WHAT’S HAPPENING: NETSPEAK DOMINATES THE LANGUAGE OF THE LEARNERS

by:

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In today’s generation where the existence of social media has been a part of humanity’s daily life, it has been obviously seen how it affects the life style of people, one is how they express their thoughts through the language. In fact, dealing with netizens through daily conversation is somehow a puzzle on mind since they are introducing the concept of “the words of only ours.” Basically, one possible solution which has been found to solve this problem is to be updated, and not outdated – exposing ourselves in the world of social media is perhaps a key.

From the basic routine, this scenario has been expanded into the four corners of each classroom where most of the learners are usually classified as social media users or the other way around the active members of the netizens. Living in a society which keeps its place on the top of the most engaged countries for social media will make our learners to be possibly influenced by its words which will later be adapted and observed to their daily conversation.

In a certain student activity, either oral or written, it is highly noticeable that students will apply the words which are very familiar to them. A teacher may ask his student to write an essay where the latter can use acronyms or abbreviations for some expressions – especially if he is in hurry of doing the essay since the teacher has given a time pressure. A student may write, for instance, “Tbh, it’s really hard for someone to decide easily” or “The decision benefits the majority. It’s perf.” On the other hand, a
teacher may also ask his student to participate in an oral recitation where the latter can make an informal response subconsciously due to the words he commonly uses. A student may respond, for instance, “It’s hard to choose between the two choices. The struggle is real” or “The person who she chose is the ideal bae.” From the italicized statements, the words/phrases such as “tbh”, “perf”, “the struggle is real”, and “bae” are considered as members of the outgrowing social media language which is now named as netspeak. Cambridge Dictionary has defined netspeak as words, acronyms, abbreviations, phrases that people use when communicating on the internet. In relation, it is clearly to say that this kind of language has expanded its use from internet to classroom. These are now the words which we can face all day that are actually originated from the surface of internet. Sooner, the chance of the netspeak to dominate the language of our learners will be highly possible since it is the trend in our today’s society and its development seems unstoppable.

Many have also created different articles which feature the power of social media in developing the language quite faster. One article, entitled “Social Media’s Effect on Language” by Carolyn Cohn, has stated that social media has had a tremendous effect on the English language and how people communicate. An example of its effect to the language is the establishment of various acronyms. The presence of this kind of outgrowing words has been associated with social media - the Twitter for instance. This commonly used social media has only allowed the users to tweet of 140 characters or less. From this, the use of acronyms has gone through the roof. Thus, teachers must not be shocked if our learners bring these words even in the classroom setting. Another article, entitled “The Language of Social Media” by Elissa Naful, has also agreed with the power of social media in changing the language. Hence, we can now encounter newly formed words originated from the social media, such as unlike and defriend, which have already entered the English lexicon as legitimate words. Having this, teachers must also be careful especially in rejecting the words presented by the learners
since a lot of words, for example, the words of social media, are now generally accepted by the lexicographers.

On a final note, we may go down with some important questions, one is “Can netspeak really dominate the language of our learners?” Well, teachers can really assess this through their daily conversation with the learners. Besides, teachers may also try to present some words, such as friend, like, status, wall, page, and profile, to their learners. Sooner or later, teachers will find out how netspeak really works since some old words have new meanings that make them as new words as well. Lastly, “If netspeak totally dominates the language of the learners, are our teachers ready?” Well, they should. Thus, teachers must also realize that they have to adapt to the evolution and must know that language is alive. Furthermore, keeping an open mind about new concepts and new words is generally an intelligent thing to do.

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