

32 - Selecting communicative functions that are useful for beginners: a checklist

Aim: This tool is to help you choose the language functions (things that people do through language) for refugees who are beginners in the target language.

What are ‘communicative functions’?

Oral and written language can be broken down into elements such as suggesting something to someone, complaining, refusing an invitation, giving advice, etc.

These are generally known as (communicative) functions. Language support activities can be organised in a way that enables refugees to learn to ‘perform’ these functions in a new language.

Functions are identified at a general level for each situation or group of situations in the list of domains and scenarios (Tool 31 *Selecting situations to focus on in language support: a checklist*).

Here they are listed as communicative functions that might occur in different scenarios or situations that are especially relevant to beginners.

If you have already used Tool 31 to choose certain situations or scenarios to focus on in language support activities, you now need to choose some of the functions that they commonly involve. Lists of the different functions are provided below. How these functions are expressed is described in Tool 33 *A list of expressions for everyday communication*.

1. Personal expression

It is very important for refugees/migrants to talk about themselves in order to start constructing their identity in another language.

1.1 Introducing themselves

- Saying who they are, giving their name
- Spelling, pronouncing their name
- Correcting a mispronunciation of their name

1.2 Talking about themselves

- Describing
- Telling a story

1.3 Expressing emotions and feelings

- Expressing pleasure, joy
- Saying you like/do not like something or someone
- Expressing sadness
- Expressing satisfaction, dissatisfaction, complaining
- Expressing hope

- Expressing surprise or the lack of surprise
- Expressing disappointment
- Expressing thanks, gratitude
- Expressing fear, anxiety
- Expressing physical pain
- Expressing relief

1.4 Sharing emotions

- Asking about joy or sadness
- Expressing sympathy
- Asking about satisfaction or dissatisfaction
- Reassuring
- Consoling, encouraging, comforting

2. Social interaction

- Thanking and replying to thanks
- Taking leave of someone
- Apologising
- Introducing someone
- Attracting someone's attention
- Welcoming someone
- Greeting and answering greetings
- Congratulating someone
- Wishing someone something (e.g.: *Have a nice day!*)

3. Coping with conversations

- Replacing a word you do not know with a more generic term
- Asking the other person whether he/she understands
- Asking someone how to say something
- Telling the other person that you do not understand (very well)
- Asking someone to explain a word
- Asking someone to repeat something
- Explaining a word or expression
- Asking someone to speak more slowly

4. Asking for information, explanations

- Identifying
- Responding to a request for information
- Getting information
- Confirming, denying, correcting

5. Expressing an opinion

- Expressing your point of view
- Expressing certainty or a probability
- Agreeing/ more or less agreeing, or disagreeing (politely)
- Saying you can do something
- Expressing approval or disapproval
- Expressing the wish to do or to have something
- Protesting
- Expressing the intention to do something
- Saying you know/do not know
- Expressing an obligation, a prohibition
- Remembering, having forgotten, reminding someone of something
- Responding to a proposal, ... by accepting ...with reservations ... hesitatingly ... by evading the question ... by refusing

6. Speaking to get something done

- Asking someone to do something
- Advising
- Ordering (in a café or restaurant)
- Warning
- Asking (about something you want to buy)
- Encouraging
- Responding to a request: accepting, accepting with reservations, refusing
- Requesting and giving permission
- Proposing to do something for someone
- Refusing
- Offering to help someone
- Forbidding something
- Offering to give or lend something to someone
- Promising
- Reproaching

7. Quantity, space and time

- Expressing quantity in general
- Situating in space: distance, movement
- Expressing specific quantities
- Expressing time: divisions of time, duration, situating in time