

*A Presentation
of
The Situational Approach
&
The Functional-Notional
Approach
to
Syllabus Design*

*Presented by:
Tarfa Ash-Shammari
Dina Al-Sibai*

*Dr. Ali Shehadeh
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The Situational Approach to Syllabus Design

Introduction: The Development of the Situational Approach

Few language teachers today are familiar with the term Situational Language Teaching, which refers to an approach to language teaching developed from the 1930s to the 1960s by British applied linguists Harold Palmer and A. S. Hornby, two of the most prominent figures in British twentieth-century language teaching. In fact, they attempted to develop a more “communicative” approach to language teaching. Like many others, Palmer and Hornby believed that a grammatical or structural syllabus was neither efficient, nor effective for language learning since this model offers language samples outside their social and cultural contexts which makes transfer of learning from the classroom to the real world quite difficult. Hornby’s *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*, first published in 1954, is based on a sequenced language syllabus together with procedures for introducing each new item by linking it to a particular classroom situation and in this way, meaning would be established. Current approaches to situational syllabus design, however, go beyond the classroom and introduce various “real-life” situations. Another active proponent of the Situational Approach in the 1960s was the Australian George Pittman. Pittman and his colleagues were responsible for developing an influential set of teaching materials based on the Situational Approach, which were widely used in Australia, New Guinea, and the Pacific territories.

Situational Syllabi

Central Premises, Logic, Syllabus Type, Assumption, Components, & Types

◆ **Central Premises:** The main focus of a situational syllabus is on the use of language as a social medium. The linguistic premise of this syllabus is that language is always used in context, never in isolation and the choice of linguistic forms are restricted by social situations. The *educational premise* is that there should be a different syllabus for different learners, based on the individual needs of the learners.

◆ **Logic:** The logic behind a situational syllabus is that if the content of language teaching is formed by a range of real or imaginary behavioral or experiential situations in which a foreign language is used, the situational syllabus provides for concrete contexts within which to learn language structures, thus making it easier for most learners to visualize, and this, in turn, helps in promoting students’ motivation.

◆ **Syllabus Type:** Since situational syllabi are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning the language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes, situational syllabi are commonly referred to as product-oriented, analytical syllabi whereby learners are required to achieve situational language accuracy.

◆ **Assumption:** The designer of a situational syllabus attempts to predict those situations in which the learner will find him/herself, and uses these situations (e.g., a restaurant, an airplane, a post office, etc.) as a basis for selecting and presenting language content. The underlying assumption is that language is related to the situational contexts in which it occurs.

◆ **Components:** A situational syllabus will typically include the following elements:

1. The physical context in which the language event occurs (such as finding a room, ordering a meal, buying stamps, or getting around town).
2. The channel of communication. Is it spoken or written?
3. The language activity. Is it productive or receptive?
4. The number and the character of the participants.
5. The relationships between the participants and the type of activity.

Obviously, different syllabuses will result for different types of learners. The exact contents of a syllabus will be the result of a careful behavioral prediction and will consist of an inventory of language situations and a description of the linguistic content of each of these situations.

◆ **Types:** There are three types of situational syllabi:

1. *Concrete*: Situations are acted out to specific settings using specific patterns.
2. *Mythical*: Situations depend on fictional characters in a fictional place.
3. *Limbo*: Specific setting of the situation is of little or no importance. What is important is the particular language involved.

The Effect of the Situational Approach on Language Teaching

- ⊙ Language teaching begins with the spoken language. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form.
- ⊙ Situational language teaching adopts an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. Explanation is therefore discouraged and the learner is expected to deduce the meaning of a particular structure or vocabulary item from the situation in which it is presented.
- ⊙ Extending structures and vocabulary to new situations takes place by generalization.
- ⊙ The learner is expected to apply the language learned in a classroom to situations outside the classroom.
- ⊙ Accuracy in both pronunciation and grammar is regarded as crucial, and errors are to be avoided at all costs.
- ⊙ Automatic control of basic structures and sentence patterns is fundamental to reading and writing skills, and this is achieved through speech work.
- ⊙ Practice techniques employed often consist of guided repetition and substitution activities, including chorus repetition, dictation, drills, and controlled oral-based reading and writing tasks.

An Evaluation of Situational Syllabi

The greatest strengths of the situational syllabus are:

- ⊙ Explicit attention is paid to the influence of social factors on language choice, especially to registeral variation (i.e. when to be formal versus informal).
- ⊙ It may motivate learners to see that what they are learning is “real-life” language that actually meets their most pressing everyday communication needs.

The shortcomings of the situational syllabus, however, are quite a few:

- ⊙ While certain language functions will most likely occur in certain physical situational settings such as “At the Post Office” or “In a Restaurant” , this does not necessarily mean that all the language forms that will be used can be predicted. One may go into a restaurant, not to order a meal, but only to ask for directions to a nearby museum. Hence, a situational syllabus will be limited for students whose needs are not encompassed by the situations in the syllabus. Simply said, language users are real people – not just robots in situations.
 - ⊙ The presence of “artificial” dialogues in many existing materials, which both illustrate recurrent grammatical patterns and present practical phrases for a situational context, often include discourse that would never be used in natural language. Thus, language as practiced in the classroom and language as spoken in the real world will often have little in common.
 - ⊙ In general, there are no clearly defined criteria for sequencing material.
- In conclusion, a situational syllabus is probably most appropriate for short-term special-purpose courses as in giving prospective tourists survival skills or preparing service personnel, such as waiters or waitresses, to deal with routine requests or fire fighters to handle emergency situations. It has limited potential for the language learner interested in acquiring global language proficiency.

Practical Demonstration: On the following page is an example of a lesson plan based on the situational approach. This plan is mainly designed for an “intermediate level” Speaking class. (Please also see Appendix A for examples of teaching grammar in situational contexts).

RETURNING DEFECTIVE ITEMS TO STORES

Objective: To improve grammar, build vocabulary and develop listening and speaking skills associated with a particular topic or situation & to develop assertiveness techniques for returning defective items to stores.



Situation:

Mrs. Lopez bought a pair of shoes on sale. She wore them one week and noticed the sewing was starting to come out. She took them back to the shoe store and this is what happened:

Salesman: Can I help you?

Lopez: Yes, I bought these shoes last week and now they are starting to fall apart.

I would like my money back. **(x2)**

S: Do you have the sales receipt?

L: No, I don't, but I want my money back. **(x2)**

S: I am sorry, but we have to have the receipt.

L: I understand what you're saying, but I want my money back. If you can't help me, who can? **(x2)**

S: No one. You have to have your sales slip.

L: I understand what you are saying but I want my money back. If you can not help me, who can? **(x2)**

S: Well, the manager. But he will tell you the same thing I am telling you.

L: I want to talk to the manager, please. **(x2)**

S: Just a minute.

Salesman goes through a door in the back of the store, comes back in a few minutes with another man.

The salesman points to Mrs. Lopez and the other man comes toward Mrs. Lopez.

Manager: Hello, I am the manager. Did you have a problem with something?

L: I bought these shoes last week and they are starting to fall apart and I want my money back. **(x2)**

M: Let me see the shoes, please. Oh, this is no problem at all. We can fix these for you again in no time.

L: I don't want them repaired. I want my money back. **(x2)**

M: It is not our policy to refund money.

L: I understand what you are saying, but I want my money back. **(x2)**

M: Listen, Mrs. ...?

L: Lopez.

M: Mrs. Lopez, if we refunded everybody's money, we would have a bookkeeping nightmare. We just can not afford that. Surely you can understand.

L: I understand what you are saying, but I want my money back. **(x2)**

M: But you have worn these for a week. We can not give you all your money back.

L: I know I only wore them for a week and they started falling apart and I want my money back. **(x2)**

M: (Sigh) O.K., come with me and I will see that you get it back.

Instructions to the teacher:

1. Explain the philosophy behind the technique, namely, persistence pays off. Point out to the student that limited language ability should not be a disadvantage for them with this type of technique.

2. The teacher first presents a recording of the dialogue and students follow silently.

3. The teacher does the following:

a. Choral imitation in which students all together or in large groups repeat what the teacher has said. This works best if the teacher gives a clear instruction like "Repeat," or "Everybody".

b. Elicitation, in which the teacher, using mime, prompt words, gestures, pictures etc., gets students to ask questions, make statements, or give new examples of the pattern. For example, have students tell about times when they were wronged as customers and what, if anything, they did about it.

c. Substitution drilling, in which the teacher uses cue words (words, pictures, numbers, names, etc.) to get individual students to mix the examples of the new patterns.

d. Question-answer drilling, in which the teacher gets one student to ask a question and another to answer until most students in the class have practiced.

e. Correction, in which the teacher indicates by shaking his/her head, repeating the error, etc., that there is a mistake and invites the student or a different student to correct it.

The Functional-Notional Approach to Syllabus Design

Introduction

A functional-notional syllabi is a semantically-based syllabus which can be considered as the most popular alternative to the structural (formal/grammatical) syllabus because it (a) combines two important elements to syllabus design: firstly, meanings (the *notions*) and secondly, communicative acts (the *functions*). & (b) was one of the first syllabi to discourage the behavioral input-output chain in which the highest priority is given to formal accuracy.

The Development of the Functional-Notional Syllabus, its Pioneers & Major Advocates

Traditionally, language learning syllabuses for schools and colleges were structured around the grammar of the target language, dealing with categories such as noun classes or verb tenses systematically in turn and they assumed that the learner's goal was a complete, in-depth mastery of the target language, and also that the learner would be willing to study for some years before applying practically what had been learned. However, by the 1970s language educators were increasingly dissatisfied with such formalistic views, which seemed increasingly out of line with the needs and interests of the new mass learners of foreign languages coming forward in the postwar years. Both for busy adult learners with vocational needs and for new-style, less academic learners of school age, it was realized that motivation depended largely on much more immediate 'payoff' in terms of the usefulness for practical purposes of what was taught. A search began, therefore, for types of language syllabi which could offer at least limited communicative ability from an early stage. The situational syllabus, as we have just discussed, was such an attempt and now we turn to a second, more influential, type of early "communicative" syllabi: namely, the functional-notional syllabus.

In the seventies, it became even more apparent that second language students were unable to fully express themselves nor were they able to do so with precision. They were quite capable of imitating and memorizing the language, but could not use it in context. The Council of Europe took on the challenge to find another means of teaching/learning a second language. In 1971, a group of linguists, now known as the Expert Group, was invited by the Committee of Out-of-School Education of the Council of Cultural Cooperation to study the needs of European students and to enquire into whether it was feasible to create better and more effective conditions for language learning by adults.

As the initial reports of the Group were received favorably, their mandate was generalized in 1978 to cover all levels and types of language learning, including schools and universities and for those learners who need to become functional in a language, outside the traditional school curriculum. They developed a large and cohesive body of work, the most notable of which is Van Ek's "Threshold Level" of the Council of Europe which is in the form of a document and it includes a list of situations, topics, general and specific notions and adequate language forms, as well as some methodological implications. In fact, the functional-notional basic principles to syllabus design are described in Threshold level English authored by Van Ek and Alexander, 1980. The Council of Europe activity proposed new, functional-notional syllabus models for foreign languages, which have become internationally influential.

Among the linguistic philosophers, applied linguists such as David Wilkins (1972) borrowed a functional view of language. Wilkins realized that it was possible to group language items for teaching purposes not only in terms of the grammatical category to which they belonged but also in terms of the language function they performed. Thus, for example, a range of grammatically varied language could be taught together to exemplify functions such as 'apologizing', 'thanking', 'requesting', etc.

Premises, Components &

Characteristics of a Functional-Notional Syllabus

◆ **Premises:** A functional-notional syllabus is primarily based not on a linguistic analysis but on an analysis of learners' social and/or vocational communicative needs. This syllabus holds that the classification of skill levels should be based on what people want to do with the language (functions) or in terms of what meanings people want to convey (notions). As such, the syllabus is based on the following premises: (1) communication is meaningful behavior in a social and cultural context that requires creative language use rather than synthetic sentence building. (2) language is constructed around language functions and notions: functions such as evaluating, persuading, arguing, informing, agreeing, questioning, requesting, expressing emotions and semantico-grammatical notions such as time, quantity, space, location, and motion. The aim of this approach was to transfer these functions to acts of communication.

◆ **Components:**

The essential components found in functional-notional syllabi are as follows:

- ① The situations in which the foreign language will be used. A situation will always include the following: the participants, the place, & the time.
- ② Topics, and what the learner will be able to do with these, for example, everyday interactions, such as buying food, giving directions, are offering advice, etc.
- ③ The language activities in which the learner will engage.
- ④ The language functions which the learner will perform. For example:
 1. **Personal** = expressing one's thoughts or feelings (e.g., love, joy, pleasure, happiness) and the everyday feelings (e.g., hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, etc.)
 2. **Interpersonal** = Enabling us to establish and maintain desirable social and working relationships (e.g., greetings and leave takings, introducing people to others, expressing joy at another's success, extending – accepting – declining invitations, apologizing, interrupting another speaker politely, etc.)
 3. **Directive** = Attempting to influence the actions of others (e.g., discouraging someone from pursuing a course of action, persuading someone to change his point of view, warning someone, etc.)
 4. **Referential** = talking or reporting about things, actions, events, or people in the environment in the past or in the future; talking *about* language (what is termed the metalinguistic function (e.g., identifying items or people in the classroom, the school the home, or paraphrasing, summarizing, or translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa), etc.)
 5. **Imaginative** = Discussions involving elements of creativity and artistic expression (e.g., discussing a poem, a story, a piece of music, a play, a painting, a film, a TV program or creating rhymes, poetry, stories or plays, etc.)
- ⑤ The general notions which the learner will be able to handle. Notions are the interaction of categories of meaning and grammatical form. Examples of notions are time (time relation: past tense, present tense; duration: until, since), quantity (countable, uncountable), space (dimensions locations, motion) and so on.
- ⑥ The specific (topic related) notions which the learner will be able to handle.
- ⑦ The language forms the learner will be able to use. These forms are usually referred to as *exponents* which are the language utterances or statements that stem from the function, the situation and the topic.
- ⑧ The degree of skill the learner will be required to display.

◆ **Characteristics:** The following are the main characteristics of the functional-notional approach:

1. a functional view of language focusing on doing something through language
2. a semantic base, as opposed to a grammatical or a situational base
3. a learner-centered view of language learning
4. a basis in the analysis of learner needs for using language that is reflected in goals, content selection and sequencing, methodology, and evaluation
5. learner-centered goals, objectives, and content organization reflecting authentic language behavior and offering a spiraling development of content
6. learning activities involving authentic language use
7. testing focused on ability to use language to react to and operate on the environment

Logic, Syllabus Type, Assumptions, & Philosophy Behind Functional-Notional Syllabi

◆ **Logic:** The logic behind the functional-notional syllabus is that if the goal is a general competence in language, language content will be context-dependent, drawing ideas from sociolinguistics and viewing language as interpersonal rather than a personal behavior. As a result, a functional-notional based syllabus will take communicative language functions as the leading element, with structural organization being largely determined by the order already established by the functional sequence.

◆ **Syllabus Type:** The functional-notional syllabus is considered as an analytical syllabus which is based on the notion of general competence in language as the goal. Wilkins (1976) explains, "Much greater variety of linguistic structure is permitted from the beginning and the learner's task is to approximate his own linguistic behavior more and more closely to the global language," (p. 1). Since this type of approach to language teaching anticipates that certain language functions will be acquired at the end, this type of syllabus, like the situational syllabus, has been categorized as a product-oriented syllabus.

◆ **Assumption:** this type of syllabus makes the assumption that the learner's needs, motivations, characteristics, abilities, limitations and resources are the point of departure. Selection from the components of the syllabus will thus be made in terms of the learner and in terms of relevance to his communicative purposes. This means that the whole system must be needs-oriented. The needs of both society and the individual must be studied, and in particular the specification of language-learning objectives must be made according to what it is that the learner wants to achieve through language.

◆ **Philosophy:** This type of syllabus has been developed from a sociolinguistic viewpoint with the primary purpose of identifying the elements of a target language which its learners, as members of a particular group and with particular social and occupational purposes in mind, most need to know. Hence, the driving force behind the syllabus is to identify the language functions and notions which the learner may wish to perform acts such as 'advising', 'requesting', 'informing', etc. (**functions**) in the 'future' (**notion**).

The Effect of the Functional-Notional Approach on Language Teaching Pedagogy

By the mid-1970's, new textbooks incorporating a functional dimension began to appear, while, instead of having such chapter or unit headings as "*Articles Before a Vowel Sound*" or "*Present Perfect Simple Tense*", such textbooks now included titles like "*Ask for, Give & Refuse Permission*" and "*Expressing Personal Opinions*" since such syllabi were organized on the basis of communicative functions rather than on grammatical structures. Further, the placement of items in the syllabus usually corresponded to real world language. For example, since the Present Perfect is frequently used, it is included at the beginning levels of instruction.

As for the effect of the functional-notional approach on classroom teaching, what the learner wants to communicate is taken as its starting point. A functional-notional approach begins by assessing learners' communicative needs. This may be done intuitively, based on experience, and/or by means of questionnaires or interviews. Language teaching is then organized in terms of content rather than form. In its purest form, a language program founded on functional-notional principles would consist of sequenced sets of oral and written functions, beginning with those most needed for survival and concluding at a proficiency level sufficient for the learner to communicate successfully, but not natively or near-natively, in most situations requiring the non-technical use of language. This level, in actuality, corresponds to what has been termed the "Threshold Level" of communication in Europe.

As a result, priority is given to **(a)** sentences in combination instead of the sentence as the basic unit in language teaching, **(b)** meaning (or communication) over form which reduces the attention given to grammar and the importance assigned to grammatical accuracy, **(c)** participation in authentic language use, **(d)** fluency and appropriateness in learner performance over formal accuracy, **(e)** speaking and listening skills in class, & **(f)** less controlled (subjective) testing.

An Evaluation of Functional-Notional Syllabi

The greatest strengths of this syllabus include the following:

- ☉ The learners learn how to use language to express authentic communicative purposes.
- ☉ Learners may be motivated by the opportunity to use real-world language to express their own purposes, ideas and emotions.
- ☉ The syllabus is easily expandable and admission of students into the syllabus is possible at any time.
- ☉ It promotes language variation since students may choose a variety of expressions and a number of grammatical patterns for each communicative function.

The functional-notional syllabus model has not been without its critics, however.

☉ The functional-notional syllabus seemed a very sensible idea at the time; however, even Wilkins himself admitted that there are problems in defining and specifying such a syllabus - due to the enormous complexity of the task of planning the content of language syllabuses in this way.

☉ The lists which appeared in the Council of Europe syllabuses are simply random selections of functions, topics and exponents, for example:

Topics (e.g., Identification, Health and welfare, Food and drink, etc.)

Functions (e.g., Requesting information, Greeting people, etc.)

The main problem with such lists is the difficulty of defining functions with precision and clarity. The absence of set conditions (or contextual factors) which limit or determine interpretation of a given function means that there is at best some ambiguity, and, at worst, a total misunderstanding over what is meant by such functions as, for example, *expressing intention*, *expressing one is/is not obliged to do something* or *expressing dissatisfaction*.

☉ A single language function, for instance, “inviting” may be expressed in many different ways by using different exponents for different contexts; e.g., formal vs. informal contexts. For learners, this sometimes causes confusion and frustration which results from their inability to determine which exponent to use in a given situation, especially at the beginning levels.

☉ There are also difficulties of selecting and grading function and form. Clearly, the task of deciding whether a given function (i.e. persuading), is easier or more difficult than another (i.e. approving), is not an easy task. Some have argued that the major problem with a purely functional-notional approach is that in attempt to sequence the functions in an organized manner, one leaves grammatical structures unsequenced, which is not advisable in the light of both cognitive learning psychology and research that indicates the existence of a natural order of acquisition of language structures.

☉ Some have argued that the finite inventories of functions in functional-notional syllabuses are not different from inventories of grammar items; for example, instead of learning “the simple past”, learners might now be required to “talk about the things you did last weekend”. Hence, the problems are basically the same; being able to perform certain functions does not equal language competence as a whole.

◎ It is a fact that the functional-notional approach is exclusively concerned with the target language, and so all the cross-cultural concerns of communicative competence oriented approaches simply disappear. However, teaching conventional complaints to Japanese students is rather different from teaching complaints to, for example, Latin American students. Whereas Latin Americans have rules in Spanish which are very similar to American rules, the Japanese do not complain in Japanese, so the very function of “complaining” has to be learned as well as its linguistic form. In general, functional-notional syllabi don’t work very well in situations with diverse students.

A Few Concluding Remarks on Functional-Notional Syllabi

Some “communicative” educators, who have forced students into premature language production without error correction, have probably done more harm than good. Sound syllabus design must recognize that semantic and linguistic considerations are forever interrelated and that no approach can deal solely with either grammatical patterns or situational settings or communicative language. It is firmly believed that language learning materials should incorporate both formal and functional elements.

Such an integrated approach, which brings the best grammatical and functional models to second language teaching and learning, would permit instant language use in communicative situations but would not disadvantage those learners who want to become proficient in the foreign language. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Few commercially available instructional materials facilitate the implementation of such an integrated syllabus design. Individuals in charge of language programs must still adapt and adjust existing materials to include both structural and functional-notional components (See Appendix B for a lesson which integrates both structural and functional features).

Finally, it is important to point out that functional-notional syllabi are most readily applicable for courses and programs for learners with special purposes, such as Spanish for medical personnel or French for business people whereby a sophisticated needs assessment would be typically implemented before beginning the program. For general academic courses, however, a needs analysis is less clear-cut. Most students have no immediate need to study a foreign language, and the challenge for the course designer is to predict the students' needs. The chief question they ask themselves is: What will be the future uses of a language for the majority of students? In fact, some will travel or even live and work in a country where the language is spoken, while others will need a knowledge of how languages work and strategies for learning another language more quickly. Whatever the needs, national polls of adults and students indicate that they want to learn to communicate, above all else.

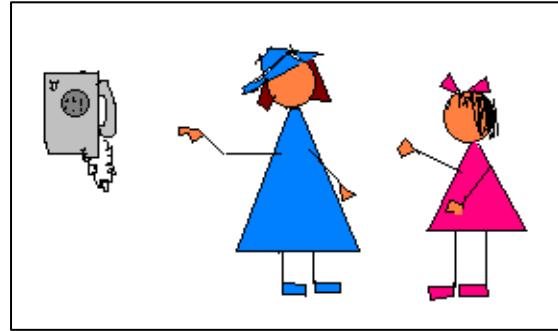
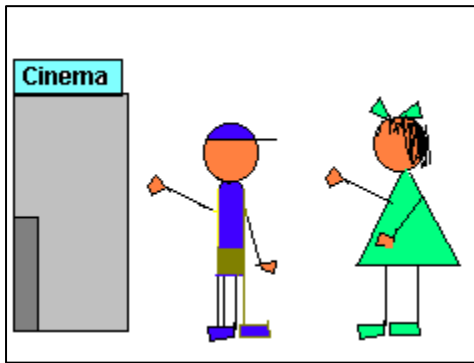
An Application of the Functional-Notional Approach

On the following page is an example of a “beginner” lesson plan based on the functional-notional approach involving the language functions of “requesting assistance” and “complying with such requests” Specifically, asking for directions and agreeing to give directions.

(Please see Appendix C for a brief guide to designing a functional-notional syllabus).

GIVING DIRECTIONS

Presentation of a brief dialogue or several mini-dialogues, preceded by a motivation to the learners' probable community experience and a discussion of the function and situation-people, roles, setting, topic, and the informality or formality of the language which the function and situation demand.



PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Look at the pictures above and guess what these people are talking about.

Do you think the girls in picture 1 and 2 are asking for directions in the same way?

If you want to get to the nearest bus stop, how would you ask: a. a small child; b. an old gentleman?

WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Listen to the dialogues and check your guesses

DIALOGUE 1:

Girl: Is there a movie somewhere around?

Boy: Sure. It's over there.

Girl: Thanks a lot.

DIALOGUE 2:

Girl: Excuse me. Could you tell me where the nearest telephone is?

Woman: Certainly. It's just round the corner.

Girl: Thank you very much.

POST-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

1. Questions and answers based on the dialogues and on the pupils' personal experience.

Answer the following questions:

Why do the girls in picture 1 and 2 ask for directions in a different way?

When do we use informal questions like '**Where is...?**'

When do we use formal questions like '**Would you...?**', '**Could you ...?**'

Which way would you use to ask your teachers for directions? Why?

2. Oral practice of the dialogues.

Take roles and repeat/act out the dialogues.

GUIDED COMMUNICATION

Give additional examples in situation and stimulate learners to generalize.

You are lost in a foreign city.

Ask a policeman how to get to your hotel.

FREE COMMUNICATION

Elicit free conversation and evaluate learning.

Further Reading:

◆ Situational Approach to Syllabus Design:

English in Situations

By R. O'Neill

Goals Clarification: Curriculum Teaching Evaluation

By W. Born

◆ Functional-Notional Approach to Syllabus Design:

Fitting in: A Functional/Notional Text for Learners of English

by Margaret Pogemiller Coffey

Functional-Notional Concept: Adapting the FI Textbook

by Gail Guntermann

A functional-notional syllabus for adult learners of Irish

by D. G Little

Functional-Notional Approach: From Theory to Practice

by Mary Finnocchiaro, Christopher Brumfit

Functional-Notional Concepts: Adapting the FL Textbook.

by June K. Phillips, Gail Guntermann

Successful course books based on Functional-Notional design:

D. A. Wilkins' metalanguage from his seminal work "Notional Syllabuses [Oxford 1976] got carried over into more than a couple of successful coursebooks.

1. Abbs Brian & Ingrid Freebairn "Building Strategies" Longman 1979 - see TB for description of the N/F Approach.
2. Jones, Leo "Functions of English" Cambridge 1979
3. Jones, Leo "Notions of English" Cambridge 1982

Less successful course books of the late 1970s and early 1980s by other writers, who were good at espousing the theory, included:

1. "Communicate" Cambridge 1979
2. "Approaches" Cambridge 1979.

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Appendix A
Examples of Teaching Grammar in Situational Contexts

Situation or Context	Points of Grammar
Follow a recipe or instructions from a boxed cake mix to bake a cake.	Imperative verb form Present continuous tense
Give directions to another person to get to a store, the post office, or a bank using a map.	Present tense Non-referential it
Discuss plans for a class field trip to the zoo.	Future tense If-clauses Conditional tense
Describe a past vacation, weekend, etc.	Simple past tense Question formation Forms of verb to do Word order in negation
Role play a shopping trip to buy a gift for a family member or friend.	May, might Collective nouns and quantifiers (any, some, several, etc.) Indirect object
Answer information questions: Name, address, phone number, etc.	Present tense of verb to be Possessive adjectives
Tell someone how to find an object in your kitchen.	Locative prepositions Modal verbs (can, may, should)
Fill out a medical history form. Then role play a medical interview on a visit with a new doctor.	Present perfect tense Present perfect progressive
Make a daily weather report	Non-referential it Forms of verb to be Idiomatic expressions
Report daily schedules of people (in the class, buses in the city, airline schedules, trains, etc.)	Habitual present Personal pronouns Demonstrative adjectives
Extend an invitation over the telephone to someone to come to a party	Would like...Object-Verb word order Interrogative pronouns
Explain rules and regulations to someone, i.e. rules for the school cafeteria; doctor's instructions to a sick patient	Modal verbs: Can, must, should, ought to Adverbs of time & frequency
Report a historical or actual past event and discuss conditions under which a different outcome might have resulted	Past conditional and past perfect tenses If clauses

Appendix B

A Syllabus Integrating Form & Function

CARD GAME FOR COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES

Aims **Functions:** Asking and giving information about quantities, degrees of quantities, speaking about containers, places where things are put, etc.

Structures: Is /are there any..., How much/many..., There isn't/aren't..., There's a little..., There are a few..., There is/are a lot of..., There isn't much..., There aren't many...

Vocabulary: bread, water, fish, coal, salad, salt, cocoa, flour, meat, lemonade, cheese, door, apple, cup, book, pineapple, garlic, pencil, flower, orange, card, lamp, pepper, note, box, egg, lemon, table, mixer, radio, plate, butter, tea, wood, juice, oil, soup, coffee, cloud, sugar

Age Teens and adults **Time** 20 to 30 minutes

- This is a fast moving card activity based on the rules for the card game called GRAB.
- There are 40 cards in this game – on each card one noun from the vocabulary list is written. Students are dealt all the cards.
- The students should get among their cards some nouns that are countables and some that are uncountables.
- The aim of the game is to have in your hand only cards of one type: either countable or uncountable. At the teacher's command "pass" all the students pass a card they do not want to keep to the student seated on their right. So everyone gets rid of one card and gets a new one at the same time. They have to decide quickly whether they need it or not, and the procedure is repeated until someone thinks that all the cards in their hand are either countables or uncountables.
- At that point the one who thinks he or she has got everything right, takes a match from the middle of the table without any warning or noise. Others, who are still deciding whether they need the given cards or not, should notice this and try to get hold of the remaining matches. But there is a catch - there is one match less in number than the number of players. So one player will not get a match.
- Now first the "winner" puts down his/her cards, so that the other players can check whether the decision about the type of the nouns is correct. If it is, the player left without the match has to take one card from the winner's pile and give examples for all types of sentences given above. On the other hand if the winner made a mistake he or she has to produce the sentences.

This game is best played in groups of 4 to 6. It gives a lot of pleasure to the players because the types of nouns are practiced in a relaxed and enjoyable way. It usually involves a lot of laughter. As the game finishes quite quickly, it can be played several times- another chance to win and more opportunities to practice.

Follow up activities

Absolute winner

After the game is played several times the teacher can challenge the students for the "Absolute winner" title by telling the students to write down as many words from the game as they can remember. The student with the biggest number of words is the winner.

Good news bad news activity

In order to elicit spontaneous language reactions situational cards are given to the students. They read their card and the others give comments whether it is good or bad news giving reasons why that is so.

I've got only a few English books.

There aren't many people at my party.

There isn't much money in my pocket.

I've got some good friends in London.

Appendix C

How to Design a Functional-Notional Syllabus

Teachers interested in designing a functional-notional syllabus can follow the following steps:

1. Make a list of communication functions you want to include in your syllabus. The following are some suggestions of communicative functions to use (Thomson, 1993):

- requesting a object
- complying with a request for an object
- refusing to comply with a request for an object
- requesting an action
- complying with or refusing to comply with such requests
- requesting assistance (asking a favor)
- complying with or declining such a request
- offering an object
- accepting the offer
- declining the offer
- offering assistance
- accepting or declining the offer of assistance
- giving instructions to an employee
- giving orders to a child
- making a promise or commitment to future action
- making an apology
- expressing regret
- expressing sorrow for the other person's situation
- initiating an encounter
- making initial small talk in an encounter
- hesitating while speaking
- asking for clarification
- interrupting
- terminating an encounter
- making a social introduction
- introducing oneself
- asking permission
- granting permission
- refusing permission
- asking the time
- indicating a desire to enter a home
- bidding someone to enter a home

2. Make a list of the semantic notions you want to include in your syllabus. **Note:** Since notions deal with meaning, and not the specific way that meaning is realized in a given language, it is possible to make a list of general notions that should hold for any language. Specific notions, however, will differ from language to language, because they are based on the cultural framework and the kinds of distinctions people in each culture need to make

3. Group the functions and notions together into sets of objectives that will form the basis for your units.