What Are Language Forms and Functions?

The **Functions of Language** include its purpose, its use, and what it does. These include the following:

1. **Informative language function**: communicating information, such as facts.
2. **Expressive language function**: reporting feelings or attitudes or evoking these feelings in the reader/listener.
3. **Directive language function**: using language to cause or prevent actions, such as in commands or requests.

Most ordinary kinds of discourse/conversation is mixed.

The **Forms of Language** include the types of sentences used (declarative, interrogatory, imperative, exclamatory) and the method of sharing the information (e.g., conversation, letter, briefing, speech).

The success of any conversation depends on each speaker’s approach to the conversation. The way in which people try to make conversations work is based on four underlying rules, or **maxims** (called **Grice’s maxims**, after the language philosopher, H.P. Grice.) These include the following:

- **Quality** – speakers should tell the truth, not say what they think or know to be false, or make statements without evidence.
- **Quantity** – speakers should be as informative as is required for the conversation to continue; they should say neither too little, nor too much.
- **Relevance** – speakers’ contributions should relate only to the purpose of the exchange.
- **Manner** – speakers’ contributions should be clear, orderly, and brief—avoiding ambiguity.