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The communication between a young teenager struggling through high school and a retired elderly citizen who has lived a full life can often be difficult. Language has continued to change throughout the years therefore every generation has grown up with different variation of their native language. Every generation has gone through their own experiences, such as living through wars and the Great Depression, as well as had their own trends and styles which frames their way of speaking. How does this affect the way the generations communicate with each other? Regardless of the language differences most people still register when speaking to others. This refers to how we dictate the way we speak in accordance to who we are talking to. One will speak quite differently to their friend as opposed to their boss or grandmother. This has always been true throughout the years however in what ways does this affect the way generations connect to each other? Although newer generations do their best to speak how they deem appropriate to their elders, for the most part every generation goes through their phases of slang words, phrases, and different forms of speech. Every generation could ultimately develop their own new dictionary based on this. Even though this does not actually happen, new words are added to the official dictionary all the time for this same reason.

In more recent years, a huge cause for these drastic changes in language is social media. Social media quickens the rate at which slang words and other new forms of speech are created and how widely it is used. Something as simple as the pound symbol (#) is now known as a “hashtag” to younger generation. Along with having new names for things, there are also more abbreviations and acronyms used in everyday speech because of social media. Because of this, any form of speech advertised through social media outlets does not reach those who do not use social media. For the most part, this includes the older generations who did not necessarily grow up with computers, internet, or Facebook. Along with Twitter being a reason for a gap in communication between generations, movies and video games take a huge role in influencing language. Television has a huge impact on popular culture and is well known for setting trends. There have been several words added to the dictionary because it became a popular word to use in society. An example being “d’oh” from the show *The Simpsons* which was added to the Oxford English Dictionary. Therefore, the shows and movies someone chooses to watch has a great power over their language and although all generation of people may enjoy watching certain classics or popular movies, for the most part every age group has different genres and kinds of movies and shows they prefer. A child probably will not choose to watch the same thing as their older sibling and same goes for the parents and grandparents. Thus, each person is receiving a different influence of language based on what they watch.

Registering is part of a person’s every day life. Every time someone speaks to another they choose the best way to do so. One speaking to their boss will most likely be polite and very agreeable when told to do something. For the most part, when people are speaking to anyone at a higher rank than them or simply just older they do this, but this changes when looking at the relationship between a child and a parent. Some cultures are very strict about “respecting your elders”, however for other cultures, including the American culture, this is not always true. Although children are always expected to follow rules and do as their told, they are more likely to disobey and talk back to their parent than they are when talking to their teacher. This fact has become more apparent in more recent generations. Does this have to do with the way language is evolving? Someone who was born in the early 1900s would have never considered talking back to their parent or anyone else for that matter and if they did, they would have been severely punished. However, someone born in the early 2000s talks back to the parents almost daily with little to no penalty for these actions. Yet registering is still a big part of everyone’s lives. Even though people do not always respect their elders the way they used to, they still change the way they speak in accordance to who they are talking to. It is very common to hear a younger female call their best friend a derogatory name, such as whore or bitch and mean nothing mean by it. When someone from an older generation hears this they find it offensive and claim that people should not call their friends these horrible names regardless of what they mean by it because they believe it is informing other people that it is acceptable to also call woman these things. However, what they do not understand is that this way of speaking to friends is now the normal thing to and is very customary for friends. Now, even though someone might speak to their friend that way, they still will not speak to their grandmother this way. Although a teenager may call all their best friends bitches and they know they are doing it in a loving way they still will not turn around and call their grandmother a whore. This is what is referred to as register. To register is to decide how formal one should converse or write in. one linguist, Martin Joos, said there was five styles of formality when referring to speech. Frozen or static register is the most straight forward and formal of the five and is mostly only seen when reading things such as the Bible or the Pledge of Allegiance. Formal is a one-way conversation which uses technical grammar and vocabulary and is typically only used during presentations. Consultative is what is thought of as normal conversation between someone with a certain knowledge and someone who needs that information such as a teacher and student or doctor and patient, where less formal grammar and vocabulary is used but the exchange still provides the necessary information. Casual is what is expected between groups of friends in a larger more public setting. Slang is often used and grammar is not that important. Intimate occurs in non-public settings and is the common way amongst family members and close friends. Intonation, tone, and meaning are considered more important than grammar or vocabulary.

How does language register and the evolution of language throughout the generations affect how generations connect? Every generation has their own attitudes, habits, motivations, and behaviors that make u who they are and this can come in the way of relating with those from other generations. A strong example of this is the workplace. Years ago, there were basic, definite rules that were followed in a work setting including the older employee was almost always the boss and those who were younger were their employees. This is no longer the case. Regardless of age, the most qualified is typically the boss. This means that someone who is fifty plus years old may have to take orders from someone who is barely out of college, which can lead to differences in opinions and how things should be done. Something like this can cause negative feelings and lead to miscommunication and broken relationships. In order to prevent such things, people should work to learn more about those from other generations. There are four different generations living together right now, traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X, and millennials, and in order for them to be able to work and live together they must be able to understand and accept each others differences, knowing that each grew up in different worlds and times.