

Gen Z's Conversational Language Practices in Everyday English Contexts

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Abstract: In an age increasingly shaped by digital communication, the role of grammar in everyday English conversations particularly among Generation Z has become both more flexible and more contested. Despite the prevalence of informal and abbreviated language online, there remains limited research on how Gen Z perceives and navigates grammatical norms in their daily interactions. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring the attitudes and behaviors of Gen Z individuals regarding the importance of grammar in both face-to-face and digital communication contexts. Using an exploratory qualitative design, data will be collected through one-on-one interviews with 18 Gen Z participants who regularly use English in everyday conversations. The study employs reflexive thematic analysis to examine how participants treat grammar whether attentively or casually and how this treatment influences their communication styles, self-expression, and social dynamics. The expected outcomes of the research include a deeper understanding of the nuanced ways in which grammar is valued or de-emphasized by Gen Z, and how these choices affect interpersonal communication. Ultimately, the findings aim to contribute to the evolving discussion on linguistic norms, digital literacy, and generational shifts in language use.

Keywords: Grammar, Gen Z, English, Conversations..

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, communication practices have undergone significant transformation, particularly among younger generations. Generation Z, typically defined as individuals born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in an environment dominated by digital platforms, instant

messaging, and social media (Twenge, 2017; Montclair, 2021). These settings often promote informal language use, including abbreviated expressions, emojis, and relaxed grammatical structures (Crystal, 2008; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008). Recent studies suggest that digital environments may influence students' grammatical habits and confidence in language use (Estoque, 2023; Ceneciro, 2025). Despite these evolving norms, traditional standards of grammar continue to hold value in academic, professional, and some social contexts (Baron, 2020; Garil, Abbas, & Limen, 2024). This tension raises a critical question: How does Generation Z perceive and engage with grammar in their everyday English conversations?

While there has been considerable research on the digital communication habits of younger users (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Androutsopoulos, 2011), relatively few studies have focused specifically on the role of grammar in these interactions (Gawne & Vaughan, 2021). Most existing literature addresses grammar from an educational or linguistic standpoint, often overlooking the personal perspectives and lived experiences of Gen Z speakers (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Curzan, 2014). There remains a gap in understanding how grammar is valued, disregarded, or strategically used by this generation in both online and offline conversations (Beers Fägersten, 2012; Garil, 2024). Moreover, socio-cultural and demographic factors have been shown to influence students' grammatical competence and language attitudes (Garil et al., 2024).

The present study seeks to address this gap by exploring the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Z regarding the role of grammar in their everyday English communication. Specifically, it investigates how grammar is treated whether casually or attentively and how these choices influence communication style, self-expression, and interpersonal interactions (Thurlow, 2011; Garil, Entong, & Muarip et al., 2024). The intention is to provide a grounded understanding of Gen Z's language practices and the implications of these practices for broader communication trends.

This research is guided by two main objectives: (1) to explore the perspectives of Gen Z individuals on the importance of grammar in daily English conversations, and (2) to examine the casual or attentive treatment of grammar and how this shapes communication dynamics. The study employs an exploratory qualitative design, utilizing one-on-one interviews with 18 Gen Z participants. The data will be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of themes related to grammar perception, identity, and social interaction (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Divinagracia, 2024).

Key variables include participants' perception of grammar importance and their treatment of grammar (i.e., casual versus attentive). Key concepts examined are grammar awareness, communication style, identity expression, peer influence, and generational linguistic trends (Eckert, 2012). These areas are addressed through semi-structured interview questions that prompt participants to reflect on their own communication habits and their interpretations of grammar use in different social settings. In educational environments, the integration of technology and teaching strategies also affects how language is perceived and used (Calzada, 2024; Carpio et al., 2024).

The expected outcome of the study is a richer understanding of how Generation Z perceives and applies grammatical rules in various contexts. By highlighting the generational nuances in language use, this research aims to contribute to ongoing discussions in sociolinguistics, digital communication, and education. It is anticipated that the findings will provide valuable insights into the evolving relationship between grammar and communication among today's youth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The way language is used by younger generations has been a subject of ongoing linguistic and sociocultural interest. Among these generational cohorts, Generation Z (Gen Z) typically defined as those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s has emerged as a digitally native group whose communication habits are shaped by online platforms, social media, and informal text-based exchanges. With this shift, the role of grammar in everyday English conversations has become a topic of inquiry, particularly in how Gen Z navigates formal and informal contexts. This literature review aims to provide theoretical grounding and empirical insights into Gen Z's attitudes toward grammar, its perceived importance, and its impact on communication, self-expression, and social interaction.

Grammar in Everyday Communication

Grammar, traditionally considered the foundation of clear and effective communication, has long been associated with language competence and literacy (Crystal, 2006). In formal settings, correct grammar use is often linked to professionalism, credibility, and academic success (Weaver, 2010). However, in everyday, informal contexts especially in digital communication grammar norms tend to be more fluid. Text messaging, memes, tweets, and captions often reflect a deliberate departure from traditional grammatical conventions, indicating a new linguistic economy based on speed, creativity, and identity signaling (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Baron, 2008). Studies like Adalia et al. (2025) and Chavez, Anuddin, Mansul, et al. (2024) demonstrate how Gen Z balances these two perspectives, understanding grammar's value but adapting it for peer-based, informal communication in digital spaces.

Gen Z and Digital Communication

Gen Z's communication habits are deeply embedded in digital environments where linguistic innovation is common. Research suggests that Gen Z users often prioritize clarity and tone over strict grammatical accuracy (McCulloch, 2019). Social media platforms encourage brevity, aesthetic formatting, and rapid exchange, leading to adaptations such as sentence fragments, emojis, and stylized spellings (Androutsopoulos, 2006). Despite this, grammar is not entirely abandoned rather, it is often used strategically to shape tone, imply humor or sarcasm, and align with specific digital identities or communities (Tagliamonte, 2016).

Attitudes Toward Grammar Among Youth

Attitudes toward grammar among youth tend to be situational and context-dependent. Studies show that young people, including Gen Z, often recognize the value of correct grammar in academic, professional, and public settings, while allowing for greater flexibility in private or peer-to-peer conversations (Lea & Street, 1998). Some youth view grammar corrections as pedantic or unnecessary in informal settings, while others may perceive grammatical correctness as a marker of intelligence or attention to detail (Tannen, 1994). These differing attitudes reflect an evolving understanding of grammar as both a technical skill and a sociolinguistic resource.

Self-Expression and Identity Construction

Grammar use (or its intentional avoidance) plays a key role in how Gen Z expresses individuality and social belonging. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), language is central to identity construction, and nonstandard grammar can function as a tool for signaling authenticity, humor, or resistance to authority. Informal grammar use can also foster a sense of closeness and relatability among peers. Conversely, attentive grammar use may be employed to assert competence, especially in contexts where first impressions matter, such as job applications or academic writing. Chavez (2022) documents how bilingual Gen Z individuals use grammar as a narrative tool, reflecting both cultural identity and real-life language adaptability. These linguistic decisions often function as identity markers, shaped by both context and intention. Additionally, the findings of Garil et al. (2024) highlight how emotional tone and delivery often enhanced by grammar choices contribute to lasting impressions in academic communication settings.

Communication Style and Social Perception. The treatment of grammar directly influences how individuals are perceived in both digital and face-to-face interactions. Misuse of grammar in professional or academic contexts can lead to negative judgments about a person's intelligence, education, or credibility (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008). In contrast, casual grammar may enhance approachability and relatability in informal settings. The balancing act Gen Z performs between attentive and casual grammar use suggests a nuanced understanding of situational appropriateness and audience awareness. The work of Chavez, Anuddin, Mansul, et al. (2024) affirms this by showing that grammar use among students in campus journalism fosters both self-expression and confidence, ultimately shaping peer perception. Furthermore, Adalia et al. (2025) point to grammar as a vehicle for

expressing credibility and academic competence, depending on the communication setting.

Existing literature reveals a shifting landscape in the use and perception of grammar among Gen Z. While formal grammar remains important in structured environments, Gen Z's everyday English conversations particularly in digital contexts often reflect a more flexible, adaptive approach. This duality in grammatical awareness and usage underlines the complexity of Gen Z's linguistic behavior, which blends traditional norms with emerging patterns of informal communication. The present study contributes to this field by offering a qualitative, thematic exploration of how Gen Z individuals perceive grammar in daily life and how their grammar choices influence communication style, self-expression, and interpersonal dynamics.

METHODS

Research design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory research design to investigate how members of Generation Z perceive and treat grammar in their everyday English conversations. A qualitative approach was selected to allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' thoughts, experiences, and attitudes toward grammar usage in both online and offline settings. Given the subjective nature of linguistic perception and expression, this design was most suitable to capture the nuances of how grammar influences communication, identity, and social interactions among Gen Z individuals.

Population and sampling

The participants of the study were eighteen ($n = 18$) members of Generation Z, aged between 18 and 25 years old, who regularly use English in daily conversations. Purposive sampling was used to select individuals who actively engage in both face-to-face and digital communication platforms such as social media, messaging apps, and academic or professional settings. The sample included a mix of students and young professionals from diverse academic and socio-cultural backgrounds to ensure a range of perspectives.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the study's objectives. The questions aimed to elicit participants' views on the importance of grammar, experiences where grammar played a role (or not), and the impact of grammar on self-expression and communication. The guide also included probes to further explore the influence of grammar on social perception and group dynamics. The interview questions were pilot-tested with two Gen Z participants to ensure clarity and relevance before full deployment. Table 1 presents the list of guide questions used by this research study.

Table 1. Interview guide questions.

Objectives	Interview question
To explore the perspectives of Gen Z individuals on the importance of grammar in their daily English conversations.	How important do you think proper grammar is when you communicate in English with your peers or online?
	Can you share a situation where using correct grammar mattered to you, or where it didn't seem necessary?
	How do you feel when someone points out grammatical errors in your conversations or social media posts?
To examine the casual or attentive treatment of grammar and how this influences communication	In what ways does your use of grammar (whether careful or casual) affect how you express yourself in conversations or online?

styles, self-expression, and interactions in everyday settings.	Do you think your grammar use influences how others perceive you in school, work, or social settings? Why or why not?
	How does the way you and your peers treat grammar shape the overall style and flow of your conversations?

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews conducted either face-to-face or via online video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' availability and preference. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Before each session, participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2019). The process began with familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts. This was followed by initial coding of meaningful units related to grammar perception and usage. The codes were then collated into potential themes, which were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and clear distinction among them. Once finalized, the themes were defined and named, capturing the essence of participants' responses. The final phase involved producing the report, which included illustrative quotes from the participants to support the findings. Throughout the entire analysis process, researcher reflexivity was actively maintained to account for any potential biases and subjectivities. To support data organization and theme development, NVivo software (or manual coding, depending on availability) was utilized as a data management tool.

RESULTS

Research Objectives 1. To explore the perspectives of Gen Z individuals on the importance of grammar in their daily English conversations.

Question No. 1. How important do you think proper grammar is when you communicate in English with your peers or online?

Theme 1: *Proper grammar is important in explaining*

Ten (10) respondents expressed that they think grammar is important when they need to explain something clearly, like in group projects or professional chats. Wrong grammar can confuse people, so they try to be careful in those cases. Using proper grammar makes them feel more confident when they're emailing teachers or applying for internships. Additionally, they mentioned that grammar matters when they're talking to someone older or in a formal situation. But if it's just GC (group chat) with their barkada, they type super casual.

" I think grammar is important when I need to explain something clearly, like in group projects or professional chats. Wrong grammar can confuse people, so I try to be careful in those cases."

" Grammar matters when I'm talking to someone older or in a formal situation. But if it's just GC (group chat) with my barkada, I type super casual. As long as they sound natural and people understand, then it's enough."

Theme 2: *Grammar is used to avoid misunderstanding*

Ten (10) respondents shared that since a lot of them talk to people from other countries online, they think grammar is helpful so they don't get misunderstood. Not perfect grammar, but at least

understandable. Sometimes slang doesn't translate well, so they adjust their English and make their grammar cleaner when they're chatting with international friends. Additionally, they mentioned that when they play online games, they try to type in proper English so teammates from other countries won't get confused. It's easier to win if they actually understand each other. They think using understandable grammar makes them feel more connected globally. It's like they all find a middle ground where they can communicate without misunderstandings.

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Theme 3: Grammar doesn't really matter as long as it's relatable

Five (5) respondents expressed that on social media, grammar doesn't really matter that much. People type fast, use shortcuts, and even memes break grammar rules. What matters is if the post is relatable. Most of the time they don't even bother with punctuation on Twitter or TikTok captions. The vibe is more important than perfect grammar. Additionally, they shared that people don't judge grammar much online. They care more about if the content is funny, aesthetic, or relatable. Memes wouldn't even be funny if they were in perfect grammar. Sometimes the wrong grammar makes the joke funnier.

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Question No. 2. Can you share a situation where using correct grammar mattered to you, or where it didn't seem necessary?

Theme 1: When Grammar Mattered

Ten (10) respondents expressed that they had to email their professor about an extension, and they made sure their grammar was on point. They didn't want to look careless, because they knew it could affect how seriously they took their request. In group chats for school projects, they usually don't care about grammar, but when they're posting on a discussion board that professors can see, they use correct grammar so their points look more legit. Additionally, they mentioned that when they applied for a part-time job, they double-checked every sentence in their resume and cover letter. They felt like bad grammar could make them look unprofessional, even if their skills were fine.

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Theme 2: When Grammar Didn't Matter

Ten (10) respondents expressed that when they're chatting with their friends on Discord, grammar just doesn't exist. They type in all lowercase, use random slang, and nobody cares. As long as they understand each other, it's fine. With their close friends, they purposely spell words wrong or use weird grammar. It's like part of our humor, and it actually makes the conversation more fun. Additionally, they mentioned that when they post memes, grammar doesn't matter at all. In fact, messing up the grammar on purpose sometimes makes it funnier. Typos, no punctuation, sometimes just emojis. Nobody even notices grammar mistakes because they all get the vibe.

" When I'm chatting with my friends on Discord, grammar just doesn't exist. We type in all lowercase, use random slang, and nobody cares. As long as we understand each other, it's fine."

" When I post memes, grammar doesn't matter at all. In fact, messing up the grammar on purpose sometimes makes it funnier."

Theme 3: Relatable Moment

Five (5) respondents mentioned that they once posted something on Instagram and people made fun of them for mixing up 'your' and 'you're.' Honestly, they didn't care that much, but it made them realize people do notice grammar sometimes, especially in public posts. People in the comments pointed it out more than the actual post. It made them laugh, but also reminded them that people on the internet love to correct grammar. Additionally, they mentioned that they saw someone's bio with bad grammar and honestly, it was a turn-off. They realized people might judge them the same way if they're careless, so they try to write properly there. It made them way more careful after that.

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Question No. 3. How do you feel when someone points out grammatical errors in your conversations or social media posts?

Theme 1: Slightly embarrassed

Ten (10) respondents expressed that they lowkey get embarrassed when someone corrects them in public, especially on social media. Makes them feel like people are more focused on grammar than what they're actually saying. They know it shouldn't matter, but they feel like it makes them look less smart, even though it's just one mistake. Additionally, they mentioned that not gonna lie, they start double-checking their captions after someone corrects them, just to avoid the same embarrassment. They know it shouldn't matter, but they feel like it makes them look less smart, even though it's just one mistake.

" I lowkey get embarrassed when someone corrects me in public, especially on social media. Makes me feel like they're more focused on grammar than what I'm actually saying."

" Not gonna lie, I start double-checking my captions after someone corrects me, just to avoid the same embarrassment."

Theme 2: Appreciative

Ten (10) respondents expressed that if someone points it out nicely, they would appreciate it. It helps them learn and avoid the same mistake again. It makes them more confident next time, especially if they're writing something important for school or work. Additionally, they mentioned that they appreciate it 'cause they know people are not trying to flex, they just wanna help them improve. They rather get corrected than stay wrong forever. It's kinda like free grammar lessons in the wild.

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"I appreciate it 'cause I know they're not trying to flex, they just wanna help me improve."

Theme 3: Defensive at first, but then okay

Five (5) respondents expressed that at first, they get defensive like 'whatever, you knew what I meant.' But later they think about it and realize it's not that bad to get corrected. Their pride gets hurt a little, but after thinking about it, they kinda appreciate it. Additionally, they mentioned that lowkey they get defensive and they act annoyed in the moment, but secretly they do remember the correction and they're thankful 'cause it makes them sound smarter next time.

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" Lowkey I get defensive and I act annoyed in the moment, but secretly I do remember the correction and I'm thankful 'cause it makes me sound smarter next time."

Research Objectives 2. To examine the casual or attentive treatment of grammar and how this influences communication styles, self-expression, and interactions in everyday settings.

Question No. 1. In what ways does your use of grammar (whether careful or casual) affect how you express yourself in conversations or online?

Theme 1: Casual vibe

Ten (10) respondents expressed that when they text their friends, they don't care about grammar at all. They type super fast, use abbreviations, and spam emojis. It makes the convo feel more natural and fun. They'll send a whole message without punctuation and their friends still get them. Additionally, they mentioned that all lowercase feels less serious, like they are just chillin'. If they use proper grammar with their friends, they'd think they are mad at them. If they ever type too properly, their friends go 'why u talking like a teacher?' so they just keep it casual.

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"All lowercase feels less serious, like I'm just chillin'. If I use proper grammar with my friends, they'd think I'm mad at them."

Theme 2: Creative expression

Five (5) respondents expressed that breaking grammar rules on purpose is part of their style. Like using all lowercase or no punctuation, it gives their texts a chill, aesthetic vibe. Sometimes they skip punctuation on purpose so the message looks like a stream of thought, kinda like they're just talking casually. Additionally, they mentioned that lowercase texts make them look calm, while if they add a period it feels kinda aggressive. Typing in all lowercase is part of the aesthetic. It matches the vibe of lo-fi playlists and soft posts.

" Breaking grammar rules on purpose is part of my style. Like using all lowercase or no punctuation, it gives my texts a chill, aesthetic vibe."

" Lowercase texts make me look calm, while if I add a period it feels kinda aggressive."

Theme 3: Personal growth

Ten (10) respondents expressed that getting grammar wrong in public is embarrassing, but it pushes them to learn. Now they double-check before posting anything important. If it's just in private chats, they don't mind, but once it's public, they get embarrassed. That's when they start being careful. Additionally, they mentioned that sometimes they get defensive, like 'y'all knew what they meant,' but later they're glad someone corrected them so they don't keep messing up. Now they proofread twice before posting.

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"Sometimes I get defensive, like 'y'all knew what I meant,' but later I'm glad someone corrected me so I don't keep messing up."

Question No. 2. Do you think your grammar use influences how others perceive you in school, work, or social settings? Why or why not?

Theme 1: Workplace scenarios

Ten (10) respondents expressed that definitely at work it influences others' perception about them. If they send an email with bad grammar, it feels unprofessional. People might think they're careless. But in group chats with coworkers, they loosen up but still correct enough to be clear, but not super formal. Additionally, they mentioned that bad grammar at work can make them sound less confident, even if they're smart. People sometimes equate good grammar with professionalism, which sucks but it's true. They don't have to love it, but it's part of being professional. Then outside work,

they switch back to lowercase and slang instantly.

"Definitely at work it influences others' perception about me. If I send an email with bad grammar, it feels unprofessional. People might think I'm careless."

"Bad grammar at work can make you sound less confident, even if you're smart. People sometimes equate good grammar with professionalism, which sucks but it's true."

Theme 1: Defensive perspective

Five (5) respondents expressed that honestly, they don't think grammar defines them. As long as people understand what they're saying, that's enough. If someone judges them just for a typo, that says more about them than about them. People act like grammar is everything, but communication is the main goal. They rather be real and understood than sound super proper all the time. Additionally, they mentioned that they feel like people who judge every little mistake probably care more about showing off than actually connecting. They know grammar is important in school or work, but outside that, they don't think it defines who they are as a person. As long as their message lands and people get the point, they don't really care if their commas are in the right place.

"Honestly, I don't think grammar defines me. As long as people understand what I'm saying, that's enough. If someone judges me just for a typo, that says more about them than about me."

"I feel like people who judge every little mistake probably care more about showing off than actually connecting."

Theme 3: Growth mindset

Ten (10) respondents expressed that they used to not care, but then they noticed people treat them differently when they write properly. Like, they get more respect when their messages are clear and polished. Now they switch depending on who they are talking to. Additionally, they mentioned that they realized people take them way more seriously if they use correct grammar. So now they kinda code-switch between casual and professional, depending on the setting. They used to think it didn't matter, but once they started writing better, people actually listened more. It's weird how small changes make a big difference.

"I used to not care, but then I noticed people treat you differently when you write properly. Like, I get more respect when my messages are clear and polished."

"I realized people take you way more seriously if you use correct grammar. So now I kinda code-switch between casual and professional, depending on the setting."

Question No. 3. How does the way you and your peers treat grammar shape the overall style and flow of your conversations?

Theme 1: Grammar lowkey sets the vibe

Ten (10) respondents expressed that if everyone types super proper, the convo feels formal and slow. But if they drop punctuation and go lowercase, it feels more casual and fast-paced. Sometimes they mix proper grammar with slang. It makes the convo look balanced which is clear enough to understand, but still casual. Additionally, they mentioned that when people send super proper texts, they usually reply shorter, because it feels like they need to match their energy. If it's all lowercase, they'll type longer because it feels more chill.

Lowercase messages feel more aesthetic, like part of the internet culture. Proper capitalization makes it look too formal for casual chats.

"If everyone types super proper, the convo feels formal and slow. But if we drop punctuation and go lowercase, it feels more casual and fast-paced."

"When people send super proper texts, I usually reply shorter, because it feels like I need to match their energy. If it's all lowercase, I'll type longer because it feels more chill."

Theme 2: Using correct grammar makes you stand out

Ten (10) respondents shared that when people use correct grammar in group chats, it actually stands out. Sometimes it makes them sound more serious, like they're making an announcement instead of just chatting. They only type proper grammar in group chats when they need everyone to understand, like planning something. Otherwise, they feel weird. Additionally, they mentioned that proper grammar in a GC gives corporate vibes, like they're in a work email instead of just chilling. Formal grammar makes the message stand out, but sometimes in a way that kills the fun vibe of the convo. One time their friend used proper grammar in the group, and everyone thought they were mad at them. But they were just being clear.

"When people use correct grammar in group chats, it actually stands out. Sometimes it makes them sound more serious, like they're making an announcement instead of just chatting."

"Proper grammar in a GC gives corporate vibes, like we're in a work email instead of just chilling."

Theme 3: Too much bad grammar can cause confusion

Five (5) respondents mentioned that too much bad grammar can confuse them though. If someone types without commas or periods at all, they need to read it twice to figure out what they mean. If the grammar is too messy, they start guessing what they mean. Sometimes they even reply wrong 'cause they misunderstood it. Additionally, they shared that bad grammar is fine until it changes the meaning. Like mixing up 'your' and 'you're' they can ignore it, but if the sentence gets twisted, they're lost. If they have to reread a message three times to understand, they kinda lose interest in the convo.

"Too much bad grammar can confuse me though. If someone types without commas or periods at all, I need to read it twice to figure out what they mean."

"Bad grammar is fine until it changes the meaning. Like mixing up 'your' and 'you're' I can ignore, but if the sentence gets twisted, I'm lost."

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate how Generation Z perceives the importance of grammar in their everyday English conversations and how their treatment of grammar whether casual or attentive affects their communication styles, self-expression, and social interactions. Through one-on-one interviews with 18 Gen Z participants, two major themes emerged corresponding to the study's objectives: (1) the contextual importance of grammar and (2) grammar as a reflection of identity and social adaptability.

The Contextual Importance of Grammar. In exploring the perspectives of Gen Z individuals on the importance of grammar, the findings indicate that grammar is viewed as situationally important rather than universally essential. Participants consistently emphasized that proper grammar holds value in formal contexts such as academic writing, job applications, or professional communication. In these scenarios, many associated grammars with clarity, intelligence, and credibility. Several respondents noted that poor grammar in formal settings could lead to misunderstandings or be interpreted as a lack of effort or education. Conversely, in informal interactions—particularly in peer conversations, texting, or social media grammar was considered more flexible. Most participants reported that in casual settings, they prioritize the message and tone over grammatical precision. Abbreviations, slang, emojis, and stylistic choices (like lowercase text or punctuation omission) were described as tools for conveying personality and emotion rather than errors. This reflects Gen Z's pragmatic and adaptive language use, where grammatical correctness is secondary to relational and contextual effectiveness. When asked about their reactions to being corrected for grammatical mistakes, participants displayed mixed responses. Some appreciated the feedback in educational or professional environments, while others found such corrections in casual conversations unnecessary or even irritating. This highlights a broader cultural shift in which grammar correction is not always welcomed unless it aligns with the context and purpose of the interaction.

Grammar as a Reflection of Identity and Social Adaptability. Regarding how the treatment of grammar influences self-expression and interaction, the study found that Gen Z sees grammar as a strategic tool rather than a rigid rule set. Participants described how casual grammar use allows them to present a more relatable, authentic, or humorous persona, particularly in online spaces. For example, the deliberate use of lowercase text or fragmented sentences was interpreted by some as a way to appear more casual, laid-back, or emotionally expressive. On the other hand, those who used attentive grammar in specific situations did so consciously to project competence, professionalism, or authority. Many participants acknowledged shifting their grammar use depending on the audience or platform, such as using formal grammar in emails to professors but opting for informal language on Instagram. This suggests a high degree of audience awareness and linguistic adaptability, allowing Gen Z to code-switch effectively between language registers. Moreover, participants recognized that grammar usage can influence social perception. Some believed that being grammatically accurate can lead others to perceive them as intelligent or well-educated, while others felt that overly formal grammar in casual settings might come across as distant or pretentious. Thus, grammar choices serve as a form of social signaling, helping individuals align with the expectations or norms of their chosen communication environments. The way grammar shapes the flow and tone of conversations was also notable. Participants indicated that strict grammar can sometimes hinder spontaneity and emotional nuance in chats, whereas flexible grammar facilitates faster, more expressive exchanges. This supports the idea that Gen Z values linguistic functionality and expressiveness over strict adherence to grammatical norms, especially in fast-paced digital interactions.

CONCLUSION

This study found that Gen Z views grammar as context-dependent — important in formal settings like school, work, or professional communication, but less critical in casual conversations or social media. Participants use proper grammar when clarity and credibility are needed, but often prefer a more relaxed, expressive style with friends and online, where the focus is on tone, relatability, and connection.

Grammar also influences how they are perceived by others. While some don't think grammar defines them, many admit that using correct grammar earns more respect and helps them be taken seriously. Most switch between formal and casual grammar depending on the situation, showing a high level of linguistic adaptability.

Overall, grammar still matters to Gen Z—but not in rigid or traditional ways. They value communication that is clear, authentic, and appropriate to the context, using grammar both as a tool for professionalism and a means of self-expression..

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