

COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR

February 2024



Why is Grammar Important for Communication?

Grammar is essential for effective communication as it provides a systematic structure and set of rules that govern how words and sentences are used to convey meaning. Without proper grammar, communication can become confusing, unclear, and even misleading. Here are some reasons why grammar is important for communication:

1. **Clarity:** Proper grammar helps to ensure that our ideas are expressed clearly and accurately. It helps to avoid ambiguity and confusion, making it easier for others to understand our message.
2. **Credibility:** Good grammar can enhance our credibility and professionalism. It demonstrates that we have taken the time to communicate clearly and effectively, which can lead to increased trust and respect.
3. **Concision:** Using proper grammar can also help us to be more concise in our communication. We can convey our ideas more efficiently, using fewer words, which can be especially useful in situations where time or attention spans are limited.
4. **Precision:** Proper grammar also allows us to express our ideas with precision. It enables us to convey the exact meaning we intend, without the risk of being misunderstood.
5. **Social and Cultural Awareness:** The use of proper grammar is also a sign of social and cultural awareness. It shows respect for the language and the

people who use it, which can be especially important in multicultural environments.



Role of Language in Communication

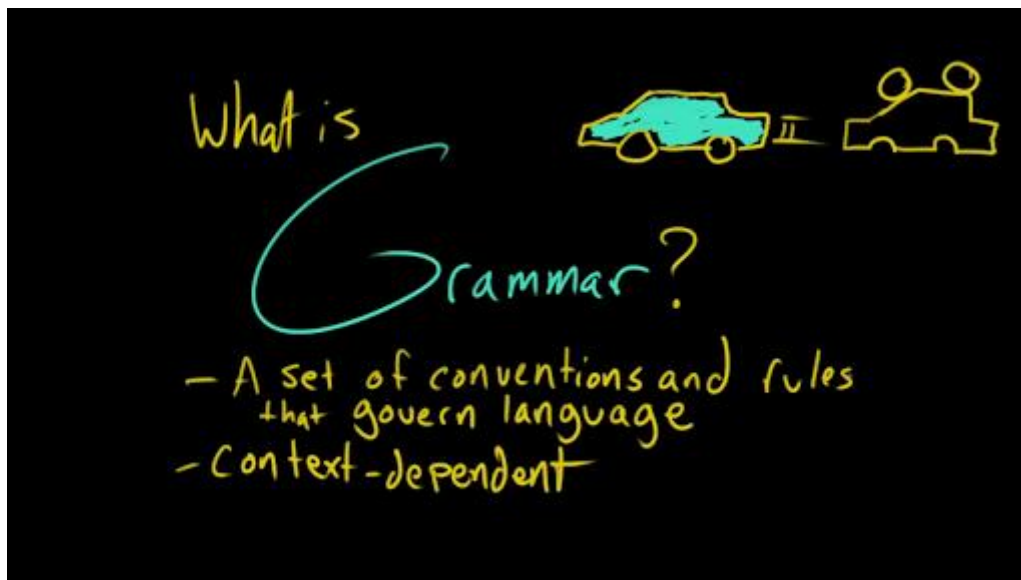
Language is the primary tool of communication. It allows us to express our thoughts, ideas, and emotions to others, facilitating social interaction and human connection. Here are some of the roles that language plays in communication:

1. **Expression of Thoughts and Ideas:** Language enables us to express our thoughts and ideas in a way that others can understand. It allows us to share our knowledge, experiences, and opinions with others, creating a sense of shared understanding.
2. **Establishment of Social Relationships:** Language also plays a crucial role in establishing social relationships. It enables us to connect with others and build relationships through verbal communication. Language also enables us to understand and appreciate cultural differences, which can help us to establish connections with people from diverse backgrounds.
3. **Transmission of Culture:** Language is also an important means of transmitting culture from one generation to the next. Through language, we can pass on traditions, beliefs, and values, preserving our cultural heritage.

4. **Problem Solving:** Language can also be used as a tool for problem-solving. It allows us to communicate our needs and concerns to others, facilitating collaboration and cooperation to find solutions to problems.
5. **Emotional Expression:** Finally, language plays a critical role in emotional expression. It enables us to express our feelings and emotions to others, promoting empathy and understanding.



As English teachers, we need to engage students in using English for meaningful activities where they have an opportunity to communicate for a real purpose. These are similar to the purposes for which they use their home language, except that the situations in which they need to use English may be different. In other words, students should be involved in situations where they need to speak or write in English to fulfil a communicative need such as getting information, seeking clarification, asking for permission, requesting a classmate to lend a pen and so on. In engaging students in communicative tasks, however, remember that second-language learners of English almost always have problems with certain grammatical structures, depending on both their home languages and their school backgrounds. If you can identify these problems as you engage your students in classroom activities, you can design remedial exercises to help them address their errors. Lack of confidence and fear of committing errors in front of others are other issues that you may have to cope with. If you create a relaxed atmosphere and group the students appropriately, even the shy ones will begin to speak. In the initial stage, with slower learners, you may have to deliberately go slow colloquial to ensure that even the weakest students can follow what you are saying. It also helps if you group students in such a way as to let them learn from one another.



Miss Monica Smith, a JSS teacher in Nepal, found that when a famous mountaineer visited the school and asked her 14-year-old students about their future plans, they avoided looking at the guest and kept quiet. Later she asked them why they had behaved like that, especially because only the previous week they had had a similar conversation in their activities class. Very shyly, one student told her that they did not feel confident about conversing with such famous people in English. Another added that they did not know how to begin or respond in a conversation. Module 6 9 Monica discussed this problem with her colleague Mr Thapa from the Counselling office. They decided to hold proficiency sessions for an hour every day after school, for about a month. With the children sitting comfortably in a circle around them, Monica and Mr Thapa conducted a conversation on a particular profession every day. The students were asked to listen carefully and then do some written exercises based on the conversation. In the first week, the students were asked only to listen and complete the worksheets so that they began to understand English spoken at normal conversational speed, and also to pick up words related to various professions. In the second week, Monica handed around worksheets containing conversations about professions, which the students, sitting in groups of four, had to fill in. Each group then had to select two members to do a role play on the script. After every presentation, the teachers and other students would comment on how it could be improved. By the third week, Monica and Mr Thapa were including students in their own conversation. They would call out names randomly, and the student would have to join the conversation at that point. After a month of such intense practice, Monica called in another guest and had her students interact with her. This time, the students were warm and confident, and had many things to discuss with the guest, who was very impressed. The principal decided to include such proficiency classes in the curriculum from that academic session onwards. What was interesting was that Monica and Mr Thapa did not use any grammatical terminology in their class — they simply familiarised the students with the appropriate structures through practice.

Points to ponder

1 Do your students face similar problems in interacting with people in English? 2
What strategies does the teacher use with your students to encourage them to
converse in English?

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