SAAYY WHAT?!?!? I’m offended

Communication is one of the most important aspects of everyday life. Everyone is communicating. How we use communication and how it is perceived is affected by factors such as age, gender, regional background, and body language.

Whether a person defines as a male or female affects the way he or she speaks to others. If one of our male agents asks a female agent if anything’s wrong and she replies with “Nothing,” something is *definitely* off. If the situation was flipped, however, and the male agent is the one proclaiming nothing is amiss, he is telling the truth. Females tend to twist the meaning behind what they say; males are more straightforward with their speech. If the aforementioned female agent says, “I’ll be in the briefing room in five minutes,” expect to see her in thirty. On the other hand, if the male agent from before states that he’ll be briefing in five minutes, he’ll be briefing in five minutes. Our gender also influences the way we communicate with each other on our team. Today during our scenarios, our male agents tended to be more assertive and commanding, wanting an instant solution to their problems, while the female agents were more team-oriented, encouraging everyone to work together and find an answer together.

Another factor that affects interpersonal communication in our everyday lives is a difference in vocabulary among people. While the article references language barriers, we sometimes encounter *regional* barriers for some words in the English language. Many southern natives call any carbonated beverage a Coke, and the two northern-born agents on our team refer to “Cokes” as “pop.” Our team also discussed what we each called a sub-style sandwich. Notable examples include the following: “Subway sandwiches,” “subs,” “heroes,” and the classic “sandwich.” Upon discussing my buggy laptop, one of our team members suggested “power-washing” the laptop, something which every other person considered the dreaded “factory reset.”

Age heavily influences our team’s communication with our coaches as well. On the way to camp, our coach asked one of our sixteen-year-old agents what “shipping” two people was, and she happily explained. Along with this, our coaches are adamant in saying that we use the word “savage,” a compliment to people our age, incorrectly. This fully encompasses the generational differences separating not only our ages but our social lingo as well.

Alternatively, one of the least hindering but most useful parts of the language our team uses on a regular basis is our body language. For example, whenever one of our agents gets complimented, his face turns red to show his emotion. Even if he says nothing, he gets his point across with his body language. He is either flattered or embarrassed.

Of course, there are many other unnamed factors that affect our communication, but it is nearly impossible to list all of them. Language and communication are dynamic, so any aspect of either is liable to change. Successful communication is about embracing these changes and adapting accordingly so that we--as a team or a community or a world—can become unified.