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CURSING IN AMERICA; Title page; Copyright page; Acknowledgments; Table of Contents; Detailed Table of Contents; Chapter 1. What Are ""Dirty"" Words?; Cursing; Profanity; Blasphemy; Taboo; Obscenity; Vulgarity; Slang; Epithets; Insults and slurs; Scatology; What Is the Value of Classification?; Connotative and Denotative Usage; Colorful Metaphors; Context is critical; Time perspective; Summary; Chapter 2. When Children Use Dirty Words; Language Development; The Language of Infancy (Birth to Two Years); Anger and Dirty Words in Infancy; The Origins of Humor; Pre-School Humor. Some Final Thoughts About Infants; The Language of Childhood (Two to Eleven Years); Childhood Humor; Elementary School Humor.; Childhood Name Calling and Insulting; Object Naming; Childhood Story Telling; From Childhood to Adolescence: Final Thoughts; Two General Issues of Sex Talk and Language at School; The ""Etiquette"" of Dirty Words and Sex Talk; Conclusions About Sex Talk; The Issue of Dirty Language at School; The Emergence of an Obscene Lexicon; Field Study One; Field Study Two: Summer Camp (Hall & Jay, 1988); Summary of Field Studies; Conclusion; Chapter 3. Anger and Dirty Words Anger Expressed Through Cursing or Blasphemy; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Subnormal Thought; Anger Expressed Through Obscenity; Anger Expressed Through Reference to a Sex Organ; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Deviant Sexual Act; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Being Sexually Violated; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Social-Sexual Deviation; Anger Expressed Through Racial-Ethnic Reference; Anger Expressed Through Scatology; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Body Product or Process; Anger Expressed Through Items Associated with Body Products Anger Expressed Through References to Animals; Anger Expressed Through Reference to Animal Feces; The Context of Anger Expression; Social-Physical Setting; Speaker-Listener Variable; Discussion; The Etiquette of Anger Expression with Taboo Words; A Five-Stage Model of Anger; Stage 1: The Offending Event; Stage 2: The Degree of Anger; Stage 3: Attempts to Control Anger; Stage 4: Loss of Control; Stage 5: Retribution; The Value of Expressing Anger; Summary; Chapter 4. The Frequency of Dirty Word Usage; Why Word Frequency?; The Frequency Estimation Problem: Why There Are No Dirty Words Counting Oral Frequency: Almost Good Enough; A Frequency Count of Students' Colloquial English (Jay, 1980a); College Sample of Dirty Words; Elementary School Dirty Words; Discussion; Field Studies Versus Laboratory Studies; A Field Study of Offensive Speech; The Contextual Approach; Method; Results; Discussion; Laboratory Studies of Offensive Speech; Jay 1977 Ratings; Method; Results; The Massachusetts Study (1978); Word List; Method; Results; A Matter of Semantics; Of Words and Deeds; Conclusion; Chapter 5. The Offensiveness of Words: Sex and Semantics; Purpose of the Chapter; Offensiveness versus Offendedness

Sommario/riassunto

Who uses dirty words? And when? How is the bad language we use reflected in the movies, in the courts, and elsewhere? With Cursing in America, psychologist Timothy Jay presents the first serious and extensive examination of American profanity from a psycholinguistic-contextual point of view. An amazing amount of factual data gathered through several field studies and numerous laboratory-based experiments reveals the relationship between cursing and language acquisition, anger expression, gender stereotypes and offensiveness. Sexual harassment, censorship, language content of film, obscene phone calls and cursing at public schools are some of the topics which are analyzed and related to the data. Word-by-word tables

demonstrate the influence that factors such as frequency of occurrence, degree of offensiveness, and gender and age of the speaker have on obscene language usage in America today
