This interaction is a conversation between four girl friends that live together in Chi Omega Sorority at Indiana University. The encounter takes places during the middle of the night around midnight in one of the four girls’ rooms. The four girls involved are named Sarah Moran, a junior at IU, Sung Chung and Mauro Miyuskovich, both sophomores at IU, and myself, Arie Werner. The conversation that was recorded was somewhat light and friendly. It’s one where friends are gossiping and speaking about their own future plans. It’s a conversation of more personal information that someone might not share in a more public place. It’s to show that women share more personal information, regardless of if men or women are around, in a smaller group of people with closer friends as opposed to a bigger, more public group of friends. It also showed that girls cuss more in smaller groups of close girlfriends, behind closed doors, as opposed to bigger groups of girls in a more public place as well, like at the dinner table in a sorority. We also see that the one’s who do cuss more in the conversation are the ones who speak the most and in a stronger tone of voice, almost as if cussing gives them power over the conversation or makes what they are saying more relatable and serious. This is seen in lines 36-39 when Sung, Mauro and myself are talking and Mauro’s statements are less aggressive and there isn’t as much cussing as there is for Sung and myself. Mauro asks, “to get your masters?” and I respond with “PhD. It’s moving to PhD.” Sung then states “grad schools so fucking expensive,” to which I back her up with “SO fucking
expensive.” Sung and myself talk like we know exactly what we are talking about and have the power in the conversation while Mauro is simply just a part of it.

We see that the conversation is a deeper, more personal conversation when looking at lines 54-70 when I tell my friends very personal information about how I am unable to afford school and the options I am considering getting their feedback. When I state, Well and there’s like options of like, you can be like, a GA for like sign language, which I’m in sign language right now, and they’ll pay for your school but also like I can’t take the risk of graduating like here, thinking I’m gonna go to grad school and then I don’t get the position. Ya know? Like ( ) so I’m thinking about changing” it shows me being a little more vulnerable than I would be in front of a big group. This is more of an intimate topic.

The social business of this conversation is that women will have deeper conversations in closed areas rather than more open areas, even if women are the only gender present. It’s also that women feel more comfortable cussing in smaller groups rather than in bigger groups, again, even if women are the only ones present.

Both of these recordings reveal that women will have more intimate conversation that involve more dirty-word usage, when in a smaller group of close female friends only, even when compared to the conversation in a larger group of female friends. In comparison to Field notes I, there are some similarities and some differences between the two conversations. In Field notes I, there are only women, freely gossiping about chitchatting with one another about whatever they want to. Similar, in field notes II, a smaller group of women are gathered and gossiping talking about whatever they want. The conversation would not be so “whatever” if
males were around because the women involved would try not to gossip as much or express whatever they wanted to speak about. However, in field notes I the conversation of the women is more broad and aloof with little to no cussing. Then in field notes II, the conversation becomes more personal and involves more cussing because the women are in a more secluded area and with closer friends. This is supported by Thomas E. Murray’s article, “Swearing as a Function of Gender in the Language of Midwestern American College Students.” Murray explains this by saying, “if there is a significant difference in dirty-word usage among members of this population according to differences in gender, it lies in when and where the swearing occurs.” And when he states, “Females, however, tend to increase their dirty word usage when they’re with only other females.” Though this doesn’t support that women will use more cuss words when just in smaller friend groups in general, it does support that they use more curse words when just in the presence of female friends.