

## BREAKING TABOOS

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### IMAGES

1. Look at the pairs of images (1-8). Which, in each pair, is a typical 'coursebook' image? Why?

Coursebook image

#### Beach

Image 1 ..... yes / no  
Image 2 ..... yes / no

#### Kissing

Image 3 ..... yes / no  
Image 4 ..... yes / no

#### Hands

Image 5 ..... yes / no  
Image 6 ..... yes / no

#### Drinking

Image 7 ..... yes / no  
Image 8 ..... yes / no

2. Should teaching materials reflect real life images?

yes / no

3. Should teaching materials represent images of a changing world?

yes / no

## LANGUAGE

4. Should teaching materials represent real life language?      yes / no

5. Would you accept swearwords in coursebook conversations? yes / no

If not, would you a) bleep them or b) cut them out?

6. Should students be expected to a) use these words or b) recognise them?

7. Which of these five opinions do you agree with?

A

*'They often in children's programmes sneak in words that, instead of using out-and-out what they would consider out-and-out swear words, they'll say things like, "Oh, God" ... I must say I find that I don't want my little boy to hear that, and that's in almost every children's programme, that seems to be the expression of choice in terms of, if we're going to have an expletive, let them say that. And as I say, he doesn't watch half the kid's programmes because I switch them off. I say "You're not listening to this ..."'*

(Group 4, female churchgoers with young children, C2D, Aberdeen)

B

*'These things should be brought to the surface. From that, you could actually stimulate some real conversation with a child and, if she said, "What's a nigger?" you could say, "It's a really horrible term that some people call Blacks, but you never do that because they are the same as us." You could turn it into a positive thing. I thought that (the use of the word "nigger" in a pre-Watershed programme) was absolutely fine, it highlights the problem ... it is the real world out there, and it was the real world.'*

(Depth 2, Jewish family with young children, North London)

C

*'... if you were driving in your car, somebody cuts you up in your car, if they shout and call you a f-ing idiot, or a bloody idiot or whatever, fair enough. If they start putting your racial background into that, it's unacceptable.'*

(Depth 4, Black British family with young children, North London)

D

*'You don't want to switch on the TV and expect to have a true reflection of everyday life. People know that that is not the case. If you want that to be a reflection of everyday life and hear a swear word every other minute, then go outside your door instead of sitting in your front room.'*

(Depth 4, Black British family with young children, North London)

E

*'In a documentary you are showing it as it is. And to cover it up using different words or using no words at all makes it less believable. In which case, why show it in the first place?'*

(Group 12, gay men, single/partnered, C1C2, Manchester)

### Topography of bad language

Although contextual differences and density inevitably affect perceptions of severity, the topography of bad language exists across all groups in a broadly consistent manner.

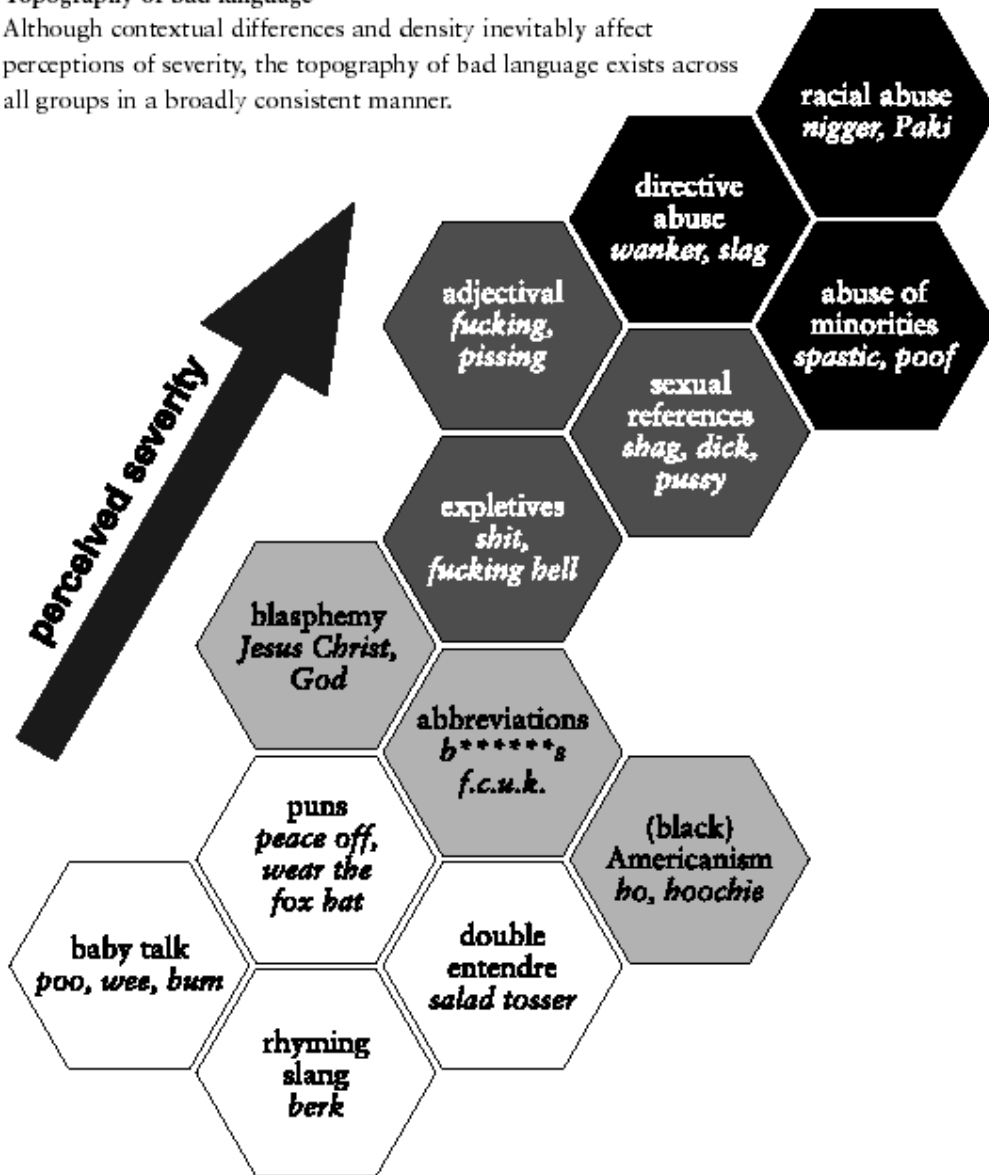
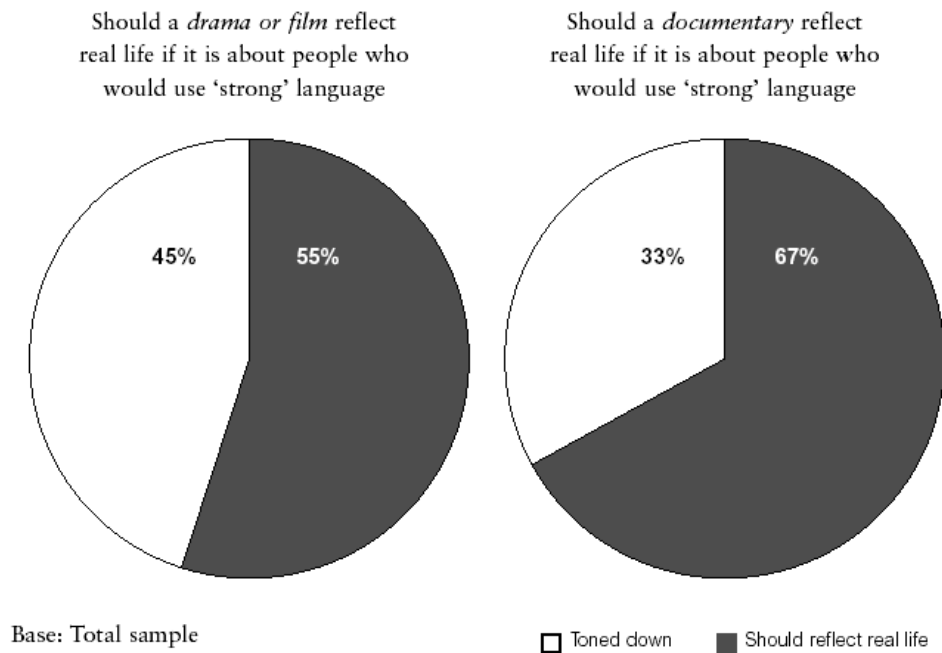


Figure 2: Swearing and offensive language and types of programme shown after 9.00 p.m.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Data and quotations from 'Delete Expletives'

[http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/consumer\\_audience\\_research/tv/tv\\_audience\\_reports/delete\\_expletives.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/consumer_audience_research/tv/tv_audience_reports/delete_expletives.pdf)

(Joint research project carried out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) and the Independent Television Commission (ITC), December 2001).