and pragmatic knowledge, which includes

functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Organizational knowledge essentially refers to the way in which sentences, utterances or texts are organized, and pragmatic knowledge refers to the way in which sentences, utterances or texts are linked with the goals and the context of the communication. These different components are described below.

It should be noted that Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) provided a more detailed breakdown of certain components for the oral context. Their model, included as Appendix A to the present document, may therefore be a useful complement to the model presented in this section.

LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT – ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE

Grammatical knowledge is needed to construct accurate sentences or utterances and includes knowledge of voca bulary, syntax, phonology and gr aphology (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Knowledge of Vocabulary

Vocabulary includes single words and compound words. Although some authors include idioms in vocabulary, it should be noted that Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) classify idioms as a component of sociolinguistic knowledge.

Knowledge of Syntax

"Syntax refers to the rules which govern the ways words ar e combined to form sentences" (Crystal, 1991, p. 341); in other wo rds, it refers to the order of words and the rules by which basic linguistic forms are connected into structures.

Knowledge of Phonology/Graphology

Phonology governs the structure of sounds. The phonological features of a language are often divided i nto two categories called s egmentals and supr asegmentals. Graphology, sometimes called spelling or orthography, refers to the way the sounds of spoken language can be represented i n written or printed symbol s. Different languages have differ ent rules governing gr aphology and knowledge of these rules i s crucial in the development of reading and writing.

NOTE FOR USERS OF *LA NOUVELLE GRAMMAIRE*

The treatment of the grammatical knowledge component in a pan-Canadian framework for FSL is complicated by the fact that some francophone communities in Canada have adopted the conceptual framework of the *nouvelle grammaire* (new grammar). In communities where language teaching is based on the *nouvelle grammaire*, objectives and evaluation criteria must follow the terminology and philosophy of this *nouvelle grammaire*.

Elements of the linguistic component are given below for illustrative purposes, based on Chartrand, Aubin, Blain and Simard (1999), Pinsonneault and Boivin (2008) and Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (2009).

Grammar

- Sentence
- Transformations of type and form
- Sentences with special constructions
- Syntactical functions
- Noun and nominal group
- Adjective and adjectival group
- Verb, verbal group and verb system
- Preposition and prepositional group
- Adverb and adverbial group
- Linking of sentences, groups and subordinate clauses
- Relative and completive subordinate clauses
- Complement and correlative subordinate clauses
- Agreement system

Lexicon

- Word families
- Word meanings (polysemy, homonymy, paronymy)
- Relationships of meaning (inclusion, synonymy, antonymy, analogy and lexical field)
- Lexical combination (semantic compatibility of words, word constructions, lexical links, fixed expressions)

Morphology

- Prefixes (characteristics, spelling)
- Suffixes (characteristics, spelling)
- Compound words
- Word formation through confixation or neo-classical combination
- Word formation through blending, clipping and borrowing

Elements of phonetics and graphology

- Phoneme (vowels, consonants)
- Main French graphemes
- Auxiliary signs (accents, cedilla, trema or diaresis, apostrophe, hyphen)
- Punctuation (functions, sentence punctuation, textual and word punctuation)

In the model proposed by Bachman and Palmer (2010), textual knowledge is separated into two components: knowledge of cohesion and knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization.

Knowledge of Cohesion

This subcomponent "is involved in producing or comprehending the explicitly marked relationships among sentences in written texts or among utterances in conversations" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 45). Cohesive devices include connecting words, pro-forms (words that can replace different elements in a sentence), ellipsis, synonyms, and paraphrases.

Knowledge of Rhetorical or Conversational Organization

In written texts, rhetorical organization refers to "conventions for sequencing units of information" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 46). In conversation, it refers to the way interlocutors manage the conversation, for example, by taking turns.

NOTE FOR USERS OF *LA NOUVELLE GRAMMAIRE*

Like the treatment of the grammatical knowledge component, the textual knowledge component in a pan-Canadian framework for FSL is complicated by the fact that some francophone communities in Canada have adopted the conceptual framework of the *nouvelle grammaire* (new grammar). In communities where language teaching is based on the *nouvelle grammaire,* objectives and evaluation criteria must follow the terminology and philosophy of the *nouvelle grammaire.*

Elements of the discourse component according to the *nouvelle grammaire* are given below for illustrative purposes. They are based on Chartrand, Aubin, Blain and Simard (1999), Pinsonneault and Boivin (2008) and Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (2009).

Elements of the discourse component

- Rules of textual organization
- Theme and rheme
- Repeating/rephrasing information
- Modalization
- Connectors
- Reported speech
- Tense sequence
- Textual sequences (narrative, descriptive, explanatory, argumentative)

FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

This kind of knowledge helps language users to map sentences, utterances or text onto their underlying intentions and, conversely, choose and identify suitable utterances to express communicative intent.

Knowledge of Ideational Functions

These functions include the use of language to inform, to express, or to exchange information about ideas, knowledge, or feelings. Descriptions, classifications, explanations, and expressions of sorrow or anger are examples of utterances that perform ideational functions (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, pp. 46-47).

Knowledge of Manipulative Functions

These functions can be grouped into three types: instrumental, regulatory, and interpersonal functions. Instrumental functions are used to get other people to do (or not to do) things (e.g., requests, suggestions, commands, and warnings). Regulatory functions are used to control what other people do (e.g., rules, regulations, laws). Finally, interpersonal functions are used to "establish, maintain, and change interpersonal relationships" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 47). They include greetings, leave-takings, compliments, insults, and apologies.

Knowledge of Heuristic Functions

These functions are used "to extend our knowledge of the world around us… and for teaching learning, for problem solving, and for the retention of information" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 47).

Knowledge of Imaginative Functions

"Knowledge of imaginative functions enables us to use language to create an imaginary world or extend the world around us for humorous or aesthetic purposes; examples include jokes, and the use of figurative language and poetry" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 47).

It is important to note that an utterance or sentence can have more than one function. In the same way, a function can be expressed in more than one sentence or utterance.

The model proposed by Celce-Mucia et al. (1995), detailed in Appendix A, lists more functions of language than the four listed above. However, the functions of Celce-Murcia et al. are all subsumed under those listed by Bachman and Palmer (2010).

Sociolinguistic knowledge refers to knowledge of the way in which the setting governs actual language use. Factors influencing these variations in language include participants in the exchange, situation, place, purpose of transaction and social situation.

Knowledge of Genre

Genre is "a type of discourse that occurs in a particular setting, that has distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure, and that has particular and distinctive communicative functions" (Crystal, 1991, p. 245). For example, professional letters, novels, memos, meetings, news articles or broadcasts and advertisements all follow different patterns and norms of organization and structure. For more information about genres, see Orlikowski and Yates (1994).

Knowledge of Dialects/Varieties

This concerns the way different social or age groups use language and how setting can influence text and utterances. It also refers to the awareness of regional ways of using language.

Knowledge of Registers

Knowledge of registers refers to different levels of formality of language through the use of different structures or vocabulary, depending on the situation and the relationship between the interlocutors. It can also refer to specific vocabulary or sentence structures used by a specific group sharing the same occupation or profession (e.g., "legalese").

Knowledge of Natural or Idiomatic Expressions

Unnatural expressions are usually grammatically correct, but they are not the expressions that members of a specific community would use. For example, the sentence, "she went to get her skin brown in the sun" is grammatically correct, but English speakers in Canada would use the more natural expression "she went suntanning".

An idiom is "an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts" (Crystal, 1991, p. 270). To say that someone is "beating around the bush" is an example of an idiom.

Knowledge of Cultural References and Figures of Speech

A cultural reference is a reference that can be interpreted literally, but is meant to be understood for its extended meaning. For example, when Canadians speak of the "Habs," they are referring to the Montreal Canadiens hockey team, not *les habitants*, early farmers in Quebec. Figures of speech include figurative language that is language in its non-literal use. Examples include metaphor (e.g., "The old man is a wolf in sheep's clothing"), similies, (e.g., "I slept like a baby") and hyperboles (e.g., "the trout he caught was as big as the boat").

Strategic competence is a critical part of the present theoretical framework. Indeed, it is the component that regulates the use of other components of the model of communicative language ability. In other words, taking strategic competence out of a language competence model is like going back to an era when language teaching and assessment did not reflect language use because they did not make use of real-world communication strategies. For example, asking a student to underline all verbs in the past tense in a paragraph does not require strategic competence on the part of the student; it only requires the use of grammatical knowledge. Since benchmarks are task-based, the CLB and NCLC represent standards of language ability which include not only the 'what' but also the 'how' of communication. As such, strategic competence is an integral part of the theoretical model underlying the benchmarks.

In the models of Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010), which are based in part on the perspective of Canale (1983), strategic competence provides a management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities. In their 2010 model, Bachman and Palmer "view strategic competence as a set of metacognitive strategies" (p. 48) comprising goal setting, appraising, and planning. They further refine their classification of strategies as follows (p. 49):

Goal Setting (deciding what one is going to do)

- Identifying the language use or assessment task to be attempted

- Choosing one or more tasks from a set of possible tasks (sometimes by default, if only one task is understandable)

- Deciding whether or not to attempt to complete the task or tasks selected

Appraising (taking stock of what is needed, what one has to work with, and how well one has done)

- Appraising the characteristics of the language use or assessment task to determine the desirability and feasibility of successfully completing it, and what resources are needed to complete it

- Appraising our own knowledge (topical, language) components to see if relevant areas of knowledge are available for successfully completing the language use or assessment task

- Appraising the degree to which the language use or assessment task has been successfully completed

Planning (deciding how to use what one has)

- Selecting elements from the areas of topical knowledge and language knowledge for successfully completing the assessment task

- Formulating one or more plans for implementing these elements in a response to the assessment task

- Selecting one plan for initial implementation as a response to the assessment task

Given differing conceptions of metacognitive and cognitive strategies proposed by different authors (i.e., Cohen, 2010; Grabe, 2009; Purpura, 1999), it is important to note that the areas of strategic competence or metacognitive strategies in Bachman and Palmer's model (2010) are not dissociated from cognitive strategies. They are, rather, conscious or automatic attempts on the part of the language user to manage different areas of language knowledge and regulate, among other things, the use of cognitive strategies:

> Strategic competence, or the metacognitive strategies, along with language knowledge and topical knowledge, are involved in arriving at a plan for accomplishing the communicative goal, or for completing a language use or assessment task. Execution, or the implementation of this plan in language use, involves cognitive strategies. (p. 52)

In a similar vein, Purpura (1999) conceptualizes metacognitive strategies as conscious or unconscious processes used by language learners. Cohen (2010), however, differs slightly in that he identifies metacognitive strategies only as conscious processes that language learners use to control and plan their language use. He defines cognitive strategies as comprising both learning and communication strategies; that is, the conscious or semi-conscious processes employed by learners to learn or use the target language, respectively.

Grabe (2009), on the other hand, does not recognize a two-level – cognitive and metacognitive – view of strategies. Using Bialystok's distinction (2001, 2002) between metacognitive awareness and metacognitive control, he argues that for reading comprehension for example, "…there are no metacognitive strategies. Rather, there are levels of metacognitive awareness that can consciously direct strategy use to support reader goals" (p. 224).

In keeping with Bachman and Palmer's 2010 model, the term 'metacognitive strategy' is used in the present document to cover all conscious and unconscious activities involved in setting goals, appraising and planning for language use tasks. Cognitive strategies are used once a plan has been devised for accomplishing a communicative goal; their role is to manage the execution of this plan in actual language use (p. 52).

The completion of the sample tasks used as exemplars for each benchmark level implies the use of relevant metacognitive and cognitive strategies as defined by this

model. It should be noted that different language users may choose different strategies for accomplishing the same communicative task. Or, depending on the goals of the communication, use of a single strategy may shift from being a metacognitive process to a cognitive one, and vice versa (Cohen, 2010). For example, 'summarizing' can represent a cognitive strategy if the learner resorts to this strategy to produce the main points of a text without making too many grammatical mistakes or mispronunciations. 'Summarizing' could also represent a metacognitive strategy if it is used by the learner as a conscious 'planning' attempt to present information in a concise manner. Therefore, the strategies included explicitly or implicitly in CLB and NCLC descriptors and sample tasks are merely samples of the range of strategies that language users have at their disposal at each level.

At a more applied level, recognizing the use of metacognitive and cognitive strategies by learners allows for the CLB and NCLC to be used as a basis for the development of assessment instruments and teaching curricula that measure and develop communicative language ability. The comprehensive nature of the strategic component of the theoretical model underlying the CLB and NCLC facilitates test and curriculum development practices because it accounts for metacognitive strategies as well as a vast range of cognitive strategies that language users employ to produce and comprehend communicative messages. In fact, research in this area has already confirmed that "a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategy training more effectively enhances learning" (Purpura, 1997, p. 311).

Cohen (2010) further suggests that for practical purposes, strategies – metacognitive or cognitive – should be grouped based on the skill to which they are most often associated. Below, we provide representative examples of the strategies related to the four basic language skills.

Research into listening strategies in second language contexts has identified a number of strategies that learners use, to varying degrees, depending on their level of language ability or the goals of the communication. Examples of metacognitive strategies used in listening include advance organization; directed attention (i.e., concentrating); and selective attention (i.e., noticing, listening for the overall message). Cognitive strategies include inferring from voice or from body language (Vandergrift, 1996). Research has also indicated that at a more advanced level, these strategies are used in combination, a process which Vandergrift (2003) has described as 'orchestration'.

Among the metacognitive strategies used for the comprehension of a written text, Grabe (2009) points to such processes as 'setting (or resetting) reading goals', 'expecting to build a coherent interpretation of the text', 'making inferences in line with the goal', 'summarizing the main ideas', etc. Cohen (2010) points to such cognitive strategies as 'making summaries', 'guessing the approximate meaning', and 'using a dictionary'.

The pedagogical model of communicative competence proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) provides a detailed description of strategies used mainly in oral communication. Cohen (2010) further categorizes the strategies used in oral communication based on the goal of the communication. He suggests learning strategies that are used to practice speaking, metacognitive strategies that are used to engage in conversation, and cognitive strategies that are used to compensate for linguistic shortcomings.

With respect to writing, a very comprehensive list of metacognitive writing strategies is offered by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) as part of their "taxonomy of academic writing skills, knowledge bases, and processes", which they claim reflects the theoretical model of communicative language ability proposed by Bachman (1990). They list 'audience considerations', 'purpose considerations', 'using alternative solutions' (considering different ways of achieving the same communicative goal), 're-reading already produced texts' (re-assessing and revising content), 'changing goals' and 'rhetorical revisions' as examples of such strategies. For pedagogical purposes, readers are encouraged to consult the document *Think Literacy Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12,* published by the Ministry of Education of Ontario, which gives many concrete strategies for writing, as well as speaking and reading.

This model of strategic competence accounts for all instances of efficient language use in all communicative settings, which is an essential characteristic of any model adopted by the benchmarks. Due to the task-based nature of the benchmarks, performance at all levels of the CLB and NCLC inevitably involves the use of a variety of strategies on the part of language users.

It should be noted that certain strategies are difficult to observe through language behaviours and are therefore difficult to evaluate unless assessed through self-evaluation. Given the fact that these strategies are cognitive processes that, by definition, 'manage' other language competency areas, it is important to consider them in the context of the communicative tasks and the accomplishment of established goals.

In this chapter we presented the conceptual model underlying the theoretical framework for the CLB and NCLC, that is, the model of language ability proposed by Bachman and Palmer (2010), with contributions from other works. This model possesses key strengths which made it the most suitable model of language ability for the CLB and NCLC:

- This model is comprehensive enough to account for language use in a range of communicative contexts. It can be applied to assessment, which is the primary focus of Bachman and Palmer's work, but also to any other context of language use.
- This model applies to the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- This model is not restrictive in terms of the languages to which it can be applied, i.e., it contains no elements of pedagogical content which may apply to one of the official languages but not the other.

This model can be adapted according to the needs of a variety of users. The pedagogical model of communicative competence for oral communication proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), which is further discussed in Appendix A, is such an adaptation. Much as the CLB and NCLC are context-free and suitable for a multitude of applications (teaching, assessment, occupational benchmarking, etc.), so the model underlying the theoretical framework is flexible and adaptable for a range of purposes.

FROM THEORY TO STANDARD: LANGUAGE ABILITY IN THE CLB AND NCLC STANDARDS

A theoretical model of language ability such as the one described in the present document is not, in and of itself, enough to establish teaching and learning objectives. However, it can be used to develop language standards such as the CLB and NCLC. A given theoretical model does not strictly prescribe the structure or contents of a language standard; indeed, the same theoretical model could be used as a basis to develop a variety of standards, each adapted to specific purposes, contexts or user needs.

The CLB and NCLC standards were built upon the theoretical foundations described in the present document. These theoretical foundations were used to develop, according to the needs of a broad range of users, standards to describe the language ability of a specific group of language users, that is, adult immigrants or potential immigrants to Canada learning or using English or French in community, study and work contexts. It should be noted that this scope is not meant to be restrictive; in fact, the CLB and NCLC could potentially be used by a wide range of stakeholders working in different contexts, and with other types of language learners and users. Defining the target users and the type of language learner that the documents describe, however, has allowed the developers of the CLB and NCLC to ensure that the approach used to describe language ability in these documents accurately meets user needs and reflects the experiences and behaviours of adult immigrants or prospective immigrants learning English or French.

FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE CLB AND NCLC

Both the CLB and NCLC standards reflect a functional approach to language use and present their levels using templates organized primarily around the taxonomy of macro-functions by Bachman (1990, pp. 92-94) and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010). This section describes how the two standards use the functional component as one of the building blocks of the presentation of their benchmark levels and how the other components are represented within the CLB and NCLC standards.

Functional knowledge is the ability to understand or convey the real intent of the spoken or written text, beyond the literal meaning of words. It is what "enables us to interpret relationships between utterances or sentences and texts and the intentions of language users" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 69).

Function can be described as 'purpose,' 'intended outcome,' or 'use.' There are multiple language functions, for example: establishing interpersonal relationships, getting things done, controlling the behaviour of others, exchanging information, learning, thinking, teaching, problem solving, memorizing, enjoying literature, self-expression, affecting the world.

As explained in the previous chapter, according to Bachman (1990, pp. 92-94) and Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010), the functional component includes the following macro-functions:

Ideational function:

These functions are used to present, describe and share our experience of reality (knowledge and feelings). This function has also been called 'referential', 'descriptive', 'cognitive', or even 'communicative' by other authors.

Manipulative functions:

- Instrumental: used to get things done (by ourselves or others);
- Regulatory: used to control the behaviour of others, and to formulate and state laws and rules;
- Interpersonal (interactional): used to form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships (phatic language use).

Heuristic function:

These functions are used to extend our knowledge; to learn; to teach; to solve problems (e.g., plan, organize, compose and revise an essay); to memorize facts, words, formulas and rules; to learn a language; to teach a language.

Imaginative function:

These functions are used to derive enjoyment from the artistic or humorous aspects of language, e.g., jokes, metaphors, poems, dramas and stories.

The four competency areas in each benchmark level and skill are derived from the macro-functions of language use. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the relationship between the speaking and reading competency areas and the functions. In authentic communication, however, the competencies may fulfill several or all the functions at once.

Table 4: Macro-Functions and Speaking Competencies

Use/Function	Related Competencies in CLB and NCLC	Goal	Examples
Manipulative: Instrumental	**Giving instructions/** *Consignes* Instructions, directions	To affect the world; to get things done	*Tell me your name.* *Turn left at the first lights, then follow the signs.*
Manipulative: Instrumental and Regulatory	**Getting things done /** *Persuasion* Promise, pledge, warn, suggest, offer, advise, request, persuade	To affect the world; to get things done	*Would you please do this for me?* *I promise.*
Manipulative: Interpersonal and Regulatory	**Interacting with others /** *Relations interpersonnelles* Greetings, small talk, thanks, congratulations, apologies, welcomes, etc. conversation management competencies	To form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships; social cohesion and "phatic communion"; to control the behaviour of others	*How are you doing? Good to see you. Please give my regards to your wife. Please be seated. Could you repeat that last point?*
Ideational	**Sharing information/** *Information* Stating, describing, identifying, classifying, narrating/relating, concluding, explaining, claiming, etc.	To exchange or communicate propositional information about knowledge or feelings; to express meaning	*There are grizzlies in the Rocky Mountains. It is raining in Victoria. I feel stressed out.*
Heuristic	**Processes and strategies;** micro-skills (no specific competencies) Strategies for language learning: memorizing words, process of composing text, listening for details, monitoring communication, summarizing, pronunciation.	To learn, think, problem-solve, memorize; cognitive processing of declarative and procedural knowledge	Self-monitoring of accuracy of speech, grouping/classifying of items (including vocabulary items), formulating hypotheses, discovering rules.
Imaginative (creative)	**Processes and strategies;** micro-skills (no specific competencies) Strategies for language learning: chanting, reciting, singing, acting, games, etc.	To create or use stories, poetry, metaphors, jokes, plays	*My love is like a red red rose…Row, row, row your boat….*

Table 5: Macro-Functions and Reading Competencies

Use/Function	Related competencies in CLB and NCLC	Goal	Examples
Manipulative: Instrumental	Comprehending and giving instructions / *Consignes* Expressing or comprehending instructions, and instructional texts and messages.	To read information to learn what others want us to do	*Manuals, directions, recipes, formulas, procedures*
Manipulative: Instrumental and Regulatory	Getting things done / *Messages sur les affaires et services* Comprehending and acting on formal or semi-formal: letters, notices, memos, messages with reminders, rules, policies, warnings, and promises.	To read information to learn what others want us to know or do, or to understand laws, rules and policies	*Cover letter, offer, proposal, traffic ticket, coupon, advertisement*
Manipulative: Interpersonal (Interactional)	Interacting with others / *Relations interpersonnelles* Comprehending the intent of and acting on social letters, e-mails, notes and greeting cards.	To read texts that form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships; to read for connectedness and social cohesion	*Greeting cards, invitations, personal notes or letters, newsletters, e-mail messages*
Ideational	Comprehending and sharing information / *Information* Demonstrating comprehension of the literal and implied meaning of various texts that state, describe, list, compare, identify.	To read to obtain information, data, knowledge, ideas, skills, understanding, facts, writer's opinions; to read for content	*Newspapers, editorials, books, reports, textbooks, catalogues, tables, calendars, schedules, graphs, statistics*
Heuristic	Processes and strategies; micro-skills (no specific competencies) Demonstrating reading process competencies / strategies to comprehend written text	To read to learn content through text; problem-solve, memorize; reading as a learning tool	*Dictionaries, encyclopedias, crossword puzzles*
Imaginative (creative)	Processes and strategies; micro-skills (no specific competencies) Demonstrating strategies for language learning	To read for enjoyment of language, literature, and the act of reading	*Stories, poetry, puzzles, captions, plays*

As shown in Tables 4, 5 and the summary table (Table 6), the competency areas of "Interacting with others" (*Relations interpersonnelles)*, "Giving and comprehending instructions" (*Consignes*) and "Getting things done*" (Persuasion/Messages sur les affaires et services*) belong in the macro-function called manipulative. "Comprehending and sharing information" (*Information*) and "Reproducing information" (*Consigner l'information*) belong in the macro-function called ideational. The heuristic and imaginative/creative macro-functions (non-communicative language uses) house the competencies which belong outside the strict "communicative" range, such as learning, practising, rehearsing, memorizing, processing, playing, and enjoying, which help in the acquisition of the more communicative functions.

Table 6: *Summary Table of Macro-Functions and CLB and NCLC Competency Areas*

Macro-functions (Bachman, 1990)	Functions/ Uses	Dominant Skills	CLB Competency Areas	NCLC Competency Areas
Manipulative	Interpersonal	Interactional skills	Interacting with others	Relations interpersonnelles
	Instrumental	Transactional skills	Giving and comprehending instructions	Consignes
	Instrumental and Regulatory		Getting things done	Persuasion/Messages sur les affaires et services
Ideational	Referential/ expressing and exchanging facts, ideas, feelings		Comprehending and sharing information Reproducing information*	Information Consigner l'information
Heuristic	Learning/thinking/ problem solving	Thinking skills Learning skills	No Benchmark standards (learning process)	Not applicable
Creative	Creating/enjoying	Creativity	No Benchmark standards (learning process)	Not applicable

*Reproducing information */ Consigner l'information* is a competency area used only for Writing.

Although functional knowledge plays a key role in the structure and presentation of the CLB and NCLC, these standards also take into account the full range of knowledge and competencies related to grammatical, textual and sociolinguistic knowledge. As explained earlier, the components of language ability are all drawn upon to accomplish communicative tasks, and language standards must therefore include all components to be valid and authentic representations of language use.

This section discusses the way in which textual, grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge are treated within the CLB and NCLC standards.

In the CLB standard, the approach taken has been to integrate textual, grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge in the presentation of the benchmark pages; that is, these components of language ability are not isolated and presented discretely at each benchmark level. Rather, they are included in the benchmark pages where they are relevant to the description of the language user's ability.

For example, at Listening CLB 9, the competency statement "Understand complex multistep directions and instructions for familiar procedures" is complemented by the Sample Indicator of Ability "Follows cohesion links across utterances." This element of textual knowledge was selected because it is specifically relevant to this particular Competency Statement.

At the same level, "Uses knowledge of complex grammar and syntax to interpret meaning" and "Recognizes the nuances in different styles, registers and language varieties" are included in the Demonstrating these strengths and limitations section of the Profile of Ability. These are, respectively, descriptors of grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge important to the interpretation of all Competency Statements for that level.

Although the components of language ability are not presented in an isolated way on the CLB pages themselves, the Knowledge and Strategies section at the beginning of every stage of every skill presents possible background knowledge and strategies that a person may need to acquire to achieve the benchmarks in that specific stage and skill, organized according to the five components of language ability. This allows users to identify specific elements within each component that may be relevant to their learners, and also enables them to more readily link the theoretical framework to CLB contents.

The approach taken in the NCLC document is somewhat different, although the same model and components of language ability are present. Although the NCLC document also integrates relevant elements of grammatical, textual and sociolinguistic knowledge within its *Descripteurs de compétences clés*, it also includes *Descripteurs de connaissances clés* which separately list elements of grammatical, textual and sociolinguistic knowledge relevant to all competency areas. This allows teachers and other users to easily identify elements of grammatical, textual and sociolinguistic knowledge that are particularly relevant to the *Descripteurs de compétences clés* for

that level. However, it should be noted that the elements listed as *Descripteurs de connaissances clés* are considered means to accomplish the behaviours described in the *Descripteurs de compétences clés* and *Exemples de tâches* and are not, in and of themselves, considered principal learning outcomes for the level. This approach is consistent with the foundations of the communicative approach and the pedagogical principles underlying the NCLC, which will be described in more depth in the next chapter.

Table 7 provides sample descriptors from the CLB and NCLC related to three sample subcomponents of language ability. These examples show that, though the presentation of information in the CLB and NCLC is somewhat different, descriptors in these two standards reflect the comprehensive model of language ability and contain descriptors for the same components and subcomponents of this model.

Table 7: *Sample Subcomponents of Language Ability in the CLB and NCLC*

Sample Component of Model of Language Ability	Sample CLB Descriptor	Sample NCLC Descriptor
Grammatical Knowledge (Vocabulary)	Identifies words related to personal identification information. (Sample Indicator of Ability: Listening CLB 2)	*Comprend plusieurs mots courants et des expressions décrivant des renseignements personnels, des objets familiers (couleur, forme, dimensions).* (*Descripteur de connaissance clé*, *Compréhension de l'oral*, NCLC 2)
Sociolinguistic Knowledge (Genre)	Conveys the message with adequate sense of audience, formality, and genre. (Sample Indicator of Ability: Writing CLB 9)	*Adapter le vocabulaire, le ton et le style en fonction du contexte, des destinataires et de l'intention de communication.* (*Descripteur de compétence clé*, *Expression écrite*, NCLC 9)
Textual Knowledge (Cohesion)	Uses an introduction, some development, and a conclusion. (Sample Indicator of Ability: Speaking CLB 5)	Structure son récit (introduction, développement, conclusion). (*Descripteur de connaissance clé*, *Expression orale*, NCLC 5)

As explained in the previous chapter, strategic competence is the component which assumes a management role and regulates the use of the other components of the model of communicative language ability described in the present document. Given the task-based communicative nature of the benchmarks, performing at any given level in the CLB or NCLC necessarily involves the activation of strategic competence on the part of language users. On the pages describing CLB and NCLC levels, strategic competence is not isolated as a component distinct from the profile, descriptors or sample tasks. Rather, the competencies and tasks described require the use of a wide range of strategies, which may differ from one task to the other at the same level, or may differ in two language users attempting the same task.

The following sample task, from Speaking CLB 4, illustrates the role that strategic competence may play at the different stages of a communication task.

Give a short set of instructions on how to set an alarm clock, use a long distance calling card or print a file from a computer.

Goal Setting

- Establish the goal to provide simple instructions on how to print a file.

Appraising

- Appraise the language knowledge of the interlocutor (for example, whether the interlocutor is a native or non-native speaker of the target language).
- Appraise the context of the communication (for example, whether the speaker should rely on words or whether he or she has visual aids, such as images or an actual computer or printer, at his or her disposal).
- Appraise the time available to complete the task.

Planning

- Plan how to initiate the task.
- Plan how to supplement the spoken instructions with visual clues.
- Plan how to use transitions to clearly explain the process.
- Plan a different way to complete the task when faced with lexical or pronunciation problems (for example, point to the computer or the printer itself).
- Plan to use more basic structures and visual aids to convey the message if the interlocutor's language ability is limited.

This list of strategies is not exhaustive and, as explained above, will vary from one learner to the other. However, the use of metacognitive and cognitive strategies should be considered whenever the descriptors and tasks in the CLB and NCLC documents are interpreted.

In addition to tasks and descriptors that take into account strategic competence, the CLB document includes key strategies which may need to be learned or practiced in the Knowledge and Strategies section at the beginning of each stage in each of the four skills.

SAMPLE TASKS AND EXEMPLES DE TÂCHES AS A UNIFYING ELEMENT

In step with the principles of communicative and task-based language teaching, both the CLB and NCLC use sample tasks to demonstrate the way in which the five components of language ability interact with one another and work in a compensatory and complementary manner to accomplish communication goals.

The following task, from CLB Listening Level 9, is a useful example:

"Listen to a lecture on the findings of a research study, an environmental issue or a technical topic in one's own field to summarize the information for a report or essay."

To accomplish this task, a person may first determine what information is important to complete his or her report or essay (strategic competence). This person may use his or her experience attending similar presentations to predict the norms of presentation of the discourse he or she is about to hear (sociolinguistic knowledge). This person will need to understand words and sentences, including specialized words used in the field in question (grammatical knowledge). He or she will understand the links between different parts of the presentation (textual knowledge) and distinguish the facts presented as results of the study from the opinions and recommendations of the presenter (functional knowledge).

The examples above are not exhaustive; in fact, many more examples of the use of each of the five components of language ability could be identified in this task. However, this example demonstrates how, in the CLB and NCLC, tasks act as a vehicle to activate all components of language ability and to demonstrate the competencies described in the Competency Statements and *Descripteurs de compétences clés*.

The CLB and NCLC, as standards for measuring and describing language ability, take into account the full range of components of language ability described in the previous chapter. These components have been described and presented slightly differently in the CLB and NCLC documents, based on the differing needs and priorities of their respective users, but always in keeping with the underlying model of language ability and the key principles of the pedagogy described in the present theoretical framework. The standards can therefore be used to develop curricula, resources and assessment tools that are authentic and relevant and that build or measure learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life contexts.

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

This chapter presents the overall pedagogical principles of the common theoretical framework and provides background information about the communicative approach and its underlying principles, which are to this day considered an integral part of language education. This approach, which is closely tied to theoretical models for language ability, forms the overall pedagogical foundation of the CLB and NCLC.

CONTEXT

In language pedagogy, the teaching methods used up to the 1960s (in particular, the American audiolingual method and the French audiovisual global-structural method) gradually lost popularity due to their limited results in student language performance and the difficulty in adhering to a single method (Long, 1984). Although classroom conversation routines provided instruction on the internal rules of a language, they did not necessarily transfer to authentic communication contexts of daily life. Exchanges between teachers and students, based essentially on a planned and thus artificial communicative structure, had linguistic correction (sentence structure, vocabulary choice) as their primary objective. Widdowson (1978) is perhaps the one who most clearly stressed the gulf between classroom communication and communication in authentic situations. This reality was confirmed in a number of countries, including Canada, the United States and France, and by various studies and critical exchanges (Germain, 1991; Rivers, 1964; Stern, 1991), thereby opening the door to the search for new theoretical guidelines.

Work on speech acts and functional linguistics (Austin, 1962; Halliday, 1974; Hymes, 1972; Searle, 1969) was instrumental in elaborating and developing the communicative approach (Germain, 1991; Savignon, 1991). From that time onwards, language was considered not just in terms of its internal logic but also in terms of context and reason for communication, and increasingly described in terms of 'notions' and 'functions' (Wilkins, 1972). Focus in the field therefore shifted towards "the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 1991, p. 26).

Like its methodological precedents, "the communicative approach stems from a combination of political factors and new theories of reference" (Cuq & Gruca, 2003, p. 244 [unofficial translation]). Adult education became an issue of great interest in Europe in the 1970s; language learning could provide adults with occupational mobility, ensuring a labour force going beyond national borders. The European construction sector played a significant role in the history of the communicative approach, and the Council of Europe was the principal source of early support for communicative language teaching (Nunan, 1988).

The Council of Europe published two documents: *The Threshold Level* for English (Van Ek & Trim, 1975) and *Un niveau seuil* for French (Coste, Courtillon, Ferenczi, Martins-Baltar, & Papo, 1976). For the first time, a framework based on a needs assessment of

learners was being proposed. It considered typology of publics and different social contexts. Both the *Niveau seuil* and the *Threshold Level* incorporated a series of concepts (objects and notions) and a series of speech acts (functions) which different publics were likely to need.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH AS A POINT OF REFERENCE

The communicative approach is to this day widely popular despite the acknowledgement that it superimposes, rather than articulates, theoretical concepts taken from different perspectives (Germain, 1993; Moirand, 1982; Puren, 1994). These concepts include:

> philosophy of language, pragmatics, enunciation and discourse linguistics, semiotics, textual analysis, sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, cognitive psychology, functional question and needs assessment, communicative competence, error analysis, autonomy, capitalizable units and the latest developments concerning the problem of teaching/learning a culture. (Puren, 1994, p. 30 [unofficial translation])

Some principles in the communicative approach can appear contradictory (Germain, 1991), which does not always facilitate the work of the participants involved. This is apparent, for example, in the relationships between the learner-centred approach and the use of whole-class activities.

Despite its highly complex theoretical and methodological underpinnings, the communicative approach and its theoretical foundations still serve as reference points in the field. The language frameworks in use today reflect the most characteristic features of the communicative approach, particularly "that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 1).

The CLB and NCLC frameworks reflect this approach to describing and teaching language. They are based on a comprehensive theoretical model of language ability and, as described in the previous chapter, use a taxonomy of macro-functions as the primary element in the organization of their descriptors. These descriptors, which can be mapped onto all components of language ability, reflect the integrative nature of language use promoted by the communicative approach, which makes them readily transferable to communicative language pedagogy.

The action-oriented approach proposed by the CEFR (2001) also shares common roots with the contemporary communicative approach in that it no longer treats language competence as an isolated element but as part of a set of competences. The contents of the European framework programs of the 1970s (Coste et al., 1976; Van Ek & Trim, 1975) were developed according to the needs of their target publics, a direct legacy

of the foundations established for the communicative approach. Similarly, the *ÉQ* framework was developed based on the needs of learners and practitioners in programs that use it.

IMPACTS ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

A MEANING-BASED APPROACH

The communicative approach considers all components of language ability by stressing their interdependence and thus takes an overall approach to language: "teaching communicative competence through its different components, teaching language in its social dimension, understanding discourse from an overall perspective and focusing on meaning are some of the strong points that have endured." (Cuq & Gruca, 2003, p. 249 [unofficial translation])

Indeed, a meaning-based approach is one of the key elements of the communicative approach which have endured in language pedagogy. In fact, 'meaningfulness' is one of the fundamental underlying principles of the learning theory behind the communicative approach, which Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 161) summarize as follows:

- The communication principle: Activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- The task principle: Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning. (citing Johnson, 1982)
- The meaningfulness principle: Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

This meaning-based approach would come to emphasize realistic communication situations and thus authenticity. It involved getting learners quickly into contact with the reality of communication outside the classroom. The communicative approach initiated the use of authentic material in the classroom and discouraged the use of non-authentic material because it is not as effective in supporting learners in real-life communicative situations.

FOCUS ON FORM WITHIN THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The meaning-based nature of the communicative approach should not, however, be mistaken for a dismissal of grammar teaching in the second language classroom. As noted by Long, Adams, McLean and Castaños (1976), grammatical knowledge (which they called 'language competence') is not unnecessary in language learning and teaching; rather, it is insufficient. Models of language ability at the root of the communicative approach, including those presented in the present framework, include a grammatical component with subcomponents such as syntax, lexicon and vocabulary, etc. (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

The term 'focus on form' is often used to describe the teaching of grammar and other language rules within the communicative classroom. 'Focus on form' should not be confused with 'focus on forms', that is, the organization of classroom teaching around one specific form at a time (J. C. Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Richards and Schmidt define focus on form as "a brief allocation of attention to linguistic form as the need for this arises incidentally, in the context of communication" (p. 205).

The communicative approach has evolved since its beginnings, with more or less focus placed on form. This variation is often explained as a distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' versions of the communicative approach:

> There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version, which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider programme of language teaching. (…) The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it'. (Howatt, 1984, p. 279)

Savignon (2005) notes the following on the inclusion of grammar in a meaning-based approach:

> research findings overwhelmingly support the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience. Grammar is important; learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences. Nor is explicit attention to form to be perceived as limited to sentence-level morphosyntactic features. Broader features of discourse, sociolinguistic rules of appropriacy, and communication strategies themselves may be included. (p. 640)

The amount of form-focused activities used in a language classroom varies depending on variables such as age, nature and length of instructional sequence, and the opportunity for communication in the target language outside the classroom (Spada & Lightbown, 2006). It should also be noted that focus on form and meaning are not mutually exclusive; indeed, some tasks allow for an awareness of form as well as a focus on meaning (Long, 1991).

In keeping with the principles of the communicative approach, the needs of specific learner groups in particular contexts determine how much focus will be placed on form in the language classroom. For the CLB and NCLC, which take into account a variety of learning contexts and learner needs, this decision is made at the implementation level according to user and learner needs.

SPIRAL PROGRESSION OF CONTENTS

The CLB and NCLC scales do not claim to reflect the 'natural' sequence of language development. Indeed, they are based on a theory of language ability rather than on a theory of second language acquisition. Although much research has been carried out to understand second language acquisition (Bailey, Madden, & Krashen, 1974; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991), an adequate and complete model based on a description of a natural sequence in the development of adult second language acquisition still eludes researchers. Research has identified some grammatical sequences in language acquisition; however, the benchmarks do not draw on this research. The CLB and NCLC provide a description of the progressing ability to accomplish increasingly demanding communication tasks, not a list of content to be anticipated at different levels of acquisition.

Given this reality, the CLB and NCLC scales do not imply linear, sequential, additive or incremental learning and acquisition processes. Progress along the CLB and NCLC continuum is described as the increasing ability to communicate in progressively demanding contexts of language use. Such contexts require increasing levels of quality of communication (e.g., accuracy, range, fluency, appropriateness) and an increasingly more sophisticated relationship between function, form and context. The demands placed on the language user are dependent on the difficulty of the linguistic code itself, the cognitive complexity of a communicative task (which includes factors such as familiarity) and communicative stress (which includes factors such as time pressure, stakes, etc.) (Skehan, 1998).

A spiral progression became the method of choice for organizing content for this learning process (Bruner, 1960: revised edition 1977). This approach is based on the principle of successively reusing a single notion in different contexts, allowing for the enrichment and broadening of knowledge. In this type of progression, elements are chosen according to their relevance and then organized according to the communication intentions targeted for learning. Contents are thus recycled throughout the learning process; in this way, they are continually enriched and broadened. Both the CLB and NCLC standards are based on this approach.

A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

The focus on language and the historical belief that teachers and course builders always knew best gave way to a focus on the learner. Responses to the real needs of publics – the desire to motivate learners in taking an active role to achieve autonomy in their learning, the taking account of motivation – were some of the concerns that changed the focus in the classroom. According to Nunan (1988),

> the key difference between learner-centred and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. (p. 2)

As with other approaches to teaching and learning, the challenge for the learner-centred approach involves managing the different elements in the pedagogical schema. With the focus on learners, it is thus necessary to keep in mind, above all, the principle of integrating the needs and realities of different publics into programs developed for them. Teachers must also become differently involved in the classroom. As facilitators, advisors and organizers, they can no longer remain in their more traditional role (Germain, 1993, p. 206).

Placing the focus on learners has had an impact on pedagogical material and has made it necessary to provide a diversity of contents to meet a broad range of learner needs (Cuq & Gruca, 2003; Germain, 1993, 1991; Nunan, 1988).

TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION

After the communicative approach gained popularity and authentic communication became the major focus of language classrooms, "task-based instruction emerged and became a central point of language teaching everywhere" (H.D. Brown, 2007, p. 242). Skehan (1998) defines tasks as activities in which:

- meaning is primary,
- there is a goal to be met,
- evaluation is outcome-based, and
- there is a real-world relationship.

Similarly, Bachman and Palmer (1996) define a communicative language task as "an activity that involves individuals in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular goal or objective in a particular situation" (p. 44). They consider the active participation of language learners as a characteristic feature of language use tasks. This is a key principle underlying descriptors in the CLB and NCLC documents.

In task-based language teaching, rather than starting from structures which students must master, the teacher assigns a task, related to real-life communication needs, for which learners must prepare. During the planning process, the teacher helps the students discover the rules or the language structures which will be needed to accomplish the task. A learner's success is measured in terms of his or her capacity to perform the task.

It must be stressed that "all tasks, if they are to remain coherent with the definition of a communicative task, must deal with a communication activity or subject, not with an aspect of the grammatical code" (Lussier & Turner, 1995, p. 127 [unofficial translation]).

Because of their close relationship with authentic language use, tasks provide learners with the opportunity to develop the grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic components of language ability, as well as an opportunity to develop learning and communication strategies. Therefore, task-based instruction enables

teachers and curriculum designers to consider all of the components of language ability in their planning (H.D. Brown, 2007).

BEYOND TEACHING METHODS

The 20th century was marked, both before and after the rise in popularity of the communicative approach, by the development of a number of language teaching methods, which Brown defines as, "coherent, prescribed groups of activities for language teaching, unified by a homogeneous set of principles or foundations" (H.D. Brown, 2007). Examples of such methods include the audiolingual method, the direct method and the natural approach.

However, the very concept of a method has since fallen out of favour. Long (1990, 1991) makes a case against the use of methods on the grounds that: they "overlap considerably, prescribing and proscribing many of the same classroom practices"; they have a very limited impact on what teachers and learners in programs that purportedly use them actually do; research on the effectiveness of methods has typically found little or no advantage to the use of one method over another; and, finally, that they do not reflect the way in which teachers plan and operate (1991, pp. 39-40).

Language teaching is no longer a matter of applying a method and its corresponding tools and materials, but rather of making use of theoretical foundations and the most relevant materials and tasks to ensure teaching that meets the needs of the target publics: "Therefore, in preparing their courses, teachers can choose the most effective activities and techniques according to their objectives, with pragmatism (a synonym for effectiveness) as the criterion demonstrating eclecticism" (Cornaire, 2001, p. 30 [unofficial translation]).

Similarly, Brown (2001) advocates a shift away from methods and towards a principle-based approach to language teaching. However, Brown (2007) does recognize the contribution of methods to contemporary language teaching, defining communicative language teaching as "an eclectic blend of the contributions of previous methods into the best of what a teacher can provide in authentic uses of the second language in the language classroom" (p.18).

The CLB and NCLC are not tied to any specific instructional method. The CLB and NCLC standards are concerned with the issues of 'what' (descriptive statements about successive levels of language ability) and 'why' (research and theoretical foundations), but they are not concerned with issues of methods and techniques (the 'how' of teaching). Methods and techniques belong to the domain of the curriculum and syllabus and are the specific domain of ESL and FSL educators, who have the benefit of knowledge of their learners and teaching context.

The present theoretical framework and the CLB and NCLC standards are not tied to any specific teaching methodology or technique. They promote a communicative approach and their core foundations are theoretical models centred on the capacity to communicate. Their contents are established according to functions (or intentions) grouped into families, which meet needs related to ordinary communication or more specialized communication in specific contexts: the community, study and work. They maintain a general approach to needs, allowing users to exploit the framework and standards to meet their specific needs.

Tasks form an essential component of the CLB and NCLC and of the programs, course plans and assessments based on these standards. Depending on the communicative tasks planned, teachers decide which specific contents they need to teach to help students accomplish those tasks. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the contents, in turn, serve as criteria to measure language learning.

When talking about a framework and 'test,' 'assessment' or 'evaluation' in the same breath, it is important to point out immediately that the CLB and NCLC standards are not tests. Rather, they are sets of descriptive statements about successive levels of language ability along a continuum; they describe a progression of language ability in each of the four skills. Throughout the language learning process, the communicative ability of every person can be located at some point along this continuum. The CLB and NCLC sets of descriptors and indicators, which are based on the components of the model of language ability described earlier in this document, capture 12 specified reference points on this hypothetical continuum.

Thus, the CLB and NCLC provide a common framework of levels which can be used for the purpose of developing second language programming (curricula, materials) and assessment instruments. To some extent, these points are analogous to various low and high water marks on a vertical scale of water depth. Hence, it is legitimate to speak of these points as 'levels'.

While marking progression along the continuous development of a competence, the 12 points in each of the CLB and NCLC frameworks do not represent intervals of equal distance. For example, the difference in ability between benchmark level 3 and benchmark level 4 is not necessarily the same as the difference in ability between benchmark levels 7 and 8. Such precision would be almost impossible to achieve.

With the understanding that each of these benchmark levels, or points, of language ability are based on descriptors and indicators of observable behaviours that gauge increasing ability to communicate in progressively demanding contexts of language use, it is possible to move on to assessment and how it pertains to the CLB and NCLC frameworks.

First, we must define assessment, measurement and evaluation, which are terms often misunderstood and misused. When these terms are used in the present framework, they are defined as proposed by Bachman and Palmer (2010):

> Assessment is the process of collecting information about something that we're interested in, according to procedures that are systematic and substantively grounded. (...) Evaluation involves making value judgments and decisions of information, and gathering information to inform such decisions is the *primary* purpose for which language assessments are used. (pp. 20-21)

As with Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010), the present document does not make a fine distinction between 'test' and 'assessment,' considering them as variations of the same process. This chapter addresses testing and assessment, but not the subsequent process of evaluation. Evaluation, though it flows from testing, is a question to be addressed at the implementation stage.

Much as the contexts in which the CLB and NCLC frameworks are used, the types of tests based on these frameworks are varied. The taxonomy proposed by J. D. Brown (1996) is useful when differentiating the purposes of testing:

Proficiency Testing

Proficiency tests are used to make decisions based on the language user's general level of ability. They may be used, for example, to determine if an applicant has the prerequisite language level required for entry in an academic program. These tests "are very general in nature and cannot be related to the goals and objectives of any particular language program"(J. D. Brown, 1996, p. 10).

Placement Testing

Placement tests are used primarily for the purpose of grouping learners who have a similar level of language ability in language programs. When groups of students are relatively homogeneous, teachers can "focus on the problems and learning points appropriate for that level of student" (J. D. Brown, 1996, p. 11).

Achievement Testing

Achievement tests are used to determine how much students have learned. They can be used, for example, to determine which students are ready to move to a higher-level course or to evaluate the adequacy of the course itself. This can be done through a variety of testing tools, including, but not limited to, portfolio-based assessment or exit tasks.

A distinction is generally made between formative and summative assessment within language programs. Formative assessment consists in "assessing students in the process of 'forming' their competencies and skills in order to help them continue that growth process", while summative assessments "attempt to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped" (H. D. Brown, 2001, p. 402).

Diagnostic Testing

The purpose of diagnostic testing is to "assess the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student vis-à-vis the instructional objectives for purposes of correcting an individual's deficiencies" (J. D. Brown, 1996, p. 14). The main distinction between diagnostic and achievement testing is that the former is typically used at the beginning of or during a course, while the latter tends to be used at the end of a course.

Depending on the objectives and context of assessment, the CLB and NCLC frameworks can potentially be used to develop different types of assessment tools including, but not limited to, those described above.

ASSESSMENT WITHIN A COMMUNICATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Models of language ability such as the one developed in the present document, which is based on the models of Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), allow one to take into account all the complexity of communication. This concern must also be reflected in testing. The concept of tasks is central here because it allows those developing tests to establish a form of assessment that takes into account the necessary articulation among the components of language ability. Furthermore, it is consistent with the communicative approach to pedagogy that informs both the CLB and the NCLC.

TASKS AS A KEY ELEMENT IN TESTING

The concept of tasks[4] is today widely accepted and used in language instruction programs, as it is particularly in step with the principles of the communicative approach. The role of teachers is to make parallels between classroom tasks and the tasks encountered in daily life. Overall, tasks are key elements in the different stages of teaching and learning, including testing. Furthermore, even when the purpose for a test is distanced from the classroom, well-constructed tasks can somewhat replicate the complexity involved in real-life language.

TEST USEFULNESS

Although tests based on the CLB and NCLC can vary greatly in terms of their purpose or target audience, test developers who wish to base their test on the CLB or NCLC standards should keep in mind key qualities that language assessments and tasks must possess, as outlined by Bachman and Palmer (1996).

Six qualities make up what Bachman and Palmer call the "usefulness of a test": reliability, construct validity, impact, practicality, authenticity and interactiveness. Reliability, construct validity, impact and practicality relate to tests in their entirety, while authenticity and interactiveness relate more closely to the tasks included within a test than to the test itself.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as "consistency of measurement"(Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 19). A reliable test result will be consistent in all of the situations in which it is administered. It should be noted that reliability is necessary for a test to be valid but not sufficient in itself. In other words, a test can be reliable but not necessarily valid.

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[4] For a definition of the term *task* see p. 46

Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to "the extent to which we can interpret a given test score as an indicator of the ability(ies), or construct(s), we want to measure" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 21). It is therefore necessary for test developers to provide evidence that the tools test the areas of language ability which they claim to test.

Practicality

A practical assessment tool is defined as one "whose design, development, and use do not require more resources than are available" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 36). An assessment tool should be developed taking into account "financial limitations, time constraints, ease of administration, and scoring and interpretation" (H. D. Brown, 2001, p. 386). Brown notes, for example, that a test which requires individual proctoring is not practical for large groups of people. Therefore, when developing tools, assessment developers should take into account existing resources and whether they can be increased or allocated more efficiently (H. D. Brown, 2001).

Impact

Impact of a test has to do with "the consequences for society, the educational system, and the individuals involved, of basing our decisions on test scores" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 30).

First, an assessment tool can impact the curriculum, approach or techniques used in language teaching. Washback is an example of such an impact on teaching and curriculum; it refers to instances where teaching is adjusted specifically for students to succeed on tests.

Testing can also have an impact on individuals being tested, either through the experience of taking the test or preparing for it, or the feedback they receive about their performance and the decisions that are made based on the results of the test.

According to Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 33), "one way to minimize the potential for negative impact on instruction is to change the way we test so that the characteristics of the test and test tasks correspond more closely to the characteristics of the instructional program". Finally, tests should reflect the values and the goals of society rather than a subgroup of society.

Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 35) invite us to take the following steps when planning test processes or developing testing tools:

1. List, as completely and in as much detail as we can, the intended uses of the test.
2. List the potential consequences, both positive and negative, of using the test in these ways.
3. Rank the possible o utcomes in terms of the desira bility or u ndesirability of their occurring.
4. Collect information to determine how likely each of the various outcomes is.

Authenticity

In keeping with a communicative approach to language teaching and testing, the tasks used as part of a test must simulate real-life communication tasks as closely as possible. Test developers must therefore be "able to demonstrate how test performance corresponds to non-test language use" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 58).

Interactiveness

The interactiveness of a task "can be characterized in terms of the ways in which the test taker's areas of language knowledge, metacognitive strategies, topical knowledge, and affective schemata are engaged by the test task" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 25). For example, a task that asks test takers to comment on a passage about a familiar topic will generally be more interactive than a task that requires them to find isolated facts in a passage.

Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) provide a variety of ways of achieving these qualities in assessment tools.

TESTING BASED ON THE CLB AND NCLC STANDARDS

This section explains how language ability is tested, or assessed, by users of the CLB and NCLC. We do not, however, provide detailed instructions on developing tests based on these standards. Publications such as *Integrating CLB Assessment into your ESL Classroom* and *Developing an Occupation-Specific Language Assessment Tool* can serve as starting points for users of the CLB. Bachman and Palmer (2010), J.D. Brown (1996) and Brown and Hudson (2002) also provide good sets of instructions for the process of designing and developing language tests.

Given the comprehensiveness of the theory of language ability underlying the CLB and NCLC, the standards can be adapted to a variety of contexts and used to create a variety of tests and assessment tools. These tools include, but are not limited to:

- a task-based proficiency test or achievement test;
- a rubric that describes different levels of performance on various language criteria and usually provides more specific information than the test score;
- a language portfolio;
- a variety of assessment techniques in the classroom, including checklists of outcomes and anecdotal records; and
- a combination of formal tests and non-test assessment techniques.

Whichever the means chosen f or testing la nguage ability within the CLB and NCLC standards, it is important that some basic considerations be common to all tests and assessment tools.

As mentioned earlier, the CLB and NCLC capture 12 specified points along a continuum that represents the development of language ability. Throughout the language learning process, the communicative ability of every learner can be located

at some point along this scale. To develop assessment tools based on the CLB or NCLC, one must develop assessment tasks which target one or more of these pre-defined points on the continuum of language ability.

The sample tasks that appear in the CLB and NCLC documents are illustrations that serve as useful reference points for developing tasks targeting one or more of the specific benchmarks. They indicate what language users can typically do at a given level in a specific skill (listening, speaking, reading or writing). In an assessment, and often in real life, individuals at differing levels of language ability attempt some of the same tasks. CLB and NCLC-based assessment is focused on identifying the level of ability demonstrated in the completion of these tasks.

The behaviours elicited by the test tasks have to be interpreted in terms of the descriptors at a particular benchmark level.

CONCLUSION

Assessment tools based on the CLB and NCLC indicate levels of ability on a continuum which applies to all language users. Although curricula and placement decisions are often related to CLB and NCLC benchmarks, the scales themselves are independent of any specified curriculum or language training program.

Assessment tools may be developed for use with a specific group of language users and adapted to the needs, topics and contents likely to be relevant to them. This is the case, for example, of occupation-specific language assessment tools. This flexibility allows for adaptation, while ensuring that the results all relate to the same underlying continuum of language ability.

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Theoretical Framework for the CLB and NCLC

Based on Bachman (1990) and on a draft of Bachman and Palmer (1996), Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) developed a pedagogical model of *communicative competence*. Though this model was developed primarily for the purposes of describing oral communication, in many cases it can be extended to reading and writing. Their model comprises five competences, each including various components. Table A.1 shows the organization of those competences and components.

A key point of interest in the Celce-Murcia et al. model is that all the elements described for each component can be read as forming pedagogical content. They seek to establish a link between the theoretical model and its pedagogical application. Their work is a useful basis for developing a framework of reference for language ability to apply in pedagogical contexts.

Table A.1: Competences and Components of the Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell Model (1995)

	Competences	Components
Communicative competence	Discourse	Cohesion
		Deixis
		Coherence
		Genre/Generic structure
		Conversational structure
	Linguistic	Syntax
		Morphology
		Lexicon (receptive and productive)
		Phonology (for pronunciation)
		Orthography (for spelling)
	Actional	Knowledge of language functions • Interpersonal exchange • Information • Opinions • Feelings • Suasion • Problems • Future scenarios
		Knowledge of speech act sets
	Sociocultural	Social contextual factors
		Stylistic appropriateness factors
		Cultural factors
		Non-verbal communicative factors
	Strategic	Avoidance or reduction strategies
		Achievement or compensatory strategies
		Stalling or time-gaining strategies
		Self-monitoring strategies
		Interactional strategies

In their model, Celce-Murcia et al. present each component in a detailed manner by subdividing each one into a set of subcomponents. For example, syntax contains the following subcomponents:

- constituents of sentences

- word order

- types of sentences

- special constructions

- others

The model is described in more detail below. All of the definitions are taken from the work of Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) unless another source is cited.

DISCOURSE COMPETENCE

Celce-Murcia et al. define discourse competence as follows:

> Discourse competence concerns the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text. This is where the bottom-up lexico-grammatical micro level intersects with the top-down signals of the macro level of communicative intent and sociocultural context to express attitudes and messages, and to create texts. (1995, p. 13)

In this model, discourse competence comprises five main components: cohesion, deixis, coherence, genre/generic structure and conversational structure (the latter applying only to oral communication).

COHESION

According to Celce-Murcia et al., *cohesion* refers to

> the bottom-up elements that help generate and understand texts, accounting for how pronouns, demonstratives, articles and other markers signal *textual co-reference* in written and oral discourse. Cohesion also accounts for how conventions of *substitution* and *ellipsis* allow speakers/writers to indicate *co-classification* and to avoid unnecessary repetition. The use of *conjunction* (e.g., 'and', 'but', 'however') to make explicit links between propositions in discourse is another important cohesive device. (1995, p. 14)

Cohesion includes the following subcomponents:

Reference (Anaphora, Cataphora)

Anaphora refers to a relationship of reference between an expression in the text and its mention previously in the text. We understand *what* or *whom* the expression refers to by connecting it to the previous mention (e.g., *John came in yesterday. I smiled at him.).* The initial expression to identify the referent is called antecedent; the expression used later is called an anaphor. Anaphora typically involves the use of pronouns.

Cataphora refers to a relationship of reference between an expression in the text used to introduce someone or something and its *subsequent* mention in the text, which identifies the referent more fully. The meaning of *what* or *who* the expression refers to becomes apparent after we hear or see it for the second time (e.g., *It slowly emerged from behind the hill. A beautiful city was lying peacefully in front of us in a green valley.).*

Substitution/Ellipsis

Substitution is a feature of extended discourse that we generally use to avoid repetition.

> A: I hope the Canadiens will win the Stanley Cup.

> B: I hope so too!
In this example, 'the Canadiens will win the Stanley Cup' has been replaced by 'so'.

Ellipsis is a term used to refer to the omission of words in a situation in which it is unnecessary to repeat them. This often occurs in conversations, in replies and questions.

> A: Where are you going?

> B: To town.

In this example, the "full" form of B's sentence ("I am going to town.") is predictable from A's sentence.

Conjunction

Conjunction is used "to make explicit links between propositions in discourse" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 15) and includes the following:

- coordinating conjunctions, e.g., but, and, or;
- subordinating conjunctions, e.g., although, despite the fact that;
- conjunctive adverbs, e.g., however, nevertheless.

Parallel Structures

"The conventions related to the use of parallel structure make it easier for listeners/readers to process a piece of text such as 'I like swimming and hiking' than to process a non-parallel counterpart such as ' I like swimming and to hike'"(Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 15).

Lexical Chains Related to Content Schemata

Lexical chains related to content schemata are words connected to each other by association within a "semantic field", e.g., mother, child, newborn, infant, baby, birth, delivery, nursing, bottle, breasts.

DEIXIS

Deixis is a system of reference connections between the text and the situational context; a way of "pointing" through language to the space, its elements and time, by using personal, spatial, temporal and textual references (e.g., *he, you; this, that; here, there; now, before).* Deictic words have the function to specify their referent in a given context. There are different types of deitic words:

Personal Reference

Pronouns referring to the persons involved or talked about (I, you, he; as in: "*I'*m telling *you* that *he…*").

Spatial Reference

Examples include "this," "that", "here" and "there", as in: "I'm telling you that he was *here.*"

Temporal Reference

Temporal deictic words are adverbs expressing time and also different tenses. For example, "now", "then", "before" and "after" are temporal deictic adverbs.

Textual reference

This is a reference to another element found in the same text in which the reference is used. Examples include "in the following picture/table", "in the graph on the previous page", "as we mentioned in our first example".

COHERENCE

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995, p. 15),

> coherence, i.e., the degree to which sentences or utterances in a discourse sequence are felt to be interrelated rather than unrelated… is concerned with macrostructure in that its major focus is the expression of content and purpose in terms of top-down organization of propositions. It is concerned with what is thematic (i.e., what the point of departure of a speaker/writer's message is).

Coherence includes the following subcomponents (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 15):

Organized Expression and Interpretation of Content and Purpose (content schemata)

Thematization and Staging (theme-rheme)

Theme refers to the topic under discussion while rheme refers to what is said about the theme.

Management of Old and New Information

Propositional Structures and Their Organizational Sequences

A proposition is a clause or sentence expressing something true or false. This component is concerned with the construction of such clauses or sentences, but also with the organizational sequences of those propositions such as temporal, spatial, cause and effect, condition-result, etc.

Temporal Continuity/Shift (sequence of tenses)

Sequence of tenses, which is often called agreement of tenses, is a rule that is specific to each language. It governs the grammatical tenses in a sentence. For example, in the sentence "I told him that I had gone to the grocery store", because the first verb refers to something that happened in the past, the second verb needs to be in the past. Specifically, in this case, the second verb needs to be in the past perfect because it happened before the first verb, i.e. the 'going' happened before the 'telling'. Therefore, tense sequence also shows the relationship of different actions in time.

GENRE/GENERIC STRUCTURE (FORMAL SCHEMATA)

A generic structure refers to the way texts with a specific purpose are constructed. For example, an official letter has a different structure than a literary essay. In the same way, a narrative, an interview, a service encounter, a research report, or a sermon each have their own specific structure (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Conversational structure refers to the rules used when taking part in a conversation. These rules are different in different cultures or languages. In part conversational structure involves such areas as knowing how to open or re-open a conversation or topic, how to establish a topic or change it, how to hold or relinquish the floor and how to interrupt the interlocutor (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Other subcomponents of conversational structure are listed below.

How to Collaborate and Backchannel

Finishing someone's utterance, for example, represents collaboration in conversation, while backchannelling refers to short verbal or non-verbal "carry-on" feedback.

How to do Preclosings and Closings

When speakers need to close a conversation so they can either move to another topic or move away to talk with someone else, they use some strategies that make them look polite. For example, saying "It has been good talking with you today" indicates that you are ending the conversation. You can also politely ask to be excused.

Adjacency Pairs (related to actional competence)

According to Richards and Schmidt (J.C. Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 12) an adjacency pair is "a sequence of two related utterances by two different speakers. The second utterance is always a response to the first. How are you today?" and "Very well, and you?" is an example of an adjacency pair.

Knowing Preferred and Dispreferred Responses

In conversation, there are some responses that are expected and some that would surprise the interlocutor because they do not correspond to what he or she expects.

For example, a host says to his guest: "Did you sleep well last night?" A preferred response would be: "Very well, thank you", whereas a dispreferred response could be: "No, I did not sleep at all, your bed is terrible."

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995, pp. 16-17) define linguistic competence as follows:

> It comprises the basic elements of communication: the sentence patterns and types, the constituent structure, the morphological inflections, and the resources, as well as the phonological and orthographic systems needed to realize communication as speech or writing (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996).

The model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) includes syntax, morphology, lexicon (receptive and productive), phonology, and orthography (or spelling) as components of linguistic competence.

SYNTAX

Syntax refers to the rules which govern the ways words are combined to form sentences (Crystal, 1991, p. 341); in other words, it refers to the order of words and the rules by which basic linguistic forms are connected into structures. It includes the subcomponents listed below.

Constituent/Phrase Structure

This subcomponent refers to the structure of the linguistic elements of sentences, phrases and words.

Word Order

This refers to the typical position of the elements in a clause. In a declarative English or French sentence, the basic word order is Subject + Verb (e.g., She is sleeping.).

Sentence Types

This subcomponent refers to different types of sentences such as statements, negatives, questions, imperatives, exclamations, etc.

Special Constructions

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) present three special constructions: existentials (there + BE…); clefts (It's X that/who …; What + subject + Verb + BE); and question tags (You're John, *aren't you?*).

Modifiers/Intensifiers

A modifier is a word, phrase or clause that narrows, specifies or otherwise alters the meaning of another word or phrase. Modifiers include quantifiers such as "large" and "innumerable" or comparing and equating words and expressions such as "more than", "as…as" and "less than". Intensifiers, as the term implies, intensify the word or phrase they modify. These are often adverbs such as "very" and "extremely".

Coordination

All conjunctions of coordination such as "and, or, but…" and "both X and Y, either X or Y" are expressions indicating relationships between elements within a sentence.

Subordination

Subordination refers "to the process or result of linking linguistic units so that they have different syntactic structure, one being dependent on the other, and usually a constituent of the other" (Crystal, 1991, p. 334). A subordinate could be, for example, an adverbial clause or a conditional clause. An adverbial clause is a clause that functions as an adverb, e.g., "I was sleeping *when you called*." A conditional is a sentence which makes a conditional statement, e.g., "*If the gas tank is empty*, the car will not start."

Embedding

Embedding refers "to the process or construction where one sentence is included (embedded) in another" (Crystal, 1991, p. 120).

MORPHOLOGY

Morphology governs the structure of words. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) identify three subcomponents of morphology:

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech refers to nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, etc.

Inflection

Inflection refers to a change in the form of a word (e.g., *he→him, go→went*) signalling change in tense/voice/person/number/gender/mood/case. (See *Derivation* following.)

Derivation

A derivational affix is one which results in the formation of a new word. This differentiates derivational affixes and inflectional affixes. As Crystal (1991, p. 99) explains, "the result of a derivational process is a new word (e.g. *nation → national),* whereas the result of an inflectional process is a different form of the same word (e.g. *nation, nations)*".

LEXICON (RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE)

In its most general sense, the term "lexicon" is synonymous with vocabulary; in generative grammar, it is the component which contains all the information about the structural properties of the lexical items (Crystal, 1991, p. 200). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) list four subcomponents of lexicon.

Words

The lexicon can be thought of as containing content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and function words (pronouns, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries, etc.).

Routines

These are word-like fixed phrases (e.g., of course, all of a sudden) or formulaic and semi-formulaic chunks (e.g., Have a great evening!).

Collocations

Collocations are generally words that co-occur with each other in natural texts, e.g., "green grass," "blue sky," "school books".

Idioms

Idioms are language expressions where the meaning is derived by usage rather than the definitions of individual words (e.g., *get over it; pick yourself up*; *once in a blue moon*). The meaning of an idiom is thus difficult to derive from its parts.

PHONOLOGY (FOR PRONUNCIATION)

Phonology governs the structure of sounds. The phonological features of a language are often divided into two categories called segmentals and suprasegmentals.

Segmentals

This is the term used in phonetics and linguistics primarily to refer to any "discrete unit that can be identified, either physically or auditorily, in the stream of speech" (Crystal, 1991, p. 308).

Suprasegmental

This is "a term used… to refer to a vocal effect that extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as pitch, stress, intonation, rhythm, or juncture pattern" (Crystal, 1991, p. 337).

ORTHOLOGY (FOR SPELLING)

Orthography refers to the way the sounds of spoken language can be represented using some kind of written or printed symbols. Different languages will have different ways of doing this. Knowledge of this system is crucial in the development of reading and writing. It includes the following four subcomponents:

Letters

Letters are the basic component of an alphabetic language (a, b, c…).

Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences

This subcomponent refers to the way phonemes are represented by letters. For example, in both English and French the phoneme /f/ can be represented by different graphemes such as f, ff, ph.

Rules of Spelling

Conventions for Mechanics and Punctuation

These conventions govern the correct use of periods, commas, capitalization, etc. Correct use of these conventions becomes more and more important and more detailed the more advanced the language user's level.

ACTIONAL COMPETENCE

Celce-Murcia et al. define actional competence as "competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is, matching intentional intent with linguistic form" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). According to this model, actional competence is comprised of two distinct components: knowledge of language functions and knowledge of speech act sets.

Knowledge of language functions is further divided into the functions defined below.

Interpersonal Exchange

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text intended to interact with others on a personal level in such activities as greeting and leave taking; making introductions; identifying oneself; extending, accepting and declining invitations or offers; making and breaking an engagement; expressing and acknowledging gratitude; complimenting and congratulating; and reacting to the interlocutor's speech or text by showing attention, interest, surprise, etc.

Information

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text intended to request, give or report factual information and explanations.

Opinions

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text intended to convey opinions or attitudes, to agree or disagree, to approve or disapprove, or to show satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Feelings

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text related to feelings, such as disappointment or satisfaction, happiness or sadness, compassion, anger, worry, etc.

Suasion

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text intended to suggest, request, instruct, give orders, advise and warn, persuade, encourage/discourage, ask for permission, or grant or withhold permission.

Problems

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text intended to complain, criticize, blame, accuse, admit, deny, regret, apologize, or forgive.

Future Scenarios

This function involves expressing or interpreting utterances or text used to promise, predict, speculate, discuss possibilities and capabilities of doing something, to enquire about plans, goals and intention, as well as expressing and finding out about wishes, hopes and desires.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPEECH ACT SETS

This component refers to "knowledge of how speech acts and language functions can be patterned and sequenced in real-life situations" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 21). Celce-Murcia et al. provide the following example:

> Olshtain & Cohen's (1991, p. 156) "apology speech act set" (...) consists of five realization elements; two are obligatory: expressing an apology and expressing responsibility, and three are situation-specific and optional: offering an explanation, offering repair, and promising non-recurrence (p. 21).

SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Sociocultural competence is described by Celce-Murcia et al. in the following way:

> Sociocultural competence refers to the speaker's knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication, in accordance with the pragmatic factors related to variation in language use. These factors are complex and interrelated, which stems from the fact that language is not simply a communication coding system but also an integral part of the individual's identity and the most important channel of social organization, embedded in the culture of the communities where it is used. (1995, p. 23)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) include the following subcomponents in sociocultural competence:

SOCIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

These factors concern the awareness of the way different social or age groups use language and also the fact that a place where language is used influences text and utterances. They include:

- participant variables (age, gender, office and status, social distance, power and affective relations, sensitivity to social variation in language), and
- situation (time, place, purpose of transaction, social function).

STYLISTIC APPROPRIATENESS FACTORS

These factors recognize the importance of rules of politeness as well as stylistic variations due to the degree of formality or to field-specific register. They include:

- politeness conventions, and
- sensitivity to register/style: functional stylistic variation (spoken or written), degrees of formality/registers, field-specific registers, sensitivity to naturalness.

CULTURAL FACTORS

These factors include:

- knowledge of cultural references, literature and the arts, children's literature, pop culture, mass-media culture, significant socio-cultural events;
- knowledge of figures of speech and idiom, and expressions such as "oops," "duh," etc.;
- knowledge of social and institutional structures, history, geography, sensitivity to dialects (regional variation);
- knowledge of social conventions, ceremonies and rituals, major values, beliefs, norms and taboos;
- cross-cultural/multiculturalism awareness and strategies.

This subcomponent refers to the ability of participants to understand those who are culturally or ethnically different, or to deal with and reduce the level of counterproductive stereotypes and prejudice. This is achieved by observing similarities and differences between those involved in the language exchange and by using strategies for cross-cultural communication.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE FACTORS

These factors involve any communication that is not in the form of words or sentences, for example, practical actions such as pointing or demonstrating accompanying deictics. A gesture such as a circle formed with the thumb and the index finger can have significantly different meanings in different cultures ("everything is ok", "zero" or "money"). Grunts or other extralinguistic sounds can play varying roles in different cultures in providing feedback to the speaker that the listener is paying attention. According to the model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al., non-verbal communicative factors include:

- body language (e.g., eye contact, gesture, posture, facial expression, non-verbal turn-taking signals);
- non-verbal vocalizations (e.g. um, aha);
- personal-interpersonal space (e.g. proxemics);
- touching conventions (e.g., haptics);
- paralinguistic factors (e.g. acoustical sounds, non-vocal sounds; culturally and socially variable voice volume, pitch and rate of speech).

In the area of languages, there are two types of strategies associated with learners: learning strategies and communication strategies (H. D. Brown, 1980). Although these two types of strategies may be linked, they must also be clearly distinguished from one another (H. D. Brown, 1980). The model of Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) focuses on the use of "communication strategies" in communicative contexts.

SUBCOMPONENTS OF STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

In the model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al., strategic competence is comprised of five main subcomponents, which are described below.

Avoidance or reduction strategies

These strategies "involve tailoring one's message to one's resources by either *replacing messages*, *avoiding topics*, or, as an extreme case, *abandoning one's message* altogether" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 27).

Achievement or Compensatory Strategies

These strategies "involve manipulating available language to reach a communicative goal and this may entail compensating for linguistic deficiencies" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 27). Celce-Murcia et al. list the 10 most common types with examples:

- circumlocution (e.g., 'the thing you open bottles with' for 'corkscrew')

- approximation (e.g., 'fish' for 'carp')

- all-purpose words (e.g., 'thingy,' 'thingamajig')

- non-linguistic means (e.g., mime, pointing, gestures, drawing picture)

- restructuring (e.g., 'The bus was very. There were a lot of people on it.')

- word-coinage (e.g., 'airball' for 'balloon')

- literal translation from the first language (L1)

- foreignizing (e.g., L1 word with L2 pronunciation)

- code switching to L1 or L3

- retrieval (e.g., 'bro… bron...bronze')

Stalling or Time-Gaining Strategies

These strategies include fillers, hesitation devices and gambits (e.g., 'well', 'actually', 'Where was I?') as well as repetition of self and others.

Self-Monitoring Strategies

These strategies include self-initiated repair (e.g., 'I mean') and self-rephrasing or over-elaborating (e.g., 'This is for students...pupils...when you're at school').

Interactional Strategies

These strategies comprise appeals for help such as direct appeals (e.g., What do you call...?) or indirect appeals (e.g., I don't know the word in English...or puzzled expression) and meaning negotiation strategies, which include requests (repetition, clarification, or confirmation request), expressions of non-understanding , interpretative summary (e.g., You mean...?/So what you are saying is ...?), responses such as repetition, rephrasing, expansion, reduction, confirmation, rejection and repair and, finally, comprehension checks (e.g., Am I making sense?, Can you say that? Are you still with me? Can you hear me?).

Theoretical Framework for the CLB and NCLC

The present document has adopted the model of language ability and the terminology proposed by Bachman and Palmer (2010). However, due to the use of other models and terminology in the field of second language teaching, and the use of different terminology in the original CLB theoretical framework (which applied only to the benchmarks for English), a link must be made between the terminology used in the present document and that which may be encountered in others.

The following tables outline the presentation of the components of language ability as described in Bachman (2010), in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) and in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework*.

The terms on the same line of the concordance table have been validated as referring to comparable concepts.

Table B.1: Concordance Table for the Functional Knowledge Component ('actional competence' in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995))

Celce-Murcia et al. 1995	CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework	Bachman and Palmer 2010
Information	Facts	Knowledge of ideational functions
Feelings	Feelings/emotional attitude	
Opinions	Opinions	
Suasion	Suasion	Knowledge of manipulative functions
Interpersonal exchange	Interpersonal exchange	
Knowledge of speech acts sets	Knowledge of speech act sets	
Problems	Problems/Moral attitudes	Knowledge of heuristic functions
N/A	Heuristic functions (no benchmark competencies)	
Future scenarios	Future scenarios	Knowledge of imaginative functions

Table B.2: Concordance Table for the Textual Knowledge Component ('discourse competence' in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)	CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework	Bachman and Palmer 2010
Cohesion	Cohesion	Knowledge of cohesion
Reference (anaphora, cataphora)	Reference in the text (anaphora, cataphora)	
Substitution/ellipsis	Substitution/ellipsis	
Conjunction	Conjunctions (and, but, however)	
Parallel structure	Parallel structures	
Lexical chains (related to content schemata)	Lexical chains related to content schemata	
Deixis	Deixis	
Personal (pronouns)	Personal reference	
Spatial	Spatial reference	
Temporal	Temporal reference	
Textual	Textual reference	
Coherence	Coherence	Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization
Organized expression and interpretation of content and purpose (content schemata)	Organized expression and interpretation of content and purpose (content schemata)	
Thematization and staging (theme-rheme development)	Thematization and staging	
Management of old and new information	Management of old and new information	
Propositional structures and their organizational sequences	Propositional structures and their organizational sequences	
Temporal continuity/shift (sequence of tenses)	Temporal continuity/shift	
Conversational structure	Conversational structure	
Openings and reopenings	Openings and reopenings	
Topic establishment and change	Topic establishment and change	
How to hold and relinquish the floor	How to hold and relinquish the floor	
How to interrupt	How to interrupt	
How to collaborate and backchannel	How to collaborate and backchannel	
How to do preclosings and closings	How to do preclosings and closings	
Adjacency pairs (related to actional competence) - First and second pair parts (knowing preferred and dispreferred responses)	Adjacency pairs (related to functional competence) - Knowing preferred and dispreferred responses	
Genre/generic structure	Genre/Generic Structure	Knowledge of genre (part of sociolinguistic knowledge)

Table B.3: Concordance Table for the Grammatical Knowledge Component ('grammatical competence' in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)

Celce-Murcia et al. 1995	CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework	Bachman and Palmer 2010
Syntax	Syntax	Knowledge of syntax
Constituent/phrase structure	Constituent/phrase structure	
Word order	Word order	
Sentence types	Sentence types	
Special constructions	Special constructions	
Modifiers/intensifiers	Modifiers	
Coordination	Coordination	
Subordination	Subordination	
Embedding	Embedding	
Morphology	Morphology	Included in knowledge of vocabulary and syntax
Parts of speech	Parts of speech	
Inflections	Inflections (e.g., agreement and concord)	
Derivational	Productive derivational processes	
Lexicon (receptive and productive)	Lexicon (receptive and productive)	Knowledge of vocabulary
Words	Words	
Routines	Routines	
Collocations	Collocations	
Idioms	Idioms	
Phonology	Phonology	Knowledge of phonology/graphology
Segmentals	Segmentals	
Suprasegmentals	Suprasegmentals	
Orthography/Spelling	Orthography/Spelling	
Letters	Letters	
Phoneme-grapheme correspondences	Phoneme-grapheme correspondences	
Rules of spelling	Rules of spelling	
Conventions for mechanics and punctuation	Mechanics and punctuation	

Table B.4: Concordance Table for the Sociolinguistic Knowledge Component ('sociocultural competence' in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)

Celce-Murcia et al. 1995	CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework	Bachman and Palmer 2010
Genre/Generic structure (part of discourse/textual component)	Genre/Generic structure (part of discourse/textual component)	Knowledge of genre
Stylistic appropriateness factor	Stylistic appropriateness - Sensitivity to register/style	Knowledge of register
Cultural factors - sociocultural background	Cultural factors - Knowledge of social and institutional structures, history, geography	Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech
Cultural factors - Awareness of dialect and regional differences	Cultural factors - Sensitivity to dialect (regional variation)	Knowledge of dialects/varieties
Cultural factors - Cross-cultural awareness	Cultural factors - Cross-cultural/multiculturalism awareness	N/A
Social contextual factors - Participant variables	Social contextual factors - Participant variables	N/A
Social contextual factors - Situational variables	Social contextual factors - Situation: time, place, purpose of transaction, social situation	N/A
Non-verbal communicative factors	Non-verbal communication	N/A
Idioms (part of linguistic/grammatical component)	Idioms (part of linguistic/grammatical component)	Knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions