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It Will Fade

This is the literal truth; I wish I could write my essays the way I would talk to my friends. With my friends I would be able to say “Dude like seriously VG Starbucks is way better than the one on Haven ‘cus you know space, there's no questioning it like literally”, but if I were writing this opinion in an essay for school it would go like this “One of the many reasons the Starbucks in Victoria Gardens mall is better than the one located on Haven, is due to the fact there is more space to enjoy coffee.” The day I realized I was complete valley girl my whole world changed because I found out the way a person speaks defines their personality and the valley girl accent defined a persona I despised. I am not visibly the stereotypical valley girl because the valley girl has converted into today’s “basic white girl” who can be described as a Caucasian female who wears Ugg boots, carries around a Starbucks drink, and speaks with a valley girl accent. However, I do like Starbucks Coffee the use of the word “like” and the use of “literally” metaphorically, but I did not speak that way all the time. I have learned to moderate my valley girl accent over the years, but the way I express myself is not just different from when I am among friends and in the process of writing a paper, but also different when I am home, with strangers, and even on social media. Each of these allows me to make unique interactions which become meaningful over time.

In my home I am comfortable and it is a place where I can be my complete self. Since I still live with my mother there are boundaries; for example, it is disrespectful if I curse in front

of her. But since the habit is irresistible my sisters and I luckily have some slang we find ourselves using when our Mother is around. My sisters and I are part of generation Z and with that being said social media has influenced our use of slang, which thankfully is great to use outside our smart phones and into our home in order to exclude our mother from conversations and compulsive cursing. In a way it has brought my sisters and me closer but also made us more aware of our speech. "Social media may actually produce writers and speakers who have a more nuanced understanding of language and identity than non-users do"(Dewey). With my sisters we say "wtf" meaning "what the fuck" or "that was mean af" which means "as fuck." Of course slang has always discriminated adults but I had never done it on purpose I thought I was protecting my mother from my vulgarity. I find it respectful that my sisters and I do this but eventually we will stop cursing all together when we are near our mother. There are many other people I interact with who I can speak freely with.

When I am outside my home and with friends that is when I feel free to speak my mind, which definitely includes cursing. Since I am a woman it is not taken lightly when I drop "f-bombs," people react in a way that seems I may have actually dropped a nuclear bomb. Something about being a woman and spending time with woman friends there is a bond we share when we freely drop "f-bombs" everywhere. Although I have never addressed this until now, I still feel it is the only environment it is acceptable for me to curse in. I am not in public and among friends who do not care about my vocabulary, but what I am trying to express. It is not about the actual word but the emotion it can emphasize, whatever curse word it may be it is mostly about the emotion I am trying to convey. I personally have the habit of saying "fuck" often and when I accidentally say "fuck" I curse about that too. With my friends we all express ourselves honestly whether it be good or bad and that is what makes us closer because we are

free to express ourselves. “Swearing is a harmless emotional release which could make you feel stronger, researchers have claimed - though only in moderation” (Bloom). It has been scientifically proven that cursing helps people be resilient. After reading about the positive effects cursing has I feel less guilty; however, I would not dare curse with a person I just met.

With strangers and acquaintances I normally use proper English, unless they begin using slang, cursing, and a valley girl accent right as we meet. Then I would speak differently but unless that occurs, because usually it does not, I speak properly. I tend to limit my use of “like” and instead of saying “huh?” I say, “What was that?” As I mentioned before I am part of Generation Z and the internet has, along with other forms of communication, influenced the way I speak to different audience. In a study conducted results showed that people were more proper when speaking to a larger audience which included strangers, “-people forego ‘proper English’ when they’re tweeting to a limited audience...But when people tweet to a larger group, as on a hashtag, or send a tweet that they know could be seen by more people, they tend to use more standard language.”(Hess). I apply this quote to my waking life because with strangers I never know if I might offend them by saying something vulgar which gives a bad impression. Social media, I would say, is a combination of different people in one setting.

My only form of social media is Instagram and here strangers, friends, family, and acquaintances are all able to see my social media page. With the way I use slang code at home I also use vague speech when I post anything on Instagram and even with email and texts. In a way I have grown up paranoid that someone is always watching and reading anything on my social media page, including my texts and emails. The way politicians and celebrities seem to get hacked and personal information gets revealed has left me and most of the population aware that it is possible we are being watched. On Instagram I keep my captions short and my pictures

meaningless to the naked eye. For example, I may post a photo with a caption of song lyrics like “rare hearts that never disagree”, to most of my followers this would be random and meaningless, but to my friends this is an inside joke about a time we went to a party. Generation Z in particular is well aware that someone is watching and we found ways to still get what we want said without actually saying it. In this quote from Hess’ article she gives an example of what a teen would say, “‘Your fave could never,’ a gleeful taunt meaning roughly ‘Your favorite [actor] could never [pull off the beach ensemble modeled by my favorite actor, Darren Criss, over which I am literally dying right now].’ A reader can only decipher its meaning if she has been briefed on the speaker’s celebrity allegiances and is plugged into the web’s breakneck gossip cycle. The modern revelation doubles as a warning: Reveal less” (Hess). Revealing less is a constant on social media with me. Constantly having to monitor what you can say and post leads to just looking into my feed as opposed to participating. Once I have used the vague slang I further into not saying anything at all. “ The gratification and thrill associated with social media has substantially faded as too many images and voices vie for attention, causing what feels like thousands of attention-hungry children speaking over one another, simultaneously saying everything and nothing. Generation Z it seems has all the excitement but also the down fall” (Helpern). As the slang reveals less so will the media users and eventually both will just go off the grid.

To show I respect my household, I use slang to exclude my mother from my conversations with my sisters that often include curse words. With friends I am able to speak freely which allows us to be closer because as young ladies there are certain things we cannot just blurt out. Although conversing without a filter with my friends allows me to feel more expressive, I must admit I do enjoy writing properly on paper. It is acceptable to speak proper

English with strangers because first impressions matter. When I first meet someone it may take a while for me to be comfortable enough to be myself. On social media a combination of all four groups are present this has lead me to use a vague language that only people I want to understand will. But after a while it gets boring and the need for privacy has driven me to be less of a participant of social media. It is easier to stay off than making an effort to keep up with slang. The desire for actual connection with people has driven me off social media. I want to be able to express myself without feeling watched. Soon enough today's slang will fade with its users who have left the internet.

Works Cited

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