

THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH IN TEACHING OF HIGHER TRAINING COLLEGES STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The use of the English language to fulfill a specific objective, such as academic study or work promotion, is referred to as functional English. Functional English gives users the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to function confidently, successfully, and independently in their daily lives and at work. Individuals who possess these abilities will be able to participate in and advance in school, training, and employment, as well as develop and secure a broader range of aptitude, attitude, and behavior that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live, work, or study. This paper presents the importance of functional English in English language teaching for students at high training colleges in Kuwait state. The students at these colleges need to understand and use the scientific concepts in appropriate way and in the right form to enable them at the end preparing high quality reports for all training activities and perform in a good manner a description about their tasks and skills learned during training period. This resource outlines some of the existing practices that support making changes to help learners become more functional with English, such as learning through application, learner-centered approaches, active learning, partnership learning, and assessment for learning. In the institute, the Functional English Language System in Mathematic (FELSM) is implemented and used as a case study. It was found that the implementation level for the selected education systems is between 76.50 % and 86.4 % in all practices.

KEYWORDS: Functional English, Higher Training Colleges, Learning By Application, Learner Centered System, Active Learning, Partnership & Assessment.

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INTRODUCTION

Colleges that teach functional skills have discovered that it is a more interesting way to educate and learn. Teachers have provided students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and abilities in real-world settings. Pupils have expressed enthusiasm for learning academic subjects in a real-life setting, which gives their studies greater meaning. The four fundamental components of functional English are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Employers, according to Moss and Bayley (2006), want people who can: articulate clearly, take and pass on messages, deal with customers effectively, read, understand, and follow a wide range of documents, and write fluently and accurately using accepted business conventions of format, spelling, grammar, and punctuation [10]. In a nut shell it is nothing but the acquisition of language skills to interact in the given situation [1].

Assisting learners in selecting appropriate communication methods, ensuring that their communication methods are fit for purpose, communicating in ways that meet the needs of the audience and situation, applying English skills in a variety of meaningful contexts, and eventually becoming increasingly independent in their

learning [1-3]. It is critical to consider learners' functional English rather than functional English as a critical body of information. This will almost certainly necessitate a new approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes practical learning while utilizing a topic or occupational focus whenever possible. This has broad implications for both English classes and the entire curriculum. Learners need opportunities in their specialized English classes to apply their skills to a variety of actual and realistic issues relevant to life and business. Topics should be clearly relevant to students, with motivational, entertaining, and realistic appeal. English instruction should show students how English is used in everyday situations, allowing them to become acquainted with the subject's wide range of applications [4].

BASICS OF FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH LEARNING

This resource outlines some of the existing techniques that enable making changes to assist learners become more functional with English, such as learning using application, learner-centered approaches, active-learning, partnership-learning, and assessment or evaluation for learning.

Writing, speaking, and listening skills will be just as important as reading skills in the education course. Speaking and listening skills will be explicitly taught and learned, with numerous opportunities to participate in real-world and relevant settings to develop and practice them. People with good oral communication skills: have more productive relationships with others, can obtain the information they need from organizations and individuals with whom they must work, can explain things clearly and make a case for themselves, can relate well to peers and colleagues, are more successful in their studies and work, and are less likely to experience conflict and aggression from others. Employers place a high value on oral communication skills. Speaking and listening instruction has been dubbed "Cinderella" in the world of English education. Linguistic abilities and communication abilities are the two primary sub-skills of speaking. Linguistic abilities include phonology, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, whereas communication skills are social abilities. Practical activities include pair work, group work, role play, information gap exercises, recounting stories, guess who I am, games, and so on.

Writing: All written material should be coherent.

Consolidated: Each sentence in a single paragraph should be related to a single overarching theme (often expressed in the topic sentence of the paragraph).

Relevant: Each statement should be directly related to the issue. Every sentence should include a reference to the main topic.

Coherent: The phrases should be ordered logically and grow in a specific pattern.

Well-developed: Each notion mentioned in the paragraph should be well described and supported by evidence and facts that work together to convey the dominating idea of the paragraph. Reading comprehension entails a number of abilities. In general, understanding occurs when the reader comprehends what he has read.

Previewing: checking titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the organization and substance of a reading selection is one strategy that may help students read more quickly and successfully.

Predicting: Using subject matter knowledge to make predictions about content and vocabulary and verify understanding; using text type and purpose knowledge to make predictions about discourse structure; and using author

knowledge to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content.

Skimming and scanning: a quick review of the text to determine the main idea, evaluate text structure, and confirm or challenge predictions.

Guessing from context: rather than stopping to look them up, use prior knowledge of the subject and concepts in the text as hints to the meanings of unfamiliar terms.

Paraphrasing: pausing at the end of a section to assess understanding by restating the material and concepts of the text. Figure 1 depicts the development and maintenance of functional skills for personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education [5].

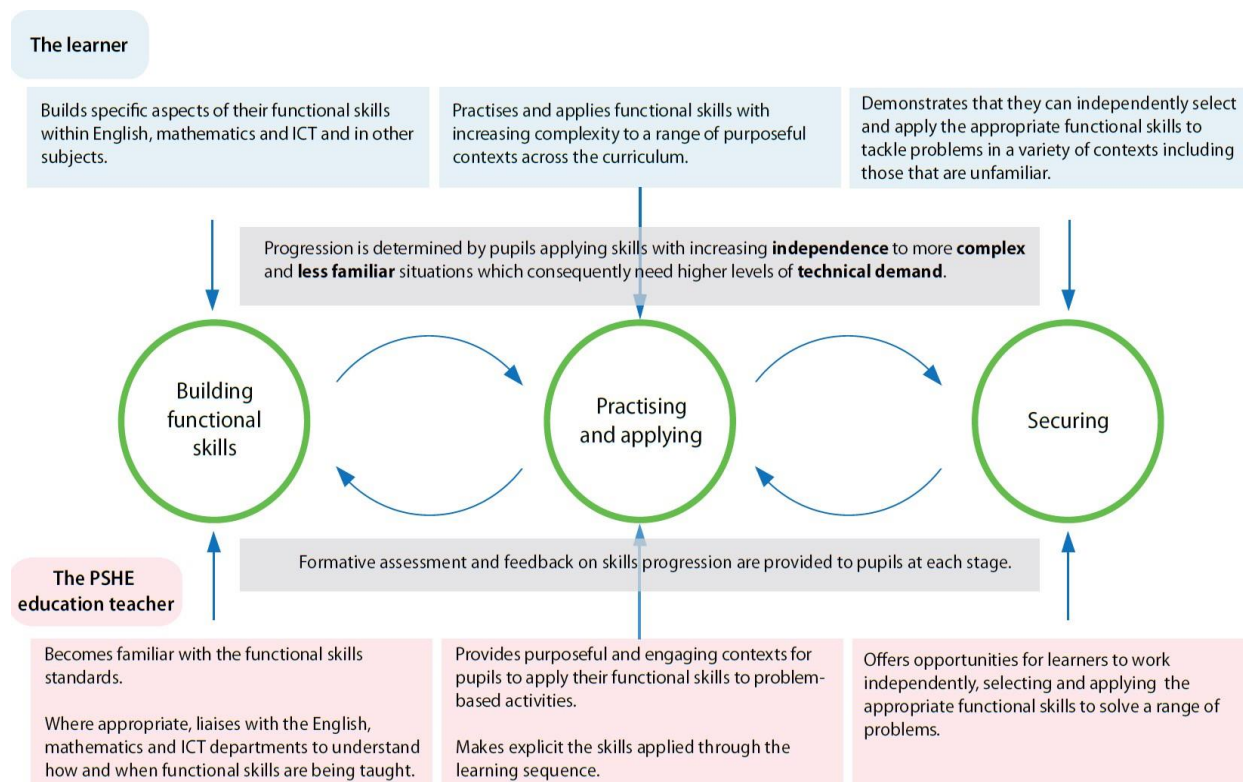


Figure 1: Developing and Securing Functional Skills for Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education

FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH LESSON PLAN

Learning how to teach functional English begins with lesson preparation after you understand functional English. Let's have a look at a functional language course to see how this all works in practice. We'll utilize functional language as an example since it generally fits well within the PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) paradigm. First, the instructor would start the subject and warm up the pupils by sharing a personal anecdote or tale about a time when they helped someone or when they were assisted by someone else. The pupils might then share their own experiences. The teacher would next elicit any terms known by the pupils to give assistance. If they don't know any or many, she'll give them a few instances - Can I assist you with that? Would you like some assistance? Do you require assistance? These would be noted on the board. This is the lesson's presenting stage. The teacher would concentrate on the sentences' form, meaning, and pronunciation. Students would complete a gap-fill exercise or a comparable worksheet in the practice stage using the target

language. It may be a conversation in this lesson. This allows for supervised language practice. Finally, during the production stage, pupils are given time to prepare a role-play that will be performed for the class. This enables unrestricted practice of the target language. As you can see, this language practically prepares our pupils for the real-life scenarios in which they will need to use it. Essentially, teaching functional language helps English Functional Learning (EFL) students to communicate in a variety of circumstances in English, even if their English proficiency is not exceptionally strong. Memorizing a functional language may be accomplished by learning linguistic chunks that can then be utilized again when a certain circumstance arises. Students will be able to make themselves heard and sound more natural in a range of situations, even if they struggle to communicate in more difficult English. The instructor will discover that the students also love studying these pieces since they provide an immediate takeaway from the EFL classroom that they can use anytime they need it. Functional language is a vital component of every language because it allows our pupils to communicate quickly and efficiently. It is critical that you understand how to teach functional language to your pupils. Understanding the nature of functional language can assist you in planning courses that contain activities that are both enjoyable and useful as a learning tool. Learning the functional language will give your students confidence when they use their language outside the classroom [6].

In this paper functional English is applied for mathematics- Functional mathematics- which may be include: Determine how you will use data and probability to determine the likelihood of an outcome (Representing), Data extraction and interpretation from tables, diagrams, charts, and graphs Use common measures, such as money (Analyzing).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies and researches discussed the issue of functional English and its application in education processes, Feng (2013) investigated and studied the nature of functional grammar, its core principles, the basic contrasts between conventional grammar and functional grammar, and its consequences for English teaching and learning. The goal of this work was to provide English Functional Learning (EFL) instructors with a general overview of functional grammar theory and important principles, as well as the beneficial role functional grammar plays in educational environments [7].

Nawaz (2019) conducted research to learn about the perspectives of professors and previous students of BS in Applied Sciences on Functional English courses. The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews and examined statistically and subjectively. Various variables were used in an eclectic model. The findings demonstrate that Functional English classes have relatively generic goals, and books are recommended as course material; nevertheless, this differs from class to class, indicating a lack of consistency in material selection. It also demonstrates that past students' speaking abilities did not improve while taking these classes. They advocate for the inclusion of practical exercises in the curriculum. It also reveals that half of the instructors have their students practice reading and listening skills in class. Former students note that improving listening skills and reading technical articles may be extremely beneficial to pupils in their future careers. Both professors and former students agree that there is an urgent need to incorporate practical exercises into existing curricula [8].

Tiwari (2016) investigated whether it is possible to improve ESL achievement levels in Functional Skills. Following the introduction of the new certificate, observations of Functional Skills English practice over the previous year revealed that students appeared to struggle with the curriculum requirements. The overall level of achievement is low. This made me wonder if the low success rate could be attributed to a lack of exposure to functional skills. This sparked the idea

to conduct research on the complexities of functional English and publish it as a research essay. The researcher concurs with the study's findings regarding the importance of Functional English for ESL learners [4].

According to Deepa (2019), functional English plays a vital part in assisting youngsters in communicating effectively. It assists students in writing with relevance and clarity on a specific topic of interest and experience to them. It aids in understanding simple English passages within their linguistic range and reproducing them in their own words with clarity in their speaking and writing. The following are the primary goals of this paper: To learn how they use functional English in literary contexts. To boost kids' self-esteem when it comes to language. Using folktales to enhance functional English. Improve functional English using a comprehensive approach. To increase the number of languages. To efficiently utilize words. And to evaluate language development. It was discovered that imposing the language on youngsters will instill hostility in their thoughts. According to the findings of this study, students in standard V are finding it difficult to practice functional English, which may be attributed to the teaching techniques and students' interest in the language. Instead of adhering to one method, teachers may experiment with multiple approaches. The diverse method enables students to simply and successfully learn and understand functional English. It is not limited to only clever students or certain themes or disciplines, but is also focused on pupils of all levels. It is a far more effective and successful way than the standard talk and chat method. It prepares pupils for self-learning and also provides English knowledge. New teaching innovations are particularly successful since they advise ways to utilize information and products from other sectors to the educational process to make it more effective. It is an ongoing and active field of study. It simplifies and entertains teaching and learning objectives. To ensure the success of the educational process, emphasis is placed on the utilization of audiovisual aids as well as new breakthroughs and discoveries in teaching, learning, and training [9].

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire is implemented here to measure the effectiveness of using functional English in developing English language skills of the students at High Training Colleges in Kuwait, the questionnaire consists of 19 question. The population of the study including students, tutors, and managers at two high training colleges in Kuwait. The size of the sample taken is 50 persons. After collecting data, it was found that functional English has been effected by many factors or aspects contributing in implement such method like Learning through application (LTA), Learner-centered approaches (LCA), Active learning (AL), Partnership learning (PSL) and Assessment for learning (AFL). In this paper functional English is applied for mathematics- Functional mathematics- which may be include: decide how to use data and probability to assess the likelihood of an outcome, extract and interpret information from tables, diagrams, charts and graphs, and use common measures, including money.

Each aspect of these approaches contribute in constructing a Functional English Language System in mathematic (FELSM), the contribution of each approach is represented mathematically by implementation index (II). The questionnaire suggested here-see appendix 1- is used with the help of Likert scale to calculate the contribution of each aspect in implementing the differentiated education system. Table 1 below shows the statistical standard for the interpretation of the arithmetical averages of variants FELSM latents.

Table 1: Statistical Standard for the Interpretation of the Arithmetical Averages of Variants FELSM Latents

Implementation index II	$0 < II \leq 20\%$	$20 < II \leq 60\%$	$60 < II \leq 70\%$	$70 < II \leq 80\%$	$80 < II \leq 100\%$
Interpretation	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

-Data Analysis and Interpretations

To estimate the Implementation Index (II) for each FELSM variables or contribution factor which includes Learning through application (LTA), Learner-centered approaches (LCA), Active learning (AL), Partnership learning (PSL) and Assessment for learning (AFL), the total score average for all received responses were computed and divided by (5 times the number of questions for this variable), as shown in Equation below. The number “5” refers to the used Likert scale which is here “five points”. The results can be interpreted according to Table 1.

$$\text{Implementation Index (II\%)} = \frac{\sum \text{Scores average for each question}}{(5) * \text{Number of Questions}} \times 100$$

The first latent, learning through application (LTA) is chosen as an example to calculate the score average and the level of implementation for this variable. As shown in Table 2, the implementation index for Learning through application (LTA) can be computed as follows:

$$\text{Implementation Index (II\%)}_{LTA} = \frac{4.0 + 4.2 + 4.4 + 4.5 + 4.5}{5(5)} \times 100 = 86.40\%$$

According to table 2, the implementation of LTA is “Excellent”. Similarly, the implementation index of all FELSM latent, namely Learner-centered approaches (LCA), Active learning (AL), Partnership learning (PSL) and Assessment for learning (AFL) were calculated and presented in the table 3, table 4, Table 5, and table 6 respectively, the overall results are tabulated in Table 7. The overall average of implementation Index for the FELSM is found to be 80.38 %, that is mean the considered education system is excellent implementer for such principles..

Table 2: Implementation index for Learning through application (LTA)

Question. No.	Item	Score Average
1	The lecturer use direct vocabularies related to the math material	4.00
2	The instructor use functional texts of math subjects and define concepts of each topic	4.20
3	The instructor presents mathematical topics and discussed them with suitable English words and details	4.4
4	The use of functional words increases students understanding of the scientific topics	4.50
5	Apply functional English in math teaching simplify math material and helps students in their study	4.50
Average of LTA practice		4.32
LTA implementation index		86.40 %
Interpretation		Excellent

Table 3: Implementation Index of Learner-Centered Approaches (LCA)

No.	Item	Score Average
6	The instructor concentrated on learners and use dynamic relationship with students	4.00
7	The instructor allow students to express their opinion and accept feedback	4.40
8	The instructor allows active learning, in which students Solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, and explain.	4.20
9	The instructor motivates students by giving them some control over learning processes	3.6
Average of LCA practice		4.05
LCA implementation index		81.00 %
Interpretation		Excellent

Table 4: Implementation Index for Active Learning (AL)

No.	Item	Score average
10	The instructor uses active learning during English courses by using many real-life, relevant situations.	3.6
11	The instructor uses oral communication method which is one of the most high level skills	3.8
12	The instructor uses active learning such as listening, conversation and discussion	3.9
13	The instructor uses practical actions like pair work, group work, role play, information gap activities, narrating stories	4.2
Average of AL practice		3.825
AL implementation index		76.50 %
Interpretation		Very Good

Table 5: Implementation Index for Partnership Learning (PSL)

No.	Item	Score average
14	The instructor divide the class into groups containing different students levels	4.00
15	The instructor encourages partnership between students in preparing projects, then make discussions using functional English concepts	4.00
16	The instructor allows discussing of results between groups using functional English concepts	4.00
Average of PSL practice		4.00
PSL implementation index		80.00 %
Interpretation		Excellent

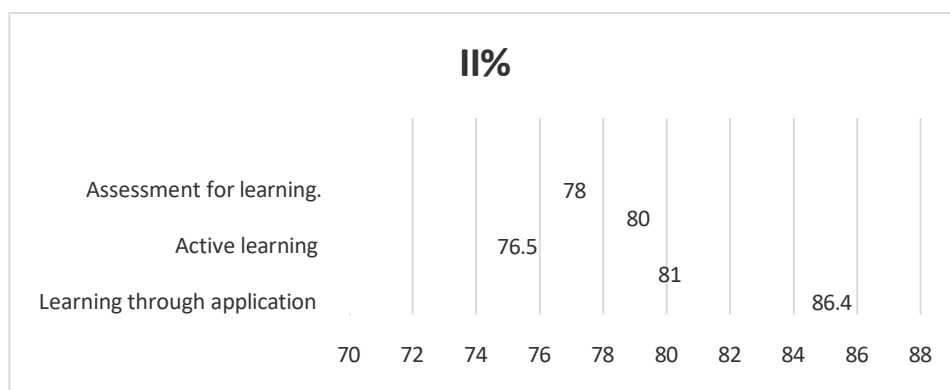
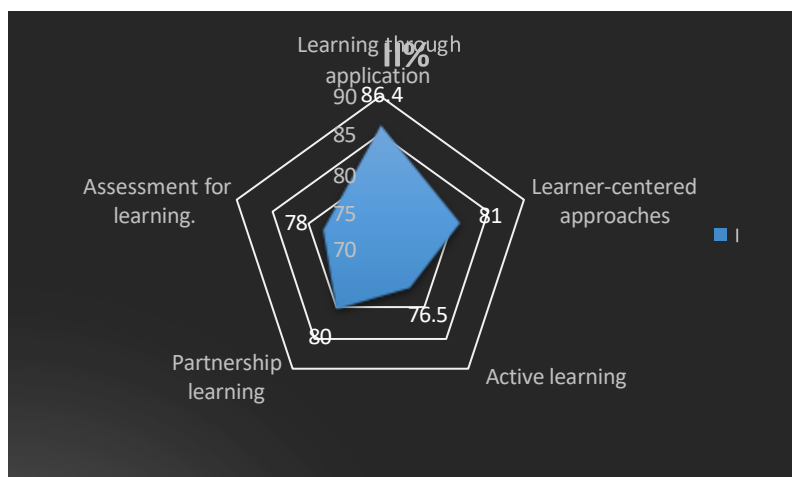
Table 6: Implementation Index of Assessment for Learning (AOL)

No.	Item	Score average
17	The assessment of learning by the instructor concentrated on using accurate vocabularies in describing math problems	4.00
18	The instructors use oral presentation of math problems solving as one of assessment methods	3.80
19	Reporting by functional English is used by instructors in assessment of learning	3.90
Average of AOL practice		3.90
AOL implementation index		78.00 %
Interpretation		Very Good

Table 7: Summary for the Implementation Level Results of Each Construct Latent Variable

Construct Latent Variable	Mean (\bar{x})	Variance (s^2)	Implementation Index (%)	Interpretation
Learning through application	4.320	0.0454	86.40	Excellent
Learner-centered approaches	4.050	0.1278	81.00	Excellent
Active learning	3.825	0.0658	76.50	Very Good
Partnership learning	4.000	0.000	80.00	Excellent
Assessment for learning.	3.900	0.010	78.00	Very Good
Overall LBES implementation level	4.019	0.0498	80.38	Excellent

Table 7 also shows that we can describe the selected sample of the energy institute as “Excellent” implementers of FELSM hence the average of all latent variables is 80.38% which is equivalent to “Excellent” depending on table 1. Figure 2 illustrates visually a comparison between implementation indices of all model latent. Figure 3 represents radar chart for implementation indices values of FELSM latent variables, the figure reveals that the implementation level for the selected education systems is between 76.50 % and 86.4 % in all practices.

**Figure 2: Visual Comparison of Implementation Index between FELSM's Latent Variables****Figure 3: Radar Chart for Mean of Different Latent Variables of FELSM.**

It was found that implementing FELSM is useful for students studied math and other technical courses in the diploma stage because they need crucially knowing all concepts and vocabularies needed to describe, analyze and discuss the scientific issues of mathematical and physical or mechanical models. The latents or variables discussed in this study which contributing in the implementation of FELSM have very good or excellent implementation index %, the values of II

% are found in the range of 76.5% to 86.4% which means if the instructors followed the suggested plan for constructing English functional based education system the results will prove that functional English skills for students would be improved.

CONCLUSIONS

Implanting functional English-based education system is very important to improve students' English skills in all fields, especially to those students at technical colleges. To implement a functional English based education system in any scientific field, the latents should be taken into consideration are as mentioned above, Learning through application (LTA), Learner-centered approaches (LCA), Active learning (AL), Partnership learning (PSL) and Assessment for learning (AFL).

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire Used in the Study

Learning Through Application						
No.	Item	Response				
		1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Some of the Time	4 Most of the Time	5 Always
1	The lecturer use direct vocabularies related to the math material					
2	The instructor use functional texts of math subjects and define concepts of each topic					
3	The instructor presents mathematical topics and discussed them with suitable English words and details					
4	The use of functional words increases students understanding of the scientific topics					
5	Apply functional English in math teaching simplify math material and helps students in their study					
Learner-Centered Approaches						
6	The instructor concentrated on learners and use dynamic relationship with students					
7	The instructor allow students to express their opinion and accept feedback					
8	The instructor allows active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, and explain.					
9	The instructor motivates students by giving them some control over learning processes					
Active Learning						
10	The instructor uses active learning during English courses by using many real-life, relevant situations.					
11	The instructor uses oral communication which is one of the most highly valued skills					
12	The instructor uses active learning such as listening, conversation and discussion					
13	The instructor uses practical activities include pair work, group work, role play, information gap activities, narrating stories					
Partnership Learning						
14	The instructor divide the class into groups containing different students levels					
15	The instructor encourages partnership between students in preparing projects, then make discussions using functional English concepts					
16	The instructor allows discussing of results between groups using functional English concepts					
Assessment for Learning						
17	The assessment of learning by the instructor concentrated on using accurate vocabularies in describing problems					
18	The instructors use oral presentation of math problems solving as one of assessment methods					
19	Reporting by functional English is used by instructors in assessment of learning					