**Study of Language Used by Teenage Boys and Girls When Discussing Robin Thicke’s “Blurred Lines” in Same Sex And Mixed Groups**

Introduction:

I am investigating to see if boys change their language when they are in the presence of girls. I chose to use Robin Thicke’s *Blurred Lines* as the stimulus of the discussion. This is due to the controversy over the lyrics causing it to be banned by more than 20 university unions around Britain and has been criticised for appearing glorifying rape and violent sex (www.theguardian.com).

I believe that the boys, who are well-educated and middle-class, may change their language in a mixed group as they’re from an all-boys school and may feel the need to appear polite and to not offend the girls. Therefore, they may use fewer profanities and avoid sexist humour.

Methodology:

My results were obtained by conducting an investigation using a total of eight volunteers, half boys and half girls ranging between the ages of 16-17. I had three groups: all girls, all boys and a mixed group. Their reaction to the “Blurred Lines” music video and their feelings towards the language featured in the song were recorded and transcribed.

Afterwards, I analysed the specific linguistic features of interruptions, humour and profanities in each group. I chose to analyse these aspect as interruptions tend to demonstrate the power balance between speakers and to explore Zimmerman and West’s (1983) assertion by considering which gender makes the most interruptions and why. Humour, depending on the context, can indicate friendliness, insecurity or superiority as suggested by Haiman (1998). The use of profanities is interesting as there has been a cultural shift and the gender gap of using profanities is narrowing as suggested by Jay (2009). Therefore, it would be interesting to compare the groups’ use of profanities to see if my data supports this suggestion.

I had gathered my data ethically as the volunteers were aware that they’re being recorded and agreed for me to analyse the content. All volunteers have been made anonymous.

The main strength in my method is that it’s primary data. The advantage of this is that the results are specific and benefit my investigation by providing specific linguistic features. It gives me greater control over the investigation, allowing me to have focus groups providing me with current quantitative and qualitative data, giving my data more depth. It’s also an efficient way of obtaining data as it the data is accessible, applicable and usable.

However, there are weaknesses in my method. For example, the volunteers know me and this factor could influence their choice of language during the discussion, impacting the validity of the data. In an attempt to reduce this I will not be present in the room during the recording. There is also the factor that the volunteers are familiar with one another and are aware of being recorded, which could impact the legitimacy of the data.

Analysing Interruptions

Tannen (1990) suggested that there are two types of interruptions (www.univeralteacher.org.uk):

* Cooperative – letting the speaker know that they’re being heard
* Competitive – attempting to become the dominant speaker.

Boys overall contribute 43% of all interruptions but in a mixed group they contribute the most. West and Zimmerman (1983) had found that in mixed conversations “men disproportionately initiated interruptions” (www.uk.sagepub.com). This is evident in my data as the boys interrupt more (60%) in the mixed group in comparison. Furthermore, regarding competitive and cooperative interruptions my data suggests that boys use competitive interruptions more. This could be due to the boys being from an all-boys school and so don’t feel the need to competitively compete to be heard but when in the presence of girls may feel the need to appear as the dominant male by being the most confident speaker.

Figure 1: A Bar Chart to Show the Number of Each Type of Interruptions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group Type | No. Overall Interruptions | No. Cooperative Interruptions | No. Competitive Interruptions |
| All Girl Group | 40 | 20 | 20 |
| All Boy Group | 17 | 10 | 7 |
| Mixed Group | 45 | 11 | 34 |
| Girls in Mixed Group | 18 | 6 | 11 |
| Boys in Mixed Group | 27 | 4 | 23 |

Figure 2: A Table to Show the Number of Each Type of Interruptions

They may not feel the need to appear as the lead role without girls to try and impress or perhaps they don’t have strong opinions on the subject matter:

*B2: It’s R&B isn’t it*

Here B2 implies that he doesn’t have any strong opinions due to the R&B genre where “expressions of hyper-masculinity and out right misogyny” (Rabaka Reiland 2013) are not subtly used. Therefore, B2 may not feel strongly about the language used as it’s expected of its genre and so doesn’t feel the need to compete to be heard.

However, this is the opposite in the girl group:

*G4: //Yeah (3) They probably got into the charts the way Miley Cyrus did cause her video was so (1)*

*G2: Shocking*

*G3: Yeah so shocking so*

*G1: Yeah but*

*G2: People listened to it and which it put it in the charts*

*G1: Yeah but the actually (.) I don’t know we’re getting off subject here but the Miley Cyrus video I’m okay with (1) because it’s showing (1) her own personal thing*

*G3: Yeah it’s but it’s like*

Here you can see that the girls all want their opinion to be heard; by using the filler “yeah” as a form of back channelling it makes them appear polite and supportive despite interrupting. Situations such as these often follow when a member of the group says a statement which one other member strongly disagrees with.

Figure 3: A Bar Chart Comparing the Number of Cooperative and Competitive Interruptions

Applying Zimmerman and West’s (1975) Dominance theory, in mixed-sex conversations “men are more likely to interrupt women to assert dominance,” my data supports this as 35.5% of interruptions were boys competitively interrupting the girls (<http://www.universalteacher.org.uk> ).

Figure 4: A Bar Chart Comparing the Number of Cooperative and Competitive Interruptions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mixed Group Only | No. Cooperative Interruptions | No. Competitive Interruptions |  |
| Boys Interrupting Boys | 2 | 9 |  |
| Girls Interrupting Girls | 5 | 2 |  |
| Boys Interrupting Girls | 2 | 14 |  |
| Girls Interrupting Boys | 2 | 9 |  |

Figure 5: Table to Show the Number of Type of Interruptions Each Group Made

This could be due to boys wanting to appear the dominant male and increase their self-importance, a primal instinct, in front of the other boys rather than the girls:

*B1: //It’s not (.) if you like (.) if you like taking his words into reality you’ll be slapped*

*G4: But we’re supposed to*

*B3: Only if you’re applying it*

It could be seen that B3 is trying to dominate the conversation and show that he is the one with the most authority and attempt to control the conversation and persuade others to agree with his statements.

Yet it must be taken into consideration that the high number of competitive interruptions could be due to the nature of the dialogue; it’s an open discussion. Therefore, the majority of the interruptions are not purposely competitive but rather overlaps:

*B3: //Genuinely like to be (.) have a dildo*

*G1: //Have you seen the switched gender version*

*B3: //Up my arse*

*B1: //No*

To conclude, taking into consideration Zimmerman and West’s (1975) conclusion that interruptions are “device[s] for exercising power and control in conversation[s]” as it involves “violations of speakers’ turn at talk[ing,]”. It could be that regardless of subject matter or gender involved, boys will automatically interrupt the most as interruptions are “bids of power” and dominating a situation is a primal instinct (www.people.uncw.edu.pdf). Therefore, from my data it can be said that it’s only in a mixed group when boys will interrupt more and in further regards to Zimmerman and West’s findings that 96% of interruptions are made by men, my data supports this (2007).

Analysing Humour:

My data suggests that Lakoff’s (1975) assertion that women lack a sense of humour and “often do not understand punch lines” is somewhat true (www.univeralteacher.org.uk). This is due to my data collection of the number of times laughter occurs for each group suggests that boys use humour more than girls.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Group Type | No. Times Laughing Occurs |
| All Girl Group | 2 |
| All Boy Group | 18 |
| Mixed Group | 8 |

Figure 6: A Table to Show the Number of Times Laughing Occurred

However, rather than ‘lacking a sense of humour’ it could be due to girls finding the subject matter more serious and see making jokes as inappropriate. Especially as the majority of the jokes made by the boys were of a crude nature with undertones of misogynist subjection:

*B3: She looks like a trained well beast (3) yeah she’s 100% asking for it (2) only in the arse though*

*[LH]*

By using the lexical choice of “beast” B3 dehumanises the woman to a wild animal and is ‘asking for it’. Despite this being inappropriate due to the song’s controversy, both genders respond with laughing. This could be due to them recognising the irony of B3 making a contentious joke. Despite B3 being from an all-boys school, where this humour involving misogyny is perhaps more socially acceptable, he is well-educated and would be aware that his statement is somewhat inappropriate. Here, it appears that the girls do have a sense of humour, thus not supporting Lakoff’s statement.

In my investigation, the majority of the humour used could be considered as ‘banter’, which Leech (1983) defines as a form of under-politeness or mock impoliteness” ([www.publikacje.ils.uw.edu.pl](http://www.publikacje.ils.uw.edu.pl)). *B3: It’s hot*

*B1: H-h and how have we not got a crowd yet*

*B3: Wait could you stop wanking so early*

*[LH]*

It becomes apparent that B3 contributes the most jokes; this could be his way of asserting dominance as linguist Haiman (1999) states that sarcasm is a way of “distancing yourself…making yourself superior” ([www.smithsonianmag.com](http://www.smithsonianmag.com)). B3 does this successfully as whatever joke he makes, both genders will laugh:

*B1: Yeah*

*B2: Lucky her*

*B3: She was practically raping him*

*G1: Yeah*

*[LH]*

Haiman (1998) goes a step further than Lakoff by suggesting that women are more likely to “refuse to play the jocularity game” suggesting that banter is more of a form of male communication. This seems likely due to them being in an all-male environment where it’s possible that banter is used at school as a form of social talk and a primary form of phatic communication. My data supports this to the extent that there is less laughter in the all-girl groups supporting the idea that girls use less humour; however, when in a mixed group they join in. Haiman suggests that the reason for this, is that the humour used, banter, is a “kind of self-protective… pre-emptive….and self-abasement,” therefore reduces hostility and avoids unnecessary argument. Therefore, the girls could have used banter to reduce tension between the genders by trying to show that they’re not being too sensitive. Furthermore, this can be used to explain the high usage of humour by the boys. The boys could have used banter as a way to show to the other boys that they’re still “masculine” and “one of the lads” despite strongly supporting the girls’ opinions:

G1: And also, it portrays men to be very dominant and women should always be submissive

B1: … sort of took their power away (.)…

Analysing Profanity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Group Type | Profanities |
| All Girl Group | 2 |
| All Boy Group | 22 |
| Mixed Group | 2 |
| Girls in Mixed | 4 |
| Boys in Mixed | 1 |

Figure 6: A Table to Show the Number of Profanities Used

My data shows that boys use expletives more in single-sex groups but girls swear more in mixed groups. This is interesting as it doesn’t support Menzie’s (1991) findings that “both women and men swear more frequently in same-sex groups”. A reason for the girls’ increase usage of profanities could be because they attend an all-boys school, therefore by converging their language they may be taken more seriously and not seem ‘overly sensitive’ in the macho environment. In addition Jay (2009) states that the gender gap of swearing “has narrowed”, therefore girls feel able to use profanities on equal terms such as emphatically (as seen below) as a way of appearing confident and dominant in the conversation. My data also doesn’t support Jay’s (2009) claim that “women are more likely to use milder words and phrases,” referring to blasphemies. In total, 81.8% of the blasphemies were uttered by boys in the single-sex group. This could be because “blasphemy” is not considered obscene in today’s society where there is a loss of Christian morality and so no longer has the same impact.

*B4: No I don’t think it is I disagree*

*G1: //Well no*

*G3: //Fuck no*

In reference to the data below it does not support Menzie’s theory in regards to the women swearing more frequently. Instead of using expletives, they frequently use adjectives to show dismay; this could be because they do not feel the need to use expletives to acquire control or to be heard as they appear to all have similar opinions about the song.

*G2: It’s really derogatory*

*G2: It’s just really derogatory*

*G3: Horrible (.) rapists (3) horrible (2) disgusting*

*G2: Horrible to women*

*G1: Yeah*

*G2: It’s really derogatory*

*G4: Yeah really offensive*

*G4: It’s just really offensive*

*G3: Really offensive*

*G4: Yeah really offensive*

When comparing the data of the single-sex groups my data supports Lakoff’s (1975) argument that women will “avoid coarse or expletive language” as the girls swear considerably less when in same-sex groups (www.universalteacher.org.uk).

Yet my data supports Menzie regarding men swearing more in a same-sex group. My data shows that the boys will use expletives when they are by themselves but will change their language when they are with girls by not using as many.

*B1: I didn’t think that kind of shit would get released like*

*B3: I think he’s a fucking idiot*

*B3: Pretty fucked up basically (.) not a very decent person*

The main profanities used were “fuck” and “fucking,” used mostly idiomatically and emphatically. It was only B3 who used dysphemistic expletives. A reason for why there is such a high usage of expletives could be because it’s now more socially acceptable to use expletives in everyday language as, again, religious morality is not as prominent or influential as it was. Furthermore, by using expletives it often makes the speaker appear flippant:

“*B3: Its general premise is I want to (1) fuck these women”* and *“it’s just like oh I’m fucking her here”*

Although, being flippant can suggest insecurity, therefore my data could suggest that B3 feels the need to constantly impress others in order to dominate the conversation and appear as the alpha male. This can be seen as B3 uses the most expletives and humour, although his humour predominantly revolves around using expletives. However, he also uses highly offensive terms such as “nigger” and “cunt” in the same-sex group. This could suggest that he does have a lot of self-confidence as he is sure enough of his status within the group that it’s acceptable for him to say. Alternatively, it could imply the opposite and shows that he is uncomfortable with the discussion by undermining the seriousness. Overall, my data supports Pinker's (2008) statement that “men swear more, on average”.

Conclusion

From my data I have concluded that both boys and girls change their language when in a mixed groups but in different ways to what I had predicted.

In terms of interruptions, overall boys competitively interrupt more regardless of gender or subject matter. This is most likely due to them wanting to dominate a situation, a primal instinct for them, and by interrupting they’re gaining power and control over the situation. My data therefore supports Zimmerman and West’s findings that men interrupt more than women.

My data shows that humour is used to avoid conflict and is a form of social talk between members. Boys’ humour mainly consists of “banter”, as they’re from an all-boys school where it can be considered as a social talk. Overall my data doesn’t support Haiman’s statement that women are less likely to join in with jokes as they laugh more in the mixed group than the same-sex group. This is most likely due to the girls wanting to avoid conflict and recognise the irony used in the boys’ misogynistic jokes.

Although my data show girls using more expletives in the mixed group, overall, boys still use more expletives. Therefore my data strongly supports Pinker’s statement that men swear more than women. My data doesn’t support Jay’s theory that women will use more blasphemies as the majority were uttered by the boys. Therefore, my data shows that girls will change their language in the mixed group by using more expletives while the boys will use less. This gives evidence that the gender-gap between male and female speakers is closing, as suggested by Jay at least in this context of mixed-gender group.

Yet it must be taken into consideration that my conclusions and findings are not completely valid as my sample was very small and the volunteers did know each other. In order to obtain more valid data, a larger and more diverse sample will be needed.

Word Count: 2297

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**Appendix**

**Transcripts from Investigation**

Key:

* [LH] – Laughter
* // – Overlap
* (.) – Micro pause
* (number) – Pause
* [action]
* A: I thought we were going into town

Interruption

B: No we’re not

* G1 = Girl One
* B1 = Boy One

All Girl Group:

Reaction to video:

G1: (4) Hey hey hey (3) everybody now (5) boobies

G2: Maybe I’m going deaf

G3: That’s something (.) comical (5) yeah no we don’t need the liberating

G2: Do you see what they’re wearing (2) it’s like a vagina cup

G3: Who would model for that

G4: Do you know what they’re wearing (.)

G1 They’re wearing like vagina cups (2)

they’re wearing a thong (1) oh yeah they are wearing a thong (.) I can see it now (.) I thought it was a vagina cup

G2: And he’s married so this is fine

G4: I know (2) I feel so sorry for his wife

G3: Yeah

G2: She has got nice boobs though

G1: It’s annoying that Pharral Williams was in involved in this (.) cause he’s actually really nice

G4: Yeah

G2: Oh

G1: What rhymes with hug me (2) it doesn’t even rhyme (.) fuck hug

G2: That’s not even a real animal

G3: If you’re married then that man is your maker

G2: Controversial

G1: I know right

[LH]

G1: That can’t be real

G3: What

G1: Boobs

G2: The animal or her boobs

G1: They’re probably all boobed job

G2: Hope so

G3: That’s not a word but you get

G1: Oh sitting on a bike in a thong

G2: I know you want it

G1: But we don’t want it

G3: No

G2: Is it me or does she look like she wants to punch him

G1: //Oh god

G2: //Oh god

G3: //Oh god

G4: //Oh god

[Groans simultaneously]

G1: Do you reckon the girl (1) knew what song they were dancing for

G4: Yeah

G3: They probably did it to get some (2) fame

G1: Mmmmm I wouldn’t want fame from that though

G2: No

G3: They probably would have had to

G1: Robin Thicke has a big dick (.) wow

G2: He’s got feet on his face

G3: What the fuck

G1: I know you want it (1) is just a horrible line

G2: Mmm ‘cause it’s going through their head (.) not the woman’s

G4: Mmm

G3: It’s them justifying it’s okay

G1: What’s that stuck there to her arse

G3: How I really know that (.) cause he’s a married man

G1: (2) is he married

G3: Yeah

G4: think he wasn’t at this point (.) I think he was separated by divorce

G2: Yeah

G1: Yeah I was going to say (.) that’s one way of getting a divorce

G3: He was married at the time this was done though

G1: Everybody get up

G2: That’s a disgusting track suit

G4: Just so everyone knows

G2: The jacket

G1: So there you go

What are your feelings towards the language used in the song?

G3: Horrible (.) rapists (3) horrible (2) disgusting

G2: Horrible to women

G1: Yeah

G2: It’s really derogatory

G4: Yeah really offensive

G3: They’re trying to justify it in their own heads that it’s oaky to think those things

G2: Yeah

G1: When it’s not

G2: Let alone act on them

G1: They’re trying to justify (1) it in a song (3)

G2: And they’re also making it seem like (2) women should want that (.) otherwise there is something wrong with them

G3: Yeah

G4: It’s just really offensive

G3: Really offensive

G2: I really need something to hit them

G1: Yeah I know what you mean (.) but it’s(.) what annoys me even more (.) is that (.) when they use language like (.) tear the ass in two it’s giving people unrealistic of what women want

G2: Yeah

G1: You know we don’t all want anal actually (1) sorry

[LH]

G3: And it’s (.) just like (.) w-with li-li teenage boys listening to this they're thinking it's okay to think that

G1: //Yeah

G2: //Yeah

G4: //Yeah

G3: Which will then grow up objectifying women

G1: //Yeah

G2: //Yeah

G4: //Yeah

G3: And they'll think it's okay to objectify women

G1: Yeah

G2: And then women will feel the need to adapt to that

G3: Yeah

G1: When actually (2) we don't

G2: And also that

G4: I think

G1: And also, it portrays men to be very dominant and women should always be submissive

G2: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah

G4: //Yeah

G1: And (.) th-the way they showed the women (1) naked (1) walking (1) and the men reaction like that will think to the girls that they'll have to be like that

G3: Yeah

G2: And have to have those types of boobs

G1: Yeah

G4: (1) Those bodies

G3: Yeah

G2: And that (.) they were all stick thin

G3: Yeah

G2: I swear that's thinner than a normal person is

G4: It is (.) it's model size

G1: And also he uses the term (.) you the hottest bitch in this place (.) like that's not a compliment

G2: //No

G3: //No

G4: //No it's more (3)

G1: I'd rather you said I was like (3)

G4: Beautiful

G2: Yeah

G1: Or (2) like

G3: Charming

G4: Charming

G2: Or charismatic or

G1: or sweet or yeah

G2: (1) Rather than the hottest bitch

G4: In this place

G1: For one (.) bitch is not a term used to (1) to talk about a woman

G3: Unless you're a bit of slut

G1: Yeah (.) but like (.) a bitch is a female dog (.)

G4: Not a human

G1: Um (.) yeah

G4: Definitely

G2: (1) Yes

G1: I mean the word choice there is really really derogatory

G4: Well the fact that they're naked I think (1)

G3: Yeah

G4: I know that's not to do with language but

G2: And also the women are naked and the men have full clothes on

G1: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah

G4: //Yeah

G2: And that's

G4: And that's just annoying

G1: //Yeah

G2: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah

G4: I mean if it wouldn't be so bad if (.) if but because it’s literally like women are being

G1: And that's (1) that's

G4: (1) Portrayed as innocent

G3: Mmm

G2: Yeah

G4: And pure and oh they’re the item of desire and stuff when actually (2)

G3: Mmm

G2: It can be the other way as well

G1: Mm yeah

G2: Derogatory word choice

G3: Derogatory word choice (.) then yes definitely

G1: A hundred per cent

G4: Yeah

G2: I feel kinda repulsed

G3: It should have never got published

G1: Yeah

G3: Cause it got published (.) like it never should have like I don’t know who’s idea

G4: It be interesting to see who took it (.)

G3: On

G4: Yeah

G1: Also

G3: What record company

G4: I don’t understand how that ever ended up in the charts

G2: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah I know that was

G1: It’s cause it’s catchy (.) that’s the issue

G2: It’s catchy but then the meaning is awful

G3: It’s because people listen to tune yeah people listen to the tune they don’t listen to the meaning (.) and another thing is that a lot of women like in this day and age (.) like when they’re when there when you think about sex and feminist they’re like oh sexism doesn’t exist when actually stuff like being called a bitch (.) like (.) a hot bitch even like

G2: Yeah

G4: Something that seems like a compliment is actually (1) really offensive (.)

G3: And lots of

G2: And (.) yeah

G4: (1) And they’re thinking like (2)

G2: Yeah (.) no it’s really derogative

G1: And also it’s also like that it it reinforces the idea that women thinking feminine (.) feminist is standing up for women’s rights and for gender equality is a negative thing

G3: Yeah

G2: And it’s not

G1: And that’s often portrayed quite a lot especially in patriarchal societies

G2: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah

G4: //Yeah (3) They probably got into the charts the way Miley Cyrus did cause her video was so (1)

G2: Shocking

G3: Yeah so shocking so

G1: Yeah but

G2: People listened to it and which it put it in the charts

G1: Yeah but the actually (.) I don’t know we’re getting off subject here but the Miley Cyrus video I’m okay with (1) because it’s showing (1) her own personal thing

G3: Yeah it’s but it’s like

G2: But he’s showing

G3: Unlike humans

G4: Women as a (.) object

G2: Didn’t one had a collar on at one point

G4: Yeah

G3: It’s just terrible

All Boy Group

Reaction to video:

B1: Oh god it is explicit (.) Jesus

B2: Is it

B1: Yeah I mean you just saw her naked

B3: Whooooh

B1: Yeah what the fuck

B4: Bloody hell

B3: She’s pretty fit though

[LH]

B3Yeah she’s my favourite

B2: Oh my god

B1: They’re really bad (.) bloody hell (.) oh god

B4: I didn’t realise there were so many tits in here

B1: No neither did I

B2: I’ve never actually heard this song with

B1: Is this actually on youtube

B4: Yeah (1) in fact I think it got taken down

B2: Yeah it did

B4: And they put it on vevo

B3: I can’t see why though

[LH]

B4: Domesticates

B3: Oh she doesn’t seem to mind

B4: Emancipation doesn’t quite work

B3: She’s loving it

B1: I think she became really famous after this video

B3: She looks like a trained well beast (3) yeah she’s 100% asking for it (2) only in the arse though

[LH]

B4: Gross

B1: Why-Why why the animals

B2: They’re trying to make it child friendly

[LH]

B1: Trying to make it friendly

B4: He-he is a wanker

B3: It’s an advert for breast feeding

[LH]

B1: What is he doing

[LH]

B2: Oh he’s doing (.) wait who is that

B3: Your mum (.) just get a fucking random bloke

B1: Oh my god

B2: [LH] oh jeez

B4: I wonder what does

B1: Oh she’s got clothes on now then (.) oh no now they’re off

B3: He’s like (.) properly (.) like groping her arse

B1: What

B2: What

B4: What huh

B2: I feel sorry for that

B1: Oh

B3: Now then

B1: Bloody hell

B4: Oh my god she’s riding it

B1: What

B3: She’s riding the dog

B1: Fucking hell

B2: Far from plastic

B4: What you want to get blasted

[LH]

B1: Oh Jesus

B4: Oh the lyrics for this song

B1: See just er what the hell

B3: She’s (.) got brilliant nuts though

B1: But this is just normal (1) what you have in every fucking song

B3: Yeah

B2: Yeah this is (.) this is just like rap

B1: Fuck

B4: Ah general rap

B3: It’s like bitch nigger bitch nigger

B1: Tear your ass oh god

B2: Oh did he just say swag on

B4: I’m pretty sure he just said swag on

B2: Oh self-reference

B1: Oh my god

B4: //Do it like it hurt

B2: //Do it like it hurt

B1: Errr

B1: What the fuck

B2: I totally forgot about that bit

B1: That is just ridiculous

B2: Just ridiculous

B1: Oh my god

B3: You’re sucking toes

B4: It smells

B2: Maybe it’s a passage

B1: What the hell

B3: Have they got their (1) vags out as well

B4: //Yeah

B1: //Yeah

B3: It’s hot

B1: H-h and how have we not got a crowd yet

B3: Wait could you stop wanking so early

[LH]

B4: From outside we just look like a group of boys

[LH]

What are your feelings towards the language used in the song?

B2: I’ve actually never listened to the song

B4: // No

B1: //No I don’t know

B2: You know listen to the lyrics

B3: It wasn’t actually that explicit though

B4: In some places though (.) it was

B1: But (.) I don’t (.) well most of the time (.) yeah (.) but it was kind of

B3: It’s more the rhythm

B2: //Yeah

B1: //Yeah

B3: Like get down

B4: Like I don’t see why an 11 year old would listen to it and be like ah I like this

B1: I know

B3: This is pretty good

B1: Well obviously (.) obviously

B2: But it is pretty explicit (.) like I’m going to tear your ass

B3: Yeah well that was kind of

B4: Yeah

B2: Yeah I was kinda disgusted

B3: I mean that was pretty subtle

[LH]

B4: I don’t know

B1: I didn’t think that kind of shit would get released like

B4: Yeah

B3: I’ve seen worse

B2: It’s a really catchy song

B4: No it’s not

B2: Yeah well you can see how it gets into your head

B1: Yeah like now I don’t like it anymore

B3: It’s pretty discrete (.) but we don’t know

B1: Yeah I just think the whole blurred lines thing like it is pretty genuine like I mean like yeah it is referring to rape

B4: But what do they mean (.) do they mean (.) the blurred lines between sex and rape

B2: Yeah basically

B3: I’m not saying she wants it but (.) but she wants it

B2: Yeah (.) it’s like you can’t know

B1: She knows she wants it

B3: //Yeah

B2: //Yeah

B1: But he doesn’t (.) because (.) she wouldn’t (.) she wouldn’t tell him

B3: But then (.) from the looks of it she does

B1: They wanted it

B4: Well no (2)

B1: Well they can’t actually have

B2: The stuffed animals

B1: So (.) so overall is there a semantic field

B3: Yeah

B1: Well it refers to a sort of rape

B2: //Yeah

B3: //Yeah

B2: It’s R&B isn’t it

B3: Yeah (1) but (.) I don’t know the acting’s done quite well

[LH]

B1: I don’t know I don’t know

B4: It kinda is

B2: I wouldn’t say there is a semantic

B3: It’s not really that violent

B1: No (.) no it’s more sorta like the whole I don’t know

B3: You can imagine if you wanted to be dirty arr I’m goanna tear your ass and be like haw

[LH]

B2: //Yeah well maybe not

B4: //Yeah

B3: Or aww yeah

B4: Well they probably got paid a lot

B1: Yeah but I wouldn’t want to be paid a lot to do that

B3: Bet he got paid a lot

B4: Yeah

B3: But there are parts where he is just a wanker

B1: There are parts where you’re like (.) you know (.) what’s wrong with you

B3: With the derogatory language with like (.) you’re an animal and shit like

B4: Yes

B1: Yeah (.) it was that (.) it was the domesticate you

B4: //I was just like

B1: //I was just like you can’t

B4: You don’t domesticate (1) your sex partner

B2: Yeah

B3: But it kind of refers to sex being like an animal (1) animal (1) experience

B1: Yeah I guess you can kind of see it like you know often some people like that sort of (1) domination sort of thing (.) I guess there’s that and like

B4: Yeah

B1: But still (1) it has a bit of a weird vibe to it

B2: I don’t think he trying to say (.) he’s actually going domesticate females like that

B1: I mean

B3: It’s weird (.) it’s weird

B1: I don’t know (.) it’s hard to tell what the extent of him

B4: Yeah

B1: Actually realising what it actually sounds like or what he actually means by it (.) I mean it’s kinda hard to tell

B4: He can’t be that much of a dick that he actually

B2: I don’t I don’t think he

B3: I think he’s a fucking idiot

B1: He’s a dick

B1: No I don’t think he means anything by it it’s all commercial

B4: It’s supposed to be outrageous

B1: It’s not all that (.) it’s not like (.) not like completely

B2: Awful

B1: Not all of it is out there (.) it isn’t just like

B4: No no there are some parts of it where you’re like

B3: Fuck fuck bitches

B4: It’s general

B3: Its general premise is I want to (1) fuck these women

[LH]

B4: Like like

B1: Like most people

B3: Want to get blasted

B4: Well I’m not directly turned on by it at all

[LH]

B3: Good

B1: Well I’ll be honest I loved every second

[LH]

B1: No I obviously I get the complaint from it I definitely do

B2: It’s just weird seeing the lyrics and the video together

B4: I know I just just can’t like

B1: It doesn’t make much sense really (.) it’s kind of like (1) it just doesn’t really have like a story (.) it’s just like oh I’m fucking her here

[LH]

B3: Ah nah actually blasting her here

[LH]

B1: Yeah yeah exactly

B2: I don’t think it’s that bad

B1: It could be worse

B3: For the video it only works as porn

B1: I wouldn’t get to annoyed over it (.) like yeah some people are naked at time but I guess it’s cause the guys weren’t and the girls were and then there’s this whole animalistic theme

B2: Yeah

B4: And they didn’t say a word

B1: And the men are in suits like they have power over them

B1: And just general consent is just (2)

B3: Pretty fucked up basically (.) not a very decent person

B4: No

B1: Yeah

Mixed Group

Reaction to video:

G1: Did anyone else not realise they were wearing underwear

B1: They’re wearing underwear

G1: Yeah they’re wearing beige thong

B2: Yeah you can’t really see

B2: Yeah

B1: Shit

G1: I didn’t realise I thought they were wearing a cup

B3: I don’t know why they’re covering herself up now (.) what’s the point

B1: Yeah I was gonna say you’ve already gone all out

B4: She does there doesn’t she

B2: Yeah true

G1: And they’re fluttering their eye lashes

B1: Here comes the stuffed animals

G3: She’s frowning why is she frowning

B1: She frowns to the music cause you know (.) she’s not allowed to speak

G3: Oh yeah

G1: On the bright side she’s humping him

B1: Yeah

B2: Lucky her

B3: She was practically raping him

G1: Yeah

[LH]

B1: Talk about being blasted

G4: It gets worse though

G1: Why does it keep hash tagging Thicke (.) cause he’s thick

B4: To go viral

G2: He didn’t really need that hash tag to do that

G3: Yeah I find it really obnoxious to keep putting that up

B3: But she does have great good tits though (.) I’ll give her that

G4: Are they real

G1: That’s what I said

[LH]

B3: What

G1: In the video I was just like watching it like her tits are really nice though

B4: Domesticate that’s that one

G1: Yeah (1) yeah that’s an issue

G4: Oh that animal one

B2: Yeah it’s interesting that

G1: Let me liberate you you don’t need no papers what the fuck is that (.) is that a (.) like a take away or a (.) a (.) is that a real or like contract

B3: It’s in her nature

B1: From a biologist (.) from an evolutionist biologist (.) view point

G2: Or like a contract and stuff

[LH]

B3: Sex (1) is in our nature

G1: Illegal contract

B1: We should get taught this in er biology

G1: You’re a good girl (1) that’s not particularly nice

G3: No

B2: Just trying to increase his chance of blasting his jeans

G1: I don’t buy these double decker the attraction

B1: I mean

G1: Well I’m confused what does he mean by hate them lines

B2: He means blurred lines

B4: He means those lines between which (1) it’s either sex or rape

B1: It’s the lines which eh either

G2: Lines between raping people

B3: Oh yeah (.) I hate that to

B4: I will rape you (.) why am I not allowed to rape people

G1: It annoys me that Pharrell Williams is in it

B1: You almost feel sorry for him

[LH]

G1: This is (2) I don’t like this bit

B2: It’s not necessarily labelling (1)

B4: Rapists

G3: That line I hate

B3: Yeah but that’s in every hip hop song

B2: //Of all time

G4: Tear your arse in two (.) it doesn’t make it acceptable

B1: It’s (.) yeah I know it’s not (.) but it’s not a justice song

G4: But it like (.) it like puts across like a (.) unrealistic (2) image

B1: I guess

G4: (1) For one those models are under weight

B1: (2) Yeah but (1)

G2: They are so skinny

B3: Have you heard of Azealia Banks 212

G4://No

G3: //Don’t they just

G2: Oh yeah (.) that song is sung by

B2: // They’re underweight too

B3: // They sing like I want to lick your cunt

G2: // But they’re not underweight to be sexualised

B3: // I’m going to ruin you cunt

B2: // Yeah

G3: //Just to seem more attractive

G4: Yeah

G1: They’re models and actresses

G4: But they’re portrayed as it’s okay for women to be underweights as long as it is to make men happy

B4: Surely it’s if (2) mm (2) if it’s not okay to be underweight then it’s not okay to be overweight

G2: No (.) you want to be a healthy weight

G4: Yeah (1) I’m not saying it’s okay to be a bit overweight but I’m saying it’s not okay for them to be underweight for the purpose of sexualisation (.) cause if the industry is saying you must be this size and this image because this is what men like

B3: What is that

B1: It’s got a stop sign

G1: I thought she had a butt plug in

B2: It’s because of commercialising

G3: What

G1: I thought she has a butt plug in

B3: I did see that she’s got a stop sign in her ass

B4: Oh

G1: //Also (.) Robin Thicke has a big dick

B1: //Maybe he needs to break in the stop sign you know

G3: Well (2) shit

B1: Oh I don’t know

B2: Has anyone seen Lily Allen’s video

G1: Yeah

B2: I love it (.) has a baggy pussy

G1: //Yeah

G3: //Yeah

B4: Okay that’s enough

G1: I always compare those two

B1: Who says that

G1: Um Lily Allen

B1: Has a baggy pussy

G1: You know Hard Out Here For A Bitch

B1: Yeah

G1: (.) um in the video (.) it’s basically a piss take of this

B2: Like with the balloon it has Lily Allen has a baggy pussy

G2: Also I hate that tracksuit (.) so fucking much

G3: It’s awful

B1: I like Pharrell though

G1: Yeah I was disappointed that he was involved

B1: Yeah (.) yeah exactly

What are your feelings towards the language used the song?

G1: What sort of lines did you pick up on as being inappropriate

B4: // Last ones the last ones

B1: // I think it was (.) I think it was ones where it just sort of like the the there were some that were derogatory there were some that were I think like (.) i-it was sort of the the where they kinda compared to animals of they sort of took their power away (.) like the whole kinda

B2: Or the split the arse in two was just (.) a bit

B1: That bit was yeah (.) well eh

B3: But I think it was (1) like like you yeah well just beating round the bush

B4: That bit was really painful

B2: Yeah

G1: Yeah

G3: Would you would you would you guys like it if a girl sang a song about you guys splitting your arse in two

B1: Yeah

B3: I’d love it

[LH]

B4: What more do I love

G3: But you guys can’t expect us to want it

[LH]

B3: //Genuinely like to be (.) have a dildo

G1: //Have you seen the switched gender version

B3: //Up my arse

B1: //No

G2: It’s hilarious

G1: Yeah they got men on leads and stuff

B3: Well where else would it go

B1: Was it literally as explicit as well (.) I mean properly

G1: Yeah yeah I mean

G2: It’s not quite as explicit but still very explicit

G1: Yeah

B1: Right

G1: But the reason is not quite as explicit it’s cause apparently men’s’ penises and genitals aren’t as attractive as women’s’

B1: Well to be fair you’re not really supposed to show something that explicit anyway like you’re supposed to censor for mainstream (2) media

G1: But also with that one it wasn’t so such an issue like having

B1: Oh no not the fact that they were naked (.) although I didn’t like the fact that they were naked and the men were completely fully clothed

G1: Yeah yeah that was that was like was actually an issue

B1: Yeah

B2: But the language is what we are supposed to be concentrating on

G1: Yeah yeah yeah of course

G2: It’s just really derogatory

G4: Did you (.) did you guys pick up on the hottest bitch in this place

G1: //Mmm

B2: //It’s not like he said it to her face (.) you’re the hottest bitch in this place

B4: //About that (.) what about it

B1: The thing is (.) that’s not (.) not one of the things I

G1: How is (.) how is that supposed to be a compliment

G4: It’s not

G2: Yeah

G1: It’s like

B2: Well yeah that’s what he’s implying as

B1: //It’s not (.) if you like (.) if you like taking his words into reality you’ll be slapped

G4: But we’re supposed to

B3: Only if you’re applying it

B1: Yeah exactly yeah (.) I mean (1) I’m not oh-so surprised by it cause cause you see that

B2: Yeah exactly B1: in a lot of songs I’m not saying I’m not saying I’m good with it but like it’s just (.)

G1: //Exactly

B3: //I don’t think it’s awful

G4: //But it’s not right

B4: //It’s not one of the things that bugs me the most

G1: //It’s not right it’s not right that that’s (1) normalised as a way of referring to women

B1: Well no

B3: Yeah it’s still got men refers (.) like women refer to er with men as well like (.) in other like songs like in 212

B4: //Yeah my sister does spend everything we watch (.) she’ll pick out which guy she think’s hot and I’m just like err

B3: //How was it (1) yeah

B4: Yeah

G2: I mean it can kind of works both

B1: //I admit I I can see yeah I mean it’s it is obviously more common for it to happen to

G3: Much more

B1: // women you know I mean

G2: Definitely

B4: No I don’t think it is I disagree

G1: //Well no

G3: //Fuck no

B1: I think it is

B4: //Well my mum and (.) me and (.)

B1: //Well easier

B4: my mum and (.) me and (.) I’m watching a film (.) and my mum and sister will spend a lot of time talking about the guys in it

B1: Well the thing is people will say that is okay but it depends on the way you talk about them like it’s fine (.) I think it’s fine to judge people’s attractiveness

G1: Yeah

G2: That’s completely normal

B2: I agree

B1: But if-if you’re doing it in a derogatory way then not so much

G1: Yeah (.) yeah so I-I can watch that and go yeah those women are hot but

B1: Yeah I mean you know

G1: But I’m not

B4: //That’s not what I’m saying

B3: But you’re not going to say you’re the hottest bitch in this place

G1: Bitch is the issue

B2: Yeah

B1: Yeah I-I think that’s the (1)

G3: But then again that’s the issue in lots of music erm (.) for instance like we were just talking about (.) erm (.) Lily Allen’s

B3: But that’s in thousands of songs though

G3: (2) The literal lyrics for it’s Hard Out Here For A Bitch and it’s like (.) not appropriate for that to be in use

G2: //Yeah (.) also it’s the fact that they’re using that language and it’s making it more acceptable to do it on a smaller way and in everyday life and (.) and I say that it’s

B2: //But well in Hard Out Here though (2) it’s cause it’s cause it’s Lily Allen’s’ claim to fame again

B1: I don’t know it’s like (.) that works to the extent but then you get things like (.) you know how in these days in rap

B3: Yeah

B1: You get a lot in rap and it’s okay for the rappers to use and say these things like all the time

B2: Yeah

[**Indistinct 0:12 seconds]**

B3: You can’t sell records without it (1) you can’t (1) sell records without it

G1: You can

B3: No (1) you can’t though

G1: Then they shouldn’t make it like that because that’s really wrong

G3: Yeah I think it shouldn’t be

B3: But at the moment (.) if you say it (.) you sell a record (2) but the fact that we’re even talking about it (.) shows

G1: That it’s an issue

B3: Yeah

G1: Do you think that it is actually a sexual (.) rapey thing

G3: Yeah

G1: Do you think that’s what he intended

B1: Err

B2: //I bet Robin Thicke didn’t even realise

B1: //But the thing is all of the language really suggests that it’s just so hard to believe that someone would write a song generally meaning those things

G1: Yeah

B2: But then

B4: It’s meant more as a shock factor like with liberalism (.) it’s what I was saying earlier about liberalism being the death of literature

G2: Yeah

B4: It’s um it’s that there’s nothing left to say that shocks you (.) like a hundred years ago if you mentioned homosexuality in a piece of pop culture it would have been like oh my god

G1: //Yeah

B1: //Yeah

B4: Now you can say that and it’s fine (.) he was just finding the next thing to say

B1: //Yeah I don’t know

B2: //Yeah I don’t think it is

G1: No

B4: But if you think it’s wrong

B3: But he wanted it to be a feminist active movement I mean

G2: Yeah

B1: The thought is a nice idea but the way he did it not so well

B2: Also he didn’t do it with feminist

B3: It’s definitely a feminist act

G1: You can’t you can’t

B3: I mean there’s a stop sign in her arse in one of the pictures lets not beat around the bush like

G1: But it’s also

B4: But it’s not going to stop him though

[LH]

B3: That was a very wrong time to use that (.) that phrase there

B2: It’s titled blurred lines isn’t it

G1: Exactly

G3: My feelings are disgust

B2: I think the song’s got like a nice rhythm to it words could be improved

[LH]

B2: Especially (.) especially in some places for example you’re the hottest bitch in this (.) in this place

G1: Yeah

B2: Or or tear your ass in two

G1: Yeah

B4: I’m not so bothered about that bit to be honest

B1: Well it’s not it’s definitely not one of my least favourite parts but like (1) you know still obviously like you know

G2: It’s a common problem

B1: Even though (2) Even though for those men they would (1) like they would enjoy it very much especially this cover of i- (.) version of it

B2: Are you obsessed (.) you and [name removed] were both laughing

B3: The thing is if you show this to like an eleven year olds like

G4: They won’t know

G2: You just listen to it

G1: Did it fell more awkward watching it with us in the room than it did when you were watching it on your own?

B1: No not really (1) I think with more people the actually more easier it is regardless of gender I think

G1: //Yeah

G3: //It’s sort of (2)

B2: //Yeah

B1: It wasn’t (.) I-I I don’t find it awkward at all (.) cause you know

G2: Yeah

B3: We’re very similar

B1: We all have like (.) pretty much same the same views on it anyway

G1: Which is interesting (.) why is there so much controversy when actually a group of stereotypical (2) things are actually all agree that’s actually that’s not okay why is that

B1: Because we’re not already representative of general populations though I mean if-if you

G3: I think most people are both

B2: We’re got Bath teen natures

B1: Yeah I mean you know we’re not like not like

B4: //We’re not normal

G1: //We’re not normal (.) I hate to say it but

B1: But we are that’s the thing

B3: Yeah but people who listen to it (.) have got no problem cause it’s everyday culture so I’m not going to say American culture but it is

G1: It is American culture

G2: It is American

B3: And the reason why it’s their culture is cause they’ve made it and it has been published and a lot of us (.) think it’s not right

G3: Yeah

B3: Which is why there is so much controversy

G1: Yeah