

Attitudes and Judgments on the Perception and Use of Swearing and Other Types of “Bad Language” Among Teachers and Students of EFL.

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I will present the results of a study I am conducting as part of my PhD research into public attitudes toward the use of “*demotic*” language, (i.e. swearing/curses, stigmatized dialects and “non-standard” forms of English).

I will introduce the results of a questionnaire regarding attitudes to the use of swearing and “bad” language in English to two control groups: EFL Teachers (both at HY Kielikeskus and the 2012 IATEFL Conference) and students enrolled in English classes at HY Kielikeskus which asks about their personal beliefs, attitudes and judgments towards the use and perception of demotic language including:

1. How participants monitor the personal, situational, functional, external and social aspects of the use of the swearing on an individual level.
2. How does the use of such language reflect the establishment of linguistic, cultural and social norms in the minds of respondents and if so, how are these norms reflected?
3. Can specific changes in the use or perception of swearing be tracked and categorized? Which parameters correlate? (e.g. teachers vs. students. youth vs. aged, native English speakers vs. non-natives)
4. Do language teachers pass on the personal, cultural, societal norms or “baggage” regarding the use of “non-standard” English to students?
5. Can the phenomenon of swearing and “bad” language be conceptualized? Can reactions to the socio-cultural environment be monitored and wider conclusions be drawn?

My study is qualitative and is based on cluster analysis and profiling. Access to prototypical cases will allow further analysis and a more complete understanding of attitudes towards the use of demotic language and related attitudes reflected in common beliefs, value judgments and the teaching and learning of “bad” language.