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## **The Translation and Dubbing of 'Fuck' into Catalan: The Case of *From Dusk till Dawn***

**Dídac Pujol**

**Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain**

### **ABSTRACT**

The word 'fuck' is the vulgar word par excellence in English, and its translation into Catalan has been little studied.<sup>1</sup> At a local level, this paper aims to be the first systematic analysis of the translation for dubbing of 'fuck' and its compounds (e.g. 'motherfuck') and derivatives (e.g. 'fucking') into Catalan, especially as practised by the Catalan national television, Televisió de Catalunya. On a more global level, it is hoped that the present study becomes a useful frame of reference for translation scholars and future translators of one of the coarsest and most transgressive words in the English language. The corpus employed is the 1996 film *From Dusk till Dawn* / *Obert fins a la matinada*, directed by Robert Rodriguez with a script by Quentin Tarantino. The paper takes into account five dimensions: lexical, contextual, pragmatic, cultural and characterisational.

### **KEYWORDS**

Audiovisual translation, dubbing, Televisió de Catalunya, TV3, vulgar language, fuck, *From Dusk till Dawn*

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Dídac Pujol is doctor in English Philology and lecturer in translation from English into Catalan at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, Universitat Pompeu Fabra. His research interests include literary translation, especially of Shakespeare and poetry, as well as the translation of colloquial language. He has published several studies on literature and literary translation, among which the books *Across the Frontier: A Dialogic Approach to Literary Translation, Poetry, Language and Identity in Contemporary Irish and Scottish Literature* and, in collaboration with Jordi Ainaud and Anna Espunya, the translation handbook *Manual de traducció anglès-català*. He has published several technical translations, translations of novels and, above all, of poetry; among his translated writers is the Nobel Prize for Literature Seamus Heaney. He has also worked as a lexicographer for HarperCollins and has directed the *Easy English Dictionary with a Catalan-English Vocabulary*.

E-mail: [didac.pujol@upf.edu](mailto:didac.pujol@upf.edu)

## **1. Introduction**

The word 'fuck' has quite a lot of meanings, as illustrated in the following passage from Tom Wolfe's (2004: 35-36) latest novel, *I Am Charlotte Simmons*:

Without even realizing what it was, Jojo spoke in this year's prevailing college creole: Fuck Patois. In Fuck Patois, the word *fuck* was used as an interjection ("What the fuck" or plain "Fuck," with or without an exclamation point) expressing unhappy surprise; as a participial adjective ("fuckin' guy," "fucking tree," "fucking elbows") expressing disparagement or discontent; as an adverb modifying and intensifying an adjective ("pretty fucking obvious") or a verb ("I'm gonna fucking kick his ass"); as a noun ("That stupid fuck," "don't give a good fuck"); as a verb meaning *Go away* ("Fuck off"), *beat*—physically, financially, or politically ("really fucked him over") or *beaten* ("I'm fucked"), *botch* ("really fucked that up"), *drunk* ("You are so fucked up"); as an imperative expressing contempt ("Fuck you," "Fuck

that"). Rarely—the usage had become somewhat archaic—but every now and then it referred to sexual intercourse ("He fucked her on the carpet in front of the TV").

Despite its length, the above list is far from being exhaustive. *The F-Word*, by Jesse Sheidlower (1999), devotes its 228 pages to record and give citations of the various meanings and uses of 'fuck', its compounds (fugly, mindfuck), its derivatives (fuckable, fucking), and its euphemisms (eff, flak), as well as the lexical combinations in which it appears (flying fuck, French fuck).<sup>2</sup>

The word 'fuck' has been much more used in speech than in writing. According to Sheidlower (1999: xii), the word was not "openly printed in any form in the United States until 1926", it was not printed in full in *The New York Times* until 1998 (ibid.: xvi), and Shakespeare never used it, even though he did use puns to refer to the word, such as 'firk' and 'focative case' (ibid.: xix-xx). The reasons for this are obvious. Writers, especially in the past, did not want to take unnecessary risks (they were afraid of possible offence to readers or censorship from the authorities), and therefore they were really cautious before using such a taboo word in print. According to the *OED*, the first recorded instance of 'fuck' with the meaning of 'copulate' appears in Dunbar's poem lxxv, from around 1503. Since then, and despite the fact that it has remained taboo, the word has been used by a large number of writers, including authors like George Chapman, who in his 1616 Preface to the *Whole Works of Homer* mentions an "envious windfucker", and James Kelman, who in his novel *How Late It Was, How Late*, written in 1994, includes "four thousand or so instances of the word 'fuck' [...] The word is not once used literally, and instead becomes an intensifier, meaning 'extremely' or 'very'" (Vice, 1997: 98).

As for films, according to the "List of Films Ordered by Uses of the Word 'Fuck'" (Wikipedia, 2005), the movie that reportedly includes the most instances of the word 'fuck' to date is Rob Zombie's *The Devil's Rejects* (2005), with as many as 560 occurrences. The film lasts 109 minutes, so the average is 5.13 'fucks' per minute. Among contemporary directors, Quentin Tarantino's films are well known for containing numerous instances of 'fuck'. The corpus employed here to study the translation of 'fuck' into Catalan is the film *From Dusk till Dawn* (*FDD*), a film directed by Robert Rodriguez (1996) with a script by Quentin Tarantino, and translated into Catalan as *Obert fins a la matinada* (*Ofm*). Due to the high frequency of occurrence of the word 'fuck' and its derivatives, *FDD* is an ideal production for the study of 'fuck' and its translation. The word appears a total of 104 times, a very high frequency of use in a film lasting 103 minutes — which means that, on average, the word 'fuck' appears once every minute.<sup>3</sup>

The plot of *FDD* seems to favour the appearance of 'fuck'. In the film, Seth and Richie Gecko are two brothers who escape to Mexico after robbing a bank, killing several people on the way and taking the Fuller family

hostage. Once in Mexico, they spend the night at a bar which unexpectedly turns out to be a refuge for vampires. The film mixes two genres, the bank robbery escape and the vampire killing genre, which are characterised by generating a lot of tension among the characters. It seems only natural, therefore, that they end up using foul language.

Although throughout the paper some suggestions have occasionally been put forward as alternatives to the commercial translations of 'fuck', the overall method chosen for this study is mainly descriptive. More specifically, each item of the original corpus has been analysed and compared with its corresponding dubbed translation, bearing always in mind the context in which they appear.

The Catalan version was first broadcast by the Catalan national television, Televisió de Catalunya (also known as TV3), in 1999 and then again in 2000. Given the fact that at the time of the broadcast more than 15 years had gone by since the creation of TV3, back in 1983, the language model devised for translating films into Catalan has the advantage of being fully tested and consolidated.<sup>4</sup> The translation of 'fuck' may therefore be deemed as representative of TV3's translation policy as regards this word, even more so if we take into account that Tarantino's films *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994), which rank in the top 20 films that use 'fuck' the most (2.55 and 1.76 'fucks' per minute respectively, according to Wikipedia, 2005), had already been broadcast by TV3 by the time *FDD* was televised in 1999 – *Reservoir Dogs* was first broadcast by TV3 in 1995 and *Pulp Fiction* in 1998.

## 2. The word 'fuck' in *From Dusk till Dawn*

Table 1 below offers a quantitative classification by grammatical category of all the occurrences of 'fuck' in *FDD*.

**Table 1** Occurrences of 'fuck' in *FDD*

<b>Form</b>		<b>Number of occurrences (out of 104)</b>	
fucking / fuckin' (adj / adv)	fucking / fuckin' (adj)	40 (= 38.46%)	58 (= 55.77%)
	fucking / fuckin' (adv)	18 (= 17.31%)	
fuck (n)	what the fuck	7 (= 6.73%)	19 (= 18.27%)
	fuck [= despicable person]	5 (= 4.81%)	
	V + the fuck + Prep	4 (= 3.85%)	
	not to give a fuck	2 (= 1.92%)	
	where the fuck	1 (= 0.96%)	
fuck (v)	fuck [transitive]	7 (= 6.73%)	15 (= 14.43%)
	fuck with	4 (= 3.85%)	
	fuck [intransitive]	1 (= 0.96%)	
	fuck around	1 (= 0.96%)	
	fuck off	1 (= 0.96%)	
	fuck up	1 (= 0.96%)	

fuck ( <i>interjection</i> )	6 (= 5.77%)
motherfucking ( <i>adj</i> )	3 (= 2.89%)
fucked ( <i>adj</i> )	1 (= 0.96%)
fucker ( <i>n</i> )	1 (= 0.96%)
motherfuck ( <i>n</i> )	1 (= 0.96%)

As can be seen above, 'fucking' is the most used form (55.77% in total, 38.46% as an adjective and 17.31% as an adverb), while the least used forms are 'fucked', 'fucker' and 'motherfuck' (0.96% each). The fact that 'fucking' as an adjective and, to a lesser extent, as an adverb, is the most used form in the language corroborates the findings of Leech, Rayson and Wilson (2001) – see endnote 3.

As noted previously, *FDD* is a film full of action and tension, which favours the use of 'fuck'. The main characters in the film can be divided into two groups: the bad ones, who say 'fuck' very often, and the good ones, who rarely pepper their dialogues with such a word. In the first group we find the Gecko brothers (Seth and Richie) and the vampire killers (Frost and Sex Machine). In the second group we find the Fuller family (Jacob and his children Kate and Scott).

After a detailed analysis of every single context in which the word 'fuck' occurs in *FDD*, it may be concluded that it is used to indicate mainly the following emotions: (1) extreme anger; (2) emphasis; (3) disgust; (4) contempt; (5) surprise; and (6) happiness.<sup>5</sup> Here is an example of each:

- (1) Extreme anger: "I don't kill people that I don't have to. And I don't fuckin' rape women. What you are doin', what you are fuckin' doin', what you are doin', is not how it's done. Do you understand that? Do you? Just say fuckin' yes".
- (2) Emphasis: "Well, your 'best' better get a helluva lot fuckin' better, or you're gonna feel a helluva lot fuckin' worse".
- (3) Disgust: "(*throwing away Richard's arm, with a sign of repulsion [Richard has become a vampire]*) Fuck!".
- (4) Contempt: "Nadine should've hit that boy in the head and sold the fuckin' milk".
- (5) Surprise: "(*surprised at the vampire*) What the fuck?".
- (6) Happiness (positive connotation): "Oh, baby, we did it. We're in Mexico. We're fuckin' in Mexico, you little piece of fuckin' shit!".<sup>6</sup>

The above categories should not be seen as presenting clear-cut boundaries. In some cases they overlap. For instance, when one of the characters exclaims "Fuck those spic pigs, man!", extreme anger and contempt converge. It should be noted, moreover, that the above categories are pragmatic rather than lexical as they express emotions rather than dictionary meanings. They exclude, for example, the literal meaning of 'fuck' in "Try and beat pussy for a penny! If you can find cheaper pussy anywhere, fuck it!". Lexical meanings are dealt with in sections 1 and 3.

The members of the Fuller family rarely use 'fuck': they do so on only six occasions, representing 5.77% of all occurrences in the film. Their resorting to this word is a clear indication of dramatic peaks in the film. Being such well-spoken persons, their use of 'fuck' really stands out as rare, as when Reverend Jacob, a character who remains calm for most of the film, angrily calls Seth a "fucking loser".

### 3. The translation of 'fuck' in *Obert fins a la matinada*

Table 2 below classifies all the Catalan translations of 'fuck' and its compounds and derivatives in *Obert fins a la matinada* (*Ofm*) according to the key word they share. Table 3 (based on table 2) lists the most common semantic fields used in the translation of 'fuck' in *Ofm*.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 2** Catalan translations of 'fuck' in *Ofm*

<b>Translation of 'fuck'</b>		<b>Number of occurrences (out of 112)</b>
<b>Key word (backtranslation)</b>	<b>Actual translation</b>	
Ø		39 (= 34.82%)
puta [whore]	fill de puta	14 (= 12.5%)
	d'una puta vegada	
	la puta!	
	de puta mare	
	putejar	
collons [bollocks]	collons!	13 (= 11.6%)
	dels collons	
	de collons	
	què collons... ?	
	collons de	
	collonut	
fotre (vulgar word with several meanings: 'to do', 'to cheat', 'to care', 'to shoot', etc.)	acollonit	10 (= 8.93%)
	fotre-la a algú (te la foto, me la fots)	
	fotre	
	què... fots?	
	se me'n fot	
	fotre el favor de	
	estar fotut un embolic	
merda [shit]	no fotre brot	9 (= 8%)
	merda!	
	(no) + V + una merda	
	i una merda!	
	N + de merda	
malparit [badly born]	merda de + N	5 (= 4.46%)
	Det + malparit	
cul [arse]	malparit!	4 (= 3.57%)
	a pendre pel cul <sup>8</sup>	
cony [cunt]	donar pel cul	4 (= 3.57%)
	què cony... ?	
	cony de + N	
jurar (et juro que) [I swear that]		4 (= 3.57%)
cabró [male goat / bad person]		3 (= 2.68%)
coi (què coi... ?) [què coi indicates surprise; it may be translated as 'what the hell', literally 'what the pussy'; coi is a euphemism for cony, 'cunt']		1 (= 0.9%)
enredar [to cheat on]		1 (= 0.9%)
follar [to fuck / to have sex]		1 (= 0.9%)
fastigós [disgusting]		1 (= 0.9%)

<i>morir-se</i> [to die]	1 (= 0.9%)
<i>cagar-la</i> [to shit it]	1 (= 0.9%)
<i>tant</i> [so much]	1 (= 0.9%)

**Table 3** Most common semantic fields used in the translation of 'fuck' in *Ofm*

Semantic field	Keyword used as a translation of 'fuck' (backtranslation)	Percentage of occurrences
sex	<i>puta</i> [whore] <i>collons</i> [bollocks] <i>cony</i> [cunt] <i>follar</i> [fuck]	28.57%
scatology	<i>merda</i> [shit] <i>cul</i> [ass] <i>cagar-la</i> [to shit it]	12.47%

It must be noted that table 1 states that there are 104 occurrences of 'fuck', while table 2 indicates that there are 112 translations of 'fuck'. This discrepancy is due to the fact that in some cases one single instance of 'fuck' has been translated by means of two lexical items, as in:

You two, Simon says sit the fuck down. Sit down.  
 → *I vosaltres dos, foteu el favor de seure d'una puta vegada. Que seieu, dic.*  
 [And you two, do the favour of sitting of a whore time. That you sit, I say.]

As can be observed in table 2 above, the most common lexical translation for 'fuck' (including its compounds and derivatives) is *fill de puta* [son of whore / whoreson], with 7 instances (6.25%) This does not come as a surprise, since the only reference to 'fuck' in TV3's linguistic criteria for translation and dubbing indicates that 'fuck' and 'fucking' are best translated as *fill de puta* (Televisió de Catalunya, 1997: 24).

It must be noted, however, that while in the film *fill de puta* and *collons* [bollocks] are the most recurrent lexical translations for 'fuck', the most common translation strategy is omission, a phenomenon represented by the symbol 'Ø' in table 2. Throughout this paper omission refers to the fact that, within the sentence level, no lexical equivalent is given for the word 'fuck' or one of its compounds or derivatives.<sup>9</sup> Here is an example of omission:

Are you such a fucking loser, you can't tell when you've won?  
 → *Tan acostumat estàs a perdre, que no saps distingir quan has guanyat?*  
 [Are you so much used to losing, that you can't distinguish when you've won?]

Omissions may be due to: (1) restrictions typical of dubbing (mainly isochrony, i.e. when the dubbed target text takes as long to pronounce as the source text); and (2) intonation compensations. Below is an example of each:

- (1) Restrictions typical of dubbing (isochrony):  
 "Fuckin' bit me! Fuckin' bit me!"  
 → *M'ha mossegat! M'ha mossegat!*  
 [Bitten me! Bitten me!].

## (2) Intonation compensations:

"Do you mind? Shut the fucking door, please."

→ *Li fa res? Vol tancar la porta, sisplau?*

[Do you mind? Will you shut the door, please?].

In the first example above each sentence in both the original and the translation contains four syllables. It may be argued that 'fuck' has not been translated for isochrony reasons, since translating it would have implied lengthening the sentence, which in turn would have caused a mismatch between the character's lip movement and the uttered speech. In the dubbed translation, the character would have carried on speaking despite the fact that his lips were not moving anymore. In the second example the Catalan intonation expresses much more anger than the English intonation, compensating for the absence of a lexical translation of 'fucking'.

It is worth pointing out that in quite a number of cases 'fuck' is not translated following the syntactic structure of the original. Thus, "I don't fuckin' believe in vampires" becomes *io tampoc hi crec en aquests fills de puta* [I neither believe in these sons of whore]. Here, although the word 'fuck' is not lexically translated in the same place as the original, there are two kinds of compensation. On the one hand, there is a lexical compensation insofar as a vulgar item is used in another part of the sentence: 'fucking' and 'vampires' coalesce to form a swear word, *fills de puta* [sons of whore / whoresons]. On the other hand, there is a phonetic compensation: the standard form *jo* [I] is pronounced in its colloquial form *io*.

Having considered all the cases of 'fuck' in *FDD*, it can be stated that the translation and dubbing of this word in the film is, on the whole, of a good quality, not only because the pragmatic functions outlined in section 2 are rightly conveyed across the languages, but also because the different meanings of 'fuck' and its compounds and derivatives are rightly translated. 'Fuck' meaning 'to have sex' is adequately translated as *follar*; 'fuck up' meaning 'to do something very badly, to fail' is correctly translated as *cagar-la* [to shit it]; 'fuck' meaning 'despicable person' is translated either as *cabró* [male goat / bad person] or as *malparit* [badly born]; and 'fucking' meaning 'damn' is translated as *dels collons* [of the bollocks]. All these translations (see table 2 for a full list) would be deemed acceptable by most Catalan speakers and translators.

There are, however, three major areas where I would argue the translation of 'fuck' can be improved: (1) to boost characterisation of those individuals who rarely use 'fuck'; (2) to compensate for the lack of naturalness in some translations; and (3) to make up for the loss of religious references in some translations.



### 1) To boost characterisation of individuals who rarely use 'fuck'

As mentioned in the previous section, the Fuller family rarely use the word 'fuck', but when they do, the word stands out as really extraordinary. In all the six cases in which 'fuck' is used by the family, the translation given by Televisió de Catalunya is inadequate, as in the following two examples:

KATE: It's just that all our lives you've been a pastor. And then, one day, you're just gonna wake up and say, "Fuck Him"?

JACOB: I didn't say "Fuck Him".

→ KATE: *Però des que, des que vam néixer que has estat pastor. I tot d'una, un dia, et despertes de bon matí i dius, "A pendre pel cul".*

JACOB: *No ho he dit, "A pendre pel cul".*

[KATE: But since, since we were born that you've been a pastor. And all of a sudden, one day, you wake up in the morning and say, 'Bugger it'.

JACOB: I haven't said it, 'Bugger it'].

Are you such a fucking loser, you can't tell when you've won?

→ *Tan acostumat estàs a perdre, que no saps distingir quan has guanyat?*

[Are you so much used to losing, that you can't distinguish when you've won?].

In the first example the expression *a pendre pel cul* ['bugger it'; literally, 'to take by the arse'] is really mild in comparison with "Fuck Him". In the translation, the implicit direct object of *a pendre pel cul* is 'it', i.e. Jacob's faith, whereas in the original the implicit direct object is 'God' (which appears as 'Him'). The taboo is therefore much stronger in the original than in the translation. Whereas in the first case we have a rather strong blasphemous insult, in the latter case what we have is a mere loss of faith. A more adequate translation of "Fuck Him", which would take as many syllables as the dubbed version, would be *Que el donguin pel cul* ['Bugger Him' or, more literally, 'That they take Him by the arse'].

In the second example Jacob's use of 'fuck' stands out. He has used it *only* once before, but the dramatic impact of the word was much milder in that case, since he was only repeating, in a disapproving way, his daughter's words. In this instance, Jacob uses 'fuck' not as an echo of somebody else's words, but as defiance to no less than Seth Gecko. A character who never swears dares now to insult his kidnapper. The situation is most tense, and the audience is shown the faces of astonishment of both Jacob's children and Seth Gecko. The word 'fuck' has therefore a really important dramatic value here, and it is much to the audience's loss that it is not lexically translated in the dubbed version. A synchronically adequate translation, with the same number of syllables as the translation given by TV3, would have been *Tan acostumat estàs a perdre, que no saps quan has guanyat, cabronàs?* [Are you so much used to losing, that you don't know when you've won, big male goat?], where *cabronàs* [big male goat] is an insult meaning 'very bad person'.

### 2) To compensate for the lack of naturalness in some translations

In some cases, the translation of ‘fuck’ lacks naturalness:

Fuck those spic pigs, man! You called me a fuckin’ nut. Now, where I come from, that stops the train in its tracks.

→ *Que els hi donin pel cul, a aquests porcs! M’has dit que era un idiota, ho he sentit, i a casa meva no li dius idiota a algú i després et quedes tan tranquil!*

[Bugger them, these pigs! You’ve told me that I was an idiot, I’ve heard it, and in my house you don’t call someone an idiot and stay so calm!].

Whatdya mean, don’t worry about it? But of course I’m gonna worry about it. But I can’t fuckin’ see!

→ *Com vols que estigui tranquil? No veig una merda.*

[How do you want that I keep calm? I don’t see a shit].

In the first example, the expression chosen to translate ‘fuck’, *donar pel cul* [to bugger], is adequate, but the morphology (*donin*) is not as informal as it could have been (*donguin*). Apart from that, the pronoun *hi* in the first sentence may sound strange to some Catalan speakers. A more natural, informal translation, at least in the Central Catalan dialect, which is the one used by TV3 when dubbing, would have been *Que els donguin pel cul, a/en/amb aquests porcs!*

In the second example, the expression *no veure una merda* sounds really weird in Catalan and is probably an interference from Spanish. A much more natural translation with a number of syllables similar to the original would have been *P’ro si no m’hi veig, collons!* [But I can’t see, bollocks!].

### 3) To make up for the loss of religious references in some translations

One of the most striking features regarding the translation of ‘fuck’ in *Ofm* (see tables 2 and 3) is the absence of swear words related to the semantic field of religion, which are very common in Catalan: *mecàgom Déu* and *càgon Déu* [I shit on God], *hòstia* and *hòstima* [Holy Host], *hòstia puta* [Holy Host whore], etc. This is probably due to moral reasons. First of all, religious swear words may still contain a certain taboo component in a traditionally Catholic country like Catalonia. And secondly, the translation policy of Televisió de Catalunya is clearly conservative as far as religious swear words are concerned if we are to judge by: (1) the results observed in the dubbed version of *Ofm*; and (2) TV3’s general translation policy of preferring the euphemism *hosti* to the stronger swear word *hòstia* [Holy Host].

## 4. Conclusions

Having analysed the translations of the word ‘fuck’ into Catalan, a series of conclusions can be reached regarding the following aspects: lexicon, context, pragmatics, culture, and characterisation.

(1) *Lexicon*. As we saw in section 3, Televisió de Catalunya adequately translates, on the whole, the different meanings of 'fuck'. They have been variously translated as *follar* [to fuck], *cagar-la* [to shit it], *cabró* [male goat / bad person], *malparit* [badly born] and *dels collons* [of the bollocks]. The vulgar and taboo nuances are properly conveyed through these translations.

(2) *Context*. In audiovisual translation we can distinguish two types of context:

(a) Linguistic context: when the word 'fuck' is not lexically translated in the same place as the original, there may be several types of compensation. This can be achieved by using a vulgar lexical item in another part of the sentence, a vulgar lexical item in another sentence, a colloquial pronunciation, or a more emphatic intonation.

(b) Visual context: restrictions like isochrony play an important role in the choice of certain terms that may not be used for length reasons. As English is a more syllabically compressed language than Catalan, translators may opt for translating the sentence omitting 'fuck' when the end result might otherwise be too long.

(3) *Pragmatics*. It is a well-known fact that:

Different languages use different pragmatic strategies. In order to use a language effectively, and be successful in achieving your goals, you need to know what the pragmatic conventions are for that particular language (*Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, 1995: xxxiv).

As seen in this paper, the word 'fuck' covers different types of pragmatic information, such as extreme anger, emphasis, disgust, contempt, surprise, and happiness. On the whole, Televisió de Catalunya conveys them adequately in *Ofm*. But, instead of using one single word, as happens in English, Catalan resorts to a more varied lexical range. Thus, extreme anger is usually expressed by means of *fill de puta* [son of whore / whoreson], *malparit* [badly born], *merda* [shit] or *fotre* [to do, to cheat, to care, to shoot, etc.]. Emphasis is usually communicated by means of *et juro que* [I swear that]. Disgust, by means of *collons!* [bollocks!]. Contempt, by means of *de merda* [of shit], or *a pendre pel cul* ['bugger it'; literally, 'to take by the arse']. Surprise, by means of *què coi* [what the hell; *coi* is a euphemism for *cony*, 'cunt']. And happiness, by means of *de collons* [of bollocks], *collonut* [bally / with balls / with bollocks], *dels collons* [of the bollocks], and *de puta mare* [of whore mother]. Apart from these lexical items, pragmatic meanings of 'fuck' like anger may also be conveyed through emphatic intonation – even though the intonation has not as strong a perlocutionary force as an expletive.

(4) *Culture*. The word 'fuck', which clearly belongs to the semantic field of sex, is mainly translated in *Ofm* by means of words belonging to two semantic fields: sex and scatology. It is striking that in the dubbing of *FDD* no swearwords related to the semantic field of religion have been used, despite the fact that some of these words are very common in everyday vulgar speech and could be a perfect Catalan match for 'fuck'.

(5) *Characterisation*. The translation of 'fuck' in *Ofm* is inadequate as far as characterisation is concerned. It is not translated, or is translated very mildly, in those cases in which it is uttered by characters who seldom use it throughout the film. The use of 'fuck' is, in such cases, very noticeable as it expresses dramatic peaks which are unfortunately diluted or lost in the translation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a study of its translation into French, see Adam, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that 'fucking' can be used as an infix (absofuckinglutely, Massafuckingchusetts). If so, it is always infixed "immediately before the word's main stressed syllable" (Fromkin, 2000: 58). Thus, it is possible to say 'Massafuckingchusetts' but not \*'Massfuckingachusetts' or \*'Massachufuckingsetts'.

<sup>3</sup> To put it another way: in *FDD*, the frequency of occurrence of 'fuck' and its derivatives is some 13,000 times per million words, the frequency of occurrence of 'fucking' (both as an adjective and as an adverb) alone being 8,000 times per million words (these word counts have been made taking the transcript of the film as a basis: <http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:hFKKg4wYCCgJ:www.show.ro/sub/F/From%2520Dusk%2520Till%2520Dawn.sub+%22shoot+him+in+the+back+of+the+head%22+%22from+dusk+till+dawn%22&hl=ca>). The aforementioned figures are extremely high indeed, especially when compared to the already high frequencies of occurrence that 'fuck' and its derivatives have in Geoffrey Leech, Paul Rayson and Andrew Wilson's *Word Frequencies in Written and Spoken English: Based on the British National Corpus*, where the adjective 'fucking' occurs 18 times per million words (it occupies the 4,899th position in the list of 7,726 most frequent words in the English language), where the adverb 'fucking' occurs 12 times per million words (it occupies the 6,597th position in their list) and where the verb 'fuck' occurs 12 times per million words.

<sup>4</sup> TV3 was conceived by the Catalan autonomous government with a view to creating and implementing a linguistic model which could serve as a reference to Catalan speakers at a time when the need was felt to 'normalise' Catalan in many everyday areas. It was feared that the Catalan-Spanish diglossia, aggravated by Franco's dictatorship, might eventually lead to language substitution in favour of Spanish. Especially in its initial stages, the language used by TV3 was insecure and there were heated discussions about which model had to be created and implemented (Tubau, 1990 and Grup d'Estudis Catalans, 1992). As time went by, the model of oral and colloquial language employed by TV3 evolved, becoming more natural-sounding (Bassols, Rico and Torrent, 1997: 147) and self-assured. The self-confidence is reflected in TV3's long-awaited publication of their linguistic criteria for translating and dubbing (Televisió de Catalunya, 1997). Given TV3's significant linguistic evolution since 1983, the 1999 translation of the film may be deemed as 'mature'.

<sup>5</sup> In her analysis of John McKenna's short story *A Summer Girl*, Adam (1998: 236) distinguishes the following four main nuances of meaning for 'fuck' and 'fucking': literal meaning; insult; anger, contempt or bitterness; and emphasis.

<sup>6</sup> A famous case where 'fucking' has a positive connotation occurs in James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "I'll wring the neck of any bugger says a word against my fucking king" (Joyce, 1992: 789). Here, the word 'fuck', though it expresses anger, is far from being a

negative qualification of 'king', since the king is defended and even praised. This praise has been rightly translated into Catalan as "Torçaré el coll del dat pel cul que digui res del meu rei de collons" (Joyce, 1990: 544) [I'll wring the neck of the one taken by the arse who says anything against my king of bollocks!] and as "Torçaré el coll del fill de puta, la mare que el va parir, que digui una paraula contra un rei de collons!" (Joyce, 1996: 592) [I'll wring the neck of the whoreson, the mother that gave birth to him, who says a word against a king of bollocks!]. However, it has been mistranslated into Spanish as "Yo le voy a retorcer el pescuezo al maricón que diga una palabra contra mi puñetero rey" (Joyce, 1994: 604) [I'll wring the neck of the faggot who says a word against my damn king], where *puñetero* [damn] clearly has a negative connotation.

<sup>7</sup> The word *fotre* (from the Latin *futuere*, 'to have sex') is not used in its primary meaning of 'to have sex', and therefore it has not been included in table 3.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout the paper, I use the colloquial, non-standard form *pendre* instead of the standard *prendre*, as the former reflects the characters' actual pronunciation in the film.

<sup>9</sup> For practical reasons, the sentence level has been taken as the basic unit of translation analysis. Thus, lexical compensations carried out within the sentence have been counted as translations. To take just one example, in "He shot me in the fuckin' hand!" → *Aquest malparit m'ha fotut la mà enlaire!* [This badly born has shot my hand!], the word *mà* [hand] is not qualified (unlike its English counterpart), but the vulgar words *malparit* [badly born] and *fotut enlaire* [shot] are used in compensation. On the other hand, possible compensations carried outside the sentence level have been counted as omissions. This is due to the fact that lexical compensations outside the sentence level are rather difficult to determine. More often than not, the analyst does not know whether a vulgar word actually compensates for an untranslated 'fuck' or is simply a vulgar way of translating a sentence that does not contain 'fuck'. An instance of this can be found in "I don't give a rat's ass about you or your fuckin' family. You can all live forever or you can die this second. And I don't give a shit which" → *M'importen una puta merda vostè i la seva família. Tant me fot si viuen eternament com si es moren d'aquí a un segon. Me la sua completament.* Here "fuckin' family" is simply translated as *família*, but the vulgar expression for 'not to care', *tant me fot*, appears in the next sentence, where there is no 'fuck' in the original [You can all live forever or you can die this second].

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