

## COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

“What, exactly, does it mean to communicate competently? Communicative competence is the ability to communicate in a personally effective and socially appropriate manner. Although this definition appears very simple, competence is a complex subject that has generated a lot of research and discussion. One reason is that competent communication involves two separate levels: (1) a surface level, consisting of the part of competence that can be seen – the actual performance of day-to-day behaviors – and (2) a deeper level, consisting of everything we have to know in order to perform. Although the surface level has many different names, we will call it **performative competence**. It is demonstrated ever time someone actually produces effective and appropriate communication behaviors. The underlying level we will call **process competence**. It consists of all the cognitive activity and knowledge necessary to generate adequate performance” (Trenholm & Jensen, 2008).

## METACOMMUNICATION

“Language can be used to monitor the process of communication. As we noted earlier, language is self-reflexive; it allows for metacommunication, communication about the communication process. When two people discuss a topic of interest such as politics or religion, they are communicating. When they discuss their discussion, they are metacommunicating. Metacommunication occurs when we use language to check communication channels (“Did you understand what I said?”), regulate the flow of talk (“Wait a minute. Let me finish making this point”), or comment on language patterns (“I know I change the subject whenever you make a good point. Its’ just that I can’t stand to be on the losing end of an argument”)” (Trenholm & Jensen, 2008).

Trenholm, S., & Jensen, A. (2008). *Interpersonal communication* (6th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.