

**IMPACT OF REGION IN TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH FOR
UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS OF TAMIL LITERATURE USING FUNCTIONAL -
NOTIONAL APPROACH**

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Abstract

This paper mainly focuses on each grammatical structure in context. It is stated in so many articles that the students who have completed their degree are not bold enough to face an interview in English. So the approach to be taken for English Language Teaching may be Functional and Notional Grammar, because it aims mainly at making students communicate effectively. It concentrates on those areas which are useful for the undergraduate students and paves way for expressing their ideas in English with full grammatical structure. The purpose of knowing sentence structure is to identify the ways to say an event without mistake. It focuses on the standard of second year students and the difficult aspects of written and spoken English faced by them. By finding this, the research paper throws light on those areas, which have been neglected traditionally while teaching English language.

Key Words: Functional Grammar, Functional English, Aspects of Teaching and Syntax.

Introduction:

Functional Grammar is a general theory of the organization of natural language as developed by Simon C. Dik (2,13,25) and others. In theory, the functional notions play essential and fundamental roles at different levels of grammar organization. Its theory is based on data and descriptions of many languages, and therefore it has a higher degree of typological adequacy. Functional Grammar offers a platform for both theoretical linguists interested in representation, formalism and descriptive linguists interested in data and analysis.

Scope of this Study:

This research focuses on identifying suitable approach to teach English for students who learn English as a second language for communication purpose.

Aims and Objectives:

This research is designed in finding a suitable approach in improving students' communicative ability in English. The major objectives of the paper are,

- To get them known grammar and its functions in English.
- To enable the students communicate to the situations confidently.
- To identify a suitable approach to teach English for communication purpose.

Hypotheses of the Study:

The following hypotheses have been formulated as research questions by the researcher:

- Why is Grammar to be learnt?
- What are the functions of Grammar in strengthening students' communication ability?
- How can Functional Grammar and Functional English be used to improve Communication ability of the students?

Methodology and Samples:

To begin with, a classroom test in the name of pre-test is conducted in order to understand the level of students, who do under graduation and Functional Grammar is taken as approach. With a collection of feedback, Functional English is used as a teaching approach to hone the students' communicative ability.

English Language Teaching through Functional Grammar:

Functional grammar has a number of features which make it suitable for studying language variation as stated by Halliday (2014).

- Firstly, it is based on the notion of choice - it models grammar as a set of options (a repertoire or resource). This means that it presents grammar to teachers and students as a set of tools they can use rather than as a set of rules about what not to do.
- Secondly, functional grammar looks at the way in which grammar is used to construct texts in their context of use - it is concerned in other words with real language not just with what is made of up examples of language that can be found in many language tests, exercises, work sheets or traditional grammar books. Its application is not restricted to the analysis of isolated sentences - it explains the way in which sentences are structured to construct whole texts such as stories, essays and reports which students learn to read and write in primary and secondary school.
- Thirdly, functional grammar is concerned with the way in which grammar is organised to make a meaning because it is concerned with meaning and it can be related directly to the concerns of teachers and students in all subject areas.

Overall, functional grammar is concerned with the way about different kinds of meaning that contribute to grammatical structure which are comprehensively addressed. It is concerned with resources for

- analysing experience - what is going on,
- analysing interaction - who is communicating with whom
- analysing the ways in which messages are constructed

In order to model grammar as a context sensitive, meaning-making resource, functional grammar looks closely at the different contributions made by clause, phrase and group and word structure to a text.

- At the clause level, functional grammar deals with resources for
 - analysing experience (Process type, Participants and Circumstances),
 - participating in communication (mood and modality)
 - packaging information (theme and cohesion)

In addition it is concerned with resources for combining clauses into clause complexes (sentences).

- At the phrase and group level, functional grammar deals with resources for
 - constructing participants (noun groups)
 - assessing events and setting them in time (verb groups).
 - modifying events (adverb groups)
 - qualifying Processes (preposition phrases)
- At the word class level functional grammar is concerned with resources for adapting words to clause, phrase and group structures
- Within words, functional grammar is concerned with resources for analysing morphemes (inflection and derivation).

Owing to the study of language structure it has not been an explicit part of teacher education for some decades; a technical approach to language is unfamiliar to many teachers. However the resources described above are regularly used by speakers and writers to make meaning in speech and writing. Bringing these resources to consciousness provides a powerful tool for teachers and students to use in comprehending and composing texts within contexts.

Theory of Functional Grammar:

Functional Grammar (FG) is a general theory of the organization of natural language. Functional Grammar seeks to be a theory which is 'functional' in at least three different, though interrelated senses:

- i. It takes a functional view on the nature of language;

- ii. It attaches primary importance to functional relations at different levels in the organization of grammar;
- iii. It wishes to be practically applicable to the analysis of different aspects of language and language use (Thompson, Geoff (2014).

The following standards of adequacy are of particular importance for theory of FG (Simon C. Dik, 1997) :

- i. **TYPOLOGICAL ADEQUACY:** the theory should be formulated in terms of rules and principles which can be applied to any type of natural language.
- ii. **PRAGMATIC ADEQUACY:** what the theory says about a language should be such as to help in understanding how linguistic expressions can be effectively used in communicative interaction.
- iii. **PSYCHOLOGICAL ADEQUACY:** what the theory says about a language should be compatible with what is known about the psychological mechanisms involved in natural language processing.

In Functional Grammar, functional notions play essential and fundamental roles at different levels of grammatical organization. Many of the rules and principles of FG are formulated in terms of functional notions. Three types or levels of functions are distinguished:

- i. **SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS** (Agent, Patient, Recipient, etc.) which define the roles that participants play in states of affairs, as designated by predications.
- ii. **SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS** (Subject and Object) which define different perspectives through which states of affairs are presented in linguistic expressions.
- iii. **PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS** (Theme and Tail, Topic and Focus) which define the informational status of constituents in linguistic expressions. They are related to the expression in the ongoing discourse that is determined by the status of the pragmatic information of Speaker and Addressee as it develops verbal interaction.

Practical Applicability:

Functional Grammar aims at a higher degree of practical applicability in the analysis of diverse aspects of language and language use. An attempt is made to reach this goal by (i) maximizing the degree of typological adequacy, while (ii) minimizing the degree of abstractness of linguistic analysis. The degree of abstractness meant the distance (as measured in terms of rules, operations, or procedures) between the structures postulated for a given language on the basis of the theory, and the actual linguistic expressions of the language constructed in terms of these structures. The following principles limit the abstractness:

- i. transformations in the sense of structure-changing operations are avoided;
- ii. empty elements in underlying structure which do not receive expression are avoided;
- iii. filter devices are disallowed;
- iv. abstract lexical decomposition is not applied (instead the semantic relations between words are accounted for through meaning definitions)

For the most part, theoretical linguists see a grammar as an abstract device that characterizes the presumably infinite set of sentences of a language, that is, which differentiates the sentences from other strings which are not sentences. Computational linguists, on the other hand, usually take a grammar to be a transducer showing how a meaning comes to be represented as a string of words or, more frequently, how a string of words is analyzed to reveal its meaning. Functional grammar has both aspects. It can also be said to be a transducer whose input is a more or less incomplete account of the syntactic relations among the parts of a sentence and whose output is one or more accounts which are complete according to the theory. Given a more or less incomplete description, it verifies a legal grammatical object – a word, phrase, or sentence – and adds such additional detail as the grammar allows. If it is not a legal grammatical object, no output is produced. If it is, one or more descriptions are produced, each an enrichment of the original, but reflecting different grammatical interpretations.

Functional Descriptions:

Intuitively, a description is a set of properties. The objects it describes are those that share just those properties. Generally speaking, to add new properties to a description is to reduce the number of objects in the set described. In fact, there is a duality in the set-theoretic properties of descriptions and those of their extensions, that is, the sets of objects are described. Thus, the empty description applies to all objects; the union of two descriptions apply to the intersections of the sets they individually describe; and the intersection of a pair of descriptions apply to the union of the two original sets of objects. Functional descriptions are defined in such a way as to preserve these intuitive properties. So, suppose that $F(s1) \dots F(s4)$ describe sentences (1) – (4) respectively.

- (1) Raja sent a paper.
- (2) Rama sent a paper.
- (3) Ragul threw the paper.
- (4) Ragul wrote a book
- (5) ... sent a paper.
- (6) Ragul ...
- (7) Ragul sent a paper.

$F(s5) = F(s1) \cap F(s2)$ is a description of all the sentences that have the predicate sent a paper and $F(s6) = F(s3) \cap F(s4)$ is a description of all sentences of which Ragul is the subject. $F(s7) = F(s5) \cup F(s6)$ describes sentence (7), as prepared by Martin Kay(1979).

A simple functional description consists of a possibly empty set of patterns and a list of attributes with associated values. The most important role of syntax is to state constraints on the relations that words and phrases concord by virtue of their status in the sentences. One of the dominant functions of functional grammar is that it states these constraints simply and explicitly.

Functional English:

The importance of English language is on the increase of every walk of life, as recruiters select candidates from colleges. People learn not only English but also many subjects through English. Students need English both for pursuing their studies and communicate in real life situation after they leave the institution.

Involvement and Diversion of Trainers:

Trainers are trying to complete the units because there is a syllabus to be covered. In the beginning most of the teachers concentrate on the practicability of subjects in real life situation, but gradually the teachers are forced to go completing the syllabus.

As N. Krishnaswamy (2000) says in his book, it is the examination that controls “men and women, materials and methods”. In order to make the students proficient in English language, it is mandatory that the number of students in a class has to be limited and the time allotted is to be increased according to the student’s involvement in activities.

Errors Found with Informants:

Standard of Students- In Written:

There are some examples of writings, which were taken from the second year students’ paper.

i am the student of
Your’s Truely
We done a project
have came
present hear
our worker were injured
this our 64th Independence day
a avoidable

By reading the above phrases , it can be known that they know words as well as meaning, but the usages of those words are not correct and they have problems in verbs, homophones, possessive noun, concord, articles and the last one but not the least one , i.e. prepositions.

Verb is the most important component in sentence, but the lateral entry second year students do not know proper grammar. It is understood from the above phrases. They should know correct usage of verbs in sentences. Third person singular subject generally takes verbs having added s/ es / ies with base form of verbs and be verb will be 'is'/have verb will be 'has' in simple present tense. The mistakes done using third person singular subject and verb do not change the meaning, but it is not a correct sentence.

Spoken- The Mistakes:

In Spoken English, students do mistakes like "we warm welcome, one again good morning; I would like to tell to you few words on regarding the Independence Day".

Different Aspects of Teaching:

Second year students have laboratory paper in English to improve their skill in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). Listening and Reading are passive skills, but Speaking and Reading are productive or active skills. So teachers have to concentrate in all these skills then only they could be bold enough in English language.

Spoken:

A person has witnessed a road accident. That person goes to college and narrates to his daughter, KomagalRS about the event. The choice is mobile phone conversation which has its own conventions. They are talking over the phone so the language chosen is oral language. The conversation is like this...

WITNESS Hmm, Good morning. Thought I'd give you a ring ... Just arrived at college ... a bit upset.

KomagalRS What's the problem?

WITNESS I feel ... saw a dreadful crash ... there were police everywhere ... I was caught up in the traffic ... we crawled past the wreck ... the ambulance and the fire brigade were there What a mess! Made me feel sick!

Subject matter	A road accident
Roles	Information giver Receiver
Relationships	Close (father to daughter)
Mode	Spoken
Medium	Mobile phone Conversation

Spoken & Written- Report:

The same accident has attracted the attention of a television network of Polimar TV so that there is a report about the news. Many of the facts might be the same, but the language used will vary, because the journalist is reporting an incident to the general public. The report is as follows...

TV REPORTER

A fatal accident on the corner of Pollachi Road and Balackad Road caused one of worst traffic jams this morning. Two students were killed in the accident. Police are withholding the names of the victims until relatives have been contacted. An eye witness at the scene described the accident as horrific and this was confirmed by a professor Dr. Gnanaprakasam. "I've been working in Karpagam University for four years and I've never seen anything like this. Two students doing B. E in ECE were killed due to rash driving. The student, who was riding the vehicle didn't see the signal and so he could not control his vehicle, because of over speed" Police are interviewing the thirty six year

old driver of the other vehicle involved in the accident. A police spokesperson said that charges were expected to be framed.

Subject matter	A road accident
Roles	TV reporter (information giver) Viewers (information seeker)
Relationships	Distant
Mode	Visual, spoken and written
Medium	Television Report

Written:

The same night, the person who had witnessed the accident decides to write about it in their diary. This is how it is written.

24 NOVEMBER

This afternoon, I saw the most hideous traffic accident. Ambulance officers and the Police Rescue were trying to do something for the victims. I was so angry at being held up in such a horrible traffic jam. I knew there must have been an accident of some kind. But when I saw the accident and the officers working desperately to do something for the people, I thought how selfish I had been.

And now home, safe and well fed, I can't help but think of how this accident must have changed the lives of so many people. I feel guilty that I was so annoyed. I feel frightened that this accident could have happened to anyone - even me. Why were those people killed? The TV said that were college students. It doesn't seem fair. But accidents never seem fair.

Subject matter	A road accident
Roles	Self as a writer and reader
Relationships	Informal for self
Mode	Written
Medium	Diary Entry

Sum up:

This research chiefly deals with some usual sentence structure and patterns to teach English, a general theory of the organization of natural language, standards of adequacy, functional relations and the most important one, practical applicability (Ragupathi, et.al, 2014). Apart from these, this paper deals with solutions related to communication by giving some tasks to overcome the problem. The teacher is not only a felicitator but also a trainer and as well as a trainee. In order to make them proficient in the language the trainer should undergo many drills and do experiments to analyse the environment and the psychology of the students.

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