

# The anatomy of swearing

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Linguistics is a field of science providing an alternative way for having an insight into the human brain and its processes. Swearing, being fundamental to human behaviour, is a very voluminous field which offers a psychological as well as physiological release. Focusing on taboo-language and gender-related differences in the language production, this paper will hopefully offer an alternative way for “picking brains” by following the changes in the brain which occur when people swear.

In this paper we will address the hypoalgesic effect of swearing and the taboo-language production among patients affected by aphasia and Alzheimer’s disease, following the research by a team from the UCLA Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Disease. Furthermore, shedding light on the double standard for how we regard profanity, this paper also aims to explore how we judge women more harshly for using profanity than men. Could it be that we pay more attention to profane women because we do not expect their language to be indecorous? Our brain depicts profane men as annoying; profane women, on the other hand, as tawdry. Exploring the idea of profanity standing for intimacy and a pain-relief device, this paper also explains that both men and women should be capable of using profanity without being looked down upon.

Although our research into this topic as non-(bio)medical students mostly relies on a (neuro)linguistic approach to speech as one of the basic human characteristics, we aim to provide a different perspective on observing the processes that occur in the brain through language.

Keywords: language, swearing, brain damage, gender, equality

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