What is Functional Language?

Functional language refers to the use of language in practical, everyday contexts such as in:

- Social settings
- Home settings
- Classroom settings
- Work settings

in order to achieve specific tasks or goals. For example, using language to order food at a restaurant or ask for help, utilising language to create social connections, and negotiating conflicts or disagreements.

Functional language does not always operate at the same level as formal language.

For example, a child's language can be assessed as within the average range on a standardised language assessment but is functionally not used at the same level. For example, the child requiring lots of scaffolding by their communication partner to get their message across due to too much information presented, or information presented in a scattered or unorganised manner to the listener.

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