

**SPEECH PATTERNS AND STYLES OF  
YOUNG MALAYSIAN METROSEXUALS**

**MOHD KHUSHAIRI BIN TOHIAR**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

**2011**

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YOUNG MALAYSIAN METROSEXUALS**

**MOHD KHUSHAIRI BIN TOHIAR**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

**2011**

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

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Name of Candidate: **Mohd Khushairi Bin Tohlar** (I.C No.: **800603-10-5983**)

Registration/Matric No.: **TGB080048**

Name of Degree: **Master of English as a Second Language**

Title of Dissertation ("this Work"): **Speech Patterns and Styles of Young Malaysian  
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Field of Study: **Sociolinguistics**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This case study attempts to examine the styles of language and patterns of speech among young Malaysian men between the ages of mid-twenties to late thirties who live and work in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding urban areas. The subjects involved in this study are randomly selected using the definition of ‘metrosexual men’ by Simpson (1994). As there have been no studies on metrosexual language, particularly in the Malaysian context, it should be noted that this study is the first to be carried out in the context of Malaysian men. In order to analyse the subjects’ styles of language and patterns of speech, the researcher employs and combines multiple theories in language and gender (deficit, dominance, difference and gender performativity), and adopts the Communities of Practice framework (Wenger, 1998) to describe the phenomena of linguistic practices by this group of metrosexuals. The results indicate that there are four areas or themes which were normally discussed by the subjects. Meanwhile, the analysis on styles of language reveals that there are seven speech patterns employed by the subjects in their conversations. Additional finding shows that the subjects also used effective nonverbal gestures to assist their speech. Further, results from the survey show that perception, societal expectation and self-image are the factors that influence the use of these linguistic practices in discussions of these metrosexuals. The findings in this study signify that further research on men’s language needs to be carried out rigorously to provide a better understanding on the linguistic changes and development demonstrated by modern men today.

## ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji bentuk dan gaya bahasa pertuturan dalam kalangan golongan lelaki muda yang berumur antara pertengahan dua puluhan sehingga lewat tiga puluhan yang tinggal dan bekerja di Kuala Lumpur serta kawasan-kawasan sekitarnya. Semua responden yang terlibat dalam penyelidikan ini dipilih secara rawak berdasarkan definasi 'lelaki metroseksual' (Simpson, 1994). Oleh sebab, tiada penyelidikan yang pernah dijalankan berkaitan dengan penggunaan bahasa lelaki metroseksual, kajian ini merupakan kajian rintis dalam konteks lelaki di Malaysia. Untuk mengkaji penggunaan gaya bahasa dan bentuk percakapan yang digunakan oleh responden, pengkaji telah menggunakan serta menggabungkan kerangka teori yang pelbagai dalam bidang kajian mengenai bahasa dan jantina (defisit, dominasi, ketidaksamaan dan perlakuan jantina) menjadi satu kerangka dan mengadaptasikan kerangka Komuniti Praktis (Wenger, 1998) untuk menghuraikan fenomena penggunaan bahasa dan linguistik dalam kumpulan sasaran yang terdiri daripada lelaki-lelaki metroseksual ini. Keputusan kajian mendapati terdapat empat topik utama yang menjadi tema perbincangan dalam kalangan responden. Di samping itu, analisis terhadap gaya bahasa pertuturan mendapati terdapat tujuh gaya ucapan yang digunakan oleh responden dalam perbincangan mereka. Dapatan sampingan mendapati subjek juga menggunakan bahasa badan dengan efektif sekali untuk membantu penyampaian ucapan verbal mereka. Selain itu, keputusan soal selidik mendapati persepsi, kehendak masyarakat dan imej ialah faktor-faktor utama yang mempengaruhi pemilihan gaya bahasa dan linguistik dalam kalangan lelaki metroseksual ini dalam perbincangan mereka. Dapatan serta keputusan penyelidikan ini mendapati usaha untuk penyelidikan masa hadapan dalam bidang bahasa lelaki perlu dilipatgandakan untuk memahami perkembangan serta perubahan linguistik yang dialami oleh kaum lelaki pada hari ini.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Allah S.W.T for giving me the strength and perseverance to complete this dissertation.

Secondly, I want to thank both my parents, Haji Tohiar B. Abdul Majid and Hajjah Hasnah Bte. Hj. Hashim for their love and kindness throughout my course of study here at the University of Malaya. Mama and Papa, I dedicate this thesis especially to both of you as a sign of my utmost gratitude and love for raising me all these while. To my siblings, Jihan, Dr. Hadi and Nadia, thank you for the moral support and love all these while.

Thirdly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Sheena Kaur for her undivided attention, assistance, advice and moral support throughout my dissertation writing process. You have enlightened me with an interesting perspective pertaining to the subject matter in this study. Once again, thank you so much for being there for me to guide me when the road gets tough.

Fourthly, I want to thank my best friend, Khairul Azreen Bin Ahmad for giving me his moral supports and assistance throughout my study. A friend in need is a friend indeed. Thank you for everything.

And finally, thank you to all of my friends who were involved in this study. I love you guys forever!

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

1. BB : Blackberry
2. BBM : Blackberry Messenger
3. CofP : Communities of Practice
4. CA : Conversation Analysis

## PREFACE

I started becoming vain about the way I look and present myself in public during my early years at college. I still remember spending a vast sum of my pocket money on local and international entertainment magazines, as well as men's lifestyle magazines to learn how to groom myself and dress up like male celebrities. I developed a rather eccentric interest in fashion, beauty products and arts and culture. I also spent thousands of ringgit, indulging myself in branded clothes and grooming products to look my best. At that time, I had not realised that I was what we call a metrosexual. All that I knew was that I had wanted to establish a 'refined' and 'smartly-dressed' image in contrast with the normal typical men's image.

Four years ago, my friend Tobey introduced me to a group of young professional men who are also metrosexuals. We became close instantly and I was accepted easily into the group as I also carried the metrosexual image like them. As a person with an English language academic background, I tended to observe the way we spoke and used the language when we interacted with each other. I could not help but noticed some interesting speech patterns and styles of language used by each member of this metrosexual group, which I thought were 'eccentric' and different compared to ordinary men. I was inspired to examine the spoken language of these metrosexuals and the opportunity came about when I was assigned to conduct a mini-research on language and gender topic for Sociolinguistics course in my Master's programme. I tape-recorded their conversations and later transcribed them for analysis. I presented some of the results and findings on a small-scale basis to my class which were well-received. This later motivated me to embark on my research and ever since then, there was no turning back...