Let's Eat Grandma!: The Vicissitudes of Grammar

by **Kenneth Francis** (June 2019)

The Grammar, Paul Sérusier, 1892

The introductory clause in the title of this essay would be morally dubious, despite being grammatically correct, if it was about cannibal grandchildren deciding what to have for dinner. However, if there was a comma included in the clause ('Let's Eat, Grandma!'), it would more normally denote some grandchildren telling their grandmother that they are hungry.

It seems bad grammar can be a matter of life or death (or should that be 'non-grammar'?). Whatever the term, there is no denying that standards in grammar/punctuation, and English education, have reached an all-time low in some academic institutions. (I write this from my proverbial grammar 'glasshouse', so I have to be *really* careful that the copy is 'clean'.)

When I started lecturing in print journalism part-time some 25 years ago, one of the toughest subjects for students was grammar. This was during a time when some people didn't have mobile phones or laptops and when the odd student used the last of the IBM Selectric typewriters in the late 1980s/early 90s.

We've come a long way since then, with spell-checking and even grammar/syntax/check programs installed in most computers to do the job for us at the click of a 'mouse'.

Read more in *New English Review*:
- [@NERIconoclast](#)