

Current Trends in Pronoun Usage among Malay Speakers

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This paper is an attempt to describe the current trends in pronoun usage among Malays across two sociolinguistic variables: age and formality. Data was generated by questionnaires, taped conversations and random observations. These were carried out in the environment of the IIUM campus and its immediate locality. The results showed that educated or urbanized women, rarely, if ever, use Malay pronouns to friends and colleagues. The preferred address terms are those of English first and second personal pronouns. This research also showed that men differed in their use of pronouns from women, and even ignored attempts of women who do use Malay pronouns by not reciprocating with the same Malay address terms. This suggests a male-dominant distribution of the use of the specific pronouns. Another observation is that the younger groups of Malay speakers not only use more types of pronouns, but they also appear to set new trends in address terms.