

**Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics**  
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**Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida**  
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**Lecture 17**  
**The “Speaking” Model**

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Welcome to class. Today we are going to talk about Dell Hymes' response to Chomskyan linguistic competence. Dell Hymes coined this term communicative competence in 1966. The SPEAKING Model, where each letter of this word, SPEAKING, represents an element of this course. So SPEAKING is an acronym created by Dell Hymes.

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## Development Framework



- Dell Hymes coined the term Communicative Competence in 1966 as a response to the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between Linguistic Competence and Linguistic Performance.
- To counter Chomsky's abstract notion of competence, Hymes explained Ethnographic Details of communicative competence that included "communicative form and function in integral relation to each other".
- Communicative competence is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principles of language usage.



So today we are going to talk about the SPEAKING model. What is this model all about? Dell Hymes coined the term communicative competence in response to Chomsky's linguistic competence that he proposed in his famous work *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965 where he made a distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. And the Dell Hymes response is about the delinking of these two aspects of language, that is, linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

Linguistic competence in the Chomskyan proposal is the underlying grammatical structure, a structural representation in the human mind. It exists in nature and linguistic performance is affected by many linguistic factors like distraction, shift in interest, and memory. So he delinks these two levels and considers linguistic competence to be the primary object of study of linguistics.

His idea of delinking was criticized by people like Halliday and Dell Hymes. Dell Hymes comes up with communicative competence. What does he mean by communicative competence? Is the language in use. So he said that, we not only learn structures in their abstractness, but also simultaneously learn the use of them.


A structure without a contextual use means nothing. So he puts performance at par with linguistic competence and he merges his two levels, linguistic competence and linguistic performance into one composite unit. And says that it is the communicative competence that we acquire. And he does not unlink these two levels.

So to counter Chomsky's abstract notion of competence, Dell Hymes explained ethnographic details of communicative competence. It included communicative form and function in

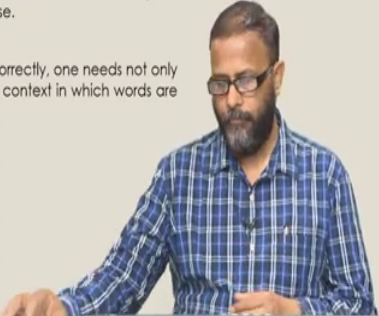
integral relation to each other. So instead of delinking the two, he makes it or he argues for a composite union of it.

In his detailed response, he develops ethnographic details of communication. Communicative competence is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principle of language usages. So this is his response to Chomsky's linguistic competence.

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- Hymes' early work frames a project for ethnographic investigation into contrasting patterns of language use across speech communities.
- Hymes called this approach "the ethnography of speaking." The SPEAKING acronym, was developed as a method to aid fieldworkers in their attempt to document and analyze instances of language in use.
- Hymes argues that in order to speak a language correctly, one needs not only to learn its vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which words are used.



So Dell Hymes' early work frames a project for ethnographic investigation into contrasting patterns of language use across speech communities. Dell Hymes himself called his approach the ethnography of speaking. The SPEAKING acronym was developed as a method to aid field workers in the attempt to document and analyze instances of language use across communities. Dell Hymes argues that in order to speak a language correctly, one needs not only to learn vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which the words are used.

So the whole idea of competence as proposed by Dell Hymes takes into account the meaning and the context of use of it. So we cannot delink the grammatical structure and the use of functions. So if the form, which is structure, and the function, which is used, they both are clubbed and combined as a composite unit. Dell Hymes argues for communicative competence. So linguistic competence and communicative competence stand in opposition to each other, where communicative competence links the two levels competence and performance. Chomsky delinks competence and performance. So this is a reply or a response to Chomsky's idea of competence.

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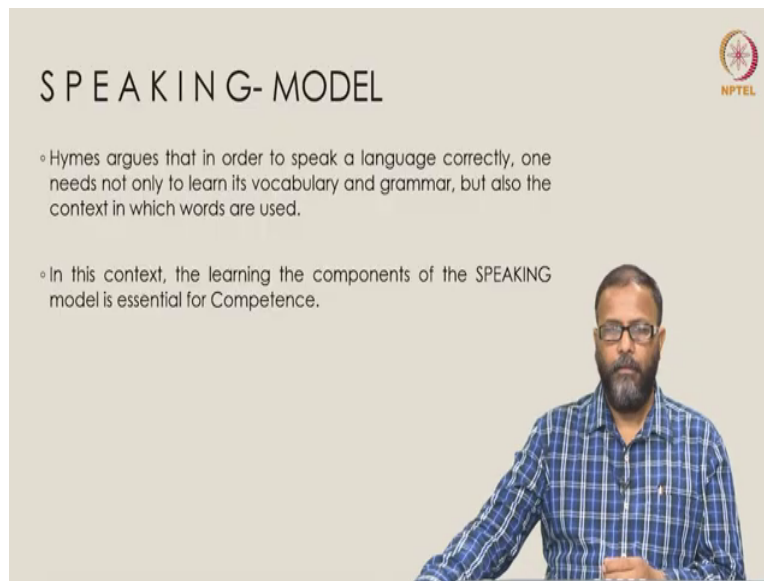
The Sixteen Components Applied to Discourse

- message form;
- message content;
- setting;
- scene;
- speaker/sender;
- addressor;
- hearer/receiver/audience;
- addressee;
- purposes (outcomes);
- purposes (goals);
- key;
- channels;
- forms of speech;
- norms of interaction;
- norms of interpretation; and
- genres.

We have talked about communicative competence in our earlier class. So here we will talk about the ethnography of communication. He started with ethnography of speaking and later incorporated larger discourse elements. Dell Hymes himself renames it and he calls it ethnography of communication.

So he explains and incorporates 16 components into the discourse. And what are these 16 components? These are message forms, message content, setting, scene, speaker and sender, addressor, hearer, receiver, audience, addressee, purpose that are outcomes, purposes that are goals, key, channels, forms of speech, norms of interaction, norms of interpretation, and genres. So this is how the 16 components as mentioned by Dell Hymes are clubbed into it.

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The slide features a light beige background. At the top left, the title 'SPEAKING-MODEL' is written in a large, spaced-out, black font. In the top right corner, there is a small circular logo with a red and white design, and the text 'NPTEL' below it. Two bullet points are listed on the left side of the slide. In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, sitting at a desk.

## SPEAKING-MODEL

- Hymes argues that in order to speak a language correctly, one needs not only to learn its vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which words are used.
- In this context, the learning the components of the SPEAKING model is essential for Competence.

Here we get the SPEAKING Model so, the arrangement or the hierarchy of these elements has nothing to do with this acronym. This acronym has been created irrespective of the sequencing and hierarchy. So the order of appearance in no way reflects any hierarchy ascribed or assigned to these elements. This is just for creating an acronym. (08:43) acronym so that everyone can stand and it connotes the whole idea of communication.

SPEAKING. Hymes argues that in order to speak language correctly, an individual will need to learn the form and the function together. They cannot be delinked. So function cannot be delinked from the form, a structure and the use. Both are composite. They cannot be delinked and cannot be put into any hierarchy. So he believes that both are acquired and learned as a single unit. In this context, learning the components of the SPEAKING model is essential for competence.

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S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G

- Setting and scene
- Participants
- End
- Act sequence
- Key
- Instrumentalities
- Norms
- Genre

Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p.53-62.

NPTEL

### The Sixteen Components Applied to Discourse

- message form;
- message content;
- setting;
- scene;
- speaker/sender;
- addressor;
- hearer/receiver/audience;
- addressee;
- purposes (outcomes);
- purposes (goals);
- key;
- channels;
- forms of speech;
- norms of interaction;
- norms of interpretation; and
- genres.


NPTEL

So what are these? As you know acronyms, what do they stand for? If we look at this pictographic representation, S stands for setting and scene. So in SPEAKING, S stands for setting and scene. P stands for participants. E stands for end. A stands for act sequence. K stands for key. I stands for instrumentalities. N stands for norms, and G stands for genre. So these 8 elements of discourse that we just talked about, do you know what are these?

These are message form, message content, setting, scene, speaker or sender, addresser, hearer, receiver or audience, addressees, purposes that are outcomes, and purposes as goals of communication, key, channels, forms of speech, norms of interaction, norms of interpretation and genres. These 16 elements clubbed into 8 and they were given an acronym SPEAKING where, S stands for setting and scenes, P stands for participants, E stands for ends, A stands


for act sequences, K stands for key, I stands for instrumentalities, N stands for norms and G stands for genre. So we will go to each of these elements one by one.

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## Setting and scene

- "Setting refers to the time and place of a speech act and, in general, to the physical circumstances". Scene is the "psychological setting" or "cultural definition" of a setting, including characteristics such as range of formality and sense of play or seriousness.
- Setting of the speech event also refers to the location of participants and any physical barriers that may be present.



So let us begin with number one, setting and scene. So setting and scene in the SPEAKING model refers to the time and place of the speech act, and in general to the physical circumstances. Scene is the physical setting or cultural definition of a setting including characteristics such as a range of formalities and sense of play or seriousness. Setting of the speech event also refers to location of participants and any physical barriers that may be present. So it refers to the background in which the speech act takes place. So that is the first element, setting and scene.



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The slide features a title 'Participants' in the top left. In the top right corner is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a star and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main content is a paragraph defining 'Speaker and audience'. In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, speaking.

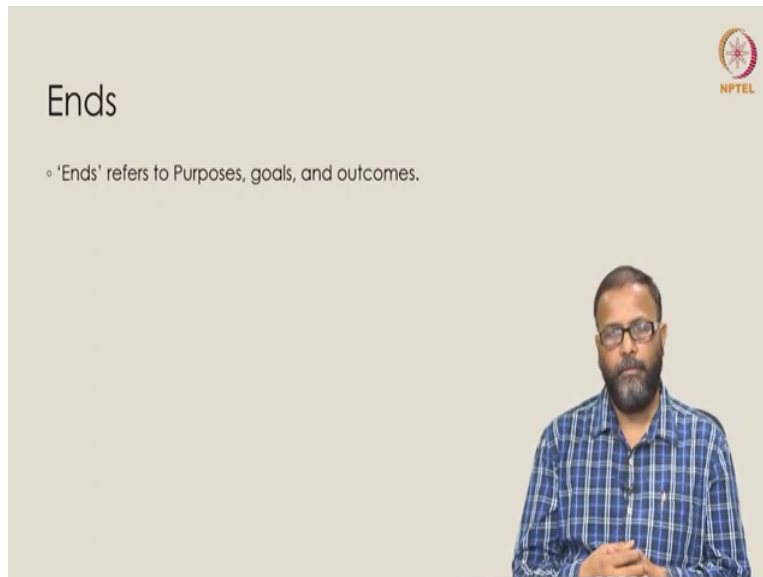
## Participants

Speaker and audience – Speaker and the audience that can be distinguished as addressees and other hearers. When considering the participants in a speech event, one should consider implicit and explicit rules about who is, can, and should be involved; what expectations are established for the participants; who is speaking and who is being addressed.

The second element P stands for participants. So who are the participants in this speech act? So speakers and audience. It refers to the speaker and audience. Speaker and audience that can be distinguished as addressees and other hearers. When considering the participants in a speech event one should consider implicit and explicit rules about who is speaking, who can speak, who should be involved, what expectations are established for the participants and who is speaking, and who is being addressed?

So this P refers to participants in the speech event, one who speaks and the other who receives. A speaker and audience, and we should also consider implicit and explicit rules about who is and should be involved. What expectations are established out of this speech act for the participants and who is speaking, and who is addressed? So when we say participate, this is what we mean by it.

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The slide features a light beige background. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main title 'Ends' is positioned in the upper left. Below the title, a single bullet point reads: 'Ends' refers to Purposes, goals, and outcomes. In the bottom right corner, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, is shown from the chest up, looking towards the camera with his hands clasped.

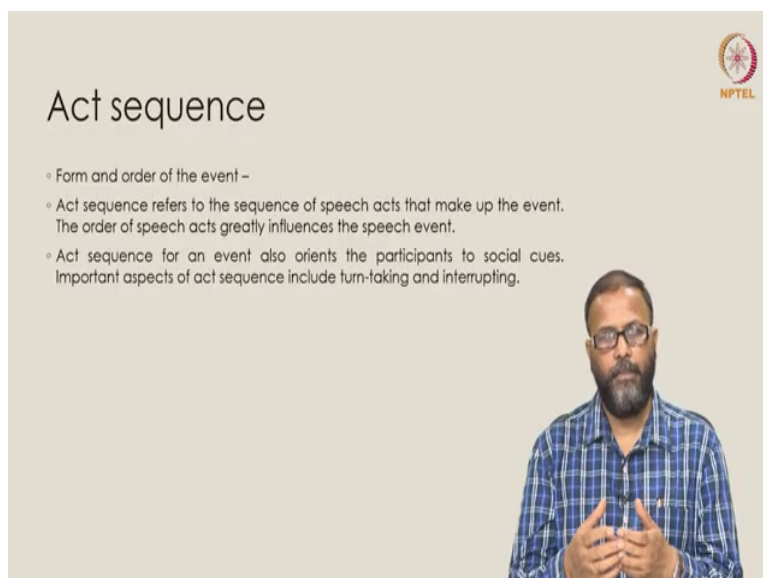
## Ends

- 'Ends' refers to Purposes, goals, and outcomes.

Moving on to the third element, that is, ends. So what is the purpose of this speech event, what is the goal of this speech event? What is the outcome of this speech event? This is what it means when we say 'ends'. Any communicative speech event, any communicative use of language as a defined purpose or definite goal it in tells a definite outcome.

So these goals, these purposes, these outcomes are called ends in this model. So what ultimately are we talking about? What is, why are we talking about x? What is the goal of this interaction or speech event and what is the ultimate outcome of it? So this is what we consider when we talk about ends.

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The slide features a light beige background. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main title 'Act sequence' is positioned in the upper left. Below the title, three bullet points are listed: 'Form and order of the event -', 'Act sequence refers to the sequence of speech acts that make up the event. The order of speech acts greatly influences the speech event.', and 'Act sequence for an event also orients the participants to social cues. Important aspects of act sequence include turn-taking and interrupting.' In the bottom right corner, the same man from the previous slide is shown, now with his hands open and gesturing as if speaking.

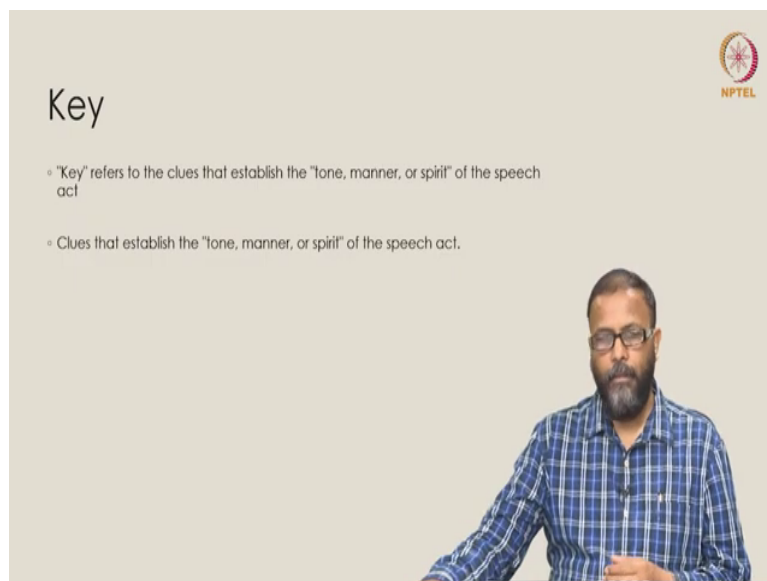
## Act sequence

- Form and order of the event -
- Act sequence refers to the sequence of speech acts that make up the event. The order of speech acts greatly influences the speech event.
- Act sequence for an event also orients the participants to social cues. Important aspects of act sequence include turn-taking and interrupting.

Moving onto A, that stands for act sequence. So any speech event starts, then proceeds, and then ends. So there is a sequence. So the act sequence in this context refers to the form and order of the event. So the Act sequence is the sequence of speech acts that makes up the event. The order of speech act greatly influences the speech event. Because there is a structure involved in it. This structure of speech event, it begins, it proceeds, develops, and ends.


Act sequence for an event also orients the participants to social queues. Into interacting you know, be included in the speech, turn taking, turn giving, into reacting, agreeing, disagreeing. So these are all arranged in a sequence in the speech event. The important aspects of act sequence includes turn taking and interacting. So it talks about interaction and how this interaction moves from beginning to the end. So this sequence does play a role in achieving the goal and purpose of the speech act.

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Then the other element is called key, K stands for key. And what is the key? Key refers to the clues that established the tone, manner or spirit of the speech act. Clues that establish the tone, manner of the speech. The tone, the tenor, the delivery, they all are crucial in meaning making and they play a crucial role in the speech act.

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The slide features a title 'Instrumentalities' in the top left, an NPTEL logo in the top right, and a list of bullet points. A speaker is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

## Instrumentalities

- It refers to the forms and styles of speech. These include the method of communication (writing, speaking, signalling), the language, dialect (a mutually intelligible subset of a language) or register (a variety of a language that is used in specific settings).

Then, the next element is instrumentalities. It refers to instrumentalities and what is that? It refers to the form and style of speech. This includes the method of communication. So writing, speaking, signaling whatever language or dialect or register. So they refer to the format in the method. How language becomes, how a particular variety becomes instrumental in achieving the goals of that speech event. How that particular dialect becomes instrumental in achieving the goal and objective of that particular speech event. So it refers to the nature of instrumentality of the language or dialect or register or the code that we are using in the speech act.

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The slide features a title 'Norms' in the top left, an NPTEL logo in the top right, and a list of bullet points. A speaker is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

## Norms

- Social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reaction –
  - When is it okay to speak?
  - Who should listen?
  - When is silence preferred?
  - How loud is too loud?
  - What speed should be used in the conversation?
  - What topics are acceptable?

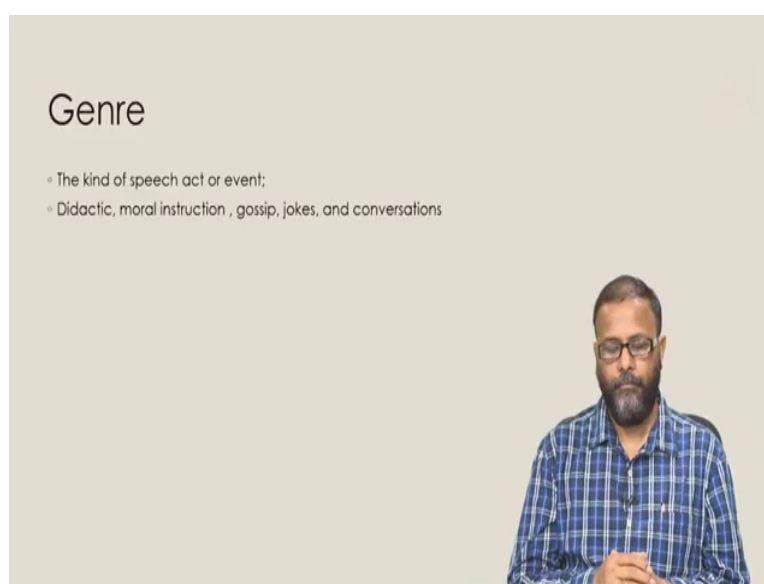
N refers to norms and what is that? Norms refers to the social rules, negotiated and agreed upon social rules that govern the event and the participant's action and reaction. Because any speech event happens within a framework of mutually agreed upon negotiated norm set of norms, that is sociological in nature.

So when is it okay to speak? So there is a cultural variation. Each speech community has their own set of norms of interaction; their own shared norms of interaction and format of interaction. So something like, when is it appropriate to speak? Who should listen? To what? When is silence preferred? When do you need to be paused? What is the tone, tenor? How loudly should you speak?

There are cultures for which loud speaking is not considered appropriate. It all refers to the appropriateness of the social norms of interaction and communication. And it varies from culture to culture. It varies from speech community to speech community. You cannot have a single universal rule and principle. What speech should be used in conversation? What topics are expectable? What are the things and themes that you can discuss in public with anyone? What are the things you cannot discuss like taboo?

Themes and words of taboo cannot be discussed in certain cultures. So every culture has a set of taboo themes, taboo words. These are restricted topics and identified, negotiated and shared norms of interaction. So norms refers to that community specific, culture specific rules.

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Then genre, and what is that? The kind of speech act or event, what kind of speech? Didactic, narrate event style, moral instruction, gossip, jokes, or conversation? So the type of speech event, a genre refers to the kind and type of speech event. So if you look at this speaking model by Dell Hymes, this is a response to the Chomskyan exclusive linguistic competence where he delinks a competence from performance.

And he says that the linguistic competence is unaffected by the grammatically irrelevant factors like memory, shift in attention and interest and other restrictions that are posed on performance. So he said that performance cannot reflect in any way the actual competence, because the knowledge of language, the underlying structure which is represented in the human mind cannot be guessed just and evaluated in terms of the actual performance. The actual performance is the act that needs to be delinked from the competence. Competence is something that is shared by all idle speakers here in the homogeneous speech community without variation.

This is what you mean by the universal set of rules of language, but Hymes' idea is that performance cannot be delinked with competence. Because we not only learn linguistic structures but also learn the function of them, that is, structure along with their functions or form along with their functions, and these forms and functions are not learned separately. They cannot be delinked. They need to be unified as a single composite unit, and this is what acquires when we acquire language. So marginalizing the performance was a trigger for Dell Hymes to react to the Chomskyan proposal where Chomsky explained the ultimate goal of linguistic theory should be to understand these abstract grammatical structures and their representation in the human mind. However, Dell Hymes and people like Halliday, brought the social and cultural context of use of these structures.

They said that it cannot be delinked from competence. So the performance cannot be delinked from the competence. Competence cannot be delinked from the performance. They both are acquired; the form that we look at, in Chomskyan perspective as competence, and the function which Chomsky has talked about. These forms and functions together define a language. And the goal of any linguistic theory should be to study this aspect of language as an object of study.

They should be treated as an object of study. So they cannot be delinked and he developed a model for the ethnography of communication. He initially named it as ethnography of speaking. Later, in order to incorporate all the discoursed items and elements into it, he

renamed it as the SPEAKING model. SPEAKING, an acronym where each letter of this word represents a discourse element. He says that learning of a language is complete only when you learn the communicative aspect of the language. And that is why he names it communicative competence and a child learns communicative competence.

So grammatical, that is the form and the use of it. That is the function, so the form and functions are learned together by the child, acquired together by the child or by the learner. And this idea of communicative competence has far fetching consequences. And we see a new method of teaching in foreign languages developed on this ground called Communicative Language Teaching.

And lots of debates and discussions continued afterwards on Chomsky's generative linguistics to the Chomskyan mentalist paradigm. Communicative competence comes as a sociolinguistic response to it. It establishes language as a social reality and grounds it in a socio-cultural context. So this is what we mean by the SPEAKING model, which is an ethnographic detailing of the act of communication proposed by Dell Hymes. And he coined a new term called communicative competence. So this is it for now. We will talk further about some other responses to the Chomskyan theory and how sociolinguistics locates language within a social cultural context. Thank You.