

**WHAT HAPPENS TO SWEAR WORDS IN SUBTITLING?  
A CASE STUDY OF THE FINNISH SUBTITLES OF  
*THE INBETWEENERS***

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May 2020

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UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

School of Languages and Translation Studies/Faculty of Humanities

VAINIO-PUHJU, VILJA: What Happens to Swear Words in Subtitling?

A Case Study of the Finnish Subtitles of *The Inbetweeners*

MA Thesis, 52 p.

English, Degree Programme for Multilingual Translation Studies

May 2020

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This thesis studies the omissions of swear words, the context of the omissions and the possible reasons behind the omissions from the Finnish subtitles of a British television series called *The Inbetweeners*.

The research material of this thesis is collected from the first season of *The Inbetweeners*, consisting of six episodes. The series can be found in the streaming service Netflix. The material consists of both the original English audio and the Finnish subtitles. After the theory part concerning swear words and translator's practices of dealing with them, there follows an introduction of those swear words whose omissions will be analyzed in the thesis. The swear words will be divided into two main categories: four-letter words and name-calling words. Lastly, the research material will be analyzed in order to explore possible reasons behind the omissions.

The results of the study provide a few possible reasons for the omission of swear words from the Finnish subtitles, main reasons being the constraints of audiovisual translation, the redundancy of swear words in the process of conveying a message to the audience and finally, a common understanding among translators that swear words are stronger in a written form than they are in a spoken form (i.e. their offensiveness is greater in writing), which results in a need to omit swear words from the subtitles.

In order to gain more accurate and detailed information on the omission of swear words from subtitles, it would be useful to study the practice of omitting swear words in both a wider and a more detailed scope. It would be crucial to conduct a research on the argument that swear words are stronger when they are in a written form in order to better understand the viewer's opinions on the strengths of swear words and the effects those opinions have on the viewing experience. This kind of a research would benefit future research on this topic immensely.

Keywords: swear word, swearing, translation, subtitles, *The Inbetweeners*

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# 1. Introduction

The first thought that comes to mind when thinking about research on swearing might be that there is not much, but actually there has been a surprising amount of research done on swearing. At first, I thought that swearing was a topic that had not been researched a lot, but after a deeper look, I found a lot of research on swearing and more specifically, on the translation of swearing. This thesis brings something new to the table, since I do not believe that *The Inbetweeners* has been studied in this context nor, as far as I know, has the omission of swear words from subtitles been studied before from the point of view of four-letter words, name-calling words, functions and characterization combined. It is important to consider the reasons behind the omission of swear words and its effects in an audiovisual context. Some of the reasons why research on the omission of swear words in an audiovisual context is important includes the fact that the omissions affect the characterization of the characters and the fact that each swear word has their own, individual functions in the audiovisual texts, which will be discussed later on in the thesis. It is also important to try to find out where the omissions are made, in what context and why they might have been omitted just there in particular. For the purposes of this thesis, the usage of milder swear words or neutral words as translations for swear words in the Finnish subtitles are also considered to be omissions. This is because in this kind of an approach, the swear words are not represented as they were originally intended in the English audio.

This thesis is thus a case study about the British television series *The Inbetweeners* and the handling, especially omission, of swear words in the Finnish subtitles of the series. *The Inbetweeners* is a coming-of-age series revolving around the lives of four teenage boys Will, Neil, Simon and Jay and the mischief they get up to with their parents, teachers and most importantly, with the fairer sex. *The Inbetweeners* can be considered as a relatively new series; it was originally aired between 2008 and 2010 but it is still available on Netflix for example. Swearing and swear words are an important part of the communication of the characters in *The Inbetweeners* and at the same time an important part of their characterization. Swearing and the way the characters use swear words make them who they are and define the way how they are presented to the audience. This is actually the rationale of this research: to consider the Finnish translation and how it expresses and mirrors the original English audio.

The study and research of swearing is a relatively new field of study. It could be said that the study of swearing started to be more of a mainstream study field from the 2000s onwards. Even though there has been literature on swearing long before the change of the millennium, such as Ashley Montagu's "The Anatomy of Swearing" from 1967, the research on swearing as it is today has only become popular after the 2000s. That might be because this kind of more detailed and deeper research on swearing is found to be more acceptable and something to be taken seriously nowadays.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: first, in section 2, I will discuss swearing in general, the definition of swearing and swear words and what swear words mean in the context and scope of this thesis. Section 2 will also focus on the pragmatics of swearing and briefly introduce the background and history of the four-letter words and the name-calling words. After that, in section 3 I will move on to swearing in audiovisual translation and the limitations audiovisual translation has. In section 4, I will introduce the research material and the research methods I have used. Section 5 consists of the analysis of the research material in two parts; first, the swearing in the English audio will be mapped out and in the second part, the Finnish translations will be examined. The analysis will cover four-letter swear words, name-calling swear words and some other aspects of swearing that occur in the research material. The analysis discusses the cases of omissions of swear words found in the research material, why they might have been made and in what context. Lastly, in sections 6 and 7, I will discuss the findings and observations of this thesis and draw up a conclusion.

## 2. On Swearing in General

In this section I will define what is meant by swear words in the scope of this research. I will also introduce different ways to classify and categorize swear words and give a brief look into the background and history of both four-letter words and name-calling words. Lastly, I will discuss the pragmatics of swearing.

### 2.1. What is a Swear Word?

In order to be able to analyze swear words, the term “swear word” has to be defined first and more specifically, it needs to be spelled out what it means in the context of this research. Beers Fägersten (2012, 3) explains the meaning of swear words as simply “the use of words which have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context”. Defining swear words and what counts as swear words and/or expletives, however, is not an easy task. Beers Fägersten (2012, 4) lists a common set of swear words that have been described in academic research in general. They are *fuck*, *shit*, *hell*, *damn* and *ass*. *Fuck*, *shit* and *ass* (written as *arse* in this research) are also a part of this research as they are swear words known as four-letter words. *Fuck*, *shit* and *damn* are also examples of expletive interjections, as are their different multi-word strings composed using them, like *fucking hell* (Ljung 2011, 80). Since my material is from a British series, and *damn* is not a swear that is generally used in British English, an equivalent in this thesis could be, for example, *bollocks* or *bloody*. Another form of swear words are expletive curses, such as *fuck that*, *fuck you* and *fuck off*. Another category of swear words are name-calling swear words, which include words such as *wanker*, *tosser*, *dickhead* and *bellend*. Ljung (2011, 4) gives four different criteria that have to be met in order for something to count as swearing, which are: 1. Swearing is the use of utterances containing taboo words. 2. The taboo words are used with non-literal meaning. 3. Most swearing qualifies as formulaic language. 4. Swearing is emotive language, which means it is meant to reflect the speaker’s feelings and attitudes.

Swear words and expletives are difficult to distinguish from one another. They are both, in a way, each other’s’ hyponyms and hypernyms and they are both used in everyday language when talking about profane language. Expletive, as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, means “an exclamatory word or phrase, especially one that is obscene or profane”. The terms swear word and expletive are almost interchangeable, so there is no reason to make a stricter distinction between these two. In this thesis, the

term swear word will be used about all profane words because it is a more common term used in everyday language. Swear words can also be called bad words, curse words, cuss words, dirty words, four-letter words, expletives, epithets, obscenities, profanity, blasphemy, bawdy language, foul language, rude language, vulgar language and taboo language (Beers Fägersten 2012, 3).

Another viewpoint of defining the meaning of swearing can be taken from Montagu (1967, 101–102), who differentiates swearing, profanity, obscenity and blasphemy: swearing constitutes profanity, “the unsanctioned use of the names or attributes of the figures or objects of religious veneration” (Montagu 1967, 101), when blasphemy is defined as “the act of vilifying or ridiculing the divine Being, the Bible, the Church, or the Christian religion” (Montagu 1967, 101). Lastly, obscenity “employs the incident” (Montagu 1967, 102). In recent years these terms have become more and more interchangeable and the meanings have changed through time. As mentioned earlier, for the purposes of this thesis, I will use the term *swear word* or *swearing* to describe profane language as a whole entity. All in all, in a nutshell, swearing is something that is considered offensive language and is usually about taboo subject matters.

Lastly, Montagu’s (1967, 104–106) classification of the forms of swearing means that swearing can be abusive, adjurative, asseverative, ejaculatory/exclamatory, execratory, expletive, hortatory, interjectional and/or objurgatory. **Abusive** swearing is when swearing is “hurled” at somebody and it is the lowest form of swearing. **Adjurative** swearing is similar to cursing, where one curses someone else or themselves. **Asseverative** swearing can be linked with adjurative swearing. **Ejaculatory** and **exclamatory** swearing is “any form of swearing uttered in a single or a few words, such as Damn! and God damn it” (Montagu 1967, 105). **Execratory** swearing is swearing in the form of a curse. **Expletive** swearing is similar to ejaculatory and exclamatory, but works more as a filler (Montagu 1967, 106). **Hortatory** swearing is swearing disguised in the name of a known or honored figure. **Interjectional** swearing is identical with expletive swearing and lastly, **objurgatory** swearing is “chiding or berating swearing, having the purpose of administering a reforming rebuke” (Montagu 1967, 106).

There are differences between Finnish and English on what are actually considered to be swear words (*kirosanat* in Finnish), even though these terms are used as equivalent to each other (Hjort 2007b, 63). Similarly to English, there are different terms for swear words in Finnish: they can be called *kirosanat* [swear words] or *voimasanat* [‘power words’], but the latter expression entails the former (Hjort 2007b, 66). In Finnish,

swear words come from taboo subjects that are mainly related to faith and religion, sexuality and the body and the bodily fluids. These are the types of swear words that are most common in Finnish, and they are usually really old (Hjort 2007b, 69). In this matter English and Finnish swear words are quite similar; both employ the body and sexuality as a source of profanities. Hjort (2017, 233–235) also lists the most used or most commonly used swear words in Finnish, which are *vittu* [fuck or cunt], *saatana* [Satan], *perkele*, *helvetti* [hell], *jumalauta*, *paska* [shit], *perse* [arse/ass] and *hitto* (a rather mild swear word that could for example be translated as *darn*).

In the beginning of this chapter swear words were defined as words “which have the potential of being offensive” (Beers Fägersten 2012, 3). On the topic of offensiveness, Beers Fägersten (2012, 77–78) has done a similar questionnaire to Ofcom’s (2016) research, which will be introduced in section 3.2., in order to measure the offensiveness ratings of twelve swear words from 1 to 10, 1 being “not offensive” and 10 being “very offensive”. The ratings, when only taking into account the swear words used in *The Inbetweeners* and this thesis, were: *ass* 3.2, *asshole* 4.2, *cunt* 6.6, *dick* 4.1, *fuck* 5.0, *hell* 2.3, and *shit* 3.1 (Beers Fägersten 2012, 78). All in all, Beers Fägersten’s findings are very similar to those of Ofcom’s; *cunt* and *fuck* were amongst of the most offensive swear words, *shit* and *asshole/arsehole* were considered to be medium offensive and *ass/arse* one of the mildest of swear words. Again, it is very interesting that even though *cunt* and *fuck* are both found to be very offensive, *cunt* was not used in *The Inbetweeners* at all and *fuck* was used an astonishing forty times. Even when taking into consideration the offensiveness ratings of swear words, the reasons behind omitting certain swear words in the subtitles do not become any clearer or seem to have any logical explanation behind them. Now I will introduce some background on four-letter words and name-calling words.

## 2.2. Background on Four-letter Words and Name-calling Words

This thesis mostly focuses on two types of swear words, four-letter words and name-calling words. Four-letter words, as their name suggests, are swear words that consist of four letters. Name-calling words, again as their name suggests, are words that are used when you call someone names. Four-letter words are found to be obscene due to their nature; they all are so-called filthy words and they draw their force from both profanity and obscenity at once (Montagu 1967, 301–302).

The four-letter words that will be addressed in this research are *fuck*, *shit*, *cock/prick*, *piss* and *arse*. The path of *fuck* as a word has been varying, but since the 1960s, it has been printed freely in books and its acceptability has just kept growing (Montagu 1967, 312). There are different and popularly used variations of *fuck*, such as *fuck it*, *fuck off* and *fuck you*. There is no certainty of the origins of *fuck*, but the German *ficken* and Latin's *futuo/future* could be its ancestors (Montagu 1967, 307).

According to Montagu (1967, 316) “*cock*, referring to the penis, has not been used as a swearword itself, but in a combined form of such as cocksucker [...] is of nineteenth-century vintage”. *Cock* is also used as its variation *prick* in this thesis. Montagu (1967, 317) also suggests that “*arse* is the mildest of the four-letter words and has enjoyed a certain permissiveness in polite conversation for many years”. *Arsehole* can also be put in the name-calling swear word category, even though *arsehole* is no longer used as “a noun denoting humans but the vulgar term for the anus” (Ljung 2011, 126).

*Piss* on the other hand only became a vulgarism and a swear word around 1760 (Montagu 1967, 317). The variation *piss off* surfaced in the nineteenth-century and was popular throughout the twentieth century as “an imperative injunction to its object to remove himself immediately” (Montagu 1967, 317), so it has had the same meaning throughout years as it has today.

Name-calling swear words are words and utterances that are aimed at someone and they are insulting or demeaning. Ljung (2011, 124) sees name-calling as a universal linguistic category, since “all languages need constructions expressing the speaker’s opinion of other people (and occasionally things)”. Name-calling is constructed of evaluative nouns conveying negative attitudes, these are called epithets, which can be either expletive or non-expletive (Ljung 2011, 125). There are 23 instances of name-calling in the material I have collected from the first season of *The Inbetweeners* through episodes 1–6 combined, which can be said is a great amount. If the name-calling swear words and the four-letter swear words are combined, there are 93 instances of swearing in the first season in *The Inbetweeners*. Out of the 93, 70 are four-letter swear words and their variations and 23 are name-calling swear words. Name-calling composes approximately 24% of the swearing in *The Inbetweeners*, which is the reason why it is an integral part of this thesis.

Jay (1999, 154) explains further what name-calling really is and what it can be: “Insults are based on culturally defined negative references; they reduce the victim to

the referent named”. Some name-calling words reduce people to body parts (e.g. *prick*, *dick*), heighten their unattractive qualities (e.g. *lard arse*), refer to them as unintelligent or unstable (e.g. *idiot*, *tosser*), refer to their social or sexual deviancy (e.g. *bastard*, *motherfucker*) or even suggest that the target is physically weak (Jay 1999, 154). It seems that name-calling is omitted more often from the Finnish subtitles than for example four-letter words. The reason behind this might be that name-calling swear words, as the name suggests, are targeted towards a certain person and/or their personality and physical appearance, which can be more hurtful and powerful, in a way, than four-letter words. Next I will move on to discussing the pragmatics of swearing.

### **2.3. Pragmatics of Swearing**

According to Jay and Janschewitz (2008, 274), “gender plays a powerful role in swearing. Most people swear more around listeners of the same gender than in mixed crowds”, which could partly explain why *The Inbetweeners* has such a great amount of swearing in it; the swearing in the series, for the most part, occurs in same gender crowds, between friends and what is more, between teenage boys who are friends. Even though there are, of course, different sexes represented in the series, most of the swearing occurs between male friends. If the main characters in *The Inbetweeners* were a mixed-gender group of friends, it would be fair to assume that there might be considerably less swearing in the series than there is now. Jay and Janschewitz (2008, 274) continue: “Frequency of use data reported in Jay [1992] show that men are more likely to swear in public than women, that men use more offensive words than women, and that both women and men are more likely to swear in same-sex contexts than in mixed-sex contexts”. This can also be tied to *The Inbetweeners* quite well since the characters in *The Inbetweeners* often swear when they are in public and the swear words the characters use are deemed to be offensive. The offensiveness of the swear words used in *The Inbetweeners* is discussed more in section 5.1.

Jay and Janschewitz (2008, 274) also tie the matter of swearing to cultural contexts: “Reactions to swearing are pointedly marked by power and status relationships. [...] To fully understand swearing, one has to appreciate the contexts and communities in which it occurs. Not everyone is as anxious about swearing as middle-class American speakers. In some indigenous communities in Australia, swearing at or in front of one’s mother is not considered rude [White 2002]”. These examples of culturally tied

pragmatics of swearing are very useful when examining *The Inbetweeners*. For example, British television and American television are known to be very different when it comes to swearing and profanity. Moore (2015) amusingly states that “it is not unusual, in the real America, to meet a graduate of the Ned Flanders School of Swearing: Gosh darn it! What the dickens? What the flood? Leapin’ Lazarus!”. Swearing and the use of profanities is not as common, or at least they are used differently and in different situations in America than in Britain. It is possible that if *The Inbetweeners* was to be remade for American television, there would most likely not be even half as many swear words in the series as there are now. There are swear words that the British use much more casually than the Americans do, for example the famous *twat* and *cunt*, *cunt* being put in the same category of taboo words as the American n-word, which tells a lot about the shock-factor *cunt* can have for the Americans (Moore 2015).

As it has been stated, pragmatics are related to and dependent on cultural contexts. Jay (1999, 147) claims that some words that are considered to be offensive in England are not considered as offensive or offensive at all in America, for example the word *bloody*. This is interesting, since it is stated in section 5.4.1. that *bloody* is more of an Australian swear word than a British swear word. Moore (2015) also takes up the case of *bloody*, informing us that according to the Oxford English Dictionary, *bloody* was once considered to be one of the strongest expletives in the English language, the United States being an exception.

Pragmatics of name-calling are multidimensional. Insults have two main characteristics according to Ljung (2011, 116-117); firstly, “insulting is treating others with a marked lack of respect and it causes those exposed to it – the targets – to experience feelings of shame and dishonour”. Ljung (2011, 118) also quotes Jucker and Taavitsainen’s [2000] idea that “insults should be analyzed in terms of pragmatic space, a pragmatic notion corresponding to the semantic notion of semantic field”. Ljung (2011, 118) also suggests that there are four dimensions regarding the pragmatic space of insults that can come in as useful when examining name-calling and insults. These four dimensions are the ritual vs. creative dimension, the truth-conditional vs. performance dimension, the conventionalized vs. particular dimension and the speaker attitude dimension. Out of these dimensions, the truth-conditional vs. performative dimension combined with the idea of ritual vs. personal insults, i.e. insults either being a ritual verbal play or an actual insult meant to offend the recipient (Ljung 2011, 118) is the most useful regarding *The Inbetweeners*, since “an obvious way to signal that an insult is intended to

be ritual or bantering rather than personal and hence not intended to wound the addressee, is to make it clear that the initial insult is not intended as a true statement” (Ljung 2011, 119). Banter means to “talk or exchange remarks in a good-humored teasing way” (Lexico, 2020). Even though it is not always clear in *The Inbetweeners* what indeed is harmless banter between the characters and what is truly meant to be offensive, it could be assumed that most of the insulting exchanges made between the characters in the context of *The Inbetweeners* are meant to be harmless banter. As stated before, the characters are a group of friends and their sense of humor and banter just happen to be on the rough side. What is more, sometimes there can be occurrences of real personal insults, but the addressee responds with ritualistic banter, lightening the impoliteness of the other party (Ljung 2011, 120).

Swearing is not something from the outside that happens to a person, swearing is a part of someone’s personality (Jay 1999, 107). For example, out of the boys in *The Inbetweeners*, Jay and Simon seem to be the ones swearing more than Will or Neil, which can be linked to their personalities. Jay is always using profane language while bragging about his adventures with the ladies and Simon is mostly frustrated with the other boys, his parents or his life in general, which causes him to swear substantially. Simon and Jay are both good examples of type A personalities, which are much more likely to swear than type B personalities, because “type A personalities tend to have a sense of urgency; they do not like to waste time, to wait in line, or get stuck in traffic. They also have a problem with anger and hostility, especially in frustrating situations because they become easily aroused to anger and action” (Jay 1999, 113).

Neil on the other hand swears very little and Will swears mostly to get his point across. Will could be seen as having an emotional temperament, which means that one can be for example shy, social or emotional, all of which lead to impulsivity, which again, leads to swearing (Jay 1999, 113). Lastly, there is Neil, who cannot really be put in any personality category. He is, in a way, the black sheep of the friendship group. All of the character’s usage of the four-letter words will be collected together and counted later on in this thesis in table 5, which will give a better depiction of the swearing behavior of the characters.

All in all, Jay (1999, 114) states that “the personality factors associated with cursing are masculinity, hostility, post-conventional morality, antisocial personality, extraversion, and emotional temperament”, almost all being qualities which go well together with the personality traits of the most excessive swearers in *The Inbetweeners*,

Jay and Simon. Jay's disposition is often hostile and he has an emotional temperament; for example, in a scene where the other boys are teasing Jay about his new friend, Jay gets so agitated that he starts jumping on the hood of his new friend's car to prove to the other boys that he does not care about his new "friend". In Simon's case, his ongoing hostility towards his family, especially his mother, is a good representation of his personality.

These personality traits that lead to excessive swearing can also explain some of the omissions: since they both swear so much, their profane language has to be omitted now and then so it does not get too excessive. Actually, most of the examples given in this thesis are examples of Jay or Simon's speech, and as it will be shown in table 5, the two swear the most out of all the characters, which possibly leads to their language being omitted the most. In the following section I will move on to discussing swearing and audiovisual translation and the limitations audiovisual translation has.

### **3. Swearing and Audiovisual Translation**

In this section the limitations of audiovisual translation and the translation of swear words in audiovisual context will be discussed.

#### **3.1. Audiovisual Translation and its Limitations**

Even though both audiovisual translation in general and subtitles might seem like fairly new phenomena, they actually have a long history. The subtitles we know and love today were preceded with intertitles, which are “texts, drawn or printed on paper, filmed and placed between sequences of the film”, first of its kind to be seen on Edwin S. Porter's film *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1903 (Ivarsson 2004, n.p.). Soon after, around 1909, intertitles became subtitles like they are today; the first subtitles were in silent films (Ivarsson 2004, n.p.), so they acted as the only dialogue in the films. This, in a way, heightens the importance of subtitles: for the members of the audience who do not understand the source language, subtitles act as the only dialogue. Still, the beginnings of the actual research on audiovisual translation can be traced back to 1957 when the first volume about subtitles, Simon Lak's *Le sous-titrage de films*, was published (Díaz Cintas 2009, 2). So, there has been quite a gap between the first subtitles and appearance of audiovisual translation and the first studies published on the topic. All things considered, the study and research of audiovisual translation is a fairly young science.

Finland has always been a subtitling nation rather than a dubbing nation. For example, most nations of Central Europe are dubbing nations. Dubbing is when a foreign-language film or another piece of audiovisual material is translated into the audience's language by adding a new dialogue on top of the old soundtrack. When I was a child, everything was subtitled and not dubbed, except for some children's shows for very young children. I still have vivid memories about watching *Spongebob Squarepants* before school, around the age of seven, and the show was in English with Finnish subtitles. Even Vertanen (2007, 149) dares to say that Finnish children have succeeded well in comparison studies between different countries regarding literacy rates because of the fact that everything on television has been subtitled, which correlates with good literacy: children learn to read much earlier with such a large amount of input daily. Furthermore, it is also beneficial for learning English and other foreign languages when the audio of the audiovisual pieces is in their original languages and there are Finnish

subtitles. So, it could be said that Finland and Finns take their subtitles and audiovisual translation quite seriously.

The most important function of audiovisual translation is connecting cultures and enabling people from all parts of the world to come together and watch a series, movie, news or whatsoever and fully understand what is going on. But in audiovisual translation, the space for the translation is limited, which differentiates it from, for example, the translation of literature and documents. The omission of words that are not important in the overall context and do not interfere with the understanding of the message is a common (and even preferred) option, and since swear words often are not considered important in conveying the message, it seems that they get omitted and removed from the subtitles quite often.

Briechle and Eppler (2019) conducted an empirical research study on the strength of swear words in audiovisual translation, comparing subtitling and dubbing. Their research question was whether audiences find swearing in subtitles more offensive than when the text is dubbed. They state that the general consensus about swear words being more offensive in written than in spoken language has been going on for centuries, but that the idea has not yet been tested empirically (Briechle and Eppler 2019, 390). Briechle and Eppler (2019, 394) also warn about taking the idea of swearing as stronger in subtitles too far, since it can modify and change the characterization of the characters for the audience. The characters and their roles and personalities should remain somewhat intact even when a product is subtitled, because otherwise the show and the message it is supposed to convey can change completely and not serve its original purpose anymore. This idea is discussed more in section 5.1.

In all kinds of translation work, it is usually considered that the translator should be faithful to the source text and the way things have been said in the source language and to aim to transmit the style and atmosphere of the source language to the target language (Vertanen 2007, 150). All of this is true also when it comes to audiovisual texts and subtitles, even though the translator often has to make radical solutions to fit the entire entity of a speech act to one or two lines of text (Vertanen 2007, 150). Subtitles and audiovisual text have to work as one with the actual program, the subtitles should be so effortless that the viewer does not even recognize they are reading the subtitles.

There are limitations to what subtitles and audiovisual text can do. There are differences between broadcasters and streaming services on the length restrictions of the subtitles and character limitations, but the average character limit varies between 30

to 34 characters per line (Vertanen 2007, 151). These are the character limits for Finnish broadcasters YLE, MTV3 and Nelonen. Streaming services such as Netflix can have character limitations up to 42 characters per line for Finnish subtitles (Finnish Timed Text Style Guide, Netflix 2020). According to Vertanen (2007, 151–152) “a full length two-lined line must be visible from four to five seconds and a full length one line from two to three seconds”<sup>1</sup> and the “minimum time a line is visible is one second and maximum 30 seconds, but even 10 seconds is too long for one line to be on screen”. The Netflix General Requirements for Timed Text Style Guide (2020) states that the minimum duration is five-sixths of a second per subtitle event and the maximum duration is seven seconds per subtitle event. So, there are differences between national requirements and multinational streaming service requirements, which can cause problems for the translators. These constraints can be one of the core reasons for omissions of swear words.

But still, even though the constraints of audiovisual translation and subtitles can be seen as justification for the omissions of, in this case, swear words, it cannot always be the reason for translators to omit swear words. Pedersen (2011, 96) quotes Toury [1995, 82] in pointing out that while omission is a valid translation strategy, “there are circumstances that make omission the only viable option, but it may also be opted for out of laziness”. This means that even if the context and/or situation could justify omissions and the translator can always argue for the constraints of audiovisual translation, taking the translation strategy of omission might not produce the best or most accurate result in, for example, the depiction of characters. And as it will be proven throughout this thesis, there is little to no criticism presented on the omission of swear words, which means that a translator can “get away” with omitting swear words without any real justification for the omissions. This is a matter that is important to keep in mind while doing research on audiovisual translation and omissions; the actual core reason behind some omissions could be, in a way, laziness. To continue, I will now move on to the problems of translating swear words in audiovisual context.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations of quotations are mine unless otherwise stated.

### 3.2. Translating Swear Words in Audiovisual Context

To begin with, Hjort summarizes a few reasons behind reducing swearwords in audiovisual translation and subtitling:

Translators reduce the number of swearwords for many reasons: to curb swearing and perhaps also audience reactions, because they feel that swearwords do not contain the kind of essential information that must be rendered in translation, or because they feel that the message of the swearwords comes across by other means, for example the facial expressions or the tone of voice of the characters.  
(Hjort 2009, n.p.)

Hjort (2007a, n.p.) conducted a survey in 2006, the aim of which was to determine the guidelines and principles that guide the decision-making of audiovisual translators in their work and what kind of feedback have they gotten about their translations of swear words. Hjort's (2007a) findings were interesting: the translation choices of swear words are often made with thought and caution while using some general principles. Hjort (2007a) suggests that the translation of swear words is a field in which a translator is most likely to get guidance and instructions in and feedback from. This is interesting, since I have found the translation of swear words to be the area of which it is most challenging to find advice on and instructions when studying translating. Hjort (2007a) states that "the translation of swear words is guided by not only the translator's choices, characteristics and features of a language but also external factors".

The key argument throughout this thesis is that "swear words are more powerful when written rather than spoken" (Hjort 2007a, n.p.). Even though there is no scientific evidence to actually prove the previous statement, it is the key statement that guides this research: there is no abundance of other theories to explain the frequent omissions of swear words in the Finnish subtitles of *The Inbetweeners*. This could be a good research topic for the next researcher: can it be scientifically proved that swear words are actually more powerful and harsher to the human mind when they are written rather than spoken.

In Hjort's survey (2007a, n.p.), a great deal of audiovisual translators stated that they have received guidelines to always aim to minimize the use of swear words in their target text, in this case subtitles, in comparison to the source text used.

Then again, there are guidelines that suggest that the translators should always omit as many swear words from the subtitles as possible and when the usage of swear words is necessary or justified, use milder swear words whenever possible (*ibid.*). Hjort (2007a, n.p.) also states that in the survey, only one audiovisual translator had answered that they got instructions that swear words should be translated as they are, which is interesting and speaks volumes: out of almost one hundred respondents, only one had instructions which told her/him to keep the swearing and swear words in the translation as they are.

Even though translators have the freedom to play with the language and subtitles, there should always be some consideration on the sociocultural context of the audiovisual text and the tone, register and expressive function of the source text and language should be preserved (Briechle and Eppler 2019, 392). But even still, the translators should be also vary about not omitting too many swear words or changing the source text too much in the subtitles in order to not let the meaning and message change in the source text, because if that would be the case, unwanted censorship occurs: “Omitting swearwords in translation can thus create a more formal, self-censored TL text that differs from the original and lacks accuracy [Gambier 2018: 60; Soler Pardo 2015: 159]” (Briechle and Eppler 2019, 392).

Finland is famous for its freedom of press and media and the fact that there is no censorship in any media. On the contrary, Finland is considered very free when it comes to the media and free speech. Still, this does not mean that general guidelines and good taste do not apply to translators of audiovisual texts. There are local norms in subtitling that are enforced. Pedersen (2018) discusses the level of locality of subtitling norms in streaming services, and the findings suggest that even if they are not that local yet, they are going to the direction of being more local in the future. For Finland this could mean, for example, the composition of local guidelines and norms for Finnish language audiovisual translation and subtitling, that would serve the Finnish audiences as well as possible. This kind of guidelines have actually just been implemented. In the beginning of 2020, national guidelines and quality recommendations were published for audiovisual texts in television, streaming services and recordings in Finland by a workgroup of Finnish audiovisual translators. These recommendations are one of the few documents where, in the open access realm, I found even a small mention of how swearing and swear words should be dealt with in subtitles (since I do not have access to, for example, private and closed forums or companies’ in-house guidelines, these

were not taken into account). The guidelines tie swearing together with domestication and as assumed earlier in this thesis, the guidelines state that swear words indeed are stronger when written rather than spoken and the strength of a swear word depends on the context (Käännöstekstityksen laatusuositukset 2020, n.p.). The guidelines also instruct not to translate every swear word, but to construct the idea of swearing with other means; literal translation is not always the way to go. Lastly, they recommend keeping the swear words characteristically Finnish. The recommendations do not specify what “characteristically Finnish” actually means, but one could imagine it means using similar swear words in the subtitles that a regular Finnish person would use in their everyday language. Lastly, the recommendations state about swear words that if the swear word has been omitted from the source text with an audible indicator, a beep, the translator can use three asterisks (\*\*\*) to mark the censored word, if it is considered necessary to bring the swearing to the attention of the viewer. In the case of the subtitles in *The Inbetweeners*, this was not a practice that was used, simply because none of the swear words were censored with a beep in the series. This would make an interesting topic for further research on the matter of omission of swear words because in, for example, some American television series some swear words are censored with a beep and some are not: why and on what basis are some swear words beeped out and some are not?

The Finnish guidelines have been in the making for years and it is very important that they have finally been finished; unifying practices and guidelines regarding audiovisual translation and subtitling helps to strengthen the field and make it more regulated for everyone’s benefit, the translators and the employers and in the long run, for the audience as well. To define the previous statement, I want to highlight that I mean regulated in respect of, for example, maintaining translation quality and good linguistic practices, not regulated in a way that could be considered as censorship in any way. It is possible for guidelines to be composed in a way that does not limit the freedom and uniqueness of the (audiovisual) text.

Vertanen (2007, 153) agrees with Hjort (2007a) on the matter that the strength of swearing is greater when written rather than spoken. There are different origins of swearing and swear words in different cultures, and their translations might be heightened unnecessarily in the tight spaces of audiovisual translation (Vertanen 2007, 153). Vertanen has a good perspective on the omission of swear words from audiovisual translation:

TV-translators are often accused of watering down the message when they do not translate accurately all the swear words yelled on the screen. Often the situation is that by leaving the unnecessary profanities out, the translator can indeed express the lines as a whole and not as watered down. The translator can count on the fact that even a viewer who does not understand the source language can deduct from the facial expressions and the tone of voice the level of vulgarity the line is said in. On the other hand, one should not be afraid to use harsh language when the situation so requires. (Vertanen 2007, 153)

To conclude, there are no general guidelines on how to translate swear words in audiovisual texts or clear instructions for translators what to do. It seems that mostly translators follow the general idea of omitting swear words whenever possible.

As mentioned earlier, it is quite hard to find general guidelines on what to do with swear words in subtitles. There were no comments or guidelines about the subtitling of swearing in Netflix's Finnish Timed Text Style Guide (Netflix Finnish Timed Text Style Guide, n.d.), so there is no explanation to be found here on why some of the swear words have been omitted from the subtitles of *The Inbetweeners*. The Finnish Timed Text Style Guide went through abbreviations, acronyms, character names, titles and so on, but there was no mention about swearing or what the translator should do about it. There could be many reasons for this. Every audiovisual text is different and every company, streaming service, channel etc. has different guidelines for subtitling. With this said, for now there are inclusive general guidelines for the subtitling of swear words, the translator always has to go by the guidelines and rules the client has given.

It seems that the lack of guidance regarding subtitling swear words in audiovisual texts is not just Netflix's issue alone. For example, Pixielogic Media that produces subtitles for HBO, Apple TV, Disney and Netflix, has a Finnish Timed Text Style Guide and the only reference there to swearing and swear words is about censored words, which they advise to be subtitled with asterisks to indicate the censored word (Pixielogic Finnish Timed Text Style Guide, n.d.). Also, the BBC's Subtitle Guidelines (BBC 2019) do not mention swearing or offensive or profane language at all. The guide does include for example humor, but not swearing. This makes one wonder why is swearing not addressed more in these guidelines? How do translators know what to do if there are no directions for them on how to handle swear words and swearing?

One reason for the omission of swear words in this case could be found from the maturity ratings of *The Inbetweeners*. Netflix has a Help-page for information on how Netflix decides the maturity ratings on its series and movies. Table 1 presents the maturity ratings as they are in the Finnish page:

<b>Pikkulapset (Little Kids)</b>	<b>Isot lapset (Older Kids)</b>	<b>Teinit (Teenagers)</b>	<b>Aikuiset (Adults)</b>
KAIKKI (EVERYONE)	7+	13+	16+, 18+

**Table 1.** Finnish maturity ratings on Netflix

*The Inbetweeners* is rated as 16+, so it is aimed for adults, at least that is how Netflix sees it (Netflix 2020). This means that there should not be any reason for the omissions when it comes to the maturity ratings. Netflix does not strictly have the same maturity ratings that, for example, Finland has nationally, but they are very similar. So, when *The Inbetweeners* is rated 16+ and in the category “adults”, it is clear that swearing is and should be “allowed”. The Finnish National Audiovisual Institution KAVI has also categorized the criteria for maturity ratings and none of the criteria include swear words or profanities; the main reasons listed are sex, violence, drug abuse or possible cause for anxiety.

Table 2 presents the same maturity ratings page in English:

<b>Little Kids</b>	<b>Older Kids</b>	<b>Teens</b>	<b>Mature</b>
U, Safe for Kids	PG, All	12, Guidance, Teen	15, 18, Mature, Adult

**Table 2.** British maturity ratings on Netflix

So, according to the English ratings as well, there should be no reason behind the maturity ratings on why so much of the swearing has been omitted from the subtitles, from neither of the languages.

The British Office of Communications (generally known as Ofcom) is the regulator of the United Kingdom’s communications services, including the radio and television (ofcom.org.uk, 2020). Ofcom has released a research on September 2016 that handles attitudes towards potentially offensive language and gestures on TV and radio. It also reviewed a range of clips from family shows and soap operas to reality tv. There

were some swear words included in Ofcom's research that are included in this thesis as well, so I will be focusing mainly on those swear words. The words are *bellend*, *bloody*, *bullshit*, *dickhead*, *fuck*, *shit*, *twat*, *arse*, *arsehole*, *bollocks*, *cock*, *cunt*, *bender*, *wanker* and *slag* (Ofcom 2016, 15).

Ofcom research (2016, 44) lists the different swear words in different categories according to the participants' views: milder swear words, medium swear words, strong swear words and the strongest swear words. Of the swear words that are used also in this thesis, *arse* and *bloody* were deemed the **mildest** swear words. *Arsehole*, *bollocks*, *bullshit*, *shit*, *piss(ed)* and *shit* were considered to be **medium** swear words. *Bellend*, *cock*, *dick*, *dickhead*, *prick* and *twat* were found to be **strong** swear words and *cunt*, *fuck* and *motherfucker* the **strongest** swearwords.

Ofcom's research is interesting and a good parallel to this research, because the swear word that was the most used swear word in *The Inbetweeners* was the one of the swear words the participants of Ofcom's research found to be the strongest swear word: *fuck*. Also, the research uncovers that the second most frequently used swear word in *The Inbetweeners*, *shit*, was only considered a medium swear word. The variation of offensiveness, according to the participants of Ofcom's survey, between the swear words used in *The Inbetweeners* is therefore great. As previously mentioned in section 5.2., *cunt* was not used in *The Inbetweeners*, which is interesting considering that the other highly offensive *fuck* was used forty times. Next I will introduce the research material of this thesis and the research methods I have used.

## 4. Research Material and Methods

In this section both the research material and the methods used in this research will be introduced.

### 4.1. Research Material: *The Inbetweeners*

*The Inbetweeners* (Finnish: *Putoajat*) is a British coming-of-age sitcom that ran on channel E4 between 2008–2010 and on TV2 in Finland at least in 2014 (iltapulu.fi, n.d.). In addition, it is found in the streaming service Netflix. I will be studying the Netflix-version of *The Inbetweeners*, since the television version is not available for me to access. *The Inbetweeners* has three seasons altogether, each containing six episodes. The series has also been extended with two movies. This research will focus on season one of *The Inbetweeners*, which has six approximately 25-minute episodes. The material, thus, consists of the English audio and the Finnish subtitles of the six episodes. The series and the subtitles have been collected from the streaming service Netflix and the first season of the series has been translated into Finnish by Heli Kivimäki from Broadcast Text International.

The main characters in the series are a group of four male friends who attend the fictional Rudge Park Comprehensive School, located in a seemingly medium-sized town that was never named during the series. Their lives mostly revolve around girls and sexuality. Will McKenzie (Simon Bird) is a new student in Rudge Park Comprehensive who thinks he is better than everyone else, and after a bumpy start he makes friends with the other main characters. Simon Cooper (Joe Thomas) is the short-tempered and most pessimistic of the group; Jay Cartwright (James Buckley) claims to be a ladies' man but really is not, and lastly, Neil Sutherland (Blake Harrison) is the kind-hearted but the slow one of the boys. In this thesis, I will focus mainly on the swearing of the main characters, but in few instances on other character's language as well, but I will only introduce the main characters.

The function and meaning behind the excessive swearing in *The Inbetweeners* can be linked to the British television series of this genre in general and to the synopsis of the series; the main characters are teenagers in comprehensive school, which in Britain is during when you are between approximately the ages of fourteen to eighteen. Since the characters are teenager boys in their prime years, so to speak, swearing

is a big part of the series and the way the characters communicate with each other. Their communication could be described as a constant banter, which means, as mentioned before, talking or exchanging remarks in a good-humored teasing way. Other well-known British coming-of-age television series, such as Channel 4's *Shameless* or E4's *Skins*, also have a lot of profane language in them: it could be typical for British series of this genre, which is aimed at young adults, to have a lot of profanities and swearing in them. In addition, *Skins* was also shown on the same channel as *The Inbetweeners* so it might be E4's preferred style of series to broadcast.

## 4.2. Methods

For the purposes of this thesis, I will categorize swear words in two main categories: swear words known as four-letter words and name-calling swear words. I chose these two categories because four-letter words can be considered, in a way, as the core of all swear words. Name-calling swear words on the other hand were chosen because they are among the most frequently used swear words in *The Inbetweeners*. I will examine the swear words with the help of theories from Montagu (1967), Ljung (2011) and Hjort (2007) in order to find out, which types of swear words have been omitted, which ones have been “watered down” and which ones have been replaced or substituted with other swear words.

Tyulenev and Zheng (2017, 197) discuss the role of comparative study in the humanities and they state that comparison is the heart and core of all scientific knowledge. So, it is no wonder that it is an important part of translation studies as well. “The history of the humanities shows that, after isolated attempts to understand a particular phenomenon in its diverse (period- or locale-specific) manifestations, there comes a stage of consolidated comparative and typological studies of all discovered varieties” (Tyulenev and Zheng 2017, 198). Comparative studies come in many forms; it can be purely academic, it can strive towards different goals and take different modes, have practical aim and so on (Tyulenev and Zheng 2017, 199). When it comes to comparative studies in translation studies, “historically, comparison is a fundamental method used in TIS [Translation and Interpreting Studies]: at the most basic level, source and target texts (ST and TT) are compared. This operation was perhaps the most widespread method during the first, linguistic, stage or ‘turn’ in TIS” (Tyulenev and Zheng 2017, 201). This is the method used in this thesis: comparing the source and target

texts in an audiovisual form. To conclude, what joins all comparative studies in translation studies is the will to find what the phenomena being compared have in common and what differences and possibilities there are to bringing them closer together (ibid.).

When analyzing translations, there is an abundance of theories to use and adapt. Spillner (2002, 37) introduces a few important theories for the purpose of comparing translations. They are different kinds of equivalences in the scope of translation studies, out of which the following can be adapted to the case of studying *The Inbetweeners*: medial equivalence (the translation should adapt to the requirements of the communication channel in question), connotative equivalence (the translation should produce the same associations in the target text audience that it has produced in the source text audience) and finally, pragmatic and communicative equivalence (the translation should produce the same communicative effect and reaction in the target text audience as it does in the source text audience). These are important theories to keep in mind while discussing *The Inbetweeners*; even when omitting swear words from the Finnish subtitles, the medial, connotative, pragmatic and communicative equivalences should remain the same in both source text and target text. In addition to the equivalence theories above, Azura, Dewi and Hidayat list the possibilities that a translator has when they are translating swearing and profanity:

In translating profanity, a translator has several options: to translate the profanity as it is, to maintain the expressive quality but not the profanity itself (softening), or to omit the profanity entirely (omission). What option the translator chooses will depend on both linguistic and non-linguistic considerations, such as whether the sentence will flow better or whether the audience will react well. Whatever options the translator chooses, they will affect the text, either positively or negatively.  
(Azura, Dewi and Hidayat 2019, 45)

Most of the cases considered in this thesis are cases of omitting the profanity completely, and some are cases of a sort of softening; in this thesis I do not refer them as softening but instead I describe them as “replacement with a milder swear word” or with “a neutral word” or with the expression “watered down”. For the purposes of this thesis I will consider the watered down swear words and the replacement of a swear words with a milder and/or neutral word to be omissions because they are not represented as they were originally intended, which makes them omitted in the scope of this research.

Another method I will use to discuss the possible reasons for the omissions of swear words is characterization, or more specifically, do the omissions have an effect on the characterization. Characterization means the instances when a personality of a character is revealed, and it can be direct or indirect. In indirect characterization, a **STEAL**-method is used (Read, Write, Think, 2004): **speech** (what does the character say and how do they speak?), **thoughts** (what is revealed of the characters thoughts?), **effect on others** (how do other characters feel about the character?), **actions** (what does the character do and how do they behave?) and **looks** (what does the character look like and how do they dress?). I will mostly focus on the speech and actions aspects of characterization in this thesis. Regarding the omissions, the characterization qualities that I will focus on can mean things like how the characters speak and whether the reasons for omissions can be found from that, and how do the characters act, what the situation is and can the reason for the omission be found from those occurrences.

The research method used in this thesis is a subcategory of the comparative research method discussed above. That means that the main focus of the comparisons in this research is only concerns one aspect of the studied audiovisual material: swear words. I collected all the swear words used in *The Inbetweeners'* first season, which has 6 approximately 25-minute long episodes. I collected the swear words manually by watching all of the episodes, transcribed into a Word-document the swear words and the sentences they appeared in and documented which character said the swear word and in what context. I only collected swear words uttered by the main characters or minor characters that appear frequently. I only collected words that were clearly swear words, as defined in section 2. Due to the way I did this research, this is an empirical research. I have used a fairly large number of examples, because it is the most straightforward and transparent way to examine the omissions and bring the context closer to the reader of this thesis.

In table 3 I have collected most likely Finnish equivalents for Montagu's four-letter words using Hjort's (2017, 233–234) equivalence examples as a source. As it can be seen in the upcoming tables 4 and 5, not all the four-letter words presented in table 3 appear in the research material, but it would not have been practical to divide the four-letter words any further.

English	Finnish
Fuck	Vittu
Cunt	Pillu
Cock/prick	Mulkku
Arse	Perse
Piss	Kusi
Shit	Paska
Fart	Pieru

**Table 3.** Finnish equivalents of the English four-letter words.

Not all of the words in table 3 are or even can be considered so called conventional pairs of swear words, but Hjort (2015, 323) explains why, for example, *vittu* and *fuck* have become a conventional pair: “87.9% of all the occurrences of the lexeme *vittu* in a parallel corpus of Finnish translations and their American English originals were translations of *fuck* -- thus there seems to be an underlying norm which posits pressure to use the lexeme *vittu* as the translation of the lexeme *fuck*. With *fuck*, a Finnish translator is thus likely to consider *vittu* as the first option to be accepted or rejected instead of a translation of the denotative meaning. In a sense, then, *vittu* has become the literal translation of *fuck*”. Swear words in Finnish and English do not have to be direct equivalents of each other in order to be translated in a certain way; conventions and norms guide the decision making of a translator.

Hjort (2017, 246–247) lists a few Finnish swear words and gives the percentage on how often people consider them to be swear words. Out of the potential candidates for being considered a swear word, the most often mentioned ones were *perkele*, *vittu*, *saatana*, *helvetti* and *jumalauta*. According to Hjort (2017, 247), “these are the most common, arguably even prototypical Finnish swearwords, the core swear words most Finns learn growing up”. As a Finn, I can confirm this. These are the core of the Finnish swearing, which might explain why some of them have been used as the translations of some of the swear words in *The Inbetweeners*. Now I will move on to the analysis part of this thesis.

## 5. Analysis

The analysis has been divided into two parts. In the first part I will collect together a complete list of the swear words that were used in the original English audio of the series. Then I will map out the differences in swearing behavior between the characters and the amount each main character uses each four-letter word in the first season of the series and lastly, I will examine in what way and what kind of swear words are used in the series. In the second part of the analysis I will introduce the examples of swearing instances throughout the series along with their Finnish translations and analyse the possible reasons for the omissions in the Finnish subtitles. Throughout the analysis I will also look into what kind of situations the omissions relate to, which characters and what functions or purposes they might serve.

There are multiple different swear words used in *The Inbetweeners*. This thesis focuses on mainly on the four-letter words and name-calling swear words, but they are by no means the only swear words and profanities that appear in the series. The swearing is almost constant in *The Inbetweeners*; only a few minutes continuously pass in each episode where no swear words are used. The frequency and amount of swearing and swear words in the series are distributed as follows: episodes 1, 2 and 5 have less swearing than episodes 3, 4 and 6. The average number of instances of swearing in episodes 1,2 and 5 is 9, while the average of swearing instances in episodes 3, 4 and 6 is 23. 23 instances of swearing in an approximately 20-minute long episode is around 1,15 swear words per minute, which can only be described as be an excessive (and maybe even an unnecessary) amount. All in all, it is fair to say that there is a lot of swearing in *The Inbetweeners*, which is the main reason why I chose it as my research material. Here below is a complete list of swear words used in *The Inbetweeners*:

1. Wanker
2. Tossler
3. Dick(head)
4. Bullshit
5. Shit
6. Hell
7. Piss
8. Bellend
9. Bumder

10. Fuck
11. Bollocks
12. Bitch
13. Twat
14. Bloody
15. Arse(hole)
16. Slag
17. Prick
18. Cock(-up)

All in all, there are 18 different swear words and their variations that appear in the first season of *The Inbetweeners*. All of them also occur fairly frequently in the series. All of the 18 swear words are quite self-explanatory and there is no need to explain most of them or their functions any further, but one of the swear words listed above might need some explanation in order to its meaning to be clear: *bumder*.

According to Urban Dictionary (2020), *bumder* is a combination of the two words *bender* and *bummer*, both of which are a derogatory term for a homosexual male. *Bumder* is an interesting swear word, since it seems that it has originated from *The Inbetweeners*: Urban Dictionary (2020) states that the phrase was made famous by *The Inbetweeners*, so it was most likely invented by the writers of the show. I will not discuss *bumder* any further in this research, but it is an interesting and unique example of swearing in *The Inbetweeners*, as well as a unique example of a swear word in general. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, a swear word can be anything that is defined to “have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context” (Beers Fägersten 2012, 3). So, anything that is offensive or meant as offensive towards the recipient of the slur can be a swear word, even if it was made up in the moment, much like *bumder*.

A few examples of swearing in the series are presented here below in order to give an idea to what the swearing is like in the series. Examples 1 and 2 will both be discussed more in the following section with their Finnish translations.

#### EXAMPLE 1:

Simon: What the **fuck** has happened? (Season 1, episode 3, 20.46)

## EXAMPLE 2:

Simon: Holy **shit**, what has happened? (Season 1, episode 3, 20.54)

As it can be seen, the swearing instances in examples 1 and 2 happen only eight seconds apart of each other. As it is mentioned earlier, these examples are a good illustration of the frequency of swearing in *The Inbetweeners*; it really does happen every few seconds. Both examples are also excellent examples of the type of swear words in the series; two of the most frequently used swear words and two swear words deemed as one of the most offensive swear words by Beers Fägersten (2012) and Ofcom's research (2016). As discussed, both studies deemed *shit* as medium offensive, but *fuck* caused some dispersion. Ofcom's research found *fuck* to be one of the strongest and most offensive swear words, while Beers Fägersten's findings were that it is medium offensive, like *shit*. In any case, it seems that at least the most used swear words in *The Inbetweeners* vary between the medium and very offensive swear words.

Montagu (1967, 300–320) lists the so-called four-letter words, which are *fuck*, *cunt*, *cock*, *arse*, *piss*, *shit* and *fart*, all of which are used frequently in *The Inbetweeners*, minus *fart* and quite surprisingly, *cunt*. Four-letter words are words considered to be profane and they get their name from the fact that they all, in fact, consist of only four letters. It seems that in *The Inbetweeners*, *twat* has replaced or can be seen as a replacement of *cunt*. It was really surprising that *cunt* did not appear in the series, since it seems like a word that would fit well with the other frequently used and offensive swear words in the series. Maybe *cunt* would have made an appearance later on the series, but at least in the first season, it is not used at all. It seems that *cunt* is considered a very harsh swear word, even harsher than *fuck*, which might explain its absence. Table 4 below lists the four-letter words, how many times each word is used in the series, each words' variations used and the number of times each word was omitted from the Finnish subtitles.

Four-letter words	Number	Variations	Omitted
Fuck	40	fuck it/off/you	25
Cunt	-	-	-
Cock/prick	2	-	-
Arse	3	arsehole, lard arse	
Piss	3	piss off, taking the piss	1
Shit	22	shitting, bullshit, shitty	9
Fart	-	-	-

**Table 4.** Four-letter words, their number of appearances, variations and the times they were omitted in *The Inbetweeners*.

To complement table 4, table 5 below presents each main character's usage of the four-letter words. The most used four-letter word is *fuck* and the second most used word is *shit*. *Arse*, *piss* and *cock/prick* are the least used of the four-letter words. As can be seen from the table, the characters that swear the most are Simon and Jay, Simon's overall score totaling to 25 instances of swearing, *fuck* being used 17 times and *shit* 8 times out of the 25. *Cunt* or *fart* were not used by any of the characters in the series. Jay's overall score rises to 19 instances of swearing with *fuck* rising to 13 out of 19, *shit* to 4 out of 19, and both *arse* and *cock* being used once each.

Of the main characters, Will and Neil swear the least. Will's most used four-letter word is *shit* with 7 instances out of his overall instances of 17 and *fuck* taking the second place by 5 instances, which is only approximately a third of Simon's and Jay's usage of *fuck*. Overall, Will's swearing behavior is more varied than Simon's or Jay's. Since Neil is the quiet one of the friendship group, it is predictable and understandable that he swears the least, but his difference to the other characters is significant: Neil does not use any four-letter words at all. In fact, Neil only swears once during the first season of the series and his choice of swear words is *bloody*. This is when a bee gets in his monkey outfit at an amusement park (this will be discussed in detail in section 5.4.1.). All of the main characters swearing behaviors can be linked to the phenomenon related to the personality traits associated with excessive swearing discussed in section 2.3. on the pragmatics of swearing.

	<b>Fuck</b>	<b>Shit</b>	<b>Cock/Prick</b>	<b>Arse</b>	<b>Piss</b>	<b>Cunt</b>	<b>Fart</b>
Simon	17	8	-	-	-	-	-
Jay	13	4	1	1	-	-	-
Will	5	7	1	2	2	-	-
Neil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	5		-	-	1	-	-
<b>Amount altogether</b>	40	22	2	3	3	0	0

**Table 5.** Frequency of usage of the four-letter words per character in *The Inbetweeners*.

Next I will discuss the possible reasons for the omission of swear words in *The Inbetweeners*.

### **5.1. Possible Reasons for Omissions**

This section is the beginning of the second part of the analysis. In this part of the analysis, the characters and situations linked to the omissions are discussed in more detail together with the Finnish translations. I will examine the omissions of swear words from subtitles and the reason behind the omissions from a few different points of views: characterization, situational swearing, functions (situational swearing can be categorized as a part of functions) or the lengths of the subtitles. Functions can be things like name-calling (Ljung 2011), which was introduced earlier in this thesis, or other functions, such as a function of displaying pain or shock; in situations like these, swearing is a natural reaction. Name-calling will be discussed more in section 5.3. Subtitle lengths are linked to the audiovisual point of view of this thesis: there is a limited space in audiovisual translation (discussed in more detail in section 3), which can cause some of the omissions. According to Jay (1999), swearing can be a part of someone's personality, as it has been mentioned earlier in section 2.2. This can be linked to situational swearing, which means swearing as a function of, for example, an unexpected situation. Situational swearing is linked to the way the characters act and the way their personalities are depicted to the audience; there are some situations where swearing and its translation is necessary, for example a situation where something surprising happens and swearing is a natural response in such a situation. A very good example of this kind of situational swearing and how swearing can have a functional aspect are the examples 1 and 2 presented above, but

with their Finnish translations as well. The context of the examples is a situation where the boys are coming back from a trip to an amusement park and Simon finds his new car completely trashed by a group of mentally disabled teenagers that Will has accidentally verbally assaulted earlier:

EXAMPLE 1:

Simon: What the **fuck** has happened? / Mitä oikein on tapahtunut? (Season 1, episode 3, 20.46)

Examples 1 and 2 are both set in the same situation mentioned above where Simon finds his car ruined. The exclamations appear back to back, because Simon cannot believe what he is seeing, which causes him to ask the same question twice. They are mainly identical questions, only the swear word changes in the beginning from *fuck* to *shit*:

EXAMPLE 2:

Simon: Holy **shit**, what has happened? / Mitä on tapahtunut? (Season 1, episode 3, 20.54)

But why have the swear words been omitted in these examples? Hjort's (2007a) survey findings included that swearing in audiovisual translation and subtitling is often avoided by trying to convey the message without swearing, taking into consideration the audience, the context and the genre of the show/series/movie etc. and by using idiomatic language. In examples 1 and 2 the wish to convey the message without swearing might be the reason for the omissions; the message remains absolutely the same without the swearing, so in terms of audiovisual translation and subtitling, the swearing is unnecessary. The viewers can see from the context, the way Simon speaks, the tone of his voice and his gestures that he is clearly upset that his car has been destroyed. There is no need to translate the swearing in this case.

The decision of omitting Simon's swearing from the examples 1 and 2 above could also be a result of the fact, which was mentioned in Hjort's (2007a) survey that in the case of audiovisual translation, whenever there is a lot of swearing in a short period of time, the translator should try to find alternatives for the swearing in order to soften the blow, so to speak. In the examples above, the swear words *fuck* and *shit* have

been omitted and not replaced with anything, both of them now only saying “what has happened?” in the Finnish subtitles. It is interesting that the swear words in neither of the questions have been subtitled since it would make more sense to translate one of them, most likely the first one, and just omit the swear word from the second question, since it would at that point already be clear to the viewer that Simon is upset. Overall, Hjort’s (2007a) survey might explain and give reasons for most of the omissions made in the Finnish subtitles of *The Inbetweeners*. Since the language in *The Inbetweeners* can be considered harsh even in English, if the idea presented earlier that swear words are more powerful when written is correct and could be proved to be correct, then the Finnish translations would be understandable and the removal of certain words and even whole utterances would be justified. Until such research is conducted, there can only be speculation.

All of this considered, it cannot be said that the level of offensiveness seems to, per se, affect the frequency of omission of certain swear words. *Fuck* was omitted most frequently from the Finnish subtitles of *The Inbetweeners*, but it was also used the most frequently, so this does not completely explain the omissions. But also, *twat* was considered to be a strong swear word and it was omitted every single time it was used from the Finnish subtitles. What is more, there is actually no reason to presume that the level of offensiveness in English swear words would correlate in the Finnish subtitles, since the swear words that are considered to be offensive in English might not be offensive for the Finnish audience in Finnish. Next, I will go deeper in the different swear words used in *The Inbetweeners* and instances when they were omitted, starting with the four-letter words.

## **5.2. Four-letter Words**

In this section I will examine the four-letter words defined earlier in this thesis and their omissions in more detail. In the next subsections I will discuss why, when and where some of the omissions have been made in the Finnish subtitles and the possible reasons for the omissions with examples from the subtitles using the four-letter words as a basis, starting with the infamous *fuck*.

### 5.2.1. Fuck

The history and origins of *fuck* have been introduced in the beginning of this thesis. *Fuck* and its different variations (*fucking*, *fucked*) are used 40 times in the first season of *The Inbetweeners*, the most frequent user of the word being Simon. The forty occurrences of *fuck* include the instances when the word was omitted from the subtitles, which was 25 times in total. So, all in all, in over half the instances, *fuck* was omitted completely or changed to a milder (swear) word. Next I will introduce two examples of the translation of *fuck* in *The Inbetweeners*. In example 3, *fuck* has been omitted completely from the subtitles. Conversely, in example 4, *fuck* has been changed to another, milder Finnish swear word:

EXAMPLE 3:

Jay: Half a **fuckin**g hour longer. / Puoli tuntia kauemmin. (Season 1, episode 3, 17.51)

EXAMPLE 4:

Simon: **Fuck, fuck, fuck...** / Perse, perse, perse... (Season 1, episode 4, 6.42)

In example 3, the boys are waiting in a separate line to get front row seats in a rollercoaster called Nemesis Inferno, which Will describes as the best ride in the country. After queuing for a long time, the boys get to the top of the line and Will promises the ride is worth the “little bit longer” waiting time, which results in Jay’s response of “half a *fucking* hour longer”. In example 3, *fuck* has been omitted completely from the Finnish subtitles and the Finnish subtitles just say “half an hour longer”.

In example 4, the boys are at a house party and Will is upstairs with a popular girl called Charlotte. Charlotte’s boyfriend, a bully called Donovan, approaches Simon, Jay and Neil to question them about what Will and Charlotte are doing upstairs, which explains Simons’ reaction to Donovan’s approach in example 4. *Fuck* has been translated in Finnish as *perse*, which directly translated means *arse/ass*. The reason behind both, the omission and the replacement with a milder swear word, in these examples could be the fact that both Simon and Jay are very frequent users of *fuck*. In example 4, Simon uses *fuck* three times in a row, and it might be that the translator felt that the Finnish equivalent for *fuck*, *vittu*, would have been too strong of a word to be used three times in a row. So even if *vittu* has formed a conventional pair with *fuck*, as seen in table 3, it might still be considered too harsh a word to be used three times in a row in the Finnish subtitles. The

reason behind the omission in example 3 could be the fact that Jay's point is valid and understandable even without the swear word, so there is no need to translate the swear word. Next I will move on to the four-letter word *cock*.

### 5.2.2. Cock & Prick

*Cock* and its synonym *prick* and their other variations appeared both only once in the research material, *cock* as the variation *cock-up* and *prick* just as *prick*. *Cock*, *prick* and their variations were one of the least used swear words in the series. Here are the two instances where *cock* and *prick* were used:

EXAMPLE 5:

Jay: I made a few **cock-ups**. / Mokasin pari kertaa. (Season 1, episode 6, 16.15)

EXAMPLE 6:

Will: The **prick**. / Mulkku. (Season 1, episode 5, 0.56)

Example 5 takes place in the school disco where Jay is talking about his skills as a DJ and admits that he made a few mistakes while playing the records. Example 6 is from a scene where the bully Donovan has tied Will up in a chair in the student lounge and has put a garbage bin on his head, which results in Will calling him a *prick*. In these two examples, *cock-up* has been omitted by changing it to a neutral word in the subtitles, but *prick* has not been omitted. In these examples, *prick* is an instance of name-calling, while *cock-up* is a way of Jay referring to himself and his abilities. Perhaps this is the reason *cock-up* was omitted while *prick* was not; since Jay is referring to himself and his personal abilities and it is not common to "bad mouth" yourself, so the swear word was omitted. Also, there really is nothing that would be equivalent with *cock-up* in the Finnish vocabulary and would describe *cock-up* as it is meant to be understood other than *mokata*, which was used in example 5. So, in this case, *mokasin* is a perfectly good and justifiable translation of *cock-up*. When it comes to example 6 and its context, it would be strange not to translate Will calling Donovan a *prick* since he has tied Will up and put a garbage bin on his head, which is more than a justified cause to call someone a *prick*, even in the subtitles. *Prick* is translated as *mulkku*, which is closer to the same meaning as *dickhead*, but still a valid translation. Next I will move on to the four-letter word *arse*.

### 5.2.3. Arse

As well as many other of the four-letter words, also *arse* and its variations appeared in *The Inbetweeners* fairly infrequently. *Arse* and its variations only appeared three times: twice as *arsehole(s)* and once as *lard arse*. As mentioned earlier, “arse is the mildest of the four-letter words and has enjoyed a certain permissiveness in polite conversation for many years” (Montagu 1967, 317). This could explain why it does not appear many times in *The Inbetweeners*; when considering the level of offensiveness of the swear words in *The Inbetweeners*, it could be said that *arse* is not offensive or vulgar enough for the purposes of the series. *Arse* is quite a mild swear word compared to, for example, *fuck* that is used countless times in the series. This theory is supported by the research mentioned earlier by Beers Fägersten (2012) and Ofcom (2016): Ofcom’s research deemed *fuck* one of the most offensive swear words and Beers Fägersten rated its offensiveness with 5 out of 10. *Ass* was given score of 3.2 and *asshole* 4.2 by Beers Fägersten (2012), while Ofcom’s research found *arsehole* to be a medium offensive swear word and *arse* to be a mild swear word. Ergo, both researches found *arse* as an isolated word to be less offensive than the compound word *arsehole*. This is an interesting finding: *arse* is more acceptable when used to describe the rear side of a person than when it is used as a name-calling word *arsehole*.

In the following example 7, *arse* is used as its variation *lard arse*, which is a name-calling word or a pejorative, as mentioned in section 2.2. As concluded above, *lard arse* used in this way is meant to offend the recipient of the slur:

EXAMPLE 7:

Jay: (Listen), **lard arse**. / (Sinne tulee ruokaa), läski. (Season 1, episode 6, 5.37)

In example 7, a meeting about the school disco is taking place and Jay is interrupting a fellow student who is constantly talking about the food he would like to have at the disco. In this example, *lard arse* has been kept in the subtitles with its original meaning: the Finnish *läski* can be directly translated as “fatty”, and fatty and *lard arse* have the same meaning and connotation; fatty can be considered to be less offensive than *lard arse*. The difference between the original English audio and the Finnish subtitles is that *arse* is considered to be a swear word but *läski* is not; in Finnish, *läski* is a name-calling word but not a name-calling swear word, per se.

Another instance including *arsehole* is when Will and Simon are arguing about whether Simon's childhood crush, a popular girl called Carli, is serious with her relationship with Simon or not:

EXAMPLE 8:

Will: Maybe if you weren't obsessed by that **arsehole** Carli, who's just stringing you along, you'd see that. / Jos et antaisi Carlin vedättää sinua, tajuaisit sen itsekin. (Season 1, episode 4, 14.27)

In the case of example 8, I think it is fair to say and fairly clear that *arsehole* was omitted from the subtitles because of the lack of space and due to the restrictions on length audiovisual translation has. Netflix's Finnish Timed Text Style Guide (Netflix 2020) states that the character limitation on Netflix's subtitles is 42 characters per line. In example 8 there are 32 characters in the top row, 37 if you include the spaces, so *arsehole* simply would not have fit in the 42-character limit. Considering all this, it can be said that the omission in example 8 most likely happened because of the lack of space and the restrictions audiovisual translation has. Next I will move on to the four-letter word *piss*.

#### 5.2.4. **Piss**

Continuing the trend of only a few appearances, *piss* only appears three times in the research material, every time as a variant or so that it has been omitted: once as "(just) taking the *piss*" (Finnish: *kunhan kettuilen*), once omitted from the Finnish subtitles altogether and once as *piss off* (Finnish: *painu helvettiin*, which translated word-for-word means "go to *hell*"). In example 9, the omission of *piss* happens in a long sentence. Donovan, who does not like Will talking to his ex-girlfriend, threatens Will at the school disco:

EXAMPLE 9:

Donovan: I  fucking  warned you about talking to Charlotte. Are you taking the **piss**? / Varoitin sinua. (Season 1, episode 6, 19.30)

There is also another swear word in the speech act, *fuck*, which has also been omitted from the Finnish subtitles. The fact that there are two swear words in one speech act can also explain the omission of *piss* from the Finnish subtitles, but it does not explain why both of them, *fuck* and *piss*, were omitted. Reasons behind the omissions could again be Hjort's (2007a) findings on the guidelines given to translators on omitting swear words. Another possible explanation could be found in the General Guidelines for Finnish Audiovisual Translators (2020) on omitting as much swearing as possible. The Finnish subtitle version is also notably shorter than the actual English audio; the whole line is translated just as "I warned you" (in Finnish: *varoitin sinua*). So, all in all, over half of the actual utterance has been omitted from the Finnish subtitles, which means the omission does not only concern the swear words, but the whole speech act. Another possible reason for the omission of both of the swear words and a big part of the whole speech act could be, again, the limited space audiovisual translation has in its use. Still, without any more detailed research it is impossible to say, which of these theories is correct and what is the actual reason behind the omissions. Next I will move on to *shit*.

### 5.2.5. Shit

*Shit* is the second most used swear word in *The Inbetweeners* after *fuck*, totaling in 22 instances with three different variations. *Shit* has been omitted from the subtitles 9 times, which is almost a half of the instances the swear word actually occurs. There were three occasions where *shit* was omitted from the Finnish subtitles altogether. The different translations varied from *paska(t)* [*shit, fuck this*] to *kusessa* [to be in the *shit*] and *perse(estä)* [*arse, bullshit*].

In the following examples 10 and 11, from the perspective of the audience it can be said that there a fair reason to omit *shit* from the Finnish subtitles. If something is *shit*, it usually has the connotation of something not being good enough, i.e. something is lousy or crappy. There is a word in Finnish that means just that and it is the word that the translator has chosen to use in examples 10 and 11: *surkea*. So, technically speaking, *shit* was not omitted from the subtitles but changed into a word that is not a swear word in Finnish but holds the same meaning. *Shit* was changed to a milder word, which is a technique recommended for audiovisual translators when they encounter swear words, as has been mentioned repeatedly in this thesis.

EXAMPLE 10:

Will: Wendy's party was the kind of **shit** party that happened most weekends. / Wendyn bileet olivat yhtä **surkeat** kuin bileet yleensä. (Season 1, episode 4, 0.25)

EXAMPLE 11:

Will: [...] with Simon's **shitty** little yellow car. / Simonin **surkealla** pikkuautolla. (Season 1, episode 5, 3.34)

In example 10, voice-over Will is describing the nature of a party the boys are attending on a weekend. In example 11, the boys are taking a trip down to a camp site with Simon's car and voice-over Will is telling that their trip has begun, with Simon's *shitty* little yellow car.

But that being said, the translations for both examples 10 and 11 could also be *paska*, which is *shit* in Finnish. *Paska* is used in the same way in Finnish as *shit* is used in English, so technically there should not be any reason to change *shit/shitty* to *surkea* at all. Again, this is most likely again a case what Hjort (2007a) and the General Guidelines for Finnish Audiovisual Translators (2020) both agreed on: when it comes to swearing, a milder version of a swear word is often used whenever possible. So, in the examples 10 and 11 above, the omissions of swear words were made but the words were not omitted completely but changed into other words that are not swear words. Next I will move on to name-calling swear words, of which *wanker*, *slag*, *dickhead* and *twat* are discussed in the next section.

### 5.3. Name-calling

In this section I will examine all the name-calling swear words and the possible reasons behind their omissions individually, starting with *wanker* and then moving on to *slag*, *dickhead* and *twat*.

#### 5.3.1. Wanker

The name-calling swear word *wanker* is an expletive epithet, more accurately an evaluative, unfavorable expletive noun, but only when it is used as a swear word and not its denotative meaning "masturbator" (Ljung 2011, 125). *Wanker* appeared in the material

four times and it was omitted or changed to a milder word only once, all the rest of the occasions *wanker* was “correctly” translated to its Finnish word-for-word equivalent *runkkari*. According to Ljung (2011, 126), *wanker* is often used in its expletive and literal meanings almost interchangeably. The only time *wanker* was not its literal equivalent *runkkari* in the Finnish subtitles, it was omitted and changed to *urpo* (which is more corresponding with *twat*, *idiot* and *moron*):

#### EXAMPLE 12:

An unknown younger student to Will: Briefcase-**wanker**. / Salkku-urpo. (Season 1, episode 1, 3.55)

The situation in example 12 takes place when Will has just arrived as a new student to Rudge Park Comprehensive and stands out by carrying a briefcase as opposed to a backpack, which results in a younger student calling Will a *briefcase-wanker*. In the case of example 12, a literal translation of *briefcase-wanker* to its Finnish word-for-word counterpart *salkkurunkkari* would most likely sound really strange and unfitting in the ears of the Finnish audience. It could create an image of someone maybe wanking to the imagery of briefcases or wanking in a briefcase or something equally disturbing. This is of course an exaggeration, but this kind of associations could possibly happen in the minds of the viewers if they came across the word *salkkurunkkari*. In addition, the student who hurled the insult at Will was very young, so it might have affected the translator’s decision on translating the line the way that they have and omitting the *wanker* part and changing it to *urpo* [*idiot*, *moron*, *twat*], which is a much more appropriate term for a young child to be using. In this case, the explanation of the length restrictions of audiovisual translation does not seem a likely cause for the omission, since the sentence is very short. Next I will move on to *slag*.

#### 5.3.2. Slag

In example 13, the boys are anxiously waiting for a group of popular girls to arrive at the party mentioned in example 10 and Jay is describing one of the girls who is coming to the party as follows:

#### EXAMPLE 13:

Jay: She's a **slag**. / Hän on **helppo**. (Season 1, episode 4, 1.17)

Merriam-Webster dictionary (2020) defines slag as a British slang holding a meaning of “a lewd or promiscuous woman”. In this example, the word *slag* (word-for-word translation in Finnish would be something similar to *hutsu* or *horo*, corresponding with a *skank* or a *ho*) has been translated as *helppo*, “easy”. This is idiomatic language, because of the connotation between being easy and being a *slag*. If someone is easy it means that they are a *slag* in this sexual context that Jay is speaking in. The difference is that *slag* is an offensive word but *easy/helppo* is not (but in this context even *easy* could be considered as offensive). For the understandability of the message, *helppo* serves the same purpose as *slag*, but in a bit milder and less offensive way, which once again, might be the goal in this case. *Slag* is also a name-calling swear word, so this is an instance that serves as an example of name-calling swear words being omitted and changed to something that represents the same meaning without using swear words. Next I will move on to *dickhead*.

#### 5.3.3. Dickhead

Both *dick* and *dickhead* are classic name-calling swear words, but there is not much theory to be found on either *dick* or *dickhead*. *Dickhead* is one of the epithets that was created to be an expletive epithet from the very beginning, since it does not really have any alternative meanings other than being an insult and a name-calling swear word (Ljung 2011, 129–130). This means that no such thing as a *dickhead* exists in the real world; not a single person on this planet has an actual penis on their head. *Dickhead* is formed out of two words, *dick* and *head*. *Dickhead* became an epithet in the 1960s and meant a fool or an incompetent (Ljung 2011, 130), and it still has the similar meaning to its original meaning today.

*Dickhead* has been used fairly frequently in *The Inbetweeners*. *Dickhead* was also translated as *molopää* in the Finnish subtitles quite often, which is a word-for-word translation of *dickhead*. *Dickhead* was omitted completely only once from the Finnish subtitles and changed to a milder word a few times:

#### EXAMPLE 14:

Jay: **Dickhead**, they're getting away. / He pääsevät pakoon. (Season 1, episode 3, 10.22)

#### EXAMPLE 15:

Will: [As Neil was about to discover], the problem for drinking for Dutch courage is the next level of drunk up from that is Dutch **dickhead**. / Rohkaisuryypyissä on se huono puoli, että seuraavassa hetkessä ihminen on rohkea idiootti. (Season 1, episode 6, 14.20)

In example 14, the boys are driving around in Simon's new car and they spot a car full of girls and decide to follow them. Only it does not go as planned as Simon's driving skills are not ideal, so Jay exclaims to Simon that the girls are getting away, Simon being the *dickhead* in the sentence. *Dickhead* was omitted from the Finnish subtitles altogether, the Finnish version just saying "they are getting away". The only explanation for the omission in this short sentence is the redundancy of the swear word.

In example 15, Will is describing Neil as a "Dutch dickhead" as a wordplay because he was taking some Dutch courage (i.e. drinking alcohol) to ask his teacher to dance at the school disco. In example 15, *dickhead* is translated as *idiootti* [an idiot]. In this case, even though Will's sentence is long, the length of the sentence and the constraints for audiovisual subtitles do not explain the changing of *dickhead* into *idiootti*. Both of the words, *idiootti* and the Finnish equivalent for *dickhead*, *molopää*, take approximately the same space in the subtitles. Actually, the word *idiootti* has 8 characters, which means that it is longer than *molopää*, which has 7 characters, yet the translator still chose to use *idiootti* instead of *molopää*. So, there is no grounds for the omission to be found from the restricted character limit of subtitles. In this case, the most likely cause for the omission is, once again, the idea of swear words being stronger in writing rather than in speech and the guidelines given to translators on putting milder words instead of swear words whenever possible. Next I will move on to *twat*.

#### 5.3.4. Twat

Dictionary.com defines *twat* as being "slang for 'vagina.' It's also used, especially in British English, to insult someone as stupid, useless, or reckless" (dictionary.com 2020). In *The Inbetweeners*, this is exactly the meaning that *twat* is used in. *Twat* was used four times in the six episodes of the first season, and surprisingly, it was omitted every single

time. This is a very interesting finding, so I am going to go through all the examples of *twat* and its omission.

EXAMPLE 16:

Simon: Look, fuck off, alright? I just passed my test and I'm not going to crash just because you **twats** can't wait two minutes. / En aja kolaria teidän takianne. (Season 1, episode 3, 11.03)

EXAMPLE 17:

Charlotte: You pretentious **twat**. / Senkin hienostelija. (Season 1, episode 4, 3.47)

EXAMPLE 18:

Jay: Well you're fucked then because you're a **twat**. / Se ei tiedä hyvää tuollaiselle urpolle. (Season 1, episode 4, 5.09)

In example 16, *twat* is the only word omitted from the second sentence, which makes it quite straightforward to assume that *twat* was omitted simply because it was not a necessary word to understand the meaning of the sentence given the context. Example 16 is set in the same scene as previously seen example 14 where the boys are all in Simon's car, who has just gotten his driver's license that day. The boys are urging Simon to follow a car full of girls, and Simon is obviously nervous because it is his first time driving and he starts to shout at his friends when they pressure him. In the scene, it is very clear to the viewer from Simon's gestures and the tone of his voice that he is nervous and angry. This makes the translation of *twat* unnecessary in the subtitles; the viewers know how Simon feels about the pressuring even without the translation of *twat*. There is also the first sentence in the same utterance, which has *fuck* in it, which again could explain the reasons behind the omissions even further; there are now two swear words in one utterance, which has been established as being, in most cases, too excessive in audiovisual translation. This leads to the need for both of the swear words to be omitted.

In example 17, a popular girl Charlotte is playfully referring to Will as a pretentious *twat* at a party while flirting with him. In the Finnish subtitles, *twat* is translated as *hienostelija*, which has a similar meaning as the English snob or posh. In this context, like in example 16, the translation of *twat* is not necessary. If it was translated, it might not be clear to the Finnish audience that Charlotte is being playful and

joking, and they might wonder why she is suddenly calling Will something corresponding with a *twat* in Finnish. These examples of *twat* are one of the few examples of omissions of swear words in *The Inbetweeners* that I agree with and find acceptable reasons behind and consider justified.

Example 18 is again set at the same party as the previous examples. Simon is excited and thinks girls are finally starting to see the him as a potential boyfriend, but Jay cuts Simon short and tells him he has not got a chance with the ladies since he is a *twat*. In example 18 *twat* is translated as *urpo*, which was also used as a translation for *wanker* in example 12. In the case of example 18, the reason behind the omission is most likely the fact that there are two swear words in the same sentence. Then again, it does not explain why both of the swear words were omitted and not just one. Even though in writing example 18 seems very similar to example 16, the context of the situation in these examples are very different. This, again, leads to the question on why in example 18 both swear words have been either omitted or changed to a milder word. Since there is no straightforward Finnish translation or equivalent for *twat*, this might be one reason behind the fact that every instance of *twat* was omitted from the subtitles and twice changed to a milder word. Example 18 is also very much similar to example 9 in section 5.2.4. and the reasons for the omissions could be the similar.

The last example of *twat* in *The Inbetweeners* is example 19, where Jay and Simon are talking about the fact whether or not Carli, Simon's childhood and current crush, likes Simon back. Simon thinks she does and Jay replies:

EXAMPLE 19:

Jay: No, she doesn't. She thinks you're a **twat**. / Ei ollenkaan. (Season 1, episode 5, 11.55)

Example 19 is again similar to example 9 in section 5.2.4. and also example 18 above because of the shortness of the Finnish translation. Here the briefness of the Finnish translation can be explained by the fact that it is a part of a longer sentence, so it is possible and likely that the Finnish subtitles have been divided into different lines, which can result in the Finnish part in this example being so short and also why it is lacking the *twat*.

In the last part of the analysis I will discuss a few miscellaneous examples of omissions of swear words that do not fit to the four-letter swear word category nor the name-calling word category. Nevertheless, I feel like they are important enough to discuss

and go through in this thesis. The swear words and concepts I will go through next are the swear words *bloody* and *bollocks*, and a case where a swear word has been put in the Finnish subtitles in a situation where there was no swearing in the English audio.

## 5.4. Miscellaneous

In this last part of the analysis I will focus on few swear words and instances of swearing that do not fit in with the four-letter word nor the name-calling categories. I will start with the infamous *bloody*.

### 5.4.1. Bloody

Montagu (1967, 239) describes *bloody* as follows: “Of all the words in the English swearer’s vocabulary one has probably been worked harder than all the rest put together. It is the word *bloody*”. This is an interesting statement because this is the way I saw and imagined *bloody* before this research, when in reality and in the case of *The Inbetweeners*, which is a British show, the swear word *bloody* was only used once. Montagu (1967, 249) continues to explain that *bloody* originates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was still a respectable word, but soon turned in to a swear word. It is astonishing that Montagu (1967) can easily talk about *bloody* for 38 pages, yet it was still used only once in *The Inbetweeners*. This might mean that in modern times, from the 21<sup>st</sup> century onwards, the word has lost its footing among the popular swear words. Conversely, Ljung (2011, 143) states that “there is general agreement among observers of such matters that by far the most enthusiastic users of *bloody* are the speakers of Australian English and the word *bloody* has acquired for itself the byname ‘the great Australian Adjective’”. This could explain why *bloody* is, after all, not among the most used of swear words in the British *The Inbetweeners*.

Even though *bloody* has a long and colorful history, as mentioned, there was only one occasion when *bloody* was used in *The Inbetweeners*. That happens when the boys make a day trip to an amusement park called Thorpe Park where Neil is working. Neil’s job is to dress up in a mascot monkey suit and when the other boys get to the park, they see Neil being attacked by wasps inside his costume:

EXAMPLE 20:

Neil: Stupid **bloody** wasps. / **Helvetin** ampiaiset. (Season 1, episode 3, 15.03)

In example 20, *bloody* has been translated in the Finnish subtitles as *helvetti* [*hell*]. In this case, there has not been omission at all, on the contrary, the opposite. *Bloody* was deemed one of the mildest swear words in Ofcom's (2016, 44) research, when *helvetti* is considered to be quite a strong swear word in Finnish. This makes the case of the translation of *bloody* so interesting; this is one of the only cases in the Finnish subtitles of *The Inbetweeners* can be deemed harsher and more offensive than the original English ones. Next I will introduce an example of the omission of *bollocks*.

#### 5.4.2. Bollocks

Out of all the swear words included in this thesis, *bollocks* was one of the hardest swear words to find theory on. *Bollocks* (older forms *bollox* and *ballocks*), meaning testicles, dates from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and it is a part of the taboo words for sexual organs category, which is an endless source of epithet kind of swearing (Ljung 2011, 69–70). *Bollocks* was “first used as derogatory term for people in the early twentieth century and later on also took on affectionate meaning as in *old bollocks*” (Ljung 2011, 69–70). *Bollocks* was used in *The Inbetweeners* six times and omitted 50% of the six times, three times altogether. Following two examples of *bollocks* are two of the cases of omissions:

EXAMPLE 21:

Jay: **Bollocks**, what about my birthday party? / Entä synttärini? (Season 1, episode 6, 6.18)

EXAMPLE 22:

Simon: **Bollocks**, you still wet the bed when you were ten. / Kastelit sänkysi 10-vuotiaana. (Season 1, episode 3, 14.11)

In example 21, the boys are talking about organizing parties and Jay is, as usual, bragging about how many parties he has organized and the other boys state that Jay has not organized any parties at all, which results in this answer. In the Finnish

subtitles of example 21, *bollocks* is omitted completely, the Finnish translation just saying “what about my birthday party?”. In example 22, Jay claims that he has taken driving lessons when he was 10 years old and in response gets Simon’s dismissive answer. *Bollocks* is again omitted completely, but in order for this statement to be more understandable to the Finnish audience, the *bollocks* should have been translated in some way, for example as the Finnish equivalent for *bullshit*, *paskapuhetta*.

In a way, *bollocks* has the same meaning as *bullshit*. *Bollocks* can be said to be more a British slang version for *bullshit*. In examples 21 and 22, *bollocks* is just emphasizing the message, which might result in the omission. In example 21 *bollocks* is not necessary in order to convey the message understandably to the audience, so it most likely omitted for this reason in order to reduce the amount of swearing. Whereas in example 22, some sort of a translation for *bollocks* would have been necessary. In the last part of the analysis I will introduce a one of a kind example from *The Inbetweeners*, where there is swearing in the Finnish subtitles but not in the original English audio.

### 5.4.3. Swearing in the Finnish Subtitles but not in the English Audio

There is only one example in the whole season where there is a swear word in the Finnish subtitles but there is no swearing in the actual English audio:

EXAMPLE 23:

Jay: Jesus, Neil. / Ei **helvetti**. (Season 1, episode 3, 15.10)

For the purposes of this thesis, Jesus (Christ) was not considered to be a swear word. In another research or in another context, Jesus might be considered a swear word, but in this study it is not. The most obvious way to translate Jesus in Finnish would be *jeesus*, which is Jesus in Finnish (whether the letter j is a upper case letter or a lower case letter depends on whether the word means Jesus Christ or is an exclamation). *Jessus* would also be an option worth considering, since it is just a variation of *jeesus*. Anyway, the translation would not be, as it has been translated in example 23, *helvetti* [*hell*].

So, the question is, why in this case in example 23 it seems that the swear word has been added to the Finnish subtitles when there was not one in the English audio? The reason behind this could be found from the context; Jay says this line when Neil is taking off his mascot costume in the staff locker room of the amusement park, and it is revealed

that he is not wearing anything under his costume, not even underwear. Given the context, the appropriate response to suddenly seeing your friends' private parts without consent could in Finnish very well be *ei helvetti* [*hell* no], which in its entirety can mean “fuck no, put some pants on, I do not want to see your private parts”. So, in this case, the *ei helvetti* can be understood in a Finnish cultural context, which makes it one of the most interesting cases in this research. Now I will move on to the last part of this thesis, which is the discussion of all the findings and observations made through this thesis and lastly, I will give my conclusions.

## 6. Discussion

The research question of this thesis was “why some swear words are omitted from the Finnish subtitles of *The Inbetweeners* and in what contexts and situations the omissions are made?”. In other words, is it possible to find and categorize some factors and reasons that could be the cause of the omissions and do the omissions tend to happen in certain contexts? For clarification, the findings of this research cannot be said to be accurate in a larger context; the findings of this thesis only apply to the subjects covered in this research.

The omissions appeared most frequently in places and scenes where there was excessive swearing, i.e. many swear words in a short period of time. The most frequent and at the same time, some of the most offensive swear words were often omitted and lastly, omissions happened when swearing and the use of swear words was not necessary in order to convey the message to the audience understandably. Out of all the swear words dealt in this thesis, *fuck* was omitted from the Finnish subtitles the most (25 times). The reasons behind this could be because it was the most used swear word in the research material with 40 occurrences, naturally leading to its omission the most, or the fact that *fuck* is considered to be one of the most offensive swear words dealt in this thesis, which can result to its frequent omissions. The effect of the omissions on the characterization was most notable in the cases of Simon and Jay; even though they were the most eager swearers in the series, their swearing was also statistically omitted more than the others, Will and Neil. This means that even though Jay and Simon were the most excessive swearers in the Finnish subtitles as well, they did not swear in the subtitles as much as they did in the original English audio, which can result in changes in characterization and the characters being portrayed in a different way that was originally intended.

In most of the examples pulled from the research material, it cannot be said with a certainty why the omissions have been made, there can only be general speculation and relying on probabilities and theories. The reason why there cannot be an exhaustive answer on why the omissions have been made is that there is really no reliable way to get error-free results or answers in a research of this kind; there would need to be a much more detailed research with more tools to research the topic in order to find out the “real” reasons behind the omissions. A way to do this could be for example a detailed interview with the Finnish translator of *The Inbetweeners* on the reasons why they have translated everything as they have. Another possibility is, of course, that there is not any single

reason for the omission of swear words in the research material presented. The most likely case is that there are many reasons that guide the decision-making of translators on the omission of swear words from subtitles, and the actual reasons behind the decisions cannot be determined through research of this kind, which is what, in a way, this thesis has proven. There would need to be a large survey of some kind to accurately find out what factors guide the decision-making of audiovisual translators in the translation of swear words, for example as mentioned above, a detailed interview with the translator of a series. In a way, a similar survey to Hjort's (2007a), but more restricted and detailed.

As said, this research has its limitations. All in all, this thesis is a very compact overview of the omission of swear words in Finnish subtitles, since this thesis has only focused on the first season of one particular series. For future research, it would be beneficial to study more series and/or movies in order to discover more reliable findings on the topic, taking in consideration a wider scope of swear words. This research only focused mainly on the four-letter words and name-calling words, which of course are just a fraction of the swear words available and used in the world. One possibility is, of course, the fact that there are no explanatory factors for the omissions of swear words and they cannot be determined even with further research. A possibility for future research on the topic could also be a research on the general consensus among professionals about the perception that swear words are stronger when they are written rather than when they are spoken aloud; future research could focus on this statement and try to find out whether it is accurate or not with the help of, for example, neurological research. One way to improve and help the future research is to write more actual theory on the omission of swear words. Finally, I will give my conclusions.

## 7. Conclusions

The aim of this research and thesis was to try to find possible reasons behind the omissions of swear words in *The Inbetweeners*, mostly focusing on the four-letter words and name-calling swear words. In a way, the research question of this research was both a hypothesis and a research question: are there any reasons behind the omissions that can be defined and if there are, what are the reasons? A part of the research question was also that how big of a part does the context around the omissions play in the omissions and can the reasons be found from the context?

This research found a few possible reasons for the omissions. First reason being the general consensus on the fact that swear words are stronger when they are written rather than spoken, which often can lead to the omission of swearing. The second finding is the fact that audiovisual translation has certain constraints on the durations and lengths of subtitles, which again might explain some omissions. There are also constraints on what type of language is permitted to be used in the subtitles, i.e. what can and cannot be said, depending on the practices and guidelines of the television channel, streaming service or other media or outlet where the subtitles are being used in. Other findings include the discovery that in most cases, swearing is not necessary in order to understandably convey the message to the audience, so it might result in the omission of swear words. However, in some contexts, name-calling swear words seem to be more likely omitted than other swear words, most likely explanation being that they are considered to be more offensive language than, for example, four-letter words. However, this is just speculation. Other than that, the level of offensiveness of swear words seems to have only little to do with the omissions in *The Inbetweeners* and cannot be said to be a determining factor of the omissions, it can only be speculated as one possible reason.

To conclude, there is an underlying problem on omitting swearwords from the subtitles as much as it has been done in *The Inbetweeners*; there is a chance that the viewers who watch the show relying only the subtitles do not get to experience the full potential and intended function of the show and the characters in it as intended. Swearing is as much a version of characterization as anything else.

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## Appendix 1: Finnish Summary

Tämä Pro Gradu -tutkielma tutkii kiroilun ja kirosanojen poistoa sekä syitä näihin poistoihin brittiläisen *The Inbetweeners* -sarjan suoratoistopalvelu Netflixissä olevan version suomenkielisissä tekstityksissä. Tavoitteena on siis selvittää mahdollisia syitä kirosanojen poistoon tekstityksistä sekä sitä, liittyvätkö poistot joihinkin tilanteisiin, henkilöhahmoihin tai funktioihin. Tutkielman materiaaliksi valikoitui *The Inbetweeners* sen sisältämien kirosanojen määrän ja tyylin johdosta.

### Teoria

Tutkielman aluksi täytyy määrittää, mitä ”kirosana” tarkoittaa ja etenkin, mitä se tarkoittaa tämän tutkimuksen yhteydessä. Beers Fägersten (2012) määrittelee kiroilun yksinkertaisesti sellaisten sanojen käytöksi, jotka voivat olla loukkaavia, asiattomia, epämiellyttäviä tai ei-hyväksyttäviä missään sosiaalisessa tilanteessa tai kontekstissa.

Tutkielman käyttää perustanaan englanninkielisiä four-letter words -sanoja, jotka ovat nimensä mukaan nelikirjaimisia kirosanoja (Montagu 1967). Four letter words -sanojen kirosanastatus perustuu niiden hävyttömyyteen ja niitä kutsutaan saastaisiksi sanoiksi, sillä ne saavat voimansa sekä riensuamisesta että hävyttömyydestä. Tässä tutkielmassa edellä mainituista sanoista tutkitaan ja käsitellään sanojen *fuck* (vittu), *shit* (paska), *piss* (kusi), *cock/prick* (kyrpä/kulli) ja *arse/arsehole* (perse/persläpi) poistoja sarjan suomenkielisistä tekstityksistä. Toinen tässä tutkielmassa sovellettava teoria on Ljungin (2011) teoria name-calling -sanoista eli nimittelysanoista. Nimittelysanat ovat sanoja tai lausahduksia, jotka ovat suunnattu jollekin tietylle henkilölle ja jotka ovat alentavia sekä loukkaavia. Nimittelysanoja, joiden poistoja tutkitaan tässä tutkielmassa, ovat *wanker* (runkkari), *dickhead* (munapää), *slag* (horo) ja *twat* (idiootti, typerys, ääliö).

Four-letter words -sanoja tai niiden variaatioita käytetään *The Inbetweeners* -sarjan ensimmäisen kauden kuudessa jaksossa 70 kertaa ja nimittelysanoja tai niiden variaatioita 23 kertaa. Näin ollen nimittelysanat muodostavat 24% tutkimusmateriaalin kirosanoista ja four letter words -sanat 76% materiaalin kirosanoista. Yhteensä kirosanoja käytetään siis 93 kertaa sarjan ensimmäisellä kaudella. Sarjan päähenkilöitä ovat teini-ikäiset Simon, Jay, Will ja Neil, joista Simon ja Jay kiroilevat huomattavasti enemmän kuin ystävänsä Will ja Neil.

Kiroilun pragmatiikka on monimutkainen aihe; esimerkiksi sukupuoli on määrittävä tekijä kiroilemisessa ja sillä on tutkitusti suuri rooli ihmisten tavassa käyttää kiro sanoja. Suurin osa ihmisistä kiroilee enemmän samaa sukupuolta edustavien seurassa kuin vastakkaisen sukupuolen seurassa. Tämä saattaa olla yksi selittävä tekijä *The Inbetweeners* -sarjassa esiintyvälle runsaalle kiroilulle; sarjan päähenkilöt ovat kaikki miespuolisia, teini-ikäisiä ja kaiken lisäksi hyviä ystäviä. Nämä kaikki tekijät yhdistettynä toisiinsa mahdollisesti omalta osaltaan lisäävät kiroilun määrää sarjassa. *The Inbetweeners* on brittiläinen sarja, ja esimerkiksi brittiläisen ja amerikkalaisen television ero on tunnetusti huomattava kiroilun esittämisessä. Jos *The Inbetweeners* olisi amerikkalainen sarja, kiroilua olisi luultavasti huomattavasti vähemmän.

Päähenkilöistä Jay ja Simon ovat sarjan innokkaimmat kiroilijat ja tämä voidaan linkittää hahmojen persooniin. Sekä Jay että Simon ovat persooniltaan tyyppiä A: tyyppin A persoonallisuuden ihmiset ovat äkkipikaisia ja heillä on usein ongelmia vihan ja vihamielisyyden kanssa, joka voi omalta osaltaan johtaa ylenpalttiseen kiroiluun. Will on luonteeltaan emotionaalinen ja temperamenttinen, joka johtaa impulsiivisuuden kautta kiroiluun. Neilin persoonallisuutta liittyen kiroiluun on vaikea määritellä, sillä hän ei kiroile juuri lainkaan koko sarjassa.

Suomi on aina ollut tekstitysmä eikä dubbausmaa, joihin kuuluu esimerkiksi suuri osa Keski-Euroopan maista. Tästä johtuen, kuten esimerkiksi Vertanen (2007) spekuloi, suomalaislapset pärjäävät hyvin eri maiden välisissä lukutaitovertailuissa ja englannin kielessä juurikin suomenkielisten tekstityksien ansiosta. Audiovisuaalisessa kääntämisessä eli tekstityksissä on omat rajoitteensa. Eri televisiokanavilla ja suoratoistopalveluilla on omat kriteerinsä ja tapansa tuottaa tekstityksiä. Suomalaisista kanavista esimerkiksi YLE, MTV3 ja Nelonen rajoittavat yhden ruututekstin pituudeksi 30–34 merkkiä, kun taas esimerkiksi suoratoistopalvelu Netflixin ruututeksteissä voi olla jopa 42 merkkiä per ruututeksti. Audiovisuaalisessa kääntämisessä on myös tarkat aikarajansa sille, kuinka kauan yksi ruututeksti voi näkyä ruudussa. Vaikka kääntäjä voi usein vedota kiro sanoja poistaessaan näihin audiovisuaalisen kääntämisen aika- ja tilarajoituksiin, on tärkeää olla poistamatta kiro sanoja tekstityksestä vain koska se on helpoin ja kivuttomin ratkaisu kääntäjälle; tällaisesta ajattelusta voi syntyä tahatonta sensuuria, joka vaikuttaa katsojan katselukokemukseen ja pahimmillaan jopa sarjan ja/tai sen hahmojen tarkoitetun funktion muuttumiseen.

Kuitenkin, kiro sanojen poistamiseen tekstityksissä voi olla monia syitä. Joissain tapauksissa kiro sanat eivät ole välttämättömiä tiedon ja ajatuksien välittymisessä, kun taas joissain tapauksissa kiro sanat eivät mahdu tekstityksiin aiemmin mainittujen rajoitteiden vuoksi ja joissain tapauksissa kiro sanoja on niin paljon ja usein, että niitä on poistettava. Hjortin (2007a) kyselyn mukaan useat av-kääntäjät ovat saaneet ohjeistusta, että kiro sanoja tulisi joko poistaa tekstityksestä kokonaan tai korvata ne lievemmillä sanoilla aina kuin mahdollista. Tämä johtunee yleisestä yhteysymmärryksestä, että kiro sanat koetaan vahvempina kirjoitettuna kuin puheessa, mistä johtuen niitä tulisi poistaa tekstityksistä mahdollisuuksien mukaan. Tähän teoriaan vedotaan usein tässä tutkielmassa.

## **Aineisto ja metodologia**

Tässä tutkimuksessa käytettävä tutkimusmateriaali on kerätty *The Inbetweeners* -sarjan ensimmäisen kauden jaksoista. Nämä jaksot löytyvät suoratoistopalvelu Netflixistä. *The Inbetweeners* -sarjaa on esitetty Suomessa nimellä *Putoajat* TV2-kanavalla ainakin vuonna 2014. Tämä tutkimus käsittelee Netflixistä löytyvää versiota sarjasta, sillä suomalaisessa televisiossa esitettyä versiota ei ole saatavilla. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy sarjan ensimmäisen kauden kuuteen jaksoon, joista jokainen kestää noin 25 minuuttia. Tutkimusmateriaali koostuu siis näiden kuuden jakson englanninkielisestä ääniraidasta ja suomenkielisestä tekstityksestä. Tässä tutkimuksessa käytetty tutkimusmetodi on vertailututkimusmetodin alatyyppejä. Kaikki tutkimusaineistossa esiintyvät kiro sanat, jotka täyttivät tutkielman alussa annetun kiro sanan määritelmän, kerättiin manuaalisesti katsomalla jokainen jakso ja löydetyt kiro sanat litteroitiin Word-dokumenttiin.

*The Inbetweeners* kertoo Rudge Park Comprehensive -nimistä koulua käyvää kirjavasta ystäväporukasta. Ystäväporukkaan kuuluvat sarjan päähenkilöt: tärkeilevä Will McKenzie (Simon Bird), kuumakalle Simon Cooper (Joe Thomas), patologinen valehtelija Jay Cartwright (James Buckley) ja hidas mutta hyväsydäminen Neil Sutherland (Blake Harrison). Sarjan aiheet pyörivät tavanomaisten teini-ikäisten ongelmien ympärillä, joihin lukeutuvat koulu, vastakkainen sukupuoli, perhe ja seksuaalisuus. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy lähinnä päähenkilöiden kiroiluun, mutta muutamassa kohdassa esitellään myös muiden hahmojen kiroilua.

Tässä tutkimuksessa kiro sanat jaetaan kahteen kategoriaan, four-letter words -kirosanoihin ja name-calling -kirosanoihin eli nimittelysanoihin. Nämä kaksi

kategoriaa valittiin siksi, että four-letter words -sanoja voidaan pitää ikään kuin kaikkien kirosanojen ytimenä ja lähteenä. Nimittelysanat valittiin siksi, että ne ovat four-letter words -sanojen jälkeen sarjassa käytetyimpiä kirosanoja. Kirosanoja käsitellään Montagun (1967), Ljungin (2011) ja Hjortin (2007) teorioiden ja löydösten valossa ja täten yritetään selvittää, mitä kirosanoja on poistettu kokonaisuudessaan sekä mitä kirosanoja on ”laimennettu” eli korvattu lievemmillä kirosanoilla tai sanoilla.

## **Analyysi**

Tutkielman analyysi koostuu kahdesta osasta, ensimmäisessä osassa kartoitetaan sarjan englanninkieliset käsiteltävät kirosanat ja esitellään, kuinka eri hahmot käyttävät kirosanoja, kuinka paljon ja mitä kirosanoja. Analyysin toisessa osassa käsitellään englanninkielisiä kirosanoja sekä niiden suomennoksia tekstityksessä sekä pohditaan mahdollisia syitä kirosanojen poistojen takana. Analyysissa käydään myös läpi kiroiluun liittyviä tilanteita ja konteksteja ja pohditaan, mitä tarkoitusta kiroilun poisto mahdollisesti ajaa kyseisessä kontekstissa.

Kaiken kaikkiaan sarjan ensimmäisellä kaudella käytetään 18:aa erilaista kirosanaa. Sarjan käytetyin four-letter word -kirosana on *fuck*, jota käytetään yhteensä 40 kertaa ja näistä 40 kerrasta 17 kertaa sanaa käytti Simon. Näistä 40 kerrasta *fuck* oli poistettu tekstityksistä (joko kokonaan tai muutettu lievemmäksi sanaksi tai kirosanaksi) 25 kertaa. *Fuckin* variaatioita sarjassa olivat *fuck it*, *fuck off* ja *fuck you*. Toiseksi käytetyin kirosana sarjassa on *shit*, jota käytettiin 22 kertaa ja se oli poistettu tekstityksistä 9 kertaa. Simon oli myös sanan *shit* innokkain käyttäjä. Sanaa käytettiin myös muodoissa *shitty* ja *shitting*. Kirosanoja *cock/prick*, *arse* ja *piss* käytettiin sarjassa kutakin 2–3 kertaa. Sanan *arse* variaatioina sarjassa toimivat *lard arse* ja *arsehole*. Sanan *piss* variaatioita olivat esimerkiksi *piss off* ja *taking the piss*. Nimittelysanoista tässä tutkimuksessa käsitellään sanoja *twat*, *slag*, *wanker* ja *dickhead*. Nimittelysanoja ei taulukoida samalla tavalla kuin four-letter words -sanoja. Tilastollisesti tarkastellessa name-calling -sanoja on poistettu tekstityksistä enemmän kuin four-letter word -sanoja, joka saattaa mahdollisesti johtua näiden nimittelysanojen loukkaavuudesta.

Mahdollisia syitä kirosanojen poistoihin on useita: kiroilun tarpeettomuus tietyn viestin välittämisessä, kirosanojen mahdollinen loukkaavuus, audiovisuaaliseen kääntämiseen liittyvät rajoitteet ja käytännöt sekä käsitys siitä, että kirosanat ovat ikään kuin vahvempia kirjoitetussa kuin puhutussa kielessä. Yhdellekään tutkielmassa

esiintyvälle poistolle ei voida antaa täysin varmaa syytä tai selitystä, ja kaikki tutkielmassa käsiteltävät poistojen mahdolliset selitykset perustuvat lähinnä spekulatioon ja todennäköisyyteen.

## **Tulokset**

Tässä Pro Gradu -tutkielmassa löydettiin muutamia mahdollisia syitä kirosanojen poistamiseen *The Inbetweeners* -sarjan suomenkielisistä tekstityksistä. Ensinnäkin, suurin selittävä tekijä poistoille saattaa olla yleinen yhteysymmärrys tutkijoiden ja ammattilaisten kesken siitä, että kiro sanat koetaan vahvempina niiden ollessa kirjoitetussa muodossa, joka mahdollisesti johtaa kirosanojen poistoon tekstityksestä. Toiseksi, audiovisuaalisessa kääntämisessä on uniikkeja rajoitteita verrattuna muihin kääntämisen muotoihin, sillä usein tekstityksille on erittäin rajattu sekä aika että tila. Televisio- ja ohjelmatekstityksissä on myös usein rajoituksia kanavasta tai suoratoistopalvelusta tai muusta lähteestä riippuvia rajoituksia, millaista kieltä tekstityksissä voidaan käyttää ja mitä niissä voidaan sanoa.

Muita löydöksiä ja selittäviä tekijöitä kirosanojen poistoille voivat olla muun muassa kokemukset siitä, etteivät kiro sanat ja kiroilu ole välttämättömiä kyseessä olevan viestin tai funktion ilmaisemiseksi yleisölle, joten kiro sanoja saatetaan poistaa myös tästä syystä. Poistoja esiintyi suurimmaksi osaksi kohdissa, joissa kiroilua oli paljon (eli monta kirosanaa lyhyen ajan sisällä) ja sarjassa eniten esiintyviä kiro sanoja poistettiin eniten (nämä kiro sanat olivat myös loukkaavimpia), mitkä ovat myös mahdollisia syitä tehtyihin poistoihin.

Kuitenkin lopuksi on todettava, että kirosanojen poistaminen ja muokkaaminen *The Inbetweeners* -sarjassa esiintyvässä mittakaavassa voi tuoda mukanaan ongelmia. On valitettavan mahdollista, etteivät ne sarjan katsojat, joiden täytyy tulkita sarjaa pelkästään tekstityksien avulla katsoessaan sarjaa, pysty kokemaan ja eläytymään sarjaan tai sen henkilö hahmoihin kuten sarjaa tehtäessä olisi todella tarkoitettu. Kirosanojen poistaminen vaikuttaa ennen kaikkea hahmojen karakterisaatioon ja katselukokemukseen.