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ENG505 Assignment 1 Solution

Fall 2026

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ENG505 Assignment 1

Assignment No. 1 — Fall 2026 | Total Marks: 20

Differentiate between linguistic competence and performance. How did Dell Hymes extend Chomsky's concept of language use by emphasizing the importance of social context and communicative competence? Support your answer with relevant examples.

Language has two sides. One side is the knowledge in the mind. The other side is the use of language in real life. Chomsky named the first two ideas. Hymes brought in the social part of language. This answer tells all three ideas with examples.

1. Linguistic Competence

Competence is the set of grammar rules that live in the mind of a speaker. A native speaker knows these rules well. The speaker can tell a right sentence from a wrong one. This knowledge stays the same at all times. It does not fall with sleep or noise. For example a child knows that He goes to school is right. The same child knows that He go to school is wrong. The child may still use the wrong form in fast speech. But the knowledge stays in the mind. Competence is what the speaker knows and not what the speaker says.

2. Performance

Performance is the real speech of a person. It is what comes out of the mouth. It is never perfect. Memory can fail. Fear can break a sentence. Noise can hide a word. A speaker may stop and start again. A speaker may use a wrong word by slip. For example a learner knows the rule of the past tense. But in class the learner says I goed to school. The fault is in the use and not in the knowledge. Performance puts the knowledge to work. But it never shows the full knowledge.

3. Hymes and Communicative Competence

Chomsky spoke only of grammar. Hymes said grammar is not enough. A speaker must also know how to use words with people. Hymes named this skill communicative competence. It holds four parts. The first part is possibility. The sentence must fit the grammar. The second part is feasibility. The speaker must be able to form it with the brain and the tongue. The third part is appropriateness. The sentence must suit the place and the people. The fourth part is occurrence. People must in fact use it in real life. A sentence may pass the first test and fail the third test. For example Give me the book is right in grammar. But it is rude when said to a teacher. The right form is Please give me the book. The grammar is the same in both. The social use is not the same.

4. Social Context and the SPEAKING Model

Social context is the place and the people and the aim of the talk. One person uses different words in different places. A learner uses one style with friends. The same learner uses another style with a teacher. A job talk needs formal words. A talk with friends allows short words. To study this Hymes made the SPEAKING model. The model looks at the setting and the people

and the aim and the rules of talk. For example a teacher asks a short question in class. The learner gives a short answer. The same learner writes a long answer in an exam. The place changes the words. Hymes proved that language use is social. Grammar alone cannot tell the full story.

5. Why This Matters for Teaching

This point matters for teaching. A grammar test checks what a learner knows. A speaking test checks what a learner can do. A good course checks both sides. A learner may pass a written test and fail in real talk. Hymes asks the teacher to train learners in real use. The learner must learn when to speak and what to say. This is the aim of teaching for communication.

Competence is the knowledge of rules. Performance is the use of rules. Hymes added the social use of rules. A good speaker needs all three parts. The speaker must know the rules and use them in the right place at the right time.

