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“Oh, shit, fuck, bollocks!” “Helvetin perseen perkele!”

Subtitling of Swear Words into Finnish in the Comedy TV Series
Green Wing

Master's Thesis

Vaasa 2017

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ABBREVIATIONS

CFD = Caroline's First Day (Episode 1)

JB = Joanna's Birthday (Episode 4)

HP = Housewarming Party (Episode 5)

TW = Tangled Webs (Episode 7)

SA = Slave Auction (Episode 8)

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Series *Green Wing***Degree:** Master of Arts**Date:** 2017**Supervisor:** Nestori Siponkoski

ABSTRACT

Tässä tutkielmassa tutkin kiro sanojen käännöksiä suomeksi brittiläisen tv-komediasarjan *Green Wingin* YLE TV1:llä näytetyissä tekstityksissä. Sarjan nimi on suomeksi *Vikatikki* ja tekstitykset YLE:lle teki Tuula Friman. Sarjan ensimmäinen kausi esitettiin Isossa-Britanniassa 2004 ja Suomessa 2005. Tutkimani käännökset ovat vuoden 2007 uusinoista, jotka eroavat jonkin verran ensimmäisistä tekstityksistä.

Kirosanat jaoin neljään kategoriaan: uskonto (taivas/helveti), seksi ja ruumiintoiminnot, eläimet sekä pehmenneetyt sanonnat ja sekalaiset. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli saada selville, mihin kategorioihin kuuluvia kiro sanoja materiaalissa käytettiin sekä puhutussa englannissa että kirjoitetussa suomessa, kuinka paljon kiro sanojen sävy muuttuu tekstityksissä sekä kuinka paljon kiro sanojen kategoria muuttuu, kun niitä käännetään toiseen kieleen tekstityksissä. Ensimmäisenä hypoteesina oli, että tekstityksissä on joko pehmenneetty kiro sanoja tai jätetty ne kokonaan pois. Toisena hypoteesina oli, että tässä materiaalissa on englannissa enemmän seksiin ja ruumiintoimintoihin liittyviä kiro sanoja, suomessa taas uskontoon liittyviä kiro sanoja ja että uskontoon liittyvät kiro sanat ovat englannissa enemmän taivaaseen liittyviä, kun taas suomessa helvetiin liittyviä. Hypoteesit toteutuivatkin laajasti, mutta hypoteesin vastaisesti muutamassa tapauksessa kiro sanoja oli jopa voimistettu tekstityksissä.

Kirosanat toimivat eri kielissä eri lailla ja tällä voi olla vaikutusta mahdolliseen komediaan. Tutkin kiro sanojen kategorioiden vaihtuvuutta, että saisin selville, muuttuvatko kategoriat paljonkin kiro sanoja käännettäessä ja että onko tällä vaikutusta käännöksen toimivuuteen. Tuloksena oli oletusta paljon vähemmän tapauksia, joissa kiro sanakategoriolla olisi merkitystä sanaleikin takia.

KEYWORDS: Subtitles, Translation, Swear words, Comedy, Audiovisual translation

1 INTRODUCTION

Statham:	Welcome to the lunatic asylum.
Caroline:	“You don’t have to be mad to work here, but it helps”?
Statham:	Well, no, come on, hang on now. The-the doctors aren’t mad here. I mean, that-that certainly wouldn’t be allowed. Not at my level. Ah, there again, we are an equal-opportunities employer, so I dare say there might be one or two of the ancillary workers, or even some of the clerical staff who might be considered a little bit... [taps side of head]
Joanna:	Oh, dear God...

CFD: Caroline is introduced to Statham

Swear words enrich the language. They add something extra to expressions, making the speaker more trustworthy or making them sound more “low culture” (Anderson & Trudgill 1991: 65–66). Although they are usually meant to be taken only metaphorically, if even that, sometimes they can be taken literally. This is more probable with puns, although it can, of course, take place in any situation. Translating swear words can, for this reason, be difficult.

Swear words are generally considered to be stronger in written form than in spoken form. Although there is no absolute evidence of this, this is important to consider when subtitling a programme or film when the viewer can both hear the spoken dialogue and read the subtitles, and, understanding both languages, compare them easily. Because the viewer can analyse the subtitles in the light of the spoken dialogue, there should not be too clear a contrast between the original swear word and the subtitled one.

Swear words can have a strong meaning when they are taken literally. When they are translated between any languages, their meaning may be lost, especially if there is a pun in the original text. For example, in a Finnish film about football, *FC Venus* (2005), one of the characters finds out who his girlfriend’s father is, and exclaims, “Ei perkele!” [‘No devil’, literally.] The father answers, “No, ei nyt sentään” [Well, not really]. The aforementioned lines were subtitled as, “Jesus Christ.” and “Not quite.”, respectively. The shift from the biggest devil to Jesus Christ is quite the opposite, yet the reply to that was simply, “not really”. The former would suggest evil, the latter good. It does not

necessarily matter how things like this are translated because the meaning is not supposed to be taken literally anyway. Yet it does matter in that the interpretation of the situation changes.

The aim of this thesis is to see how swear words are subtitled in the context of a comedy TV series. The research questions are: (1) what kind of swear words are used both in the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles, (2) how much the tone of swear words changes in subtitles, and (3) how much swear words shift in swear word categories when subtitled into another language. Swear words can be categorised into three categories: these are from Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 15), who in turn quote Edmund Leach (1975).

1. 'Dirty' words having to do with sex and excretion, such as *bugger* and *shit*.
2. Words that have to do with the Christian religion such as *Christ* and *Jesus*.
3. Words which are used in 'animal abuse' (calling a person by the name of an animal), such as *bitch* and *cow*.

(Anderson & Trudgill 1991: 15; original italics)

Anderson and Trudgill's list differs slightly from Leach's list, in that Leach has shorter explanations, but the categories are the same:

Broadly speaking, the language of obscenity falls into three categories: (1) dirty words – usually referring to sex and excretion; (2) blasphemy and profanity; (3) animal abuse – in which a human being is equated with an animal of another species (Leach 1975: 28).

Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 15) quote Leach saying that the English swear words fall into these three groups. These are of course based on the English language, and so they are not globally accurate categories. For this thesis, they will suffice, however, as the languages concerned are British English and Finnish, British English being the source language. It will be interesting to know whether Finnish swear words fall into these three categories, and if so, to which extent they do this in the subtitles of *Green Wing*.

The first hypothesis of this thesis is that mostly swear words have been either softened in tone or completely omitted in the subtitles. Strengthening swear words in subtitles was not found to be mentioned in study books, so that will not be expected to be found in this

material. The second hypothesis is that in this material, English has more body-related swear words and Finnish more religion-related swear words; of the religion-related swear words English would have more heaven-centred swear words whereas Finnish would have more hell-centred swear words. The way the swear words are translated here has a huge impact on the subtitles in general, and therefore for the viewer. The subtitles follow the comedic style of the show and are quite as varied as in the original language.

There are a few studies about translating English swear words into other languages, but mainly into Chinese and Spanish. For example, Chong Han and Kenny Wang (2014) have studied swear words in the Chinese subtitles of the Australian reality TV series *The Family*. Chen Chapman (2004) has studied swear words in the Hong Kong Chinese subtitles of several American films. María Jesús Fernández Fernández has studied swearing in the dubbing of the American TV series *South Park* into Spanish. However, there seems to be no studies about subtitling English swear words in a comedy into Finnish. In that sense, this thesis can bring new information on this topic.

Many people may not like it that there is so much swearing but even still, swear words are widely used. They play an important role in language. People use them to release tension and to express strong emotions and attitudes, such as anger, surprise, frustration and annoyance. Some use them more than others, but we all know them. “Swearing has always existed, will always be with us and cannot be ignored. As a linguistic phenomenon, taboo language surely deserves to be studied and analysed.” (Fernández Fernández 2009: 210–211.)

1.1 Material

The material of this thesis consists of a VHS recording of the first series of *Green Wing* aired by YLE TV1 in summer 2007 under the translated name *Vikatikki*. All nine episodes were subtitled by Tuula Friman and are 50 minutes long.

The classification of swear words has largely been taken from Anderson and Trudgill (1991) in their book *Bad Language* where they discuss the uses and types of swear words; they are partly based on Edmund Leach's (1975) categories. Minna Hjort's (2006; 2007) work on swear words and translators' position has been used as well. Basics of subtitling has mainly been taken from Díaz Cintas and Remael (2010) whose book *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* gives great detail in how to do and practise subtitling. Esko Vertanen (2007) gives excellent detail in how subtitling procedures take place working at YLE.

The material of swear words is abundant in *Green Wing*. Not only is there much swearing, it is also diverse in form. The same word is not repeated throughout the series but combinations of swear words are built, making the language more varied. This takes place in the Finnish subtitles as well. The swear words could have been subtitled using only a few translations for swear words but here there are nearly as many different subtitled swear words as there are original British English swear words. This keeps in line with the comedy aspect of the series, making the translated language diverse.

Swear words in this thesis can be categorised into four categories:

1. Religion
 - a) Heaven
 - b) Hell
2. Sex and bodily functions
3. Animals
4. Minced oaths¹ and mixed expressions

In this thesis, words are included in the material if their meaning is metaphorical. As Trudgill and Anderson (1991: 53) describe, one way of determining a swear word is that it "should not be taken literally" (ibid.); therefore it can be metaphorical. If someone is quoted as having a nice *arse*, that is no swear word, but if someone is called an *arse*, that is a swear word. In the Animal category, *donkey* could be included but it is used in such

¹ Minced oath means an expression where the tone is taken down, for example instead of saying *oh, shit*, one says *oh, sugar*; or instead of *shut the fuck up*, one says *shut the front door*.

a way that it has no metaphorical meaning, although it is used of a human. *Fuck* is an exception to this rule, as it is counted in whether its meaning is metaphorical or literal. *Fuck* is generally considered one of the rudest words in English, so omitting it in this thesis, even if the meaning is literal, seemed illogical.

While the *Green Wing* episodes' names were translated into Finnish, the English names are not visible in the version YLE TV1 showed. They are not mentioned on the DVD either. They are used, however, on sites like British Comedy Guide (2016), and from there they are taken into this work as well.

Some of the episodes will be named in this work with abbreviations in the sources if the name of the episode is more than one word long. The abbreviations are the first letters of the episodes' English names. The first episode, *Alku aina hankalaa* [*The beginning always difficult*], or *Caroline's First Day*, will be CFD. The fourth episode, *Mauton merkkipäivälahja* [*Tasteless anniversary present*], or *Joanna's Birthday*, will be JB. The fifth episode, *Tuparitempaus* [*Housewarming event*], or *Housewarming Party*, will be HP. The seventh episode, *Verkot solmussa* [*Webs tangled*], or *Tangled Webs*, will be TW. The eighth episode, *Omituista orjakauppaa* [*Odd slave trade*], or *Slave Auction*, will be SA.

The remaining four episodes will be named with their full English names, being only one word long and thus not too long for references as whole names. The second episode, *Juoru kiertää* [*Gossip circles around*], or *Rumours*, will be *Rumours*. The third episode, *Aivoton alivuokralainen* [*Brainless lodger*], or *Lodgers*, will be *Lodgers*. The sixth episode, *Testejä ja testejä* [*Tests and tests*], or *Tests*, will be *Tests*. The ninth and final episode, *Kuilun partaalla* [*On the brink of abyss*], or *Emergency*, will be *Emergency*.

As stated above, only swear words that have a metaphorical meaning have been counted in. This does not include lyrics in music although they were written specifically for the series. Such music includes the clip where Guy and Caroline drive to work together (*Rumours*) where the music goes, "Ah! Bitch! Bitch! I took the bitch home, I took the bitch home, I took the bitch home last night. [...] Bitch bitch bitch!" or Guy somewhat singing a song (CFD), "Smack-a my bitch up, smack-a my..." Altogether, these would

make 14 instances of the word *bitch*. There are other words someone else might consider swear words in *Green Wing*, such as *donkey boy* (SA) or *ginger freak* (JB) but they are excluded here, *donkey* being quite descriptive, not metaphorical; and *ginger* and *freak*, although together an insult, not being swear words per se. Also language of a sexual nature has largely been omitted. Someone might call *slag*, *slut* or *Jezebel whores* swear words. They are definitely derogatory words, but whether they are swear words is another matter. Such words of sexual nature tend to have a more literal meaning in the context and are therefore omitted. The words *cock* and *cocky/cockies* exist in *Green Wing* as well but they are omitted as their meaning is literal. However, in the expression *cock up* there is no actual reference to penises, and it is therefore counted in. To be sure, *oh, dear* is no swear word, either, but such expressions have been counted in to see how great a part of expletive expressions is minced. *Arse* is also used as strictly referring to a body part in *Green Wing* but the only instances where it has been counted in here are when its meaning is more metaphorical.

1.2 Method

The first series of *Green Wing* was aired as a repeat by YLE TV1 in summer 2007 under the translated name *Vikatikki*. All the episodes were subtitled by Tuula Friman. The spoken dialogue was transcribed to help marking and counting swear words; this was aided by *Green Wing. The Complete First Series Scripts* (2006), which contains the scripts in a book format. The scripts book has some mistakes² and omissions, so these were then checked against the English subtitles and dialogue on the DVD *Green Wing. The Complete First and Second Series, Special and Bonus Disc of Unseen Material* (2007). With the help of these two aids, the spoken dialogue could be attained completely and swear words counted more easily. The spoken dialogue and the Finnish subtitles in the VHS recording were then compared to find out the differences in the swear words. The

² For example, Mac's name is written as MacCartney in the book, whereas it is Macartney in the programme end titles.

swear words were compiled into types (*fuck, shit* etc.) based on their form (*fucker, fucking; oh shit, leg shit* etc.), and the types were then grouped into categories.

In transcribing audio material, it is obviously impossible to tell if something should be written with a capital letter or not. Should it be God or god? The same applies to Jesus/jesus and Satan/satan, among others. In this thesis, these English words are written with a capital letter but the Finnish subtitles are written mainly with a smaller case letter, as they mostly are in the subtitles; exceptions are of course when a swear word begins the sentence. Whether a spoken word is written out with a capital letter or not does not necessarily matter but some people might think it rude to spell God with a smaller case g while others would consider it superfluous. This is to point out the difficulty in choosing one way or another. In fact, Hjort (2006: 83) mentions of translators' attitudes that some may choose always to spell *Jumala* [*God*] with a capital letter. In their personal view, this can make a great difference.

Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 53) describe swear words to be used in a metaphorical sense, so that is the way they have been taken here. An exclamation of *oh, God* is counted in when it means just an exclamation; when it refers to a supernatural being, it is not counted in, as in someone saying they believe in God. *Arse* is also counted in when it refers to someone *being an arse*, not when someone says they have a nice arse, or buttocks. There are some combinations of swear words that have been counted in only one type of swear word even though they would have references from two or several types. Such expressions include *buggering wank* and *fucking shit*, included in the types *bugger* and *fuck*, respectively. The number of times any word has been omitted in the subtitles has been counted, as well as toning them down, or, possibly, even strengthening the tone. In addition to these, the times a word has kept its strength in the subtitles has been counted.

Leach (1975), and Anderson and Trudgill (1991) describe swear word categories, as mentioned in Chapter 1, and these are used as the base categories in this thesis. Swear words are categorised into different categories, based on religion, sex and bodily

functions, and animal abuse. These are categorised more in-depth, and the two languages, British English and Finnish, are compared, to see how they correspond with each other.

Chapter 2 will discuss *Green Wing* as a whole comedy series, and then more particularly, the first series of *Green Wing*, and the translated *Vikatikki* with Finnish subtitles. Chapter 3 will give information on subtitles in general and how they are done in Finland and at YLE, in more detail. Chapter 4 will discuss swear words and how they can be subtitled. Chapter 5 will analyse the swear words in *Green Wing* and *Vikatikki*. Finally, Chapter 6 will have conclusions on this thesis.

2 GREEN WING AND VIKATIKKI

“Quick-fire (and occasionally slow motion [sic]) genre-defying comedy, set in a surreal hospital but lacking medical content. From the award-winning team behind *Smack the Pony*.” (Channel 4 2017.) From the programme’s own site, this is obviously an advertising text but it is very accurate, too. The series was shown in Britain in 2004–2007 and in Finland in 2005–2007. This chapter discusses first the whole series of *Green Wing*, then the first series³, and finally moves on to the subtitled *Vikatikki* that was shown in Finland. *Green Wing* uses swear words abundantly but being a comedy series, it is not to be taken seriously.

2.1 *Green Wing* the Comedy Series

Green Wing was created, devised and produced by Victoria Pile. It was produced for Talkback Thames and broadcast by Channel 4. Its writers are, in addition to Pile, Robert Harley, James Henry, Gary Howe, Stuart Kenworthy, Oriane Messina, Richard Preddy and Fay Rusling. The directors of the series are, also in addition to Pile, Dominic Brigstocke and Tristram Shapeero. With so many writers, the writing was difficult and complicated, “a bit ad hoc”, but Pile and the script editor harnessed the writers into “a total story” (Chortle 2009). Some of the script was also ad-libbed, but mostly scripts were thrown to-and-fro in the writing and making process, so that it became a combination of drafts and improvisation at the practicing stage, and a fully scripted version for the shooting stage (ibid.).

Green Wing is a comedy series that happens to take place in a hospital. A hospital was chosen for the location so that there would be many different kinds of people in the same place. As Victoria Pile says on the audio commentary for the first episode about her ideas for the new comedy, “I started talking vaguely about hospitals and doctors and houses

³ Note that the word ‘series’ is used here when in American English it would be ‘season’. ‘Series’ is also used for the whole series, so that in the case of *Green Wing*, a series contains two series.

where people could – all walks of life could merge and be hilarious together”, and “[w]e’re not really into medicine, [...] [it’s] not about procedure” (Audio commentary for episode 1). Although said in a comedic sense, a rather apt description of the series is shared by Stephen Mangan and Tamsin Greig (Audio commentary for episode 5): “Hair and sex is really what this programme is all about” and “[i]t’s very physical, there’s a lot of visual gags (ibid.)”. The series is not even a parody of hospital series since there are hardly any patients and hardly any work is done, and extremely little medical jargon – mostly only used in a comedic sense, as in *CFD*, when Statham is showing an X-ray to students: “This is the same gall bladder and here we can see the small object has become dislodged and is now down here. It is what I like to call the Mick Jagger effect, because it is essentially a rolling stone. Which is a joke, you may laugh.” (*CFD*.)

More important than any medical jargon are people’s relationships. Indeed, medical jargon hardly appears in this series, patients are hardly seen, and only very little action is done in the operating theatre. A programme *Green Wing* could be compared to would rather be *Smack the Pony* the sketch show than *Scrubs* the American hospital comedy show. Incidentally, *Smack the Pony* is from the same makers as *Green Wing*, and also a production for Channel 4. *Green Wing* was initially a progression from *Smack the Pony*, meaning to continue the sketch show format, only with stronger narrative structure (Chortle 2009). The makers wanted to do something with characters who had more depth and longevity but they wanted also the ability to be randomly funny, which was the sketch appeal (ibid.).

The name *Green Wing* sounds like it could be referring to a hospital wing, or, more specifically, the operating theatre where in this series people wear green scrubs. In the words of Sue White, “Nothing could be further from the truth” (*Lodgers*), as the name was come upon by Victoria Pile and the executive producer Peter Fincham when a little green-winged figurine fell from his pocket and nobody knew who it belonged to. Or, as Victoria Pile put it herself,

[A]s I spoke, a small green man fell out of Peter’s top pocket onto my desk. A little figurine with wings. And I said, “Oh, Peter, you’ve dropped your little green

man,” and he looked at me rather strangely and said, “That’s not mine.” [...] He’d never seen it before. So, I picked it up, put it on my computer monitor and it became our guardian angel. [...] Little man with green wings.

(Audio commentary for episode 1.)

According to actor Julian Rhind-Tutt, the cast and crew were asked for a better name for the show but no one came up with anything better, so the name *Green Wing* stayed (Audio commentary for episode 2).

Green Wing is a British hospital comedy series, partly sketch comedy and partly drama. Although there is a general plot for the whole series, it mainly consists of sketches, or little stories that have no meaning on a greater scale. Each episode begins with a “last week” collage to showcase the general plot of the whole series, although even individual sketches are shown in it. The hospital is a fictional East Hampton Hospital Trust and the series starts with a new Surgical Registrar Caroline Todd starting to work in the hospital. The main plot of the whole series is basically whether Caroline will end up with Mac, a surgeon, or Guy, an anaesthetist. Sub-plots include Joanna and Statham’s relationship or lack of one, Martin’s ambition to get a girlfriend, and as a “glue” bonding every character together, the Staff Liaison Sue White. The series also uses a then-new technique of speeding up and slowing down. This enables the makers to set the programme with music better, and this technique also allows them to show what happens prior or post a scene in a way that it does not take too much screen time; and occasionally it is “literally a time thing, to get the programme the right length” (Chortle 2009).

Green Wing is a comedy series combining sketch comedy and drama. Or, as the creator Victoria Pile said (although in a comedic sense), “we ended up with a sketch slash sitcom slash drama slash soap slash porn thing” (*Green Wing Unmasked* 2007: 3). The “porn thing” is not really true but other than that, it is surprisingly accurate. In *Green Wing* it is more likely to see posters saying, “Have you seen this yoghurt?”, a camel in a corridor, or doctors playing children’s games in the operating theatre than anyone doing any actual work.

The first series has nine episodes and the second series eight episodes. In addition to them, there is also a Special episode which is longer than the others. The “normal” episodes are 50 minutes each (without adverts), and the Special is 1.5 hours long (without adverts). The “normal” episodes were broadcast on a commercial channel, with adverts, in Britain, making them practically one hour long. In Finland, however, they were broadcast without adverts, making them 50 minutes long.

The first series of *Green Wing* was shown in Britain in 2004, the second series was shown in 2006, and the Special episode in early 2007, all of them on the commercial channel Channel 4. In Finland, the series was shown as *Vikatikki*, and the first series was shown in 2005. In 2007, the first series had a repeat and right after that, the second series was shown. The Special episode was shown later in the year. The series was shown by YLE (the Finnish Broadcasting Company), and all the episodes were subtitled by Tuula Friman.

This work, however, concentrates on the first series, and disregards the second series and the Special episode; the first series will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.2 Series One of *Green Wing*

There are thirteen main characters in the series. Of these, Caroline, Mac and Guy are most often presented as the main characters, though other characters have equal roles in the series. Dr Caroline Todd is the new person in the workplace, the first episode is her first day at the hospital. Other doctors include Dr ‘Mac’ Macartney, Dr Guillaume ‘Guy’ Secretan, Dr Angela Hunter, Dr Alan Statham and the junior doctor Dr Martin Dear and the student Mr Boyce. Head of Human Resources is Joanna Clore and the people in the administration office are Kim Alabaster, Naughty Rachel, Harriet Schulenburg and Karen Ball. The Staff Liaison Officer is Sue White who Victoria Pile called “our linking device, if you like” (Audio commentary for episode 1), as people from all around the hospital

come to her office, usually to complain about one thing or another, quite often using rather abusive language.

Other characters who play quite a significant role include Liam, Angela's boyfriend; Oliver, a member of the administration staff; Lyndon, head of IT Department; Emmy, physiotherapist; and Cordelia Denby, the hospital Chaplain.

As said in the previous section, the series starts with Dr Caroline Todd arriving in the hospital as the new Surgical Registrar. As there are so many main characters, there are also many plotlines. The major ones of these are Caroline's indecision about whether Mac or Guy would be preferable as a boyfriend; Sue White trying to get Mac as her boyfriend; Joanna and Statham losing their relationship; Statham and his student Boyce who always teases his superior; and general banter and swearing between everyone. Guy tries to sleep with as many women as possible, and Martin tries to pass his exams. Each episode has its own main plot as well: the first episode, *Caroline's First Day*, deals with Caroline as well as the viewer getting to know everyone; the second episode, *Rumours*, centres around rumours about where and why Caroline spent the previous night. The third episode, *Lodgers*, deals with Caroline's problem of getting a flat mate; the fourth one, *Joanna's Birthday*, is about birthday presents and possible celebrations. The fifth episode, *Housewarming Party*, centres around the housewarming of Caroline's house; the sixth episode, *Tests*, is about Martin's exams and pregnancy tests. The seventh episode, *Tangled Webs*, deals with Caroline's problem of deciding which one is better, Mac or Guy; the eighth episode, *Slave Auction*, is about gathering money for hospital equipment; and the ninth episode, *Emergency*, deals with decisions about the future, leaving with a literal cliffhanger, when some of the main cast in an ambulance are left hanging from Dover cliffs.

The series has a great amount of abusive language. Actor Stephen Mangan (Audio commentary for episode 2) comments the series to be "quite rude", and "with lots of swearing" (Audio commentary for episode 1). According to the series' deviser Victoria Pile (Audio commentary for episode 1), all the swearing had to be in accordance with taste and decency rules, and Online Editor Billy Sneddon (*ibid.*) added that the word *cunt*

cannot be said; in fact, it was bleeped even on the DVD audio commentary. Victoria Pile (ibid.) added yet that more swear words could go onto the second half of the show which would definitely be shown after 10pm. She also mentioned (ibid.) that there is no quota for swear words but as long as the usage was justifiable for the character, it was accepted by Channel 4.

Green Wing is a comedy series, so no matter how much there are swear words, they should still convey a comedic sense; they should not be taken literally – or, as it happens, they may exactly be taken literally and thus make it comedy. Someone may be talking about *tits* (the birds) first and wanting to make sure others did not think they were talking about *breasts* (tits), create an awkward moment (see Example 5 in 5.3), and create comedy for film. Or the repetitive use of a certain swear word is diminished in its sense when taken into a childish conclusion, also thus creating comedy (see Example 8 in 5.4.2). More about this in Chapter 5.

2.3 The First Series of *Vikatikki* on the Finnish Television

The first series of *Green Wing* was shown on the Finnish channel YLE TV1 as *Vikatikki* first in 2005, and as a repeat in 2007. Both these times it was subtitled by Tuula Friman. There are some small alterations in the second set of subtitles (such as Mac’s name being written as Macartney, instead of McCartney on the first time) but aside from them, the subtitles are the same. *Vikatikki* was shown on YLE TV1 between 3rd July and 28th August 2007, every Tuesday evening (Netello.fi 2016a; Netello.fi 2016b).

The show’s name was translated as *Vikatikki*. Literally this means a false stitch, so that could be a reference to the hospital surrounding. Metaphorically, though, it means a mistake, which also describes the programme quite well. *Vikatikki* as a word is also mentioned in the actual subtitles in the episode *Emergency* where Guy talks of women he has slept with and mentions of someone, “I wish I hadn’t had!”; this was subtitled as “Vikatikki”, or “a mistake”. This usage gives more validity to the translated name of the

series. It could be argued that the Finnish name is more logical than the original English name of the series.

All the episodes were translated by Tuula Friman. She works for YLE, the national Finnish television and radio broadcaster. She has worked several years for YLE as a freelancer, and had worked a number of years for the commercial channel MTV3 (LinkedIn 2017). Some of the notable cases she has worked with during her 27 years as a subtitler include *Lovejoy*; *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*; *The Benny Hill Show*; *One Foot in the Grave* and *Ideal* (Friman 2017).

The next chapter will discuss subtitling in general and how it is done in Finland, particularly at YLE.

3 SUBTITLING AS A METHOD OF TRANSLATION

Subtitles help the viewer to understand what is being said in a foreign-language TV series or film, for example. They are quite necessary when the dialogue is in another language from the viewer's one, but they can also work intralingually, that is to say, within one language. For example, English spoken language may have English subtitles, to help to understand what is being said; this can help the hard-of-hearing, as well as those learning the language. Other methods of translating audiovisual material include voice-over and dubbing, where one person's voice, or several actors', play out the dialogue and no subtitles are seen. This thesis focuses on interlingual subtitles, however, but it is important to know how subtitles work in the first place, which I will deal with in the next sections.

This chapter will deal with subtitling in general, then move on to how it is used in Finland, particularly at YLE.

3.1 Subtitling as a Method of Translation

The study of audiovisual translation is quite new in translation studies. Only since the 1990s has it been recognised as an important field. We see images everywhere; on the television, in cinemas, on the computer screen, on our phones; in private and public lives; and since the 1930s text has been a companion to image. And where there is text, translation is needed. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 8.)

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2010: 8), subtitles can be defined as a translation practice that consists of a written text (generally on the lower part of the screen) whose aim is to convey the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as “the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)”. Some languages, like Japanese, may have subtitles vertically and on the right-hand side of the screen (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 8–9).

There are three main components in all subtitled programmes. These are the spoken word, the image and the subtitles. The basic characteristics of the audiovisual medium are determined by these three components, along with the viewer's ability to read both the images and the written text at a particular speed, and the actual size of the screen. "Subtitles must appear in synchrony with the image and dialogue, provide a semantically adequate account of the [source language] dialogue, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them." (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 9.)

As Díaz Cintas and Remael (2010: 61) describe, "The transition from oral to written mode obviously means that some of the typical features of spoken language will have to disappear, no matter what subgenre a dialogue belongs to." Then again, spoken language is not so clear-cut, either. It has to adjust to the style of the programme in question (*ibid.*), and many times it is scripted and practised lines (such as programmes and films) as opposed to natural speech (such as interviews).

"[T]he subtitler is limited to two lines of approximately 37 characters each for 5 to 6 seconds of speech. The actual lines available for the translation are calculated proportionally: a th[r]ee-second intervention is normally rendered in one line." The viewer will have a very limited time to read, and moreover, to understand, the subtitles. That is the reason subtitling has developed a style of its own that has an impact on grammar, style and features of dialogue. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 63.)

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2010: 63), although customers will always have their say, there are some global rules that apply to subtitling. Grammar and lexical items tend to be simplified, while interactional features and intonation are only maintained to some extent (for example, through word order, rhetorical questions, occasional interjections, and incomplete sentences). Not all of the speech is lost but condensed; if everything was translated, that would make too long subtitles and the viewer would have too much to read. Subtitles concentrate on informationally most relevant sentences. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 63–64.)

In documentaries, subtitles may be difficult to condense due to the heavy information load, whereas unscripted speech, such as in interviews, may require much interpreting and rewriting. The subtitler may also have to evaluate how much the audience knows about what is being said and how much extra information is required to make the text more easily readable. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 64.) Hesitations and confirmations, and requests for confirmation, along with other conversational tools, are often omitted in subtitles for lack of space and clarity of text (see Table 1). These include comments like “oh”, “yeah” and “isn’t it?” between characters and in between conversation. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 63.) However, sometimes in order to render the typical speech pattern of someone, these features need to be translated. Even still, the subtitles must be kept tidy and easy to read.

The following table illustrates the points discussed above. In the situation related to the dialogue and subtitles presented in Table 1, Caroline has not got hold of her new house keys, neighbour A tries to break into her house to help her get in and Caroline accidentally causes him to fall down the ladder. Neighbour B, who has the keys, is on the phone, not at home. Caroline is here first talking to neighbour A, then on the phone to neighbour B and then to neighbour A again.

Table 1. Condensing text in subtitles, leaving out hesitations, repetitions and requests for confirmation

Original dialogue	Subtitles into Finnish ⁴	Back-translations ⁵
Listen, thanks, thanks anyway, it was really kind of you for trying.	Kiitos kuitenkin, kun yrititte.	Thank you anyway for trying.
And you’ll be paying for a locksmith, all right?	Sinä maksat lukkosepän.	You pay for the locksmith.
Oh! Oh, oh, oh, sorry!	Anteeksi.	Sorry.
Er, don’t–don’t try and move your neck. You’ll be... you’ll be fine. I’m a doctor.	Älkää liikuttako niskaa. Ei hätää, olen lääkäri.	Don’t move your neck. Don’t worry, I’m a doctor.

⁴ The Finnish subtitles are by Tuula Friman.

⁵ Back-translations are by me.

Ah ah ah, I said don't move.	Kielsin liikkumasta.	I forbad you to move.
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(CFD)

As can be seen in Table 1, hesitation and repetitions are left out of the subtitles. This makes them easier to read and absorb. The subtitles are also clearer units of text than the spoken dialogue.

Global techniques vary but with the introduction of the DVD and its multiple subtitle tracks, subtitling practices have unified (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 80–81). Because some television manufacturers deal with the edges of the screen differently, ten per cent of the screen should be cut out and the middle part used as a background for the subtitles. These are usually placed on two lines at the bottom of the screen. In case the important part of the picture is taking place at the bottom of the screen, or if there are inserts – such as name placards – subtitles may be placed on top of the screen as surtitles. If the bottom two lines are used, but there is only one line of text, some practices have it on the second-to-last line, whereas others have it on the bottom line, to have as little “pollution” of the picture as possible. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 82–83.)

3.2 Subtitling in Finland

Esko Vertanen's article *Ruututeksti tiedon ja tunteiden tulkkina* [Screen text as an interpreter for knowledge and feelings] (2007) clarifies the subtitling procedure in Finland very well. This article describes precisely the fitting procedures for translating *Green Wing*, being written by someone who works in the same place as the translator of *Green Wing*, and both – the article and the subtitling of *Green Wing* – having taken place before the digital television age which might have brought additional challenges to subtitle techniques. At least there were some problems with timing at first.

Almost all foreign-language programmes on Finnish television are subtitled. The exception to this rule are children's programmes and some documentaries where the narrator's part may be dubbed. Subtitling is cheaper than dubbing, and therefore more

economical for small-language audiences such as Finnish, Swedish and Dutch. Dubbing can be used in countries with more viewers of that language, such as German, French or Italian, where viewers range in millions, potentially even tens of millions. The costs of dubbing will then be more reasonable per capita. (Vertanen 2007: 131–132.)

Vertanen (2007: 132–133) explains how a subtitler can work. In Vertanen's opinion, just like in all translation, the translator should be loyal to the original text. A subtitler, in addition, has to condense the (mostly) spoken text into concise and logical short units of subtitles, in just one or two lines. The subtitles need to be on the screen for the right amount of time, at the right time, so that the reader has enough time to read them and understand whose lines they represent. Subtitles can show factual information as well as great emotions. They have to work just as well with quick-fire-and-funny wordplay as with slow, repetitive wondering and yet keep the time and space limit. When the subtitles follow the speech precisely and are in harmony with the picture and sound, the viewer has an illusion of understanding the spoken language in the programme. The viewer is not necessarily even aware of reading subtitles on the screen. (Ibid.)

Because people watch television a great deal in Finland, and as a large part of the programmes are of foreign origin, the subtitles need to be of high standards, according to Vertanen (2007: 131). Of all the text Finns read, subtitles take the largest part (Heikkilä 2015). The quality of subtitles also matters greatly in how the viewer sees the original text. If they are not coherent or appear on screen too long or – more importantly – too briefly, or are spaced awkwardly in not concise units, the viewer will not be able to follow the original material and will be left disliking the programme or film. The reader (or viewer) pays attention first to the layout of the text which greatly matters in the reader's decision to accept the verbal text. It is important to remember that written text has no natural, "self-born" form but it is always the result of more or less successful creative work. (Schopp 2007: 254). Therefore, it is important to pay attention to how the subtitles are translated and placed.

In the following subsections, I will give more detailed information on how subtitles are done in Finland, on the practical level.

3.2.1 Condensing Subtitles in Finland

Green Wing, or *Vikatikki*, was shown on YLE TV1 in summer 2007. Right between showing series one and two, there was a change from the analogue television to digital. As this thesis concerns the first series, it is important to know how subtitles were made during the analogue era. According to Vertanen (2007: 133), during the analogue television age, subtitles in Finland could be attached to the programme in two ways: the so-called “burned-on” subtitles were already a part of the picture signal that was being sent; and the subtitles that were sent via teletext were sent as a separate signal that a television set equipped with a decoder would show as regular subtitles. In digital sending technology, the subtitling is separate from the picture, and the viewer can even choose whether to have them or not. (Ibid.)

Subtitles have to be large enough to be read easily but not too large to cover the picture (Vertanen 2007: 133). In Finland in 2001 (the original publishing date of Vertanen’s article), the national channel YLE used a font and size that had been in use for decades. On YLE, one line of subtitles managed up to 30 characters. On the commercial channels MTV3 and Nelonen [Four] they used 32 characters per line. This difference was caused by YLE sending the subtitles on teletext as well, and they did not want the “burned-on” subtitles to be seen underneath the teletext subtitles. (Ibid.)

According to Vertanen (2007: 134), a full-length double-lined set of subtitles has to be shown for four to five seconds, and a full-length single line set of subtitles two to three seconds. The minimum duration of a unit of lines is one second, and the maximum is thirty seconds, though over ten seconds is too long for the subtitles to hang over the picture. The length of the lines is then the result of two factors, time and space. The more important one of these two is time. Subtitles should follow the speech rhythm as well as possible, which means the written text should be on screen the length of time it takes to say the matter. The length of the subtitles should also follow the length of spoken dialogue: a full-length double-lined set of subtitles cannot represent a short light blurt, nor should a slow and heavy speech be truncated into breathless single lines. (Vertanen 2007: 134.)

As space and time are restricted, nearly all that is said in the programme will not make it into the subtitles. Therefore, the subtitler must pick the important parts of the spoken text and leave out the additional, non-relevant parts. These include things that have been mentioned in the subtitles already and short expressions such as “I think that...”, “I believe...” and “I would like to point out that...” Also people’s names and titles need not be repeated very often when the characters are known to the viewer. Especially in American polite discussion, people’s names are mentioned often – this is very different from the Finnish way of using names and titles. Leaving the name out, there is more precious space for other subtitles. Names should, though, of course, be subtitled when they are mentioned the first time. (Vertanen 2007: 134.) Swear words are also expressions that can easily be left out of subtitles (Hjort 2006: 77), especially if they have no significant meaning.

The adjective attribute can be left out of the subtitles when it gives no extra information. As in Vertanen’s example, there is no need to subtitle “behind that big red house” if the viewer can see that the house is big and red. If there are houses in different sizes and colours, or the programme is in black and white, this information is, of course, important and should be subtitled. (Vertanen 2007: 134–135.) Place names and times can also be left out if needed. For example, “We came here to Poughkeepsie yesterday at 5pm” can be subtitled into “We came here yesterday.” Of course, if the question is about the alibi, for instance, the time and place may be very crucial and should therefore be subtitled. It is also noteworthy that long foreign place names may be difficult to read and they should be given enough time to be read. (Vertanen 2007: 135).

Subtitles always represent someone’s speech (unless they are texts in foreign language on the screen), so the message should not be left too bare. Often it is useful to translate the whole speech word for word and then condense it, and possibly add some words that are specifying, complementary, or give depth and nuance to the text; in this order. A worse solution is to translate the whole text and shorten it until it fits the space provided; the result is often too long or heavy. (Vertanen 2007: 135.)

In subtitling slang or regional accent, there is the difficulty of choosing language that conveys the meaning and gives nuance to the subtitles and yet is not too difficult to understand quickly. As subtitles can only be seen briefly, there must not be need to read them more carefully. Subtitled text can then give a hint of this slang or regional accent without being too strong and difficult to read. When this kind of non-standard text is chosen for any reason, it must be followed throughout. (Vertanen 2007: 135.) This can also be applied to swearing: the swear word can give a hint of the swearing in the original dialogue without needing to be an exact translation (Hjort 2006: 77, 78).

According to Vertanen (2007: 135), it is important to remember that when subtitling coarse language and swearing, the written text is always stronger than spoken language. In different cultures, swear words and insulting expressions come from all kinds of contexts and in the confined space of subtitles their meaning may be emphasised too much. Audiovisual translators are often accused of toning down the message by not translating all the swear words. However, in many cases, the message can be expressed in a more precise and un-watered-down manner in the subtitles by leaving out excess swearing. The translator can trust even the viewer who does not understand the source text to infer the level of coarseness from the speaker's expression and tone of voice. On the other hand, coarse language should not be avoided when it is needed. Soldiers during war hardly spoke with minced oaths. (Vertanen 2007: 135–136.)

3.2.2 Practices of Placing the Subtitles

Although subtitles can be shown in double lines of thirty characters, the meaning is not to cut text into that length sporadically but to make independent sets of subtitles that can be understood in one reading. Sometimes, the subtitles do not fit in one set of double lines and have to, therefore, be separated onto two or more sets of subtitles. These too have to be in logical, understandable units. (Vertanen 2007: 136.) At YLE, and most often in Finland in general, an unfinished set of subtitles is ended with a hyphen (-) [and sometimes with a longer dash] to show that the sentence continues in the next set of subtitles. A set of subtitles can include a whole sentence, but it is not advisable to have

the end part of a first sentence and the beginning of a second sentence in one set of subtitles. (Vertanen 2007: 136.) This, however, happens sometimes in the news, and it is much more difficult to follow.

It is not inconsequential how the subtitles are placed. Readability is of course the first criterion but it is also good to try to compose the lines so that they cover as little of the picture as possible. If a person's face is in close-up, there should not be a full-length double set of subtitles because the face would be covered too much. In addition to that, it is more difficult to follow the conversation if the speaker's mouth is covered with text. It is preferable for the upper line to be shorter than the lower line if the text allows it. Words ought not to be broken onto different lines, separated by a hyphen, if only possible. If this needs to be done, the word should be cut at a logical place, such as the separation of words in a compound word. Still, Finnish allows shifting in word order, and this can often be a way to leave words unbroken in subtitles. However, it should not be done at the expense of readability, either. (Vertanen 2007: 136–137.)

The speaker can change during a set of subtitles, and the shift is marked by a hyphen (-) [and sometimes with a longer dash] surrounded by spaces. The best choice is to have the first speaker's subtitles on the first line and the second speaker's on the second line but if the situation needs it, the speaker can change in the middle of a line. In no case, however, should a set of subtitles have the end part of the first speaker's subtitles, followed by the first part of the second speaker's subtitles. This should be kept clear. (Vertanen 2007: 137.)

In writing the subtitles, the general Finnish punctuation rules are followed. The practice at YLE was long one where other punctuation was followed except the full stop was left out. It was thought that it was not needed since it would be clear that the sentence would end there anyway. The full stop was taken into use after all, due to Finnish teachers saying it was difficult to teach Finnish to pupils when such a clear example was missing them. (Vertanen 2007: 137.)

The careful use of italics is one way to make subtitles clearer. The text can be italicised when the speaker is not visible and the voice is heard for example from behind a door, on the phone, on the radio or on speakers. Italics are useful also when the discussion takes place on several levels, for example in flashbacks. The narrator's voice in the background can be subtitled in italics and the speech of the people actually on screen can be subtitled as regular text. Foreign words in the subtitles are also advised to be italicised. What is more important, is to be consistent so the viewer will not be confused with the end result. (Vertanen 2007: 137–138.)

The subtitles consist of two lines usually but on special occasions the subtitler has eight lines to use. They are all in use when the top part of the screen says the name of the speaker and the two bottom lines what that person says. In many foreign programmes and films the speech begins already when the credits roll. In such cases, the subtitles can be placed as surtitles at the top part of the screen. According to copyright law the credits may not be covered, so the place of the subtitles may need to change. It is better to have single lines as surtitles than double lines that would need to jump up and down to give way to the credits. It is easier for the viewer to follow the text if the subtitles keep to one place instead of going up and down. (Vertanen 2007: 138.)

Sometimes, the picture has important written information concerning the programme or film, such as newspaper headlines, signs, place names or dates. They are subtitled as what Vertanen calls a “planssi”, or an insert; they are centred and on several lines if needed. Short inserts can be written in capital letters. The title of the programme is also written in capitals and centred. (Vertanen 2007: 138–139.)

The next chapter will focus on swear words both in British English and Finnish, and will discuss subtitling strategies related to them, and problems there are in subtitling swear words. Translators' attitudes to translating swear words will be mentioned, and there will also be a brief look at age restrictions in Britain and in Finland.

4 SWEAR WORDS AND SUBTITLING

Many people are shocked and appalled by swearing. Swear words are considered offensive, rude, insulting and inappropriate. Swearing is often considered as dumbing down the language, and many people wish to avoid them. (Fernández Fernández 2009: 210.) Swear words are taboo words which means that their usage should be limited because of cultural beliefs. Swearing is, in a sense, a violation of taboos: “the ‘high’ varieties violate the taboo of invoking the name of the deity, while the ‘low’ are often violations of sexual taboos, especially those concerning incest” (Hughes 1992: 5). Although the original, historical meaning of swear words may sound far-fetched, “there is always the alarming possibility of the words coming true” (Hughes 1992: 4).

Many consider swear words to be stronger in written text than in spoken language. Bearing that in mind, translating swear words can be tricky. If swear words are translated literally, they can influence the linguistic structure, and the sociocultural and communicative structure of the target language (Fernández Fernández 2009: 210). In films and programmes, or anything with subtitles, the viewer can both hear the spoken dialogue and see the written subtitles, and if they understand both languages, they can compare how the swear words have been subtitled. Subtitles usually have to leave quite much of the spoken dialogue out, and swear words often fall into this omitting.

People are shocked about swear words because they refer to things that are taboo in their culture. These things include references to bodily functions and sex, and these should not be talked of in public (Fernández Fernández 2009: 210). Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 56–57) add that even though many of these things are “necessary for survival”, including *pissing* and *shitting*, if we want to talk about them in a neutral way, we have to refer to them in their “proper expressions”, *urine* and *faeces*.

This chapter will first define a swear word, then discusses them in British English and Finnish, then moves on to translation strategies in translating swear words. Problems of subtitling swear words will be dealt with, and translators’ attitudes will be discussed. There will also be a brief look at age restrictions both in Britain and in Finland.

4.1 The Definition of a Swear Word

What is a swear word? How does it differ from any other word? How to define one out of so many types of words? Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 53) give three steps to define the expression. First, it “refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture” (ibid.). Second, that it “should not be interpreted literally” (ibid.). And third, it “can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes” (ibid.). Taking the example of the word *shit*, it is not meant literally when swearing. “By freeing the term, so to speak, from its referential duties, we can use it to express emotions and attitudes” (ibid.).

Despite some guidelines, defining a swear word is difficult. Where is the line between a literal sense and a metaphorical sense? When is a swear word meant as such, when its meaning may change within a second, from literal to metaphorical? A swear word may also be a term of endearment – is it then still to be understood as a swear word? These are difficult questions to draw a line to as themselves, but then in this instance they also need to be subtitled in a way that they convey the same meaning, whatever that meaning be.

Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 15) quote Edmund Leach (1975) who suggested that “taboo words in English fall into three major groups”. These categories are:

1. ‘Dirty’ words having to do with sex and excretion, such as *bugger* and *shit*.
2. Words that have to do with the Christian religion such as *Christ* and *Jesus*.
3. Words which are used in ‘animal abuse’ (calling a person by the name of an animal), such as *bitch* and *cow*.

(Anderson & Trudgill 1991: 15; original italics.)

Words can move from one category to another over time. For instance, *bloody* was, according to Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 15) and Leach (1975: 28), originally “by our Lady” and therefore in category 2, “but it is no longer regarded as ‘blasphemy’ by most people (Anderson and Trudgill 1990: 15)”. Expressions *gee* and *cor* are similarly originally references to religion (Jesus and God respectively) but are now seen as non-blasphemous. Also the word *damn* may have had a connection with the word *dam* (an animal mother) and therefore would be in category 3, but would nowadays be linked to

damnation and therefore put it in category 2. (Anderson & Trudgill 1990: 15.) *Blimey* also originally meant “God blind me” (Hughes 1992: 5) but it is now a very mild word.

These categories are used as a guideline in this thesis but slightly altered. Category 1 will be 1 Religion, divided into 1a Religion – Heaven and 1b Religion – Hell, category 2 Sex and bodily functions, category 3 Animals, and category 4 Minced oaths and mixed expression will keep all other words. *Cor*, *golly* and *crikey* will be in 1 Religion, not in 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions.

Swear words have been used throughout ages, and even in some “high-culture” texts they are to be found. For example, in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio cries, “A plague o’ both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.” Today Shakespeare is seen as “high culture” by many, so it is interesting to notice that even this “high culture” piece uses swearing. Indeed, Culpeper (2011: 211) argues that in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, in addition to *Romeo and Juliet*, there are “vestiges of ‘flyting’” to be found. By ‘flyting’ he means an old competitive ritual of insults between two or more people.

Then what are swear words used for? They can show anger, surprise, agreement (Anderson & Trudgill 1991: 59), and they are used to make language more colourful, to make expressions clearer and they are used to define the social status (Tammi 2007: 9). Culpeper (2011: 141) also quotes Timothy Jay with, “taboo words ‘intensify descriptions’”. They are also “words of power”, meaning that using them can help the person achieve something – to mend something, to ease pain, to make others do something, to say briefly how important the situation is (Hämäläinen 2006: 37, 39; Hakala 2006: 225). However, it is important that if the meaning is to have someone do something that swearing is not overused because it loses its power when used too much (Hämäläinen 2006: 39).

Using swear words, especially certain words, can also show that the speaker belongs in a certain group; or that not only *despite* swear words being insulting, they want to use that

kind of language exactly *because* it is insulting (Anderson & Trudgill 1991: 14; my italics). The positive values connected to using bad language is known as covert prestige (ibid.). Swear words can be used in a positive sense within a group for example with sports teams or siblings (Holmes 1995: 10). They may express in-group membership and friendliness, even camaraderie, even though they would still be insults (ibid.).

Swearing is, of course, dependent on the culture. According to Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 57), swearing is expected to be related to the areas that are taboo or significant in a particular culture. “In Catholic and Orthodox countries, we find many more expressions relating to the Virgin Mary than in Protestant countries, for instance” (ibid.). Hakala (2006: 225) mentions the case of a French footballer Zinedine Zidane whose sister was insulted by an Italian footballer in a game in 2006, and because Zidane reacted very strongly, his match ended there. According to a Guardian (2007) article, this Italian footballer, Marco Materazzi, had said, “I prefer the whore that is your sister”. Presumably, he did not mean that to be taken literally but cultures are different as well as personalities, and reactions may be quite unexpected. Hakala (2006: 225) adds that in sports, language can be rather foul due to adrenaline but usually players are friends afterwards despite the language that was used. In Zidane’s case, it just went too far for him.

Status and workplace affect the situation, too. Culpeper (2011: 142) mentions an American study by Timothy Jay and Kristin Janschewitz where the results showed that people allow different people to swear in different situations. For example, it is more allowed for a student to swear than a dean, but if a dean swears, it is more allowed if it takes place in their own office rather than in public; and if a student is in the dean’s office, it is not allowed at all for the student to swear there (ibid.).

Hughes (1992: 3) describes swear words more broadly than Anderson and Trudgill (1991) or Leach (1975), but asks very good questions about universals and culture-boundness.

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. Being manifestly not a simple matter, it seems to raise more

questions than answers. Why, for example, is swearing not constant in its modes, styles and referents? Why is it that some forms of swearing appear to be universal, while others are more specific to a culture?

(Hughes 1992: 3.)

Hughes (1992: 256) also states that swearing both violates and respects taboos through shocking directness and euphemistic evasion. In this thesis, madness and nationality are not taken into consideration, but the amusing and the absurd, in addition to the shocking and the casual, are very much important factors in the style.

4.1.1 Swear Words in British English

There are several English-language cultures, so due to the cultural background of *Green Wing*, this subsection deals with British English. However, as Culpeper (2011: 142) points out, “a ‘national culture’ is made up of many cultures.” People in different parts of the country use language differently, and even gender matters (ibid.).

Formal oaths have rigid formulas of words, and the more “informal” swearing becomes, the more the language becomes elastic, malleable and flexible (Hughes 1992: 21). Based on examples of swear words relating to excretion and related words, it would seem swear words are stronger the closer to the genital/anal area they are and the more solid they are. *Poo* is slightly stronger than *fart*, as a swear word, while *shit* is much stronger. *Piss* is not that strong and mostly only used in the expression *piss off*. In actions, spitting would be very rude, especially to spit on someone, but as a word it bears no foulness. (Ibid.)

Flexibility among adjectives is very plausible, so that *bloody* can be replaced by *fucking*, *stupid* or *damned*, but this does not take place with nouns (Hughes 1992: 21). Different nouns have a world of difference between alternatives. An interesting exception takes place with certain expressions, or what Hughes calls formulas: in this context nouns become interchangeable. *For Christ’s sake!* can easily be replaced by another noun, *for shit’s sake!* or *for fuck’s sake!* Do these nouns then have something in common? Nothing

whatsoever, answers Hughes, they are simply terms of high emotional charge that have over the time been used in this context. (Hughes 1992: 21–22.)

In English, expressions can be made stronger by adding *so* in front of the word, as in, “you are so beautiful”. Swear words can work as this intensifier, too. Culpeper (2011: 144) mentions *fuck* as such an intensifier where the above example would be “you are fucking beautiful”. Culpeper’s examples are all rather of the negative meaning but this intensifier can be used as a positive expression too, despite its first appearance. Yule (1997: 69) explains of English grammar that there is no ‘real’ infix – an addition to the middle of the word – but swear words can be used in this sense, as in *abso-bloody-lutely* or *Jesus fucking Christ*. Culpeper (2011: 144) adds the example *shut the fuck up* where *the fuck* is the infix.

Swearing does not always need to be rude as such. If it is used as banter, it loses its offensiveness (Culpeper 2011: 137). Culpeper (2011: 140) quotes Stacy L. Young, “In short, the cliché [sic] ‘It’s not what you say but how you say it’ rings true with regard to recipients’ appraisals about hurtful messages.” Culpeper (2011: 208) also quotes Geoffrey N. Leech in saying that banter involves something which is “obviously untrue”. The expression can be taken literally and thus be seen not to be true, or that it is exaggerated so much that the opposite of what is said must be true (ibid.).

Swearing in public has changed fairly much over the last decades. Leach (1975: 24) describes the atmosphere in the 1960s as, “If at this moment I were really anxious to get arrested by the police, I might strip naked or launch into a string of violent obscenities: either procedure would be equally effective.” Leach (1975: 26) also mentions *quim* as “one of the most unprintable obscenities in the English language”, so much so that he does not even give the written form of the word, only the phonetic form. He continues with, “It is hard to talk about the unsayable” (ibid.). While getting naked in public might still get the person arrested, it is hardly done today due to foul language. *Quim* is no longer “unprintable”; it is even mentioned several times and shown in writing on the BBC 2 quiz show *QI* (2004). What comes to “talking of the unsayable”, swear words are in quite a common usage in a surprisingly large number of programmes made in Britain today.

Their offensive meaning has clearly diminished. Their usage has also changed; according to Hughes (1992: 237) English swear words have shifted from religious matters to sex and bodily functions, and from disgraceful religious categorization, such as *heathen* and *pagan*, to national and racial insults. These trends reflect the increasing secularization of Western society (ibid.). He notes also that moralistic words, such as *villain*, *rotter*, *bounder* and *cad*, have disappeared from English insults and been replaced by more physically and sexually based terms, such as *bastard*, *bugger*, *shit* and *fucker* (Hughes 1992: 238).

Hughes (1992: 11) depicts swear words to be a rare instance where reactions to language are the same as reactions to referents. By this he means the “interestingly exact correlation between degree of taboo in verbal usage and the degree of taboo in actual public exhibition of the referent” (ibid.). This is shown in the following scale in Diagram 1.

Action	Word
barely acceptable in public	fart piss
totally unacceptable in public	shit fuck

Diagram 1. Action/word

The scale shows how certain swear words refer to actual actions and how their acceptability as words is determined by that reference. Words and their literal meaning at the top of the list are more acceptable than those at the bottom of the list.

From Hughes (1992: 11)

Hughes (1992: 252) claims swearing is the most emotive form of the language. This is also the reason it is most easily misinterpreted; “there is always the possibility of a form of words (such as *bastard*, *bugger* and *mother-fucker*) being taken literally when it may be intended in a mild, familiar or even jocular fashion” (ibid.). There are now, in addition to the “regular” swear words, so many dialectal and cultural forms of swear words that it would be difficult to know all of them, or even to call all them English swear words, since even the English-speaking cultures are so diverse (ibid.).

The difference between swear words and euphemisms is that there are more and more euphemisms because they become too explicit and have to be replaced at regular intervals, whereas swear words need the periodic reinforcements as they become weakened through repetition (Hughes 1992: 253). *Fuck*, *shit* and *cunt* have not lost their meaning or tone, but words such as bloody, bastard, damn, hell, blast and all religious terms, and some sexual terms, such as *frig* and *frigging* (which meant ‘copulation’ and ‘masturbation’ in the 17th century) have lost their tone: these words have become very mild (ibid.).

4.1.2 Swear Words in Finnish

According to Jari Tammi (2007: 7), Finns swear the most in the world. He adds that only Russians, Scots and the Irish reach nearly that level (ibid.). This might not be true, considering all the languages there are in the world, but swear words do seem to be very prevalent in the Finnish culture. Tammi has compiled a dictionary of Finnish swear words, and this third publication has over 5000 entries of swear words and insults, with their variants in addition to that, as Tammi mentions in the introduction of the book (ibid.).

Tammi (2007: 9) claims that the five main Finnish swear words are *helvetti*, *jumalauta*, *perkele*, *saatana* and *vittu* [*hell*, *god help*, *the devil*, *satan* and *cunt*] and that they still have a strong meaning in them. Swear words traditionally are taboo words, and saying the taboo out loud included danger and defiance, power and banishment of illnesses. Tabooness still defines swear word classes to some extent, coaxes at breaking taboos and adds to the amount of euphemisms. Historically, the power sense of swear words was related to religion, magic or evil spirits; now it relates more to the word itself, its phonetic features and creative purposes. Today anyone can utter a dangerous word, if for nothing else, for comedic reasons. (Tammi 2007: 8.) The prehistoric words have somewhat lost their meaning, and sex-related swear words are beginning to sound old now, so even more complex forms are created, more varied combinations of swear words and euphemisms alike (Tammi 2007: 10).

Minna Hjort (2007a: 23) describes *perkele* [*devil*] to be an old word that literally means ‘enemy of the soul’ and it has been taken into religious use already in pre-Christian time. Today it is mostly used as a swear word. Although swear words are, according to Hjort (*ibid.*), mostly used in spoken language, *perkele* is an exception in that it is used very much in written general language. As a swear word, *perkele* is found already in the first Finnish novel, *Seitsemän veljestä* [Seven brothers] by Aleksis Kivi (Hjort 2007a: 23–24). Unlike Tammi (2007: 8), Hjort (2007a: 24) claims that the strength of a swear word is generally not based on the appearance of the word but on the taboo it refers to. *Perkele*, however, can be seen as an exception to this. It is seen as a specifically strong swear word due to its harsh sounds. The effectiveness is stronger when the three-syllable word is pronounced slowly, emphasizing each syllable: per-ke-le. The stressed R can be even stretched to create extra power to the word. Swear words are often called *ärräpää* [*R head*] in Finnish; this may be because of the strong R in *perkele*. (Hjort 2007a: 24.)

Finnish swear words may sound quite religious in all, but some of them predate Christian religion, even if the same word is now used for a Christian meaning. Ulla-Maija Kulonen (1995) mentions *perkele*, *jumala*, *helvetti*, *hiisi*, *lempo* and *piru* [*devil*, *god*, *hell*, *demon*, *god* and *devil*]. This is peculiar, agrees Kulonen (1995: 370), because these words sound Christian words to a person living today. This is because Christianity took these words into use and perhaps slightly changed their meaning. For example, *helvetti* meant earlier the place after death, and only after Christianity it meant a place of pain and suffering after death. However, in this case, it is noteworthy that *helvetti* came into Finnish after Christianity, but the etymology lies in paganism. (Kulonen 1995: 370–371.) These words may have gained the swear word usage only after Christianity, too; but although the language has swear words that have religious connotations, it does not naturally follow that this religion would be Christianity but it could be one predating it (Kulonen 1995: 371, 375).

In addition to religious words, there are also swear words related to sex and body in Finnish. According to Hämäläinen (2006: 37), these kinds of words became swear words after the so-called civilisation has taught us to be prudish about them. Even words like

paska [*shit*] and *perse* [*arse*] were “normal” words until they were taught as uncivilised ones (ibid.).

Words and expressions are used in a social surrounding, and the context tells if the word is proper or taboo; words themselves are not “evil” or “kind” (Nuolijärvi 2006: 16). This is also shown for example in church when a minister or priest can talk about hell and devils but pupils might not be allowed to do so at school (Hämäläinen 2006: 36): context matters. According to Hämäläinen (2006: 38), it seems the most accepted type of swearing is in exclamations, when a reaction to pain or sudden disappointment or anger forms into words; it is related to a burst of laughter or tears; the pressure is released. Swearing can also be taken in a positive sense when it describes how good something is (Hämäläinen 2006: 40). Hämäläinen (ibid.) gives an example of two people, one of whom has written a book, the other one reads it. Feedback of “ihan kiva” [“all right”] is very plain, so is “hirveän hyvä” [“extremely good”]. But if a swear word is used as an intensifier, the expression is much stronger: “helevetin hyvä!” [“hell’s/fucking good!”], especially if the stress is on the swear word, saying it slowly and in a rocking manner, and used the dialectal form instead of the more formal *helvetin*. Swear words may be much more acceptable if the tone is playful (ibid.).

4.2 Translation Strategies in Translating Swear Words

There are many issues present in translating swear words. There is no clear-cut division into “translating it well” or “translating it badly”. The translator may use in the translation words that they use naturally in their own idiolect (their personal language) and sometimes they have been given guidelines by the publisher or the like. (Hjort 2006: 83.) Whether the translator likes to translate swear words or not, they should still be familiar with the nuances of such language (Hjort 2006: 74). The choices for translating them in any particular way are chosen based on trying out different solutions, thinking what kind or a person it is in question, and basing the choices often on stereotypes. Reasons for the choices are also considering the target group and any restrictions or possibilities the customer has given. (Ibid.)

There are several strategies in translation. One of them is domestication – foreignization, suggested by Lawrence Venuti, in which the translation is either brought closer to the reader, or kept “foreign” by including words that may not exist in the target culture. According to Hjort (2006: 79), some translators try to avoid using particularly Finnish swear words, such as *perkele* [*devil*], because it would not fit the translation. The literal meaning of swear words can be quite different in different languages, and this may cause problems: if the translation follows the original language closely on word level – keeping it foreignized – the result may be using words that are not so much used in the target language. Hjort has noticed (2006: 77) for example that expressions *jeesus kristus*, *jeesus* and *jessus* [*Jesus Christ*, *Jesus* and *Jeez*] are much more common in translations than in original works. According to Hjort’s (ibid.) questionnaire, translators follow the norm of acceptability. That means that the translators try to create a translation that sounds like the target language and follows the target language norms (ibid.).

Translation strategies are often divided into micro and macro strategies (Hjort 2006: 76). Micro strategies mean single cases in a translated work, whereas macro strategies mean large ideas for translation, such as diminishing swear words on the whole (ibid.). According to Hjort’s questionnaire (2006: 77), many translators believe a written swear word to be stronger than a spoken one. This concerns more subtitlers than literary translators, of course, but it is interesting, since there is no actual factual knowledge of this. (Hjort 2006: 79.) Here this diminishing of swear words is the macro strategy; micro strategy would be individual cases of certain words.

Because most translators think swear words are stronger in written language than in spoken language, common features are to tone them down in translations and restricting the number of translated swear words (Hjort 2006: 77). For audiovisual translations this may be more easily done, especially in subtitles, when the space for translations is limited in any case. Swear words may be the ones that are easily left out or omitted for spatial reasons. (Hjort 2006: 84.) Translators may also work as self-censors when these words are left out or toned down; this may nevertheless be seen as retaining the original style, not toning it down (Hjort 2006: 78). If the spoken word and its “usual” or literal text translation do not match any more in tone, then the toned-down translation works better

in retaining the original style (ibid.). For example, *fuck* and *vittu* [*cunt*] are quite often seen as a matching pair, but if the written *vittu* is much stronger than the spoken *fuck*, then replacing the translated swear word with a milder form, such as *helvetti* [*hell*], retains the style (Hjort 2006: 78–79).

In trying to translate swear words according to the cultural boundaries, it is often seen that the most important part of it is to translate the function of the expression, not so much its shape (Hjort 2006: 78). Translators evaluate what kind of a situation the original language conveys and try to create a similar one in the target language. Therefore certain words may be seen as couples although their literal meaning may be very different. Such couples include the aforementioned *fuck* and *vittu*, which are both strong in meaning and largely avoided by many, and yet are widely used by others. These two words refer to the same category of swear words but that need not be the case. (Ibid.)

In addition to the features of swear words, translators have to follow Finnish language rules, such as collocations or conventionalised groups of words. Typically, swear words are used together with certain interjections, such as *voi*, *ei* and *oi* [*oh*, *no* and *o*]. (Hjort 2006: 82.) In English, of course, many swear word expressions begin with *oh*, so this follows the same way. In Finnish, certain insults can exist together, such as in an attribute combination *saatanan idiootti* [*satan's idiot*] and compound words, such as the exclamation *vittusaatanaperkele* [*cunt satan devil*]. Swear words are often used together by combining different taboo subjects where different categories of taboo and swear words are combined, such as in the example above. Other factors that guide the choice for a certain swear word in translations that are chosen for linguistic features are for example phonetic features; certain swear words are chosen because of their alliteration, such as the expression *vitun vammanen!* [*cunt's/fucking disabled!*]. (Hjort 2006: 82.) Hjort (ibid.) quotes Geoffrey Hughes saying that the choice for English swear words is often guided by an endeavour to a certain melody and balance. According to Hjort (ibid.), this has not been studied in Finnish but it is possible that a certain swear word is chosen sometimes because with the rest of the language material, it forms a punchy combination.

In translating audiovisual material, especially subtitles, many things have to be left out. The text must usually be condensed. Swear words are often seen as words that may be left out. For lack of space, the most common case is to omit the swear word, or leave it out. Other techniques include ameliorating the expression, or using either a euphemism or translating the word into a toned-down version. The words may also keep their strength in the target text as well as in the source text; this is called retaining. Sometimes, but rather seldom, the translated expression may be stronger than the original expression.

4.3 Swear Words and the Problems in Subtitling

Green Wing is first and foremost a comedy series, so in studying the swear words and their subtitles it must be remembered that it is not a documentary: the words are not to be taken literally or even the context to be considered what one might call normal. If this kind of language was used in a real workplace, especially in such a caring workplace as a hospital, there would very soon be repercussions (in a non-medical way).

Subtitles can be quite different from the original dialogue. “The transition from oral to written mode obviously means that some of the typical features of spoken language will have to disappear, no matter what subgenre a dialogue belongs to” (Días Cintas & Remael 2010: 61). This means, in the context of this thesis, that there will definitely be fewer swear words in the subtitles than in the original text. This is particularly true when people repeat the same words or stutter in pronouncing the swear word.

As Díaz Cintas and Remael (2010: 196) quote Díaz Cintas, “Taboo words are tied in with local traditions and are used differently by different linguistic communities, depending on those communities’ religious background, for instance.” Swear words are offensive words and they are used as an expression of anger, despair, content, emotion and so on, and because some swear words are also taboo words, they require careful handling. Even if the use of a swear word is legitimate in the original language, considering its connotative meaning and strength of expression, it always depends whether the word can be translated the same way in the target language. (Días Cintas & Remael 2010: 196.)

This is more apparent in subtitles when spoken dialogue becomes written text; they are often toned down or omitted (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 195). Different cultures have different sensibilities and hence different swear words and taboo words. Words also lose their taboo meaning, or, sometimes, they become stronger. An example of a swear word becoming more acceptable in the English language is the word *fuck*; not so long ago it was avoided in many circles whereas now it can be seen in several places without further thought. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2010: 196.)

4.4 Attitudes to Swearing by Translators

Minna Hjort (2007b: 8) studied the attitudes of translators themselves to swearing, and how they were advised in their work, or if at all. Literary and audiovisual translators both said they had received instructions from various sources, such as supervisor, client or colleague. The translator's personal opinions matter as well, as some people's repertoire or swear words may be larger than others', or they prefer to use certain words instead of others. Some people prefer to spell religion-related words with a capital letter whereas to others it makes no difference.

Translators included in Hjort's study (2007b: 8) share the opinion that a swear word is usually toned down, especially in audiovisual translation. The explanation is that an expletive is stronger in written form than in spoken form. There is no actual evidence of this, Hjort claims, as there is no sufficient study on this matter but the opinion is widely held. Especially audiovisual translators had been instructed to alleviate the meaning of strong swear words, most often *vittu*, which in spoken language would be the equivalent of *fuck* but in written form it would take its literal form, *cunt*, making it sound stronger even in English. (Ibid.) Also Tuula Friman, the subtitler of *Green Wing*, mentions this in a private e-mail. Although there was no guidance regarding the usage of swear words by YLE, the use of the "V word" should be avoided. According to Friman, YLE trusts its translators to translate swear words like professionals would in subtitles. The situation, the expressions, the tone of voice usually give away what kind of language is implied. After all, the subtitlers translate messages, not words. (Friman 2017.)

According to Hjort's (2006: 79) questionnaire, translators may choose not to use certain swear words because they sound too Finnish and this would take the translation away from the original text. The one word in particular that was mentioned is *perkele*. Some translators see that this is too Finnish for the original language use. This was seen as too much domestication although other swear words were equally Finnish. (Ibid.)

4.5 Age Restrictions

There are different kinds of age restrictions as to what can be shown on the television or films, and at what time of day. Generally speaking, violence and sex should be shown at a time when children are less likely to see them and be influenced by them. However, there are different attitudes to swearing; stronger in Britain than in Finland, as is shown in the next two subsections.

4.5.1 Age Restrictions in Britain, or Watershed

Swear words and especially plentitude thereof cannot be shown on the television at any given time. The broadcaster has responsibility for the viewers, especially the younger ones. "The watershed means the time when TV programmes which might be unsuitable for children can be broadcast" and "[t]here are strict rules about what can be shown on TV before the 9pm watershed". "The watershed begins at 9pm and material unsuitable for children should not, in general, be shown before 9pm or after 5.30am." (Ofcom 2013).

Unsuitable material includes violence, sexual content, graphic or distressing imagery and swearing. This should not be broadcast when there is a stronger likelihood that children will be watching the television or listening to the radio. Even with the watershed being at 9pm, the strongest material should be left for later in the evening. (Ofcom 2013).

Green Wing was shown late in the evening in Britain when it was on the television, and so it was also in Finland. The abundance of swear words that exists in *Green Wing* was

shown as it was – there was no bleeping. The only exception to this rule is the word *cunt*. The word exists five times in the first series but on none of the occasions is it clearly said.

4.5.2 Age Restrictions in Finland

The Finnish equivalent of the British watershed is “ikärajat” or “age restrictions”. This means the age over which the viewer must be in order to be allowed to see the film or programme, or playing the video game. During the time when *Green Wing* was shown in Finland as *Vikatikki*, the age restrictions were 7, 11, 15 and 18 (Finlex 2000). Since then, it has changed, and the age restrictions are now 7, 12, 16 and 18. Those programmes with the age restriction 16 and over must be shown after 9pm, and those with the age restriction 18 and over must be shown after 11pm. (YLE 2015).

Swearing as such is no criterion for the Finnish age restrictions, though it may emphasise the decision for a certain one (Ikärajat 2016). Swearing is surpassed by violence, sex, drugs and horror, for instance, in reasons given by parents, to questions about dangerous contents; swearing is one of the least mentioned reasons (Opetusministeriö 2010).

Although the age restrictions are by the new standard, and not the 2007 standard, those given to *Green Wing* are mostly for people aged 12 and older – one episode seems to be even for those aged 7 and older. Reasons for the age restrictions are sex and/or horror and/or violence, swearing is not mentioned at all. (Kuvaohjelmien ikäraajahaku 2017). *Green Wing* in Finland – with the name *Vikatikki* – was shown late in the evening in any case (Netello.fi 2016a; Netello.fi 2016b).

The next chapter analyses swear words both in the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles in various ways, and gives many examples.

5 SWEAR WORDS IN *GREEN WING* AND *VIKATIKKI*

The material of swear words is abundant in *Green Wing*. Not only is there much swearing, it is also diverse in form. The same word is not repeated throughout the series (*fuck this, fuck that*) but combinations of swear words are built, making the use of language more varied (*shitting Jesus, bugging wank*). This takes place in the subtitles as well. The swear words could have been subtitled using only a handful of translations for swear words but here there are nearly as many subtitled swear words as there are original swear words. This keeps in line with the comedy aspect of the series, making the subtitles diverse.

Swear words can be categorised into four categories: the three first ones are from Anderson and Trudgill (1991: 15), who in turn quote Edmund Leach (1975); the last one is for the supplementary words that do not fit into any earlier category in this work. So, swear words can in this thesis be categorised into these four categories:

1. Religion
 - a) Heaven
 - b) Hell
2. Sex and bodily functions
3. Animals
4. Minced oaths and mixed expressions

These will be referred to as 1a Religion – Heaven, 1b Religion – Hell, 2 Sex and bodily functions, 3 Animals and 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions.

This chapter will discuss swear words in the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles, group swear words into categories, show the differences between the categories and how swear words shift from one category to another. The tone is also discussed, and many examples given.

5.1 Swear Words in the English Spoken Dialogue and the Finnish Subtitles

There is a great number of swear words in both the original dialogue and the subtitles. These can all be seen in detail in Appendix 1 where the English swear words are accompanied by their respective Finnish subtitles, and back-translated into English. At the beginning of every episode, save the first one, there is a “last week” collage of what has earlier happened. The dialogue and the subtitles of these parts have not been counted in, although they may be slightly different from the earlier episodes’.

All swear words in this thesis are taken based on their metaphorical sense. Thus, if a person calls someone *fucker* or *pig*, they do not literally mean that the person accused is either of them. Instead, the metaphorical sense is implied to them. The exception to this rule is with the word *fuck*. Its meaning is literal even in this thesis but it was counted in as it is considered one of the strongest swear words in English, despite its lack of metaphor.

Swear words that are counted in in this thesis are represented in general types in the lists and figures. Thus, one swear word type can have several forms, and each form can have several instances of how many times it was mentioned in the material. For example, *piss* has five forms (or versions) and 11 instances of how many times all these forms together were mentioned. Table 2 should make this clearer. All these types and forms are in detail in Appendix 1.

Table 2. Types, forms and instances

Type	Form	Instances
piss	take the piss	1
	piss off	7
	I’ll piss off then	1
	piece of piss	1
	pissed out of his skull	1

Table 2 shows one type of swear word, *piss*, and its five different forms that have been counted in separately. Four of these forms have been mentioned only once and one form seven times, so together that makes 11 instances.

Next, swear words in both the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles will be grouped and shown in lists which expressions have been included in this thesis.

5.1.1 Swear Words in the English Dialogue

The words that have been counted as English swear words in this study fall into these types: (1) God, (2) God – minced, (3) Jesus, (4) Christ, (5) Heaven, (6) Damn, (7) Hell, (8) Satan, (9) Devil, (10) Arse, (11) Shit, (12) Crap, (13) Piss, (14) Penis, (15) Bollocks, (16) Tossler, (17) Wanker, (18) Scumbag, (19) Fuck, (20) Bugger, (21) Sod, (22) Bastard, (23) Bloody, (24) Tit, (25) Twat, (26) Cunt, (27) Animals and (28) Minced oaths and mixed expressions.

The types above can be combined into categories. Types (1) to (9) refer to 1 Religion, of which the first five ones relate to 1a Religion – Heaven, and the four last ones refer to 1b Religion – Hell. Types (10) to (26) refer to 2 Sex and bodily functions, various bodily activities and body parts of either gender from the milder forms (*arse, tit*) to the strongest ones (*fuck, cunt*). Although *bloody* may be derived from not “blood” but “by our Lady” (Anderson & Trudgill 1990: 15), in which case it would be in category 1 Religion, here, however, it is considered to be related to blood and therefore in category 2 Sex and bodily functions. (27) alone refers to animals, and so is the category 3 Animals. (28) has words that do not refer to any major category but are very soft expressions or euphemisms, and so known as 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions. The distribution of these types is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of types in categories 1a, 1b and 2 in English

1a Religion – Heaven	1b Religion – Hell	2 Sex and bodily functions
(1) God (2) God – minced (3) Jesus (4) Christ (5) Heaven	(6) Damn (7) Hell (8) Satan (9) Devil	(10) Arse (11) Shit (12) Crap (13) Piss (14) Penis (15) Bollocks (16) Tosser (17) Wanker (18) Scumbag (19) Fuck (20) Bugger (21) Sod (22) Bastard (23) Bloody (24) Tit (25) Twat (26) Cunt

Table 3 shows the distribution of English swear word types in the categories 1a Religion – Heaven, 1b Religion – Hell and 2 Sex and bodily functions. 3 Animals and 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions are left out as there is only one type in each category and it is called by the same name.

In more detail, the types mentioned above comprise the forms in the following list. For reasons of clarity, the commas in these expressions are omitted in this list (*oh, God*). A full list of swear words and their subtitled translations can be found in Appendix 1.

(1) God

God, oh God, my God, oh my God, dear God, oh dear God, good God, for God's sake, God forbid, how in God's name, I swear to God, goddamn

(2) God – minced

cor, goh, gosh, oh gosh, oh golly, oh my golly, sainted Lord in heaven, blimey

(3) Jesus

Jesus, Jes-no⁶, oh Jesus, Jesus Christ, Jesus fucking Christ, Jesus fucking..., creeping Jesus, oh sweet Jesus

⁶ Saying "Jesus" is interrupted here with the word "no".

(4) Christ

Christ, oh Christ, for Christ's sake, crikey

(5) Heaven

good heavens, for heaven's sake

(6) Damn

damn, damn (v.), oh damn, damn it

(7) Hell

what the hell, what the—, who the hell, one hell of a dad

(8) Satan

daughter of Satan

(9) Devil

piece of devilry

(10) Arse

anus, arse, arsehole(s), arse area, “‘job’, ‘stick’, ‘up’ and ‘arse’, all in one sentence”⁷, pompous arse

(11) Shit

shit, shit (adj.), shitting, oh shit, shite, useless bunch of shitheads, little bits of shit, hippy-shit, up the shitter, Château de la Shite, leg shit, “damn. shit.”, bloody shitting, thick as pig shit, bullshit

(12) Crap

crap, crap your pants

(13) Piss

take the piss, piss off, I'll piss off then, piece of piss, pissed out of his skull

(14) Penis

knob-head, cock up

(15) Bollocks

bollocks, what is this bollocks?, any of that bollocks, talk bollocks

(16) Tosser

tosser, toss-pot, you toss-bag

(17) Wanker

wanker(s), an utter wanker, wankpot, wankered

⁷ “I think I might've used the words ‘job’, ‘stick’, ‘up’ and ‘arse’, all in one sentence. Is that a bad thing?”
(*Tests*)

(18) Scumbag
scumbag

(19) Fuck
fuck, oh fuck, what the fuck, shut the fuck up!, for fuck's sake, fancy a fuck, holy fuck, fuck (verb), fuck off, oh fuck off, fuck (itself) up, fuck you, fuck it, let's get the fuck out of here, fucker, you fucker, fucking, fucking hell!, fucking shit, thank fuck for that, you cretinous fuckwit, fuckosity, "fuck! shit!", you fucking twat, you ginger fucking freak, fuck all, TDTF⁸, oh shit fuck bollocks, oh my fucksy

(20) Bugger
bugger, say bugger, bugger off, bugging wank, bumper

(21) Sod
sod, sod (v.), sod off

(22) Bastard
bastard(s), you bastard, you Scottish bastard

(23) Bloody
bloody, oh bloody, bloody hell, oh bloody hell, bloody Nora, bloody bastard(s), you bloody, you bloody bloody bloody bloody bastard, fan-bloody-tastic, blooming

(24) Tit
tit, such a tit, titting, tit-end, you titty, Chuzzletit, Titbrain, Dr Tit, blow your tits off

(25) Twat
Twatty, twat face

(26) Cunt
cunt, a total cunt, C, U, N..., Cu-, Unt, the nasty C word, Massively Annoying—⁹

(27) Animals
bitch, whore bitch, drone

(28) Minced oaths and mixed expressions
you, oh you..., man!, grief, oh my goodness, thank goodness, goodness no, oh dear, gimp

That makes 167 forms. The list does not count in expressions such as *God* or *Jesus* when they refer to religious beings as such. When they are counted in, they are taken

⁸ Too Drunk to Fuck

⁹ "That's how I remembered your name when I first met you. Massively Annoying Chap. Yeah, 'Mac'. I was going to say Massively Annoying—" [scene cuts]. (*Tests*)

metaphorically at the very least. On the other hand, the list does include more complicated expressions, some of which have been taken into pieces and counted separately. These include “you great big piece of white shit” (CFD), “bloody bastards” (CFD), “C-U-N” (CFD), “bloody hell” (CFD), “fucking hell” (*Rumours*), “bloody hell” (*Lodgers*), “the nasty C word” (*Lodgers*), “bloody shut it” (*Lodgers*), “buggering wank” (JB), “sound a bit like a tit” (HWP), “creeping Jesus” (HWP), “fucking twat” (HWP), “fucking shit” (*Tests*), “shit, fuck, bollocks” (*Tests*), “fucking hell” (*Tests*), “Massively Annoying–” (*Tests*), “fan-bloody-tastic” (*Tests*), “‘job’, ‘stick’, ‘up’ and ‘arse’, all in one sentence” (*Tests*), “bloody shitting” (TW), “Jes–no” (TW), “Jesus fucking Christ” (SA), “he’s a bastard bastard” (*Emergency*), “what the–” (*Emergency*), and “fucking hell” (*Emergency*).

5.1.2 Swear Words in the Finnish Subtitles

The words that have been counted as Finnish swear words in this study fall into these types: (1) Jumala [God], (2) Jeesus [Jesus], (3) Juudas [Judas], (4) Pyhä [saint], (5) Helvetti [hell], (6) Hemmetti [hell – softer], (7) Hiisi [demon], (8) Hiivattu [demon], (9) Himputti [demon – softer], (10) Hitto [damn], (11) Perkele [devil], (12) Pentele [devil – softer], (13) Kirota [curse], (14) Piru [devil], (15) Saatana [Satan], (16) Saakeli [devil], (17) Samperi [devil – softer], (18) Anus, (19) Perse [arse], (20) Paska [shit], (21) Sonta [dung], (22) Kusi [piss], (23) Mulkku [prick], (24) Runkku [wank], (25) Homosexuality, (26) Vittu [cunt], (27) Animals and (28) Minced oaths and mixed expressions. Some euphemistic expressions might be considered to be in Minced oaths, such as *jukra* [gee], but as they have a clear reference, they belong in their respective groups.

The types above can be combined into categories. Types (1) to (17) refer to 1 Religion, of which the first four ones relate 1a Religion – Heaven, and the thirteen last ones refer to 1b Religion – Hell. Types (18) to (26) refer to 2 Sex and bodily functions, various bodily activities and body parts of either gender from the milder forms (*naida*, *kakkia* [have sex, poo (verb)]) to the strongest ones (*vittu* [cunt]). Group (27) alone refers to 3 Animals. Group (28) has words that do not refer to any major category but are very soft

expressions or euphemisms, and so is known as 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions. Some expressions in group (28), however, may refer to the other types on a mental level: *haista* [*smell*] can usually be followed by *paska* [*shit*] or *vittu* [*cunt*], but leaving the actual swear word out, all is left is a euphemistic expression. The distribution of these types is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of types in categories 1a, 1b and 2 in Finnish

1a Religion – Heaven	1b Religion – Hell	2 Sex and bodily functions
(1) Jumala [God]	(5) Helvetti [hell]	(18) Anus
(2) Jeesus [Jesus]	(6) Hemmetti [hell – softer]	(19) Perse [arse]
(3) Juudas [Judas]	(7) Hiisi [demon]	(20) Paska [shit]
(4) Pyhä [saint]	(8) Hiihattu [demon]	(21) Sonta [dung]
	(9) Himputti [demon – softer]	(22) Kusi [piss]
	(10) Hitto [damn]	(23) Mulkku [prick]
	(11) Perkele [devil]	(24) Runkku [wank]
	(12) Pentele [devil – softer]	(25) Homosexuality
	(13) Kirota [curse]	(26) Vittu [cunt]
	(14) Piru [devil]	
	(15) Saatana [Satan]	
	(16) Saakeli [devil]	
	(17) Samperi [devil – softer]	

Table 4 shows the distribution of Finnish swear word types in the categories 1a Religion – Heaven, 1b Religion – Hell and 2 Sex and bodily functions. 3 Animals and 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions are left out as there is only one type in each category and it is called by the same name.

In more detail, the types mentioned above comprise the forms in the following list. A full list of swear words and their subtitled translations can be found in Appendix 1.

(1) Jumala [God]
 voi hyvä jumala, Juma, jumalattomasti, jumalauta, voi jumalauta, jumankauta, jumankekka, jumankissus, jukra, luoja siltä varjeltoon

(2) Jeesus [Jesus]
 Jessus, Jeesus, jestapa jee, jestas, voi jessus

(3) Juudas [Judas]
 voi juutas

(4) Pyhä [saint]
 voi pyhän pahnat, voi pyhän pieksut, voi pyhä perse, voi taivas

(5) Helvetti [hell]
 helvetti, helvetin, ei helvetti/issä, helvettiäkö, kuka helvetti, mitä helvetiä,
 painu(kaa) helvettiin, painutaan helvettiin, voi helvetti, voi helvetin perse, voi
 helvetin perseen perkele

(6) Hemmetti [hell – softer]
 hemmetti, hemmetin

(7) Hiisi [demon]
 hiisi, hiisi vie, painukaa hiiteen

(8) Hiivattu [demon]
 hiivatun

(9) Himputti [demon – softer]
 himputti soikoon

(10) Hitto [damn]
 hitto, hitto vie, ja hitot, mikä hitto, voi hitto, voihan hitto, ”hitto, että”

(11) Perkele [devil]
 perkele, perkeleen

(12) Pentele [devil – softer]
 penteleen palikka, perskule

(13) Kirota [curse]
 kirota/kiroan

(14) Piru [devil]
 pirun, pirunkauta, piru vie, pirullisen ovela kapine

(15) Saatana [Satan]
 saatanasti

(16) Saakeli [devil]
 saakelin, saakelin ämmä, saakelin saakelin saakelin ämmä

(17) Samperi [devil – softer]
 samperi

(18) Anus

anukseeni, R-a-k-o-l-ä-ä-k-ä-r...

(19) Perse [arse]

persealue, (perskule), persläpi, (voi helvetin perse), (voi helvetin perseen perkele), (voi pyhä perse), ”työ”, ”työntäkää” ja ”hanuriin”. Samassa lauseessa.¹⁰, revin perseeni

(20) Paska [shit]

(-)paska(-), paskat, ja paskat, haista paska, senkin paska, voi paska, meni itsestään paskaksi, paskanokareita, paskantärkeä ääliö

(21) Sonta [dung]

kakit housuun, Château de la Sonta, sontaa

(22) Kusi [piss]

kusessa, kusipäinen, kusipäisyys, kusipää, kusipää-, ”mielettömän ärsyttävä kus...”

(23) Mulkku [prick]

mulkku/mulkut

(24) Runkku [wank]

runkku, voihan nussu, naida

(25) Homosexuality

puppelipoika, (hömötiainen)

(26) Vittu [cunt]

vitun, Vittu, V/vittupää, Chuzzlevittu, ittu, se ikävä v-sana

(27) Animals

alppiapina, hömötiainen, kuhnuri, mullinkuikelo (kullinmuikelo), narttu, pässi, (-)sika, siat, senkin possu, punapersepaviaani, lehmä

(28) Minced oaths and mixed expressions

senkin, hyvänen aika, voi hyvänen aika, voi sentään, voi voi, torvi, senkin torvi, tohtori Torvi, suksi kuuseen, suksi suolle, painu

That makes 131 forms. These include expressions “Voi helvetin perse” [“oh hell’s arse”] (JB), “Perkeleen Peppi” [“devil’s Pippi”] (HWP), “penteleen palikka” [“devil’s tool”] (HWP), “helvetin prole” [“hell’s pleb”] (HWP), “Voi helvetin perse! Voi helvetin perseen

¹⁰ ‘Taisin käyttää sanoja ”työ”, ”työntäkää” ja ”hanuriin”. Samassa lauseessa. Mahtaako olla huono juttu?’ [‘I might’ve used the words “job”, “push” and “into arse”. In the same sentence. Might it be a bad thing?’] (Tests)

perkele!” [“oh hell’s arse! Oh hell’s arse’s devil”] (*Tests*), “Voi helvetin perse” [“oh hell’s arse”] (*Tests*) where swear words have been counted in in more than one list entry. “Luojan kiitos” [“thank Lord”] may be with a smaller case letter like other religion-related words; it is difficult to know since it is the beginning of the sentence.

The Finnish swear word expressions may use an intensifier that looks like a genitive, or possessive, form. In Appendix 1 these are back-translated as genitive, although their meaning is not necessarily possessive. Then again, swear words are metaphorical, so perhaps the genitive form was meant, after all.

From these we can see that Finnish has many more religion-related words than English, or at least so they are used in this material. There is also a great deal of variation in both the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles. This creates more varied language and keeps up with the comedy aspect of the programme.

The next subsections will show the differences between the English spoken dialogue and the Finnish subtitles in figures.

5.1.3 Swear Words in Figures

There is quite a difference in the occurrence of swear words in the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles. As can be seen in Figure 1, English has the most swear words in 2 Sex and bodily functions, both in the number of forms (over 100) and instances (nearly 300). 1 Religion comes next but both the forms (over 40) and the instances (over 150) are roughly half of the amount of 2 Sex and bodily functions. 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions comes third with under ten forms and over 20 instances. 3 Animals has only three forms and 15 instances.

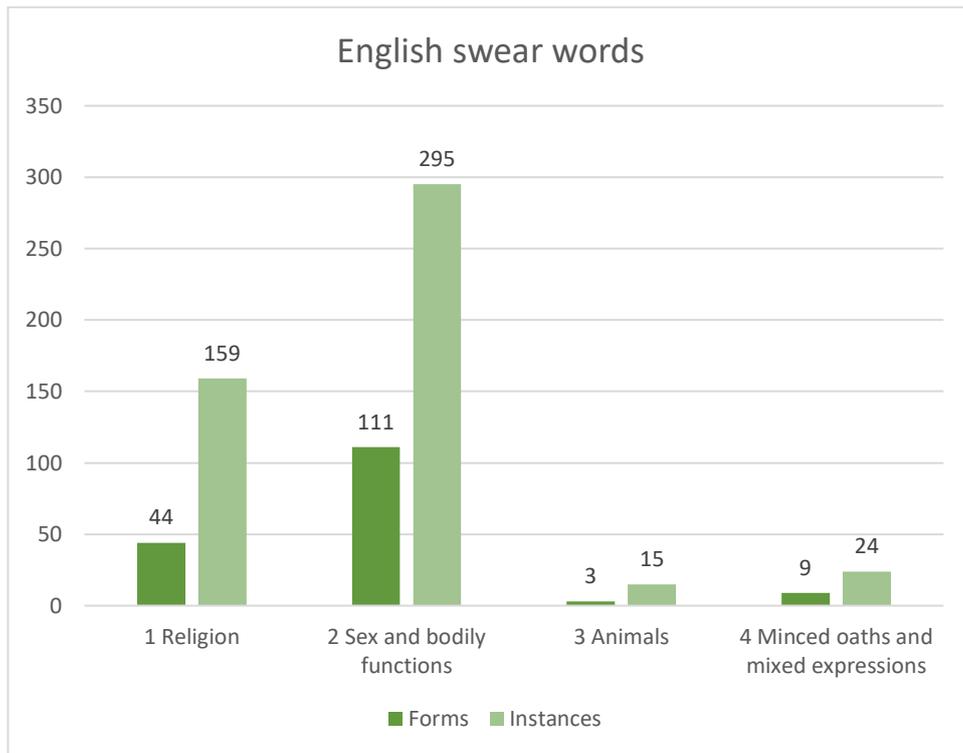


Figure 1. English swear words by categories

As can be seen in Figure 1, there is quite a strong spike in favour of 2 Sex and bodily functions. 1 Religion follows relatively close but 3 Animals and 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions are barely visible in the figure.

Figure 2 shows that in the Finnish subtitles, 1 Religion is the most-used category by both forms (over 40) and instances (over 150). 2 Sex and bodily functions has the second-most forms (over 30) and instances (over 50). There are many more forms and instances in the 3 Animal category than in the English dialogue, namely 12 forms and over 20 instances. 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions is roughly twice the amount in English, with over 20 forms and over 40 instances.



Figure 2. Finnish swear words by categories

In Figure 2 it can be seen that even though 1 Religion is the most-used category, the results are very even.

As can be seen by comparing Figure 1 and Figure 2, the Finnish subtitles are quite different from the English dialogue. There is difference not only in the number of instances that swear words have been used but also in the categories. The English dialogue is heavily centred on 2 Sex and bodily functions with extremely few swear words from 3 Animals. The Finnish subtitles, on the other hand, are used in a much more balanced way (even though the scale is not the same) still with the focus on 1 Religion.

As is seen in Figure 3, *fuck* has the most of different kinds of swear word forms in the spoken dialogue of *Green Wing*. It is also by far the most-used expression with over 100 instances (including different forms of *fuck*). *Fuck* includes forms such as *fucker*, *fuck off*, *fucking*, *what the fuck*, and plain *fuck*. All of these expressions are used several times; in addition to those, there are some expressions that are used only once, such as *shut the fuck up*, *holy fuck*, or *thank fuck for that*. Second in forms comes *shit*, with half as many forms as *fuck* and over 40 instances. *Shit* has forms such as *shitting*, *shit*, *shite*, *Château*

de la Shite, thick as pig shit. Very nearly equal with *shit* is *bloody* with 40 instances and ten forms. The second one in the number of instances, though, is *God*, with over 90 instances. Forms *God* only has 12 which is still third-most of all swear word types. The least-used types are Satan, devilry and scumbag, with one each, of both forms and instances. As Animals and Minced oaths are not specified in Figure 3, they represent types and instances, not forms and instances.

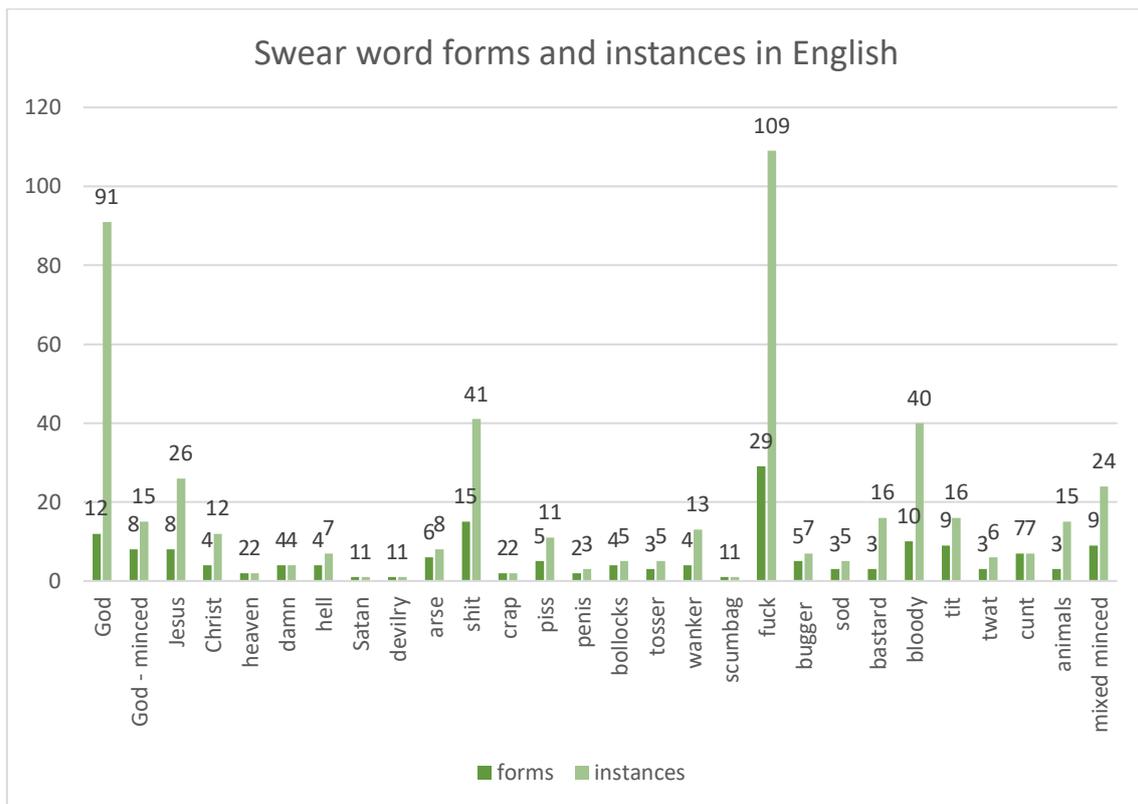


Figure 3. Quantity of forms and instances of swear words in the English spoken dialogue, Animals and Minced oaths and mixed expressions have not been specified

There is a general balance of types and even instances that have been used in the English dialogue, except for the few that make a great difference, such as *fuck* and *God*. Overall, there is a great variety of swear words; the focus is not even on *fuck* or *God*, despite their frequency.

In Figure 4 can be seen the quantity of forms and instances of swear words in the Finnish subtitles of *Green Wing*, or *Vikatikki*. The most-used type was Minced oaths and mixed expressions with 23 forms, over twice as many as any other type – although, minced expressions are not specified here. The most-used type of swear word is *helvetti* [*hell*], with 11 forms and 38 instances. Second comes *paska* [*shit*] with 10 forms and 22 instances. The least-used expressions are *Juudas* [*Judas*], *hiivattu* [*demon*], *himputti* [*demon*], *paholainen* [*devil*], *saatana* [*Satan*] and homosexuality with one each, of both forms and instances. As Animals and Minced oaths are not specified in Figure 4, they represent types and instances, not forms and instances.

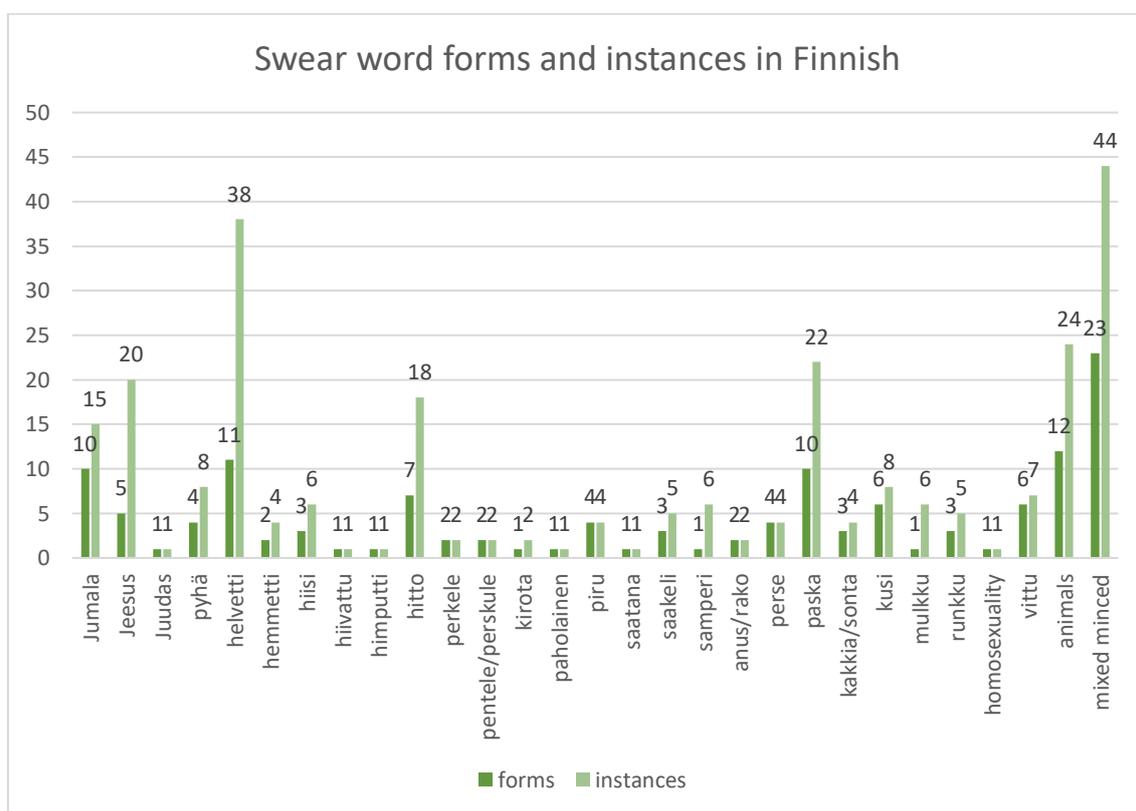


Figure 4. Quantity of forms and instances of swear words in the Finnish subtitles, Animals and Minced oaths and mixed expressions have not been specified

The Finnish subtitles have quite a low general amount in all forms and instances, with a few spikes that are clearly visible in Figure 4.

Although *helvetti* [*hell*] and Minced oaths in the subtitles are the most-used types, it is still important to notice that they are less than half of the amount of the most-used English types *fuck* and *God*, and roughly the same amount as *shit* and *bloody*. Also, it is interesting that the English dialogue only has 9 types of Minced oaths and 24 instances, whereas the Finnish subtitles have 23 types and 44 instances.

In the following subsections, I will explain the categories in more detail and give examples of expressions in each category in both English and Finnish.

5.1.4 Religion

Religion is divided into two parts, 1a Religion – Heaven, and 1b Religion – Hell. 1a Religion – Heaven includes references to heaven, God, Jesus, Christ, saints and similar expressions. 1b Religion – Hell includes references to hell, devils, demons, Satan and similar expressions. The most varied expressions of 1a in English is *God*, especially if the minced *God* expressions are counted in. In Finnish, the most varied expressions of 1a Religion – Heaven are variations relating to Jesus. Of 1b Religion – Hell in English, the most varied expressions are *hell* and *damn* with a measly four, while the most varied expression of 1b Religion – Hell in Finnish is *helvetti* [*hell*] with 37 instances. These results can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4 above. All in all, it can be seen that in this material, there are many more religious swear words in Finnish than there are in English.

There are only nine types in English for 1 Religion, the most varied expression being *God*. If all forms of *God* and the minced versions of it are counted, there are 20 of them, being the second-most varied type. Examples of different forms of God and minced versions of it include *oh, God*; *dear God*; *oh, my God*; *for God's sake*; *cor*; *gosh*; *goddamn*; the latter actually containing a reference to damning, or category 1b Religion – Hell. Despite this combining of categories, 1b Religion – Hell has only a few instances in English, and most of them are used in complex forms, such as *fucking hell*, which in turn includes a reference to category 2 Sex and bodily functions.

5.1.5 Sex and Bodily Functions

Category 2 is Sex and bodily functions. As can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4, there are many more types in this category in English than in Finnish. The most common type in English is different forms of *fuck*, followed by *shit* with half the number of instances. In Finnish, the most common expression in this category is *paska* [*shit*]. Swear words in category 2 Sex and bodily functions have not been divided like in category 1 Religion. Therefore, it is not possible to know for example how many times *fuck* and related words would have been subtitled with for example *perse* [*arse*], which could have been in a different subcategory.

5.1.6 Animals

In the English spoken dialogue, only two animal abuses were used. These are *bitch* and *drone*. Slightly different was *whore bitch* which is counted as a third one in this thesis despite its closeness to *bitch*. In the Finnish subtitles, there were seven different kinds of animal abuses: *alppiapina*, *hömötiainen*, *kuhnuri*, *mullinkuikelo*, *narttu*, *pässi*, (-) *sika/siat* and *possu* [*Alp monkey*, *willow tit*, *drone*, *bull-calf beanpole*, *bitch*, *ram*, *pig(s)* and *piglet*]. This is far more instances than what was suspected. Most of these subtitled words were mentioned only once, but *possu* as the expression *senkin possu* [*you piglet*] was mentioned twice, and the forms of *sika* (-*sika*, *sika*, *siat*) were mentioned twelve times. All in all, that makes 21 instances of animal abuses being mentioned in the subtitles. *Alppiapina* refers to Guy who is half Swiss, but there is no connection with the word *apina* [*monkey*]. *Hömötiainen* is a play on words where, if the dots on the letter ö are taken off, it looks like *homo*. This suits the situation where there is a discussion on birds and one wants to insult the other one, as is shown in Example 1 where Statham and Boyce have a conversation about birds ending with the word *tit*. Only the last line here needs subtitles.

(1) Statham:	So, the second stage of the scan is the powerful pulse of radio waves which knock the protons out of alignment. Uh – Oh! Is that a mobile phone? Come on!
Boyce:	Was-was what a mobile phone?
Statham:	That noise.
Boyce:	I didn't hear a noise.
Statham:	Well, I did.
Boyce:	Can you describe it?
Statham:	Yes, it was a kind of chirrup.
Boyce:	Chirrup?
Statham:	Yes. Like, um, "chi-chi-chirrup".
Boyce:	Could it have been a chaffinch? Stuck in a ventilation shaft?
Statham:	No, it wasn't a chaffinch, Mr Boyce; a chaffinch goes, "tw-tw-tw-twe-twe-twe tweet tu".
Boyce:	Chiffchaff?
Statham:	A chiffchaff. I wonder what noise the onomatopoeically named chiffchaff might make.
Boyce:	A sort of chirrup noise?
Statham:	"Chiffchaff. Chiffchaff. Chiffchaff. Chiffchaff. Chiffchaff chiffchaff. Chiffchaff."
Boyce:	You're beginning to sound a bit like a tit.

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations¹¹
Kuulostaa hömötiäiselta.	Sounds like a willow tit.

(HP)

Here, in Example 1, *tit* could be considered to be in the animal category but because its meaning is rather *an idiot*, it is not counted as a reference to the bird.

Mullinkuikelo is a bit problematic in this category, as it literally means *bull-calf beanpole*, and is therefore in the animal category, but it is actually a spoonerism¹²-like wordplay from *kullinmuikelo*, related to *cock*.

¹¹ All subtitles in this thesis are back-translated by me.

¹² Spoonerism is a condition where words get mixed up and instead of saying for example "great hat" one says "hate grat". Named after the Rev. William A. Spooner, an Anglican clergyman at Oxford University who was famous for his tongue-slips. He famously described God as "a shoving leopard to his flock" (Yule 1997: 166).

5.1.7 Minced Oaths and Mixed Expressions

Figure 4 would show that 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions is the most common category of subtitled swear words but when compared to Figure 2, it can be seen that it is the second-least category with 44 instances and 23 types. In fact, they are not really swear words, or they can be euphemisms. In English, expressions in this category include forms such as *you, man!*, *grief*, *oh my goodness*, *oh dear*. These are counted in rather to see how much – or little – euphemistic expressions are used in *Green Wing* where there are so many swear words used. These are explained in more detail in Figure 5. *Oh, dear* is the one most commonly used, with *you* and *oh, you* following quite closely, especially if they are counted as one, which would make eight instances together. The rest are used only once each.

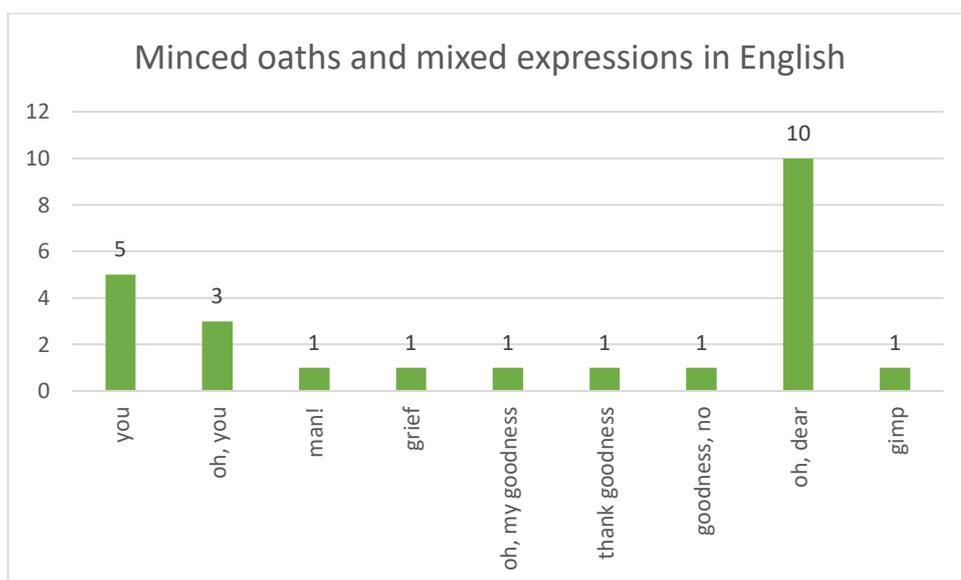


Figure 5. Instances of Minced oaths and mixed expression in the English dialogue

Figure 5 shows quite an even scale of 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions in the English dialogue, with *oh, dear* creating a small spike. Figure 5 lists forms of English Minced oaths and mixed expressions, as opposed to types in Finnish ones in Figure 6.

Figure 6 shows the variety of 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions in the Finnish subtitles. The most common ones are *suksi suolle* [*ski to the marsh*] and *törkimys* [*rude person*], with seven instances each. Many more types are used in Finnish than in English, and there are also more instances. Figure 6 shows Finnish swear word types rather than forms, as it is easier to count them as such. For example, the type *torvi* includes forms *torvi* [*horn / stupid person*], *senkin torvi* [*you horn / stupid person*] and *tohtori Torvi* [*doctor Horn / Stupid person*].

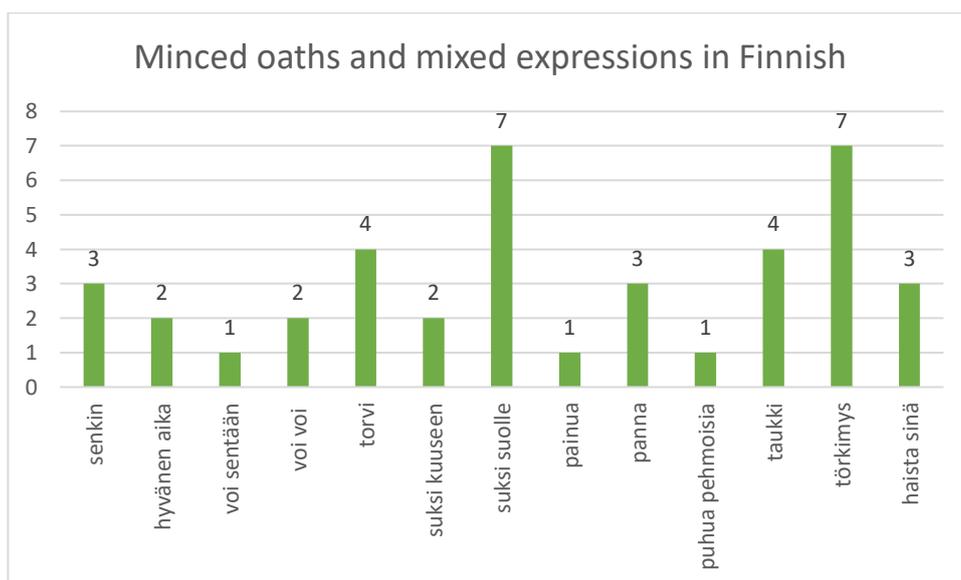


Figure 6. Instances of Minced oaths and mixed expression in the Finnish subtitles

Although there are more types in 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions in the Finnish subtitles, as can be seen in Figure 6, than forms in the English dialogue, as can be seen in Figure 5, the Finnish words spread out more evenly.

5.2 Tone of Swear Words in Subtitles

Translating the tone is important, especially since the work is comedy whose tone depends on the language. Written text is considered stronger than spoken language, so what sounds fairly acceptable looks more unacceptable, at least according to a common belief. *Green*

Wing is a comedy series, so firstly, any swear word that is used, is written beforehand and its usage is practised. Secondly, because it is comedy, swearing should not be taken seriously. In audiovisual programmes, it is possible to see the actions and hear the voices and tones; these together create an experience of not only what is being said but how it is being said. Non-verbal communication is important, and easier to see in audiovisual material. Subtitles help the viewer (especially of a different language) to understand the situation at hand. Although the viewer can see what happens in the programme and hear the tone, they might not understand the words that are said. They might also have difficulty in following the picture if they have to pay much attention to the subtitles. Therefore, it is advisable that the subtitles convey the tone of speech as well. Luckily, the subtitles in *Vikatikki* by Tuula Friman do this. A swear word need not always be translated with a swear word to convey the meaning of the scene. The translated expression may be toned down or even omitted, and even if it is translated with a swear word, it may be from a different category, or a softer form of the same category. These different choices can be seen in Figure 7 which shows the distribution of swear words in the Finnish subtitles.

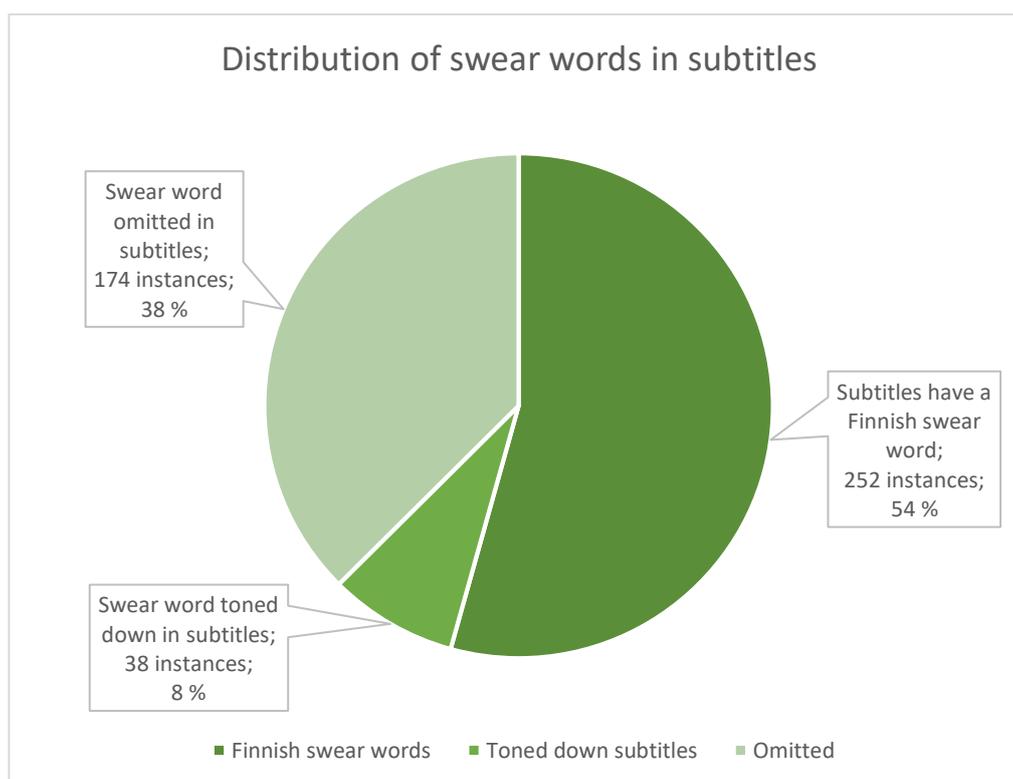


Figure 7. The distribution of swear word in the subtitles in *Vikatikki*

Figure 7 shows the distribution of swear words in the Finnish subtitles. 100 per cent equals swear words in the English dialogue, 38 per cent has been omitted (174 instances), 8 per cent has been toned down (38 instances), and 54 per cent has been translated as swear words in the subtitles (252 instances). The chart shows that more than half of the English swear words were subtitled as swear words, nearly ten per cent were toned down in the subtitles, and over a third were completely omitted.

The next subsections will present these translation strategies in more detail, giving examples of nearly each one.

5.2.1 Omitting

Because subtitles are condensed and it would be impossible to translate everything that was said in a legible form, much needs to be left out, as was shown in section 3.1. Swear words are often the ones that are left out for spatial reasons. An example of such is Martin's "Oh, fucking brilliant!" in CFD when he is reading information on his former school friends online. The tone of the scene is apparent from other subtitles already, and there is no time or space to translate this expression. This can be seen better in Example 2.

(2)

Martin:	Oh, Sally Dalton works for Asda, thank you, God!
Boyce:	Yes!
Martin:	Oh, fucking brilliant, she wouldn't kiss me at school, and now she works for Asda.
Boyce:	Good!
Martin:	That is poetic justice.

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Sally Dalton on marketin kassa. Kiitos, Jumala. - Hienoa!	Sally Dalton is a supermarket's cashier. Thank you, God. - Great!
Ei antanut pussata, ja nyt on kassa. Oikeus toteutuu.	Didn't let me kiss, and is now a cashier. Justice comes true

(CFD)

In the above example, although Boyce says only “Yes!”, it is subtitled as “Great!” This already means the same thing as Martin’s next comment: “Oh, fucking brilliant”. There is no need to mention this twice in the subtitles, or even to subtitle Boyce literally, as “Niin” [“Yes”] because that would not convey the meaning of the situation. Thus, omitting an expression makes the subtitled situation more understandable.

In the following, in Figure 8 and Figure 9, there are two lists of omitted words. The forms of each type and instances how often the word was spoken in the English dialogue are seen in them. As can be seen, different forms of *God* make up the most of omitted words in the subtitles. *God* as an expression is said very quickly and it does not bear much meaning, so it is understandably often omitted. Second-most often is omitted the word *bloody*. It is often used as an intensifier, so if the second swear word is translated, there may not be space (or even need) to translate *bloody*. An example of such would be *bloody hell*, subtitled as *voi helvetti [oh hell]*. The third and fourth types that follow in amount of instances are *fucking* and *Jesus*.

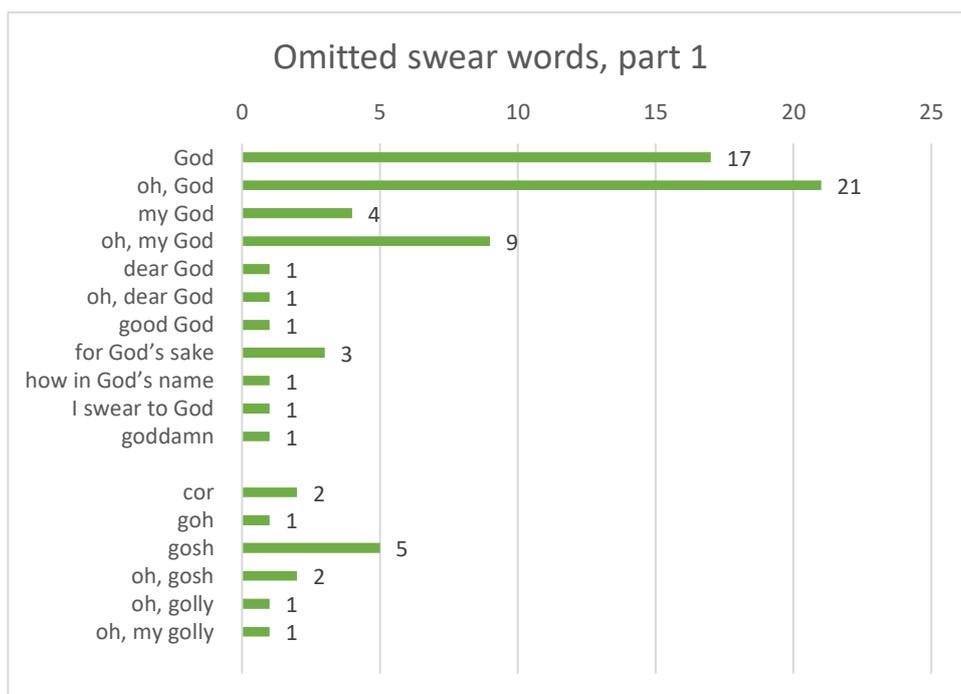


Figure 8. Instances of omitted swear words, part 1

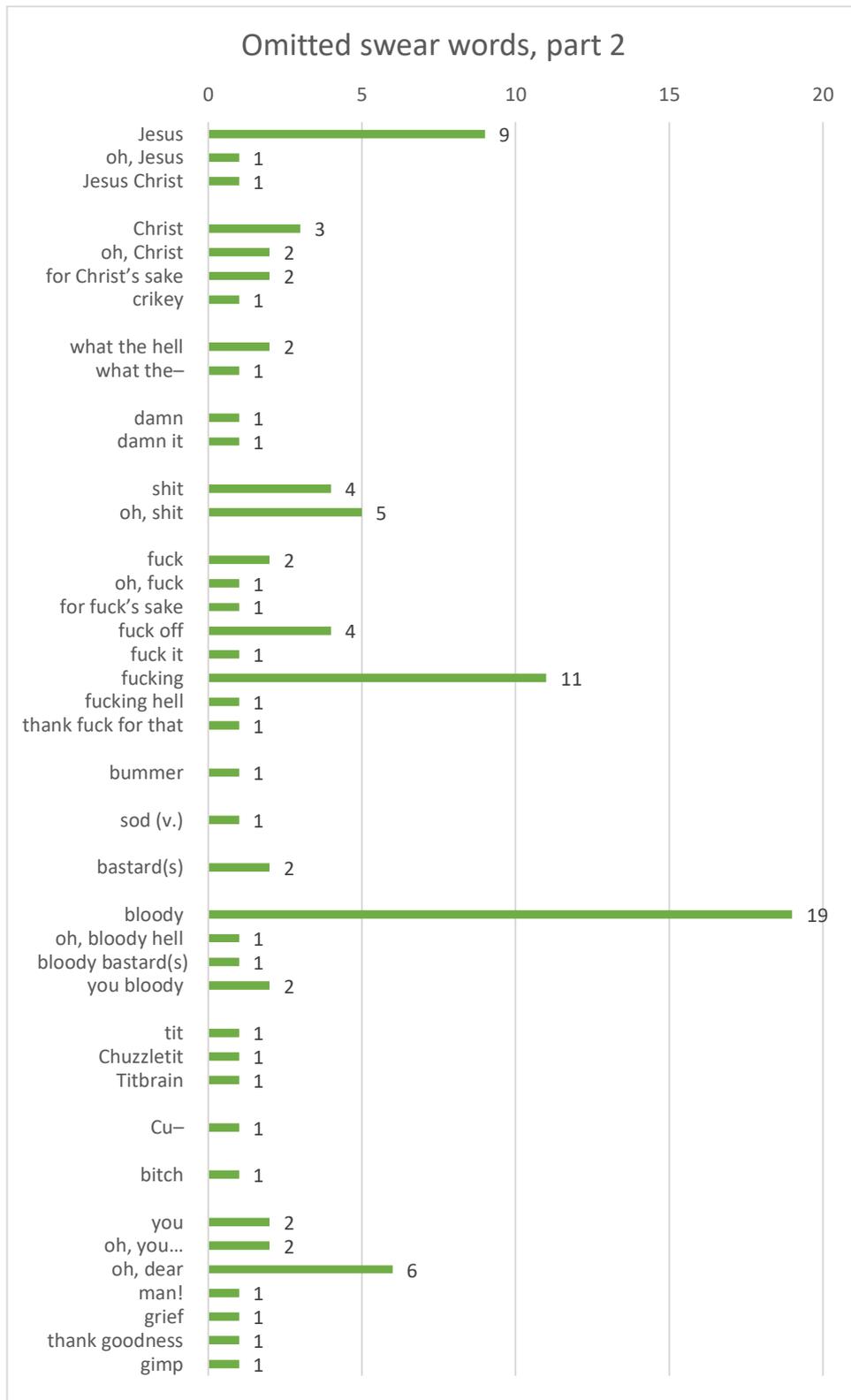


Figure 9. Instances of omitted swear words, part 2

Many swear words have been omitted just once. Sometimes a swear word is used so many times in the English dialogue that some of them are translated as swear words or toned down, and some are completely omitted. Other occasions, then again, are mentioned only once, or only a few times, and are omitted altogether, such as *cor*, *gosh* and *oh, golly*.

5.2.2 Toning Down

Another common feature of translating swear words is toning them down, or making them softer in tone. This has partly to do with swear words sounding stronger written than spoken. Sometimes the subtitled expression works better in the target language toned down, and even conveys the original meaning better than with a literal translation.

In Example 3, Alan Statham's badge has been altered to make it look like it says "C***u***nt Radiologist". This has been subtitled into Finnish not using the equivalent of *cunt*, *vittu*, but by toning the expression down by using the word *rako*, meaning *a hole*. This conveys roughly the same meaning as the original dialogue.

(3) Statham:	All right. Um... somebody has used a marker pen to make some alterations. The badge should read Dr Alan Statham, next line: Consultant Radiologist. And on the word 'Consultant', they've blacked out the letters O N S and L T A.
Sue White:	I see. So that would in fact leave... a C, a U, an N...
Statham:	Yes, yes, yes, exactly. Yes.
Sue White:	And an – oh, I see. So your badge now reads, Alan Statham, Cu–
Statham:	Yes, there, thank you. That's what it's, that's what it's been changed to.
Sue White:	Again?
Statham:	Yes, again.

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Joku on sotkenut vanhan nimikylttini tussilla.	Someone has messed my old badge with a marker pen.
Siinä pitäisi lukea:	It should read:
Alan Statham, radiologian erikoislääkäri.	Alan Statham, radiology specialist.

Siitä on mustattu dialogian, eri ja is.	On it has been blacked “dialogian”, “eri” and “is.”
Selvä. Siis jää kirjaimet...	Right. So that leaves the letters...
R-a-k-o-l-ä-ä-k-ä-r... - Niin juuri!	H-o-l-e-d-o-c-t... - That’s right!
Kyltissä lukee Alan Statham... - Kiitos, kyllä.	The badge says Alan Statham... - Thank you, yes.
Taas? - Niin.	Again? - Yes.

(CFD)

Another example of toning down is in category 3 Animals. Although *bastard* is very often generally translated with *paskiainen* [*little shit*], in *Green Wing* it is mostly subtitled as *sika* [*pig*]. The expression is used as a tone of endearment, too, in which case subtitling it with the same word, *sika*, might not convey the desired emotion. Instead, in these cases, *bastard* is subtitled with *senkin possu* [*you piglet*] which not only tones down the original swear word but also conveys the tone of voice.

5.2.3 Retention

Retention means keeping the same tone. It could be argued that translating a swear word with a swear word is retention but this is not the case. As can be seen in 5.2.2, the group that is called swear words includes different types, and different tones. Although not very common, occasionally swear words are translated very nearly literally. For example, Statham’s comment, “Simon-shitting-Mason, you just, you just shut it! (*Lodgers*)” was subtitled as, “Ole sinä hiljaa, senkin paska Simon Mason!” [“You be quiet, you shit Simon Mason!”]. Here *paska* and *shitting* are very nearly the same word. English uses an infix here which Finnish does not have, so the Finnish swear word has been put in front of the name, not in between, to convey the same meaning. Another example of retaining the same swear word is Martin’s comment when he is practising to be much more macho and says, “Come on, let’s have sex, you bitch! Grrr! (SA)” which was subtitled as, “Nyt naimaan, narttu!” [“Now to have sex, bitch!”]. *Narttu* is not usually used as a Finnish swear word because it really means a female dog. It can be used occasionally but it might

sound too much like a translation from English. In the scene mentioned above, Martin is trying very hard something he is not and in that sense the swear word is suitable.

5.2.4 Making the Tone Stronger

There are some examples where the tone of the expression is made stronger in the Finnish subtitles than what it is in the English dialogue. That is, there is a swear word in the subtitles without one in the original dialogue. There are actually 11 instances when there is a swear word or swear word expression in the subtitles when there is none in the original dialogue. These are all mentioned in Appendix 2. Five of these relate to 1b Religion – Hell (*hemmetin, saatanasti, perkeleen, helvetin* and *hitto*), three to 3 Animals (*punapersepaviaani, lehmä* and *siat*), two to 2 Sex and bodily functions (*perse* and *paska-*) and one (*voi, voi*) to 4 Minced oaths. One of these instances can be seen in Example 4 where by a misunderstanding, Mac thinks Linda Evans had complimented Joanna. She in turn touches Mac’s hair and insults him.

(4) Statham:	No, she shouldn’t, she–
Joanna:	Yeah, Linda Evans from Dynasty, no less, so stick that in your orange pipe and choke on it, doctor...
Mac:	Dooh! Hey, hey, hey! Hey, hey, hey!
Joanna:	Lena Zavaroni.

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Ei, kun... - Dynastian Linda Evans.	No, but... - Dynasty’s Linda Evans.
Märehti sitä, <i>punapersepaviaani</i> .	Ruminate that, Red arse baboon / hamadryas baboon.
Perkeleen Peppi!	Devil’s Pippi!

(HP)

Here only Statham’s and Joanna’s words are subtitled, mainly just Joanna. “Lena Zavaroni” is translated as “Perkeleen Peppi”. Reasons for this must be that no one in Finland knows who Lena Zavaroni is. She was a child singer who had her own television show, and had – what is most important here – slightly curly longish hair (Lena Zavaroni

– The Brightest Star 2016). Mac has curly, Joanna would say, girly hair that Joanna tries to pull here. The original text might be “Bloody Lena Zavaroni” as well, in tone. This has then been omitted elliptically in the dialogue but translated accordingly in the subtitles. Interestingly, this is also one of the only two occasions where the subtitler has used the Finnish swear word *perkele*. Peppi, or Pippi, describes the appearance of the alluded person quite well, and *perkele* was probably chosen for the phrase because of alliteration.

5.3 Category Shifts in *Green Wing* and *Vikatikki*

In comedy, it can be difficult to translate, let alone subtitle, swear words. They can be taken literally which might mean different things in the target language. Quite often “matching pairs” are words from different categories or at least their literal meaning is different (*fuck* and *vittu* [*cunt*], for example). When the first, metaphorical, meaning is quickly changed to a literal meaning, it can be difficult to make the subtitles convey the same meaning, or at least one close enough in the target language.

Examples of such are surprisingly rare in *Green Wing*. More results were expected to find but these two, Example 5 and Example 6, at least show the problematic situation that can occur in swear word subtitling. In Example 5, Alan Statham is singing on the phone a love song about birds but he wants to disguise this as merely talking of birds. He talks to the other people who come into the room of children’s nursery rhyme’s Jenny Wrens and Tommy Tits, and clumsily points at one woman’s breasts as to show that he did not mean breasts. Oliver walks in last, and Statham leaves clumsily.

(5)	Statham:	“...close to you.” Ah, aah, ah yes, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Yes, yes, yes. Bye, goodbye to you, yes. That’s a – very, very interesting, er – why, why do birds, er, the gulls, er, you know, Jenny wrens, er, Tommy tits – N-not actually, no, I wouldn’t say that as such, but um, good morning to you.
	Oliver:	Good morning.
	Statham:	Er, nice to see that you’re, um... I was explaining...

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Ahaa. Niin, selvä, kuulemiin.	Ah. Yes, right, talk to you later.
Sepä onkin mielenkiintoinen kysymys.	Well that is an interesting question.
Miksi linnut? Lokit ja...	Why birds? Seagulls and...
Pipsa Peukaloiset, Tommi Tiaiset. Tai siis ei.	Pippa Eurasian Wrens, Tommy Chickadees. Or I mean no.
Eihän niinkään voi väittää. Huomenta.	One can't argue that. Morning.
Mukava nähdä, että tulet... Selitin juuri...	Nice to see you come... I was just explaining...

(JB)

Here the word *tit* is not meant as a metaphorical swear word, it is meant very literally, and to mean a type of bird. The other meaning of *tit* is *breast*, to which Statham is referring here, as if to say he did not mean that reference. Although neither of these meanings is a swear word as such, using the word *tit* for someone's breast is not formal, and in any case should be avoided in a workplace scenario, between relative strangers. In the subtitles, then again, *tit* is translated only as the bird, *tiainen*. The reference to breasts is omitted except for what the viewer can see in the picture, and in the expression “tai siis ei” [“or I mean no”].

Example 6 includes more swear words and more difficulty to subtitle. Martin has read a letter Guy has received where Guy's adoptive father tells him who his biological parents are. It is revealed that the hospital Head of Human Resources is the mother. Martin does not know what to do with the opened letter and seeks advice from the hospital Chaplain.

(6) Chaplain:	“Mon cher Guillaume...”
Martin:	“Dear Guy...”
Chaplain:	Yes, thank you, Martin. Oh, you really shouldn't have opened this, Martin.
Martin:	Yeah, I know. He's not just a bastard, he's a bastard bastard! Sorry, is it all right to swear in the canteen?
Chaplain:	I'd rather you didn't. Right, now... So, his real father is Fabien Leclerq, ski instructor. And his mother is a Joanna Pearson, student.

Martin:	Yeah, but that's her maiden name, okay? And she kept the name that she took from her second marriage, which was Clore. Joanna Clore.
Chaplain:	You're fucking joking!

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
<i>Mon cher Guillaume...</i>	<i>Mon cher Guillaume...</i>
"Hyvä Guy". - Aivan niin, kiitos.	"Dear Guy". - That's right, thank you.
Et olisi saanut avata kirjettä.	You shouldn't have opened the letter.
En niin. Guy ei ole vain sika, hän on äpäräsika.	No, I shouldn't. Guy isn't just a pig, he's an illegitimate-child pig.
Saako kahvilassa puhua rumia? - Älä puhu.	Is it allowed to speak dirty in the canteen? - Don't speak.
Oikea isä on hiihdonopettaja Fabian Leclerq - ja äiti opiskelija Joanna Pearson.	The real father is a skiing teacher Fabian Leclerq - and the mother a student Joanna Pearson.
Se on tyttönimi. Nyt hänellä on nimi toisesta avioliitosta. Clore.	That's the maiden name. Now she has the name from the second marriage. Clore.
Joanna Clore. - Ei helvetti!	Joanna Clore. - No hell!

(Emergency)

Bastard is quite often translated as *paskiainen* [little shit(ter)] in Finnish but in the subtitles of *Green Wing* this does not happen once. Instead, the word is usually translated as *sika* [pig] in *Vikatikki*, but neither of these words means the same as *bastard* in its literal sense, an illegitimate child, as it is used in the original dialogue. It is the repetition of the word that creates the joke which is somewhat lost in the translation where two different words are used. Therefore, changing the category can change the meaning or at least the tone of the translation.

Figure 10 presents all the shifts or changes of categories. Category 1 Religion is divided into 1a Religion – Heaven and 1b Religion – Hell. Category 2 is Sex and bodily functions but this has not been categorised more in-depth. Category 3 is Animals, category 4 is Minced oaths and mixed expressions, and category 0 is Omission. It is quite clear that 1a Religion – Heaven is the one with most omitted swear words. With second-most omissions comes 2 Sex and bodily functions.

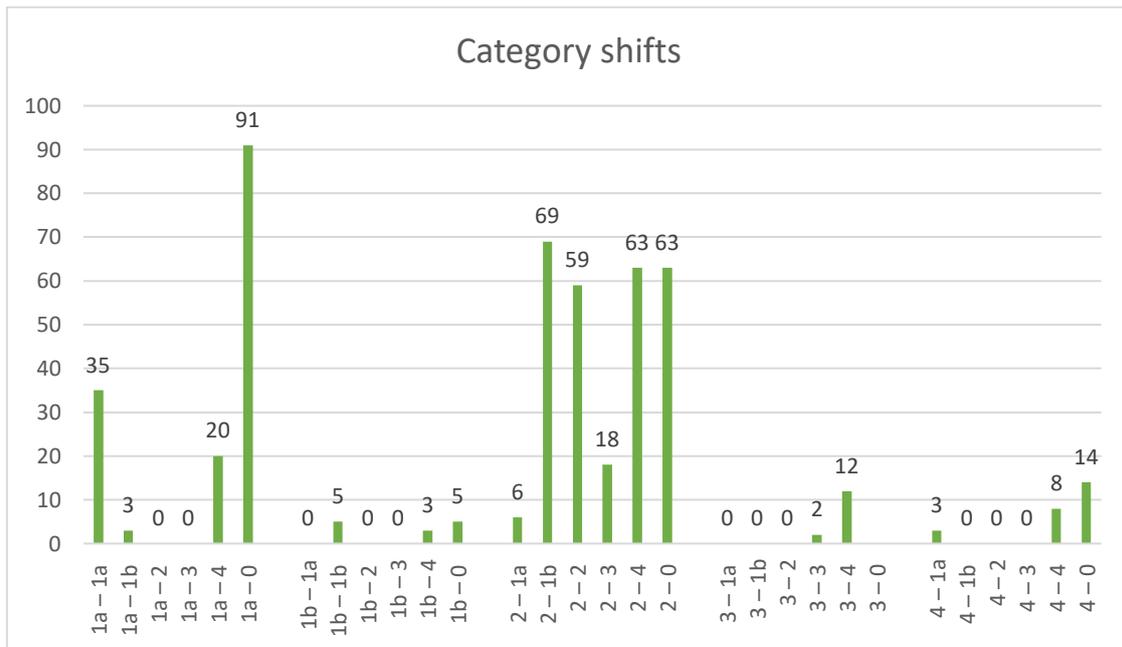


Figure 10. Category shifts between the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles

As can be seen in Figure 10, 1a Religion – Heaven subtitled to the same category comes second, after 0 Omission, in category 1a Religion – Heaven, although there are only a third of instances compared to the omitted ones. There are also quite a few ones toned down into 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions. Only three instances were subtitled from 1a Religion – Heaven to 1b Religion – Hell, a clear minority. There were no instances of subtitled 1a Religion – Heaven into 2 Sex and bodily functions or 3 Animals.

The other Religion category, 1b Religion – Hell is hardly used in the original dialogue. There are only a few instances of subtitled any expression in that category. The same amount, five, is subtitled both into the same category 1b Religion – Hell and 0 Omission. Three were subtitled into 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions, and none into 1a Religion – Heaven, 2 Sex and bodily functions or 3 Animals.

Category 2 Sex and bodily functions is by far the most used category in the original dialogue. Most of them are subtitled into 1b Religion – Hell, with nearly 70 instances. The second-most used shift is into both 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions and 0 Omission with more than 60 instances each. Subtitled this category into the same one, 2

Sex and bodily functions, follows closely with nearly 60 instances. Although 3 Animals were the least-used category in these subtitles, it still has nearly 20 instances.

Category 3 Animals has only a few instances. Two instances were subtitled into 3 Animals, and 12 into 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions. None at all was subtitled into 1 Religion or 0 Omission. 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions in the English dialogue were mostly omitted in the Finnish subtitles, with 14 instances, eight instances were subtitled into 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions, and only three were subtitled into 1b Religion – Heaven, thus making them stronger in the subtitles than in the original dialogue. None was subtitled into 1b Religion – Hell, 2 Sex and bodily functions or 3 Animals.

There are some expressions that do not belong in one category alone. Examples of such include the subtitles of “Oh, shit, fuck, bollocks!”, where the expression is “Voi helvetin perseen perkele!” [“Oh hell’s arse’s devil”] (*Tests*). The intensifiers in this Finnish expression can be seen as genitive or just as intensifiers that look like genitive. In any case, the categories in this subtitled expression follow 1b – 2 – 1b. The English expression is completely in category 2 Sex and bodily functions. A shorter form of this, “Voi helvetin perse” [“Oh hell’s arse”] (JB, *Tests*, TW) also includes two categories. The original dialogue for this latter subtitle example is these: “Fuck! Shit!” (JB), “fucking shit” (*Tests*) and “bloody shitting” (TW).

5.4 Interesting Swear Word Subtitling Cases

Certain words are used much more often than others in *Green Wing*. They are words that are used quite often in general, too, but here they appear much more often than many other swear words. They may be subtitled in various ways; one word is not necessarily always subtitled the same way. The category of the swear words can also shift. A body-related word may be subtitled with a religion-related word or religion-related word can lose all its swear wordiness in the subtitling altogether.

In the following, there are presented some words that have been translated in quite an interesting way in the Finnish subtitles.

5.4.1 Fuck

Fuck is a very common English swear word. It refers to having sex but is often quite differently translated. In Example 7 below, *fuck* is subtitled with *helvetti* [*hell*]. This is to keep in tone with the spoken dialogue. *Fuck* is seen as fairly acceptable, as is *helvetti*. *Fuck* could be translated with *vittu* [*cunt*], as well, but although the meaning would be closer to the original meaning, the tone would be greatly changed. However, in translating *fuck* with *helvetti*, the swear word category will shift from 2 Sex and bodily functions to 1b Religion – Hell. Example 7 has swear words *fucking*, *fucker* and *wanker* in it. *Fucking* and *fucker* are subtitled with *helvetti* [*hell*] or *helvetin* [*hell's*], *wanker* is subtitled with *runkku*, which means *wank*. *Runkkari* would have been a more literal translation for *wanker*.

(7) Guy:	Fucking Mac! I know he fucking goes to the fucking canteen before me and takes all the fucking jelly and hides it 'cause he knows I fucking like it! What are you going to fucking do about it?!
Sue White:	Well, you can have mine.
Guy:	This doesn't mean that it's over. The fucker's gonna get it.
Sue White:	Get out.
Guy:	What?
Sue White:	Out. Wanker.

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Helvetin Mac! Kiilaa ruokalaan ennen minua, helvetti.	Hell's Mac! Cuts into the canteen before me, hell.
Rohmuua kaikki helvetin hyytelöt, koska minä tykkään niistä.	Hoards all hell's jellies, because I like them.
Mitä helvettiä aiot tehdä?	What the hell are you going to do?
Saat minun hyytelöni.	You can have my jelly.
Ei tämä silti tähän jää.	This won't still be left here.
Kostan sille helvetin jätkälle. - Mene ulos.	I'll revenge to that hell's dude. - Go out.

Täh? - Ulos täältä.	Wha'?' - Out of here.
Runkku.	Wank.

(CFD)

In Example 7, the English dialogue has six instances of the word *fuck*ing and one of *fucker*. The Finnish subtitles have five instances of different forms of *helvetti*. This scene is the one in the whole series where there are more swear words than in any other one. The subtitles follow the style rather closely, only replacing *fuck* with *helvetti*, to make it sound smoother. After all, the whole discussion and annoyance is about jelly.

5.4.2 Bastard

Bastard can very often be translated as *paskiainen* [*little shit(ter)*] but in this material, it does not happen once. Instead, it has been translated as *sika* [*pig*] or *possu* [*piglet*], depending on the tone of the scene; or even been omitted by the subtitled verb in the sentence, as can be seen in Example 8.

- (8)

Statham:	I've still got it. I'm sorry to report it's been vandalised by some bloody bastards!
----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Tallessa, mutta joku vandaali on tuhonnut sen.	Safe, but some vandal has destroyed it.

(CFD)

As Example 8 shows, swear words do not always need to be subtitled. The sentiment of the situation can be expressed by a range of other words. Below, in Example 9, Statham has gone to seek solace from the Staff Liaison Officer who first provides it but then disappears herself. Statham is very annoyed.

- (9)

Statham:	Oh, you, you bloody bastard! You bloody bastard! You bloody, bloody, bloody, bloody bastard!
----------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Saakelin ämmä.	(milder) Satan's woman (derogatory).
Saakelin ämmä.	Satan's woman.
Saakelin, saakelin, saakelin ämmä.	Satan's, Satan's, Satan's woman.

(TW)

As is seen in Example 9, if there is space and time, swear words can be subtitled. The swear word does not need to be similar to the original dialogue's but it makes it more comedic to use the same word several times, as is done in the original dialogue too. Repetition can make situations more fun.

In Example 10, below, Mac has told Caroline a list of things that impressed him about her. He has not got yet to item c), which is in fact kissing her.

(10)

Caroline:	You bastard. Wha-what was c)?
-----------	-------------------------------

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Senkin possu.	You piglet.
Mikä se kohta c oli?	What was that item c?

(Emergency)

Subtitling *bastard* in Example 10 with *senkin possu* [*you piglet*] shows the emotion in the scene. There is no need to subtitle the swear word literally.

5.4.3 God

God can be a reference to a mythical being or merely a swear word. Occasionally, religious figures are referred to, and those instances are not counted in here, only the ones with a swear word meaning.

Most of the times *God* appears in *Green Wing* it has been omitted. It is a short word in English with not much meaning as a swear word but is much longer and with multiple variants to translate. The general translation for *God* would be *Jumala* but that word does not exist in this subtitled material, except for in *voi hyvä jumala!* [*oh good god!*]

(*Rumours*). Instead, expressions such as *juma* [*gee*] (*Rumours*), *jumalauta* [*god help*] (HP, *Tests*, TW), *jumankauta* [*god help*] (*Rumours*, *Tests*, TW, SA), *jumankekka* [*god help*] (*Tests*) or *jumankissus* [*God Christ*] (*Tests*) are used. It can even be translated quite differently, depending on the scene and situation, as *apua*, [*help*], as in the expressions, “I’ve lost Robbie, oh, my God!” which was subtitled, “Olen hukannut Robbien, apua!” [“I’ve lost Robbie, help!”] (*Rumours*), or “Voi ei.” [“Oh no.”] (CFD).

5.4.4 Vittu

Vittu [*cunt*] is very often avoided in subtitles. It is very strong as a swear word and using it can distance the viewer from the actual scene, if the viewer only pays attention to the surprising swear word in the subtitles. In *Green Wing*, it is used a few times, but mainly in a going-around-the-word kind of way. Once it is mentioned as *se ikävä v-sana* [*the bad c word*] (*Lodgers*), once it is strengthened from *bloody* to *vitun* [*cunt’s*], mainly, presumably, for alliteration reasons: “Oh, you’re a bloody local councillor now” into “Vitun viranomainen” [“cunt’s public officer”] (HP). Sometimes, *vittu* is used because it resembles another word it refers to, as in Example 11. Here, Caroline asks if Martin had any school nicknames and he tells he was called Titbrain, which apparently was only a reference to Dickens.

(11) Martin:	Mmh. It’s just – well, my name’s Martin, and, uh – as you know – and, um... well, as school they used to call me Chuzzlewit, because they said I looked Dickensian and we were doing Dickens, and um – Chuzzlewit became Chuzzletit... and, uh, Chuzzletit got shortened to just Tit. And then that got lengthened again to Titbrain. Um, yes. I mean, it wasn’t derogatory or anything, it’s just a literary reference to Dickens.
Caroline:	You were called Titbrain?
Martin:	Mmm, but I mean, yeah, in an affectionate kind of way, do you know what I mean? They – they loved me, you know, it was just, “Hey, Titbrain”, you know, it’s just, it’s not...

Subtitles by Tuula Friman	Back-translations
Minä olen Martin. Koulussa olin Chuzzlewit.	I’m Martin. At school I was Chuzzlewit.

Luettiin juuri Dickensiä, ja muistutin niitä tyyppejä.	We were just reading Dickens, and I resembled those types.
Chuzzlewitistä tuli Chuzzlevittu. Se lyheni Vituksi.	Chuzzlewit became Chuzzlecunt. It got shortened to Cunt.
Se taas piteni Vittupääksi.	Then that got lengthened to Cunthead.
Eikä se ollut pilkkanimi, vaan viittaus Dickensiin.	And it wasn't an abusive name, but a reference to Dickens.
Sinua sanottiin vittupääksi.	You were called cunthead.
Sillä lailla kiltisti. Minusta pidettiin.	In a kind manner. I was liked.

(*Rumours*)

The end of the word Chuzzlewit looks already quite like the Finnish swear word *vittu* [*cunt*], so it seems a very reasonable way to subtitle Chuzzlewit, especially since there is no good swear word for *tit* in Finnish. The young people are quite often accused of using much of the swear word *vittu*, so that would fit in in this scene as well, as natural language usage for pupils at school.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Translating swear words can be difficult, especially if it is in subtitles where the viewer can both read the text and hear the speech, and possibly understand both. People's attitudes to swearing also vary but although swearing is seen as rude and lower-class by some people, it is a group of words that exists in languages and has existed a long time.

The aim of this thesis was to see how swear words are subtitled in the context of a comedy series. The research questions were (1) what kind of swear words are used both in the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles, (2) how much the tone of swear words changes in subtitles, and (3) how much swear words shift in swear word categories when subtitled into another language. The first hypothesis was that most swear words are either toned down or even omitted from the subtitles. The second hypothesis was that in this material, English swear words are more related to sex and bodily functions whereas Finnish swear words are more related to religion. Of the religion-based words, Finnish swear words are more related to hell, and English words more related to heaven.

Green Wing is a comedy series that was shown on Channel 4 in Britain first in 2004. This first series was broadcast in Finland on YLE TV1 with the name *Vikatikki* in 2005 and as a repeat in 2007; the subtitles from this repeat were studied. All the episodes were subtitled by Tuula Friman. *Green Wing* is a hospital series with little to do with medicine or patients. Combining drama and sketches, it mostly centres around some doctors, Human Resources staff and as a gluing instrument, the Staff Liaison Officer and their personal and love lives. Being comedy, the situations are sometimes quite absurd, and therefore, the language that is used is not supposed to be taken seriously.

In translating audiovisual material into subtitles, the subtitler has to make many decisions regarding the choice of words, whose lines are subtitled, and how the subtitles are placed on screen. They should not cover the picture nor should they be so long that the viewer has not enough time to read them. Neither should they be too short so that they would not convey enough meaning. In condensing spoken language to subtitles, swear words are often the ones that are left out. Their meaning can be expressed with other words, and it

is a commonly held belief that swear words in the written form are stronger than in the spoken form. Therefore, either leaving them out or toning them down can be seen as a practical solution to convey the original meaning. Translators' own opinions about swear words can also matter in the way they are translated.

Swear words are not altogether bad, however. They are used in different kinds of situations to mean different things. Sometimes, they strengthen the relationships of the speakers or are used as a mutual comedic style. However, as swear words are known as abusive language, they can also be used to abuse someone. Calling someone names or insinuating they are a certain type of person can create a very negative feeling to the accused. Swear words are seen as strong expressions because there is always the chance that they will come true, no matter how metaphorically they are meant.

Swear words in this thesis were categorised based on Anderson and Trudgill's list which in turn is taken from Leach. Swear words were categorised as 1a Religion – Heaven, 1b Religion – Hell, 2 Sex and bodily functions, 3 Animals and 4 Minced oaths and mixed expressions. Swear words in both the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles were counted to see how many would compose each category. Swear words were compiled into types according to the form of the swear word. Some swear word expressions were counted in several types or even categories if the words within the expression fell to different groups. Other expressions, however, were counted only in one type even with several words in them.

The results show that the English dialogue has much more swear words than the Finnish subtitles; two-fifths of all English swear words were omitted. More than half of the English swear words were subtitled into Finnish swear words, although the category or tone may be quite different. In English, 2 Sex and bodily functions was the category most used, whereas in Finnish, it was 1 Religion. Also, in Finnish, in 1 Religion, the subcategory that was most used was 1b Religion – Hell, while in English it was 1a Religion – Heaven. Category 3 Animals was surprisingly little used in the English dialogue but a little more used in the Finnish subtitles. As can be assumed, a large part of the subtitles either omitted swear words or toned them down.

Unlike is often with subtitles, there were a number of occasions when the subtitles had a stronger tone than the original dialogue. These occasions even used Finnish swear words that were not used in any other occasion and that are very strong in meaning, mainly *vittu* [cunt] and *perkele* [devil]. The choice of these words was probably to suit the phrases better, for alliteration or due to a reference to another word that needed subtitling, such as *perkeleen Peppi* [devil's Pippi] or *Chuzzlevittu* [Chuzzlecunt], respectively.

How the translator subtitles swear words, especially in a work with so many swear word expressions, is important because the choices they use have a huge impact on the subtitles and therefore on the subtitled product itself. And that has an impact on the viewer's experience of the programme.

For further studies, it would be interesting to compare the Finnish subtitles of *Green Wing* on the DVD that was published in Finland. They are not the same subtitles as done by Tuula Friman; it would be interesting to see how the tone of the series would change depending on two different sets of subtitles. That DVD only has the first series, but it would also be interesting to compare this first series (subtitled by Tuula Friman) to the second series and the Special episode (subtitled by her as well). In addition to these, the sexual language of the series would be interesting to study as itself, and to compare it with swear words.

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Appendix 1. Swear words in English, their subtitles in Finnish and very literal back-translations. If ‘omitted’ reads only once, it means there was only one instance per expression.

Original dialogue	Finnish subtitles	Back-translations
anus	anukseeni	into my anus
arse	törttö niin kusipää-	bungler so piss head-
arsehole(s)	persläpi	arsehole
arse area	persealue	arse area
“job”, “stick”, “up” and “arse”, all in one sentence	“työ”, “työntäkää” ja “hanuriin”. Samassa lauseessa.	”job”, ”push” and ”into buttocks”. In the same sentence.
pompous arse	paskantärkeä ääliö	shit-important moron
bastard(s)	omitted 2 (-)sika 7 törkimys 2 senkin possu helvetin kusipäinen	pig filth you piglet hell’s piss-headed
you bastard	senkin possu	you piglet
you Scottish bastard	senkin sika!	you pig!
bitch	orja 3 muija 2 akka 2 ämmä 3 saapasnahka narttu omitted	slave woman (derogatory) hag woman (derogatory) boot leather bitch
whore bitch	vöyhkä	minger
blimey	jumankekka!	god help!
bloody	omitted 19 hemmetin hiivatun vitun hitto vie samperi hitto vie! saakelin hemmetin	heck’s demoned cunt’s demon take satan (mild) demon take! satan’s heck’s
oh, bloody	hemmetti!	heck!
bloody hell	hiisi vie voi helvetti!	demon take oh hell!
oh, bloody hell	omitted	
bloody Nora	himputti soikoon!	demon will sound!

bloody bastard(s)	saakelin ämmä 2 omitted	satan's (mild) woman (derogatory)
you bloody	omitted 2	
you bloody, bloody, bloody, bloody bastard	saakelin, saakelin, saakelin ämmä	satan's, satan's, satan's (mild) woman (derogatory)
fan-bloody-tastic	helvetin hieno juttu	hell's great thing
blooming	hiisi vie	demon take
bollocks	ja paskat!	and shits!
what is this bollocks?	mitä helvettiä tämä on? mitä hittoa sinä toit?	what the hell is this? what the damn you brought?
any of that bollocks	juttuja tempuista	stories about stunts
talk bollocks	puhut pehmoisia	you speak soft things
bugger	voi helvetti hitto	oh hell damn
say bugger	kirota	curse
bugger off	painukaa suksi kuuseen	go ski to the spruce
buggering wank	pirunkauta!	devil help
bummer	omitted	
Christ	omitted 3 Jesus!	Jeez
oh, Christ	omitted 2 voi jessus	oh jeez
for Christ's sake	omitted 2 voi pyhän pahnat	oh saint's straws
crikey	omitted jukra	golly
cock up	tyriä	mess up
crap	paska	shit
crap your pants	kakit housuun	you poo in your pants
a total cunt	kusipää	piss-head
C, U, N...	R-a-k-o-l-ä-ä-k-ä-r...	H-o-l-e-d-o-c-t-o...
Cu-	omitted	
Unt	ittu	unt
the nasty C word	se ikävä v-sana	that bad c word
Massively Annoying-	"mielettömän ärsyttävä kus..."	"amazingly annoying piss..."
damn	omitted	
damn (verb)	kiroan	I curse
oh, damn	hiisi vie	demon take
damn it	omitted	
oh, dear	omitted 6	

	voi, voi 2 voi sentään voi hyvänen aika	oh, oh! oh dear oh good time
cunning piece of devilry	pirullisen ovela kapine	devilily sneaky apparatus
drone	kuhnuri	drone
fuck	omitted 2 (voi) helvetti 3 hitto (vie) 2	hell! damn! / devil take
oh, fuck	omitted	
what the fuck	mitä helvettiä 3 helvetiäkö horiset? mikä hitto	what the hell the hell you chatter? what the devil
shut the fuck up!	hiljaa!	quiet!
for fuck's sake	omitted piru vie	devil take
fancy a fuck	haluat naida	you want to fuck
holy fuck	voi pyhä perse	oh holy arse
fuck (verb)	panna 2 naida	shag fuck
fuck off	omitted 4 painu helvettiin 7 suksi suolle 2 haista (paska) 6 paskat häivy!	go to hell ski to the marsh smell (shit) shits get lost!
oh, fuck off	haista sinä nyt!	you smell now!
fuck (itself) up	meni itsestään paskaksi pilattu	went itself to shit spoiled
fuck you	haista paska 3	smell shit
fuck it	hitto ja hitot omitted	damn and damns
let's get the fuck out of here	painutaan helvettiin	let's go to hell
fucker	helvetin jätkä kusipää kakru mulkku	hell's dude piss-head brat cock
you fucker	sika!	pig!
fucking	omitted 11 (ei / mitä) helvetti(ä) 6 jumalauta/jumankauta 3 saakelin mitä helvettiä kuningas-	no /what the hell god help satan's what the hell king-

fucking hell!	Jumankauta! voi jumalauta... perskule omitted	God help! oh god help... devil
fucking shit	voi helvetin perse!	oh hell's arse!
thank fuck for that	omitted	
you cretinous fuckwit	alppiapina	Alp monkey
fuckosity	pantavuus 2	shagability
fuck! shit!	voi helvetin perse voi helvetti!	oh hell's arse oh hell!
you fucking twat	penteleen palikka	devil's tool
you ginger fucking freak	punapääpiiperö	redhead tiny thing
fuck all	en mistään en niin mistään	not anything so not anything
TDTF (too drunk to fuck)	LKP (liian kännessä panemaan)	TDTS (too drunk to shag)
oh, shit, fuck, bollocks	voi helvetin perseen perkele!	oh hell's arse's devil!
oh, my fucksy	voihan nussu!	oh screw!
gimp	omitted	
God	omitted 17 Jestas 2 että jumalattomasti	Jeez that godlessly
oh, God	omitted 21 voi ei 5 apua 2 Jestas 2 hyvä voi voi...	oh no help! Jeez good oh oh...
my God	omitted 4 hyvänen aika	good time
oh, my God	omitted 9 Jestas/Jessus /Jeesus 4 (voi) apua 3 voi taivas 3 kauhistelit voi ei	Jeez (oh) help oh heaven you bemoaned oh no
dear God	omitted voi hyvä jumala! hitto vie	oh good god! devil take
oh, dear God	omitted	
good God	omitted jestas	jeez
for God's sake	omitted 3	

	hitto vie	devil take
God forbid	luoja siltä varjelkoon	may lord protect from it
how in God's name	omitted	
I swear to God	omitted	
goddamn	helvetti! omitted	hell!
cor	omitted 2	
goh	omitted	
gosh	omitted 5	
oh, gosh	omitted 2	
oh, golly	omitted	
oh, my golly	jestapa jee omitted	Jeezy Jeez
grief	omitted	
oh, my goodness	Jestas! Jestas!	Jeez! Jeez!
thank goodness	omitted	
goodness, no	ei todellakaan	really not
good heavens	jestas	jeez
for heaven's sake	voi taivas	oh heaven
what the hell	omitted 2 mitä 2	what
what the–	omitted	
who the hell	kuka helvetti?	who the hell
one hell of a dad	pursuta isäenergiaa	burst father energy
Jesus	omitted 9 (voi) jesus 5 vau jumankauta apua	oh jeez wow god help help
Jes–no	no ei	well no
oh, Jesus	Jestas! omitted voi taivas	Jeez! oh heaven
Jesus Christ	omitted	
Jesus fucking Christ	jumankauta	god help
Jesus fucking...	apua	help
creeping Jesus	voi juutas	oh judas
oh, sweet Jesus	Jumankissus	God christ
knob-head	-törttö nilkki	-bungler vile person
sainted Lord in heaven	voi pyhän pieksut	oh saint's boots
man!	omitted	
take the piss	vinoilu	annoying someone with words

piss off	suksi suolle/kuuseen 6 painu	ski to the marsh/spruce go
I'll piss off then	ei väkisin	not by force
piece od piss	paska-	shit-
pissed out of his skull	kännissä	sloshed
daughter of Satan	paholaisen tytär	devil's daughter
scumbag	pahempi	worse
shit	omitted 4 (voi/-)paska(t) 5 hiisi 2 helvetti hitto vie voi ei hitto!	(oh/-)shit(s) demon hell devil take oh no damn!
shit (adj.)	surkeat	lousy
shitting	paska senkin paska	shit you shit
oh, shit	omitted 5 (voi) hitto 4 voi helvetti 2	(oh) damn oh hell
shite	sontaa 2	dung
useless bunch of shitheads	siat	pigs
little bits of shit	paskanokareita	shit lumps
hippy-shit	hippihorinaa	hippy prattle
up the shitter	kusessa	in piss
Château de la Shite	Château de la Sonta	Château de la Dung
leg shit	nilkuttaa	limp
damn. shit.	voihan hitto	oh damn
bloody shitting	voi helvetin perse	oh hell's arse
thick as pig shit	täysin aivottomia	completely brainless
bullshit	esittäminen	showing off
sod	sika 2	pig
sod off	painukaa hiiteen häipykää!	go to demon get lost!
sod (v.)	omitted	
tit	omitted Vittu hömötiainen	Cunt willow tit / "homo" tit
such a tit	kammottava ääliö	horrible moron
titting	pirun	devil's
tit-end	houna	fool
you titty	puppelipoika	homo boy
Chuzzletit	Chuzzlevittu omitted	Chuzzlecunt
Titbrain	V/vittupää 2	C/cunt head

	omitted	
Dr Tit	tohtori Torvi 2 Tumpelo	doctor horn/stupid clumsy person
blow your tits off	lähteä taju	lose conscience
tosser	törttö 2 torvi	bungler horn/stupid
toss-pot	senkin torvi	you horn/stupid
you toss-bag	tömpelö	clumsy person
twat	sika 2 pässi runkku	pig! ram wank
Twatty	Törttö	Bungler
twat face	-nöhvelö	wuss
wanker(s)	runkku 2 mulkku sg/pl, n./adj. 5 äaliö kusipäisyys kusipäinen	wank cock/s moron piss-headedness piss-headed
an utter wanker	tuollainen taukki	such an idiot
wankpot	mullinkuikelo (kullinmuikelo)	bull-calf beanpole (cock [something])
wankered	sekaisin	confused
you	omitted 2 senkin 3	you
oh, you...	omitted 2 Juma (2.10),	Gee
LAST WEEK		
fuck off	painu helvettiin	go to hell
scumbag	pahempi	worse
oh, dear	voi, voi	oh, oh
Jesus	Jestas! Jesus!	Jeez! Jeez!
shit	omitted	
man	omitted	
oh, my God	Jestas!	Jeez
gosh	omitted	
oh, shit	oho	oops
sod off	omitted	
bloody	omitted	
hell of a dad	pursuta hyvää isäenergiaa	burst good father energy
crikey	omitted	

Appendix 2. Instances where there is a swear word in the Finnish subtitles but none in the English dialogue, with literal back-translations.

Original dialogue	Finnish subtitles	Back-translations
she can't keep her fat mouth shut!	hemmetin suurisuinen akka!	heck's bigmouthed hag!
thank you so much	kiitos aivan saatanasti	thank you very satanally
Lena Zavaroni	perkeleen Peppi!	devil's Pippi!
so stick that in your orange pipe and choke on it, doctor...	Märehti sitä, punaperserpaviaani	ruminate on that, red-arse baboon / hamadryas baboon
a dirty, minging woman	lemuava lehmä	stinking cow
got my knockers in a twist over nothing	revin perseeni ihan turhaan	I ripped my arse over nothing
oh, you bitch	helvetin ämmä! [not counted in bitch]	hell's woman (derogatory)
the filth	paskalakeille	to the shitcaps
porky	siat	pigs
I can't believe you told them	hitto, että menit kertomaan	damn, that you went to tell
oh, yeah	voi, voi	oh, oh