

The Relevance of English Grammar in the Digital Age: A Survey-Based Study

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Abstract:

➤ Aim:

To assess the perceived importance of English grammar in digital communication across diverse age groups and educational backgrounds, and to evaluate its impact on clarity, professionalism, and credibility in online interactions.

➤ Methods:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 75 participants aged 10 to over 50 years. The questionnaire included objective items designed to capture participants' views on grammar use in digital contexts such as emails, social media, and messaging platforms. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics via Microsoft Excel and Google Forms.

➤ Results:

The survey revealed that over 88% of respondents emphasized the importance of grammar for clear communication, particularly in professional contexts like job applications. More than 90% acknowledged that grammatical errors cause confusion or misinterpretation. Additionally, 89.3% supported school-based grammar instruction, and 70.7% believed digital tools cannot fully replace grammar knowledge. A majority (73%) reported practicing correct grammar in daily digital communication.

➤ Conclusion:

Despite evolving digital trends favoring brevity and informality, grammar remains a vital component of effective communication. These findings underscore the need to reinforce grammar education and encourage its consistent use in both academic and professional settings to promote clear and credible digital discourse.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, where instant messaging, emails, and social media dominate communication, grammar continues to play a vital role in ensuring clarity, professionalism, and credibility. Whether drafting an assignment, composing a formal email, or posting online, correct grammar helps convey the intended message without confusion. Despite the popularity of informal language, poor grammar can lead to misinterpretation and may negatively impact on how the writer is perceived [1]. The roots of English grammar trace back to the 16th century, with William Bullokar's pioneering grammar book [2]. Over time, scholars like Robert Lowth and Lindley Murray helped codify rules that are still in use today [3]. As English spread globally through colonization and education, grammar became a key part of language instruction in both native and non-native

English-speaking countries. In places like India, Singapore, and the Philippines, grammar is taught rigorously to ensure effective and confident communication, especially in academic and formal contexts [4].

The digital revolution, however, has influenced grammar use dramatically. The rise of abbreviations, emojis, and internet slang has encouraged compressed, informal language across platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). Messages like "c u tmr @ d mall" save time but deviate from standard grammar rules [5]. Emojis now often replace entire phrases, and character limits on platforms like Twitter have encouraged further grammatical shortcuts. Tools like autocorrect, predictive text, and AI-powered grammar checkers such as Grammarly and ChatGPT have improved writing assistance but also risk reducing users' internal understanding of grammar [6]. For instance, 61% of

Grammarly users report depending on the tool for professional writing. Even in casual settings, grammar still influences perception; a LinkedIn report noted that job seekers with grammar errors had 60% lower response rates from employers [7]. Furthermore, with the rise of remote work and digital collaboration, proper grammar in emails, chats, and documentation has become critical for maintaining professionalism. While digital learning platforms have made grammar education more accessible, they must be paired with deeper practice to ensure real understanding [8]. Overall, grammar remains essential—not only as a set of rules but as a tool for building trust, avoiding miscommunication, and enhancing one's digital identity.

The aim of this study is to examine the relevance of grammar in digital communication across age groups, assess its impact on clarity, professionalism, and credibility, and highlight the continued importance of grammar education in modern digital environments. HYPOTHESIS:

Effective grammar use in digital communication positively impacts clarity, credibility, and comprehension in personal and professional interactions.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design

A cross-sectional survey approach was adopted to collect data from a diverse group of individuals at a single point in time. This design was chosen for its efficiency in capturing attitudes and patterns across a heterogeneous population, enabling the assessment of grammar-related perceptions across age groups, genders, and educational backgrounds.

➤ Study Population and Sampling

The study comprised 75 participants selected via convenience sampling through online distribution platforms, including WhatsApp and Google Forms. The sample included individuals aged 10 to over 50 years, ensuring broad representation across demographics.

- Age Range: 10–54 years
- Gender Distribution: 60% Male, 39% Female

• Educational Attainment:

- ✓ 6th to 12th Grade: 5.3%
- ✓ Undergraduate: 42.7%
- ✓ Postgraduate: 48%
- ✓ Doctorate: 4%

This demographic spread facilitated the exploration of grammar perceptions among both students and working professionals across varied educational backgrounds.

➤ Data Collection Tool

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed in Google Forms. The questionnaire was constructed in simple, accessible English to ensure comprehensibility across different education levels. It consisted of 10 multiple-choice items categorized into three sections:

- Demographic Information: age, gender, and highest education level.
- Perceptions of Grammar: importance and relevance of grammar in digital communication, perceived consequences of grammatical errors
- Grammar Usage in Daily Life: self-assessed grammar practices, views on school-based grammar instruction, and opinions on grammar tools.

To ensure authenticity, each participant was allowed to respond only once.

➤ Data Analysis

Data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, primarily percentage distributions. Google Forms' in-built visualization tools (bar and pie charts) were used to display response patterns.

➤ Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to basic ethical research guidelines: Participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that their responses would be used solely for academic research. No vulnerable populations or sensitive questions were involved in the study.

III. RESULTS

➤ Demographic Information

- *Age: Participants Ranged from 10 to 58 years, with the Highest Frequency Among Individuals Aged 34 (12%).*

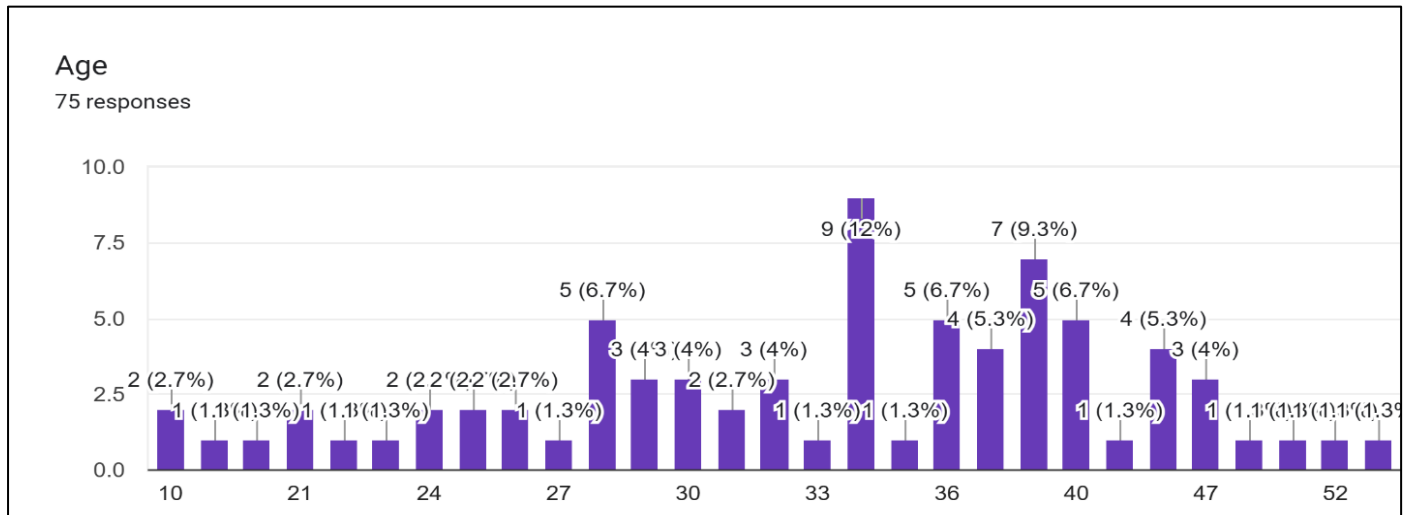


Fig 1 Demographic Information by Age

- *Gender: 50.7% Identified as Male (37), and 49.3% as Female (35).*

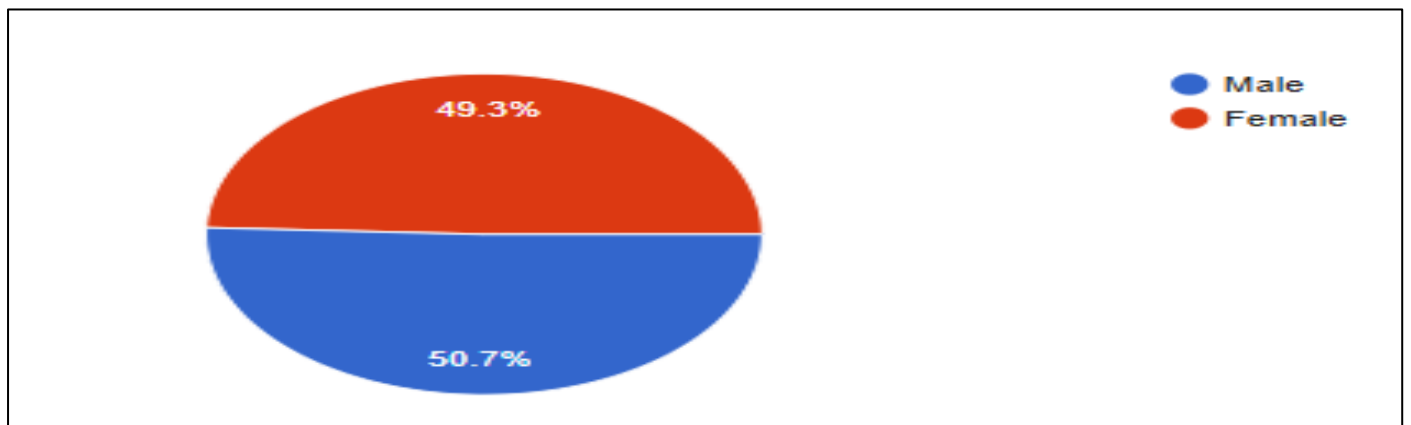


Fig 2 Demographic Information by Gender

- *Education: 5.3% had Education up to 12th Grade, 42.7% were Undergraduates, 48% were Postgraduates, and 4% held Doctorate Degrees.*

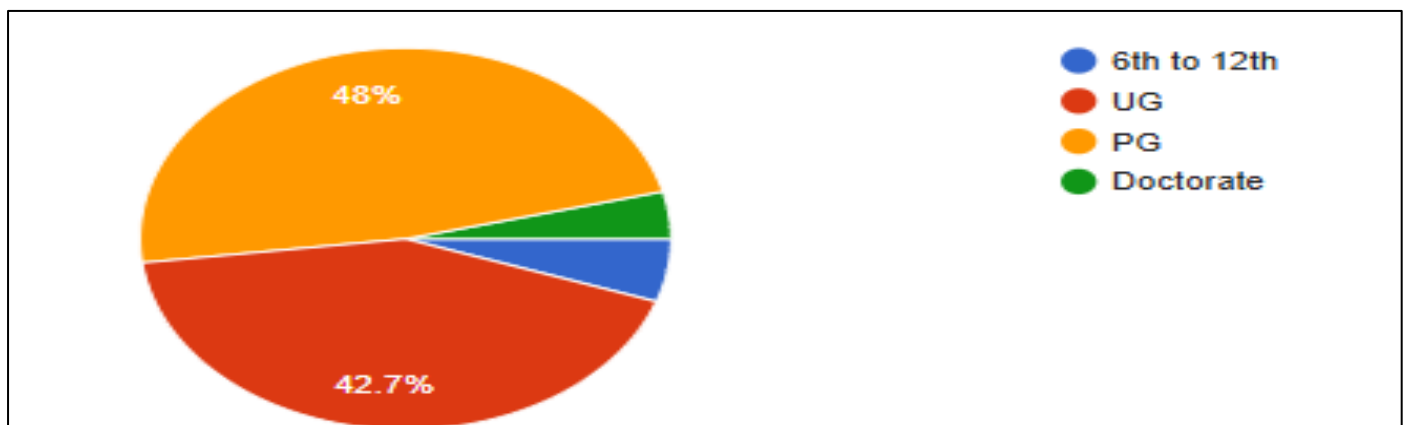


Fig 3 Demographic Information by Education

- *Occupation: 50.7% were professionals, 24% students, 17.3% teachers, and 8% others.*

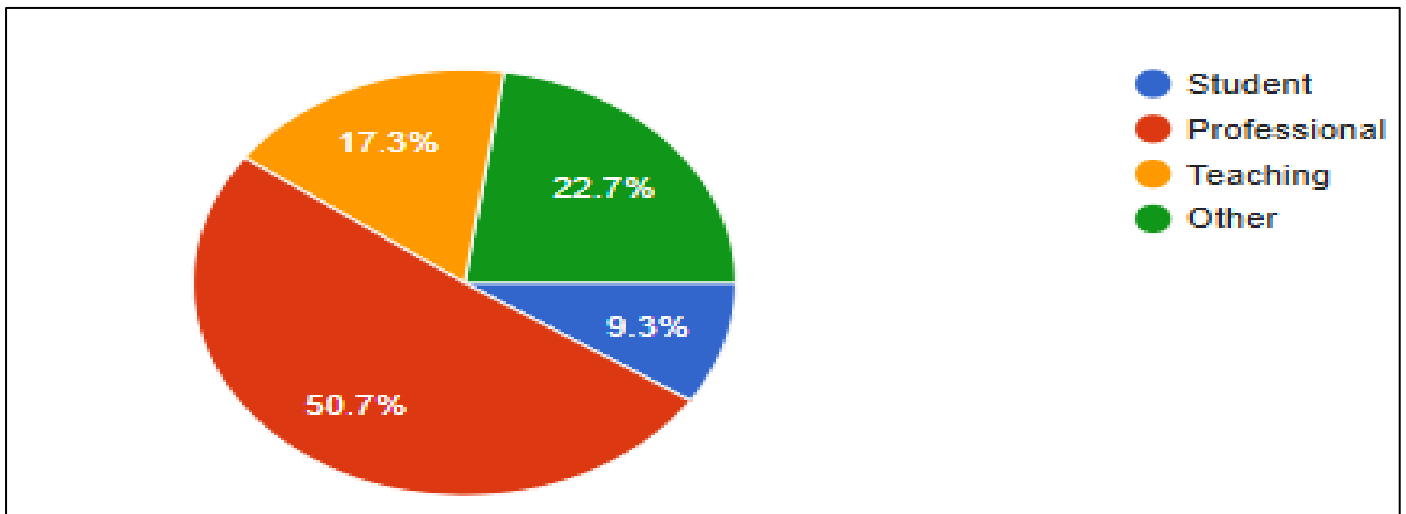


Fig 4 Demographic Information by Occupation

➤ Perceptions of Grammar

- *88% of Respondents Agreed that Grammar is Essential for Clear Communication in Digital Interactions.*

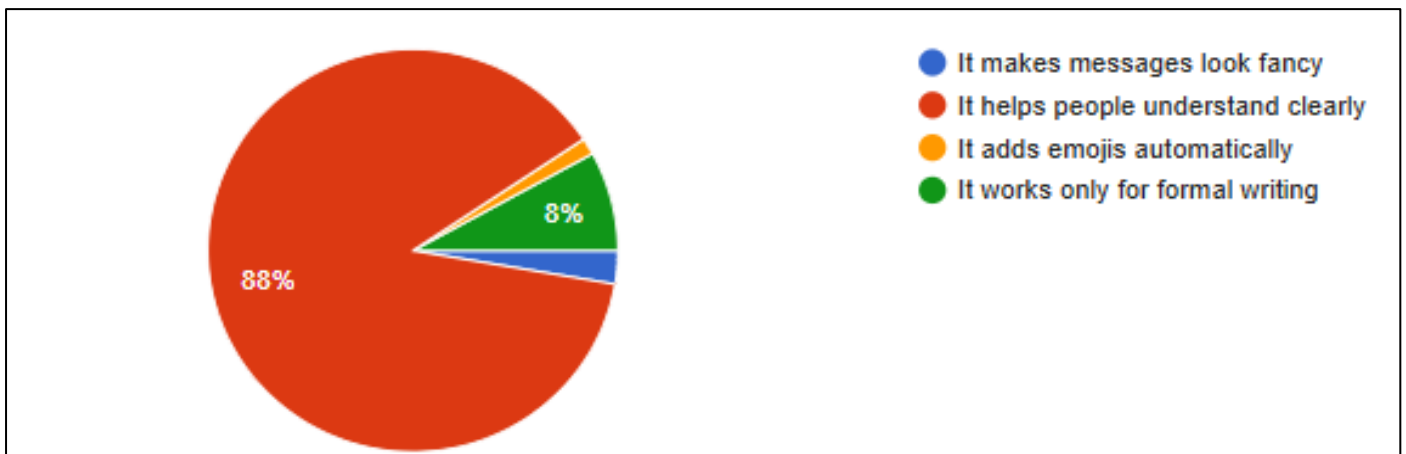


Fig 5 Perceptions of Grammar by Respondents

- *93.3% Stated that Poor Grammar Results in Confusion or Misinterpretation.*

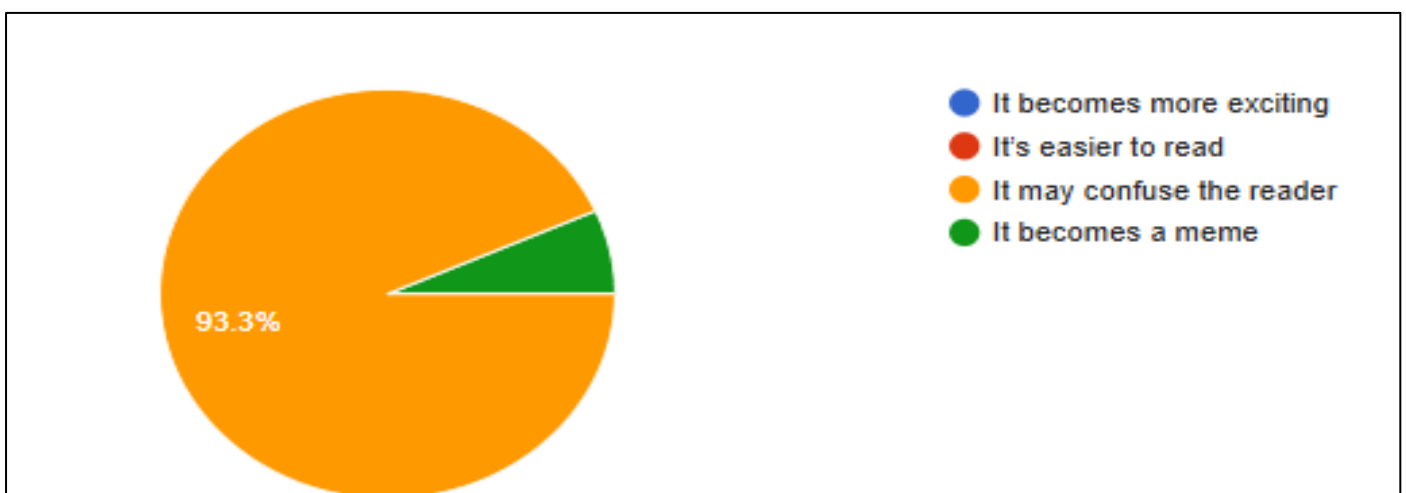


Fig 6 Perceptions of Grammar by Results

- 96% Felt Grammar is Most Important in Professional Contexts Such as Job Applications.

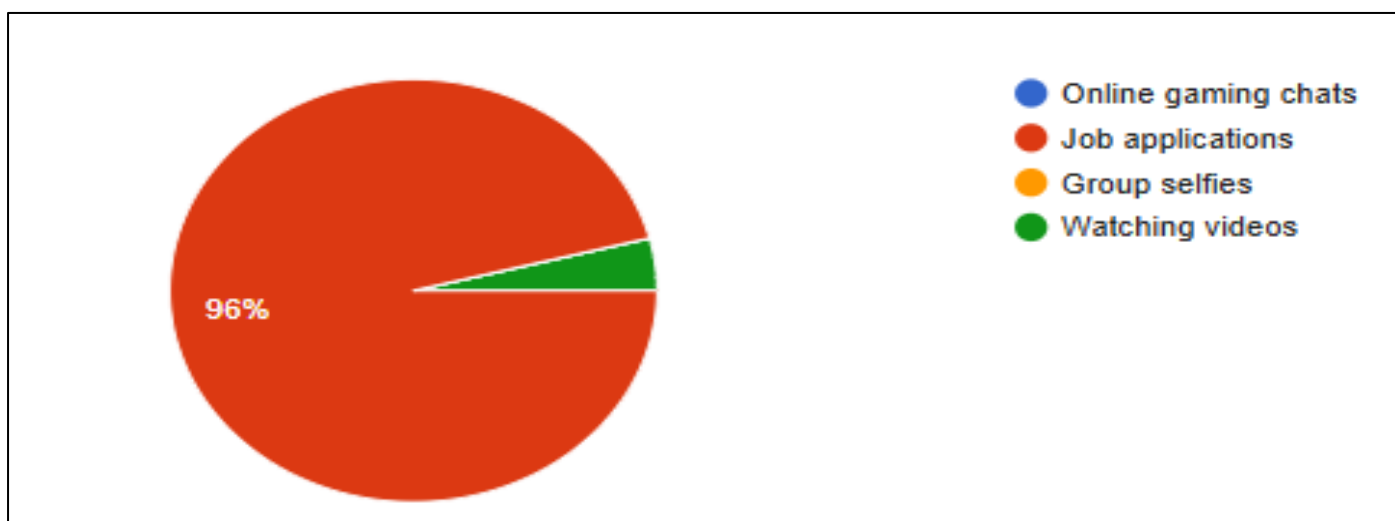


Fig 7 Perceptions of Grammar by Profession

- 92% of Participants Stated that Grammar Mistakes in Surveys or Forms Usually Lead to Confusion or Wrong Answers.

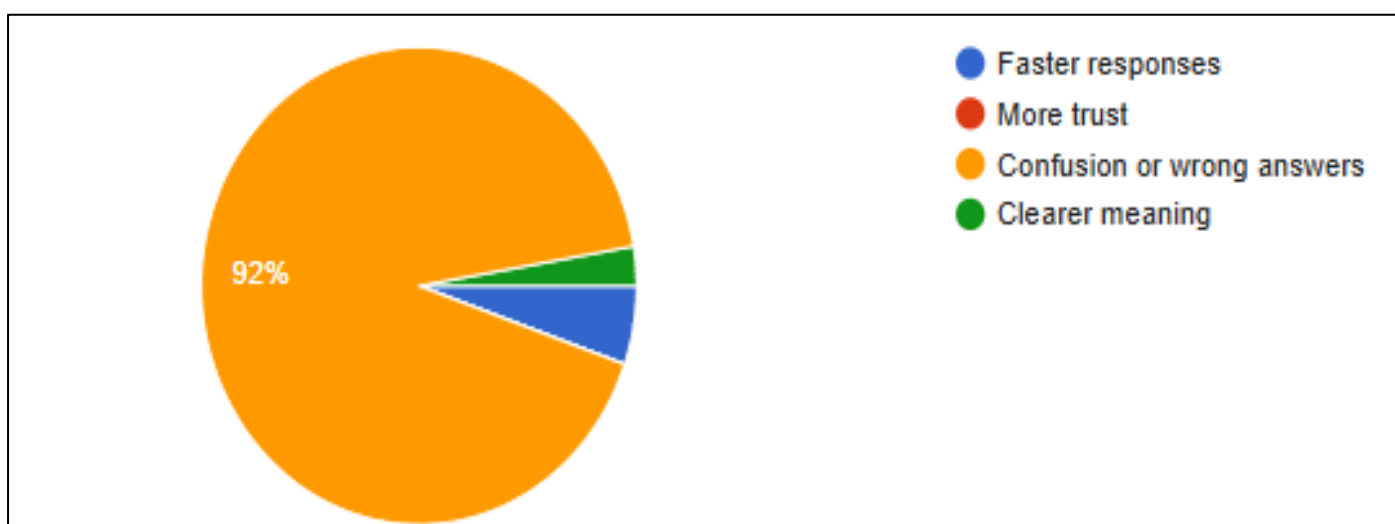


Fig 8 Perceptions of Grammar Mistakes in Surveys

- 42% of Participants Correctly Identified that "Helping you win Arguments" is Not a Valid Reason to care about Grammar, while 41% Chose "it makes you Confusing."

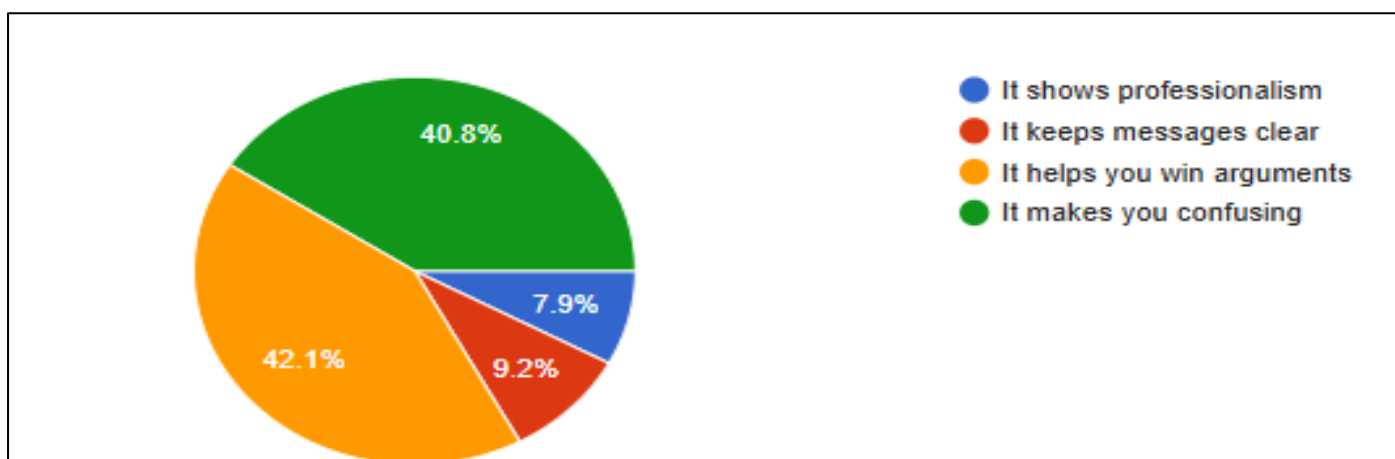


Fig 9 Perceptions of Grammar by Participants Correctly Identified

➤ *Grammar Usage in Daily Life*

- *71.1% Stated that Grammar Tools like Autocorrect cannot Replace Personal Grammar Knowledge.*

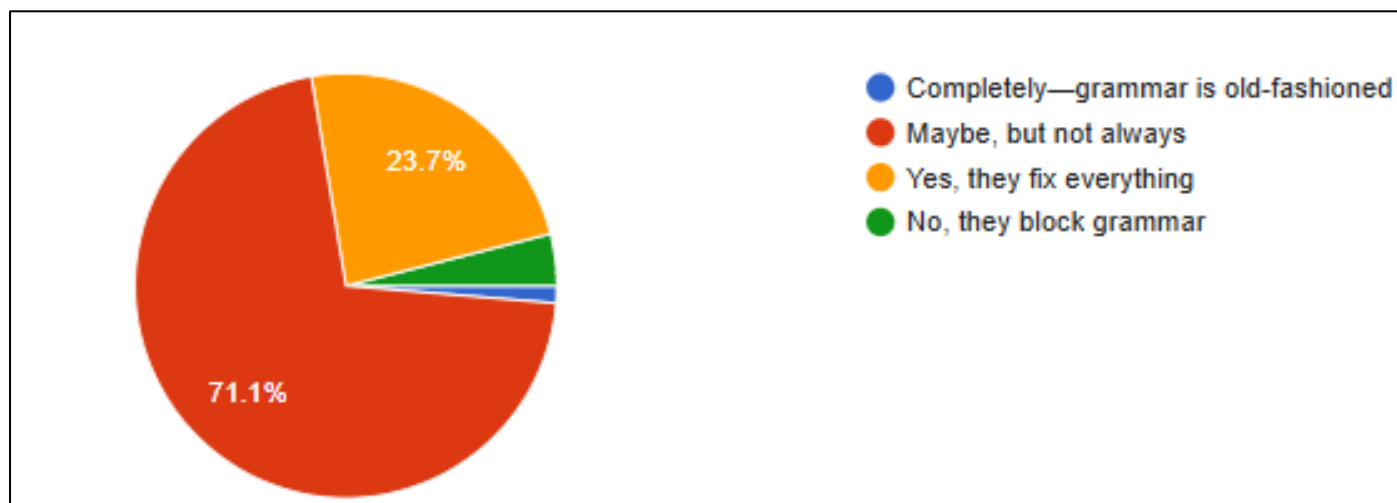


Fig 10 Grammar Usage in Daily Life by Grammar Tools

- *89% of Respondents Agreed that Using Proper Grammar Shows a Person is Clear and Respectful.*

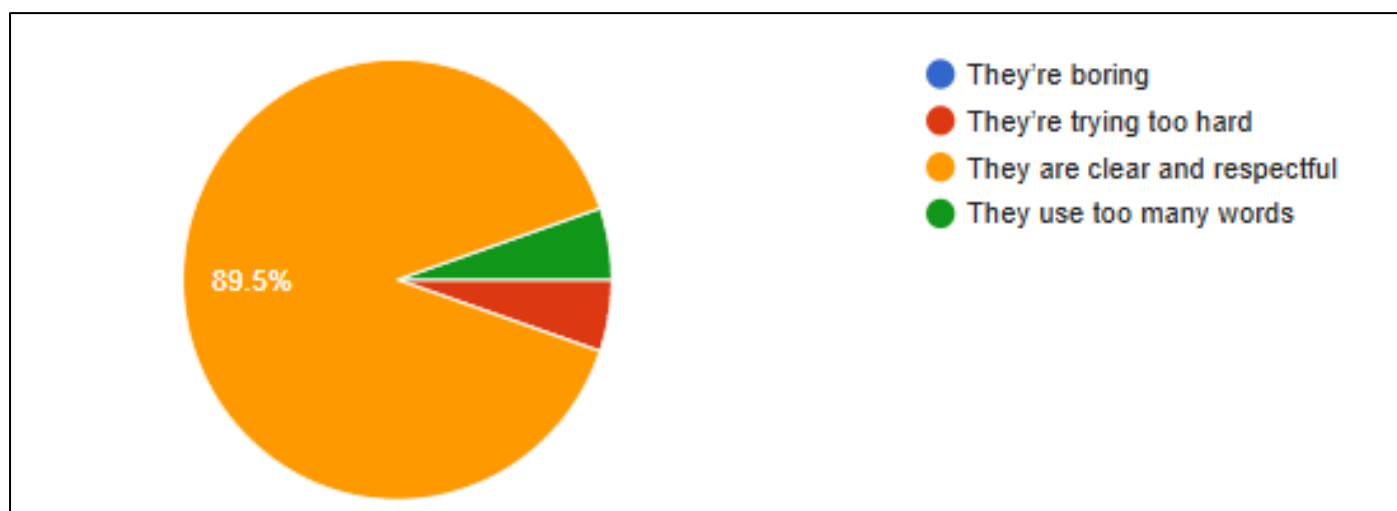


Fig 11 Grammar Usage in Daily Life by Respondents

- *94.7% Stated that Grammar Mistakes Sometimes affect how Others Perceive a Message.*

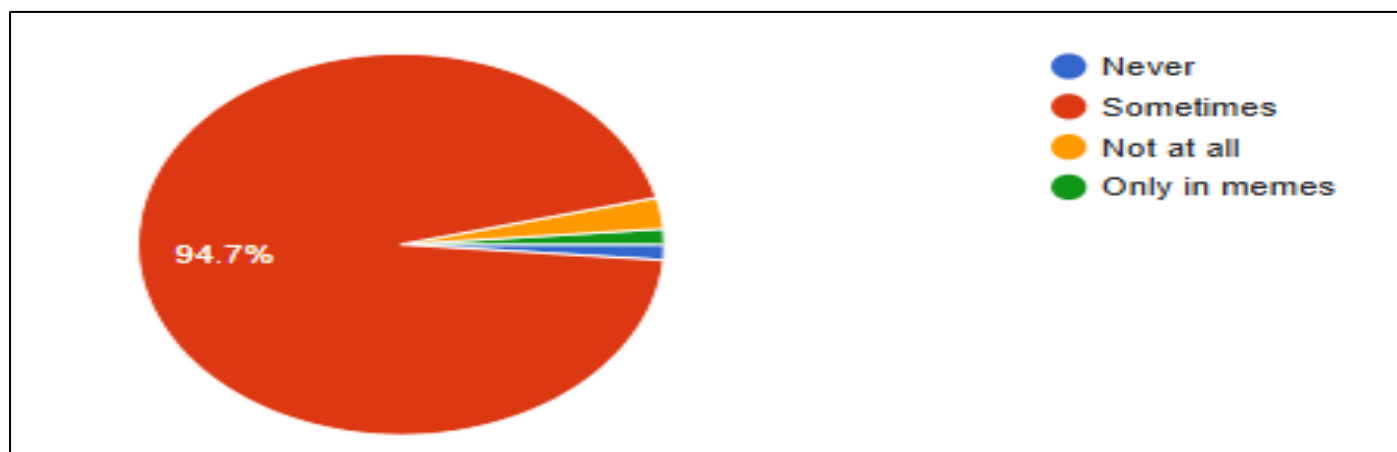


Fig 12 Grammar Usage in Daily Life by Grammar Mistakes

- 78.9% Believed Grammar should be used even in Informal Texting and Social Media.

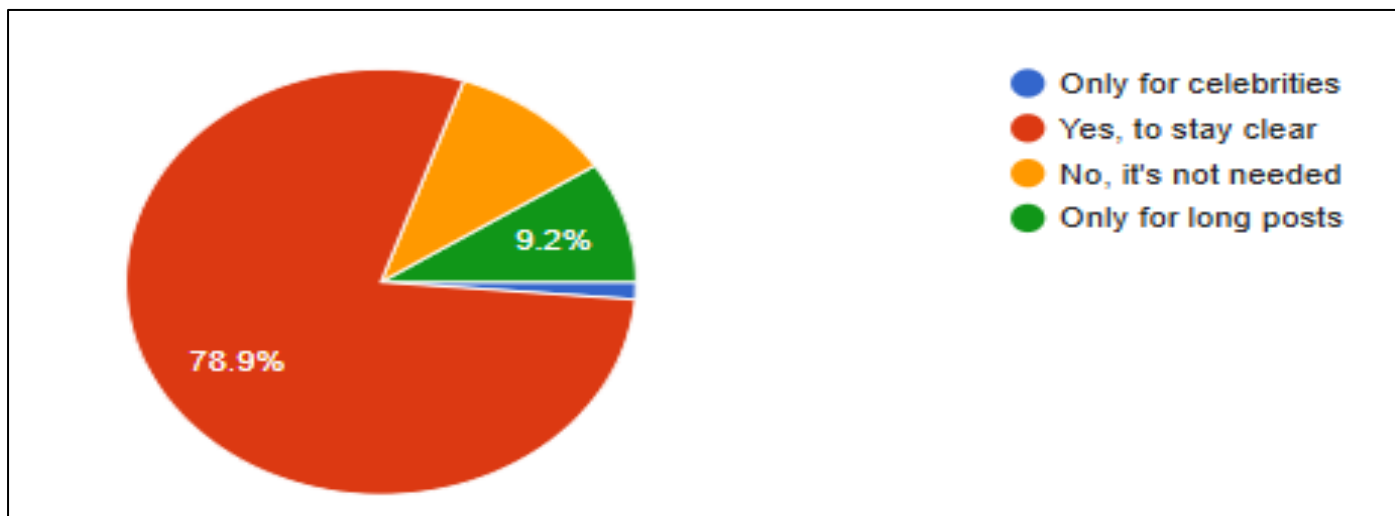


Fig 13 Grammar Usage in Daily Life by Informal Texting and Social Media

- 88.2% Supported Continued Grammar Instruction in Schools.

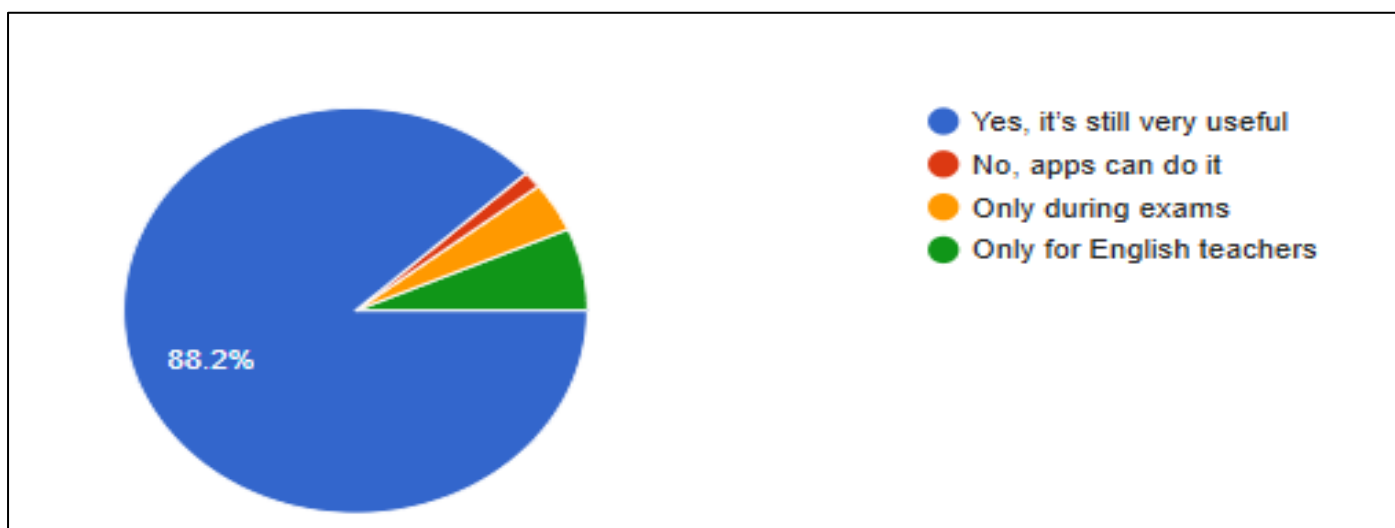


Fig 14 Grammar Usage in Daily Life by Instruction

- 73% Reported Following Grammar Rules in Daily Digital Communication

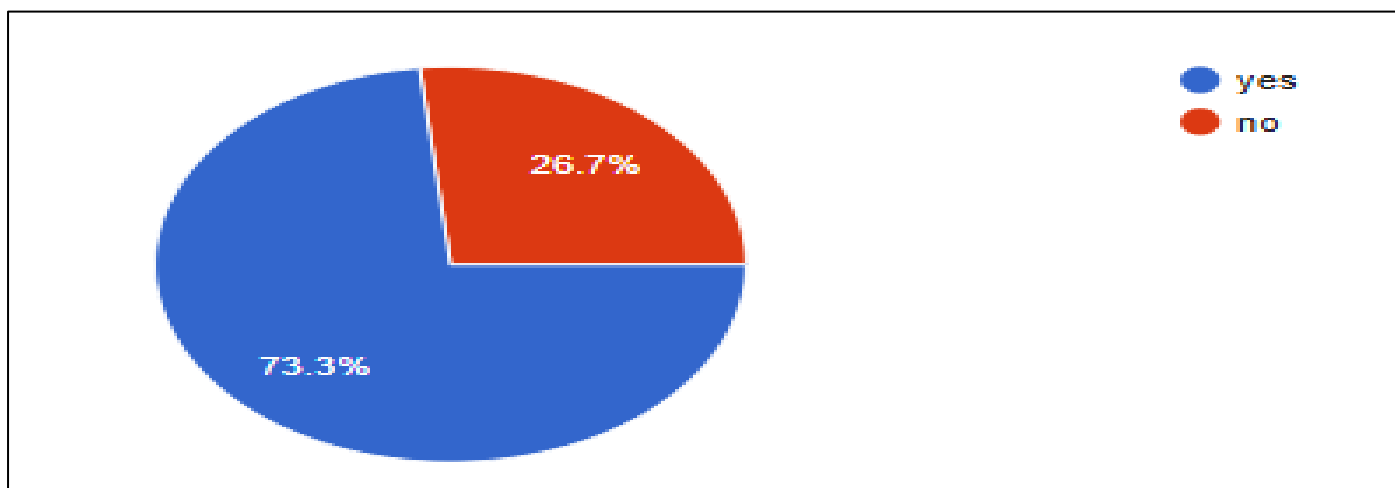


Fig 15 Grammar Rules in Daily Digital Communication

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the continued relevance and perceived importance of grammar in digital communication across various demographic groups. Participants across age groups and educational backgrounds overwhelmingly agreed that grammar is essential for clear communication (88%) and that errors can lead to confusion or misinterpretation (93.3%). This consensus suggests that despite the rise of informal digital language practices, users still recognize the foundational role of grammar in ensuring clarity and reducing misunderstandings.

Notably, 96% of respondents emphasized the importance of grammar in professional settings, particularly in contexts such as job applications. This aligns with existing literature, which shows that grammatical proficiency influences how individuals are judged in academic and workplace environments. Similarly, 92% agreed that grammatical mistakes in structured formats like surveys or forms can lead to errors in interpretation, reinforcing grammar's role in accuracy and data reliability.

Participants demonstrated a critical awareness of grammar's limitations and the role of digital tools. While grammar aids like autocorrect and Grammarly are widely used, 71.1% of respondents acknowledged that these tools cannot substitute for foundational grammar knowledge. This reflects a balanced perspective, recognizing technology as a support rather than a replacement for learning. Furthermore, the belief that grammar usage reflects clarity and respect (89%) and can impact how messages are perceived (94.7%) underlines the social implications of grammatical correctness. This awareness was not limited to formal settings; a notable 78.9% of participants believed grammar should be applied even in informal digital interactions like texting and social media. This is particularly important in an era where personal and professional identities increasingly converge online.

V. LIMITATIONS

- The relatively small sample size ($n = 75$) may limit generalizability.
- Convenience sampling introduces selection bias, favoring participants who are digitally literate and active online.
- The exclusive use of English may have excluded non-English speakers or individuals with limited digital access.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, the strong support for ongoing grammar education (88.2%) and the self-reported adherence to grammar rules in everyday digital communication (73%) suggests a persistent cultural value placed on linguistic accuracy. This underscores the need for continued grammar instruction, not only in schools but also through digital literacy programs that address evolving communication platforms. In summary, the study reinforces that grammar remains a key element of effective digital communication, influencing comprehension, professionalism, and user

perception. The results advocate for balanced integration of technology and traditional grammar instruction to equip individuals with both competence and adaptability in the digital age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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