- Fitting in
- Inequality
- Difference in language
- Another family member that lives somewhere else and they talk differently
- Code-switching
- Parental expectations on language/speech
- Having Accents
- Forced to speak something
- Judgement
- Speaking with more than just words (gestures)
- Misunderstanding between people
- Learning a foreign language

The Controlling Effects Of Grammar

Society gives grammar the power to control us. It wants us to be pressured into having excellent spoken grammar and speech. If we do not have that, then we are criticized. Marilyn vos Savant says, “Be able to correctly pronounce the words you would like to speak and have excellent spoken grammar.” This is the way society wants us to speak. It’s because of this that I ruminate a lot on what I say, what I’m going to say, and how I say it. “Grammar is a piano I play by ear. All I know about grammar is its power.”(Joan Didion). Grammar has power over a lot. It can affect the way people look at you. If you’re interviewing for a job, and you don’t have the best grammar chances are you won’t get hired. Grammar gives you power also. It can give you the power to attract people when you’re giving a speech. It can get you to higher places especially if your grammar is what society expects of you. Although these quotes are true, the only reason grammar has power and the ability to control us, is because we let it.

“Grammar, which knows how to control even kings.”(Moliere). What Moliere is saying is that grammar controls everything. It controls the way some of us think and the way some of us speak. I can attest to this because it has definitely controlled my thought process. Occasionally, I make mental notes about what to say in the correct grammar the next time I speak to someone when I don’t say it correctly the first time. I even correct myself out loud. For example, one day in spanish class I was confused on how to conjugate a certain word. So, I got up out of my seat to go and ask my spanish teacher. He was sitting at his desk, talking to a student teacher when he looked up at me. “Yes dear?” He said with a welcoming smile. “Um...” I started to say. I wasn’t sure how to ask him the question. I wasn’t sure how to start it off, and I was afraid that I wouldn’t use the proper grammar. “Don’t you drop the ‘e’, and add the ‘i’?” I asked. “Yes.” He nodded and turned to continue his previous conversation. Walking back to my seat I thought, *“Shoot! I wasn’t supposed to say ‘don’t you’. I was supposed to say ‘wouldn’t you’.”* After realizing that I said the improper use of grammar, I began to feel embarrassed and ashamed. Sitting back down I corrected myself again. This time out loud. “I wasn’t supposed to say ‘Don’t

you'. I was supposed to say 'Wouldn't you". Oh my gosh!" I let the use of grammar control me so much, that when I say something incorrectly I automatically feel ashamed. I get embarrassed and I come down even harder on myself. At other times I'm afraid to speak up because I'm afraid of how I will sound, that I may not sound right, or that I won't make sense. I'm also afraid that will affect how people look at me. I get this way because I don't want people to look at me as "the girl who doesn't have correct grammar" or "the girl who doesn't speak right". I want them to look at me as "the girl with perfect grammar", "the girl who has no flaws in her speech". So, I make it an effort to make sure that my grammar is perfect. And no, it's still not perfect but I still try. Although I consider my grammar pretty well, I do make mistakes sometimes. "Look at them people." I pointed to a group of kids doing silly stunts and tricks. I was walking down the street with my friend when we saw them. "I mean look at *those* people." She looked at them and laughed.

I'm so used to correcting myself that sometimes, when someone says something grammatically incorrect, I silently correct them myself. It's not that I judge how people speak because I don't at all. They are free to speak however they wish. Especially if that's who they are. I just do it to help myself. Only so that I will know what to say when I speak to someone who has the mindset that you need to speak a certain way. Another example is when my mom and I were in the car, and she was talking about how much the damage to her car was. "Five hunned.." She said in a loud, silly voice. I automatically interrupted her, "Do you mean five *hundred*?" I made sure I emphasized the word "hundred". She just looked at me and laughed. I only corrected her because I really dislike the word "hunned". Although grammar is something I strive to be perfect in, there is one type of language that I don't have to be perfect in. It's my own type of language. I use words or sentences like, "durp", "salty grits", and "you're doing the most", when I'm playing around and because it's fun. I believe at some point anyone should have some type of fun with their language. Personally for me, fun with my language is making up words. What makes it fun is that I know people can't criticize me with that.