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**MALAY RESPONSES TO ONLINE INVITATION FROM A GENDER
PERSPECTIVE**

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**THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED AS ONE OF THE
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I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

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ABSTRACT

From the perspective of sociolinguistics, little is known on how Malay online responses are mediated. With this in mind, the two main objectives of this study are (a) to examine the structural elements of online responses across gender and (b) to examine the linguistic elements of online responses across gender. A contextual analysis using qualitative and quantitative approaches was used for the study of 103 Facebook online wedding invitations, involving 1475 male and 3233 female Malay responses (henceforth Tokens). In the construction of the analysis, the following frameworks were adopted: Al-Khatib's Classification of Acceptance (2006) and Beebe et al's Classification of Refusal (1990). In addition, Swales' moves and steps structure and Searle's five (5) points of speech acts were also used in analysing the data. The findings of the study reveal that for both males and females, the obligatory and optional moves can be seen for token of affirmative and tentative, while only obligatory moves can be noted for both genders in the token of decline. Nonetheless, the obligatory and optional moves for both genders differ for each token of affirmative, tentative and decline. As for linguistic elements, two (2) speech acts, namely expressive and commissive, have been found used by males while three (3), namely expressive, directive and commissive, have been applied by female informants in their responses. The significance of this study serves twofold: (a) provide a better understanding on how males and females handle online invitations, and (b) giving insights as to how language variation in terms of speech acts is applied upon responding to online invitations across gender within a sociolinguistic framework.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Technology has revolutionized the way we make meanings through virtual space by enabling us to get connected within seconds. Since the introduction of Social Network Sites (henceforth SNSs) such as MySpace, Friendster and Facebook.com, SNSs have attracted millions of people to be part of cyber speech communities and have changed the way we interact with others, thus resulting in language variations. Defined as online communications that permit individuals to create online profiles, SNSs enable users to locate and make connections with whomever they want (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). While the nature of certain SNSs may vary from one to another, they are generally a virtual system that allows people to communicate and make connections regardless of place and time.

With the ability to connect people virtually, SNSs has been used for different communicative purposes. According to Boyd & Ellison (2007), the widespread of SNSs among society has influenced communication behaviour in a variety of contexts such as political participation (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010), teacher-student relationships (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007) and also adolescent friendships (Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Ledbetter et al, 2010). Out of hundreds of SNSs available on the internet, Facebook.com is considered one of the most popular SNSs in the world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Rusli (2012) states that there were