

# Communicative Functions

We have adapted Mary Finocchiaro's functional categories for our purposes (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, pp. 65-66). These fall under five major categories: personal, interpersonal, directive, referential, and imaginative. Specific examples of functions under each category appear below (note that not all possibilities are included; instead, an array of functions is listed to exemplify each category).

## ***Personal***

- clarifying or arranging one's ideas
- expressing one's thoughts or feelings (love, joy, pleasure, happiness, surprise, likes and dislikes, satisfaction, disappointment, distress, pain, anger, anguish, fear, anxiety, sorrow, frustration, annoyance at missed opportunities, etc.)
- expressing moral, intellectual, and social concerns
- expressing the everyday feelings of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, cold, and warmth

## ***Interpersonal***

- greetings and leave-takings
- introducing people to others
- identifying oneself to others
- expressing joy at another's success (or disappointment at another's misfortune)
- expressing concern for other people's welfare
- extending and accepting invitations
- refusing invitations politely or making alternative arrangements
- making appointments for meetings
- breaking appointments politely and arranging another mutually convenient time
- apologizing
- excusing oneself and accepting excuses for not meeting commitments
- indicating agreement or disagreement
- interrupting another speaker politely
- changing an embarrassing subject
- receiving visitors and paying visits to others

- arguing or debating
- offering food or drinks and accepting or declining such offers politely
- sharing wishes, hopes, desires, problems, beliefs, thoughts, opinions, etc.
- asking about others' wishes, hopes, desires, problems, beliefs, thoughts, opinions, etc.
- making promises and committing oneself to some action
- complimenting someone
- making excuses

### ***Directive***

Directive functions attempt to influence the actions of others. These include:

- accepting or refusing direction
- making suggestions in which the speaker is included
- persuading someone to change his/her point of view
- requesting and granting permission
- requesting information
- asking for help and responding to a plea for help
- forbidding someone to do something; issuing a command
- giving and responding to instructions or directions
- warning someone
- discouraging someone from pursuing a course of action
- establishing guidelines and deadlines for the completion of actions
- asking for directions or instructions

### ***Referential***

- talking or reporting about things, actions, events, or people in the environment
- identifying items or people in the classroom, the school, the home, the community
- asking for a description of someone or something
- describing someone or something
- understanding messages or descriptions
- creating questions
- scanning or skimming for information

- paraphrasing, summarizing, or translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa)
- interpreting information
- explaining or asking for explanations of how something works
- comparing or contrasting things
- discussing possibilities, probabilities, or capabilities of doing something
- requesting or reporting facts about events or actions or about a text
- hypothesizing
- formulating and supporting opinions
- evaluating the results of an action or an event

### ***Imaginative***

- discussing a poem, a story, a text, an advertisement, a piece of music, a play, a painting, a film, a TV program, etc.
- story-telling, narrating events
- experiencing and/or discussing a simulation (e.g., of an historical event)
- expanding ideas suggested by others or by a piece of reading
- creating rhymes, poetry, stories, plays, or scripts
- recombining familiar dialogues or passages creatively
- suggesting original beginnings or endings to dialogues or stories
- solving problems or mysteries

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