

Why Grown-Ups Keep Talking Like Little Kid

More and more, adults are *sprinkling* their speech with the language of children. The *adoption* of some of these linguistic tics by adults has given rise to a register we might call kidspeak.

sprinkle 撒; 点缀

adoption 采纳; 接受

Clearly, kidspeak affords its users certain *rhetorical* advantages — the way it playfully softens blows is part of why younger people on social media now often couch what they say to one another in the *toddler-esque*. But what made bright teenagers and 20-somethings start imitating 5-year-olds in the first place? And why are many older Americans following suit?

rhetorical 修辞的

toddler 小孩

-esque 似...的

Young people today are afraid in ways that generations before them were not. They're facing new, compounding economic hardships — many Millennials and older members of Gen Z depend on their parents to help cover *exorbitant* rents or student-loan payments. A pair of 2016 studies led by April Smith, a psychology professor at Miami University, in Ohio, showed that over the past few decades, young people have become newly fearful of reaching adulthood, agreeing more and more with statements such as "I wish that I could return to the security of childhood" and disagreeing with ones such as "I feel happy that I am not a child anymore."

exorbitant 过高的; 过分的

A generation understandably *spooked* by "adulting" may well embrace the linguistic comfort food of childlike language. And once established, the habit can easily make the jump to those of us more advanced in years. After all, a kid *lurks* inside every one of us, and few people are immune to the sheer *infectiousness* of creativity.

spook 惊吓

lurk 隐藏; 潜伏

infectiousness 传染力