

Free essay on gender and swearing: a community practice

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The issues involving Gender and swearing has been a cause celebre from the time of inception of this idea. Gender holds a very important notion whenever swearing is dealt with. The research however shows increased usage of expletives amongst women, but the evaluation of such practice still needs to be filtered through the sociocultural aspects and misconceptions. (e.g. Risch, 1987; de Klerk, 1992; Hughes, 1992). The writer Karen Stapleton in this article " Gender and Swearing: A community Practice" portrays a very clear picture of the swearing practice with respect to gender and compels one to think that it is not right to paint the entire picture with the same brush and there are always certain pros and cons related to every practice.

' Community of practice', on the other hand, is a practice that describes members assimilating to a group and their mutual engagement. Such practice can function as resource development too (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999). The study mentioned in the article helps to explore the facts about meaning of swearing within the community and how does it change the perceptions related to gender differences in swearing. It even gives an explanation about how the community practice redefines the meaning of gender within the community.

Swearing may turn into obscene or decent depending upon the environment in which one uses it. A group recording regular use of bad language may see swearing as a usual act whereas a group that hardly uses such languages finds even a little amount of swearing as derogatory. Different people carry different reasons for swearing. Some mention it as important for releasing anger or tension, and some say that it is a way to cover fear. For some people, it's a way to show intimacy whereas for some it has developed as a

part of personality over the passage of time. But, According to a report majority thinks it is required for creating humour. The anti-swearing group, on the other hand also have their reasons justifying it as derogatory. The study reveals that most of these people believe that swearing is offensive activity; some call it inappropriate and some feel uncomfortable speaking bad language.

The way one looks at swearing depends on his personal opinion. Swearing when looked from the positive end can act as a motivation generator in the group. For instance, before a cricket match if the coach uses swearing in his motivational speech, it is seen as an inspiration arousing practice and rather acts as a remedy that helps the team to perform better. But, on the other hand, if the same way swearing is used in public places; it will surely be looked upon as an offensive act. Although when the gender context comes into a picture, the reactions turn more objectionable. The author critically mentions the views that how swearing is looked upon depending on one's environment. Stating own opinion about the swearing practice, I can define it as a reflection of the circumstances surrounding an individual. As mentioned in the example earlier, it can be treated as a positive quality or a negative practice depending on the situation where it is used.

Hence, the way in which swearing and gender are correlated and looked upon differs widely from culture to culture, drastically from context to context and substantially from group to group.

References

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