

PREFACE

The book *Functional English* can be viewed as an introductory reading in the domain of functional language, or language used in order to perform certain communicative purposes. **Functional language** is a concept normally connected with foreign language learners of lower levels and with problems in achieving the designated standards in terms of the four basic language skills. The book is meant to provide a description of the subject matter of Functional English by establishing the basics, as well as the main features and elements of this linguistic domain. The overall objective of the book is to help with the understanding of existing language features sometimes taken for granted, and which may cause communication difficulties. Simultaneously, its ambition is to enable all the interested parties to reaffirm the foundations and build on the existing language repository, in an attempt to achieve a higher level of competence in English used to perform different communicative functions.

The term **practical language skills** within Functional English entails the ability to formulate or articulate one's communicative message, as well as the ability to interpret correctly or relay clearly to other parties any verbal material relevant to the process of communication. Moreover, being competent in Functional English means being able to select the adequate communication channel or method, where the key factors are the linguistic devices employed, the correlation between the language used and the intended goal, as well as the context of situation and its relation to the audience or the participants in the verbal interaction.

In many situations in the contemporary world, it has become increasingly important to be equipped with adequate function-related language and respond to the demands of everyday communication in a timely and appropriate manner. Therefore, the purpose of this book is not only to offer instruction concerning the adequate ways of participating in an act of communication in English, but also to provide a rich, diversified and readily available repository of linguistic forms at the disposal of speakers, by which they can achieve stylistic variety without jeopardising the appropriateness of their utterances to the situation at hand.

It may also ensure a better comprehension of some of the qualities of the more traditional language used throughout the English-speaking community. As functional language mostly rests on using fixed expressions for each of the intended functions, the book focuses on supplying a variety of phrases, fragments and sentences, by means of which readers can endeavour to attain functional English proficiency. This aspiration of the book may be viewed in light of the words by David Crystal:

The aim of language education is to put all these literacies under the confident control of the student, so that when they leave school they are able to cope with the linguistic demands made upon them.

(Crystal, 2008: 164)

The monographic publication/textbook *Functional English* is intended primarily for ESL or EFL students at the tertiary level of education, but may be found useful by many other types of learners and students of English. The knowledge of English is implied and it is advisable that the students be at least at B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As English abounds in expressions and stock phrases that are used to achieve certain communicative effects such as to agree or disagree, make suggestions, demand explanations, give warnings and much more, this volume may be used as a description of, or a guide book through, the vast domain of language used for specific pragmatic functions.

The expected result of the book is to ensure the following knowledge and skills as an integral part of the students' English language proficiency, with a focus on performing different functions by language use:

- Ability to introduce oneself to peers and superiors, and to introduce others.
- Ability to provide and request information by using appropriate informal and formal social expressions in English.
- Ability to congratulate, to express gratitude, and regret in social interaction.
- Ability to formulate invitations, suggestions or offers in oral communication.
- Ability to describe individuals, objects or events in connected speech and writing.
- Ability to understand, summarise and/or recreate an adequate structure of narrative texts.

Many things regarding Functional English can be acquired "incidentally", along the way as one learns the language in general, but this book provides the means of learning the essentials of Functional English as a conscious task, in one go, in a single place.

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