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Offensive Language Spoken on Popular Morning Radio Programs

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN ON POPULAR MORNING RADIO PROGRAMS

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Patrick and Kathleen Fitzgerald. Thank you for supporting all that I do—even when I wanted to grow up to be the Pope. By watching you, I learned the power of teaching by example. And, you set the best. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

A content analysis examined offensive language spoken on popular morning radio programs on the five highest-rated radio stations offering live-streaming audio over the Internet in the top ten U.S. markets. While concerns over indecency have long existed, renewed interest in the issue of indecency on television and radio was sparked during the 2004 Super Bowl half-time show and, as evident in the 2007 firing of radio personality Don Imus, continues to be of concern today. The purpose of this study was to identify the amount and kind of offensive language spoken on-air. Overall, there were 872 instances of offensive language or 4.36 words spoken per hour. Of these, words classified as mild (words such as “hell” and “damn”) were the largest proportion (40.9%). While the seven dirty words were the least common form of offensive language, these supposedly banned words were still uttered on popular morning radio programs. The bulk of crude language was spoken on radio formats such as Rock and Popular that target a young audience. Additionally, the Northeast broadcasts featured significantly more instances of offensive language.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation reports the results of a content analysis of the five highest-rated radio stations in the top ten U.S. markets offering live streaming audio over the Internet. The purpose of this study is to identify the amounts and kinds of offensive language in these broadcasts. This chapter presents the problem statement, outlines the purpose of the study, and provides information on the context of the problem. Throughout this dissertation, the words offensive language, indecent language, strong language, profanity, swearing, expletive, cursing and cussing are used interchangeably.

Problem Statement

Worries about cursing in popular entertainment are not new and have arisen in theater, radio, publishing, film, and television (Battistella, 2005). For example, in 1914, a production of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* sparked controversy when an actress playing Eliza Doolittle used the expression, "Not bloody likely!"(Battistella, 2005). While concerns over indecency have long existed, renewed interest in the issue of indecency on television and radio was sparked during the 2004 Super Bowl half-time show. After Janet Jackson's now infamous "wardrobe malfunction", the radio and television industries faced an outraged audience demanding content reforms, legislation-eager politicians and Federal Communication Commission (FCC) investigations. In the succeeding three years, the concern over indecency has not lessened. In fact, radio personality Don Imus was fired in April 2007 from CBS Radio and MSNBC because of the racist and sexist remarks he made about the Rutgers University women's basketball team (Finn, 2007). In an effort to broadcast an advertisement during the 2006 Super Bowl, GoDaddy.com went through 14 versions of its ad before ABC, which was broadcasting the event, would approve the spot (*Communications Daily*, 2006). In the aftermath of the Jackson fiasco, we have watched live television become time-delayed television, witnessed Clear Channel Communications drop the *Howard Stern Show* from its stations, and stared at a dark television screen when a 2005 episode of *NYPD Blue* faded to black because ABC executives feared that a sex scene was too racy (Byrne, 2004).

Even with Howard Stern running for the cover of satellite radio at the start of 2006 and the often-controversial *NYPD Blue* signing off in 2005, the battle over a crackdown on indecency on the public airwaves wages on. In 2005, a bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives that increased the amount the FCC can fine over-the-air-broadcasters for indecency from a $32,500 maximum to a $500,000 maximum (Ahrens, 2005). The bill also includes a provision for license revocation for stations that repeatedly violate FCC standards. A similar bill is currently working its way through the U.S. Senate. While shock jocks like Howard Stern and Opie and Anthony are finding new homes in the unregulated arena of satellite radio, politicians are threatening to regulate satellite radio as well (Ahrens, 2005). If one wonders whether this crackdown amounts to nothing more than media hype, consider that in 2001 FCC fines for both the radio and television industries totaled just $48,000. In 2004, the fines for indecent programming exceeded $7.7 million (Armas, 2005).

Although the Janet Jackson incident was a televised event, the implications of it extend beyond the television industry. The radio industry has also been heavily criticized for broadcasting indecent content. While the FCC is the federal agency that investigates offensive-language complaints against broadcasters, it is the public that must initiate the investigation by filing a complaint with the FCC. The public's growing concern about indecency is evident in the rise in the number of complaints filed with the FCC between 2003 and 2004. In 2003, the FCC received 202,032 complaints. In 2004, 1,405,419 complaints were received (FCC, 2005). While the occasional f-word uttered by Bono at an awards program makes the news, radio personalities and their off-color commentary seem to be constant fodder for critics. Shock jocks and "morning zoo" personalities often push boundaries and, subsequently, make headlines. While this boundary pushing used to spell big publicity, big ratings and even bigger profits for the shock jocks' radio stations, it is now more likely to cost these radio personalities their jobs and cost their stations significant FCC fines.

How pervasive is indecent language on radio? Is it really as "filthy" and out of control as critics claim it is? While some lawmakers and interest groups presume this to be the case, no research evidence exists to support or reject these claims. Although Kaye and Sapolsky (2004) have extensively studied offensive language on primetime television, offensive language on radio has received little scholarly attention. Without systematic research on radio content it is impossible to determine the kinds and amounts offensive language that listeners are likely to hear.

Purpose

This study is one of the first content analyses examining offensive language on radio. Specifically, the primary goal is to investigate the frequency and kinds of indecent language present in radio programming. Although popular music lyrics have also been the subject of parental and legislative concern, this study does not examine lyrical content. It focuses solely on the spoken portion of radio programming, excluding advertisements**,** because much of the criticism leveled at the radio industry is directed at radio's morning "drive-time" (6 am-10 am) programs, this study investigates radio programs airing during these hours.

It is important to note that radio programs selected for the study air during the time period in which indecent language does not receive First Amendment protection. The FCC has designated the hours between 10 pm and 6 am as a "safe harbor" where indecent and/or profane material may be broadcast (FCC, 2005). In contrast, there is no "safe harbor" for obscenity (FCC, 2005). However, before any further discussion of offensive language on radio or television broadcasts, it is imperative to understand the distinction between indecency and obscenity.

In 1978, the Supreme Court ruled on the "seven dirty words" case involving comedian George Carlin and the Pacifica Foundation (Federal Communications Commission v. Pacifica Foundation, 1978). This ruling established the "seven dirty words" (*shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker and tits*) as obscene and upheld the FCC's punitive power over stations airing broadcasts considered indecent or obscene. However, the court failed to clearly define the difference between indecency and obscenity. While a clear definitional distinction does not exist between the two types of speech, a legal one does. According to the courts, indecency has First Amendment protection; obscenity does not (Sapolsky and Kaye, 1997).

The FCC has defined broadcast indecency as "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community broadcast standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory organs or activities" (FCC, 2005). According to the FCC, indecent programming contains "patently offensive" sexual or excretory references that do not rise to the level of obscenity. When assessing whether material is "patently offensive" the FCC looks at three primary factors: (1) whether the description or depiction is explicit or graphic; (2) whether the material dwells on or repeats at length descriptions or depictions of sexual or excretory organs; and (3) whether the material appears to pander or is used to titillate or shock (FCC, 2005). While indecent language is protected by the First Amendment, the FCC does, as stated earlier, restrict the times when indecent programming may be broadcast to hours when children are less likely to be in the audience (FCC, 2005.) Therefore, programming—both on television and radio—which falls within the definition of indecency that is aired between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm is subject to indecency enforcement action by the FCC (FCC, 2005).

As with offensive language on television, there are concerns about the possible negative psychological effects of offensive language on the radio audience—particularly children. However, the purpose of this study is not to examine the effects of such language. Instead, this study serves as an important first step in defining the scope of the issue. We cannot begin to investigate and fully understand the effects of offensive language on radio audiences until we first explore the pervasiveness and nature of offensive language on radio today.

Context of the Problem

Media content is not only a reflection of the culture from which it is created, but it also plays a reciprocal role in influencing culture. It is this potential influence that is at the root of parental and media watch group concerns—and that is what spurs criticism of radio and television content. In response to an FCC investigation of formerly nationally-syndicated shock-jock Howard Stern, Stern responded**:**

> "Bush put in some maniac on the FCC who's super-conservative and, here we go again because Clinton's out of office and he didn't care about stuff like this because he was busy getting oral. But the FCC's worried if we *talk* about oral…Let the FCC take me off the air. I don't care. Foul language is all around us; porno is rampant and, you know what? The country's running fine. Bleep the whole god damned show and get rid of me. My time has passed" (Stern, 2003, p.1).

Stern's quote not only highlights the belief that foul language is pervasive in our society, but that a societal shift has occurred wherein people are increasingly concerned about the impact of this strong language on American culture. An *ABC News* poll found that 48% of Americans are bothered "a lot" by bad language (*ABC News*, 2006). In addition, a Parents Television Council study conducted in March 2005 found that 75 % of respondents would like to see tighter enforcement of government rules on broadcast content (PTC, 2005). The question is not whether people are concerned over broadcast content. The question is whether these concerns are justifiable. Without a study of radio content it is impossible to know the amount and degree of offensive language on radio.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1931, L.W. Merryweather wrote in *American Speech* that "hell fills so large a part in the American vulgate that it will probably be worn out in a few years" (Mencken, 1944). However, as we now know, Merryweather's contention did not in fact come to fruition. Instead, the vocabulary of offensive language and its use has only continued to grow. And, the use of such language continues to become more socially acceptable in our society (Graham, 1986). Since the use of obscene language is a widespread behavior, it renders it an intrinsically appropriate research domain for those interested in a complete understanding of human behavior and its motivation (Foote and Woodward, 1973).

Cameron points out that one does not need a high degree of sensitivity to notice that profanity is not necessarily the mark of the uneducated or even that it is not necessarily socially taboo (Cameron, 1969). While the courts have had a difficult time defining offensive language, we know it when we hear it. What words are considered dirty fluctuate as a function of time and usage (Jay, 1992). While offensive language can be broken down into several categories, such as blasphemy, profanity, and racial slurs, etc., one can think of an overarching definition of swearing as "cursing in a profane, scurrilous, and vituperative language" (Montagu, 1967). Studies in the psychology of language define taboo or dirty words by their affection—the reactions aroused by the word—instead of the word's denotative meaning (Risch, 1987).

But what is so bad about bad language? Objections to obscenity and vulgarity in public language often focus on the idea of protecting some listeners from bad language; stereotypically it is women and children who are assumed to need such protection (Battistella, 2005). This stereotype was evident in the 1999 conviction of the so-called cursing canoeist, a man fined $100 and given community service, for violating a 1897 Michigan law that banned swearing in front of women and children (Battistella, 2005). Offensive language is marked by a violation of accepted inhibition and by the use of words regarded as taboo in polite usage (Mulac, 1976). According to Battistella (2005), what is evident from the various objections to coarse language is the idea that certain words are not used in polite speech—that public language should be suitable for all possible groups of listeners. Language that falls outside of this range is characterized as impolite, inappropriate, disruptive, disrespectful, immoral, injurious, or dangerous, and as such is constrained by etiquette, workplace rules, and law (Battistella, 2005). This literature review will examine the history of offensive language, recount the U.S. courts' attempts to define and restrict offensive language including key regulatory issues, discuss the function of offensive language in society, present the cultural concerns of offensive language, review gender and use of offensive language, explore the theoretical issues, discuss popular press coverage of offensive language on radio, and, finally, review research on offensive language on television.

History of Offensive Language

In 1821, William Hazlitt stated, "The English (it must be owned) are rather a foul-mouthed nation" (Hughes, 1998). While some readers may find it surprising that the English were considered foul-mouthed as long ago as 1821, England's reputation for swearing, actually, reaches at least as far back as the time of Joan of Arc (Hughes, 1998). However, the English are not alone in their use of offensive language. While most languages have their choice of swear words, many of which are unique and revealing, the English language is rather barren as far as insults and swearing are concerned (Berger, 1973) According to Berger, the French, Germans, and Italians can insult "circles" around English-speaking people. While swearing does exist in many cultures, swearing is not universal. Speech communities such as the Native Americans, the Japanese, the Malayans and most Polynesians do not swear (Montagu, 1967). However, in cultures where swearing is present, the use of such language is fascinating in its diversity and poetic creativity, while being simultaneously shocking in its ugliness and cruelty (Hughes, 1998).

In Western cultures, the stereotypical powerful speech style is one of assertion of dominance, interrupting, challenging, disputing, and being direct (De Klerk, 1991). Powerful language is high-intensity language which, by definition, subsumes expletive use (De Klerk, 1991). Swearing draws upon such powerful and incongruous resonators as religion, sex, madness, excretion, and nationality—encompassing an extraordinary variety of attitudes, including the violent, the amusing, the shocking, the absurd, the casual and the impossible (Hughes, 1998). The many sophisticated forms of swearing attest to the fact that since humans first learned to speak**,** imagination and inventiveness have been outstanding characteristics of their speech (Montagu, 1967).

But how old is swearing? According to Montagu (1967), it is as old as man and equally as old as language**.** In fact, some philologists have held that speech originated with utterances closely akin to swearing (Montagu, 1967). These philologists contend that before humans developed any articulate means of communicating with each other, certain emotionally highly-charged sounds or expletives were already in existence (Montagu, 1967). While various theories of speech development exist, what most theorists agree on is that it is highly probable that some of the earliest elements of speech were initiated by the desire to express oneself forcefully (Montagu, 1967). Therefore, according to Montagu, swearing is probably concurrent with the birth of language. However, it cannot be regarded as the sole or even the principal stimulus to the origin of speech (Montagu, 1967). At most, swearing is a contributory or dynamic factor in its development (Montagu, 1967).

While there is support for the birth of swearing occurring with the birth of language, no evidence exists that there is an innately determined drive or urge to swear (Montagu, 1967). As stated earlier, swearing is not a universal phenomenon. Instead, the evidence suggests that swearing constitutes a learned form of behavior, a culturally-conditioned response to the experience of certain conditions (Montagu, 1967). According to Montagu, the urge to swear, namely the aggressive response to frustration, constitutes a form of behavior that developed early in the history of humankind (1967).

In English, most expletives or taboo words are words connected with sex, excretion, and the Christian religion (Hughes, 1992). According to Berger (1973), if a swear word is to be meaningful, it must attack something valued—something held to be important. This assertion is also supported by De Klerk (1992) who states that tabooed words are generally culture-specific and relate to bodily functions or to aspects of culture that are sacred. While the words that are considered dirty fluctuate as a function of time and usage (Jay, 1992), the primary targets of offensive language are the same: religion, sex, and bodily excretions. The early forms of swearing were often of a nature regarded as subversive of social and religious institutions, as when the names of the gods were profanely invoked (Montagu, 1967).

Historically, swearing demonstrated a convergence of the high and low, the sacred and the profane (Hughes, 1998). Accordingly, taboos have traditionally grown up around offensive usages. Swearing is, in one sense, a violation of these taboos: the "high" varieties violate the taboo of invoking the name of the deity, while the "low" are often violations of sexual taboos.

Although swearing tends to center on the religious, the sexual, and the excretory, the focus on each has not always been equal. As Hughes discusses, in Western society the major shift in focus has been from religious matters to sexual and bodily functions, and from "opprobrious religious categorization", such as heathen and pagan to national and racial insults. In swearing, the words have progressed through four stages: religious, sexual, and, finally, political and racial (Hughes, 1998). These trends reflect the increasing secularization of Western society (Hughes, 1998).

Since swearing tends to attack social institutions and the sacred, the primary target of the earliest swearing centered on the ideas of gods, God, and religion. The ancient Greeks and Romans swore. Montagu (1967) states that like the Greeks, the Romans swore chiefly by their gods and swore frequently too. The great and obvious force, according to Hughes (1998), behind most medieval swearing was Christianity. "The word of God, so signally absent from the older heroic asseverations, was used and abused, elevated, debased and distorted as never before" (Hughes, 1998, p.55).

Swearing in religious terms increased from medieval to Victorian times in direct proportion to the decline of the Church as a major force in Western society. The corresponding increase in sexual swearing seems to reflect liberation from inhibitions that traditionally aimed at suppressing the sex drive and any direct reference to it (Hughes, 1998). When people swear they choose a word or phrase that represents what is most potent to them. The decline in religious swearing in Protestant societies reflects the decline of the influence of the Church (Hughes, 1998). Today, while sexual swearing is now taken seriously by some and lightly by others, the religious swearing of the Middle Ages had altogether greater force and impact (Hughes, 1998).

Our attitudes towards swearing can be traced back even further than the Middle Ages. Religious laws governing swearing are evident and numerous in the teachings of the Old Testament (Montagu, 1967). Montagu argues that the Jews of the Old Testament were powerful swearers as evidenced by the number and character of prohibitions against the practice in the Old Testament. The Old Testament emphatically bans blasphemy. In fact, the Old Testament identifies its ban as a direct rule from God and breaking this rule would result in punishment. It was an obligation of those who heard the swearer to bear witness against him, lest the guilt and vengeance descend upon their own heads (Montagu, 1967). Therefore, it may be that some of the disapproval with which swearing has been viewed through the ages has been due to the fear of "consequences that might befall one who listened and tolerated without informing or at least demonstratively disapproving" (Montagu, 1967**,** p. 21).

Whether we are discussing the Middle Ages or the twenty-first century, swearing has almost always resulted in punishment—whether severe or innocuous. In fact, the punishment accompanying swearing during the Middle-Ages makes the threat of "getting your mouth washed out with soap" seem, by comparison, quite harmless. When Saint Louis of France (1214-70) ruled, he decreed that swearers should be **"**branded upon the face with a hot iron for a perpetual memorial of their crime, and later on, indeed, ordained that they should be set in a public place in the high stocks…similar in form and mode of punishment to that inflicted upon cutpurses in England**"** (Montagu, 1967, p. 111). In the seventeenth century, even harsher punishment existed in America and England. There offenses against religion, such as blasphemy, were punishable by death until 1697 (Jay, 1992). Another such punishment was boring through the tongue with a hot iron (Jay, 1992). Punishment for swearing dates almost as far back as swearing itself. According to Montagu:

> "The whole history of swearing bears unequivocal testimony to the fact that legislation and punishments against swearing have only had the effect of driving it under the cloaca

> of those more noisome regions, where it has flourished and luxuriated with the ruddiness of the poppy's petals and the blackness of the poppy's heart. It has never been successfully repressed" (1967, p. 25).

Swearing is not part of Native American vernacular; it probably came to America with the Mayflower. According to Burnham (1993), the English settlers brought with them swearing customs that had already evolved over many centuries in England. Continental Europeans called English soldiers "Goddams" because the men used the phrase so frequently as to make it characteristic (Burnham, 1993). From the beginning that expression and other profanities flourished as well in the New World as the Old World. Burnham (1993) states that during the American Revolution when offensive language proliferated, George Washington, himself known to utter an occasional oath, issued a general order against "the wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing" (p. 209).

In early America, profanity and obscenity belonged together in the category of taboo language. However, during the nineteenth century taboo words focused primarily on religious ideas and symbols, especially taking the Lord's name in vain (Burnham, 1993). In 1815, the Chillicothe Association for Promoting Morality and Good Order declared that any social deviation—including swearing—was harmful to society. The Association stated,

> "The thief, the robber, the murderer, cannot be allowed to indulge that lawless liberty which they claim. Neither can the profane swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, or the drunkard. These overturn and bear away the very foundations of morality, order, and good government" (Burnham, 1993, p. 212).

While the focus of offensive language during the nineteenth century was mainly religious in nature, in the twentieth century much of the religious taboos fell out of fashion among most Americans and swearing again came to involve the broader standard of sexual decency and propriety (Burnham, 1993). Swearing in early America was seen as an antisocial behavior whether the swearer was attacking religious or sexual institutions. According to Burnham, early in the twentieth century a judge could proclaim openly that he had "no scruples about" removing children from a home in which he found "habitual indecent, vulgar, and profane language" (p. 215).

In the late nineteenth century, Americans increasingly developed informal sanctions against breaking verbal taboos (Burnham, 1993). Accordingly, the middle-class evangelicals were remarkably successful in establishing the "conspiracy of silence" against sexual matters. In this conspiracy of silence no respectable person printed or said in public words that referred to sexual content (Burnham, 1993). Social pressure of all kinds succeeded in muting public use of offensive language (Burnham, 1993). Swearing then became defined as an antisocial private behavior, typically used by men or the lower class (Burnham, 1993). For example, as Burnham explains, in the rural South, when rowdy drunken men crowded the small towns on Saturdays, women stayed away particularly to avoid hearing profanity and smutty talk.

However, it was in the twentieth century that, for the first time, well-educated people in substantial numbers first began to undermine these religious and sexual taboos (Burnham, 1993). According to Burnham, many were confident that language standards were secure enough that these taboos could be discussed without danger. It was at this time that written defenses of swearing began to appear in general and literary magazines (Burnham, 1993). Defenders of swearing invoked the unrelenting process of secularization (Burnham, 1993). Critic Burges Johnson wrote in 1916 that swearing is not generally a matter of morals. He stated, "Seldom, in fact, does one who utters an oath have the real meaning of the phrase in his thought" (Burnham, 1993, p. 215).

Burnham (1993) states that such reasoned arguments for swearing, as they were articulated in the early twentieth century, involved much more than breaking the conspiracy of silence in sexual matters. Because the common people did in fact swear, proponents argued that swearing was acceptable in fiction and drama. They argued that, in spite of the success of the civilizing process, even nice, admirable people occasionally let loose with a curse (Burnham, 1993). Proponents argued that everyone knew that "strong language" was appropriately masculine (Burnham, 1993). They also argued that swearing was actually good because the swearer got rid of bothersome or malignant emotions in a harmless way (Burnham, 1993). It was thought that the human animal, like a locomotive, requires escape valves for occasions when there is too much steam in the boiler (Burnham, 1993). According to Burnham, popular opinion was not far behind the critics. In 1910, a New Jersey jury rendered a "not guilty" verdict for a man on trial for violating a profanity law when he, under provocation, called a woman a "damn fool" (Burnham, 1993).

World War I served as a further catalyst for swearing in America. As Burnham points out, wartime patriotism silenced many opponents of swearing. One newspaper editor wrote, "One can hardly talk of the Kaiser without the word 'damn'" (Burnham, 1993, p. 216). Young men who entered the service found that swearing was not only masculine but another part of the male-bonding experience (Burnham, 1993). Burnham reports that a YMCA secretary on the Western Front during the war noted that "these kids all cuss whether they want to or not, or whether they have anything to cuss about" (p. 217).

However, swearing was not restricted to the armed forces and its soldiers. People outside of the army used wartime enthusiasm as an excuse for wholesale violation of the swearing taboo (Burnham, 1993). Ordinary citizens shouted, "Damn the Kaiser" and drove automobiles with bumper stickers that read, "To hell with the Kaiser!" (Burnham, 1993). According to Burnham, by the end of the war, the old standards did not come back to life—instead swearing steadily gained ground (1993).

During the post World War I period, a gradual rejection of the institutions and social figures who opposed swearing and whom swearing defied occurred (Burnham, 1993). In the 1920s and 1930s, an important and powerful group was added to those Americans who actively favored swearing**—**journalists (Burnham, 1993). At that time, journalists came together to fight censorship not only in politics—but all areas of life (Burnham, 1993). Journalists, who were very aware of their role in establishing standards, attempted to publish and broadcast any and all frequently-used terms because they were authentic (Burnham, 1993). In the 1930s and 1940s, literary figures also followed the trend. American authors like John Steinbeck and Erskine Caldwell freely used taboo language (Burnham, 1993).

Though attitudes toward offensive language began to change in America during and after World War I, the process of breaking down barriers against profane and obscene language accelerated during World War II. Burnham explains that a key to the increasingly rapid acceptance of offensive language was the large number of women who not only displayed growing tolerance of this language, but who used such language themselves. In the past, men had avoided using strong language in the presence of women because it would have constituted a public sign of acceptance (Burnham, 1993). Now, as Bernard De Voto noted, "educated or refined women...who used to be the most censorious upholders of the taboo" tolerated or themselves used offensively-obscene expressions (Burnham, 1993, p.220). De Voto contended that during this time four-letter words had “come to signify frankness, sophistication, liberalism, companionability, and even smartness among a very great many educated and well-to-do metropolitan women”– and women in other sectors of society followed their lead (Burnham, 1993, p. 221). According to Burnham, major changes in values and customs were involved in making the use of offensive language a common habit, which prior to this had long been recognized as a bad habit.

Even though the social acceptance of swearing appears swift here, Hughes points out that in America the liberations from censorship have been surprisingly slow, given the American belief in individual liberty, the glorification of the maverick, and the constitutional endorsement of freedom of speech (Hughes, 1991). According to Hughes, the influence of Hollywood was a dominant factor, initially for restraint, but later for license to use offensive language. The Production Code of 1934, a self-regulatory code of ethics, prohibited themes of revenge in modern times, illegal drug use, sex perversion, pointed profanity—profanity directed at religion, and other profane expressions—from appearing in film (Hughes, 1991). This regulation was self imposed by the industry which reasoned that art can lead to moral corruption and that the effects of unclean art, indecent books, and suggestive drama are obvious and must, therefore, be regulated (ProductionCode.com, 2006).

According to Hughes, the erosion of the Production Code was initiated by competition from television which was first broadcast in America in 1939 and had expanded to twelve channels by 1952. Unlike film, the radio and television industries were regulated by the Federal Communications Commission and limited in what they could broadcast. Television was also considered a family medium and was constrained by even more rigorous standards against nudity, profanity and immorality than was film (Hughes, 1991). As cinema audiences started to decline because of competition from television, filmmakers saw a unique opportunity to make adult entertainment (Hughes, 1991). Unlike television producers, filmmakers were not subject to pressures from advertisers to keep content “clean.” The Production Code disappeared and the divergence between the film and television media increased (Hughes, 1991).

While Hollywood struggled with how and when to include profanity, swearing among its viewing audience continued. As Partridge observed, “War is the greatest excitant of vocabulary” (Hughes, 1991, p.199). Just as World War I had served as a catalyst, World War II was another significant factor in the acceptance of slang and expletives by society (Hughes, 1991). However, exactly when after World War II the keepers of public standards came to believe that all language was acceptable in public as well as private discourse is unclear (Burnham, 1993). This trend continued to gain strength as the 1950s came to a close (Burnham, 1993). Walter Allen reported that:

> “Anyone like myself who habitually reads American novels submitted to English publishers, usually in proof-form could watch the forbidden word creeping into print and becoming, it seemed, almost obligatory in any novel that laid claims to realism” (Burnham, 1993, p. 221).

While the 1950s may have served as a transitional time, in the 1960s the floodgates opened (Hughes, 1991). Major social movements of the era, which journalists termed the hippies and the flower children, consciously rejected and even violated traditional family values and advocated an open lifestyle in terms of sexuality, drug-taking, and a general freedom from bourgeois restraint (Hughes, 1991). The Vietnam War was another major catalyst in social division—provoking violent protests in which the liberation of sexual vocabulary was a corollary. Confrontations between the establishment and war dissenters included slogans such as "fuck the pigs" (Hughes, 1991).

Students at the University of California-Berkley politicized foul language in their Filthy Speech Movement—where they voiced and published obscenities as a form of protest (Hughes, 1991). The rise of the feminist movement also resulted in the growth of a more liberated attitude towards swearing (Hughes, 1991). The changes in literature and in the self-styled liberation press were so rapid that no one could tell who was most forward in publishing obscene language (Burnham, 1993). And, it was also during this time that popular-music composers and performers pioneered drug advocacy and extreme candor in song lyrics (Burnham, 1993). This, according to Burnham, helped validate the act of publicly using taboo expressions.

The evolution didn't take long. In 1960, Elvis Presley sang, "Your lips excite me; let your arms invite me." By 1969, Mick Jagger was singing, "I laid a divorcee in New York City." In the 1970s, Frank Zappa sang about "Titties 'n Beer" (Burnham, 1993). Thirty years later, four-letter words and explicit lyrical content are common in popular music. "The de-moralization of profanity, sexual, and scatological expression seems to reflect both the cachet of coarse language in American society and the twentieth century trend for the mainstreaming of popular culture" (Battistella, 2005, p. 82). However, one aspect of language where taboos remain strong today, and in fact have probably strengthened over the last fifty years, is ethnic and racial slurs (Battistella, 2005) "For centuries", according to Dooling (1996), "*fuck* was the most objectionable word in the English language, but now *nigger* and *cunt* are probably tied for that distinction, and *fuck* has at long last stepped down" (p. 18). He maintains that we are on a cusp of taboos, where formerly prohibited terms for excrement and sex are becoming much more acceptable and are being replaced by the new unspeakables: racial or ethnic slurs and gender stereotypes (1996). "Finally," Dooling states, "hatred is more dangerous than sex" (p. 18).

What seems clear, according to Battistella (2005), is that the notion of offensive language is a variable one, shifting over time relative to domain (the workplace, broadcast media, literature, political discourse, polite conversation), and is affected by social, historical, political, and commercial forces. It is also clear that offensive language ranges from that which is simply offensive to the more-easily-offended to language that is disruptive and harmful (Battistella, 2005). Some critics of offensive language believe its use reflects a decline of standards, a lack of regard for tradition, and a danger to the stability of language (Battistella, 2005). However, Hughes, like Battistella, also believes that attitudes towards swearing are not constant (Hughes, 1998). He states,

> "Like those towards sexuality, they seem to oscillate in cycles between acceptance and repression. However, the energy generating swearing is constant. The comparison with sexuality is apposite in that, during periods of sexual repression, prostitution and perversion flourish. In the same fashion, during the periods of Puritan, Augustan and Victorian repression, the underworld lexicon flourished to quite a remarkable degree. Within the American provenance, a long period of restraint has led to the counterbalancing modern explosion" (p. 256).

Since this quote is now eight years old, one could argue that some Americans are anxious for the pendulum to swing back towards a period of restraint. However, what is intriguing about offensive language is the "continual paradoxical relationship between institutional and popular expressions of revulsion against 'bad language' on the one hand, and thriving vulgar usage on the other" (Hughes, 1998, p. 268).

Offensive Language and the U.S. Courts

Offensive language long ago took root in the United States. Prosecution for indecency is equally well established. While the First Amendment guarantees Americans freedom of speech, movies, television, music lyrics, and even some of the words used in public (such as yelling "fire" in a crowded theater) are subject to restriction, censorship, and other controls (Jay, 1992). The definition of obscenity, according to Jay, is not fixed but dynamic because the law of the land is an organic document which grows, changes, or evolves over time in response to changes in society and the courts' decisions (Jay, 1992). While an absolutist position on the Constitution would say that all speech is free and there should be no restrictions at all, this absolutist viewpoint has not been supported by Supreme Court decisions (Jay, 1992). Over the last 100 years, the Supreme Court has restricted four types of speech: obscene speech, defaming or libelous speech, fighting words, and speech which poses an imminent danger (Jay, 1992).

This discussion will focus on obscene and indecent speech. While the average person probably sees very little difference between obscenity and indecency, broadcasters know that obscene speech is not protected by the First Amendment and cannot be broadcast at any time (McKenzie, 2002). However, indecent speech is protected by the First Amendment and can be broadcast if it meets certain requirements (McKenzie, 2002). While concern over obscenity has existed for centuries, the definition of obscene speech did not appear until recently in legal decisions (Jay, 1992). According to Jay (1992), while there have been numerous local and state rulings, there are three landmark Supreme Court cases that address obscene and indecent speech: *Roth, Miller,* and *Pacifica*. Prior to the Roth case, American obscenity laws were similar to those developed in England centuries earlier and primarily focused on speech against religion, as opposed to sexual material or sexual behavior (Jay, 1992).

The first common law conviction for obscenity in the U.S. occurred in 1815 when Jesse Sharpless was convicted in Philadelphia for distributing allegedly obscene pictures (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). While a strict censorship system was created in 1662 in the colony of Massachusetts, there were no recorded cases until 1821 (Jay, 1992). It was then that Peter Holmes was convicted of obscenity in Pennsylvania for attempting to distribute the book *Fanny Hill.* At the same time, the first state statute law dealing with obscenity was enacted in Vermont (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Concern over obscenity continued to grow.

In 1842, America enacted a tariff act that prohibited the "importation of all indecent and obscene prints, paintings, lithographs, engravings and transparencies" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003**,** p. 6). According to Hilliard and Keith, in 1857 printed matter was added to the list. Mailing any allegedly obscene material was made a criminal act by Congress in 1865 (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). During most of the 1800s, there was little enforcement of either state or federal laws regarding obscenity (Jay, 1992). However, when Anthony Comstock started a campaign against distributing obscene literature in the mail, Congress responded and federal laws were strictly enforced (Jay, 1992). What became known as the Comstock Law gave the U.S. Post Office the authority to ban the mailing of any "obscene, lewd, lascivious, or filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p. 7).

For over a century, America's definition of obscenity stemmed from a nineteenth century English case known as *Regina v. Hicklin* (Jay, 1992). The case centered on Benjamin Hicklin, the recorder of London at the time, who voided the seizure of an anti-Catholic pamphlet written by Henry Scott (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Hicklin's decision was reversed by the chief justice of

Britain and established what became known as the Hicklin rule (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The rule stated that obscenity may be judged by the degree to which it would appear to corrupt with immoral influence the most susceptible persons in society—presumably children (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The ramification of this was that any matter deemed to have a potential immoral influence on the youngest child in society would be banned as well from the eyes and minds of adults (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

When the first radio station went on the air in 1920 (KDKA in Pittsburgh) and the first station was licensed in 1921 (WBZ in Springfield Massachusetts) there were no rules and regulations for radio (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Anyone who had the money and the equipment simply traveled to Washington, D.C., received a license and went on the air (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Within a short time there was chaos on the air; stations broadcast on the same frequencies and those with more power and higher antennas drowned out the others (Hilliard and Keith**,** 2003). Radio station owners begged the government to step in and establish rules that would facilitate the orderly development of radio services nationwide without signal interference (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). As a result of this urging, the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) was established when Congress passed the 1927 Dill-White Act (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The FRC was given regulatory authority over radio.

Among the many duties of the FRC were to require stations to be individually and solely responsible for whatever programming they aired and develop any other regulations it deemed necessary (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The most significant aspect of the Act was the requirement that stations operate in the "public interest, convenience, or necessity" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003**,** p.9). While the FRC did not issue any rules regarding indecency or obscenity at that time, the "indecency" clause was incorporated into the Communications Act of 1934 and provided the basis for subsequent federal regulation regarding perceived "dirty discourse" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

According to Hilliard and Keith, as diverse radio programming grew, the range and specialties of performers also grew. Leading nightclub, vaudeville and burlesque stars not known for a lack of indecent and obscene material gravitated to this medium (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). While stopping short of direct censorship, the FRC exerted enough influence through the threat of regulation that radio broadcasters avoided content that might be considered too sexually provocative or that might disturb any potential buyers of its advertisers' products (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Broadcasters also paid close attention to song lyrics that might be racy—suggesting indecent or obscene thoughts (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). NBC even hired a "song censor" to clear all music in 1933 (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Since the regulation of different aspects of communication was in the hands of a number of different federal agencies, further communication legislation was needed (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). As a result, the Communication Act of 1934 was passed and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was born. The regulation of all interstate and foreign communications by wire and radio was placed in the hands of this one agency (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). According to Hilliard and Keith, the FCC assumed considerably more regulatory authority, including authority over program content, than had its predecessor, the FRC.

While radio continued to address its growing pains, the definition of obscenity continued to be retooled in the federal courts. According to Hilliard and Keith, the first important reversal of the Hicklin rule and the Comstock Act's influence occurred in 1933 when a federal judge, John Woolsey, allowed the importation of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (2003). However, the Hicklin rule was not officially abolished until the 1957 case of *Roth v. United States* (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Sam Roth, a publisher and distributor of magazines and books, was indicted in 1954 for using the mail to advertise and distribute material with sexual content, including literary erotica and nude photography (*PBS*, 2006). While Roth's conviction by a lower court for mailing obscene material was upheld by the Supreme Court, the case was important because it provided a new definition of obscenity. The *Roth* case went beyond upholding prior court decisions that obscene speech is not protected speech to establishing a three-part test of obscenity (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The Roth test established that**,** for a work to be considered obscene, it must be established that:

1. the dominant theme of the material taken as whole appeals to a prurient interest in sex,
2. the material is patently offensive as it affronts contemporary standards relating to descriptions of sexual matters, and,
3. the material is utterly without redeeming social importance (Jay, 1992)

It was during this period of continuing court tests of obscenity cases that the broadcasting industry grew and, along with it, problems relating to indecency and obscenity on the airwaves (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). While the Roth test enabled the Supreme Court to overturn lower court rulings that nudist magazines and nude studies in journals published by art students were obscene, that a magazine for homosexuals was obscene, and that a bookstore owner could be held responsible for distributing obscene materials, confusion continued to abound over what was permissible on the airwaves (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

In 1970, the Philadelphia based station WUHY-FM broadcast an interview with Jerry Garcia, a member of the rock band the Grateful Dead, in which Garcia said the following: "shit, man," "I must answer the phone 900 fuckin' times a day, man," "it sucks it right fuckin' out of ya, man," "that kind of shit," "it's fuckin' rotten, man, every fuckin' year," and "political change is so fuckin' slow" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p. 23). The FCC, using the guidelines established in Roth, did not find the material obscene because it did not have prurient appeal (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). However, the FCC did find the material indecent and "patently offensive by contemporary community standards and utterly without redeeming social value" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p.17). This case is significant because it marks the first time the FCC fined a station for indecent speech—not obscene or profane speech (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). While WUHY's fine of $100 pales in comparison to the price of today's fines for uttering such language, it's not the price tag that it is important but the fact that speech deemed not to be obscene was still sanctionable. According to Hilliard and Keith, the FCC had hoped to make this a test case, forcing the federal courts to formulate a definition of indecency applicable to broadcasting. However, the FCC would have to wait a few more years before the Supreme Court would provide more depth on this complex issue.

In 1972, the Supreme Court stated in *United States v. Orito* that obscene material may not be carried across state lines, even by common carrier for private use (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). This ruling went directly to the root of the FCC's authority: regulation of interstate commerce (broadcast signals by their nature cross state lines) on behalf of the public (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). With the FCC's regulatory power justified, the FCC waited on a workable definition for obscenity and indecency as applied to the airwaves (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). In 1973, the Supreme Court once again visited the issue of obscenity and, finally, provided the definition that still comprises the basis for judgment of obscenity of broadcast, as well as print materials (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

In the *Miller v. California* ruling the Supreme Court attempted to develop a more workable and uniform standard for obscenity (Jay, 1992). The result of Miller was that community standards of prurient interest need not be based on national standards, but rather on state or even local definitions (Jay, 1992). The decision also replaced the terms "utterly without redeeming social value" used in the Roth decision with "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" (Jay, 1992). The Miller case established that all three of the following criteria must now be met:

1. the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex; and
2. the work depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state (or federal) law; and
3. the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value (Jay, 1992).

The decision introduced the concept that one standard could clearly not be applied to every state in the Union and that citizens in one state should not have to accept depictions of sexual conduct tolerated in other states (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Basically, what is considered obscene in Ocala, Florida may not be considered obscene in Los Angeles, California. The Supreme Court stated that it would not issue a national uniform standard, but that material would have to be judged in terms of individual communities' standards (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

According to Hilliard and Keith, in the years between the Roth and Miller cases, the FCC found itself dealing with numerous complaints from listeners alleging programming was obscene or indecent. Without a concrete definition of obscenity or indecency, the FCC floundered. One FCC commissioner, Nicholas Johnson, consistently opposed the FCC's restrictions on what he felt were First Amendment rights (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). He stated that there was no clear definition of obscenity and that "if obscenity is so vaguely defined, then the indecency variant promulgated by the majority is a hopeless blur" (p. 22). Among the stations whose programming was reviewed were several stations owned by the Pacifica Foundation (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The Pacifica stations were dedicated to First Amendment freedoms and presented materials and viewpoints of concern to society, even if they were politically or socially unpopular (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Since Pacifica's licenses were up for renewal in 1964, the FCC sought to determine if there was a pattern of objectionable programming that should be considered in their license renewal (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

The FCC determined that the programs, however provocative to some listeners, were not obscene and that to take action against them would create a situation where "only the wholly inoffensive, the bland, could gain access to the radio microphone or TV camera" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p.21). In the 1970s, the FCC continued to juggle listeners' complaints when so-called "topless" radio—a staple, at the time, in afternoon radio wherein radio personalities encouraged women to call in to discuss their sex lives—became a popular format. The FCC warned broadcasters to avoid such materials (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Though some complained that the FCC was infringing on First Amendment rights, the FCC maintained that without further clarification from the courts**,** they were operating on the "I know it when I see it" interpretation (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). In fact, the FCC welcomed and urged judicial review of its actions (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

This judicial review did not occur until the 1978 case of FCC *v. Pacifica* (438 U.S. 726). In 1973, the FCC received a single complaint from the father of a fifteen-year old son. The teenager had tuned in at 2 p.m. to WBAI, a Pacifica station, which was broadcasting a segment on perceptions of language (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The broadcast included a monologue by comedian George Carlin entitled "Filthy Words." The case became known as the "Seven Dirty

Words" case because in his routine Carlin describes the meanings and implications of seven words that he said could not be uttered on the public airwaves: *shit, piss, fuck, cunt, tits, cocksucker*, and *motherfucker* (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The complaint against the broadcast was filed on behalf of the man's son. The father argued that his son should not be subjected to obscene material on the air during the times of day when young people are likely to be in the audience (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The FCC agreed with the father and found Carlin's routine patently offensive and indecent—but not obscene (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The FCC placed a warning in WBAI's file and clarified its definition of indecency as material that:

> Describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities and organs, at times of the day when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p.29).

WBAI and the Pacifica Foundation appealed**,** and the FCC's ruling was reversed in the U.S. Court of Appeals (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The appeals court ruled that the FCC had violated the Communication Act of 1934 which forbade censorship (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The court also found the FCC's action to be too vague and broad because the FCC did not clearly define what it meant by minors and it "sweepingly forbids any broadcast of the seven words irrespective of context however innocent or educational they may be. Clearly, every use of the seven words cannot be deemed offensive even as to minors" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p. 29). The court also stated that Carlin's words were not obscene, but merely crude; it questioned the application of a so-called national standard, implying that the decisions of the FCC were a composite of the individual commissioners' standards or what they suppose are national standards (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

The FCC appealed and the case reached the Supreme Court—marking the first case on indecency to reach the Court (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). In its decision, the Court upheld the FCC's right to regulate the content of speech over the radio (Federal Communications Commission v. Pacifica Foundation, 1978). In effect, by supporting the regulation of an "indecent" but not obscene program, the Court extended the government's censorship of expression beyond the limits established in *Miller v. California* (Jay, 1992). However, the Court did not establish an over-arching definition of indecency. Instead, the Court ruled that all future cases on the subject would be considered on their individual merit (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). This meant that the only material specifically designated as inappropriate for broadcasting during daytime hours is Carlin's "Seven Dirty Words" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003).

However, the Pacifica case did not solve the problem of defining indecency (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). And, this problem persists today. According to Dooling, while the First Amendment protects freedom of speech,

> "it has spawned an absorbing delusional system of case law, because the harder you work to understand it, the more complex and inscrutable it becomes, until its tracts and tiers of analyses, its time, place, and manner restrictions, its public and private figures and forums, its symbolic expressions and invasions of privacy—all evanesce into vaporous metaphysics" (1996, p. 96).

Without a working definition of indecency, broadcasters must be careful not to cross an invisible line that can move at anytime. If a broadcaster today calls the FCC to ask if she will be fined for broadcasting a specific piece of material between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. that might be considered indecent, she will not receive an answer (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). She will be told that the FCC does not engage in censorship and that all broadcast material must be judged by the licensee (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). The only exception is the seven dirty words (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). One article describes the problem as the following:

> **"**How would you like to be told that if you said the wrong thing you would lose your livelihood, and then when you asked for some guidelines as to what the "wrong thing" might be, they told you that they couldn't tell you in advance, but that they'd have to wait until you spoke, and if you said the wrong thing they'd tell you then. And take away your livelihood" (Hilliard and Keith, 2003, p.43).

While broadcasters have little certainty that the material they are broadcasting is totally "clean," there is also no guarantee that they will be punished if they intentionally or accidentally violate indecency or obscenity laws (McKenzie, 2002).

The fact that the FCC rules on indecency only in retrospect is particularly disturbing to Lane; broadcasters can be punished for what they have aired, often months or years earlier, but are never told what they cannot broadcast (Lane, 2006). Until an overarching definition of indecency is provided by the Supreme Court, cases of indecency will continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. However, the FCC has continued to take steps to limit indecent programming. In 1987, the FCC attempted to narrow the "safe harbor" hours—the hours when indecent programming can be broadcast—from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. to midnight to 6 a.m. Since the "safe harbor" hours were created to protect children, this decision was later reversed by the U.S. Court of Appeals because the FCC could not enforce a ban on indecent evening broadcasts until the commission investigated children's viewing behavior (Action for Children's Television v. FCC, 1988).

While many argue that the FCC is promoting censorship, Doctor does not view attempts at government regulation as censorship. Rather, it is seen as protecting parents' rights to protect their children. According to Doctor (1992) the federal government only regulates indecent speech during times of the day when unsupervised children are likely to be in the audience as a means to safeguard parents who wish to protect their children from such speech (Doctor, 1992). The courts have recognized the interests of parents to raise their children in a manner they see fit as a rationale for regulating indecent speech (Doctor, 1992). The premise has been that the FCC can fine broadcasters for indecent programming that airs during the safe harbor period because these programs are easily and freely accessible by children, who must be protected (Lane, 2006). Increasingly, however, people choose to pay for the broadcast content they receive. In fact, 84 percent of US homes with television sets receive cable television services (Lane, 2006), and satellite radio has over 9 million subscribers (Block, 2006), neither of which are subject to the same FCC restrictions as traditional broadcast media. If people increasingly choose to invite this unregulated content into their homes, should the FCC still have a role in policing broadcast content (Lane, 2006)?

One problem is that a complaint by a single viewer or listener is enough to initiate an FCC investigation (Lane, 2006). Once the investigation has been completed, the determination of indecency rests in the hands of as few as four people: the complaintant and three of the five FCC commissioners (Lane, 2006). Lane posits that in a nation of over three hundred million people that is a staggering and totally unwarranted level of power. He counters that the FCC should adopt a policy where a certain percentage of the viewing audience must complain in order to initiate an FCC investigation (Lane, 2006). Interestingly, even if the FCC set this bar to as low as 10 percent of the viewing audience, the FCC could not have opened an investigation of the Janet Jackson Super Bowl half-time incident because the FCC received only about 500,000 complaints and, according to Lane's proposition, they would have needed approximately 9.5 million complaints (Lane, 2006).

While the FCC receives a great deal of attention for its regulatory role, it is not alone in its continued attempts to regulate indecent speech. Congress also attempted to limit indecent programming by attempting to enact a 24-hour ban against indecent speech. However, in 1991 this ban was ruled unconstitutional (Action for Children's Television v. FCC, 1991). While attempts to restrict or eliminate the "safe harbor" hours have not succeeded, the FCC continues to crack-down on indecent speech and increasingly levies hefty fines on broadcasters who air it.

The Function of Offensive Language in Society

Language serves the reciprocal role of reflecting shifts in society while simultaneously contributing to the character of that society (Selnow, 1985). According to Selnow, we look to language as an indicator of deeper currents and we suspect that it has something to do with maintaining patterns evident in society and bringing about change. Verbal behavior, according to Cameron (1969), is probably the most frequent kind of behavior, and profanity is common in many situations. Both anthropological evidence and psychological research suggest that obscene language is one of man's most frequent types of linguistic expression (Bostrom et al., 1973).

But, why do we use offensive language? Offensive language is commonly used to criticize, insult and degrade (Driscoll, 1981). There is also an element of humor in offensive language usage (Berger, 1973). According to Berger, to call someone an "asshole" is to indulge in a kind of grotesque caricature, a reductionism that becomes ultimately absurd. Offensive language is viewed by researchers in a number of ways, namely as inhibited use, as a way of breaking the rules, and as a symbol of protest and reaction against certain authority figures (Hughes, 1992). Profane words play a peculiar role in society (Selnow, 1985). Selnow states that depending on the context of use, these words may serve to provide linguistic bonding among interactants, while simultaneously functioning to alienate others from group membership. Offensive language may also contribute to establishing dominant and submissive roles in a relationship and, in some environments, may furnish a medium through which a hierarchy among interactants is established (Selnow, 1985).

Bostrom, et al. (1973) offers five reasons for the use of offensive language: to create attention, to discredit someone or something, to provoke confrontations, to provide a type of catharsis for the user, and to establish interpersonal identification. Since the use of offensive language is generally considered socially unacceptable in our society, the use of such language in public places provides the most jolting, evocative stimulus to society—generally drawing much attention to its use (Bostrom, et al., 1973). Offensive language serves the purpose of discrediting when it takes the form of vilifications by radical, militant, and other individuals fighting against the establishment (Bostrom, et al., 1973). The anti-authority slogan, "Fuck the Pigs!" would be an example of this. Offensive language can also be a means of showing extreme contempt for society and authority, and for the things espoused by the establishment (Bostrom, et al., 1973). The use of obscenities at the Chicago Democratic National Convention in 1968, according to Bostrom, is an example of offensive language used in provocation. In this instance, the goal was to provoke the audience into violent confrontations and actions. According to Rothwell (1971), verbal obscenity is the most effective rhetorical method available to agitators for inciting a violent response.

Offensive language also serves a cathartic purpose when its use allows one to reduce emotional tension verbally instead of physically (Bostrom, et al., 1973). In 1901, Patrick wrote that profanity is a primitive and instinctive form of reaction to a situation which threatens the well-being of the individual in some way. He states that it seems to serve as a vent for emotion and a way to relieve it. Bostrom (et al., 1973) suggests that in many instances the use of profanity is a substitute for violent, physically aggressive behavior—allowing users to release their frustrations and aggressions in a less physically destructive manner. Swearing, laughter and weeping share the common function of acting as relief valves for sudden surges of energy that require the appropriate form of expression (Montagu, 1967). Robert Graves writes in *Lars Porsena, or the Future of Swearing* that:

> "There is no doubt that swearing has a definite physiological function; for after childhood relief in tears and wailing is rightly discouraged, and groans are also considered a signal of extreme weakness. Silence under suffering is usually impossible. The nervous system demands some expression that does not affect towards cowardice and feebleness and, as a nervous stimulant in a crisis, swearing is unequalled" (1929, p. 32).

While swearing may stem from nervous stimulation, Montagu contends that the principal action of swearing is that of sedation rather than stimulation (1967). Many thinkers, according to Montagu, view the function of swearing as acting as a relief mechanism that allows excess energy to escape without doing anyone serious injury and, simultaneously, doing the swearer some good. Even those who have disapproved of swearing have recognized that some forms of strong expression must be permitted in any properly organized society (Montagu, 1967). According to Montagu, swearing is an instrument which, like any other, can only be effectively played when it is sustained by a sufficient amount of feeling.

While swearing may serve as a relief valve for humans, it is not an innate human behavior. Swearing is a "culturally conditioned form of behavior, which serves the dual function of permitting the excess energy of frustration to express itself in harmless verbal aggression and of restoring equilibrium for the user" (Montagu, 1967, p. 78). Montagu maintains that swearing is the culturally-conditioned verbal expression or venting of the aggressiveness that follows frustration. The desire to swear is only experienced by those who have learned to swear under conditions that give rise to frustration (Montagu, 1967).

At times, offensive language can also be credited with acting as a social marker of group identity and solidarity, frequently serving to distinguish men from women, certain cultures, or marking membership of adolescent subcultures (De Klerk, 1991). Offensive language can also facilitate the creation of strong group identification when it is used to elicit admiration and identification for the communicator by the recipient (Bostrom et al., 1973). According to Battistella (2005), coarse language creates a tough-guy solidarity among those disregarding convention, and racial slurs create a feeling of solidarity among the bigoted.

Offensive language can also serve as a planned rhetorical strategy to create identification between agitators and potential allies (Bostrom, 1973). Because offensive language is both improper and daring, it can also serve as a status marker of ordinary speech (Battistella, 2005). During the 2004 presidential election campaign, both candidates John Kerry and Vice President Dick Cheney used forms of the word *fuck* (Battistella, 2005). While both received some mild criticism for their language, each man positioned himself as a speaker who puts directness over convention (Battistella, 2005).

The functions of offensive language in Western cultures are complex (De Klerk, 1991). Montagu (1967) stresses the fact that the presence or absence of offensive language is a socially developed trait and strongly underscores the social nature of swearing. Offensive language serves an overridingly emotive or expression function—used most often to get rid of nervous energy when under stress, especially when one is angry, frustrated, or surprised (De Klerk, 1991). According to De Klerk, we find offensive language to be "strong" language because it is an act of being daring—no matter how slight.

Cultural Concerns of Offensive Language

Americans curse. So what? The problem with foul language, according to James O'Connor, is that we use it too often—failing to communicate clearly, ignoring the sensitivities of others, and damaging the positive perceptions we want people to have of us (O'Connor, 2006).Critics of the use of offensive language view the proliferation of its use as an indicator of the victory of crudity in American society. "The entertainment culture," according to Senator Joseph Lieberman, "is an immensely powerful force in our society, as powerful as any of us in Washington, and that power is increasingly being used in ways that make our society's problems worse, not better" (Lieberman, 1996, p.2).

Don Imus was recently fired from his radio-morning program for referring to members of the Rutgers University women's basketball-team as "Nappy-headed hos" (CNN.com, 2007). "Nappy" is a slur describing the tightly curled hair of many African-Americans and "Ho" is slang for "whore" (Robinson, 2007). For years, Imus has insulted blacks, Jews, Arabs, gays, Catholics and women on his radio show (Robinson, 2007). However, Imus' most recent remarks cost him his job. According to CBS Chairman Leslie Moonves, Imus has flourished in a culture that permits a certain level of objectionable expression that hurts and demeans a wide range of people (Finn, 2007).

Moonves states, "In taking him off the air, I believe we take an important and necessary step not just in solving a unique problem, but in changing that culture, which extends far beyond the walls of our company" (Finn, 2007, p.1). Eugene Robinson, a columnist with the *Washington Post*, points out that Imus was a shock jock and that he entertained people by shocking. "If he was talking about African-Americans," Robinson states, "he used racist language; talking about Jews, he used anti-Semitic lines; with women, misogynistic language" (*Meet the Press*, 2007, p. 6). Robinson argues that a whole culture has arisen that entertains by being shocking and cruel and that "this culture of shock is something that's polluting the public culture" (*Meet the Press*, 2007, p. 6) The Reverend Jesse Jackson called Imus' firing a victory for public decency because Jackson believes that no one should use the public airwaves to transmit racial or sexual degradation" (Finn, 2007, p. 2).

Rutgers coach C. Vivian Stringer believes that Imus' comments are indicative of greater ills in our culture. "It's not just Mr. Imus," she says, "And we hope that this will be and serve as a catalyst for change" (Finn, 2007). However, not everyone agrees that change is imminent. *Dateline* Correspondent Josh Mankiewicz believes that the line between what's entertaining and what's degrading has been blurring for a long time (MSNBC.com, 2007). According to Mankiewicz, "It didn't start with Imus, and it's unlikely to end now" (MSNBC.com, 2007, p. 3). He cautions that it will not be easy to change our diet of cultural junk food (MSNBC.com, 2007).

Critics of offensive language claim that it is a contributor to the overall degradation of society. Pat Boone, speaking on behalf of the Parents Television Council, argues that the entertainment industry is poisoning our children with a steady diet of filth, blatant sexuality, blasphemy, profanity, and dehumanizing violence (Boone, 2007). Those opposed to the current culture of the entertainment industry worry that this "diet of filth" has a negative impact on American society. According to Potter, "When society is changed, we eventually are influenced to change" (Potter, 2003, p.35). Many see the media as leading the charge for this change. Media critics believe that we are engaged in a "culture war"—where "moral values" are under attack. At the center of this "culture war" is the ongoing struggle over the values that guide our daily lives and the course of the nation (Lane, 2006).

Lieberman (1996) holds that the entertainment industry is contributing to a moral and social breakdown in America. Boone (2007) claims that the entertainment industry saturates our culture and that it is shaping the moral climate of our society. Our entertainment culture, in Lieberman's eyes, is not only out of touch with the values of mainstream America, but out of control as well (Lieberman, 1996). He views the sex and crude language portrayed on broadcast media not as only offensive, but as being on the offensive—assaulting the values that most Americans share (Lieberman, 1996). However, Lane counters that it is the minority attempting to dictate what is moral for the majority. Religious conservatives are committed to the cleansing of American society, primarily through the imposition of their moral code on the rest of the nation (Lane, 2006). "Religious conservatives continue to command political and media attention that is disproportionate to their actual influence, and, for that reason alone, the decency wars will persist" (Lane, 2006, p. 280).

While many people may use offensive language in private, media watchdog groups and some legislators and parents feel that the media are largely responsible for the glorification of offensive language use. According to the American Decency Association, media companies are the worst violators of decency and must be held responsible for systematically wreaking destruction on American life in the pursuit of profits without true concern for how that profit was made (Americandecency.org, 2006). Lieberman states that many Americans feel as if their culture has been hijacked and replaced with something alien to their lives, which openly rejects rather than reflects the values they are trying to instill in their families (1996).

The broadcast industry often defends its use of offensive language with the claim that it is merely representing the way "real" people speak. However, conservative Robert Bork, whose 1987 nomination to the Supreme Court caused one of the most heated and bitter debates over an appointment in American history (Lane, 2006), suggests that the arrow of causation probably points in the other direction (Bork, 1996). He argues that people use profane language because they hear it so frequently on broadcast media (Bork, 1996). The obscenity of themes and words used by the entertainment industry, according to Bork, is staggering (Bork, 1996). The English language, Bork states, is increasingly vulgar (Bork, 1996).

While the Court has protected freedom of speech because it is the beginning of thought, Bork wonders what thoughts valuable to freedom are triggered by the language of the gutter (Bork, 1996). His extremist view is that society should not be denied the power to curb speech or images of no social value and that are capable of debasing society and discourse (Bork, 1996). Bork argues the case for censorship because it is the right of the majority to live in an environment free of the worst insults to decency and of a popular culture that incites violence and sexual nihilism (1996). "Though the Court did not create our moral smog, it has consistently outlawed attempts of communities to contain that pollution," Bork states, "When such law is declared unfit to survive, not only are sordid tastes freed, they are also validated" (1996, p.351). Bork believes that the proliferation of obscenity and vulgarity are forcing us to live in an increasingly ugly society (1996).

While America's youth have always rebelled against authority, the difference now, Bork posits, is that obscene assaults on authority have become culturally acceptable (Bork, 1996). Neil Postman states that our current communication environment has been radically altered by television, radio, film, and records and that these media together have the power to create a society where childhood no longer exists (Postman, 1988). The language of children and adults has also been transformed so that the idea that there may be words that adults should not use in the presence of children seems to no longer apply (Postman, 1988). "It is not inconceivable to me that in the near future we shall return to the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century situation in which no words were unfit for a youthful ear" (Postman, 1988, p. 159). Currently, popular culture "obliterates the distinction between child and adult, as it obliterates social secrets, as it undermines concepts of the future and the value of restraint and discipline" (Postman, 1996, p. 160).

Lieberman claims that there is a swelling sense that the anything-goes mentality that permeates the electronic culture is contributing to the moral crisis we are experiencing in America (Lieberman, 1996). "Culture," according to Lieberman, "is affecting our values in a deeply troubling way"(Lieberman, 1996, p.2). Popular entertainment, Bork states, sells sex, pornography, violence, vulgarity, perversion, and attacks traditional forms of authority (Bork, 1996). The concern is that we are incessantly pressing against the limits set by a culture's sense of decency and shame (Bork, 1996). In Bork's eyes, American culture has changed and continues to change for the worse (Bork, 1996). However, not all views of our culture are this extreme or this negative. Lane argues that our society is, in fact, far more "decent" than it was a century or even a half a century ago—legal segregation has been abolished, the treatment of homosexuals is generally better, women have moved steadily towards equal rights and the disabled are treated with respect (Lane, 2006).

While the broadcast industry often takes the if-you-don't-like-it, don't-listen-to-it approach to such criticism, critics claim that due to the pervasive nature of the broadcast media, this is nothing more than an excuse for the industry's irresponsible behavior. According to Bork, to say that if you don't like popular culture, then turn it off, is like saying that if you don't like smog, stop breathing (Bork, 1996). "Even those of us who try to avoid the more repellent aspects of popular culture know about it through a sort of peripheral vision" (Bork, 1996, p. 126). While Lieberman understands that it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to protect their children, he argues that it is difficult to do so when you have no warning about the vulgarities or mayhem to come (1996).

According to Lieberman, our current culture is depriving parents of their ability to do their fundamental job as parents—teaching their children right and wrong, and instilling a sense of discipline (Lieberman, 1996). He argues that more and more control over children's lives is being exercised by strangers who don't to seem to care what impact they have on the children of others (Lieberman, 1996). "I can't help but ask how these industry leaders would feel if I came into their home and used some of this kind of foul language in front of their children." Lieberman continues: "I doubt they would stand for it. But why then, do they feel it is perfectly acceptable and appropriate to use that kind of language in my home—in front of my child?" (Lieberman, 1996, p. 3)

However, not everyone believes that the federal government should be responsible for monitoring broadcast content. Lane (2006) cautions that we need to take personal responsibility for media choices rather than expecting the FCC or Congress to monitor or control media decency. Lane claims that it is a grave disservice to both children and this country to rely on the federal government to protect children with broadcast limitations. “Ceding authority and responsibility to the government is politically dangerous and simply sets a bad example for children about the relative roles of government and its citizens” (Lane, 2006, p. 287).

Gender and Offensive Language

Empirical research on language has shown that men and women use language in ways that differ systematically (Mulac, 1976). Dooling (1996) states that “men swear because we are uncouth warthogs by nature, and we especially love to say bad words because it makes us feel manly in some violent, disturbing way, which (government studies will someday show) is indicative of the male need to exploit, debase, and discriminate against women” (p. 5). While Dooling’s tongue-in-cheek quote does not shed any scientific light on swearing, it does highlight the socially-accepted idea that gender differences exist in the use of offensive language. The notion of gender differences in the use of coarse language is also supported by research. Offensive language research supports the commonly-held assumption that men swear more than women (De Klerk, 1991; Foote & Woodward, 1973; Jay, 1992; Rieber, Wiedemann, & D’Amato, 1979; Selnow, 1985).

However, it is important to note the limitations of research on offensive language usage. According to De Klerk (1991), this type of research is limited because it is difficult to study expletives in a natural context. Further, since people generally do not use offensive language unless the situation warrants it, getting a stranger to use these terms in a linguistic interview is not an easy matter (De Klerk, 1991). For these reasons, offensive language studies have been limited to self-reported use, word ratings, and production measures in which participants are asked to generate a list of offending words (Sapolsky and Kaye, 2005). It is also important to note that people are often unreliable in reporting on their own usage of profanities and that females show a tendency to underreport and males to overreport (De Klerk, 1991).

Keeping in mind the limitations associated with studying offensive language usage, prior research indicates that men, in fact, do swear more than women. Women, according to Bostrom et al., (1973), have long been expected to refrain from the use of offensive language in public, a standard much less strictly imposed on men. Jay (1992) suggests that gender differences exist in offensive language usage because men and women view the world differently. Jay states, “As much as the field of psychology would like to present a more balance pictured, the dirty word literature shows that we are different” (p. 181). These differences are based on different underlying cognitive models and metaphors for sexual and interpersonal behavior (Jay, 1992). “The language of insults and name calling,” according to Jay, “supports the view that men and women are operating on different assumptions about what makes our hearts and minds tick” (p. 181). Jay maintains that offensive language research suggests that women seem to operate in a world concerned with intimacy, social desirability and security, while men’s concerns seem to be sex, power, and physical attractiveness. However, Ginsburg**,** Ogletree, and Silakowski (2003) caution that scant empirical research limits our current ability to provide any robust explanation for why these gender differences exist.

Jay is not the only researcher to find sex differences in offensive language usage. In an experiment conducted by Foote and Woodard (1973), they found that men produced significantly more obscenities than females when asked to generate examples of obscene speech either in writing or orally on a tape recorder. A study conducted by Sewell (1984) examining humor and profanity in cartoons also found gender differences. His results showed that when a non-profane cartoon caption was shown to his subjects, men and women agreed in their evaluation of the humor, but when mild profanity was added to the caption, men found the cartoon more humorous than women. Additionally, he found that when strong profanity was added to the caption, men found the cartoon significantly more humorous than did women.

A 1985 study by Selnow suggested gender differences not only in the reported use of profanity, but on the perceptions of profanity. He found that women claim to incorporate profanity less frequently into their speech and that women express a relatively more negative impression of profanity use on a wide variety of measures. His study also found that women respondents reported a greater disapproval of the use of profanity on television and in formal settings. In addition, both sexes in Selnow's study reported a significantly greater frequency of profanity use by their fathers than by their mothers. This finding further supports the presence of sex differences in profanity use.

While men and women generally agree on what is offensive or insulting, gender differences beyond the frequency of offensive language use exist. Research indicates that men use more and different words than females (Jay, 1992). For example, a study by Preston and Stanley (1987) found that men used the term "asshole" more than expected and females used it less than expected. They also found that when women were speaking about men, there were more nonsexual insults and fewer sexual responses than expected. Additionally, "sexually loose" accusations were attributed significantly more often toward women and "homosexual" terms significantly more often toward men, but almost entirely by men. The findings indicate that there were significant differences attributed the types of profanity men and women use. Additionally, those who utter crude language use different words to insult men than they do to insult women (Preston & Stanley, 1987). A study by Rieber, Wiedemann and D'Amato (1979) also found that women react more strongly or extremely to obscene language than men. Their results suggest that women find obscenity stronger, more potent, and more active than men do.

According to Jay (1992), men and women prefer to use different types of sexual terminology in different contexts. When men and women insult each other, they use different concepts of sexuality, deviance, and characteristics of gender appropriate behavior. Evidence suggests that men and women are offended by different words, depending on the semantics of the word. According to Jay, one of the most offensive ways to insult a man is to suggest that he is sexually inadequate or a homosexual. Words such as *queer, fag, homo, wimp, pussy, wussy, gay,* and *cocksucker* are targeted almost exclusively at males. Men who are seen as uncaring, socially inept, self-centered, harmful or mean are often called *bastard, prick, asshole, son of a bitch,* or *cock* whereas women displaying these characteristics are often called *cunt, tease, cockteaser, bitch, scag,* or *dyke* (Jay, 1992). However, words that refer to female homosexuality are more likely to be used by males to insult females than by females to insult other females (Jay, 1992). Research shows that insults depend not only on the sex of the speaker, but on the sex of the target (Jay, 1992). While gender differences may exist, both men and women report using dirty words more often with members of the same-sex than with mixed company (Jay, 1992). Coates (1986) also explains that men and women swear more in same-sex company. Additionally, male usage, in particular, drops dramatically when involved in mixed-sex conversations.

In a discussion of gender differences, it is important to note that many of the offensive language studies have been conducted by male investigators and that women respondents may feel restricted in their responses. Also, male speech has been studied more than female speech (Hughes, 1992). While evidence does support the existence of gender differences, many researchers believe that the gap is narrowing. According to Hughes, popular stereotypes of female and male speech assume more differentiation than is, in fact, the case. While the Preston and Stanley study (1987) did find gender differences in how men and women use profanity, they also found that the college students sampled for their study share a similar vocabulary of insults and tend to agree about which insults are used primarily by men versus women and which sex is typically the target of these insults. They found that both men and women were gross and sexual in their responses and that although subjects attributed slightly more polite language to women, subjects of both sexes seemed to have equal knowledge and expression of terms. De Klerk's article (1991) points out that, with societal shifts in power, habits of expletive usage are changing and that studies indicate an increase in the usage of expletives by females, especially among the more "liberated" 30-40 year old group. De Klerk suggests that overall differences relate more strongly to age rather than to sex. The results of the study also indicate that females, regardless of geographic location,—appear to be moving in the same direction—toward increasing "freedom" in the use of offensive language.

Theoretical Issues Concerning Indecent Language

While television content and its effects have been the subject of much research, theorizing, discussion and debate, radio content has not received the same attention. That is not to say that radio does not have the ability to impact its audience. For example, it was a Rwandan radio station that broadcast calls for genocide and created hysteria among its listeners—culminating in the disastrous Hutu-Tutsi civil war of 1994- 1995 (Harris, 2004). Worldwide, radio is the most available medium (Harris, 2004). Radio plays a crucial role in isolated societies because it depends neither on literacy nor on the purchase of a relatively expensive television set (Harris, 2004).

Radio's near-universal reach has held steady throughout the years (Arbitron, 2006). No other medium—electronic or otherwise—can claim as many weekly consumers as does radio (Arbitron, 2006). Radio remains relevant and prevalent (Radioink.com, 2007). Ed Seeger, president of American Media Services, states that the conventional thinking over the past couple of years has been that new technologies were going to overpower radio and threaten its relevance to the American consumer. "Well, we've heard all that before. Radio was going to become obsolete when television came along, and then when the eight-track was installed in cars, and, most recently, when the computer revolution began. It didn't happen, and it isn't happening now" (Radioink.com, 2007).

More than television, radio is highly age-and interest-segmented (Harris, 2004). It is also ubiquitous. By the end of 1996, there were over 12,000 AM and FM radio stations in the United States (Harris, 2004). And, at the end of 2005, satellite radio providers XM and Sirius boasted 6.6 million and 3.3 million subscribers, respectively (Block, 2006). Radio's reach is also consistent among all age groups and both sexes (Arbitron, 2006). With a medium this pervasive—the average radio consumer spends more than 19 hours listening to the radio each week (Arbitron, 2006)—there are concerns about the possible negative psychological effects on listeners who may imitate the language they hear on radio. Much of this concern is an effort to protect society's youth. This is evident in the FCC's decision to create "safe hours," which restricts indecent speech when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience (FCC, 2005). Unlike television, radio is little used through preadolescence, but then becomes a central part of adolescent and young adult culture (Harris, 2004). In fact, teenagers listen to music on radio or CD three to four hours per day, more than the two to three hours per day they spend watching television (Harris, 2004). John Stossel, in an *ABC News 20/20* segment on offensive language in the United States, states that "if a Martian landed at a high school, he'd think swearing was basic speech" (*ABC News*, 2006). With preadolescents and teenagers heavily using both radio and this type of language, a discussion of the possible negative psychological effects of offensive language is warranted.

Human thought, affect, and behavior can be markedly influenced by observation (Bandura, 2002). Critics of offensive language on radio worry that listeners may imitate the language they hear on radio. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication provides a framework for how offensive language broadcast on radio can impact the listener. Bandura states that a vast amount of information about human values, styles of thinking, and behavior patterns is gained from extensive modeling in the symbolic environment of the mass media (Bandura, 2002). While the media are not the only factor or even the most important factor leading to negative effects, the media are an important factor and their influence should not be ignored (Potter, 2003).

Children have an innate tendency to imitate whomever they observe (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Through observational learning, behavioral scripts, world schemas, and normative beliefs become encoded in a child's mind simply as a consequence of observing others (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). Schemas are mental templates that help people organize all of the information that they come into contact with everyday as well as information already stored in memory (DeVito, 2005). These schemas are general ideas about people, including oneself, and social roles (DeVito to, 2005). Scripts, a type of schema, focus on action, events or procedures (DeVito, 2005). A script is a general idea about how some event should unfold such as eating in a restaurant or entering a classroom (DeVito, 2007). Schemas and scripts are shortcuts that simplify understanding, remembering and recalling information about people and events (DeVito, 2007). Since young minds have fewer existing encoded cognitions, they can encode new scripts, schemas, and beliefs through observational learning with less interference than can adults (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). According to Bandura, research has shown that both children and, even, adults acquire new attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling. A major significance of symbolic modeling lies in its tremendous reach and psychological impact (Bandura, 2002).

Bandura has proffered that symbolic modeling influences the development of moral judgments by what it portrays as acceptable or reprehensible conduct according to the sanctions and justifications applied to it. In observational learning a single model can transmit new ways of thinking and behaving simultaneously to countless people in widely dispersed locales (Bandura, 2002). People have direct contact with only a small portion of the physical and social environment—they go to work in the same place everyday, see the same set of friends and associates and drive to the same destinations. Consequently, their conceptions of social reality are greatly influenced by vicarious experiences—by what they see, hear, and read—without direct experiential correctives. The more people's images of reality depend on the media's symbolic environment, the greater potential social impact (Bandura, 2002). Bandura suggests that**,** with the increasing use of symbolic modeling, parents, teachers, and other traditional role models may occupy less prominent roles in social learning.

The media's ability to serve as a vicarious teacher of values and behaviors underscores why a study of offensive language on radio is important. Media messages, Potter argues, are constantly exerting an influence on all of us (Potter, 2003). Critics of media content worry that offensive language on radio will result in increased usage of such words by children and that the radio audience will become desensitized to offensive language, resulting in an increasing coarsening of the language. According to Potter, the media continually and profoundly affect the audience and "we constantly use the lessons learned from the media to guide our actions in real life" (Potter, 2003, p. 7). Researchers who study television violence worry about its potential to habituate and desensitize people to violence and aggression after significant exposure over a long period of time (Van Evra, 2004). They worry that perhaps children of this violent media culture will become more aggressive themselves (Van Evra, 2004).

While the effects of offensive language have received little scholarly attention, media violence research indicates that the media can influence audience perception and behavior. These findings may also apply to offensive language. In a study on the short and long-term effects of violent media on aggression in children and adults, Bushman and Huesmann (2006) found that adults are more influenced by media violence in the short term, while children are more likely to exhibit long-term effects. They argue that it is children who need the most protection from repeated exposure to media violence because it can change the way children perceive the world and their beliefs about aggression (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). Child psychologist John Burgess maintains that the overall increase in hostility and aggression in our society is reflected in the language of children who use offensive language (ABC News, 2006). Researchers fear that as people's sensitivities to violence become increasingly dulled, violent behavior may increase, in part because it is simply not recognized any longer as behavior that should be curtailed (Sparks & Sparks, 2002). Repeated exposure to emotionally arousing media can lead to habituation of certain emotional responses (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). This process, called desensitization, has been used to explain a reduction in distress-related physiological reactivity to media portrayals of violence (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). Bushman and Huesmann state that violent scenes do become less arousing over time. Behaviors that might seem unusual to the child at first will seem more normative after repeated exposure (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006).

The same reasoning that has been applied to media violence can be applied to offensive language—the more we hear it, the more our senses are dulled by it, and the more likely we may be to use profanity because it is no longer viewed as an inappropriate behavior. Desensitization, or blunting of emotional responses, may lead to more tolerance of mediated verbal vulgarities and increased usage of aggressive words in everyday conversation (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). Repeated exposure to offensive language, especially when reacted to positively, can lead to negative social consequences such as imitation and desensitization (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). "The repetition of a word thus blunts the original offense caused by inhibition or taboo. This desensitization effect is not particular to dirty words but occurs when any word is used repeatedly" (Jay, 1992, p.14). Thus, it is possible that listeners may also become so accustomed and indifferent to offensive language through its repeated use on radio that they no longer "hear" the bad words.

Additionally, the negative effects of media can also manifest themselves in nonbehavioral ways (Potter, 2003). They can also influence emotions, attitudes, and knowledge (Potter, 2003). The media, Potter states, can create, alter, and reinforce attitudes (2003). Therefore a possible negative effect, aside from increasing use of offensive language, may be a change in our attitude towards offensive language. Offensive language may no longer be considered offensive.

Cultivation research, which has primarily been applied to television effects, can also be applied radio. Cultivation research looks at exposure to massive flows of messages over long periods of time (Gerbner et al, 2002). What is most likely to cultivate stable and common conceptions of reality is the overall pattern of programming to which total communities are regularly exposed over long periods of time (Gerbner et. al., 2002). In turn, if the radio audience is consistently and constantly exposed to offensive language over a long period of time, a cultivation effect may occur. If offensive language is a recurring pattern on radio, listeners may be exposed to it many times a day. Cultivation researchers argue that continued exposure to media messages are likely to reiterate, confirm, and nourish its own values and perspectives (Gerbner et al, 2002). However, we cannot fully understand the effects of offensive language on radio audiences until we first explore the pervasiveness and nature of offensive language on radio today.

While the desire to curb indecent programming stems from the belief that its effects are harmful to the audience, particularly children, there is little scientific evidence to support this (Donnerstein, et al., 1992). Very few studies have examined the effects of indecent material on children up to the age of 18 and the studies that have been conducted indicate that such exposure does not have any effect (Donnerstein, et al., 1992). Media watchdog groups and legislators consistently claim that indecent programming is harmful to children and society. However, evidence suggests that even if children are exposed to sexual terms and innuendo, children under the age of 12 may not understand them. Donnerstein, et al. (1992, p.112) explains that "if children do not comprehend basic sexual concepts, it is unlikely that any indecent language referring to these sexual activities will be fully understood." Since children lack the cognitive and emotional capacities to comprehend these materials, it is difficult to conceive of any negative effects (Donnerstein, et al., 1992). There is little social science evidence to suggest that the psychological welfare of children is threatened by indecent content, yet the FCC continues to tighten its indecency restrictions even though the available evidence does not justify it (Donnerstein, et al., 1992).

Popular Press Coverage of Offensive Language on Broadcast Media

When considering indecency on broadcast television and radio, time has definitely not healed all wounds. While the Janet Jackson incident, in which she exposed a breast during the 2004 Super Bowl half-time show, occurred over three years ago, the crackdown on indecency has not waned. Today the FCC continues to levy hefty fines against broadcasters for programming it deems indecent (CNN.com, 2006). In 2004 and 2005 both Clear Channel and Infinity paid fines for indecent programming leveled by the FCC without protest and, in many cases, dropped the radio personalities responsible for these fines. Clear Channel even adopted new rules for what it calls its "responsible broadcasting initiative**,**" and decided that DJs who violate FCC rules will be suspended immediately and fired if it is found that the broadcast breaks the law (Lorek, 2004). What some view as necessary regulation, others view as censorship. "I can't imagine that the majority of Americans want their programming decided by fear," said Emmy-winning writer-producer Tom Fontana. "I don't think they want it decided by four or five commissioners. The Federal government does such a rotten job of things in general, why would we suddenly expect that the FCC would be the one thing that works well" (CNN.com, 2006, p. 1). The fact that some station owners and television executives are now engaging in self-censorship makes industry observers uncomfortable. "Media is supposed to be independent of the government," stated Paul Levinson, chairman for the Department of Communications and Media Studies at Fordham University, "For the government to step in and threaten media, and then for the media to go and do what the government wants, completely distorts our democratic process and our freedoms" (Salant, 2004, p.2)

However, not everyone agrees that the media are doing enough to curb indecency or that the FCC is infringing on First Amendment Rights. Supporters of the FCC argue that broadcasters who air purportedly indecent content are simply getting what they deserve. "It's beyond preposterous that the networks would even propose that airing the F-word and S-word on television is not indecent," said L. Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council, "The networks' principles have now been unmasked for everyone to see. Their actions today are indecent in and of themselves" (Finn, 2006, p.2). While conservative and watchdog groups are pleased with the FCC crackdowns, broadcasters are not amused. In April 2006, the FCC fined the four major television networks millions of dollars for the broadcast of indecent content. In a joint statement issued by the networks, they vowed to appeal the FCC's decisions—claiming that the FCC overstepped its authority in an attempt to regulate content protected by the First Amendment (Finn, 2006).

The question of how much is too much for broadcast radio and television may never be answered.

> "Every generation's culture tends to alarm the previous generation—that's the way of American pop culture," said Ken Paulson, director of the First Amendment Center in Nashville, Tennessee. "I think it's fair to say that American pop culture is as crass and coarse as it's ever been. I also think it's fair to say that in the 1930s, in the 1960s, and so on, American pop culture was as crass and coarse as ever"
> (Blythe, 2004, p.1).

Radio and Offensive Language

When radio is considered, it is the morning personalities that have been blamed for much of the "crass" and "coarse" language that is aired. In fact, the term "shock jock"—unique to radio—was coined as a result of such content. A shock jock is a radio personality who attracts attention using humor, including sexually explicit humor, stunts, interviews, and, in some cases, racial slurs that a significant portion of the listening audience may find offensive (Ho, 2006). In the 1970s, this new and outrageous kind of radio disc jockey first began to appear on American radio (US Fed News, 2006). While these radio personalities were wildly creative, they often pushed the edges of acceptable taste (US Fed News, 2006). Shock jocks like Howard Stern provoke and insult American sensibilities (Bashir, 2006). When Howard Stern was heard on terrestrial radio, station KPNT, which aired his show, described it on their website as being "characterized by its lack of taste, class, restraint and moral value" (US Fed News, 2006, p. 2). While the idea of a performer or entertainer that breaks taboos is not a new one, shock jocks entered the American radio scene during the 1980s and are still common on radio today. Shock jocks tend to push the envelope of decency in their market and often show a lack of regard for FCC regulations concerning content.

Most recently, Don Imus pushed this envelope with his comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team and lost both his radio show and the television-simulcast of the show. Imus states, "Our agenda is to be funny and sometimes we go too far. And, this time we went way too far" (Robinson, 2007, p.1). The Reverend Al Sharpton, who called for Imus' termination, argues that we must draw the line on what is tolerable in mainstream media. "We cannot keep going through offending and then apologizing and then acting like it never happened," states Sharpton. "Somewhere we've got to stop this" (CNN.com, 2007, p.1). CBS and MSNBC put a stop to Don Imus by canceling *Imus in the Morning* (Finn, 2007). Imus, who has claimed that he practically invented shock radio, used a plethora of words that were crude, tasteless, racially-charged and intended to insult over his 30-plus year radio career, and he consistently reduced his targets to crude and racial stereotypes (Kosova, 2007). For example, he referred to Arabs as "ragheads" and NBA star Patrick Ewing as a "knuckle-dragging moron" (Kosova, 2007).

Like much of the criticism leveled at the *Imus in the Morning* show, a cursory listen to radio programs hosted by other shock jocks reveals that they feature sex, bodily functions, and thinly-veiled innuendo. They are also known to engage in dialogue that is racist, homophobic, and exploits women. In May 2006, Tori Torain, known as Star on the "Star and Buc Wild Morning Program" for Power 105 FM in New York City, was fired for his remarks about DJ Envy, a DJ for rival hip-hop station Hot 97, and his family (CNN.com, 2006). His remarks included his desire to "do an R. Kelly…on your little baby girl" (in 2002, R. Kelly was accused of having sex with someone underage on video and then urinating on her) and racial slurs against the DJ's wife, who is part Asian. (CNN.com, 2006). On a previous broadcast, Torain referred to an Indian woman as a filthy rat-eater and aimed ethnic slurs at actress and singer Jennifer Lopez (Guzman, 2006). Clear Channel, which owns Power 105 FM and broadcasts the show on its other stations in Philadelphia, Miami, and Richmond, called Torain's statements "wholly unacceptable" (CNN.com, 2006, p. 1) and promptly fired him. Torain defends his words as social satire—even a form of education (Guzman, 2006). "I use humor, sometimes backwards psychology, sometimes stupidity," states Torain, "so that someone can see not only the grand picture, but to see themselves, and to see whether they've been hateful within their thinking" (Guzman, 2006, p.2). Torain's critics have labeled him a hate-monger who hides behind the First Amendment and as further proof of the media degeneration into shock value, sensationalism and vulgarity (Guzman, 2006).

While Torain is the latest casualty in the assault against shock jocks, more infamous shock jocks include Howard Stern, Bubba the Love Sponge, Opie and Anthony and Mancow. While it is not uncommon for these personalities to be fired, as Torain was, for their on-air antics, it is also common for them to be, in turn, rehired by another station. For example, Opie and Anthony were fired from Boston radio station WAAF in 1998 for an April Fool's Day prank announcing that the mayor of Boston was killed in an accident. Soon after this incident, they were picked up by New York radio station WNEW. However, in 2002, the duo were once again fired after holding a contest for listeners who have sex in interesting places or circumstances. During the contest, a couple was arrested for having sex in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

Shock jocks became famous for this boundary-pushing behavior and station owners often paid the price. In 1995, Infinity Broadcasting, which syndicated Howard Stern's show, paid a record $1.7 million fine to the FCC for violations by the Stern show (Lorek, 2004). As both the criticism of Howard Stern and the fines for his content increased, Clear Channel, which owns more than 1,200 stations in the U.S., dropped Stern from its stations that carried his show. Clear Channel president John Hogan stated: "Clear Channel drew a line in the sand today with regard to protecting our listeners from indecent content and Howard Stern's show blew right through it. It was vulgar, offensive, and insulting, not just to women and African Americans, but to anyone with a sense of common decency" (Jicha, 2004). While Clear Channel maintained that Stern was offensive to "anyone with a sense of common decency," his syndicated show attracted 12 million listeners before he moved to satellite radio in January 2006 (Hall, 2006). Bubba the Love Sponge was fired by Clear Channel in 2004 because his show was too raunchy for the company's standards. At the time, his Tampa based-program was rated number one in the Tampa Bay area from 6 to 10 a.m. with people ages 18-34 (Boulton, 2004). While many complain about the offensiveness of radio, millions listen to it. Fans of shock jock radio were angered over Clear Channel's willingness to buckle under pressure from the FCC (Bauerlein, 2004).

In the wake of recent FCC crackdowns, shock jocks like Howard Stern and Opie and Anthony moved to unregulated satellite radio—where they are free to air content without restrictions, fear of fines, and firing. However, in an interesting twist, in April 2006, CBS Radio announced the first satellite-to-broadcast radio syndication deal. In the deal, XM Radio will license the Opie and Anthony Show to CBS Radio as a replacement for David Lee Roth in the markets where Roth replaced Howard Stern after he moved to Sirius Satellite Radio (Hall, 2006). CBS Radio will now be the vehicle for shock jocks' Opie and Anthony's return to broadcast radio. Although Imus is currently off the radio, many doubt that the kind of language that cost him his job will disappear with him (MSNBC.com, 2007). Shock jock radio, according to Mankiewicz, is alive and well. Sarah McBride, who covers radio for the *Wall Street Journal*, states that while we may see a short die-down of insulting, degrading language on the radio, it will return (MSNBC.com, 2007). She argues that hosts will be careful about what they say for the moment, but, as so often happens, it will blow over and radio personalities will go back to saying as much as they can get away with (MSNBC.com, 2007). McBride appears to be correct. Just a few weeks after the Imus incident, Opie and Anthony managed to find trouble once again. The pair was condemned by XM radio for the crude comments a homeless man made on their show about having sex with Condoleezza Rice, Laura Bush and Queen Elizabeth (CNN.com, 2007).

Review of Offensive Language Research on Television

Although offensive language on radio has received little scholarly attention, offensive language on prime time television has been extensively studied by Kaye and Sapolsky. Their studies of offensive language on television have examined context and offensive language, offensive language before and after content ratings, and gender and offensive language usage. Just as radio personalities like Howard Stern and Opie and Anthony have been criticized for their trash talk, the television industry has also been criticized for incorporating offensive language into its programming. However, due to a dearth of research, we currently can say little about the kinds and amount of offensive language used on radio.

Over the years, watchdog groups and legislators have claimed that offensive language use on television has increased. Content analysis enables researchers to support or reject the claims leveled at the television industry. Kaye and Sapolsky (2001) reported that in 1990 viewers could hear offensive language of one type or another once every eleven minutes. By 1994 they found that this rate had grown to nearly once every eight minutes. While the rate dropped in 1997 to nearly once every 13 minutes, content analysis revealed that in 2001 the rate of offensive language usage on prime time television had once again reached nearly once every eight minutes (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). The concern is that the repetition of vulgarities may contribute to a coarsening of language, especially for younger viewers who consume many more hours of all forms of television programming (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005).

Research has identified that the bulk of crude language spoken on television includes words classified as mild, including words such as hell, damn, and God (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). While the majority of offensive language on television falls under this classification, the "seven dirty words," which are the only words specifically identified by the FCC as inappropriate for broadcast between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm, have also made their way onto prime time air waves (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2001). In fact, a study by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) found that one of the "seven dirty words" was spoken about once every three hours. These researchers also found that the first hour of prime time contained more profanity than the last hour of prime time. Media watchdogs, parents and lawmakers have criticized the television industry for failing to provide a wholesome family hour of television. Kaye and Sapolsky's findings support the contentions of these groups that the prime time hour most likely to contain young viewers features expletive-laced dialogue.

These results may indicate a growing acceptance of profanity in everyday language and in televised discourse, as well as a loosening of program standards (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). Additionally, analysis of reactions to offensive language finds that television characters are more likely to react positively to mild cursing. However, reactions to the "seven dirty words," sexual, excretory, and strong words were met equally with positive and negative reactions. This indicates that while mild words are more acceptable, mixed reactions to other categories of words suggests that stronger language may be viewed as more taboo than milder words (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005).

Research has also examined the context of offensive language on television. A content analysis by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) revealed that while expletives were spoken more frequently on situation comedies than other genres, overall more profanity was spoken in a non-humorous context. It was found that profanity spoken on a situation comedy is not always uttered for humorous effect. Conversely, coarse language spoken during a drama is not exclusively delivered with serious intent. The authors suspect that the preponderance of coarse language in a non-humorous context is perhaps more expected by the viewing audience that is culturally accustomed to hearing profanity as an expression of anger rather than a means to generate a laugh.

The kinds and amount of offensive language on television are not the only hot-button issues. As noted earlier, there is also debate over gender differences and offensive language usage. While evidence suggests that men use profanity more than women (Jay, 1992; Rieber et al., 1979; Selnow, 1985), there is also evidence that this "profanity gap" is narrowing (De Klerk, 1991; Hughes, 1998; Risch, 1987). Sapolsky and Kaye (2005) examined the issue in a 2001 content analysis of prime-time television programs. They found that men were featured more often as speakers and targets of offensive language. While women uttered profanities less often then men, they were not above cursing. In fact, 4 out of 10 expletives were initiated by women. They also found that sexual and excretory words were less likely to be spoken in women-to-men interactions than in any other type of interaction. Consistent with Jay's findings that coarse language is heard more in same-sex conversations, Sapolsky and Kaye (2005) also found that men and women tend to express stronger words to same-sex characters. And not surprisingly, there was a greater share of the "seven dirty words" spoken in inter-male interactions than in all other forms of dialogue. However, Sapolsky and Kaye did not find a gender difference in reaction to offensive language. Women were just as likely as men to have a positive, negative or neutral reaction to expletives.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Parents, legislators, policymakers, and conservative watchdog groups are concerned about the frequency of profane words heard on television and radio. Since little empirical research on the topic of offensive language on radio exists, the primary goal of this content analysis is to identify the amount and kinds of offensive language on radio programming. Morning drive-time radio (Monday-Friday, 6 – 10 a.m.) has received the bulk of criticism because of the "shock jocks" and morning "zoo" programs that have been strongly criticized for their liberal use of profanities and sexual language. This initial exploration of radio morning content asks:

Research question #1. How many and what types of offensive words are spoken during radio morning shows in the top 10 U.S. markets?

Research by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) found that the bulk of crude language spoken on television is words classified as "mild" (words such as "hell" and damn"). Therefore, based on the findings for television, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis #1: Significantly more crude language spoken on radio will be classified as mild.

Crude language is often used to discredit someone or something, to provoke confrontations, or to provide a type of catharsis for the user (Bostrom et al., 1973). It can be used to express frustration with oneself or to blow off steam. However, indecent language is also frequently directed at another person in order to cause psychological harm. A study by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) found that an overwhelming number of expletives on prime-time television were directed at another character and that less than one-quarter of the words were self-directed or directed at a third party who was not present in the scene. Therefore, the next research question examines the directionality of offensive language:

Research Question #2. What is the frequency and type of offensive words spoken *about* oneself, directly *to* another person, *about* a third party and, finally, *to* the radio audience?

Research by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) indicates that reactions to offensive language are most often neutral and rarely disapproving. Therefore, the next hypothesis states:

Hypothesis #2: Significantly more offensive language will be met with neutral or positive reactions than with negative reactions across all categories of words.

As discussed in the literature review, there is much debate about gender differences and offensive language use. According to Lakeoff (1973), women are socialized to use words that are more polite and less forceful. While a gender gap may exist when it comes to cursing, there is also evidence that this "profanity gap" is narrowing (De Klerk, 1991; Hughes, 1998; Risch, 1987). A Sapolsky and Kaye study (2005) found that while women uttered profanities less often then men, they were not above cursing. In fact, 4 out of 10 expletives were initiated by women (Sapolsky & Kaye, 2005). While women do use profane language, evidence suggests that men still use profanity more than women (Jay, 1992; Rieber et al., 1979; Selnow, 1985). Sapolsky and Kaye (2005) also found that men were featured more often as speakers and targets of offensive language. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis #3. Men, including radio personalities, guests, and callers, will be more likely than women to be speakers of offensive language.

Hypothesis #4. Men, including radio personalities, guests, and callers, will be more likely than women to be targets of offensive language.

The next two research questions address offensive language according to station format and market.

Research Question #3. Does the frequency and type of offensive words differ according to the type of radio station format (adult contemporary, talk, classic rock, etc.)?

Research Question #4. Does the frequency of offensive words differ according to the radio station market?

Prior research on television also indicates significant differences according to the hour of prime time in which offensive language is heard (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). The results indicate that more profanity is heard in the first hour of prime time than the last hour. Additionally, excretory and mild-other words were heard more in the first two hours of prime time than in the final hour (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). These findings support the contention of media watchdog groups and parents that the prime time hour most likely to have children in the audience features offensive language (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). However, it is unknown, if a study of radio programming will yield similar results. Therefore, the fifth research question is as follows:

Research Question #5: Does the frequency and type of offensive words differ across the hours of morning radio programs?

Offensive language is not always intended to be offensive. Sometimes, it is intended to be funny. Unfortunately, what is humorous to one person is offensive to another, and that's especially true with humor that is raunchy, racy, or risqué (O'Connor, 2006). Research by Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) found that while expletives were spoken more frequently on situation comedies, overall more expletives were spoken in a non-humorous context. The researchers suggest that the reason for this finding is that our culture is more accustomed to hearing profanity as an expression of anger rather than as a means of generating a laugh (Kaye & Sapolsky, 2005). The next research question will explore the context of offensive language:

Research Question #6. What is the frequency and type of offensive words spoken in a humorous and non-humorous context?

While Kaye and Sapolsky's (2005) television research found significantly more profanity in situation comedies than in all other program genres, they have also found that the supposedly banned "seven dirty words" tended to appear in reality shows. Similar to reality shows, radio programming is largely unscripted. Additionally, Kaye and Sapolsky (2001, 2004, 2005) found that despite the ban on the "seven dirty words" during the safe harbor hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., these words are still heard on broadcast television during prime time—albeit with significantly less frequency than other categories of offensive language**.** Given the finding that the seven dirty words, despite their ban, appear on primetime television, the next research question states:

Research Question #7. What is the frequency of the "seven dirty words" on morning radio programs?

Both television and radio have a history of bleeping out offensive words. In addition to bleeping, these words are also muted, cut-off, or drowned out with background noise (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2007)**.** For example, during televised sporting events, the sound is often cut, but the camera clearly shows a coach or a player mouthing a profanity (McKenzie, 2002). Similarly, on radio, listeners are allowed to hear key syllables of profanities, while the rest is bleeped out (McKenzie, 2002). Despite these efforts to "cover" the offensive word, the audience still understands the *implied* meaning. Often, these efforts at masking offensive language are reserved only for the most offensive words, such as the seven dirty words. Prior research on broadcast and cable television indicates that these words are almost always implied, not actually spoken (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2007). In light of this, the fifth hypothesis states:

Hypothesis #5. When the "seven dirty words" are spoken on morning radio programs, significantly more utterances will be implied.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Since much of the criticism leveled at the radio industry is directed at radio's morning "drive-time" (Monday-Friday, 6 am- 10am) programs, the present content analysis examines the amount and kinds of offensive language spoken on these programs. Additionally, regulation of broadcast content generally stems from the desire to protect children who may be in the audience. A 2001 Arbitron study provides further support for the selection of the 6 a.m.- 10 a.m. time period. Arbitron found that children and preteens spend a significant amount of time listening to the radio (Arbitron, 2001). In fact, for children and preteens**,** as well as adults, listenership peaks during the 7 a.m. hour (Arbitron, 2001). This study also considers whether words are spoken in a humorous or serious context, program format, market, hour of broadcast, directionality (speaking to self or others), gender of speaker and/or receiver, and reactions to profanity.

Procedure for Selection of Stations

Programs broadcast during morning drive-time (6 a.m. – 10 a.m.) on the five highest-rated radio stations**,** according to Arbitron Average Quarter Hour Ratings, offering live-streaming audio over the Internet in the top ten U.S. markets were recorded. The top 10 radio markets, at the time of this study, in order, were: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Philadelphia, Houston-Galveston, Washington, D.C., Boston, and, Detroit (Arbitron, 2005). As discussed later in the limitations section, substitutions had to be made when a top-five rated station did not offer live-streaming audio or broadcast only in Spanish. When a substitution was necessary, a station was replaced with next highest-rated English-language station offering live-streaming audio. It is important to note that in Los Angeles the rankings of some of the selected programs are lower than in the other markets because of the large number of high-ranking Spanish programs. Table 1 presents the final breakdown of station selection and rating.

It was important to focus on the highest-ranking stations in the largest markets because the morning shows broadcast on these stations reach a larger audience. In two instances, the selected radio stations featured a syndicated morning program, but the stations did not offer streaming audio. The syndicated programs were simply recorded on the same day/time from an alternate station that did offer streaming media. A syndicated program was never recorded twice on the same day. For example, the *Tom Joyner Morning Show* appeared on three of the top-rated stations in three different markets. However, it was recorded on three different days to avoid duplication of content.

Streamed radio programs were recorded using PC-based software, Replay Radio, which works much like a VCR. The user schedules days and times for recording. Once recorded to the PC hard drive, the morning programs were burned to CD. Using a random-number table, each four-hour block programs was assigned a day (Monday-Friday) for recording. A total of 200 hours of programming was recorded on randomly-selected mornings over a six-week period. Recording began on January 30, 2006 and continued until March 17, 2006. Due to technical difficulties with the streaming media, several shows had to be rerecorded if the stream gave out for more than a total of 10 minutes throughout the four-hour broadcast (the show was rerecorded on an alternate day). The final sample consisted of 50 programs (primary sampling unit, totaling 200 hours). While the primary sampling unit equals 50 programs, the reader should be aware that given the detailed objectives of this study, the analyses examine verbal incidents of which some are independent while others are correlated and repeated. This analysis strategy can increase

Type 1 error (Hays, 1973). In addition, this study used multiple planned comparisons (C) which can also result in increased Type 1 error (Kirk, 1968). Once again, in an attempt to reduce Type 1 error probability coefficients were adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C) (Glass and Hopkins, 1996).

Table 1: Station Ranking by Market

MARKET	STATION	RANK
New Work	WLTW-FM WHTZ-FM WINS-AM WAXQ-FM WBLS-FM	#1 #6 #7 #8 #9
Los Angeles	KISS-FM KFI-AM KOST-FM KHHT-FM KLSY-FM	#1 #6 #8 #12 #16
Chicago	WGN-AM WGCI-FM WNUA-FM WBBM-AM WUSN-FM	#1 #2 #3 #4 #5
San Francisco	KGO-FM KOIT-FM KMEL-FM KYLD-FM KCBS-AM	#1 #2 #3 #4 #5
Dallas	KPLX-FM KHKS-FM WBAP-AM KDGE-FM KLTY-FM	#3 #4 #6 #9 #11
Philadelphia	KYW-AM WXTU-FM WRNB-FM WRDW-FM WMMR-FM	#1 #7 #9 #10 #11
Houston	KMJQ-FM KODA-FM KRBE-FM KTRH-AM KTBZ-FM	#1 #2 #5 #8 #9
Washington, D.C.	WMMJ-FM WGMS-FM WHUR-FM WMZQ-FM WWDC-FM	#2 #3 #4 #6 #7
Boston	WBZ-AM WEEI-AM WJMN-FM WXKS-FM WMJX-FM	#1 #2 #3 #4 #5
Detroit	WJR-AM WWJ-AM WJLB-FM WKQI-FM WMXD-FM	#1 #2 #3 #4 #5

Source: Arbitron (2005)

Coding Categories

The coding categories were developed from Kaye and Sapolsky's research of offensive language on television (2001, 2004, 2005). Offensive words were classified into one of five categories: the "seven dirty words," sexual words, excretory words, strong-other words and mild-other words. The "seven dirty words" (shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker, and tits) were grouped into a single category because the FCC has identified these words as being too indecent to utter on broadcast radio (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2001, 2004, 2005). By placing these words in a single category**,** comparisons can be made between words that are legally banned from the airwaves and profanities that are considered offensive by the general public (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2001, 2004, 2005).

The sexual words category consists of those terms that describe sexual body parts (e.g., "vagina," "boobs," "penis"), or sexual behavior (e.g., "screw"). Excretory words were defined as those that made direct and literal references to human waste products and processes (e.g., "poop," "asshole"). All remaining words were coded either as mild**-**others or strong**-**others. The book *Cursing in America* (Jay, 1992) was consulted to determine the level of tabooness of certain words for classification. Examples of mild-other words include: "hell" and "damn." "Christ," "Jesus," and "God" are also included as mild words but only if spoken in vain. The simple use of these words did not result in automatic coding of the terms. If the word was said in reverence, it was not classified as offensive. However, if, for example, a morning radio personality angrily yelled "for God's sake," it would be coded as mildly offensive. Strong-other words include "bastard," "bitch," and "bullshit," and others that evoke strong emotions and offense (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005).

The context of offensive words was characterized according to presence of humor, directionality, the speaker's role and the reactions of recipients upon hearing offensive words. Programs were classified by format according to the station formats identified by Arbitron. A profanity was coded as humorous if it appeared that the speaker's intention was to be funny. All other incidents were coded as non-humorous. The directionality of offensive language was also recorded. Cursing could be self-directed ("I'm such a bitch")**,** directed at another ("You're a bitch"), directed at a third party ("She's a real bitch") or directed at the radio audience. The centrality of speakers of offensive language was classified as main host, co-host, supporting DJ/personality, guest, caller, or recorded material (playing a clip from a movie or television show). Finally, reactions to the use of offensive language were recorded. Reactions were coded as positive, negative, neutral (or no response), and mixed. A mixed reaction was coded if a comment was heard by two or more people who react differently to the crudity.

Graduate students worked independently classifying and recording all incidents of offensive language. To catch the offensive words and phrases, coders were trained to listen carefully to the programs. A random selection of 5 programs (10% of all programs) representing 20 hours (10% of all program hours) was used to measure intercoder reliability. Using SPSS, Krippendorff's alpha was used in this analysis (Hayes, 2005). Variables with sufficient intercoder agreement are as follows: .77 for offensive words, .93 for word form—verbal versus implied, .81 for speaker's role, .63 for speaker's gender, and .96 for time of incident. However, five of the 10 variables that required intercoder reliability did not have sufficient intercoder reliability for use in the data analysis, including context, directionality, reaction to profanity, receiver's role, and gender of receiver. The possible reasons for this will be explored in the discussion section.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The analysis of 200 hours (50 blocks of four hours each in the top 10 U.S. markets) of morning radio yielded 20 programs or 80 hours with no instances of offensive language. Therefore, data analysis **focuses on** the remaining 30 programs or 120 hours. Research question one examines the quantity and types of offensive language on morning radio. Overall, there were 872 instances of offensive language or 4.36 words per hour. Of these, 776 or 86.3% are overt; the remainder are implied (bleeping out or cutting off of dirty words). Table 2 presents the top-20 offensive words heard most often on morning radio.

Table 2: Top-20 Offensive Words

Word	Number of Incidents	Category
Christ/Jesus/God	165	Mild Others
Ass	119	Excretory
Damn	73	Mild Others
Bitch	55	Strong Others
Hell	49	Mild Others
Fuck	47	Seven Dirty Words
Crappy (slang)	34	Mild Others
Butt	31	Excretory
Boobs, hooters, knockers, etc.	30	Sexual
Suck	26	Sexual
Screw	26	Sexual
Nipples	20	Sexual
Pissed Off	17	Mild Others
Bastard	14	Strong Others
Shit	13	Seven Dirty Words
Whore	12	Mild Others
Fricking (as a euphemism for Fuck)	12	Strong Others
Pee	11	Excretory
Balls/Nuts	10	Sexual
Bone, Boner	9	Sexual

Hypothesis #1 states that significantly more language spoken on radio will be classified as mild. The number of incidents of offensive language differed significantly across the five categories ($X^2 = 282.21$ ($df = 4$), $p < .05$). Data analysis revealed that mild-other words accounted for the largest proportion of offensive language (40.9 %). Table 3 shows that mild-other words differed significantly from all other categories of offensive language. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The next most common types of offensive language are excretory (21.3%) and sexual (17.4%). While sexual and excretory language occurred significantly less often than mild other words, sexual excretory language occurred significantly more often than strong other words and the seven dirty words.

Table 3: Occurrence of Offensive Language by Category

Category of Offensive Language	Occurrence of Offensive Language	Per-Program Rate
Seven Dirty Words	73_a	1.46
Strong Others	104_a	2.08
Sexual	152_b	3.04
Excretory	186_b	3.72
Mild Others	357_c	7.14
Total	872	17.44
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=10).		

The second research question concerns the directionality of offensive words—specifically words spoken about oneself, directly to another person, about a third party, and to the radio audience. The second hypothesis examines whether the recipient of coarse words (e.g. a caller or an in-studio guest or personality) responds with positive, negative, or neutral reactions to the speaker's use of offensive language. However, Research Question #2 and Hypotheses #2 cannot be addressed due to insufficient intercoder reliability for both the directionality and reaction variables. Possible explanations for the low reliabilities will be explored in the discussion section.

The third hypothesis predicts that men will be more likely than women to be the speakers of crude language. Analysis reveals that men uttered significantly more cuss words (n=684) than women (n=187) ($X^2 = 283.59$ (*df* =1), *p*<.05). However, as evident in Table 4, this difference should be considered with caution as there were significantly more male radio personalities in the sampled programs ($X^2 = 15.80$ (*df* =1), *p*<.05).

Table 4: Sex of Radio Personalities

Sex	Number of Radio Personalities	Number of Offensive Words Spoken by Radio Personalities[1]	Per-Program Rate
Female	37_a	66_a	1.2
Male	80_b	517_b	11.44
Total	117	583	11.66
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test.			
[1]Does not include guests or individuals calling into a program.			

While there were more words spoken by more male personalities, guests, and callers, the general pattern of their offensive language use, presented in Table 4a, is similar. Both men ($X^2 = 189.348$ (*df* =4), *p*<.05) and women ($X^2 = 102.866$ (*df* =4), *p*<.05) used significantly more mild language than any other category of crude words.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that men were also more likely to be the target of offensive language. However, data analysis could not be performed because of insufficient inter-coder reliability for the receiver of offensive language variable.

The third research question examines the frequency of offensive words spoken according to the type of radio station format. Offensive language was used in the majority of radio station formats. The only formats free of such language are Classical, Contemporary Christian, Classic Rock, Smooth Jazz, and Soft Adult Contemporary. However, it is important to note that each of these offensive language-free formats only appeared once in the sample. While offensive language was heard on 12 different station formats, the frequency of usage varied greatly. The preponderance of crudities was found on Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio (n=260), Alternative (n=196), Pop Contemporary Hit Radio (n=175), and Album-Oriented Rock (n=111). Offensive language was spoken the least on Adult Contemporary (n=1), Rhythmic Oldies (n=2), and Country radio (n=5). These formats could not be used in data analyses because there were too few instances for statistical comparisons. In examining overall offensive language use and format, Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio had significantly more occurrences of offensive language ($X^2 = 720.521$ (*df* =8), $p<.05$) than the other station formats. However, when the number of programs represented by each format is considered, Album-Oriented Rock features significantly more offensive language than any other format ($X^2 = 201.043$ (*df* =7), $p<.05$). Also**,** there is no significant difference between Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio and the Alternative format. Table 5 indicates where the formats differ significantly in the amount of offensive language.

Table 4a: Sex of Speaker and Offensive Language

Category	Women	PPR[1]	Men	PPR[1]	Total[2]
Strong-Others	14_{a}	.28	89_{ab}	1.78	103
Seven Dirty Words	15_{ab}	.3	58_{a}	1.16	73
Sexual	32_{bc}	.64	120_{bc}	2.4	152
Excretory	36_{c}	.72	150_{c}	3	186
Mild-Others	90_{d}	1.8	267_{d}	5.34	357
Total	187	3.74	684	13.68	871

NOTE: In the vertical comparisons, if two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by $p<.05$ by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=10).

[1] PPR = Per-Program Rate

[2] One individual was coded as "unknown" for the sex variable.

To further explore RQ#3, the various formats were collapsed into four broader programming categories: Urban, News/Talk/Sports, Rock, and Popular. The categories were assigned based on the station format definitions provided by *Radio World* (Radioworld.com, 2007). These definitions detail similarities among station formats enabling the researcher to group similar formats together. For example, Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio is similar to Pop Contemporary Hit Radio. Therefore, they are subsumed under the category of "Popular" format. Country and Adult Contemporary are not similar to other formats and, therefore, could not be absorbed into a broader programming category. Since the occurrence of offensive language on Country and Adult Contemporary formats is too small for statistical analysis, they are excluded. As seen in Table 6, Chi-square analysis reveals significant differences among the formats ($X^2 = 479.450$ ($df = 3$), $p<.05$). Significantly more offensive language was uttered on the Popular and Rock formats than on the Urban and News/Talk/Information formats.

Table 5: Frequency of Offensive Language by Format

Station Format	Hours of Programming	Number of Programs	Incidents of Offensive Language	Per-Program Rate
Classical	4	1	0	0
Contemporary Christian	4	1	0	0
Classic Rock	4	1	0	0
Smooth Jazz	4	1	0	0
Soft Adult Contemporary	4	1	0	0
Adult Contemporary	16	4	1	.25
Rhythmic Oldies	4	1	2	2
Country Radio	16	4	5	1.25
News/Talk Information	48	12	14_a	1.17
Urban Contemporary	12	3	23_a	11.5_{ab}
All Sports	4	1	25_a	25_b
Urban Adult Contemporary	20	5	29_a	5.8_a
Talk/Personality	4	1	31_a	31_b
Album-Oriented Rock	4	1	111_b	111_d
Pop Contemporary Hits	24	6	175_c	29.2_b
Alternative	12	3	196_{cd}	65.33_c
Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio	16	4	260_d	65_c
Total	200	50	872	17.44
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by $p<.05$ by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=36).				

Additionally, Popular formats had significantly more instances of offensive language than did Rock. However, the Popular format (Rhythmic Contemporary Hit and Pop Contemporary Hit) included 10 programs while the Rock format (Album-Oriented Rock and Alternative) consisted of just four programs. When this difference is accounted for, there is no significant difference between offensive language spoken on Popular formats at a rate of 43.5 incidents per program and offensive language spoken on Rock formats at 76.75 incidents per program. Table 6 displays the findings.

Table 6: Collapsed Formats and Frequency of Offensive Language

Format	Hours of Programming	Number of Programs	Incidents of Offensive Language	Per-Program Rate
Urban	32	8	54_a	6.75_a
News/Talk/Sports	56	14	70_a	5_a
Rock	16	4	307_b	76.75_b
Popular	40	10	435_c	43.5_b
Total	144	36	866	24.05

NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=6)

Table 6a: Frequency of Category of Offensive Language Within Each Format

Category	Urban	News/Talk/ Sports	Rock	Popular
Seven Dirty	--	--	19_a	50_a
Strong Others	--	--	44_b	54_a
Sexual	--	20_a	60_b	68_a
Excretory	22_a	17_a	70_b	77_a
Mild Others	25_a	28_a	114_c	186_b
Total Spoken	47	65	307	435

NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts (horizontal comparisons), they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test.

The above analyses examine significant differences across the five categories of offensive language within each format. It is also important to examine whether the categories of language differed significantly according to format. Therefore, additional analyses were conducted to see if a particular category of language occurred more often in a particular format (refer to Table 6b). For example, analysis was done to see if there was a significant difference in the number of sexual words used in each format. Cells with too few instances were excluded. Analysis revealed that significantly more instances of the seven dirty words occurred in the Popular format ($X^2 = 13.93$ (*df* =1), *p*<.05) than in the Rock format. However, no significant difference was found in the use of strong words or sexual words between the Rock and Popular formats. As expected, because of the higher frequency of overall crude language on the Rock and Popular formats, significantly more instances of all categories of offensive language were heard in these formats compared to the Urban and News/Talk/Sports formats. While there was no significant difference between the Rock and Popular formats use of excretory words, the Popular format ($X^2 = 202.25$ (*df* =3), *p*<.05) contained significantly more mild words than the Rock format. However, as stated earlier, the Popular format contained more programs than the Rock format. After calculating the per-program rate of offensive language, there is no longer a significant difference between any category of offensive language spoken on Popular formats and offensive language spoken on Rock formats. Table 6b displays the findings.

Table 6b: Frequency of Category of Offensive Language by Format

Category	**Urban (8 Programs)**		**News/Talk/Sport (14 Programs)**		**Rock (4 Programs)**		**Popular (10 Programs)**		**Total**
Breakdown	Incidents	IPP[1]	Incidents	IPP	Incidents	IPP	Incidents	IPP	
Seven Dirty	--	--	--	--	19_a	4.75_a	50_b	5_a	69
Strong Others	--	--	--	--	44_a	11_a	54_a	5.4_a	98
Sexual	--	--	20_a	1.43	60_b	15_a	68_b	6.8_a	148
Excretory	22_a	2.75	17_a	1.21	70_b	17.5_a	77_b	7.7_a	186
Mild Others	25_a	3.13	28_a	2	114_b	28.5_a	186_c	18.6_a	353
Total	47	5.88	57	4.07	307	76.75	435	43.5	854

NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts (horizontal comparisons), they differ by *p<.05* by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons: Excretory and Mild (C=6).

[1] IPP = Incidents Per Programs

Another area of exploration, addressed in Research Question 4, is whether the frequency of offensive words differs according to the radio station market. Philadelphia (n=172) and Dallas (n=133) had the most instances of offensive language. However, there is no significant difference among instances of crude language in Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco, or Boston. Chicago, which had the least amount of offensive language, was excluded from data analysis because it had just three instances.

To examine regional differences, the markets were collapsed into regions, according to parameters defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (Census.gov, 2006). Chi-square analysis revealed a significant difference across regions ($X^2 = 267.61$ (*df* =3), *p*<.05). Offensive language occurred significantly more often on radio stations located in the Northeast than any other region. Although overall the Northeast had significantly more instances of offensive language than the other markets, as can be seen in Table 7b, the category of language spoken in the Northeast was not significantly different from any of the categories of language spoken in the South, which was ranked second highest for offensive language. In fact for the strongest language—the seven dirty words—there were no significant differences among the regions. There was also no significant difference in the utterances of strong-other language in the West, South, and Northeast. With the exception of excretory language—where there was no significant difference between the Midwest and the West—the Midwest featured the least amount of all categories of offensive language. Table 7b shows the type of offensive language spoken in each region.

Investigation of Research Question 5 demonstrated that, unlike the results of offensive language research on television, there is no significant difference in the frequency of offensive language across the hours of morning radio programs. Table 8 displays the amount of offensive language spoken during each hour.

While there is no statistical difference in the total use of offensive language according to the hour of the morning, there are differences among the categories of offensive language within each hour (see Table 8a). During the first three hours, mild-others were uttered significantly more often than any other category of offensive language. However, in the fourth hour, there is no statistical difference among mild-others, excretory and sexual words.

Table 7: Frequency of Offensive Language in each Market

Market	Number of Incidents	Per-Program Rate
Chicago	3	.6
Detroit	40_{a}	8
Los Angeles	57_{ab}	11.4
Houston-Galveston	59_{ab}	11.8
New York	73_{ab}	14.6
Washington D.C.	88_{bc}	17.6
Boston	123_{cd}	24.6
San Francisco	124_{cd}	24.8
Dallas-Ft. Worth	133_{d}	26.6
Philadelphia	172_{d}	34.4
Total	872	17.44
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=36)		

Table 7a: Frequency of Offensive Language in each Region

Region	Number of Markets	Number of Programs in Region	Number of Incidents	Per-Program Rate
Midwest	2	10	43_{a}	4.3
West	2	10	181_{b}	18.1
South	3	15	280_{c}	18.67
Northeast	3	15	368_{d}	24.5
Total	10	50	872	17.44
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=6)				

Table 7b: Frequency of Category of Offensive Language in each Region

Category	Midwest	West	South	Northeast	Total
Seven Dirty	1	33_{a}	15_{a}	24_{a}	73
Strong Others	7_{a}	24_{b}	37_{b}	36_{b}	104
Sexual	3	32_{a}	47_{ab}	70_{b}	152
Excretory	16_{a}	29_{a}	62_{b}	79_{b}	186
Mild Others	16_{a}	63_{b}	119_{c}	159_{c}	357
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts, they differ by *p*<.05 by the Chi-square test.					

Table 8: Frequency and Hour of Offensive Language Use

Hour	Occurrence of Offensive Language	Rate per Program
6am-7am	221_a	4.42
7am-8am	234_a	4.68
8am-9am	230_a	4.6
9am-10am	187_a	3.74
Total	872	17.44

NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts (vertical comparisons), they differ by $p<.05$ by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=6)

Table 8a: Frequency of Category in each Hour

Category	1st Hour	2nd Hour	3rd Hour	4th Hour
Seven Dirty	21_a	16_a	22_a	14_a
Sexual	23_a	44_{bc}	42_a	43_{bc}
Strong-Others	35_{ab}	24_{ab}	24_a	21_{ab}
Excretory	50_b	53_c	38_a	45_c
Mild-Others	92_c	97_d	104_b	64_c
Total	221	234	230	187

NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts (vertical comparisons), they differ by $p<.05$ by the Chi-square test. Probability coefficients adjusted (Bonferroni) for multiple comparisons (C=10)

The sixth research question concerns the frequency and type of offensive words spoken in a humorous and non-humorous context. However, due to insufficient intercoder reliability on the context variable, this question cannot be answered. Possible explanations for low reliability will be addressed in the discussion section.

The seventh and final research question asks how frequently each of the "seven dirty words" was spoken on radio morning programs. As noted earlier, the least common form of offensive language is the seven dirty words (n=73). Nearly all (63 or 86.3%) were implied. For example, several morning programs featured a prank-phone call segment where a radio personality would purposefully call and agitate an unsuspecting person. When the guest—either out of anger or frustration—would begin to utter a word like *fuck* the radio station would bleep the remainder of the word. Despite the bleeping, the audience could easily discern the guest's intended profanity. Three of the infamous seven dirty words were never spoken or implied on morning radio—piss, cocksucker, and cunt. The most commonly used word is fuck (64.4%).

As Table 9 shows, there is a significant difference between the implied use (n=62) of the seven dirty words on radio morning programs and actual usage (n=11) ($X^2 = 35.63$ (*df* =1), $p<.05$).

Table 9: Occurrence of Verbal vs. Implied Usage of the Seven Dirty Words

Word	**Verbal (Actual)**	**Verbal (Implied)**	**Total**
Fuck	2	45	47
Motherfucker	0	5	5
Shit	2	11	13
Tits	7	1	8
Piss	0	0	0
Cocksucker	0	0	0
Cunt	0	0	0
Total	11_a	62_b	73
NOTE: If two frequencies do not share the same letter in the subscripts (horizontal comparisons), they differ by *p<.05* by the Chi-square test.			

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study examines the use of offensive language on morning drive-time radio programs. Specifically, the content analysis explores the amount and kind of crude language spoken on-air. The strength and frequency of profane language on morning drive-time radio programs were analyzed within category of offensive language, gender of speaker, radio station format, market, hour of radio program, and by use of the “seven dirty words.”

Overall, there were 872 instances of offensive language on radio-morning programs aired on 45 radio stations in the top 10 U.S. markets (five stations did not air any instances of coarse language). Curse words and phrases were heard once nearly every 14 minutes. Consistent with past research on offensive language on television, the majority of words were classified as mild (e.g. hell, damn). In fact, mild words accounted for 45% of all the crude words spoken. Frequent exposure to offensive language may contribute to the increasing use of crude language, especially by younger listeners who are a part of the early-morning radio audience. In fact, children and preteen use of radio peaks during the 7 a.m. hour (Arbitron, 2001).

This study hypothesized that men will use more offensive language than women. In fact, men uttered 76% of offensive language found in this study. This is consistent with prior offensive language research which found that men swear more than women (Sapolsky & Kaye, 2005; De Klerk, 1991; Foote & Woodward, 1973; Jay, 1992; Rieber, Wiedemann, & D’Amato, 1979; Selnow, 1985). However, this finding should not be used to make sweeping generalizations about gender and use of offensive language on radio because of the large discrepancy in the number of men versus women featured on the radio programs. Men outnumber women nearly three to one.

Five radio station formats did not feature any offensive language (Classic Rock, Soft Adult Contemporary, Smooth Jazz, Contemporary Christian, and Classical). However, each of these formats was only represented once in the study. Therefore, the findings may be different if additional programs in these formats are analyzed.

Rhythmic Contemporary Hit radio presented more crude language than other radio station formats. It accounted for nearly 30% of all the offensive language heard during the 6 a.m.-10 a.m. time period yet represents only 8% of the programs sampled. The Rhythmic Contemporary Hit format falls within the Popular format. The preponderance of offensive language found in this format may be due to its target audience, which is persons 15-30 years old. The three formats with the highest incidence of offensive language (Rhythmic Contemporary Hit, Pop Contemporary Hit, and Alternative) are all geared towards a younger audience (RadioWorld.com, 2007). While these formats represent only 26% of the programs sampled, they account for nearly 73% of all the offensive language spoken in the study. However, it is important to point out that when the number of programs represented by each format is considered, Album-Oriented Rock features the most offensive language—111 instances per program compared to Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio with just 65 instances. While the Rhythmic Contemporary Hit, Pop Contemporary Hit, and Alternative formats feature the most instances of offensive language, the per-program rate of these formats is significantly less than the per-program rate of Album-Oriented Rock.

When the formats were combined, the Popular format, followed by the Rock format, featured the most offensive language. However, the study sample contains 40 hours of Popular format programs and 16 hours of Rock format programs. Consequently, almost 11 words per hour were uttered in Popular format radio compared to just over 19 words per hour in Rock format programs. When the difference in number of programs is considered, there is no statistical difference between the Popular and Rock formats.

The finding that the bulk of crude language is uttered on formats targeting a young audience may be particularly troubling to parents and conservative groups who fear that repeated exposure to such language, especially for children, leads to imitation, desensitization, and an increasingly crude culture. However, it is also possible that the only real danger of offensive language is that, with repeated usage, it loses its power to offend (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005). Because the preponderance of offensive language spoken on the radio is classified as mild, this may indicate that those who utter words such as hell and damn don't view them as offensive. Such words are no longer considered taboo and have become an acceptable part of everyday language.

The bulk of crude language was spoken in the Philadelphia and Dallas markets. Top-rated Philadelphia radio stations contributed nearly 20% of total offensive language use and Dallas stations contributed about 15%. While these markets contributed the largest percentages of offensive language, there was no statistical difference between Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco, and Boston. Chicago stations aired the least amount of offensive language—contributing only 0.3%. Because the instances of offensive language vary greatly by radio station format and formats can vary greatly among the top-rated stations in each market, the markets were collapsed into U.S. regions for a broader picture of offensive language use across the country. The regions (Midwest, West, South, Northeast) differed significantly from each another in the amount of crude language spoken in morning shows. The Midwest radio stations aired the least amount of offensive language. The Northeast radio stations accounted for the most offensive language. When discussing differences in offensive language use and market, it is important to remember that what is "offensive" in one community may not be "offensive" in another. While Northeast radio may have had more instances of offensive language than Midwest radio, the use of crude language may actually have offended people less in the Northeast audience. Because little research exists on regional differences in reaction to profanity, this may be an area for future research.

While there was significantly more cursing on the radio stations in the Northeast, the types of words (seven dirty words, strong-others, sexual, excretory, and mild-others) spoken in the Northeast were not significantly different from the types of words uttered on radio stations in the South. In fact there was no significant difference in the use of the seven dirty words, which are considered the strongest forms of language, in any of the regions. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the use of strong-language (e.g. words such as bastard, bitch, jackass) in the West, South, and Northeast. Although the Northeast had the highest level of offensive language, the language uttered is not stronger (e.g. using the seven dirty words or strong-other words more frequently) than the language on the radio in the West or the South.

Prior research on the level of offensive language on television has found that the amount of crude language varies by hour of prime time (Kaye and Sapolsky, 2005; 2004). However, no significant difference was found for the amount of offensive language heard between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. (the four-hour morning "drive" period). Concerns exist over the impact of offensive language on children who may be in the audience. This concern may be warranted because children's radio listenership peaks during the 7 a.m. hour, which is part of the morning "drive" period.

While the finding that offensive language on radio does not differ by hour is different from the findings of television research, it is also logical. Television consists of various programs—often of differing genres. However, the 6 a.m.-10 a.m. time period features a single radio show with the same on-air radio personalities. There is little reason to expect that one hour would be cruder than the next. In fact, consistency across the time block implies that the radio personalities use these words as part of their everyday vernacular and, probably, do so without thinking. In shows containing bad language, cursing is consistent from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. While there was no significant difference in the overall amount of offensive language during the four hours of programming, there are slight differences in the type of language spoken. During the first three hours significantly more mild language is used than any other category of language. However, the fourth hour contains slightly less offensive language than the first three hours. This drop, while not significant, may explain why in the fourth hour there is not a significant difference among mild-others, excretory, and sexual language.

Despite the federal ban on the "seven dirty words" these words were spoken on radio-morning programs. Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) found that television reality shows tended to have more instances of offensive language than other program genres. This may be **because of** the unscripted nature of reality programming. Likewise, morning radio is relatively unscripted. Therefore, it is not surprising that morning radio shows contained the supposedly banned seven dirty words. However, the vast majority of these instances were implied—meaning they were bleeped out or cut off. While the seven dirty words are a part of the everyday language of radio, radio broadcasters recognize the risk associated with airing these banned words and, therefore, attempt to bleep or cut them off.

Analysis of the directionality of offensive words—words spoken about oneself, directly to another person, about a third party, and to the radio audience—could not be completed due to insufficient intercoder reliability. A plausible reason for the low reliability is the nature of content analyzing a radio program versus a television program. Unlike television, radio offers no visual component. Coders cannot see radio personalities while they are speaking. The programs selected for analysis aired in 10 cities across the U.S. Coders had no familiarity with the programs or radio personalities prior to the study. Morning radio frequently features numerous personalities as part of the morning "zoo" shows. With several people speaking, with no prior knowledge of the personalities or show, and with no visual element to aid coders, it was problematic to determine who was speaking to whom.

This study also hypothesized that men would be the targets of offensive language more often than women. However, data analysis could not be executed on this variable because of low intercoder reliability. Coders had trouble discerning directionality—to whom the speaker was directing the offensive words. Therefore, the coders were unable to discern the gender of the target. The reaction variable, whether people responded positively, negatively, or neutrally to offensive language, also had low intercoder reliability for data analysis. Due to the difficulty of determining the directionality of offensive language, coders, therefore, were also unable to determine reactions to crude language. Relying solely on audio made determining such reactions extremely difficult to do. Coders could only evaluate reaction by verbal response—if there even was a verbal response. Unlike television, coders could not use nonverbal cues to help them gage the receiver's reaction to the language.

Context is another factor considered in the use of offensive language. The intention of profanity is not always to insult an individual. Sometimes, the intent is to be humorous. However, context, operationalized in this study as a speaker's intent to be humorous or non-humorous, could not be examined in this study due to low intercoder reliability. On the surface, determining intent does not appear daunting because audiences are more familiar with their own local morning programs. The programs become almost formulaic and audiences come to expect or anticipate the type of jokes local radio personalities make and the intent behind them. It is easy to laugh along with familiar morning radio programs, but deciphering humor in a show that is unfamiliar is difficult. Since coders were exposed only once to each show—located in 10 different markets throughout the U.S.—coders had no prior knowledge of the programs or whether the radio personalities typically intended comments to be humorous or serious.

Relying solely on auditory communication made identifying context difficult for the coders. With visual media, coders can use facial expressions, gestures, and posture to help discern meaning. However, this is impossible to do with radio. Additionally, television programs are often identified by genre such as comedy versus drama. This identification alone can provide insight into context. Also, television comedies will often feature laugh tracks which can also aid in the identification of context. Radio does not provide genre identification or a laugh track.

Limitations

Future researchers should consider alternative data analysis designs that account for correlated and repeated measures. This strategy will help minimized Type 1 and Type 2 errors. Researchers should continue to use appropriate adjustments for both planned and *post hoc* comparisons.

While a number of important variables were explored in this study, additional research should examine variables such as directionality, context, and target of offensive language, which had low intercoder reliability in this study. Additionally, this study used a male and a female coder. Perhaps some of the coding difficulties, particularly the context variable, were due to gender differences. Although this study examined the number of men and women radio personalities who used offensive language, future studies should examine the number of men and women guests and callers who use offensive language. This studied recorded the sex of guests and callers who cursed. However, this resulted in knowing the total number of cuss words spoken by each sex, but not the number of men and women who cursed. Since the intercoder reliability difficulties can largely be attributed to the lack of visual cues to aid in coding, perhaps, prior to beginning the study, researchers should consider having coders listen to broadcasts of the sampled programs that will not be used in the study. This may help familiarize coders with the radio personalities featured on each program; thereby, making it easier to recognize who is speaking to whom when coding the broadcasts.

Additionally, this study was limited by the availability of live-streaming audio. Since not every radio station offers streaming audio over the Internet, higher-ranking shows had to be replaced with lower-ranking shows. Since the top 10 markets are located throughout the U.S., researchers are dependent on streaming audio to record radio programming in each city. In this study, many Urban stations had to be replaced with lower-ranking stations because they did not offer streaming media. This study featured eight Urban programs with a rate of 6.75 incidents per program. However, if more Urban stations had offered live-streaming audio the number of Urban programs in the study would have increased and the per-program rate may have changed. As technology improves and streaming media becomes the staple, researchers will be able to listen to and record the highest-ranking shows in each market. However, future researcher may also want to consider selecting middle tier or small markets instead of the highest-ranking stations for analysis. This would allow researchers to make comparisons by market size and to investigate whether these smaller markets are flying under the radar of the FCC or are "cleaner" than the largest markets.

Future research should also examine Spanish-language radio programming. The coders in this study spoke only English. Therefore, Spanish-language programming was excluded from the study. The exclusion does not mean that Spanish-language radio is free of indecent content. In fact, shock jocks are not unique to English-language radio. Spanish stations across the country are flooded with shock jocks who push the envelope of off-color humor (Jamgerchinov, 2005). However, indecency on Spanish-language radio has developed mostly under the radar of mainstream moral monitors and the FCC (Guza, 2004). Critics claim that it is because the FCC is not equipped to deal with the language barrier and cultural differences (Guza, 2004). Also, recent immigrants are not as likely to file government complaints which are necessary to initiate an FCC investigation (Guza, 2004). While future studies should include bi-lingual coders, studying Spanish radio stations will present new challenges as well. The Spanish language is as diverse as the 300 million people who speak it, and there is an infinite supply of double-edged words (Jamgerchinov, 2005). A word can mean one thing to a person from Cuba and mean something entirely different to a person from Columbia. The ambiguity of Spanish words often makes it difficult to translate indecencies and profanities into English (Jamgerchinov, 2005). Offensive content—especially that couched in slang and double-entendres—is often lost in translation (Guza, 2004).

It is also important to note that Spanish-language radio continues to grow. It frequently tops the ratings in such cities as Dallas, New York, and Los Angeles (Soto, 2005). The Latin population is extremely important in radio. Radio reaches more than 95% of all Hispanic-Americans 12 years of age and older each week (Arbitron, 2006) and Hispanics listen to the radio an average of 3.5 more hours per day than the general market (Soto, 2005). Therefore, while studying Spanish radio will present new challenges, Spanish radio is an important segment of the broadcast industry that needs to be examined.

Controversy over content exists today in every media distribution system (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). While commercial radio, and to a lesser extent commercial television, get the bulk of listener and viewer complaints and the attention of the FCC, cable, satellite, the Internet, and noncommercial or public radio are also targets of concern (Hilliard and Keith, 2003). Just as offensive language research has compared broadcast television and cable television, future content analyses may also want to compare traditional broadcast radio with satellite radio or Internet radio stations. Researchers may also want to conduct research to learn how crude language on radio morning programs compares to different time periods such as mid-day (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) or afternoon-drive time (3 p.m.-7 p.m.).

APPENDIX A

Table 10: Study Sample

Market	Station	Format	Show
New York	WLTW-FM	Adult Contemporary	Bill Buchner (5AM- 9AM)
New York	WHTZ-FM	Pop Cont. Hit	Z Morning Zoo
New York	WINS-AM	All News	
New York	WAXQ-FM	Classic Rock	Jim Kerr Mornings
New York	WBLS-FM	Urban Contemporary	Steve Harvey
Los Angeles	KIIS-FM	Pop Cont. Hits	On-Air with Ryan Seacrest
Los Angeles	KFI-AM	News Talk Info.	Bill Handel
Los Angeles	KOST-FM	Adult Contemporary	Mark & Kim
Los Angeles	KHHT-FM	Rhythmic Oldies	Jamz Session
Los Angeles	KLSX-FM	Talk/Personality	Adam Carolla
Chicago	WGN-AM	News Talk Info.	The Spike O'Dell Radio
Chicago	WGCI-FM	Urban Contemporary	Crazy Howard McGee
Chicago	WNUA-FM	New AC/Smooth Jazz	Ramsey Lewis
Chicago	WBBM-AM	All News	Morning Drive for CBS
Chicago	WUSN-FM	Country	Big John and Ray)
San Francisco	KGO-AM	News Talk Info.	The Morning News
San Francisco	KOIT-FM	Soft Adult Cont.	Jack Kulp, Sherry Brown, Lisa Daley
San Francisco	KMEL-FM	Rhythmic Cont. Hits	Chuy Gomez
San Francisco	KYLD-FM	Rhythmic Cont. Hits	Strawberry in the Morning
San Francisco	KCBS-AM	All News	
Dallas-Ft. Worth	KPLX-FM	Country	Wake up with the Wolf Show
Dallas-Ft. Worth	KHKS-FM	Pop Cont. Hits	KiddKraddick in the Morning
Dallas-Ft. Worth	WBAP-AM	News Talk Info.	The WBAP Morning News
Dallas-Ft. Worth	KDGE-FM	Alternative	Morning Edge
Dallas-Ft. Worth	KLTY-FM	Contemporary Christian	Family Friendly Morning Show
Philadelphia	KYW-AM	All News	Ed Abrams
Philadelphia	WXTU-FM	Country	Evans and Andie
Philadelphia	WRNB-FM	Urban Adult Cont.	Tom Joyner
Philadelphia	WRDW-FM	Rhythmic Cont. Hits	Big Momma and the Wild Bunch
Philadelphia	WMMR-FM	Album-Oriented Rock	Preston and Steve
Houston-Galveston	KMJQ-FM	Urban Adult Cont.	Tom Joyner
Houston-Galveston	KODA-FM	Adult Contemporary	Dana and Marc
Houston-Galveston	KRBE-FM	Pop Cont. Hit	Atom and Maria
Houston-Galveston	KTRH-AM	News Talk Info.	Lana Hughes and J.P. Pritchard
Houston-Galveston	KTBZ-FM	Alternative	The Rod Ryan Show
Washington DC	WMMJ-FM	Urban Adult Cont.	Tom Joyner
Washington DC	WGMS-FM	Classical	Mornings with James Bartel
Washington DC	WHUR-FM	Urban Adult Cont.	
Washington DC	WMZQ-FM	Country	Ben and Brian
Washington DC	WWDC-FM	Alternative	Elliot in the Morning
Boston	WBZ-AM	News Talk Info.	
Boston	WEEI-AM	All Sports	Dennis and Callahan
Boston	WJMN-FM	Rhythmic Cont. Hits	Ramiro and Pebbles
Boston	WXKS-FM	Pop Cont. Hit	Matty in the Morning
Boston	WMJX-FM	Adult Contemporary	Morning Magic
Detroit	WJR-AM	News Talk Info	Paul W. Smith
Detroit	WWJ-AM	All News	Morning News
Detroit	WJLB-FM	Urban Cont.	
Detroit	WKQI-FM	Pop Cont. Hit	Mojo in the Morning
Detroit	WMXD-FM	Urban Adult Cont.	Steve Harvey Morning Show

Source: Arbitron (2005)

APPENDIX B

Coding Scheme

Program Variables
V1. Name of the Show (#1-50)

V2. Day of the Week: 1=Monday 2=Tuesday 3=Wednesday 4=Thursday 5=Friday

V3. Station Owner:
1=Clear Channel
2=Infinity/CBS Radio
3=Beasley Broadcast Group
4=Entercom
5=Radio One
6=ICBC Inner City Broadcasting
7=Tribune Broadcasting
8=ABC Radio
9=Bonneville International
10=Susquehanna Radio
11=Salem Communications
12=Greater Media
13=Howard University

V4. Format of Show:
1=Adult Contemporary
2=Album-Oriented Rock
3=All News
4=All Sports
5=Alternative
6=Classic Rock
7=Contemporary Christian
8=Country
9=New AC/Smooth Jazz
10=News/Talk Information
11=Pop Contemporary Hit Radio
12=Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio
13=Rhythmic Oldies
14=Soft AC
15=Talk/Personality
16=Urban Adult Contemporary
17=Urban Contemporary
18=Classical

V5. Market:
1=New York
2=Los Angeles
3=Chicago
4=San Francisco
5=Dallas-Ft. Worth
6=Philadelphia
7. Houston-Galveston
8=Washington DC
9=Boston
10=Detroit

V6. 1=Syndicated Program 2=Non-syndicated Program

Context Variables
V7. Time of Incident:
1=6:00
2=6:30
3=7:00
4=7:30
5=8:00
6=8:30
7=9:00
8=9:30
9=10:00

V8. Hour: 1=1st hour 2=2nd hour 3=3rd hour 4=4th hour

V9. Directionality:
1=Speaking about him/herself (I'm an asshole)
2=Speaking to another person (You're an asshole)
3=Speaking about a third person who isn't present or can't hear remark (He's an asshole)
4=Speaking about a third person who is present and hears remark (Two DJs are talking about a caller and they comment while he's on the line, "He's such an asshole")
5=Speaking to the radio audience

V10. Gender of Speaker: 1=Male(s) 2=Female(s) 3=Mixed 4=Unknown

V11. Gender of Receiver:
1=Males(s)
2=Female(s)
3=Mixed
4=Unknown
5=No Receiver
6=Radio Audience

V12. Speaker's Role:
1=Main Host
2=Co-host
3=Supporting DJ/Personality (in studio)
4=Guest (in studio/phone-in interview)
5=Caller (member of radio audience)
6=Recorded Material (DJs play a clip of a movie, comedy routine, etc.)
7=Unknown

V13. Receiver's Role:
1=Main Host
2=Co-Host
3=Supporting DJ/Personality (in studio)
4=Guest (in studio/phone-in interview)
5=Caller (member of radio audience)
6=Radio audience (in general)
7=No Receiver
8=Unknown

V14. Context: 1=Humorous 2=Non-humorous

V15. Receiver's Reaction:
1=Positive
2=Negative
3=Neutral/No Reaction
4=Mixed Reaction
5=N/A (Radio audience will not have reaction)

V16. Sound Effects: 1=Bodily Function (Farting, etc.) 2=Sexual (Sexual moaning, etc.)

V17. Context: 1=Humorous 2=Non-humorous

Word/Phrase Variables
V18. Form:
1=Verbal (Actual)- Verbalizing a profane word or words
2=Verbal (Implied)- Bleeping out, or cutting out a word or words
(The audience can clearly tell what the offensive words is or that it was meant to be risqué)

V19. Category:
1=Seven Dirty Words
2=Sexual Words
3=Excretory Words
4=Mild Other
5=Strong Other

V20. Words:

1. Seven Dirty Words
101=cocksucker
102=cunt
103=fuck
104=motherfucker
105=piss (not “pissed off”)
106=shit
107=tits

2. Sexual Words
108=balls/nuts
109=bone, boner
110=boobs, knockers, hooters, etc.
111=cock
112=dick
113=ejaculate
114=erection
115=masturbate
116=oral sex
117=pecker
118=penis
119=pussy
120=screw
121=scrotum
122=suck
123=testicles
124=vagina
151=jackoff
152=gonads
153=hump
156=hung
160=boff
161=nipplies
164=wanker
165==jerk-off
166=hummer
167=genitals
168=cooter
172=Dike
175=jizz
176=blow job
177=giving/getting head
178=carpet muncher/munching

3.Excretory Words
125=ass
126=asshole
127=butt
128=crap (literal)
129=fart
130=feces
131=pee
158=poop/poo (literal)
159=wetting yourself
162=wiz
170=anal

4. Mild Others
134=bite me
136=Christ/jesus Christ/jesus/God/Lord (said in vain only)
137=crappy (slang: “You look like crap,” “What’s all this crap?”)
138=damn/god damn
139=douche bag
140=giving the finger
141=hell
143=pissed off
144=slut
146=up yours
147=whore
148=faggott
150=ho
171=scumbag
173=spick

5. Strong Others
132=bastard
133=bitch
135=bullshit
142=jackass
145=son of a bitch
149=fricking (as a euphemism for fuck)
154=f-word
155=smartass
157=SOB
163=b-word
174=Nigger

V21. Sentence Containing Word: Write exact words—provide content (entire sentence)

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Megan Fitzgerald attended Stonehill College where the earned a B.A. in communication in 1998. In 1999, she earned her M.A. in journalism from Syracuse University. After working as a content producer at an Internet company, she enrolled at Florida State University and began the PhD program. She currently teaches at Barry University and Miami Dade College. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she is the coordinator of the Communication Arts Center and the Writing Center at Miami Dade.