English as a Linguacultural Code for Communication

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Language fluency is a complex achievement which consists of multiple different elements. A lay-person would generally equate successful language use with a successful conduct of grammar and vocabulary or i.e., linguistic competence. However, linguists and other language professionals have continuously confirmed through research that linguistic competence is only one element of language fluency. In order to be able to use the language efficiently, a speaker needs to be aware of sociocultural factors and contextual features in a particular speech situation. Herein, this paper gives a theoretical overview of the interrelations among language, culture and communication. The aim of the paper is to review the proposed definitions on the different elements that make language a successful tool for communication, through an extensive discussion of the different types of competences linked to language and language fluency. The focus is on English as a foreign language and its use by learners with different cultural backgrounds. The paper shows that foreign language proficiency is possible only through simultaneous communicative and pragmatic competence, as well as social and cultural awareness.

Keywords: English, EFL, language, culture, code, competence, fluency