

English Connects

# Teaching Grammar Communicatively: How the Situational Approach Helps!

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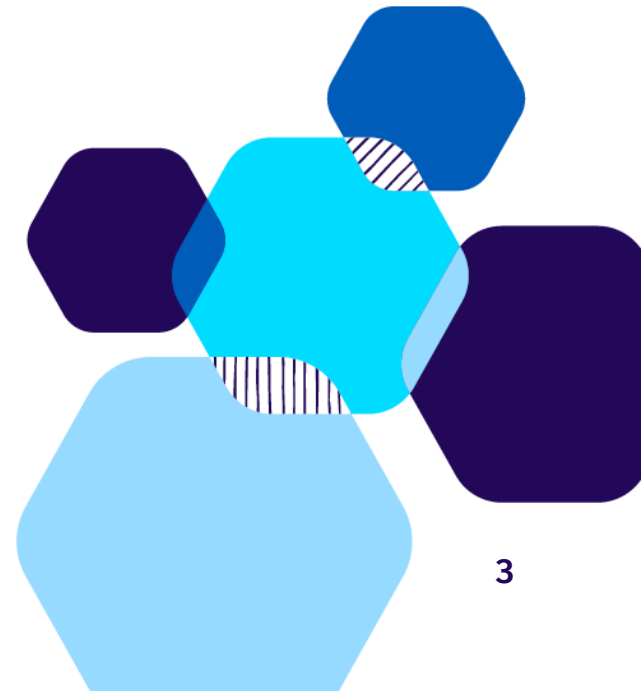
## About the speaker

Anestin Lum Chi is a multiple award-winning language teacher and teacher educator from Cameroon. She's passionate about innovative teaching methodologies and teachers' continuous professional development. Her research interests include pre- and in-service teacher training.



# Objectives

- Learn about the situational approach
- Explore strategies and techniques for making grammar instruction more engaging while taking into account meaning, use and form.



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# Session outline

- Overview
- Why do learners face difficulties with grammar lessons?
- Teaching ideas related to the situational approach and techniques of building context for language structures
- Examples from personal teaching
- Benefits of the situational approach in the teaching of grammar

# Overview

1. How important is grammar?
2. Rote memorisation? Random contexts?
3. Assessment and testing of grammar?

**II - Rewrite each of the sentences below following the instructions after each sentence.  
Write your answers in the spaces provided. (5 marks)**

1 - "We will be on holiday tomorrow", the child told his mother. (Put in reported speech)

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2 - The principal has made a good speech. (Write in the passive voice)

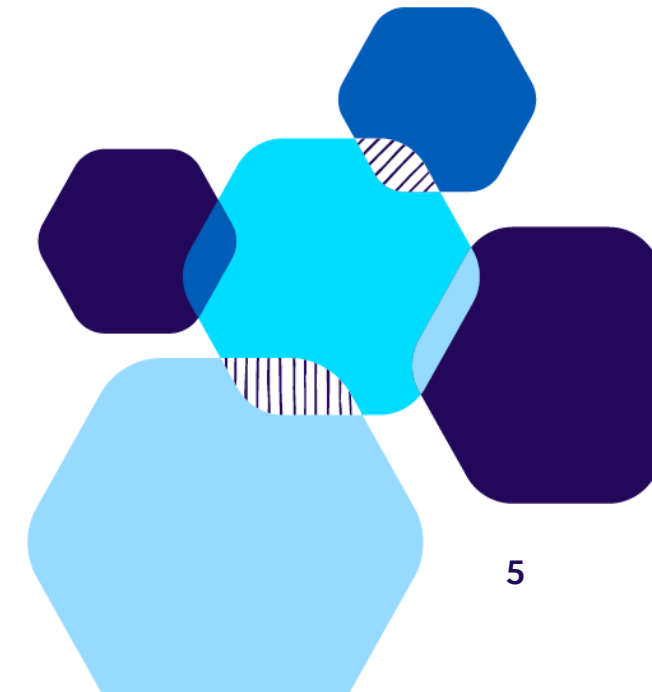
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3 - If you had gone to school, you \_\_\_\_\_ (to see) our new Minister. (Put the verb in the appropriate tense)

4 - The Minister of Public Health is worried that too many people eat junk \_\_\_\_\_ (to feed) in Cameroon. (Use the expression in its correct form)

5 - The diesel engine is named after its inventor Rudolf Diesel, \_\_\_\_\_ (who) first working prototype ran in 1897. (Use the word in its correct form)



# Overview

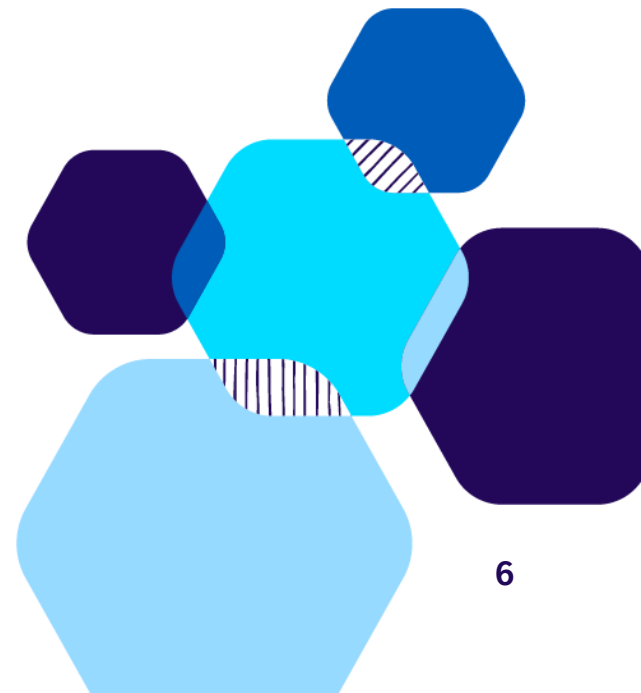
## CLT and grammar



*Photo credit: Pixabay*

How can teachers make grammar instruction less challenging and more engaging for learners?

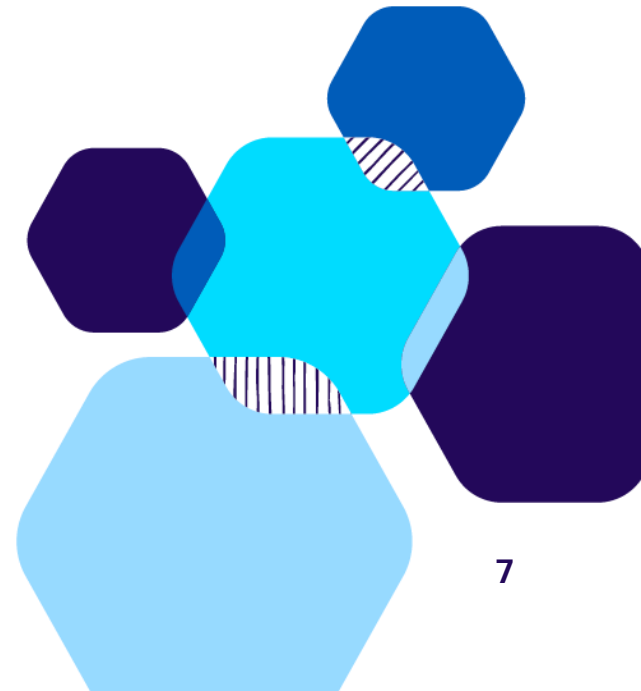
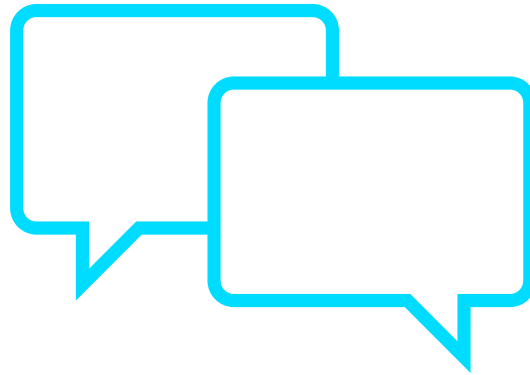
How do we shift focus from rules alone and lay emphasis on meaning, use and form?



# Brainstorming

Why do learners of ESL/EFL face difficulties with grammar lessons?

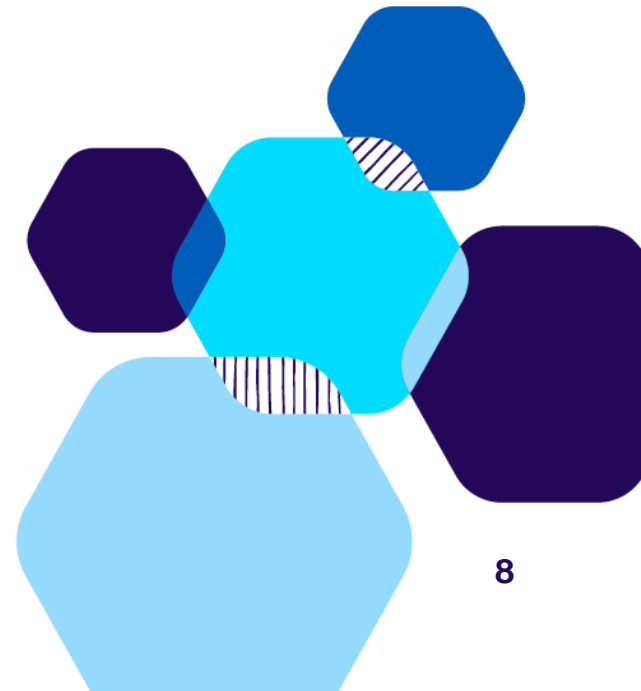
*Please write your ideas – from your experience in the chat.*



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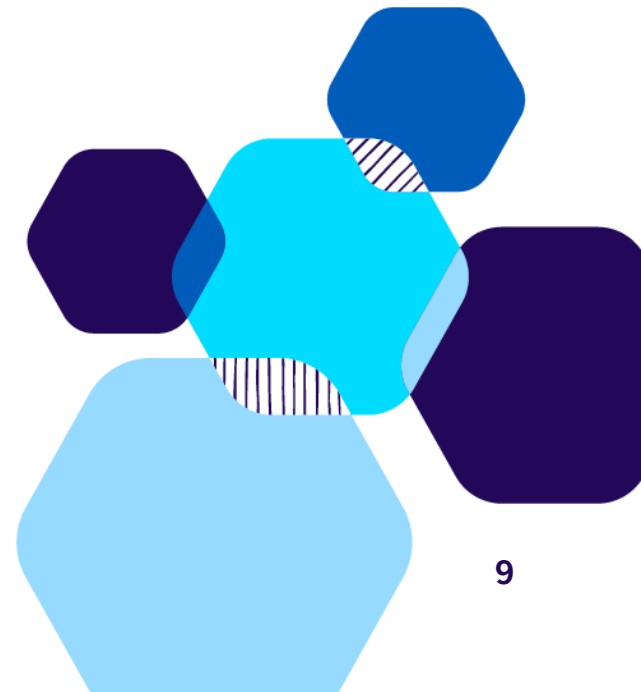
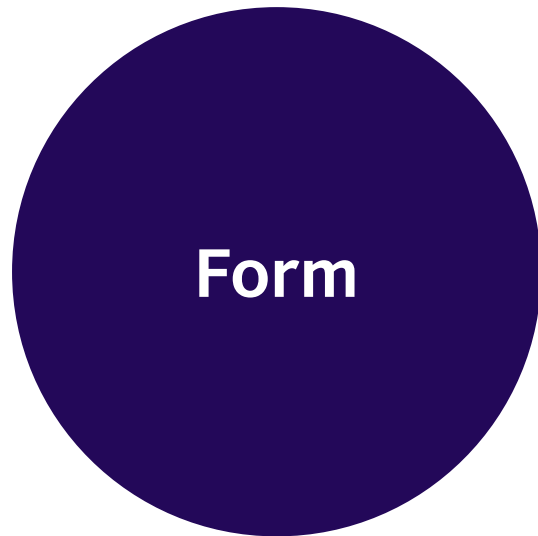
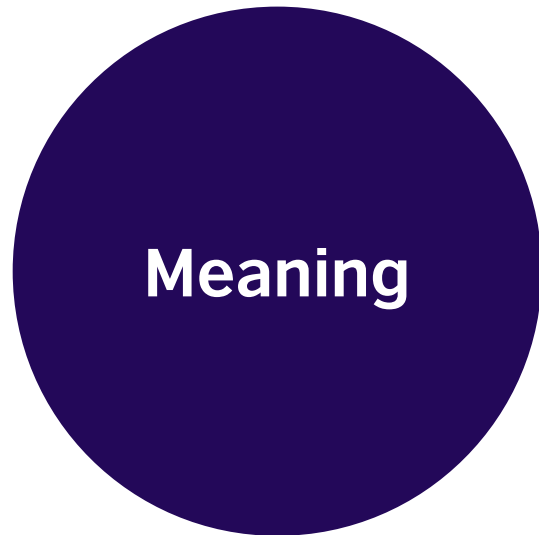
## Situational approach

- a) What do you know about this?
- b) How does it work?
- c) How do meaning, form and practice relate to it?



# Stages of the situational approach

Proceed by laying emphasis on



# A - Meaning

**Build  
context  
slowly**

**Elicit from  
learners**

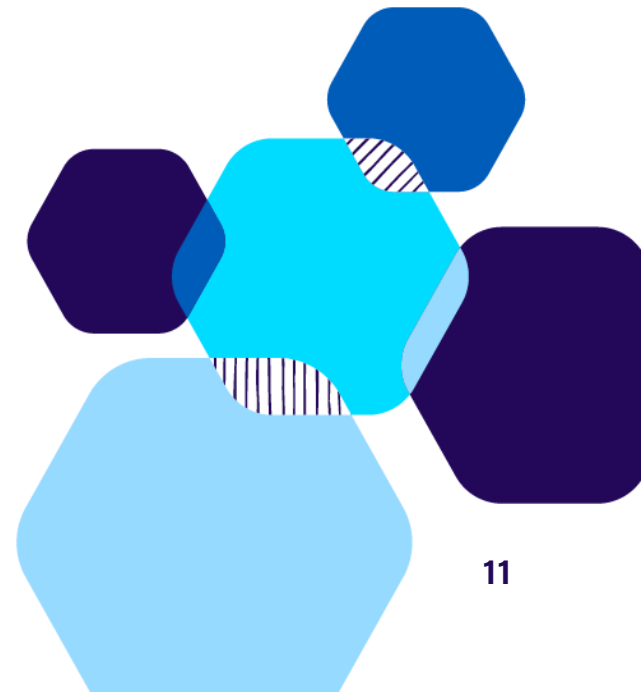
**Have a  
model  
target  
sentence/  
structure**



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# Context-building techniques

- **Pictorial approach:** Use visuals (pictures, videos, real objects, ...)
- **Narration** - story telling
- **Dramatised real life or imagined situations.**



## B - Form and use

Drill learners  
through the  
model  
structure

Provide a  
written form

Check  
understanding  
via concept  
check questions  
(CCQs) and  
timelines



Photo credit: Pixabay

## C - Practice

### Controlled and freer practice



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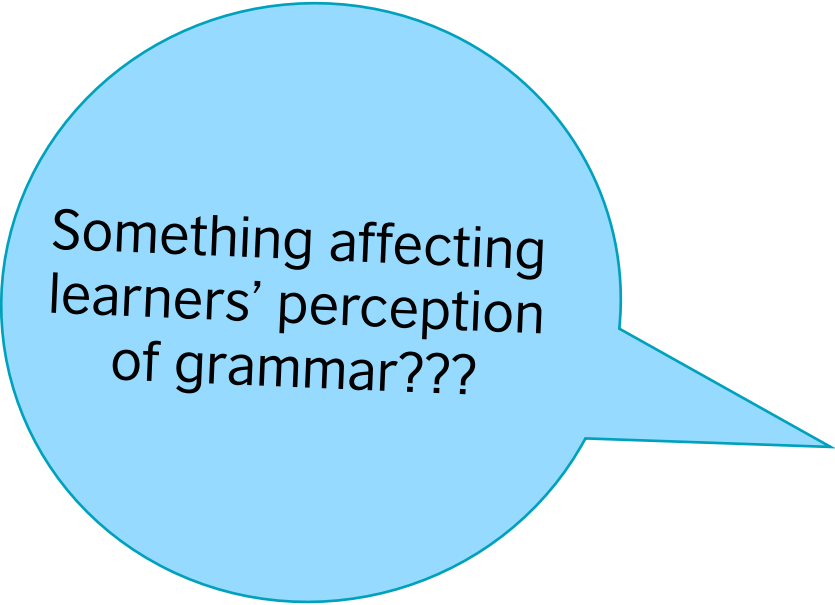
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# My action-research about grammar teaching and learning

## Background

- Rural government technical school
- Specialisms: Building Construction, Cloth Designing, Cloth Designing, Electrical Technology or Motor Mechanics.
- Average class size: 70.
- Medium of instruction: French
- Languages spoken out of school: mother tongue and French

# Action-research



Something affecting  
learners' perception  
of grammar???

## Exploration

- Why do my learners face difficulties with grammar lessons?
- What do my learners like/dislike about grammar lessons?
- How do they feel during grammar lessons?
- How can I help my learners?

# Findings

Grammatical concepts were abstract.



They didn't understand the context, meaning and usage of the grammar points.



Grammatical rules were difficult to assimilate, memorise and use.



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## Examples from my teaching

- **Pictures:** use of modals – ought/ should/shouldn't have /conditionals,...
- **Story telling:** used to, past perfect progressive tense, ...
- **Role play involving learners:** reported speech,....





Photo credit: Pixabay

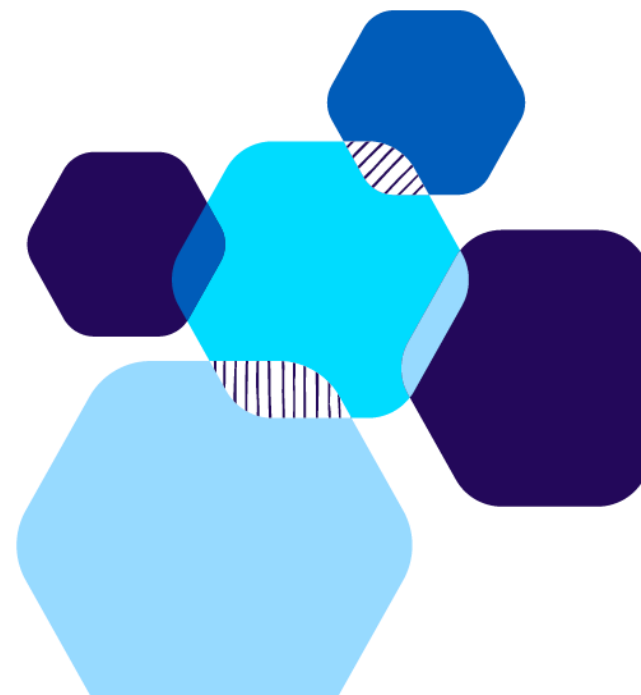




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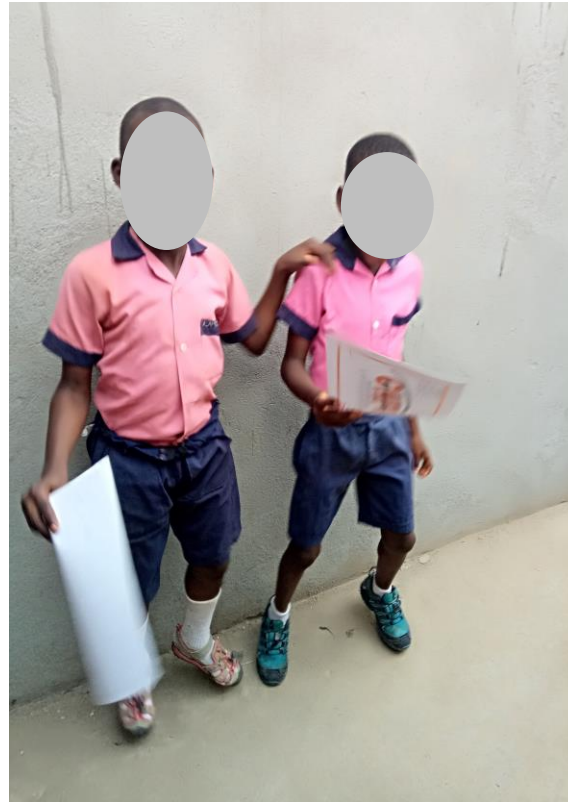


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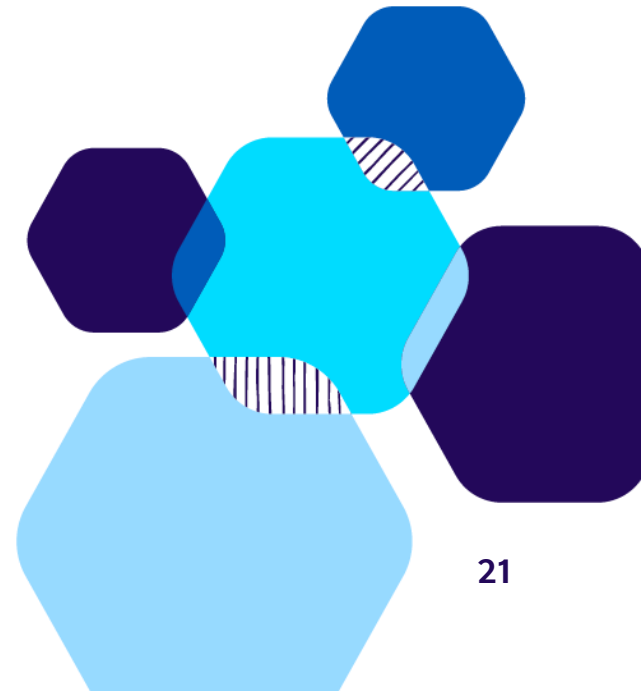
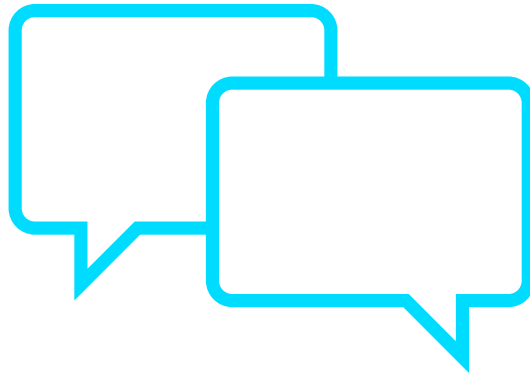
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# Brainstorming

In what ways is the situational approach beneficial?

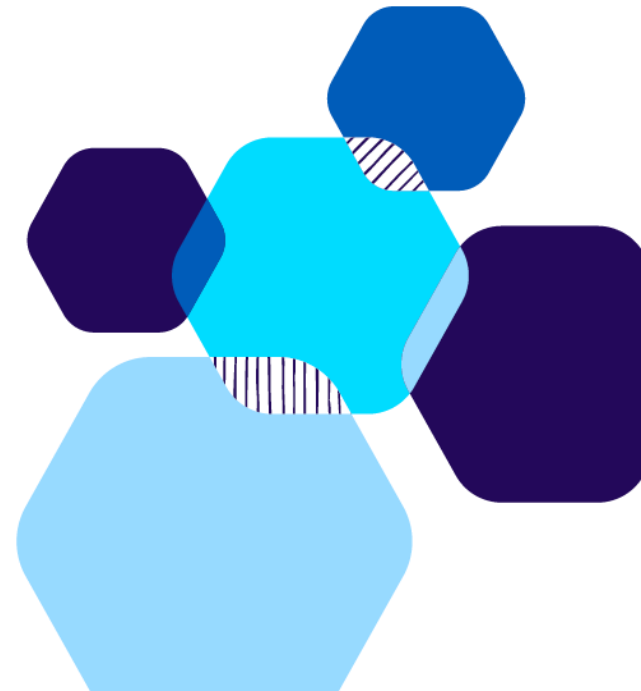
*Please share your views in the chat*



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# Benefits of the situational approach

- Less focus on rules
- Learning is student-centred
- Learners enjoy the context/situations build up
- Learners understand the meaning of the structure from the context
- Learners are able to use the structure in their daily communication



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# References

- Chi, A. L. (2023). Teaching grammar communicatively: The situational approach. TESOL Connections, May 2023.
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- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2015). Research into practice: Grammar learning and teaching. Language Teaching, 48(2), 263-280.



**Thank you**  
**Any questions?**

