

GENDER ROLES AND SWEARING BEHAVIOUR OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Swearing is one of the oldest and commonest languages that have been regarded as a taboo in many societies. The use of taboo language is closely related to gender roles and society's expectations of both male and female sexes. This paper aims to examine the perception and behaviour of 10 Malaysian university students in swearing. It also explores how the notions of gender roles affect the way students view swearing as a form of expression. This qualitative research analyzed the interview transcripts of five male and five female students. The findings reveal that both male and female students felt that swearing is increasingly becoming acceptable. Consequently, most categories of swearword commonly used by Malaysian students are related to religion, sex acts and genitalia, excretion, stupidity as well as undesirable or animal-related behavior. The findings also suggest that notions of gender roles do not influence on how the participants view swearing. It implies that there are other factors that influence how people perceive swearing, such as peer influence and the media.