

May the grammar be with you

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist
Friday, 25 August 2023 03:10



I have to admit—I don't know much about *Star Wars*. Somehow I missed the window to watch them during my formative years. Although I have glasses, write about grammar and prefer staying inside, my lack of *Star Wars* appreciation makes others seriously second-guess my nerd street cred.

Here's what I do know about *Star Wars*: Luke and Leia were brother and sister, which made things awkward, especially after they kissed. Darth Vader was Luke's dad. We pretend Episode I never happened (especially Jar Jar). Han shot first. What shot second. And I don't know is on third. Also, Yoda is an awesome green Muppet (voiced by Frank Oz, who also voiced Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, Cookie Monster, Bert and Animal, to name a few) who could go toe-to-toe with Chuck Norris in a head-to-head matchup.

But is Yoda's grammar correct? His sentence structure is certainly odd. He says things like, "When nine hundred years old you reach, look as good you will not."

Odd, that sounds. Writing like this, I don't know why I am.

For the most part, English syntax (how we arrange our words) follows the same pattern. In order for a sentence to be complete, it needs a subject and a predicate. The predicate always includes a verb and often includes an object.

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Most English sentences follow the subject-verb-object order. In one of these popular laser sword space movies, according to Google, Darth Vader says, "I find your lack of faith disturbing." In this sentence, "I" is the subject, "find" is the verb, and "lack of faith" is the object.

Many other *Star Wars* quotes follow this subject-verb-object pattern. "I am your father." "I think I just blasted it." "Women always figure out the truth. Always."

Yoda's syntax follows a distinctly different pattern. For the most part, his sentences follow the object-subject-verb pattern. This pattern is only found in 0.3% of the world's languages.

Let's take this quote from Yoda: "Patience you must have, my young Padawan." In this sentence, "patience" appears first, serving as the object. This is followed by "you," the sentence's subject. Finally, we get the verb, "have." Object-subject-verb. Here's another: "Through The Force, things (object) you (subject) will see (verb)."

Therefore, the answer to the question is: yes, Yoda's speech pattern is grammatically correct; strange to our ears, it just sounds.

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