KU LEUVEN

FACULTEIT LETTEREN EN SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN
TAAL- EN COMMUNICATIE ANTWERPEN
SINT-ANDRIESSTRAAT 2
2000 ANTWERPEN
BELGIE

Masterproef aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van het diploma Master of Arts in het **vertalen**

Going back for *Seconds*: Translating comic book dialogue, humour and sound effects

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ACADEMIEJAAR 2014-2015

ASSOCIATIE KU LEUVEN

Foreword

Translating a text is like getting a second helping of it, discovering all-new perspectives and linguistic intricacies that went unnoticed the first time around. I have titled this paper *Going back for Seconds* not only because *Seconds* is the name of the graphic novel I translated in function of it, but also because this translation process left me craving to return to the text time after time again, to see what other secrets it had left in stock.

This paper was written between October of 2014 and May of 2015, under the supervision of Dr. Peter Flynn, of the Translation and Intercultural Transfer Unit at the KU Leuven, Faculty of Arts, campus Sint-Andries Antwerp, and with the assistance of Ms. Nadine Malfait of the Translation Studies Research Unit at the same institution. This paper was commissioned to the KU Leuven on the 1st of June 2015, in order to obtain a master's degree in Translation.

Abstract

Academisch onderzoek naar stripboeken en beeldromans is, ondanks hun populariteit, zeldzaam. De enkele artikelen die over stripvertaling handelen, houden zich voornamelijk bezig met stripboeken die als 'linguïstisch uitdagend' of 'cultureel erfgoed' beschouwd worden – doorgaans klassieke stripboeken voor een breed publiek of zogenaamde beeldromans voor meerwaardezoekers. Dit paper onderzoekt daarentegen vertalingen van stripverhalen voor een alternatief, doorgaans jonger publiek, en toont aan dat de linguïstische kenmerken van die teksten – het idiomatische taalgebruik, de ironische humor en zelfs het bijzondere gebruik van geluidseffecten en klanknabootsingen – minstens even interessant zijn dan die van de klassieke canon waartoe onderzoek naar stripvertaling zich te vaak beperkt. Aan de hand van bestaande Nederlandstalige vertalingen van de stripreeks *Scott Pilgrim*, geschreven en getekend door Bryan Lee O'Malley, en een eigengemaakte vertaling van diens recentere beeldroman *Seconds*, onderzoekt dit paper waarom de vertaling van *Scott Pilgrim* eerder elementen uit het origineel – gaande van details in de dialogen tot ironische cues – weglaat waar de vertaling van *Seconds* die juist toevoegt. Daarnaast beschouwt dit paper ook hoe er in beide vertalingen omgegaan wordt met de visuele aspecten van het origineel, die soms problemen kunnen opleveren bij het vertalen. Tenslotte onderzoekt, benoemt en definieert dit paper ook een bijzondere, nieuwe soort multimodale boodschap typerend voor deze en soortgelijke stripboeken: het *non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect* ('niet-onomatopoëtische beschrijvingseffect'), een effect dat de vormelijke kenmerken van een typische klanknabootsing overneemt, maar in feite geen geluid weergeeft.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. Literary Review 5
   2.1 What Are Comics? 5
      2.1.1 The History of Comic Books 6
      2.1.2 Comic Books from a Theoretical Perspective 8
   2.2 Comic Book Translation through the Ages 11
      2.2.1 Interlingual, Intralingual and Intersemiotic Comic Book Translation 13
   2.3 An Overview of the Corpus 13
3. Methodology 16
   3.1 Kaindl's Framework for Comic Book Translation 16
   3.2 The General Theory of Verbal Humour 17
   3.3 Translating Irony 19
   3.4 Translating Multimodal Humour 20
4. Building the Corpus 22
5. *Scott Pilgrim* vs. *Seconds*: A Comparative Analysis 23
   5.1 Quantitative Corpus Research 23
   5.2 Translating Verbal Messages 27
      5.2.1 Language Use 28
      5.2.2 Challenges of Translation 32
      5.2.3 Paratext and Typesetting in *Scott Pilgrim* 39
      5.2.4 Realia and Cultural References 43
      5.2.5 Conclusion 47
   5.3 Translating Humour 48
      5.3.1 Translating Verbal Humour 49
      5.3.2 Translating Irony 54
      5.3.3 Translating Multimodal Humour 58
      5.3.4 Conclusion 62
   5.4 Dealing with Sound Effects 63
      5.4.1 Sound Symbolism 64
      5.4.2 The 'Unsound Effect' 66
      5.4.3 Conclusion 73
6. General Conclusion 75
7. Bibliography 77
   7.1 Works Quoted 77
   7.2 Works Consulted 79
   7.3 Electronic Sources 80

1. Introduction

Comic books are widely read and translated across the globe. Due to the rise of the so-called 'graphic novels' or literary comics, the storytelling medium once featured on the 'funny pages' of newspapers and in cheaply printed periodicals is no longer considered a mere 'low' art form intended only for children and teenagers. Nevertheless, academic writing on the topic has been few and far between. Up until the late 1990s, comic authors themselves, such as Will Eisner (1985) and Scott McCloud (1993) were responsible for most comic book research, with occasional contributions by linguists or semiologists such as Daniele Barbieri (1993). However, these academic works hardly ever regarded the inherent intersectional nature of comic books which distinguishes them from other literary genres, and focused exclusively on the aspects of those comic books deemed linguistically interesting (Kaindl, 1999: 264) and relevant to their respective disciplines. Only in the late 1990s, research started to take the pictorial and typographical elements of comic books into consideration. Academic writing on comic book translation is an even more recent phenomenon. No attempts at 'providing a comprehensive account of comic book translation' had been made until around the turn of the century, when Klaus Kaindl (1999: 265) published a model to 'serve as the foundation for a systematic account of dealing with comics in translation'.

Nevertheless, most research into the translation of comic books, including Kaindl's own, is still limited to culturally significant, well-known or 'mainstream' comic books, such as *Astérix* (e.g. Kaindl, 2004), *Spirou* (e.g. Celotti, 2014) or comics based on Disney characters (e.g Grun & Dollerup, 2003). Within the comic book medium, however, different genres exist as they do in literature, each of which have distinct characteristics which warrant further scrutiny. Throughout the corpus ammassed in function of this research, the comics researched are fairly classic, traditional or oriented towards children or general audiences. Consequently, the setup of this thesis will be twofold: On one hand, it will compare and contrast translated comics of a more alternative, young-adult-oriented, or less culturally significant kind, using Kaindl's (1999; 2004) models – as well as other relevant theories not necessarily specific to comic book translation (e.g. Attardo, 2002; Celotti, 2014; Pelsmaekers & Van Besien, 2002). On the other hand, it will also attempt to research further into certain characteristics typical of this type of comics (most noticeably, the use of the so-called 'unsound effect', as elaborated on in §5.4.2), which could lead to insights not previously explored in the underrepresented research into comic book translation.

Therefore, this research will seek to discover, analyse and clarify the differences in the strategies adopted for the Dutch translation of two works by Canadian cartoonist Bryan Lee O'Malley: one existing, the other made specifically for this dissertation. It will aim to define the characteristics of O'Malley's writing and through a comparison of these two translations, analyse the principles, strategies and methods adopted for translating this idiomatic style. Through a mixture of quantitative and qualitative analysis, it is the purpose of this dissertation to analyse the translation strategies adopted to convey the idiomatic English of the comics into Dutch, and clarify particular translation shifts and concessions, especially in the translation of inscriptions. Furthermore, this research will analyse the types of humour and irony used in the corpus, and the strategies used for translating them. Finally, a look into O'Malley's distinct use of sound

effects in both source and target texts will lead to the definition of a new term: The 'non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect', a verbal message which appropriates the formal characteristics of a traditional comic book onomatopoeia, yet implies an action, atmosphere or vibe that does not necessarily produce a sound.

2. Literary Review

Similar to other literary media, like novels, films or theatre plays, comic books form a substantial part of the average consumer's daily reading experience. Comics are read and produced all over the world (Zanettin, 2014) and cover every imaginable format, genre or target audience. From newspaper funnies to hardcover, bound Franco-Belgian *bandes dessinées*, from Japanese pocket *manga* to newsstand comic magazines, the genre, publication form and overall public image of comic books are dependent on various historical and geographical factors. As stated by Pilcher and Brooks (2005: 12), in Britain, comic books are mostly considered to be popular, lowbrow entertainment for children, whereas in France, comic books are held in equally high regard as other literary forms, such as poetry or prose. In Japan, on the other hand, *manga* are the bread and butter of the nation's cultural identity.

2.1 What Are Comics?

The world of comics is as diverse as the world of prose, encompassing many themes and literary techniques also seen in 'traditional' writing. Whereas Kaindl (1999, 2004) refers to comic books as a 'genre', Zannetin (2014: 5-6) argues that comics are not a mere literary genre – as comic books themselves make use of different genres, many of which can be categorized into the same three traditional 'fictional super-genres' also found in literary traditions:

1. **comedies**, from which comic books derive their name, and which include 'funny animal' stories (*Micky Mouse*, *Donald Duck*), gags (*The Beano*), newspaper comics (*Peanuts*, *Calvin & Hobbes*) or satire (*MAD*);
2. **epics**, including adventure (*Tintin*), mystery (*XIII*), horror (*Tales From The Crypt*), sci-fi (*AKIRA*), fantasy (*Lanfeust*), historical or superhero (*Spider-Man, Batman*) stories;
3. **tragedies**, which according to Groensteen (2005) are more common on the American and especially Japanese market (Zannetin, 2014: 6).

Naturally, many comics feature a crossover between these three genres, such as *Astérix*, an historical adventure featuring many comedic or satirical moments, or *Maus*, a tragic story with biographical and historical elements. Consequently, other authors have proposed different terms such as 'narrative form' (Kaindl, 1999; Kokko, 2013), 'system' (Groensteen, 1999) or 'medium' (Zanettin, 2014) to describe what comic books are exactly. Because of that wide variety of genres and formats comic books can encompass, and target audiences they can appeal to, it is difficult to come up with a comprehensive definition of what comic books are. Widely accepted is Eisner's (1985) statement that comic books are a form of 'sequential art' in which images or a combination of images and written text in sequence are used to 'narrate a story or dramatize an idea' (ibid.: 5). Groensteen (1999: 14) stresses said narrative aspect and describes comics as

'narratives with a visual dominant' (Celotti, 2014: 33). The most comprehensive definition of comic books, however, was coined by Kaindl (1999: 264), who proposes the following working definition:

> *Comics are narrative forms in which the story is told in a series of at least two separate pictures. The individual pictures provide contexts for one another, thus distinguishing comics from single-frame cartoons. Comics involve linguistic, typographic and pictorial signs and combinations of signs as well as a number of specific components such as speech-bubbles, speed lines, onomatopoeia etc., which serve particular functions. The form and use of these elements are subject to culture-specific conventions.* (Kaindl, 1999: 264)

In brief, comics are a 'semiotic system' (Zannetin, 2014: 5) consisting of multiple signs working together to convey a narrative. Unlike similar semiotic systems such as films, however, the importance and conventions of these modes, defined by Kress (2003) as 'semiotic resources that are culturally and socially shaped for representation and communication, such as image, gesture, written and spoken language', greatly differ depending on the social conventions of the source culture (Huang & Archer, 2014: 1).

Likewise, the size, method of publication, layout, and as mentioned before, contents, of comics are largely culture-specific as well (Celotti, 2014). Zanettin (2014) distinguishes the differences between European, American and Japanese conventions: In the English-speaking world, comics are usually published in newspapers, or in stapled, low-quality periodicals, whereas in Japan or the Franco-Belgian industry, comics are first released as serials in comic book magazines, and afterwards compiled into collectible volumes. In France, *bandes dessinées* usually take the shape of A4-sized, hardcover, full colour 'albums', also called '48CC' ('*48 pages, cartonée, couleurs*') (Celotti, 2014: 35), whereas in Italy and in Japan, paperback black-and-white pockets, named *bonelli* and *tankôbon* respectively, are the most common means of comic compilation. A more recent phenomenon is that of 'web-comics', comic strips released via the Internet, often by amateur writers and artists who would otherwise have no means of publishing their work (Fenty, Houp & Taylor, 2004). The rise of the Internet and the subsequent popularity of personal information appliances, such as tablets or smartphones, have changed the way comic books are made, distributed, and even read, as was predicted by McCloud (2000). As such, recent years have seen the introduction of animated, interactive or voice-acted digital comics. On the other hand, print 'graphic novels' have seen an increase in prominence as well. Graphic novels are self-contained, often higher-quality volumes and can appear in a variety of formats. They often have a more highbrow artistic and/or literary intent, and are marketed towards a more diverse audience than the mostly male teenager-oriented serialized comics. Nevertheless, graphic novels about superheroes or serialized 'art comics' are not unheard of, indicating that in spite of this distinction, the comic book medium remains characterized by a wide variety of formats, distribution methods and target audiences.

2.1.1 The History of Comic Books

The origins of the comic book medium can be traced back to Prehistoric cave graffiti, as sequential art has been a part of human cultural expression from the very beginning, ranging from the bas-relief of Trajan's pillar to the war scenes of the Bayeux Tapestry. In Japan, the term

'*manga'* was first coined by *ukiyo-e* artist Katsushika Hokusai (born 1760, died 1849 (Frédéric, 1996)), who published a selection of sketches and caricatures known as *Hokusai Manga* at the beginning of the 19th century. It was a landmark in Japan's strong tradition of comedic or educational illustration which began with the *Choju-Jinbutu-Giga*, an 11th century scroll depicting a satirical scene of frolicking, anthropomorphised animals (Sansom, 1931), and eventually paving the way for the *manga* of today (Ito, 2005).

In Europe, the origins of comic books as they are known today are credited to the 18th century satirical caricatures of William Hogarth and the 19th century illustrated stories by Rodolphe Töppfer and Wilhelm Busch, which consisted of pictures accompanied by narration, mostly oriented towards children and serving an educational purpose. In the United States, on the other hand, comic strips originated in newspapers. In 1894, *The Yellow Kid*, created by Richard F. Outcalt, first appeared in New York newspapers, soon to be followed by numerous newspaper comics targeted towards the entire family, often in the Sunday pull-out section. *The Yellow Kid* was one of the first comics to include spoken language dialogue written in speech bubbles, which would not cross over into Europe and Japan until the 1920s. Before then, non-American proto-comics would feature prosaic or poetic narration outside of the panels, with certain American comics even being translated as illustrated stories – with the speech bubbles removed and the dialogue text being rewritten into rhymed sentences below each panel. This localization practice was especially common in Italy (Zanettin, 2014).

The 1930s signified a boom in the American comic book business, thanks to the introduction of the superhero genre and the periodical, cheap comic book form. However, a post-war loss of faith in patriotic icons like Superman or Captain America, and an increase in moral campaigning against the supposed bad influence of comics on the nation's youth, most noticeably as perpetuated in psychologist Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), brought the 'Golden Age of Comics' to a halt. The 1960s heralded the beginning of the Silver Age, characterized by a decrease in quantity, strict self-censorship by the publishers' own 'Comics Code Authority' and the introduction of a new generation of superheroes, including characters such as Spider-Man. Due to the diminished offering of American comics to import, many European countries, most noticeably France, Belgium and Italy, started producing their own comic books, many of which were first published in comic magazines, and released as albums upon completion. The lack of a 'Comics Code Authority' led to European comics having a wider range of themes and target audiences, resulting in a distinct comic book culture that substantially differed from the American one it was initially dependent on.

The following decades saw a continued diversification of the comic book medium on both sides of the Atlantic. From the 1970s onwards, the two major American comic book publishers, Marvel and DC Comics, gradually moved away from the self-imposed censorship and black-and-white morality of the Silver Age and started to introduce more mature and socially conscious themes in their published comics, such as drug abuse (Jones & Jacobs, 1986). Alongside numerous independent publishers, they also started popularizing the graphic novel format, indicating that comic books were no longer just a lowbrow, 'sub-literary' (Zanettin, 2014: 7) medium for children and teenagers. Comic books have since expanded their format, publishing method and target audience, leading to the diverse market of today. Furthermore, globalization

has lead to American and European comics being influenced by the distinct storytelling aspects, drawing methods and visual style of Japanese *manga*, and vice-versa, with the publication of the first American, French, Italian or German 'pseudo-*manga*' around the turn of the century (Jüngst, 2007).

2.1.2 Comic Books from a Theoretical Perspective

Through the use of different publication methods, the different forms of distribution and the prominence of certain genres over others, or of works catering towards certain target audiences over others, the societal and cultural perception of comics, as established earlier, greatly differs from the perception of literary prose. From a strictly theoretical perspective, however, Kaindl (1999: 264) distinguishes one major difference between comics and literary prose: whereas novels are a mostly mono-modal medium, using only a single semiotic mode (i.e. written text) to convey a message – barring the use of e.g. typography or cover art to supplement the message in certain cases, hence the 'mostly' – comics are by definition a multimodal medium, using 'both the mixing and blending of pictures and words' (Zanettin, 2014: 12) to tell a story. Saraceni (2003: 13-35) further adds that the signs used in comic books can be located at any point on a spectrum between strictly symbolic signs (text) and strictly iconic signs (images). For instance, emotion can be conveyed through typography, with text being written and/or coloured in such a way as to express anger or sadness. While the illustrations supplement the text to create a message which cannot be understood without the interpretation of both semiotic modes, the text on the other hand also has become 'part of the picture' and 'functions as an extension of the imagery' (Eisner, 1985: 10). In this regard, comic books are more similar to cinema or theatre than they are to literary prose. Furthermore, this 'language of comics' (Barbieri, 1993) is, like the societal perception of comic books, culture-specific (Kaindl, 1999; Celotti, 2014) which poses an issue when it comes to the translation and localization of comics to a different target culture. This aspect will be further elaborated on in §2.2.

2.1.2.1 Comics as a Multimodal Medium

As set out in the above paragraph, comic books, like theatre, cinema, advertisements and video games, are a 'syncretic semiotic environment' (Zanettin, 2014: 13) where 'different semiotic resources are given meaning through their mutual interdependence' (Celotti, 2014: 35). However, whereas most other means of visual communication are either 'isolated' (paintings, photographs, etc.) or 'continuous' (film, theatre, etc.) comics consist of sequences 'formed by the juxtaposition of at least two panels' (Zanettin, 2014: 13). Between each static panel, even within one and the same sequence, there is a short 'gap' which the reader is expected to fill in with 'the recognition […] of real-life people portrayed in the art and the addition of 'in-between action' based on their own experience (Eisner, 1985: 140). While 'isolated' visual communication generally features no such gaps, and 'continuous' visual communication only between individual sequences (i.e. film 'scenes' or theatre 'acts'), comics feature gaps of varying length in between every single panel. The spacing between panels, known as the 'gutter' (see also §2.1.2.2), can be made narrower or wider to convey a certain message, e.g. to show how much time has passed between panels. As such, the gutter is but one of the many modes comprising the comic book medium, which conveys its message through multimodal synergy.

Borodo (2014: 2) further elaborates on the multimodal approach in linguistics, which states that 'meaning is not only communicated by language but by many other modes'. Therefore, 'language is […] an element within a larger semiotic framework, and it may have a primary or a subordinate role to play'. Seminal work on multimodality has been delivered by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001: 20), who describe it as 'the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event'. Kress (2009: 54) later defines a mode as 'a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning'. In other words, comic books, amongst other multimodal media, convey meaning through the combinations and interactions of various culture-specific resources, such as text, typography or illustrations. These interactions, known as inter-semiotic relations, play an integral role in the translation of comic books. Borodo adds:

> *In a comic book, the visual mode plays the primary role and the verbal mode has a subordinate and complementary role to play, but these two modes constantly interact, at times overlapping in what they communicate and sometimes diverting from each other in the meanings they express.* (Borodo, 2014: 2)

In other words, according to Borodo, the visual mode is the most important one, while the verbal mode supplements the visual mode, communicating that which cannot be communicated through visual means alone, including not only dialogue, but time, characterization or other abstract narrative elements as well. Martinec and Salway (2005) distinguish three different possible relations between verbal and visual modes in such a case. When the verbal mode confirms certain information already present in the visual mode, both modes are in a relationship of **elaboration**. An inter-semiotic relationship of **extension** implies that the verbal mode 'goes beyond what the image represents' (Borodo, 2014: 2) and provides additional information regarding the image. Lastly, a relationship of **enhancement** implies that the verbal mode qualifies the visual one with circumstantial information, usually related to space, time or purpose, which the visual mode often cannot express. As such, in relationships of elaboration, visual and verbal modes are closer to each other in terms of function and meaning than in relationships of extension or enhancement.

As they consider only the relationship between verbal and visual modes, the logico-semantic relationships described by Martinec and Salway are but three of the many different relationships that can exist between the modes of comic books. As stated in §2.1.2, the modes in comic books exist on a spectrum between the strictly visual and the strictly verbal (e.g. sound effects, or symbols in speech bubbles to indicate swearing), which Martinec and Salway observe only as absolute opposites. Nevertheless, their system is useful for the translation analysis of comic books, as proven by the widespread use of the medium's multimodal nature for humoristic ends.

While it is possible to analyse the verbal humour in comic books by means of a general model, such as Attardo's (2002), the multimodal nature of comic book humour requires a model of its own. Kaindl (2004) has stressed the importance of approaching the translation of comics – particularly with regards to humour and culture-specific visual elements, such as body language – from the perspective of multimodality. The models set forth by these two authors will be elaborated on in the Methodology (§3).

2.1.2.2 The Anatomy of Comics

As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, comics consist of 'panels', 'boxes' or 'frames', while the space in between panels is known as the 'gutter'. This terminology was observed and popularized by Will Eisner (1985), who further states that the outline of a panel is called the 'border', though some panels on a page may not have outlines for stylistic purposes. On occasion, especially in Japanese *manga* (Zanettin, 2014), images or speech bubbles will 'pop out' of their respective panels and overlap with an adjacent panel, in a process known as 'bleeding'. An image that covers two or more pages is known as a 'spread', whereas a large, often full-page illustration to introduce the story is known as a 'splash page' (Lee & Buscema, 1978). The various elements of comic book lay-out work together to create certain pragmatic or symbolic effects, such as panels being distorted from their usual rectangular shape into an irregular, quadrilateral one during action sequences, or the number of panels per page increasing to illustrate a sense of speed. Zanettin, drawing on Fresnaut-Deruelle (1977), argues that complete pages form an articular unit in and by themselves: the page forms a picture which is first read before the reader will read the text in the individual panels. Benoît Peeters (2007 [1998]) ascribes several 'uses' to the comic book page as such, depending on the relationship between its narrative and visual aspects: the conventional use, the decorative use, the rhetorical use, and the productive use.

Conventional pages, which follow the established patterns of comic book page layout, usually meaning that every panel should have the same dimensions, are usually focused on narration, stability and neutrality. **Decorative** pages are mainly intended to serve a visual function and use unconventional panel designs, though the 'mise en page', as Peeters states, serves a merely aesthetic purpose and has no symbolic meaning. Usually, splash pages or spreads are decorative pages. The third use is the **rhetorical** use. Rhetorical pages are the most widespread, and are designed in a way as to support the narrative. Peeters elaborates:

> *[On rhetorical pages] the dimensions of the panel conform to the action being described, the whole page layout is placed at the service of a pre-existing narrative for which it serves to accentuate the effects.* (Peeters, 2007 [1998])

The rhetorical page can take all kinds of forms, depending on the author's intent, from the simple use of a vertical panel to accentuate a character standing upright to the elimination of borders and 'blending together' or panels to convey a sense of confusion or chaos. The final use of the comic book page Peeters distinguishes is the **productive** one, which is the opposite of the rhetorical use. On a productive page, the narration is adapted to the page layout, which dictates the narration. In other words, 'a particular arrangement generates a piece of narration' (Peeters, ibid.).

Aside from visual elements, a comic book also comprises of verbal messages. Celotti (2014: 38-39) distinguishes four categories: balloons, captions, titles and paratext. **Balloons** or locugrams (Bouissac, 1998) contain the dialogue, i.e. written messages resembling spoken tone, and in many cases the bulk of the verbal messages in a comic book. Kaindl (1999: 273) mentions that speech balloons, or dialogue texts, as he calls them, serve a dramatic purpose, which 'reflects the speech

behaviour of the protagonists in close connection with the socio-cultural context shown in the pictures'. Román Gubern's entry on comics in the *Encyclopedia of Semiotics* (Bouissac, 1998) adds that the 'perigrams', or borders of speech bubbles, are particularly important, as they serve as signs of the tone or emotion of the text contained within the speech bubble. Barbed perigrams often indicate anger, whereas perigrams with wavy lines or perigrams resembling clouds, called 'psychoperigrams' by Gubern, often express thoughts or inner monologues. Not only the shape, but also the colour or font of a speech bubble can serve as a visual indicator of the author's intent. For example, in Snyder and Capullo's *Batman* (2014), the eponymous superhero's narration is printed in grey caption boxes with yellow lettering – the colours of his costume – while his archnemesis, The Joker, speaks in a different font from all other characters, to indicate his menancing tone of voice.

Captions, called 'narration' by Kaindl (1999: 273), are often located on the top or the bottom of the page, and contain commentaries similar to literary prose (Groensteen, 1999: 30), either in first person by a character monologueing, or in third person by an external narrator. Even in comics where there is no narrator, captions will likely still be used to mark changes in the temporal and spacial settings of the events depicted, making Celotti's term the preferrable one. Kaindl ascribes an epic function to captions, and adds that they are commonly used to explain abstract situations which are difficult to portray using images and/or dialogue alone. The third of Celotti's categories are the **titles**, naming the comic and occasionally, its chapters and serving the same purpose as they do in all other methods of communication – drawing the attention of a potential audience.

The final category, named 'linguistic **paratext**' by Celotti – derived from Margarito (2005) – and 'inscriptions' by Kaindl, consists of all the text in comic book panels that is not part of speech bubbles or captions: labels, signs, prints on clothes, posters, text written by characters, dialogue outside of specch bubbles – frequently used in *manga* to indicate bantering, random thoughts or offside remarks by background characters – and onomatopoeia or sound effects. The latter are considered by Kaindl to be a separate, fifth, category, which will be further elaborated on in §5.4. Some instances of paratext are essential for the reader to understand the story or a joke, whereas others merely serve to set the scene and inform the reader of the 'social, cultural or geographic context' of the story (Celotti, 2014: 39). Celotti states that translators should distinguish between these essential and marginal instances of paratext, so as to convey the message of the comic properly without needing to edit or redraw a large number of panels, which is a costly and time-consuming affair.

2.2 Comic Book Translation through the Ages

Many specialists agree that the comic book medium has, for a very long time, been largely ignored in translation studies, in spite of the large numbers of comic books being translated worldwide every year. In fact, Kaindl (1999: 264) makes a clear distinction between 'importers' and 'exporters' of comic books, concluding that in certain countries such as Germany, Austria or Sweden, the comic book industry consists almost entirely of translated works. Due to the social and cultural stigma on comic books in many countries, very little research into the translation on comic books was conducted before the turn of the century. Celotti (2014: 33) mentions that in

various prominent encyclopaedias of translation studies, comics were not even allowed their own entry, instead being lumped in with other multimodal texts such as films or theatre plays.

At the time, most research into the translation of comic books was centred around works considered to be 'linguistically demanding' (Kaindl, 1999: 264), such as Goscinny and Uderzo's *Astérix*, with its many complex puns and satirical jokes. Kaindl adds, however, that most of this research was focused strictly on the text, rather than on the comic as a whole, and centred around normative, 'elitist' notions stating that the original is prestigious and the translation is a mere reflection (Grun & Dollerup, 2003: 197). Celotti (2014: 34) adds that this research focused on the concept of 'constrained translation'. Most translation academics only considered comic books to be linguistically interesting because the room provided for the translated text is limited, and that the text needs to serve a specific purpose that complements the picture. In other words, the visual mode of comics was considered to be a limitation or a challenge for translators, rather than an aid. In the aptly titled *Comment faut-il traduire?* ('How should one translate?'), Edmond Cary (1986) even calls the visual mode of comic books a 'tyranny'.

These sentiments started to change with Eisner's (1985) definition of comic books as 'sequential art', which states that the visual message contributes to the meaning of the verbal one, rather than restricting it (cf. Martinec & Salway, 2005), and that the two messages need to be 'read together' (Celotti, 2014: 34) in order to 'grasp the globality [sic] of [the comic's] meanings'. This notion was further elaborated on by Kaindl in his *Framework for the Study of Comics under Translation* (1999), stating that his attempt would be the first to '[provide] a comprehensive account of comic translation'. He states that the perception of the comic book image as a 'visual Esperanto' (Kaindl, 2004: 183), maintained by adherents of the 'constrained translation', is incorrect, as pictures do not necessarily directly reflect the reality they represent, but are rooted in a code determined by conventions shaped by cultural constraints. In the same way certain gestures and expressions may have completely different meanings in different cultures, the visual representation of objects 'can be interpreted correctly only if the significance of these elements has been defined in the particular culture' (Kaindl, ibid.; Eco, 1976: 65). Consequently, Kaindl's approach acknowledges the fact that comic books are multimodal media, distinguishes tree different sets of signs in comic books: linguistic (verbal), pictorial (visual) and typographic (in-between), and defines six different translation procedures relevant to all three sets of signs, based on Delabastita's (1989) model for analysing the translations of films. This model will be explained in full in the Methodology.

In brief, the academic approach to the translation of comic books has evolved from a mostly text-oriented, normative approach to a semiotic, multimodal approach. Grun and Dollerup (2003: 197-198) state that rather than looking at the translation of comics strictly as a matter of at best 'compensation' for the nuance that will be lost by translating the dialogue text, translated comics can, in fact, 'gain' layers of depth or humour, or a broader target audience compared to the originals because of their visual message. Furthermore, both Kaindl and Celotti argue in their respective models that translating not only the verbal, but also the visual message – by changing certain culturally-defined details in the pictures – can help overcome the challenges imposed by the notion of 'constrained translation'.

2.2.1 Interlingual, Intralingual and Intersemiotic Comic Book Translation

In keeping with the conclusions of the above paragraph, the translation of comic books is not a mere translation of text, but a translation of verbal signs, including not only written dialogue, but the paratext and onomatopoeia as well. This corresponds with Jakobson's (1992 [1959]) famous distinction between three types of translation, each of which is regularly applied to comic books, maybe even more than to any other medium. The term '**interlingual translation**' covers translation proper, from a source language into a target language, or in Jakobson's (ibid.: 145) terms, the 'interpretation of signs by means of signs from a different language'.

Intralingual translation or 'rewording' is a similar 'interpretation of signs', only this time using '[signs from] the same language'. This practice is widespread in the comic book industry, as comics are reprinted and re-issued with minor changes in the dialogue text. More common, however, is the republication of comics with the visual signs 'translated'. In this case, the text remains unchanged, but panels are 'reproduced with a different page size and layout, different panel arrangements and reading direction [or] in colour rather than in black and white' (Zanettin, 2014: 12). Another form of intralingual translation that is popular in the comic book industry is the metaphorical 'rewriting' or 'rebooting' of comic book characters and stories to accommodate for new target audiences. In 2000, Marvel Comics released 'Ultimate Universe' versions of their famous superhero comics, including *Spider-Man*, *The Avengers* and *X-Men,* which have been published alongside their 'regular' long-running series ever since. The *Ultimate* comics were intended to retell the stories of the eponymous superheroes – many of which originated in the 1960s – from the very beginning, in order to attract a new audience possibly intimidated by the decades-long history of the heroes' long-established counterparts (Ching, 2011). In such a case, not only verbal, but also visual signs were 'translated', as the sometimes 40-year-old stories were rewritten and redrawn to reflect the writing, storytelling and artistic trends and standards of the 21st century. Based on these conclusions, it is clear that the intralingual translation of comic books is, in keeping with the conclusions of Zanettin (2014), not strictly limited to the reinterpretation of verbal signs.

The final form of translation distinguished by Jakobson is the **intersemiotic translation** or 'transmutation'. An intersemiotic translation is the 'interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems' (Jakobson, 1992 [1959]: 145). Toury (1986) later adds a distinction between intra- and intersystemic translation, based on the nature of the sign systems being translated from or into. Whereas intra-systemic translations are interpretations from a verbal sign system into another verbal sign system (e.g. from poetry to prose) or from a non-verbal sign system into another non-verbal sign system (e.g. from music to painting), an intersystemic translation translates verbal signs into non-verbal ones (e.g. from written story to sculpture) and vice-versa. The most common types of intersemiotic translation comics are subjected to, are film or animated adaptations.

2.3 An Overview of the Corpus

The corpus used in this research consists of four comic books by Canadian-born, Los Angeles-based cartoonist Bryan Lee O'Malley (born 1979). First of all, the first 148 pages of *Seconds*,

issued in 2014 by Ballantine Books, served as the subject of the applied part of this dissertation, an attempted translation of these pages into Dutch. For the theoretical part, a comparison will be made between this translation of *Seconds* and the translations into Dutch of the first two volumes (out of six) of the *Scott Pilgrim* series by the same author: *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life* (2004) and *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* (2005), published by Oni Press. The Dutch translations of these two volumes were issued in 2010 and 2011 respectively by Oog & Blik.

Seconds is a 321-page, full-colour graphic novel released by Bryan Lee O'Malley in 2014. It tells the story of Katie Clay, a talented, yet somewhat self-absorbed young chef with a bright future. Her restaurant, Seconds, is the most popular venue in town, yet when Katie is on the verge of stepping down and opening a new restaurant on her own, disaster strikes: Her ex-boyfriend, Max, has returned to town and in spite of her fling with a sardonic colleague named Andrew, Katie cannot seem to get over him. Even worse, her irresponsible behaviour causes an accident that leaves Hazel, a shy new waitress at Seconds, with severe burns across her arms. Luckily for Katie, a mysterious girl appears on her bedside dresser in the middle of the night, offering her a second chance: Using a mysterious red-capped mushroom and a raggedy notebook, Katie can undo one mistake she made and set right what once went wrong. Yet a single second chance is far from enough for Katie. When she finds another batch of mushrooms and starts abusing them for her own gain, the mysterious girl in her room, Lis, starts to rebel against her. There are rules, and Katie fails to see the consequences of breaking them. Things soon go haywire, and only with the unexpected help of Hazel, will Katie be able to learn to live with the consequences of her actions once more.

The *Scott Pilgrim* series consists of 6 volumes, issued in black-and white between 2004 and 2010. Larger, hardcover, coloured in versions with minor edits (cf. intralingual translation) were released starting from 2012, with the sixth and final reissue scheduled for release somewhere in 2015. The first two volumes have been translated into Dutch, yet the translation was discontinued in 2011. The titular main character is a 23-year-old unemployed slacker who spends his days playing in an awful garage band and being a bother to his friends. Much against their advice, he is dating a naïve high school girl named 'Knives' Chau because it's 'easy' and helps him forget a traumatic past of nasty breakups, irreversible mistakes and social incompetence – yet everything changes when he meets the mysterious Ramona Flowers. To Scott's surprise, Ramona seems quite interested in him as well, but it soon turns out that she too has a dangerous past coming back to haunt her. Ramona tells Scott that if they are to go out, Scott will have to deal with her seven 'evil' exes, who have vowed to destroy her love life. In the first volume, *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*, readers are introduced to Scott Pilgrim and his friends, whereas in the second volume, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*, Scott prepares to face off against Ramona's second evil ex, a movie star named Lucas Lee, while a jilted Knives seeks out Ramona to win back Scott.

The *Scott Pilgrim* series, set in a seemingly mundane Toronto where super-powered battles are somehow commonplace, is a sincere coming-of-age story peppered with hyperactive action, referential humour and distinct use of language; making it an interesting subject for the analysis of comic translation, which has traditionally been limited to comics considered to be 'linguistically demanding' (Kaindl, 1999), if not entirely disregarded comedy- or action-oriented comics with seemingly little literary value, such as the *Scott Pilgrim* series (Celotti, 2014).

Furthermore, the comic combines elements from both the American and Japanese comic book traditions, reflected particularly in its interesting use of onomatopoeia. On the other hand, *Seconds* is presented as a 'graphic novel' and targeted towards a broader target audience, while still retaining O'Malley's characteristic contemporary idiolect and *manga* influences. Bearing this in mind, examining the translation into Dutch of the *Scott Pilgrim* series can provide interesting perspectives for the analysis of the translation of *Seconds* that this dissertation is aiming to provide.

3. Methodology

In order to analyse the translation of the dialogue, the humour and the sound effects of these two comic books, four models will serve as the backbone of this research: Klaus Kaindl's *Framework for the study of comics under translation* (1999) will be used throughout the corpus, while his *Multimodality in the translation of humour in comics* (2004), Pelsmaekers and Van Besien's *Subtitling Irony* (2002) and Salvatore Attardo's *Translation and Humour: An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)* (2002) will be used to look into humour translation in particular. Furthermore, Andrew Chesterman's classification of translation strategies (1997) will be used for categorizing particular translation shifts. Other models used will be briefly highlighted whenever necessary.

3.1 Kaindl's Framework for Comic Book Translation

Klaus Kaindl's methodology originated from a perceived lack of any theoretical frameworks for the analysis of comic book translation. It has been specifically designed for comic books and 'to establish a classification of translation strategies which applies to both verbal and nonverbal textual material' (Kaindl, 1999: 263). Towards this end, he drew inspiration from Delabastita's (1989) model for the analysis of film translation, a very similar practice to comic book translation due to both mediums being multimodal. Based on Delabastita's model, Kaindl distinguishes six shifts: *repetitio, deletio, detractio, adiectio, substitutio* and *transmutatio*. These six 'rhetorical concepts' (Kaindl, 1999: 275) are applicable both to verbal and visual messages, 'since semiotic studies have shown that rhetorical figures in language can all find a visual expression' (ibid.). Because of this specific shift-based approach, Kaindl's model is a micro-textual model, analysing and naming individual differences between source and target texts or illustrations.

Kaindl briefly defines the six rhetorical figures in his typology. ***Repetitio*** encompasses taking over source language, typography or picture elements in their identical form (ibid: 275). According to Kaindl, this shift is applied most commonly to sound effects and linguistic paratext, due to the financial and aesthetic constraints of editing or replacing visual or semi-visual messages. Strictly visual messages are almost always retained in their entirety, though Kaindl does point out that 'on the pictorial level the taking over of elements in their identical form is, strictly speaking, rather rare, since the size and format of comic albums and issues often vary depending on the publisher, which means that a certain degree of enlargement or reduction in size is usually necessary' (ibid: 276).

Deletio is the opposite of *repetitio*, and indicates that text and pictures are removed entirely. Within the context of this dissertation, *deletio* will only refer to speech bubbles, panels and individual sound effects being removed in their entirety, whereas the removal of certain elements – such as certain words or affixes, stylistic elements, unconventional fonts or typography – will be referred to as ***detractio***. Kaindl describes *detractio* as 'parts of linguistic/pictorial/typographic elements [being] cut in the translation' (ibid.: 277) and further adds that 'on the pictorial level, both spatial signs and action signs can be removed, usually by retouching the pictures'.

The opposite of *detractio* is ***adiectio***, or the addition of 'linguistic/pictorial material which was not there in the original' (ibid.: 278) in order to 'replace or supplement' the source material. These additions may range from hedge words being added or sentence structures being changed to tenses being changed or generic phrases in the source text being replaced by target text idioms. *Adiectio* shifts may remove elements from the source text, but unlike *detractio* shifts add other elements in order to 'compensate' for this removal. Furthermore, Kaindl also points out that *adiecto* shifts may replace pictorial elements with verbal elements and vice-versa. Another shift that may do so is the ***transmutatio*** shift, which Kaindl defines as 'a change in the order of source language or source pictorial elements' (idib.: 281). Replacing speech bubbles with sound effects would also be a case of *transmutatio*. ***Substitutio*** is the final strategy Kaindl mentions, yet is often the most common translation strategy, as it encompasses what translation is commonly defined as: 'the original linguistic/typographic/pictorial material is replaced by more or less equivalent material' (ibid.: 283). Kaindl however does not mention what exactly would constitute 'more or less equivalent'. Consequently, the distinction between *substitutio*, *detractio* and *adiectio* is often unclear.

3.2 The General Theory of Verbal Humour

Attardo (2002) proposes an advisory theory on the translation of verbal humour based on his previously established hierarchy of so-called 'Knowledge Resources' in jokes. According to the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), first coined by Attardo and Raskin (1991), verbal jokes are understood as comprising six parameters, or Knowledge Resources, hierarchically ordered from least to most distinctive. The **Language** (LA) parameter 'contains all the information necessary for the verbalization of a text' (Attardo, 2002: 177). In other words, it constitutes the way a joke is worded. Changing the LA parameter does not change the 'meaning' of a joke, as polysemy in language allows for any sentence to be worded in a plethora of ways without a change in meaning. Puns, however, are an exception to these rules, as wordplay relies on specific *signifiants,* rather than on their meaning. Next, the **Narrative Strategy** (NS) parameter consists of 'the form of narrative organization' (ibid.: 178) in which the joke is cast, ranging from a simple story to a short dialogue or a riddle.

The third parameter is the **Target** (TA), which indicates the proverbial 'butt' of the joke. This can be anyone or anything, ranging from a specific person to a group of people, a belief, an institution or an ideology. Attardo (2002: 178-179) further specifies that the Target does have to be human or related to humans, as the parameter always indicates a sentiment of aggression. Vandaele (2002: 158), who defines humour as a combination of incongruity and superiority, seconds this motion, as the latter of his merely two characteristics of humour corresponds with Attardo's Target parameter. Nevertheless, it is unique amongst Knowledge Resources in the fact that it can be completely absent from a joke, as not all jokes target any subject of ridicule in particular. The **Situation** (SI) parameter defines what the joke is about. It contains all of the 'props' for the joke: objects, participants, activities, etc., regardless of how relevant they are for the actual joke itself. Usually, the situation is carried over from the larger narrative context in which the joke takes place (ibid.: 179).

The **Logical Mechanism** (LM) parameter embodies the 'resolution of the incongruity' (ibid: 179-180). Vandaele (2002: 156) defines incongruity, the former of his two characteristics of humour as 'a (humorous) effect caused by a departure from normal cognitive schemes'. In other words, the Logical Mechanism is the twisted logic on which the joke operates, the 'type' of humour that lurks behind the joke. Attardo lists 27 known Logical Mechanisms, including juxtaposition, false analogy and exaggeration. Finally, the **Script Opposition** (SO) parameter constitutes the essence of the joke. Raskin (1985) states that a text is humorous if it corresponds with two different scripts, and if said scripts contradict each other. A script is 'an organized complex of information about something, in the broadest sense' (Attardo, 2002: 181). When a statement about something (script 1) can be interpreted as being about something else (script 2), and scripts 1 and 2 are opposed 'in a technical sense' (ibid.) and 'only within a particular discourse and solely for the purposes of this discourse' (Raskin, 1985: 108), humour is created.

Consequently, Attardo orders the Knowledge Structures of which all jokes consist in a hierarchy according to the so-called 'Similarity Metric'. The degree of difference perceived between jokes depends on the ranking of the parameter in which the jokes differ in this linear order, with Language being the lowest-ranking parameter and Script Opposition the highest. In other words, jokes that are merely worded differently will be perceived as being very similar, as is the case with the two different translations of the 'bread makes you fat' joke in both the *Seconds* and *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpora (see §5.2.4). On the other hand, jokes that differ based on the Script Opposition parameter are perceived as very different, because they are about two completely different things. Based on this metric, Attardo proposes a 'mini theory' for the translation of jokes:

> *If possible, respect all six Knowledge Resources in your translation, but if necessary, let your translation differ at the lowest level necessary for your pragmatic purposes.* (Attardo, 2002: 183)

This instruction can be applied to select translations from the corpus to assess their faithfulness to the original, source language jokes as per Attardo's model.

In order to aid translation students in the translation of humour, Trajan Shipley Young (2007) has developed a checklist prototype based on Attardo's six parameters. Furthermore, he has added four additional, extra-linguistic parameters, which 'account for factors which lie outside both the source and target texts' (ibid: 981): Time Frame Considerations (TFC), Social-Class and Educational Considerations (SEC), Cultural Awareness Decisions (CAD) and Publication Background Information (PBI). These external factors may help translators consider the cultural context of a joke upon translating it.

The **Time Frame Considerations** parameter is self-evident; it concerns possible references in the source text to recent real-world events. Upon translating such a humorous text, a translator will need to consider whether the target audience will be able to identify the event being referred to. The **Social-Class and Educations Considerations** parameter is the opposite of Attardo's Target parameter: While most jokes have a target who is the 'butt' of the joke, they also have an target audience in mind which the joke is intended to appeal to. Translators need to keep in mind whether or not their target audience is familiar with or sufficiently educated enough to

understand jokes about modern or complex themes such as the Internet, laws of physics or the works of Shakespeare. The **Cultural Awareness Decisions** parameter is similar, only deals with culture-specific elements. As Young points out, however, these need not necessarily be changed if the target culture is sufficiently aware of the source culture's traditions. Finally, the **Publication Background Information** parameter takes into consideration the 'ideological, political and editorial' leanings of the media companies publishing both source and target texts. For example, a political cartoon from a conservative-leaning newspaper might be changed if it ever were to be translated for publication in a liberal-leaning newspaper.

In his conclusion, Young (ibid.: 988) states that 'there is really no substitute for intuition' and that a checklist of the essential elements of a humorous text may aid a translator in '[melding] their own intuitive capabilities of (re)producing humour'. In other words, the translation of humour might be as hard to define as it is to define humour itself.

3.3 Translating Irony

Starting from Vandaele's definition, Pelsmaekers and Van Besien (2002) study the concept of irony as a combination of incongruity and superiority. Using Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) anatomies of speech acts, they define irony as 'some kind of contrast or incongruity between what is said (the propositional content) and what can be inferred from the situation' (Pelsmaekers & Van Besien, 2002: 243). An illocutionary act consists of both this propositional content and a 'conventional force', i.e. the intention that is commonly associated with said propositional content. Pelsmaekers and Van Besien state that the conventional force of ironic statements is 'no longer fully operational' as the true intent of an ironic statement is to criticize, rather than to relate, ask or command. The essential condition of an ironic statement – coined by Searle (1969) and defined by Pelsmaekers & Van Besien (2002: 244) as a condition 'relating to what the utterance is meant to count as' – is 'to count as an expression of a (predominantly negative) evaluative attitude'. However, rather than being an explicit illocutionary act of criticism, an ironic statement will 'disguise' itself as another speech act, creating incongruity.

Furthermore, irony distinguishes itself from direct criticism not only by disguising itself as a different speech act, but also by its perlocutionary intention. When a speaker uses irony, they have a different intent than they would have if they criticized their target directly. While Pelsmaekers and Van Besien state that the answer to the question as to why people use irony when they could as well just express direct critisism is open-ended, they also claim that the intended perlocutionary effect of irony is two-fold: to chide the target, but also to generate goodwill by doing so in a humourous way.

In their descriptive study, Pelsmaekers and Van Besien rely on Mateo's (1995) twelve strategies for translating verbal irony:

a. *Irony in the source text becomes irony in the target text with a literal translation;*
b. *Irony in the source text becomes irony in the target text with an 'equivalent effect' translation;*
c. *Irony in the source text becomes irony in the target text by means of different effects from those used in the source text, including the replacement of paralinguistic elements by other ironic cues;*

d. *Ironic innuendo in the source text becomes more restricted and explicit in the target text;*
e. *Irony in the source text becomes sarcasm (i.e. more overt criticism) in the target text;*
f. *The hidden meaning of irony in the source text comes to the surface in the target text, i.e. no irony in the target text;*
g. *Ironic ambiguity in the source text has only one of the two meanings translated in the target text, i.e. there is no double-entendre or ambiguity in the target text;*
h. *Irony in the source text is replaced by a 'synonym' in the target text with no two possible interpretations;*
i. *Irony in the source text is explained in a footnote in the target text;*
j. *Irony in the source text is translated literally, but the irony is lost in the target text;*
k. *Ironic source text is completely deleted in the target text;*
l. *No irony in the source text becomes irony in the target text.*

(Adapted from Mateo (1995), via Pelsmaekers & Van Besien (2002: 251))

While their research is concerned with subtitling, its findings can be easily applied to comic translation as well, due to both being examples of 'constrained translations' of multimodal media. From their analysis of a corpus consisting of translations from English into Dutch, Pelsmaekers and Van Besien found that 'the large majority of nearly all translations preserved the locutionary incongruity with the situation'. They also pointed out, however, that the deletion of hedgings, intensifiers and address forms – so-called 'ironic cues', i.e. 'verbal or non-verbal signs that indicate the speaker does not mean to be taken literally and positively' (ibid.: 245) – from many ironic statements in the target text made these statements come across as both harsher (i.e. as sarcasm, in line with Mateo's strategy (e)) and more 'deadpan' (ibid.: 263), deliberately impassive or expressionless.

3.4 Translating Multimodal Humour

Kaindl (2004) applies his previous approach to comic book translation (see §3.1) to the translation of comic book humour. Jokes, defined by Kaindl as 'autonomous textual entities with a similar sequential organization (i.e. introduction, text, reaction), which are structured so as to lead up to a punch line and are not necessarily dependent on contextual factors' (ibid: 174), can be both strictly verbal, strictly visual, or a combination of both. The former two categories are 'mono-modal', using only one 'semiotic vehicle, e.g. language, image, sound, music, etc.' to 'convey meaning and to create a message' (ibid: 173). The combined category, on the other hand, is multimodal (see §2.1.2.1), which according to Kaindl, has been largely ignored by other methods of humour analysis, such as Attardo's (2002). For that reason, his article attempts to provide a framework for the translation of jokes in comics relying on incongruity or 'dual perspectivisation' (Kotthoff, 1996) between not only different communicative scripts, but between communicative scripts and visual messages as well.

Kaindl distinguishes eight different translation techniques, based on the differences in the semiotic type of humour used in source and target texts (mono-modal vs. multimodal). Within these eight categories, further distinctions may be made between the type of humour used and the inter-semiotic relation (cf. Attardo's Script Opposition), leading to sixteen different

techniques. When the semiotic type of humour changes, the language-picture relation always changes as well, except when humour is removed. When humour is added in the target text where there was none in the source text, the humour technique always changes as well.

	Source text: Semiotic type	Target text: Semiotic type	Humour technique	Language - picture relation
A1	Mono-modal	Mono-modal	Similar	Similar
A2			Similar	Changed
A3			Changed	Similar
A4			Changed	Changed
B1	Mono-modal	Multimodal	Similar	Changed
B2			Changed	Changed
C	Mono-modal	No humour	-	-
D	No humour	Mono-modal	Changed	Changed
E1	Multimodal	Multimodal	Similar	Similar
E2			Similar	Changed
E3			Changed	Similar
E4			Changed	Changed
F1	Multimodal	Mono-modal	Similar	Changed
F2			Changed	Changed
G	Multimodal	No humour	-	-
H	No humour	Multimodal	Changed	Changed

The above table was adapted from Kaindl (2004: 175). As Attardo's model allows for a more comprehensive analysis of mono-modal verbal jokes, however, the A, C and D shifts are irrelevant for this corpus. Kaindl's methodology is most useful when analysing the translation of source text multimodal jokes. Furthermore, Kaindl distinguishes five categories of play on words and/or signs (ibid.: 176): aside from the strictly mono-modal 'plays on words consisting basically of linguistic signs' (i.e. puns) and the 'plays on signs consisting only of non-verbal elements', there are three different types of multimodal humour in comic books: 'plays on words reinforced by non-verbal signs'. These include gestures accentuating a pun (ibid.: 177-178), 'non-verbal plays on signs reinforced by verbal signs', such as character pointing out the incongruity between two visual signs, and 'plays on signs depending on a multimodal combination', such as an incongruity between a verbal and a visual message (ibid: 178-179). In distinguishing three types of multimodal humour and ten different techniques for translating it, Kaindl's conclusions provide an opportunity for this dissertation to look into not only the verbal aspect of the humour present in the *Scott Pilgrim* and *Seconds* sub-corpora, but the visual aspects as well.

4. Building the Corpus

In order to translate the first 148 pages of *Seconds*, all texts from the comic, including paratext, captions and sound effects were copied manually into a Microsoft Word document, using a table for an easy side-by-side comparison of source and target text. Each row of the table corresponds with a single panel of the comic, with page number and panel number being listed in the first and second columns respectively. The third column contains the source text, whereas the fourth contains the translation. Pages or panels containing no text have not been included. Furthermore, panels were counted from top to bottom, from left to right. Panels without borders or text outside of panels were included in the table following the same logic. For instance, page 43 contains a sound effect, 'shff' to the left of the first 'proper' panel; therefore this sound effect is marked as panel 1, and the first 'proper' panel as panel 2.

The time, money and resources required to replace all verbal messages in text bubbles, inscriptions and onomatopoeia in the visual message with their translated equivalents would be disproportionate compared to the overall value. Therefore, the translation of *Seconds* exists exclusively as text, yet certain markers were used to distinguish paratext, sound effects and onomatopoeia from the dialogue. Sound effects were marked in block capital letters and placed between angular brackets, e.g. '<KSHH KSHH KSHH>' (p. 53), whereas paratext was placed between square brackets, e.g. '[Doug's Contracting Services]', as can be read on the contractor's shirt on page 111, panel 2. Narration is unmarked, whereas dialogue is always preceded by the name of the character speaking, with each paragraph representing a single speech bubble. Because the translation only exists in this strictly textual form, no analysis of the changes in typography or edits to the artwork made to accommodate a translated multimodal joke can be made for the translation of *Seconds*. However, the source text's multimodal nature has been taken into account during the translation process, despite the target text existing exclusively as text.

Because no official Dutch translation of *Seconds* exists, the closest point of comparison would be the official translation of O'Malley's earlier work, the *Scott Pilgrim* series. For the analysis of the existing translations of volumes 1 and 2 of this series, the same working methods and table layout were used, with the source text copied from the 2004-2005 original editions and the target text from the 2010-2011 Dutch translations by Hans Enters. This corpus was collected in December of 2014, and comprises the first 105 pages of the first volume, *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*, as well as select lines from the rest of the first and the entirety of the second volume, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World,* which could be considered 'linguistically demanding' as per Kaindl's (1999: 264) definition. Kaindl distinguishes as belonging to this category puns, metaphors or names. Furthermore, specific realia referring to the North American context of the original source text have been included (e.g. 'seventh grade' on panel 3, page 144 of volume 1) as well as translations containing particular shifts in meaning, e.g. 'She has too much A.D.D., it's not even funny' (vol. 1, p. 114, panel 4) being translated as '[Ze] heeft zo veel A.D.H.D. dat het niet leuk meer is.' Both corpora have been attached to this dissertation in digital format.

5. *Scott Pilgrim* vs. *Seconds*: A Comparative Analysis

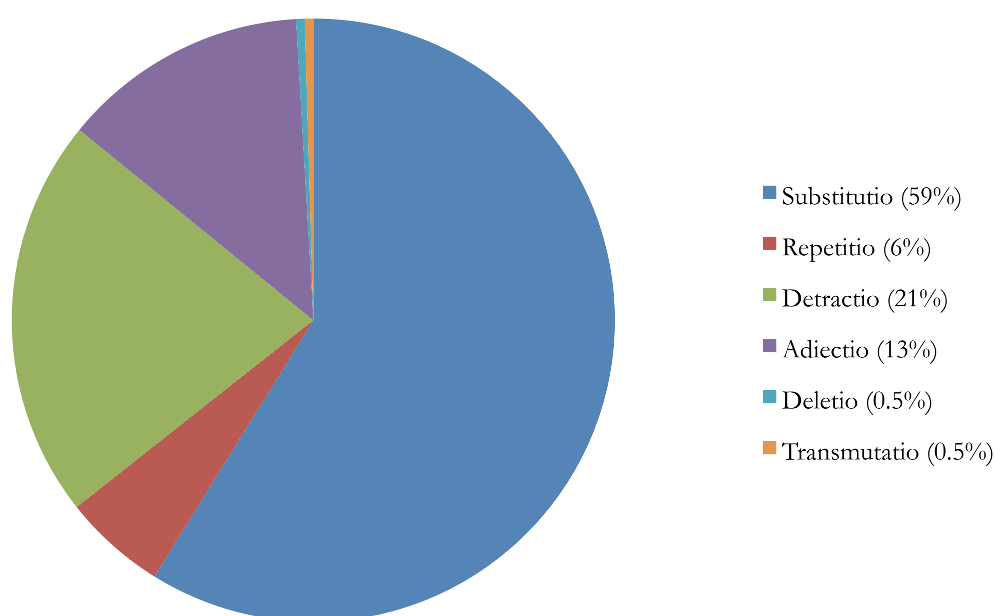
The approach used in the analysis is a mixed quantitative/qualitative one and accompanies a translation into Dutch of the first 148 pages of *Seconds*. This translation has been made specifically for this research and covers the first four chapters of the story. Because the comic is relatively new, however, no official Dutch translation exists at the time of writing. For that reason, this comparative analysis will instead set the translation of *Seconds* side by side with the existing official translation of the first two volumes of *Scott Pilgrim*, a previous work of the same author, translated by Hans Enters.

In order to do so, a quantitative analysis of the two source text sub-corpora will first be conducted in §5.1, using Kaindl's framework for comic book translation, highlighting the major discrepancies between the two translations as an overall perspective. Next, the comparative analysis will delve deeper into the strategies adopted for three particular aspects of comic book translation in the corpus. §5.2 will take a look at how idiomatic verbal messages are translated in both target texts. §5.3 concerns the translation of verbal and visual humour, and applies Attardo's (2002) model based on the general theory of humour, Pelsmaekers and Van Besien's (2002) reflections on the translation of irony and Kaindl's (2004) framework for the translation of multimodal humour in comic books to the corpus. Lastly, §5.4 will take a look at the translations of onomatopoeia and sound effects, based on Garcés' (2014) translation strategies, with particular focus on O'Malley's use of the 'un-sound effect', as defined by Kokko (2013). The findings from the qualitative analysis will then be contrasted with the quantitative data discovered in §5.1.

5.1 Quantitative Corpus Research

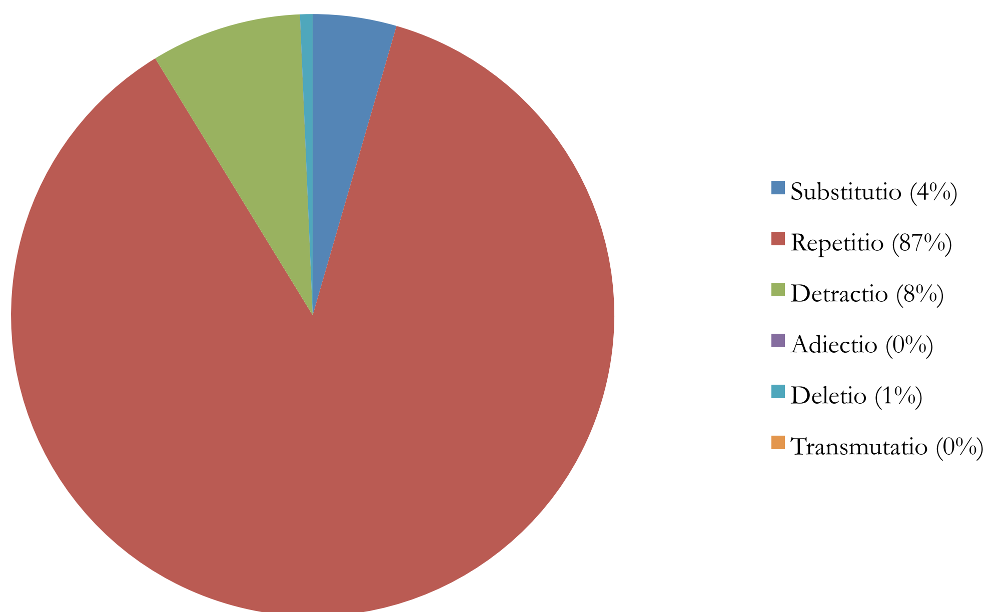
In order to provide an overall quantitative perspective for further comparative analysis, three shift analyses have been carried out: one categorizing the shifts between verbal messages within the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, one categorizing shifts between visual messages in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, and one categorizing verbal message shifts in the *Seconds* sub-corpus. Because of the *Seconds* translation's mono-modal nature, it could not be subjected to a visual message shift analysis. The verbal message shift analysis comprises all shifts that are not related to raw text, including changes to the artwork, changes in typesetting and font or onomatopoeia. Categorizing these changes is difficult, because, as Kaindl (1999) does not accommodate for the wide spectrum between the strictly verbal and the strictly visual that comic book messages may inhabit, these elements turn out to be more subject to change than the strictly visual ones. For this reason, this analysis will consider the verbal aspects of typography and onomatopoeia as verbal messages, but the visual aspects as visual messages. Furthermore, Kaindl's model offers relatively little definition of his shifts, which may lead to significant discrepancies between analyses using his methodology. For the purposes of the analysis Kaindl's shifts will be considered as literally and micro-textually as possible, in particular by marking even shifts where relatively insubstantial address forms or hedges have been removed or added upon translation as *detractio* or *adiectio* respectively. Kaindl himself offers no indication of how 'strict' an analysis' definition of said terms need to be, seemingly leaving this task up to the analyser's instincts.

The *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus consists of 651 verbal messages. Every individual caption and speech bubble, as well as each sound effect and sign counts as a verbal message. Of these verbal messages, 383 (59%) have been subjected to ***substitutio***. 36 utterances (5%) have been 'taken over in their identical form' (ibid: 275). These ***repetitio*** are often simply speech bubbles containing only direct address forms, as the names of the characters have not been localized. Contrarily, 3 verbal messages from the source text (0.5%) – all sound effects – have been removed entirely in the target text, while 140 verbal messages (21%) have had certain words, nuances or stylistic characteristics such as rhyme or alliteration removed from translation. Kaindl (ibid: 277) dubs these shifts ***deletio*** and ***detractio*** respectively. Furthermore, the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus contains 86 instances (13%) of verbal message *adiectio*. Finally, 3 verbal messages (0.5%) have been rearranged in the target text, leading to a ***transmutatio***.



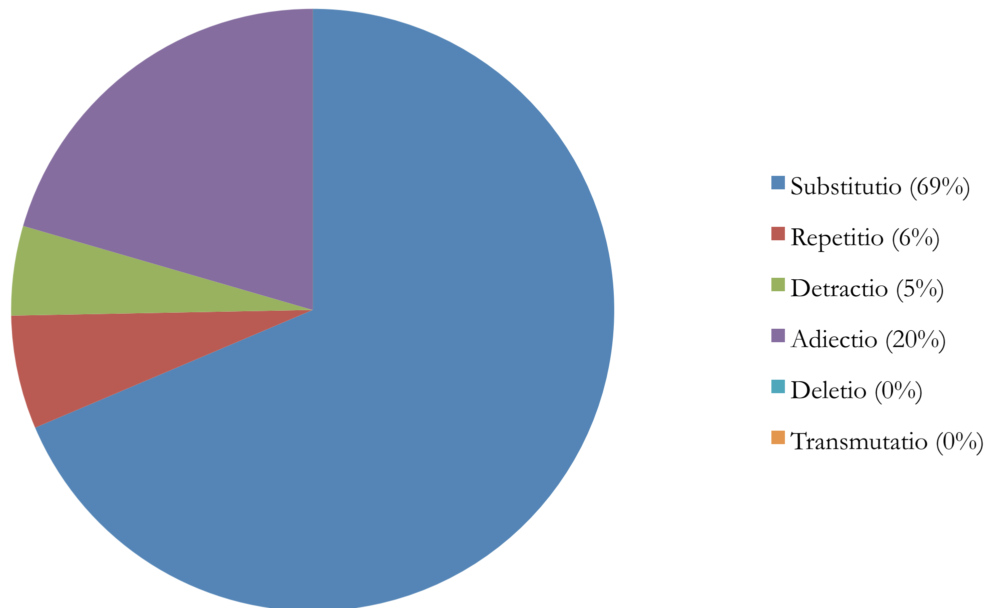
Regarding the above pie chart, it can be concluded that Hans Enters' translation of *Scott Pilgrim* is relatively 'faithful' to the original, as evidenced by 59% of the translation accounting for *substitutio* shifts. Additionally, there is a noticeable difference between the amounts of *detractio* and *adiectio*, which ostensibly means that the target text 'loses' more content than it gains. The items most commonly removed from the target text are exclamations such as 'huh' or 'oh' (e.g. vol. 1, p. 54, panel 5), hedges such as 'maybe' and intensifiers such as 'really' (e.g. vol 1, p. 86, panel 4). Furthermore, repetitions are often left out of the target text in order to save space. As repetitions are a trademark of Bryan Lee O'Malley's writing style, this aspect will be further elaborated on in §5.2.1. Most *adiectio* shifts in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus add words to the target text in order to fully replace certain words in the source text, rather than to supplement the source text. Changes in the voice (e.g. vol. 1, p. 30, panel 6), tense (e.g. vol. 1, p. 97, panel 4) and structure (e.g. vol. 1, p. 111, panel 2) of verb phrases are prominent, as well as localizations or neutralizations of cultural references. Whenever words are added, however, these words are usually hedges such as 'eigenlijk' (e.g. vol. 1, p. 89, panel 1) or intensifiers such as 'echt' (e.g. vol. 1, p. 24, panel 1).

Visual messages are counted as individual panels, of which the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus contains 446. The large majority of these panels, 387 or 87%, have been directly taken over in their identical form, with only the text changed, but the same font being used, making *repetitio* the most prominent shift in the visual translation. While Kaindl (1999: 276) himself points out that strictly speaking, visual *repetitio* is 'rather rare', and while the font used for dialogue texts in the target text might not be the exact same font used in the source text, there is no noticeable difference between these visual messages in the corpus. Therefore, these shifts are labelled as *repetitio* for convenience's sake. *Detractio* is the second most common visual message shift in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus. Most instances of the 36 visual *detractio* shifts (8%) involve unconventional fonts in the source text being replaced by regular fonts (e.g. vol. 1, p. 75, panel 4), or stresses on certain words inside speech bubbles being removed (e.g. vol. 1, p. 31, panel 2). On some occasions, however, onomatopoeia or unconventional lettering has been replaced by a more or less equivalently distinct font (e.g. vol. 1, page 17, panels 3-4). 20 panels (4%) are subject to such a visual *substitutio*. The same three instances of verbal *deletio* mentioned in the above paragraph (vol. 2, page 19, panels 3-5 and p. 143, panel 3) per definition also become visual *deletio* (1%), as next to their meaning, their typesetting has been deleted as well.



As previously mentioned, the *Seconds* sub-corpus consists of verbal messages only, including dialogue texts, signs, captions, titles and onomatopoeia. The same criteria adopted for the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus apply, which yielded a total of 1083 verbal messages in the sub-corpus. In this case, the most commonly featured of Kaindl's shifts is *substitutio*. 743, or 69% of the utterances have been replaced by more or less equivalent material, with every word or collocation in the source text having an equivalent in the target text. Compared to the 59% of the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, this makes the *Seconds* translation arguably a more 'faithful' translation. In further contrast with the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, the *Seconds* sub-corpus contains more *adiectio* (222 verbal messages or 20%) than *detractio* (52 verbal messages or 5%). Most *adiectio* shifts in this sub-corpus consist of common verbs being replaced by idiomatic phrases (e.g. p. 17, panel 1),

clarifications (e.g. p. 32, panel 4; p. 83, panel 4) hedges or intensifiers being added (e.g. p. 110, panel 4), joke translations (e.g. p. 63, panels 1-2) and localizations (e.g. p. 74, panel 1). Finally, as there are no instances of *deletio* or *transmutatio*, the remaining 66 verbal messages (6%) are subject to *repetitio*. Similar to the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, these messages are usually little more than bare address forms, as names have not been translated in this sub-corpus either. The absence of the former two shifts can be explained by the translation's strictly mono-modal nature, as *deletio* and *transmutatio* become more likely when the financial and aesthetic constraints of comic book translation play a role.



At first glance, the most noticeable difference between the two sub-corpora seems to be that while the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus features more *detractio* than *adiectio*, the *Seconds* sub-corpus is quite the opposite. Consequently, it appears to be the case that the *Seconds* sub-corpus is both more faithful, by virtue of its high ratio of *substitutio* and low ratio of *detractio* and *deletio*, and more 'free', because of its high degree of *adiectio*. However, the idea that a *substitutio* translation is *de facto* more 'faithful' than a *detractio* or *adiectio* translation is not always correct. Consider the following example:

Source:	So she'd been saving every penny. Living in the same crummy apartment, driving the same crummy car, biding her time. And she'd done it. At Lucknow, Katie would be an equal partner. Just the thought of it energized her.
Target:	Dus spaarde ze het brood uit haar mond. Bleef ze wonen in hetzelfde aftandse appartementje, rijden met hetzelfde aftandse autootje, en wachtte haar tijd af. En het was haar gelukt. Ze zou medevennoot zijn van het nieuwe restaurant. De gedachte eraan alleen al gaf haar energie.

(*Seconds*, p. 30, panel 4 – p.31, panel 1)

The above excerpt from the *Seconds* sub-corpus is an example of a *substitutio* shift. Every element present in the source text has been replaced by a suitable equivalent: the idiom 'saving every penny' has been replaced by a Dutch idiom with the same meaning, the reference to 'Lucknow' (the location of Katie's new restaurant) has been replaced by 'het nieuwe restaurant', and all adverbs and nuances have been carried over into translation. Nevertheless, due to its idiomatic nature and given the former two shifts, this translation would still be considered a 'free' translation. Now consider the following example from the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus:

Source: Scott: 'This whole thing is an unmitigated disaster!'
Ramona: 'Oh, come on. I think "act of God" is a decent excuse for a lousy date.'
Scott: 'So this was a date, eh?'
Ramona: 'Did I say date? Slip of the tongue.'

Target: Scott: 'Dat was een grandioze mislukking!'
Ramona: 'Kom op. 'Natuurramp' is een aardig excuus voor een mislukt afspraakje.'
Scott: 'Dus dit was een afspraakje?'
Ramona: 'Zei ik dat? Ik versprak me.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 96, panels 2-5)

The above example could be considered a fairly literal translation, as it follows the word order of the source text, up to the line 'dus dit was een afspraakje', which arguably sounds rather stilted in Dutch. Nevertheless, the second and third lines are examples of *detractio* in translation: In Ramona's line, the address form 'Oh', as well as the hedge 'I think' have been removed. In Scott's response, the 'eh' exclamation is gone. As a result, these two examples show that Kaindl's notion of *substitutio* does not automatically indicate faithfulness, nor that his notions of *adiectio* and *detractio* constitute a higher degree of deviation from the source text. In order to explore the implications of these quantitative research findings properly, further in-depth qualitative analysis is required.

5.2 Translating Verbal Messages

Verbal messages are one pole of the cline of modes of expression a comic book message may comprise, with strictly visual messages serving as the opposite pole and sound effects or typography being located in between. Similarly to the way visual messages comprise not only the illustrations, but also the layout, colouring or lettering of the comic book, verbal messages consist of more than just dialogue. As stated in §2.1.2.2, the verbal messages of a comic book can be divided into four categories: dialogue texts or balloons, captions or narration, titles and linguistic paratext or inscriptions, each of which serve as a *locus* for translation. While 'the aim of the translator should be to translate all verbal messages', Celotti (2014: 38-39) points out that that is often not the case in practice. In particular, while the former three categories are usually subject to general translation strategies, the category of linguistic paratext presents 'a high degree of variability' regarding whether the verbal message will be translated or not (ibid.: 39).

Therefore, this subsection will attempt to define the specific stylistic and idiomatic language use of the author, reflected in both dialogue texts and captions, before delving deeper into how this style has been translated into Dutch. To do so, Kaindl's (1999) framework for comic book translation was used with particular focus on the regional differences between translations and the subsequent varying interpretations of what constitutes 'natural dialogue'. Next, the translation of linguistic paratext and typography will be analysed, using the strategies coined by Celotti (ibid.). Because the translation of *Seconds* accompanying this dissertation exists only in a strictly mono-modal, textual format – in which the translation of linguistic paratext is uninhibited by the practical and financial concerns which are instrumental in deciding which translation strategy to use – this particular analysis will only concern the *Scott Pilgrim* translation. Lastly, a collation will be made of the strategies adopted by both translations for the localization of realia and culture-specific language use in both comics, as well as their reliance on cultural references, using Kaindl's (1999) framework for the study of comics under translation.

5.2.1 Language Use

By citing the frequent breaking of the proverbial fourth wall by having the protagonist Katie bicker with the external, omniscient narrator and by pointing to frequent inter-textual references to popular culture as an example of the latter, reviewers generally describe O'Malley's writing in *Seconds* as 'witty', 'laid-back' and 'post-modern' (Travis, 2014; Wolk, 2014; Schedeen, 2014). Both in *Seconds* and in the *Scott Pilgrim* series, O'Malley adopts a strongly idiomatic, modern and conversational writing style, which is frequently compared to the language use in the cult 1990s television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Dickinson, 2010; Jackson, 2010), often affectionately referred to as 'Slayer slang' and commonly attributed to the show's creator, Joss Whedon. A number of the characteristics of this ideolect, as distinguished by Kirchner (2006), also appear in Bryan Lee O'Malley's writing:

- **Use of jargon**: The *Scott Pilgrim* books in particular adopt various video game-related terms in their dialogue, e.g. 'He's going for the air juggle!' (vol. 1, p. 140), 'Why didn't I pick that skateboard proficiency back in fifth grade?!' (vol. 2, p. 123);
- **Affixation and compounding**: prominent in both books, e.g. 'sucky' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 72 and *Seconds*, p. 177), 'reddish' (*Seconds*, p. 88), 'queenology' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 165). Compounding is used to create unusual collocations, e.g. 'maybe-homeless' (*Seconds*, p. 88), 'ego-stroking' (*Seconds*, p. 101), 'uneaten' (*Seconds*, p. 133);
- **Syntactic changes**: e.g. 'Didn't you want to say hi to the guy before I exploded him?' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 122). The intransitive 'explode' becomes a transitive verb;
- **References to popular culture**: see §5.2.4.

Other characteristics of Bryan Lee O'Malley's language use include:

- **Excessive hedging**, in particular the use of 'like' as a discourse particle: e.g. **'**Isn't that, like, racist or something?' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 12) or the accumulation of non-committal or ambiguous adverbs and clauses, e.g. 'It was probably like some kind of justification for the endless amounts of housework the women had to do, right?' (*Seconds*, p. 67);

- **Asyndeton of three elements**, only used in *Seconds*, e.g. 'he was young, talented, hard-working' (*Seconds*, p. 32, panel 3), 'she remembered the dream, the girl, the dresser' (*Seconds*, p. 43, panels 4-5)
- **Intensification** using peculiar adverbs: e.g. 'You're probably mega bummed right now' (*Seconds*, p. 109), 'Lis is being super annoying and I need your help' (*Seconds*, p. 134);
- **Substituting words with placeholders**: e.g. 'It kinda became a thing' (*Seconds*, p. 97), 'I know there's a thingy up here somewhere' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 93);
- **Ellipses**: e.g. 'I know. Sorry. Brain bad.' (*Seconds*, p. 73), 'My secret lair is one of those 'no girls allowed' deals, actually' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 38);
- **Semantic change** in the use of *to be* for describing physical characteristics, e.g. 'But right now, the space was all insulation and exposed pipes.' (*Seconds*, p. 17), 'The girl was all gangly limbs, ghostly white hair, too many layers' (*Seconds*, p. 83), or as *verbum declarandum*, e.g. 'This guy at work was like 'Steve, do you know anyone in a band?'' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 76);
- **Repetition** and reprise or rephrasing of pervious statements, often also used as a source of wordplay, e.g. 'Ew. Get rid of it. You are getting rid of it, right?' (*Seconds*, p. 111), 'Scott, if your life had a face, I would punch it. I would punch your life in the face.' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 4, p. 67), 'It's over Tamara, seriously! He's an idiot and a loser and... and he's a loser and he's an idiot!' (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 4, p. 43);
- The deliberate **juxtaposition of formal and informal language**: e.g. 'She made a conscious decision not to freak out' (*Seconds*, p. 7);
- Profiling characters or settings using captions for **direct characterization**: Whenever a character is introduced or reintroduced, they will usually be accompanied by a caption stating their name, age and another characteristic, such as their occupation, status or 'rating'. This is especially prominent in *Scott Pilgrim*, but also shows up in *Seconds*.

Seconds is further characterized by its prolific use of an external narrator, leading to a significantly higher number of captions compared to the *Scott Pilgrim* series. The latter, aside from the above mentioned brief 'profiles', virtually only uses captions for indications of space and time, e.g. 'The bus, a few nights ago' (vol. 1, p. 11, panel 7) or 'The next morning, or technically afternoon' (vol. 1, p. 67, panel 1). In spite of the story being related in third person, the narrative voice in *Seconds* is noticeably subjective, casting light on the events from Katie's perspective and frequently adopting loaded speech to convey her impressions, e.g. '[Katie] quickly realized that Hazel was probably universally hated for the following reasons (…)' (p. 61, panel 2). While the narrator knows Katie's innermost thoughts, they can only speculate about other characters' feelings, e.g. 'Hazel probably thought [Katie] was crazy' (p. 93, panel 2).

As evidenced by Katie's frequent bickering with the narrator (Schedeen, 2014), captions serve a different function as well, as Katie's vocalized consciousness. Because Katie can 'hear' everything the narrator 'says', the narrator comes to serve as a two-way relay between the main character and the reader. They both convey Katie's thoughts to the reader, and, by proxy, relay the audience's presumed expectations back to Katie, e.g. by stating that her fling with Andrew must feel 'wrong' (p. 35, panel 1) or warning her that 'toying with the universe' is 'a little unsettling' (p. 120, panel 10). For these reasons, finding a suitable translation for the captions and narration in *Seconds* will be an essential part of translating it.

Furthermore, character idiolect needs to be accounted for when translating. Each character has peculiar speech habits, which need to be substituted by an equivalent way of speech in the target language. Lis speaks in extremely brief, compact sentences, whereas Hazel's speech is peppered with hedges, fillers ('like', 'you know', 'I mean') and a disproportionate number of questions, reflecting her insecure personality. The excessive filler and qualifying used by a minor character, Yana, brings to mind the 'Valspeak' sociolect. Valspeak originates from the language use of teenage girls of the San Fernando Valley in Southern California and is usually associated with a stereotypically air-headed personality (Ouellette, 2013). It became very popular throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with its distinct increase in pitch at the end of a sentence, also referred to as 'uptalk', and its use of 'like' and 'totally' as fillers which have since become English slang mainstays. Bryan Lee O'Malley's dialogue already incorporates many of these characteristics naturally, so Yana's use of Valspeak is strongly exaggerated, and italicization is used in her speech bubbles to enunciate the typical 'uptalk' intonation, e.g. 'She gets *so* embarrassed by like any harmless comment. It's like come *on*, Hazel, I'm a super-nice person' (p. 63, panel 3).

A final example of the distinct idiolects being used in *Seconds* can be found in the language used by Katie's colleague Andrew. His speech contains certain characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), as outlined by Labov (1972), including the omission of copular verbs (Pullum, 1997), e.g. 'what up' (p. 58, panel 2), 'this what you been up to in the prep kitchen all day?' (p. 75, panel 3). Furthermore, though not formally typical of AAVE, Andrew's use of 'yo' to address people and of shortened and condensed forms ('oughta', 'sup', 'cause'), also serve as an indicator of his 'black' accent. Nevertheless, certain distinct characteristics of AAVE are lacking in Andrew's idiolect, such as the use of 'ain't' for negation or the double negative (Labov, 1972). As such, caution must be exercised as not to exaggerate Andrew's idiolect in translation.

A closer quantitative analysis of the translation shifts occurring between characteristics of O'Malley's style in the source and the target text of the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus reveals that, while the typical excessive hedging and intensification are often toned down, most other characteristics remain intact in translation.

	Retained (~*substitutio*)	Removed (~*detractio*)	Replaced (~*adiectio*)	**TOTAL**
Use of jargon	1	0	1	**2**
Affixation/compounding	3	8	1	**12**
Syntactic change	0	0	1	**1**
Pop culture reference	5	1	1	**7**
Substitution	4	1	0	**5**
Ellipsis	1	2	1	**4**
Semantic change	0	2	0	**2**
Repetition	7	3	3	**13**
Juxtaposition	1	3	1	**5**
Direct characterization	2	0	1	**3**
Asyndeton	0	0	0	**0**
TOTAL	**24**	**20**	**10**	**54**

Cultural references, substitutions with placeholders and repetitions are usually subject to *substitutio* shifts. On the other hand, out of the five deliberate juxtapositions of formal and informal register speech found in the sub-corpus, only one is subject to a *substitutio*, while the other four lose some of the linguistic irony present in the source text. Furthermore, the most common characteristics of O'Malley's writing found in the sub-corpus, affixation and repetition, are lost in translation on significant occasions. Eight of the twelve affixations in the sub-corpus – almost all instances of the word 'thingy' or 'diminutive onomatopoeia' (e.g. 'tweety tweet' (vol. 1, p.106, panel 1), 'skatey skate skate' (vol. 2, p. 70, panel 3)) – lose the affixation in translation. Additionally, six of the thirteen repetitions have been either deleted from their respective lines (*detractio*) or replaced by a synonym that does not literally repeat the preceding line (*adiectio*).

The *Seconds* sub-corpus shows a significant decrease in affixations (5 as opposed to 12), pop culture references (2 as opposed to 7) and uses of video game jargon (none whatsoever) compared to the *Scott Pilgrim* one; a sign of its more mature target audience. On the other hand, more conventional stylistic elements become more common: There is a significantly larger number of ellipses (10) and repetitions (38) in *Seconds*, and a stylistic element not present in *Scott Pilgrim*, the asyndeton, becomes common, occurring 12 times throughout the sub-corpus. Along with this asyndeton, the increase in repetitions results in a very fragmented writing style, which is possibly intended to reflect the book's theme of repeating and redoing past mistakes.

	Retained (~*substitutio*)	Removed (~*detractio*)	Replaced (~*adiectio*)	**TOTAL**
Use of jargon	0	0	0	**0**
Affixation/compounding	3	1	1	**5**
Syntactic change	0	0	0	**0**
Pop culture reference	2	0	0	**2**
Substitution	1	0	8	**9**
Ellipsis	7	0	3	**10**
Semantic change	0	1	1	**2**
Repetition	21	7	10	**38**
Juxtaposition	2	1	0	**3**
Direct characterization	7	0	0	**7**
Asyndeton	6	0	6	**12**
TOTAL	**49**	**10**	**29**	**88**

These research findings reveal that, while most of the repetitions and half of the asyndeta have been retained, retaining the substitutions has been difficult. This is because most instances of words of phrases being replaced by 'thing' would sound unconvincing if translated literally into Dutch, e.g. 'How could things have gone so wrong?' (p. 42, panels 1-4), 'It kinda became a thing' (p. 97, panel 9). When examining the relative number of characteristics of O'Malley's writing that are retained, removed or replaced, the results roughly correspond to the findings in §5.1: The *Seconds* translation retains relatively more of the source text compared to the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, and favours replacing elements over removing, whereas the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus favours the opposite. Still, with only 55% of style elements replicated (49 out of 88), expressing an author's distinct style in another language seems to be harder than it might look.

5.2.2 Challenges of Translation

Translating the verbal messages of *Seconds* poses a bigger challenge than the relatively simple, vernacular language used in the comic book might suggest. Further complications arise from the split in the target language between the Dutch spoken in the Netherlands – usually referred to as *Noord-Nederlands* ('northern Dutch') – and the Dutch spoken in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium – usually referred to as 'Flemish' or *Zuid-Nederlands* ('southern Dutch'; De Laet, 2012). This split results in discussions about which one of the two language varieties sounds the most 'natural' or 'vernacular' – an important point to consider when translating Bryan Lee O'Malley's conversational style. Language use that Flemish readers interpret as being 'too northern' may alienate this section of the audience (Michiels, 2012), as many speakers of Flemish consider the northern variant of their language as sounding unpleasant (Koning, 2013). On the other hand, many speakers of northern Dutch consider theirs to be the sole correct variant – as northern Dutch does indeed constitute the norm for standard Dutch (Hanssen, 2011; KU Leuven, 2014). Consequently, the Flemish variant is often regarded as a mere 'cute' dialect (Belder, 2013; Koning, 2013).

Hofstede (2004) distinguishes a large cultural difference between the two countries, despite their proximity, shared history and language. Nevertheless, texts translated into Dutch very frequently adopt northern Dutch vocabulary and norms (Jacobs, 2011), both due to the above-mentioned perception – stating that the northern variety is superior to the southern one – and to the fact that the vast majority of Dutch literary translators hail from The Netherlands (Humbeeck & Smink, 2008). The translation of *Scott Pilgrim* also contains vocabulary and phrases typical of northern Dutch, e.g. 'verkering hebben' (to date), 'sarren' (to tease), 'jij bent ruk' (you suck), 'zoenen' (to kiss), 'gozer' (dude), or references to culture-specific terms from the Netherlands, e.g. 'groep 8' (seventh grade) or 'brugklas' (freshman year). On the other hand, the translation of *Seconds* made in function of this thesis contains some vocabulary and phrases typical of Flanders, e.g. 'gek zijn van' (to be into), 'gast' (dude) or 'frietjes' (fries). These were evaluated in co-operation with the supervisor of this dissertation in an attempt to create a neutral, but modern target language that sounds both natural and accessible to both Belgian and Dutch readers.

In brief, both §5.2.1 and the abovementioned arguments indicate that translating the verbal messages in O'Malley's repertoire into Dutch may prove more challenging than the relative accessibility of his writing might suggest. The following examples indicate how certain challenging verbal messages have been dealt with translating *Seconds* into Dutch and compare these translation strategies to the ones used in the *Scott Pilgrim* translation wherever relevant.

5.2.2.1 Going Back for Seconds

Titles are the first of the four categories of verbal messages in comic books distinguished by Celotti (2014), and only five verbal messages in the *Seconds* sub-corpus qualify as such: the title of the book itself, and four chapter titles. Of these, only the title of the graphic novel itself warrants further analysis. 'Seconds' is both the name of the restaurant in the story – most likely derived from the expression for a second helping of a meal – and a reference to the element of time, which plays a pivotal role in the story. Katie gets 'a second chance' to erase the mistakes she has

made. A Dutch expression equivalent to 'going back for seconds' would likely involve a word like 'bijnemen' or 'bijscheppen' (to take another serving) plus an indication of repetition like 'opnieuw' (again), 'nog 'n keer' (once more) or 'nogmaals' (idem). Therefore, no Dutch word exists which would be able to convey both of the implications the word 'seconds' has in English, requiring a different solution to be found.

Nog 'n keer, for instance, could be a possible translation for the title, because it also refers to the story's theme of getting to 'do over' pivotal moments in one's life. However, the name of the restaurant in the story must be related to the title, and as the comic frequently refers to the restaurant by name, using a phrase as its name would often lead to stilted sentences. A possible solution would be to simply keep the name of the restaurant in English. That would pose no problem of alienation, as the explicitly North American setting evident by the artwork would make it difficult to adapt the book's setting anyway. It would, however, erase the ties between the name of the restaurant and the theme of the story. Because of this, *Nogmaals* (again) is a more suitable translation. It is a single word, rather than a phrase, and in addition, it includes the Dutch word for 'meal', 'maal'. This would create a pun to compensate for the loss of the double meaning of 'seconds'. Additionally, a synonym of 'nogmaals', 'andermaal', though seemingly less common, also incorporates a more elaborate pun: 'andermaal' could be interpreted as 'het andere maal' ('the other meal'), an idiomatic expression that could refer to the restaurant's reputedly daring or innovative menu. Hence, the best translation for the title seems to be *Andermaal*. The name of the restaurant will consequently be translated as 'Het Andermaal' – the article added in line with Dutch restaurant naming conventions.

In comparison, the titles of the *Scott Pilgrim* series contain no such wordplay, and pose little challenge when it comes to translation. In all cases, the translator elected to remain faithful to the original. As such, the title of the first volume, *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*, becomes *Scott Pilgrims geweldige leventje*. The translation of the second volume's title, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*, is made more explicit and becomes *Scott Pilgrim tegen de rest van de wereld,* likely because the reference to the naming conventions for legal cases in common law systems would be lost on most target culture readers. Furthermore, chapter titles have also been translated relatively faithfully to the source text, posing little particular challenge. Consequently, the title translation strategies adopted in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus warrant little analysis.

5.2.2.2 Birch Ash Vinaigrette

Being set primarily in a restaurant, *Seconds* contains a significant amount of kitchen and cooking terminology. Panel 6 on page 22 provides a look at the restaurant's menu (image 1, notice also the 'bleeding' mentioned in §2.1.2.2), yet poses a number of challenges for translation. First of all, the comic states that 'the food was Katie's' (p. 22, panel 6). The most obvious option would be to simply literally translate 'the food' as 'het eten' and use a clause structure change to change 'Katie' from the genitive into the subject of the phrase, e.g. 'Katie had het eten gemaakt', because a more literal translation, 'het eten was van Katie', would lead a Dutch-speaking reader to believe that the food *belongs* to her. Later on in the book, however, it is mentioned that Katie doesn't actually work at Seconds anymore, so she isn't literally *making* the food. The food is 'hers' because she conceived of the recipes. Hence, using an abstraction change and translating 'food'

as 'menu' would be a better fit. As such, 'And the food was Katie's' becomes 'En Katie had het menu samengesteld', using a specific collocation to make the translation more idiomatic.

Image 1 © 2014 by Bryan Lee O'Malley

Secondly, there is the problem of the 'birch ash vinaigrette' mentioned on the menu itself. While most of the jargon is relatively transparent, the 'birch ash vinaigrette' could refer to birch ash, an obscure health product, or to 'ash vinaigrette', a vinaigrette containing charred herbs, vegetables or onions as a bitter component (Canora, 2013). Because this type of vinaigrette is not known in Dutch-speaking territories, an explanation (*adiectio*) might be in order. While the most obvious edible part of the birch tree to use in a vinaigrette would arguably be the sap, the fact that this is an 'ash vinaigrette' implies that the parts of the birch are solid, not liquid. Further research indicates that the white bark of the birch tree is edible as well (Hopkins, 2004: 244). Consequently, 'birch ash vinaigrette' would best be translated as 'vinaigrette van berkenbast'.

The final problem this page poses is Katie's title of 'executive chef'. It is a synonym for *chef de cuisine*, a French term that is also used in Dutch (De Telegraaf, 2012). The executive chef is responsible for inventing recipes and taking care of staffing; they are the 'eyes, face and palate' of the restaurant (Martin & Leventhal, 2009), but do not take care of cooking. In some restaurants, this term is used for the owner of the restaurant. Katie, however, is not the owner of Seconds – another character, Ray, is – nor does she work at the restaurant. She used to be the chef, and conceived of the menu, but does not have the managerial duties of an 'executive chef'. Furthermore, Andrew is only referred to as a 'chef'. This term can be used to any professional cook. He is mentioned to be Katie's successor, however, so it is likely he is the one in charge of

the kitchen right now. Therefore in Dutch, Katie would be addressed as *chef de cuisine* because she conceived of the menu. The *chef de cuisine* is the 'star' of restaurant, yet as Martin and Leventhal (2009) point out, does not necessarily need to be the owner. For Andrew, on the other hand, the general term 'chef-kok' can be used without a problem.

5.2.2.3 A Second Chance Awaits

The meaning of a verbal message consists not only in its referential content, but in its tone and register as well. While the dialogue in *Seconds* generally adopts an informal, conversational register, there is one noticeable instance of the book using a very formal register. On page 46 (Image 2), Katie finds a little box containing a mushroom, a notebook and a card containing instructions.

Image 2 © 2014 by Bryan Lee O'Malley

The instructions are written in a noticeably more formal register than the rest of the comic book, using technical words and phrases such as 'ingest' or 'anew'. On the next page, the narration states that the notebook accompanying the instructions card 'felt old, like something from an earlier era', further indicating that the register used on the instructions is intended to feel antiquated. In Dutch, the most common indicator of formal register is the use of 'u' as a pronoun. Because the imperative mood in Dutch, like in English, uses no pronouns, only the possessive pronoun in 'write your mistake' can be translated using the formal pronoun. By subjecting the line 'a second chance awaits' to a clause structure change, however, making 'a second chance' object of a transitive verb rather than subject of an intransitive one, the formal pronoun can be used once more, as in 'U krijgt een tweede kans' ('You get a second chance').

This translation strategy increases the formality of the target text, while compensating for the lack of suitably formal equivalents for 'ingest' and 'wake anew'. These two verbs have been translated using more general, neutral equivalents, i.e. 'eet' (eat) and 'ontwaak' (wake up), leading to an interpersonal change. In order to translate the phrase 'events must occur on these premises', the fossilized idiom 'ter plekke' can be used. This use of the obsolete locative case adds to the feeling of antiquity the verbal messages of this panel must convey. As such, while

some aspects of formality have been lost in the target text, others have been gained (Grun & Dollerup, 2003).

5.2.2.4 What the Hell?

One characteristic of informal idiomatic English is the use of '(the) hell' as an intensifier for interrogative pronouns ('what the hell?'), imperatives ('get the hell out!') or exclamations ('hell yeah!'), used 'for emphasis or to express anger, contempt, or surprise', according to the Oxford Dictionary of English (2010). This intensifier occurs frequently in the *Seconds* sub-corpus, but only once in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus. However, since no real equivalent of equal intensity exists, the expletive is often left out, or substituted by a similar intensifier or the addition of a swear word. The sole instance of 'hell' being used in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, when Scott introduces his girlfriend Knives to his friend Stephen, is removed in the target text:

Source: Scott: 'You promise to be good?'
Knives: 'Yes. I'll be so good.'
Stephen: 'What **the hell** are you making this poor girl say, Scott?'

Target: Scott: 'Beloof je je te gedragen?'
Knives: 'Ik zal me zó goed gedragen.'
Stephen: 'Wat laat je dit arme meisje allemaal zeggen, Scott?'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 18, panels 3-5)

This omission is perhaps due to the predetermined size of the speaker's speech bubble being too small to fit in a lengthy 'in hemelsnaam', as well as the added 'allemaal' necessary to make the dialogue sound more idiomatic – an example of 'constrained translation' (Celotti, 2014: 34). The translation of *Seconds*, however, contains a wide variety of different translations for the intensifier 'hell'. On page 110, panel two, Katie's exclamation 'Hell yeah!' has not been translated (*repetitio*), while 'in godsnaam' (*substitutio*) is used in two instances, e.g.

Source: Katie: 'What **the hell** was wrong with that burger?!'

Target: Katie: 'Wat was er **in godsnaam** mis met die burger?!'

(*Seconds*, p. 102, panel 4)

Source: Katie: 'What **the hell** are you even wearing?'

Target: Katie: 'Wat heb je **in godsnaam** aan, trouwens?'

(*Seconds*, p. 117, panel 1)

In two other instances, using a swear word for intensification was deemed more fitting, e.g.

Source: 'Luckily, Katie was good **as hell** in a crisis.'

Target: ‘Gelukkig wist Katie in crisissituaties **verdorie** goed van wanten.’

(*Seconds*, p. 37, panel 8)

Source: Katie: ‘Why **the hell** not, Lis?’

Target: Katie: ‘**Verdomme**, Lis, waarom niet?’

(*Seconds*, p. 127, panel 1)

In a third case, the phrase containing the intensifier was replaced entirely by a similarly informal Dutch idiom, e.g.

Source: Arthur: ‘I think this is all going really well.’
Katie: ‘**The hell it is.**’

Target: Arthur: ‘Ik denk dat het hier allemaal uitstekend vooruitgaat.’
Katie: ‘**Maak dat de kat wijs.**’

(*Seconds*, p. 18, panel 2)

Source: Andrew: ‘Turn that ridiculous ass right around and **get the hell out of my kitchen** before I throw you out.’

Target: Andrew: ‘**Maak dat je** met je belachelijke kop **uit m’n keuken bent** of ik gooi je eruit.’

(*Seconds*, p. 33, panel 2)

Source: Hazel: ‘How do people get to know people?’
Katie: ‘**Hell if I know**.’

Target: Hazel: ‘Hoe leren mensen elkaar dan kennen?’
Katie: ‘**’k Zou het niet weten.**’

(*Seconds*, p. 136, panel 6)

One particular use of ‘hell’ as an intensifier remains. On page 55, the narration simply states ‘What the hell?’ when Katie finds out Hazel’s injuries have mysteriously vanished. The former two solutions cannot be applied here, because intensifiers are not coupled with interrogative pronouns like that in Dutch. However, unlike ‘what the hell’, a similar phrase, ‘what the fuck’ or its bastardized version ‘wat de fuck’, has become common in Dutch thanks to the prominence of its abbreviation ‘WTF’ online. A calque (*substitiutio*) thus seems to be the preferable option for translating this instance of ‘hell’, as it is likely that this translation will reach the broadest possible audience. As the source text itself uses the word ‘fuck’ on certain occasions – albeit in chapters not included in the corpus, e.g. page 159, panel 3: ‘I will fuck you up’ – there needs to be no

worry about the use of this word in the translation rendering the target text more vulgar than the author had intended.

5.2.2.5 She's Like OCD or Something

Aside from the translations of specific meanings, jargon terms, registers and idioms elaborated on in the previous paragraphs, the final major challenge posed by translating *Seconds* is finding a way to convey the idiolect of specific characters properly without caricaturizing them. §5.2.1 previously highlighted the characteristics of 'Valspeak' and African American Vernacular English in the idiolect of the characters Yana and Andrew respectively. Upon translating their dialogue texts, it is essential to consider the characteristics of their speech and translate accordingly.

Yana's dialogue texts are characterized by a strongly exaggerated use of filler and intensifying, and the italicization of certain words to indicate 'uptalk' intonation. While the latter is related to typesetting and as such, not relevant to the strictly mono-modal translation provided by this thesis, the former requires the identification of filler and intensifying elements in Yana's speech. On page 63, Katie asks Yana what she thinks about her co-worker, Hazel. Yana replies:

Source: Yana: 'Hazel? Oh *man*, don't **even** get me started. […] She gets *so* embarrassed by **like** any harmless comment. It's **like** come *on*, Hazel, I'm a super-nice person. I think she's **like** *OCD* **or something**. She's *super* into sweeping and cleaning. **I mean, yes,** it's part of the job, but this is above and beyond. She's especially weird about the fireplace. And… *She leaves food out at the end of the night.* **Like**, *intentionally*! It's senseless! Why even clean? Maybe she loves rats? **Like** she communicates with animals **or something**? She sure doesn't like *humans*.'

(*Seconds*, p. 63, panels 1-7)

In the above excerpt, filler elements are marked in boldface, while intensifiers are underlined. The overuse of the discourse particle 'like' is noticeable, in line with the excessive filler found in Valspeak (Ouellette, 2013), though Andersen (2000: 19) states that 'the description of 'like' as a mere filler or hesitation device is insufficient', and that 'like' is in fact closer to a marker of propositional attitude because it 'provides speakers whose dialect includes this linguistic resource with a means to disassociate themselves slightly from the expressions contained in the utterance' (Andersen, 2000: 18). In other words, 'like' is not a mere filler, it also serves as a hedge. Consequently, the above marked elements should be translated not literally, but using similar hedges in Dutch.

Target: Yana: 'Hazel? Oh *man*, breek me er de bek niet over open! […] Ze kruipt al weg bij **echt** *de minste* commentaar. Da's **echt** van kom *op*, Hazel, ik ben **dus wel** keilief. Ik denk dat ze niet goed in haar hoofd is **of zo**. Ze is **echt** *super*gek van vegen en poetsen. **Ik bedoel, ja**, dat hoort bij de job, maar zij gaat er **echt wel** over. Vooral met de open haard is ze precies geobsedeerd. En… *ze zet er aan 't eind van de avond altijd eten klaar*. **Maar echt** *opzettelijk*, **hè**! Dat slaat nergens op! Waarom zit ze dan altijd te poetsen? Misschien houdt ze van ratten? Kan ze praten met dieren **en zo**? Ze praat in elk geval niet met *mensen*!'

The target text provides a relatively equal number of propositional attitude markers, in order to avoid caricaturizing or exaggerating Yana's idiolect. While the word 'like' is used as a means of distancing oneself from one's statement 'as a signal that the relation between an utterance and its underlying thought is not a one-on-one relation, but a relation of non-identical resemblance' (Carston, 1996), the Dutch word used to replace it, 'echt', distances the speaker from their statement by presenting it not as their opinion, but as an absolute truth.

Translating Andrew's occasionally AAVE-influenced speech poses a bigger challenge, because even if the omission of copular verbs or the use of shortened forms would be characteristic of a certain Dutch dialect, this dialect would not be familiar to the average Dutch-speaking reader, especially not when used in written language, the way prominent characteristics of AAVE are to English-speaking audiences. The closest Dutch has to an equivalent of AAVE is the so-called 'straattaal' (street language), a sociolect influenced by Moroccan Arabic, Berber, Turkish, English and Sranan, the language of Suriname (van den Braak, 2004). 'Straattaal' is prominent amongst urban youths in major Dutch cities such as Amsterdam and is commonly associated with – though unlike what is often assumed, not exclusive to (Cornips & de Rooij, 2007) – ethnic minorities, like AAVE is for speakers of English.

However, as concluded at the end of §5.2.1, Andrew's speech contains only certain characteristics of AAVE, while averting certain other essential traits. Therefore, translating his speech using 'straattaal' would be a case of overcompensating, adding certain implications to the character that are not there and possibly creating a racial stereotype, which the source text avoids. As such, the more preferable option would be to understate Andrew's idiolect rather than overstate it. While his use of 'yo' to address people and tendency to shorten the names of the characters he addresses can be retained, the target text compensates for its inability to omit copular verbs and use shortened forms by using shortened pronouns (''k', 'ie') to imply his use of a dialect.

5.2.3 Paratext and Typesetting in *Scott Pilgrim*

The linguistic paratext, also called 'inscriptions' by Kaindl (1999: 273) constitutes the final category of verbal messages in comic books and comprises of all texts found 'on objects within the pictures', such as texts on signs, clothes worn by the characters, or books read by them. Unlike other verbal messages, the linguistic paratext does not always have to be translated. The reason for this is simple: translating paratext will often require re-editing or redrawing pictures, and replacing inscriptions and signs in the source language by target language ones. Kaindl (1999: 275) refers to this process of simply taking over paratext in its original form as *repetitio*, and confirms that the financial expense and the risk of diminishing the artistic quality of the original illustrations by editing them often leads to many comic book translations leaving the paratext (as well as onomatopoeia – see §5.4) untouched. Because the translation of *Seconds* made in function of this dissertation is strictly mono-modal, only the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus can be used to analyse the translation of linguistic paratext. Upon observation of the translated editions of *Scott Pilgrim*, it becomes immediately obvious that this translation project did indeed not have the time or the resources to edit most visual messages.

Due to these constraints, Celotti (2014: 39) distinguishes six strategies for the translation of linguistic paratext: (1) translating, (2) annotating with a footnote in the gutter, (3) culturally adapting, (4) leaving the paratext untranslated, (5) deleting the paratext or (6) a mix of the aforementioned. The Dutch translation of *Scott Pilgrim* mostly resorts to the fourth strategy for the previously mentioned reasons, though certain prominent or important inscriptions are translated (1). Celotti also makes this distinction, between paratext which plays a fundamental role and marginal details. In the former case, a translator 'has no choice but to translate' (ibid.) the paratext by any means necessary. When this happens in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, the handwritten inscriptions will often be replaced by typeset ones, using the same font used inside speech bubbles. As such, the typography meant to distinguish the paratext from regular dialogue is replaced by regular typeset lettering, in spite of the translation, which corresponds to Kaindl's *detractio*.

Consequently, most inscriptions on books, clothing and store signs in the background of the comic's illustrations are simply left as they are. Whether or not more prominently featured inscriptions are translated, however, depends on how integral they are for the reader to understand the narrative. For instance, in the Dutch translation of volume 2 of the *Scott Pilgrim* series, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* (2005), Scott reminisces about a prior job he had at a Mexican restaurant. While he explains that the restaurant was closed down for illegal activities, the illustration shows him holding a paper saying: 'Notice: You are fired'. This notice is not translated because, based on the contents of Scott's speech bubble, readers will already know that Scott lost the job. On the other hand, earlier in the same volume, a flashback shows Scott sitting outside the office of his high school principal, waiting to be scolded for getting in a fight. The first line of dialogue of the scene is a fellow student, Lisa, asking Scott what he is 'in for'. The reader only knows what Lisa is talking about – Scott is to be scolded by the principal – because the first panel of the scene is a close-up on the sign on the door Scott is sitting in front of, stating 'principal'. Unlike the 'You are fired' notice from the previous example, understanding this inscription is important for a reader's understanding of the story, because the dialogue never mentions a principal in any other way. The verbal message elaborates (cf. Martinec & Salway, 2005) on information that can only be learned from a correct interpretation of the paratext, necessitating its translation. Therefore, the target text has translated and attempted to edit the sign to the best of its ability. However, because the handwritten sign in the source text has been replaced with a typeset one, the loss of the original's typographical deviation from the norm in the target text still counts as a *detractio* shift.

While this *detractio* is relatively minor, translating fonts with the usual financial and aesthetic constraints of comic book translation can pose a problem. As briefly touched upon in §2.1.2.2, different fonts are sometimes used in speech bubbles to convey different tones or methods of speaking. While 'translating' regular typeset font differences poses no problem, complications arise when hand-written or hand-drawn lettering is used inside speech bubbles, instead of machine typesetting. The *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus features a number of such instances. On page 76 of volume 1 (Image 3a), for example, Knives yells so loudly, the text in her speech bubble is handwritten, rather than typeset using the standard font for dialogue. Instead of redrawing the handwritten lettering in Dutch, the translation (Image 3b) simply replaces it with typeset lettering using the same font as all other dialogue, only larger. While the font changes, the text size is

retained, meaning that in this case, only part of the line's distinct typography has been cut. This would be another case of *detractio:* the removal of certain, but not all – in this case, typographical – elements from translation.

Image 3 © 2004 by Bryan Lee O'Malley

Furthermore, page 43 of volume 2 provides a particularly interesting example. After Scott has been ordered by his roommate to break up with Knives after meeting and falling in love with Ramona, he asks Knives if she's even allowed to date 'outside of her race'. Knives answers that she does not care about such conventions, because she's 'in love' (Image 4a). The word 'love' is in a separate speech bubble and typeset using a highly stylized font. This typesetting is carried over into Dutch, where 'verliefd' is typeset using a similar font.

Image 4a © 2005 by Bryan Lee O'Malley

The 'taking over of linguistic, visual or typographical elements in their identical form' is dubbed *repetitio* (Kaindl, 1999: 275), though this term must, at Kaindl's own advice, not be used lightly.

To truly regard the translation procedure used in a particular instance as *repetitio*, source and target text must be identical in that regard. For instance, while visual *repetitio* would seem commonplace in comic book translations, as these generally do not edit the original artwork in any way, Kaindl states that 'the size and format of comic albums and issues often vary depending on the publisher, which means that a certain degree of enlargement or reduction in size is usually necessary' (cf. p. 26; ibid.: 276). Consequently, the aforementioned translation procedure can only be referred as a typographical *repetitio* if the fonts used in both source and target text are the exact same. As this is likely not the case, this example seems to be a case of what Kaindl (1999: 281) calls a typographical *substitutio* -- i.e. replacing source typographical material with 'more or less equivalent' typography in the target text – rather than an outright typographical *repetitio*.

The next panel further complicates the translation of this page, however. The word 'love', uttered by Knives in such a dramatic fashion reflected by the baroque typesetting in Image 4a, becomes a physical object, 'shooting' out of her mouth and overwhelming Scott (Image 4b). As opposed to the typeset 'love' in the previous panel, this hand-drawn word is not translated in the Dutch target text, or as Kaindl would call it, subjected to a linguistic and typographical *repetitio*, because any other translation procedure would require significant editing or redrawing of the panel, for which this translation project evidently lacked the means.

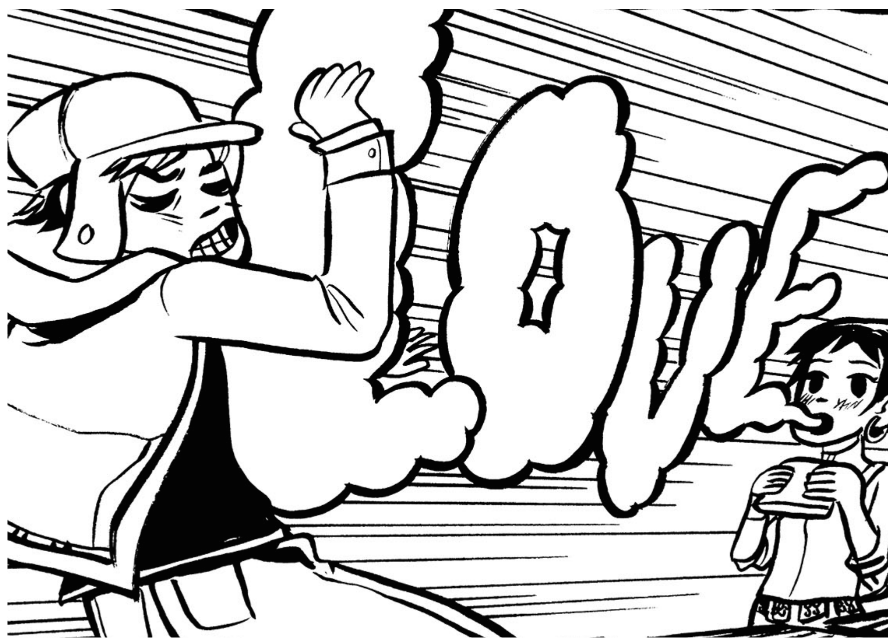


Image 4b © 2005 by Bryan Lee O'Malley

This decision results in a possibly jarring inconsistency, as the word 'verliefd' suddenly becomes 'love' once it takes physical form. Possible ways of solving this inconsistency without having to edit the original illustration include, for instance, not translating the 'love' in the first panel as well (e.g. 'Dat kan me niet schelen! *I'm in love*!'). Another solution would be to use a footnote explaining to readers who do not understand English that 'love' means 'verliefd', similar to Celotti's (2014: 39) second strategy for translating paratext. Kaindl (1999: 278 – 279) regards the addition of footnotes as a part of *adiectio*.

5.2.4 Realia and Cultural References

Both *Seconds* and the *Scott Pilgrim* series are set in North American urban areas – the latter explicitly in Toronto, Canada, the former in a city that is never called by name, but clearly located somewhere in Canada or the Northern United States – and regularly allude to their settings and the accompanying context in their dialogue texts. Both translations favour the 'foreignisation' of cultural references over 'domestication' (Venuti, 1995) and choose to stay faithful to the comic's North American setting by largely retaining cultural or language-specific elements such as names or prices. Nevertheless, the *Scott Pilgrim* translation makes certain references to the source text's Toronto setting less specific (*adiectio*), e.g. 'Goodwill' becomes 'de kringloop' (vol. 1, p. 34, panel 3), 'U of T' (University of Toronto) becomes 'de universiteit' (vol. 1, p. 73, panel 1) or 'Pacific Mall' becomes 'een winkelcentrum' (vol. 1, p. 117, panel 4).

Because of *Seconds*' more anonymous setting, such cultural references pose less of a problem, with the only named locations in the sub-corpus being the titular restaurant and two specific streets, Lucknow Street and Talmadge Street. The name of the restaurant is an exception to the alienating technique preferred by the translation, because it doubles as the title of the comic and serves as a pun referencing the events of the story. For these reasons, the name of the restaurant has been translated (*substitutio*), whereas the names of the streets have been retained (*repetitio*). However, because Dutch usually does not refer to streets without using the suffix '-straat', '-laan', '-weg' or something similar, like the characters in *Seconds* do, these suffixes are added (*adiectio*) in the target text to avoid confusion, e.g.

Source: Katie: 'Hey, Arthur, guess where I'm parked? […]'
Arthur: 'Damn it, Katie, **Talmadge** again? Stop doing this to yourself.'

Target: Katie: 'Hé, Arthur, raad eens waar ik geparkeerd sta? […]'
Arthur: 'Verdomme, Katie, weer **op Talmadge Street**? Doe jezelf dit niet aan.'

(*Seconds*, p. 74, panel 1)

Furthermore, whenever Katie's new restaurant, which is located on Lucknow Street, is referenced to as simply 'Lucknow', the translation simply refers to it as 'het nieuwe restaurant' (*detractio*), e.g.

Source: '**At Lucknow**, Katie would be an equal partner.'

Target: 'Ze zou medevennoot zijn **van het nieuwe restaurant**.'

(*Seconds*, p. 31, panel 1)

While appellations have mostly been retained in both translations, certain other cultural references were domesticized to accommodate for readers unfamiliar with the source culture. Ramona's references to her education in her native United States in particular stand out in *Scott Pilgrim*, with 'seventh grade' becoming 'groep acht' (vol. 1, p. 144, panel 3) and 'freshman year' being (incorrectly) translated as 'brugklas' (vol. 2, p. 104, panel 2). Most noticeably, these two

terms are typical only of the education system in the Netherlands. For a Flemish speaking audience, the correct equivalents would be, 'eerste' and 'derde middelbaar' respectively, as the term 'freshman' refers to the first year of the four-year American high school. Furthermore, the word 'rector', used as a translation for 'principal' (vol. 2, p. 8, panel 1), is only used in this meaning in the Netherlands, whereas in Belgium, this term refers to the head of a university. In order to overcome such regional differences, the sole reference to education in *Seconds* has been rendered less specific (*adiectio*) in translation:

Source: 'Her favorite pen. So familiar in her hand. She hadn't seen it since the third day of high school.'

Target: 'Haar lievelingspen. Lag zo vertrouwd in haar hand. Ze had hem sinds het middelbaar niet meer gezien.'

(*Seconds*, p. 47, panel 7)

Because *Seconds*' specific setting is unclear, it cannot be determined how old a student on their 'third day of high school' would normally be. In the United States, a student in their first year of high school would be 15 years old (Crowther, 2005: C29), whereas in Canada, the definition of what constitutes 'high school' and when it starts depends on the province or territory (Government of Canada, 2014). Because of this ambiguity, and inconsistent terminology across Flemish and Dutch school systems, the best option would be to have Katie refer to a non-specific point in her high school career. As such, the most important message of the line, i.e. Katie had not seen the pen *in a very long time*, remains intact, while the translation remains faithful to the source text.

Aside from culture-specific realia, the works of Bryan Lee O'Malley are characterized by a large number of references to popular culture, predominantly to music, film and in the case of *Scott Pilgrim*, video games. The translation of these inter-textual references is a part of the localization of comic books, which as Zanettin (2014b: 204) states 'depends on what is recognizable or familiar for readers in the target culture'. This philosophy is also reflected in the translation of *Scott Pilgrim*. For example, when Ramona explains to Scott that she can rapidly travel between locations using 'subspace highways', Scott asks her if this progress is similar to the video game *Super Mario 2*. The translation retains this reference as such, assuming the reader knows that *Super Mario 2* is a video game, which apparently involves rapid travel through an alternate dimension.

Source: Ramona: 'It's like… rapid transit? Subspace highways?'
Scott: 'Is it like in *Super Mario 2*?'

Target: Ramona: 'Het is als… supersnel transport? Universele snelwegen?'
Scott: 'Zoals in *Super Mario 2*?'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 83, panel 5)

However, a few pages earlier, when Scott asks around at a party if people happen to know Ramona, one character, Monique, mocks her name by comparing her to the children's book

character Ramona Quimby, created by Beverly Cleary. In this case, the translator inferred readers would not be familiar with the *Ramona* book series, which is popular in English-speaking territories (Blair, 2010), but apparently not in Dutch-speaking ones, and added an explanation (*adiectio*) for what this 'Ramona Quimby, Age 8' Monique is referring to, is.

Source: Scott: 'Hey, do you guys know Ramona Flowers?'
Sandra: 'Julie introduced me to her. Doesn't she have the most ridiculous name?'
Monique: 'I know. It's so 'Ramona Quimby, Age 8.' And yet…. Flowers.'

Target: Scott: 'Hee, kennen julie Ramona Flowers?'
Sandra: 'Julie stelde me aan haar voor. Vind je haar naam niet belachelijk?'
Monique: 'Zeker. Het is net **dat boek** Ramona Quimby, 8 jaar, en dan… Flowers.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 61, panels 3-4)

However, on certain occasions, the reference-heavy dialogue texts in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus lead to confusing or incorrect translations. In volume 1, when Scott shows his roommate Wallace a drawing of the 'haunting shoes' Ramona was wearing, Wallace points out that the shoes are similar to those worn by Mr. Silly, a character from the *Mr. Men* series of children's books by Roger Hargreaves. In Dutch, the character is known as 'Meneer Malloot' (Hargreaves, 1972). However, the target text simply retains the original, English reference (*repetitio*), only adding quotation marks, as if implying that 'Mr. Silly's' is a brand or a type of shoes.

Source: Wallace: 'These shoes are Mr. Silly's shoes, Scott.'

Target: Wallace: 'Dit zijn 'Mr. Silly's' schoenen, Scott.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol.1, p. 66, panel 8)

Furthermore, one particular mistranslation is especially noticeable. In volume 2, Knives is revealed to be a fan of The Clash at Demonhead, a popular band fronted by Scott's ex-girlfriend Nathalie 'Envy' Adams. The band name is a reference to the punk band The Clash, as well as an obscure videogame named *Clash at Demonhead* (Hunt, 2010). In the target text, the band is also simply known as 'The Clash at Demonhead'. However, on one occasion (Image 5), the translator incorrectly translates this band name, assuming the characters are talking about the existing band, The Clash, playing a concert at a location called 'Demonhead', similar to, e.g. 'Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock' or 'Bob Dylan at Budokan'.

Oddly enough, this happens despite all other instances of the band being called by its name being left intact in the target text. While this single instance of misinterpretation could be attributed to the translator recognizing a reference to the band The Clash, but failing to take into consideration the pun referring to an obscure video game, the fact that this translation error occurs only once is particularly striking – as even before this panel, Knives had already been established as a fan of the band named 'The Clash at Demonhead'.

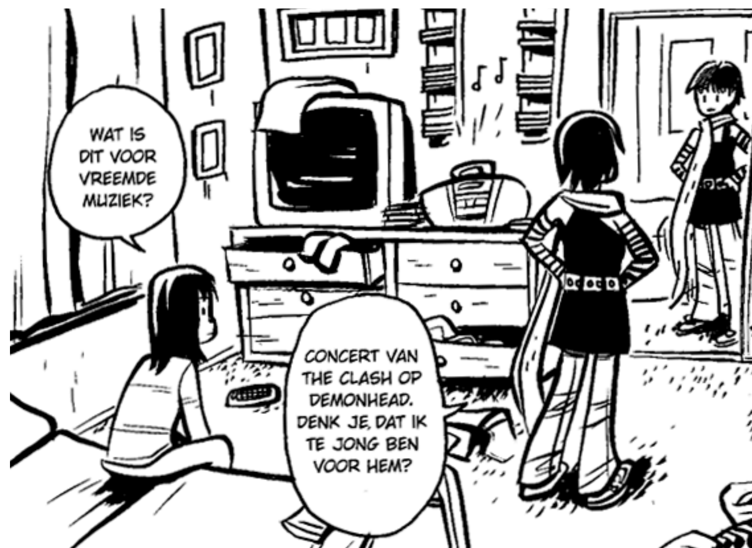


Image 5 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2005

Similar translation errors, surprisingly, occur sporadically throughout the sub-corpus. One example involves Scott's friend Neil Nordegraf. Because he is considerably younger than his friends, the character is always referred to as 'Young Neil', a nickname obviously intended to reference singer Neil Young, similarly to how another character, Stephen Stills, is named after a different member of the band Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Throughout the translation of volume 1, the nickname is left in English in order to maintain that reference. However, in the translation of volume 2 (page 49, panel 2), the same character is introduced as 'jonge Neil', a literal translation of his nickname, which erases the popular culture reference it originally encompassed. Likewise, earlier in the same volume (page 30, panel 1), a poster reading 'Lunchapalooza signups today' is translated as 'Lunchapalooza signeert vandaag' ('Lunchapalooza are signing today'). The name 'Lunchapalooza' is an obvious parody of Lollapalooza, a famous annual music festival. Given that the panel is part of a flashback showing Scott forming his first band in high school, it is obvious the panel aims to convey that Scott and his friends are signing up to play at a school music festival named 'Lunchapalooza'. The translation, however, implies that Scott and his friends are lining up to get an autograph from a band named 'Lunchapalooza', despite the next page featuring a poster clarifying that 'Lunchapalooza' is a music festival. Furthermore, because the word 'signup' can never mean 'to hand out an autograph', this translation error is especially puzzling. Not only did the translator fail to recognize a cultural reference, he also mistranslated a fairly unambiguous word that should have clarified the meaning of that reference.

Because *Seconds* presents itself as a more mature graphic novel, rather than a serialized, teen-oriented comic like the *Scott Pilgrim* series, the abundance of pop culture references typical of the latter has been toned down considerably. The only explicit reference in the sub-corpus can be found on p. 119. This page features Katie watching a television series named *Baking Bad* on a website named 'Videoz', a reference to the TV series *Breaking Bad* and the video streaming service Netflix. These references should be transparent enough for the average reader to understand and therefore need not be translated. Additionally, the comic also contains a

reference to *Scott Pilgrim*, in an exchange that parallels a conversation between Scott and Ramona in volume 2 of *Scott Pilgrim*:

Source: Scott: 'Garlic bread is my favourite food. I could honestly eat it for every meal. Or just all the time without even stopping.'
Ramona: 'You'd get fat.'
Scott: 'No.'
Ramona: 'You'd get totally fat.'
Scott: 'I don't think I'd get fat. Why would I get fat?'
Ramona: 'Bread makes you fat. Butter makes you fat.'
Scott: 'Bread makes you fat??'

Target: Scott: 'Knoflookbrood is mijn favoriete gerecht. Ik zou het bij elke maaltijd kunnen eten. Of gewoon aldoor, zonder te stoppen.'
Ramona: 'Dan word je dik.'
Scott: 'Nee.'
Ramona: 'Heel erg dik.'
Scott: 'Volgens mij niet. Waarom zou ik dik worden?'
Ramona: 'Brood maakt dik. Boter maakt dik.'
Scott: 'Brood maakt dik??'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 56, panels 3-6)

Source: Katie: 'You feed her bread every day? Just bread? Wow.'
Hazel: 'Yeah… Why wow?'
Katie: 'I mean… Uh… Will she get fat?'
Hazel: 'Wait… Bread makes you fat?'

Target: Katie: 'Geef je haar elke dag brood? Alleen brood? Wauw.'
Hazel: 'Ja… Waarom wauw?'
Katie: 'Tja… Uh… Wordt ze daar niet dik van?'
Hazel: 'Wacht, maakt brood je dik?'

(*Seconds*, p. 135, panels 8-11)

Due to the risk of the intransitive use of 'dik maken' sounding unfamiliar or unnatural to audiences in Belgium, Hazel's last line in the *Seconds* excerpt was originally translated as 'Wacht, word je van brood dik?'. However, in order to retain consistency with the official Dutch translation of the line from *Scott Pilgrim* this line is referencing, reversing object and subject and using a transitive 'maken' instead of an intransitive 'worden' seems to be the better option. Nevertheless, an object, 'je' was added to prevent the target text from becoming too regionally charged.

5.2.5 Conclusion

As evidenced by the above-mentioned example and the entirety of §5.2.2, regional differences, especially those concerning conversational language, must always be taken into account when

translating into Dutch, because the Dutch-speaking market comprises two different cultures which usually have to share the same translations of imported works – usually published by publishers from the Netherlands (Schyns, 2002). These works include the Dutch translations of the first two *Scott Pilgrim* volumes, which contain vocabulary and idioms that are highly typical of the Dutch spoken in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the translation of *Seconds* made in function of this dissertation attempts to reconcile both regional traditions and create a modern, conversational language which could be interpreted by neither Dutch-speaking region as being too heavily influenced by the other region. Nevertheless, the notion of what constitutes 'natural, conversational language' will always depend on the specific translator and the language tradition they are a part of.

Aside from its penchant for 'northern' Dutch, the translation of *Scott Pilgrim* is further characterized for its inconsistent approach towards the translation of linguistic paratext and typesetting. Only essential inscriptions are translated, in line with Celotti's (2014) distinction between essential and marginal paratext, while the occasional use of hand-written letters in the original is erased in favour of computer typesetting. These changes occur strictly out of necessity, as financial and aesthetic constraints very often prevent translators from transferring the paratext and lettering of the source text to the target text in their entirety. However, certain methods for conveying the meaning of inscriptions to readers without having to edit the visual message do exist, such as the use of footnotes in the gutters between panels. The translation of *Scott Pilgrim* makes no use of such methods. Furthermore, as elaborated on in §5.2.4, its translations of certain realia and cultural references are inaccurate and may cause confusion. Carefully analysing the source text as a whole rather than as a series of unrelated lines can help avoid such translation errors and create a high-quality translation. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the *Seconds* translation made in function of this thesis has not been subject to any external factors that may have influenced the existing translation of *Scott Pilgrim*, including time limitations or the inability to edit and translate inscriptions.

5.3 Translating Humour

Humour constitutes an important part of many comic books, and *Seconds* and the *Scott Pilgrim* series are no exception. As a part of the message propagated by a comic, humour as well can be divided into three categories: visual humour, verbal humour and multimodal humour. Of these three categories, the first generally poses no problem for translation. Nevertheless, the assumption that visual storytelling – and by extension, visual gags – are universal is incorrect, as Kaindl (2004: 183) points out by disproving the myth of the 'visual Esperanto' (see §2.2). For example, in *manga*, a comically exaggerated nosebleed is a so-called 'graphic emblem' for sexual arousal. The un-annotated *repetitio* of such a visual gag would render it difficult to comprehend for readers unfamiliar with such culturally defined emblems (Huang & Archer, 2014). Other such emblems could include hand gestures or culture-specific associations and superstitions, such as spontaneous sneezing in Japan being considered an indication that someone is talking about you behind your back (Yao, 2012).

Regardless, because of financial and aesthetic difficulties, it remains rare to see strictly visual humour being translated without a shift in mode. A possible means to compensate would be to

explain the culture-specific emblem through textual means, either by adding a translator's note (cf. Martinec & Salway's extension (2005)) or by making its meaning explicit through dialogue texts, two forms of *adiectio*. In such a case, the visual humour of the source text becomes multimodal humour in the target text, or the humour is simply lost, as described by Kaindl (2004: 175). Consequently, only the translation of verbal and multimodal humour needs to be accounted for in this analysis.

Firstly, this chapter will consider the strictly verbal humour used in both comics and the strategies adopted to translate it, based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (Attardo, 2002) and Vandaele's (2002) interpretation of humour as a combination of incongruity and superiority. The latter element is particularly evident in the sarcastic language use of certain characters in both comics. Therefore, a separate subsection will be dedicated to the translation of irony in *Seconds* and the *Scott Pilgrim* series, based on Pelsmaekers and Van Besien's (2002) research.

The aforementioned stictly visual and strictly verbal means of creating humourous effect are known as mono-modal humour. Due to their hybrid nature, however, comics are able to create multimodal humour through the combination of a verbal message with a visual emblem. In many cases, understanding of both the verbal and the pictorial sign is required for a multimodal joke to be understood. Given the lack of a 'visual Esperanto' (see §2.2), the pictorial elements of multimodal gags often further complicate the already challenging process of translating the strictly verbal elements of humour. Consequently, descriptive research shows that multimodal humour is occasionally reduced to mono-modal or no humour entirely, as evidenced by Kaindl (2004: 175). Furthermore, in cases where a multimodal gag has been retained – whether in its entirety or in a reduced, mono-modal form – the type of humour used in the target text may differ entirely. Because multimodal humour, like wordplay, is often based on polysemy, figurative speech, idioms, or culture-specific association, translating English multimodal humour into an ethymologically related language such as Dutch might look easier than it really is. This question will be elaborated on in §5.3.3.

5.3.1 Translating Verbal Humour

Various sources acknowledge the difficulty of defining humour. Vandaele characterizes humour as an 'effect' (2002: 156) created by any combination of incongruity and superiority. Humour is the 'departure from normal cognitive schemes' which serves as evidence of a percieved feeling of superiority the 'agent' of the humourous act has towards the 'target'. With his General Theory of Verbal Humour, Attardo has created a model incorporating these two defining characteristics for the analysis of the translation of verbal humour (see §3.2). This model can be used to highlight some noticeable translations found in the sub-corpus.

5.3.1.1 Salt of the Earth

Attardo states that jokes that differ solely in the way they are worded are most similar to each other. Due to the convenient transparency of many English idioms in Dutch, translating jokes using idioms would, according to Attardo's theory, simply involve rephrasing the English

sentence into Dutch. Consider the following example. In volume 2 of the *Scott Pilgrim* series, after Scott offhandedly tells his friends he traded Knives in for a new girlfriend, after which he casually changes the topic, his friend Kim sarcastically remarks:

Source: Kim: 'Scott, you are the salt of the earth.'
Stephen: 'What?'
Kim: 'Oh, I'm sorry, excuse me. I meant scum of the earth.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 50, panels 4-5)

Following Attardo's model, the anatomy of this joke is as follows: The Script Opposition involves the juxtaposition of a compliment and an insult. Kim first pretends to be praising Scott, but later 'corrects' her mistake when Stephen states his confusion at her initial sarcasm. The overlap between the scripts of insulting and complimenting is derived from two similar idioms, which nonetheless have completely different meanings. Consequently, the Logical Mechanism operating behind Kim's remark is a parallelism playing on the verbal construction 'the X of the earth'. The Situation of the joke is – as is often the case (Attardo, 2002: 179) hardly relevant; Kim is simply insulting Scott because she thinks he is insensitive towards Knives and shouldn't try to change the subject. This makes Scott the Target of the joke, and the Narrative Strategy employed a straight response to his behaviour. Stephen's response then turns the joke into a dialogue, allowing Kim to make her sarcasm explicit.

Furthermore, Young's (2007) parameters reveal little extra-linguistic difficulties to translating this particular line. There are no references to specific real-life events (TFC), nor does the joke reveal any ideological undertones (PBI). As for the Social Class and Educations Considerations parameter, however, it could be stated that certain knowledge of idioms or proverbs is required for readers to understand the joke. The Cultural Awareness Decisions parameter could be of importance as well, as in certain cultures where people are expected to be less open about their romantic lives, readers might not be able to understand why Kim is angry with Scott for refusing to disclose any further information on his breakup with Knives. Furthermore, Kim's tendency to openly and directly criticize or insult her friends might be frowned upon in certain cultures, for example in Japan (Alston, 2005). Now, consider Hans Enters' translation:

Target: Kim: 'Je bent het zout der aarde, Scott.'
Stephen: 'Wat?'
Kim: 'O sorry. Excuses. Ik bedoelde het slijk der aarde.'

Applying the General Theory of Verbal Humour to this translation immediately reveals a high degree of similarity to the source text joke. The Script Opposition remains the exact same, with the Logical Mechanism once again being a play on parallelism, this time involving two opposing idioms using the word structure 'het X der aarde'. Situation, Target and Narrative Strategy remain unchanged as well, leading to the Language parameter being the only distinction between source and target text. Not only the language is different, obviously, but also the phrasing of the joke differs slightly, such as the target text having the vocative at the end of the line rather than at the beginning.

As for Young's parameters, the target text's Social Class and Educations Considerations remain. They are no different from the source text's, as the intended audience does not change. The translator has considered that if O'Malley assumes his audience will be able to understand the idioms 'salt of the earth' and 'scum of the earth', the audience of the target text will be similarly aware of their Dutch equivalents. Furthermore, the Cultural Awareness Decisions parameter plays no role, for as far as these two culture-specific values are concerned, there is little difference between source and target culture. Knowing this, it is safe to conclude that Enters' translation complies with Attardo's theory and makes no 'unnecessary' changes to the joke, as source and target text differ only at the lowest level necessary.

5.3.1.2 You Fight Like a Cow

If changing only the Language parameter when translating a joke renders the humour null and void, a translator will have to 'move up' the ladder of Attardo's similarity metric and change the first parameter that may be changed without eliminating the joke altogether. In the following example, also from volume 2 of *Scott Pilgrim*, a heartbroken Knives challenges Ramona to a fight to 'win' Scott back. After managing to make a scratch on Ramona's face, she taunts her rival:

> Source: Knives: 'You think you're so cool and tough, but look at your face! I totally grazed you!'
> Ramona: 'How appropriate. You fight like a cow.'
>
> (*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 143, panels 1-2)

Because there is no Dutch word that can convey both meanings of 'graze' as it is used here, merely changing the Language parameter and rephrasing the joke into Dutch will not be adequate. Analysis of the joke indicates that the Script Opposition behind it involves the opposition between Knives' use of 'graze' in the meaning of 'scraping skin', whereas Ramona uses the other meaning of the word, 'graze' as in 'eating grass' to insult Knives by comparing her to a cow. Consequently, Attardo (2002: 180) calls the Logical Mechanism at work 'cratylism', 'the assumption that two words […] that have the same or similar sounds must have the same meanings as well, and therefore that one can freely switch from one sense to the other'.

Krikmann (2006), however, rightfully points out that Attardo's definition of the term seems to imply that puns are unintentional and based on a lack of knowledge. Using this logic, Ramona in the above example would genuinely think that Knives is talking about eating grass, rather than actively use the double meaning to make Knives' taunt backfire on her. Because Attardo claims that all wordplay is cratylistic (Krikmann, ibid.: 43), no other Logical Mechanisms related to play on homonyms and synonyms are included in his model. Krikmann further states that Attardo means to justify the contradiction between his definition of puns as cratylistic on one hand and his definition of cratylism as unconscious on the other hand – while puns are often deliberate – by stating that 'Puns are metalinguistic because their decoding presupposes the presence of a metalinguistic assertion along the inferential processing involved in the decoding' (Attardo, 1994: 168). Both Attardo and Krikmann however fail to further elaborate on this statement. Ultimately, however, the exact name of the Logical Mechanism at work in Ramona's line is of

little importance, as it is obvious that the ones used by the original joke and its translation are the same, as evident from Enters' translation.

> Target: Knives: 'Je denkt dat je zo cool en stoer bent maar kijk eens naar je gezicht! Ik heb je totaal te grazen genomen!'
> Ramona: 'Dat is toepasselijk dan, dat je als een koe vecht.'

When considering the translation, it becomes obvious that the difference between the two jokes lurks in minor details. As mentioned, it is not merely the Language parameter that is different between source and target text, as the actual meaning of the joke changes slightly. In the target text, Knives proudly boasts that she was able to graze Ramona's face – which by all means is not that admirable an achievement. The juxtaposition of a very innocuous word with Knives' smugness creates additional humour that is not present in the source text, in which Knives simply boasts that she is winning. Of course, this minor change is necessary to retain the pun on 'graze'/'grazen' and 'cow'/'koe'. Alongside the Language Parameter, it is the Situation that slightly changes as well, from Knives being proud of managing to land a single hit on Ramona to Knives being convinced of her victory.

Taking a brief look at Young's extra-linguistic parameters, the Time Frame Considerations and Publication Background Information parameters are once again irrelevant. For Cultural Awareness Decisions, the same remark regarding insults mentioned in the previous example applies. However, when considering the Social Class and Education Considerations, it must be pointed out that Ramona's line is in fact an *ad verbatim* reference to a line from *The Secret of Monkey Island*, a 1990 computer game released by LucasArts (Sims, 2009). Readers unfamiliar with this game will miss out on this reference, though as the joke itself remains intact even without this knowledge, the translator has chosen to retain the line, rather than replacing it by a reference target culture readers might be more familiar with.

5.3.1.3 A Witch's Pot

The above example is as complicated as translating verbal humour in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus gets. While the writing style of *Seconds* is very similar to *Scott Pilgrim*, the verbal humour is toned down, with most humour in the sub-corpus resulting from specific language use in concrete situations, like Ray's thinly-veiled sarcasm, Yana's Valspeak, Katie's bickering with the narrator or Lis' speech impediment and dry delivery contrasting with her menacing nature. In line with Vandaele's (2002) definition of humour, each of these humoristic *loci* constitutes a combination of incongruity and superiority, regardless of where the discrepancy from which humour originates lies. Ray's sarcasm relies on incongruity at the illocutionary level (see Austin, 1962), because his intentions differ from his actual words, stemming from a feeling of superiority. The incongruity and superiority of his dialogue is directly proportional: When the incongruity between what he says and what he actually means increases, readers will regard his character as superior to others in intellect or wit. Humour involving Lis, on the other hand is incongruent on a perlocutionary level, because her childish speech pattern and bizarre behaviour create a different effect from the one she intended. As a result, the relationship between incongruity and

superiority in many jokes involving Lis is inversely proportional: When the incongruity of her behaviour increases, the sense of superiority readers get from the character will, in fact, decrease.

This makes many of the joke translations in the *Seconds* sub-corpus similar to Kim's line from §5.3.1.1, minus the linguistic parallelism as Logical Mechanism. Most verbal jokes differ only on the lowest level, that of the Language parameter, with juxtaposition and exaggeration being the most common Logical Mechanisms. However, on certain occasions, source-language-specific jokes will pose a bigger challenge. The wordplay involved in the title is one example (See §5.2.2.1). The following exchange based around the difference in register of certain synonyms is another:

Source: Andrew: 'What is this thing? A pot?'
Katie: 'The word I'd use is *cauldron*. Pretty cool, huh?'
Patrick: 'What's a cauldron?'
Andrew: 'Yo, dummy, it's like an old pot that belongs to a witch.'

(*Seconds*, p. 112, panels 4-5)

Following Attardo's anatomy, the Script Opposition behind the joke is the fact that Patrick does not know what a 'cauldron' is. Both Katie and Andrew are able to cognitively associate the word 'cauldron' with 'pot', whereas Patrick lacks this internalized knowledge, even though 'cauldron' is a common, if somewhat archaic word. The juxtaposition of 'Patrick is an adult who works in a kitchen' and 'Patrick does not know what the word 'cauldron' means' serves as the Logical Mechanism behind the joke, making him the Target of the joke. Dutch, however, lacks a word that carries the same connotations as 'cauldron'. The word 'ketel' can be used to refer to a cauldron, but it can refer to any pot or kettle, whereas 'cauldron' specifically refers to an old pot with a handle, used for cooking over an open fire. It is specifically associated with out-dated methods of cooking, or with witchcraft, whereas the word 'ketel' is still commonly used in Dutch. As a result, Patrick not knowing what the word 'ketel' means would not be just incongruent and therefore funny, but simply unrealistic, making the Logical Mechanism hard to translate. Furthermore, because the Situation of the joke is both essential to the story, establishing a later important plot point, and hard to change because it would involve altering the artwork, the target text will have to alter the Script Opposition in order to translate the joke.

Target: Andrew: 'Wat moet dit voorstellen? Een pot?'
Katie: 'Ik zou het eerder een *ketel* noemen. Nogal cool, hé?'
Patrick: 'Wat moeten we daarmee?'
Andrew: 'Yo, die is niet voor in de keuken, dumbo. Die is van een heks of zo.'

While Katie's initial nit-picking about 'pot' versus 'cauldron'/'ketel' remains transparent, the target text has changed the Script Opposition from Patrick not knowing what the word 'cauldron'/'ketel' means to him thinking Katie is telling the kitchen staff to use it for cooking. While the Target, Situation and Narrative Strategy remain, this change in Script Opposition causes not only the Language parameter to change, but the Logical Mechanism as well. As opposed to humour originating from the juxtaposition of Patrick's lack of knowledge and the knowledge he is expected to have in his situation, the joke in the target text is based on Patrick

reasoning from a false premise (see Attardo, 2002: 180), asking his question from the assumption that Katie expects him to cook with the cauldron. Accordingly, different Script Oppositions will lead to the jokes being perceived as very different even if the Target remains the same.

When considering Young's additions to Attardo's taxonomy, the Cultural Awareness Decisions parameter could play an important role in the translation of the joke that immediately follows up on this one. When Andrew points out that cauldrons tend to belong to witches, he, Patrick and Katie look at Hazel holding the cauldron and imagine her as a stereotypical witch, after which they start laughing – much to Hazel's confusion (Image 6).

Image 6 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2014

Naturally, this joke would not work in cultures that do not share the same archetypical, folkloric image of a green-skinned witch, wearing a black, pointy hat, riding a broomstick and using a cauldron to concoct potions. Similarly, translation difficulties might also arise in certain cultures where cauldrons are still used for cooking over an open fire and the association with witches, which the joke presents as evident, may not be commonly made. While this poses no problem for Dutch-speaking territories, where this image of witchcraft is widespread, translations aimed towards Asian or African markets will need to take into consideration how familiar their target audiences are with the traditional Western-European/North-American image of a witch.

5.3.2 Translating Irony

Given his penchant for writing self-absorbed main characters, Bryan Lee O'Malley frequently adopts irony and sarcasm to subtly criticize his protagonists' actions. The subtlety, and consequently, the humour of most ironic statements is derived from Pelsmaekers and Van Besien's (2002) conclusion that ironic statements are disguised as other speech acts, creating an incongruous effect. When Katie warns Ray, the owner of Seconds, to watch out for Lis causing trouble, and Ray tells her 'I assure you I will keep my eyes peeled for a white-haired homeless lady next time I'm patrolling the area for undesirables' (*Seconds*, p. 88, panel 7), he is not

reassuring her, as would be the conventional force of this type of illocutionary act, but in fact *criticizing* Katie for bothering him with deluded ghost stories.

Additionally, Pelsmaekers and Van Besien state that irony has a different intended perlocutionary effect than explicit criticism: Irony is never strictly critical, but may also serve to prevent the target from losing face by criticizing them in a humourous way, or to make the target realize how ridiculous they are sounding. In the above example, and by extension, many of Ray's sarcastic lines, for instance, Ray both criticizes Katie and caricaturizes her statements in order to make her think about how absurd her request is. This double perlocutionary intent is made evident, for instance, by his use of police jargon ('patrolling the area for undesirables').

Out of the 20 ironic utterances in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, the ironic cues of 11 are translated literally (Mateo's (1995) strategy (a)) or according to equivalent effect (b). The below translation, for example, contains an equal number of ironic cues in the target text as in the source text:

Source: Stacey: 'Scott? Did I wake you up? It's twelve thirty!!!'
Scott: '**Ohh**… No… I've **totally** been awake **for several hours**. ***Several***.'

Target: Stacey: 'Scott? Maak ik je wakker? Het is half een!!!'
Scott: '**O**… nee… Ik ben **al uren zó** wakker. ***Uren***.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 28, panels 6-8)

Both verbal and non-verbal (e.g. stress, indicated by italic typeface) ironic cues are literally translated or replaced by an equivalent construction, resulting in no irony being lost. On the other hand, however, 9 utterances in the sub-corpus do undergo some kind of change with regards to how many of them there are, or how explicitly critical they are.

Pelsmakers and Van Besien (2002: 253) found that, in their corpus of ironic utterances from the TV series *Blackadder*, 62% of translated ironic utterances displayed a significant change in the ironic cues being used, leading to their conclusion that target text irony is often harsher due to the deletion of hedgings, intesifiers and address forms. Compared to the 45% (9 out of 20) of the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, the disrecapancy is significant, though can be easily explained considering the nature of both translations. The constrained nature of subtitling is more restrictive than that of comic book translation, as it provides significantly less space for the target text (max. 2 lines of max. 35 characters each, according to Pelsmakers and Van Besien (ibid.: 252)) than for the source text (approx. 6 seconds for every 2 subtitled lines). That means that on average, only two thirds of what is being said can actually be translated (Scheer, 2000: 35). Conversely, comic book translation generally provides the same amount of space for the target text as for the source text, with most complications arising only from linguistic differences, such as certain languages being more verbose than others.

Within the translations that altered some ironic cues, Pelsmakers and Van Besien found that address forms, hedges, intensifiers and echoes of previous turns are amongst those most suspectible to change. In the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus as well, ironic utterances becoming more

explicit (strategy (d)) is usually the result of hedges and intensifiers being deleted or altered. Furthermore, one particular translation removes an address form, leading to a target text that has a particularly more 'deadpan' effect, also due in part to the deletion of another intensifier:

Source: Kim: 'I'm **tragically** sorry to have woken you up so **tragically** early, **Sara**, and I mean that. I really do.'

Target: Kim: 'Het spijt me dat ik zo **mensonterend** vroeg gewekt heb. Sorry, en dat meen ik. Echt.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 62, panel 4)

On one occasion, however, changing an explicitly dismissive 'whatever' into the a discongruent 'tuurlijk' turns an overtly critical line into an ironically critical one. 'Tuurlijk' could be interpreted as legitimate interest in or agreement with Scott's complaint, whereas 'whatever' is overtly contemptuous. This is an example of Mateo's strategy (l): no irony in the source text becomes irony in the target text.

Source: Scott: 'I'm coooooold!'
Kim: '**Whatever**. It's like spring out.'

Target: Scott: 'Ik heb het kou-ou-oud!'
Kim: '**Tuurlijk**, 't lijkt wel lente.'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 53, panel 1)

In other cases, certain word choices in the source text may serve as ironic cues: the juxtaposition of highly formal words with sarcastic remarks creates a humourous effect. In the target text, this high-register vocabulary is often replaced by more common synonyms – reducing the irony.

Source: Scott: 'It isn't over! We're gonna destroy her stupid pretentious crappy art school poser band!!'
Kim: 'Do I **detect** some **latent hostility**?'

Target: Scott: 'Dit is niet het einde! We gaan haar stomme, pretentieuze, rottige, nep-kunstacademiebandje vernietigen!!'
Kim: '**Bespeur** ik hier wat **latente agressie**?'

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 76, panel 3)

In the translation of Kim's deadpan response, the words 'detect' and 'hostility' are replaced by the less formal 'bespeuren' and the less nuanced 'agressie' respectively, increasing the odds of the line being interpreted as genuine concern, rather than an ironic dismissal.

Source: Wallace: 'Okay, what exactly are you planning to so on this website you know absolutely nothing about? **Are you struck with the sudden urge to read?**'

Target: Wallace: ‘Goed, wat ga je precies doen op een website waar je helemaal niets vanaf weet? **Heb je ineens zin om te lezen?**’

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 1, p. 69, panel 2)

Furthermore, the deletion of the passive voice, another trademark of formal speech, in the above line changes the effect from Wallace questioning the usually rather dim-witted Scott’s sudden interest in an online bookstore into a more genuine-sounding question. Only ‘ineens’ remains to serve as an ironic cue.

Of the 18 humorous ironic utterances in the *Seconds* sub-corpus, eight have undergone significant change with regards to the number or nature of ironic cues, leading to a 45% disrecapancy analogous to the one found in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus. The most noticeable difference between the two sub-corpora, however, is the latter sub-corpus’ increased reliance on Mateo’s strategy (e). Four humorous ironic utterances in the source text are made significantly harsher, which does not occur in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, e.g.:

Source: Katie: ‘And what do we have here?’

Target: Katie: ‘En wat moet dit voorstellen?’

(*Seconds*, p. 32, panel 5)

In the source text, Katie’s utterance is mildly patronizing, but it could still be interpreted as a sincere question. In the target text, however, her question makes her intent to criticize immediately evident.

Other such shifts include changes in the intensity of adjectives used for ironic praise, which is usually more overt in the target text. For instance, ‘great’ becomes ‘fantastisch’ (p. 99, panel 5), or ‘cool’ becomes ‘geweldig’ (p. 105, panel 11). Unlike in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, only one humourous ironic utterance in the *Seconds* sub-corpus is made more ‘deadpan’ by the deletion or alteration of hedges and intensifiers.

Source: Ray: ‘I have not seen a white-haired homeless lady hanging around. But I assure you I will **keep my eyes peeled** for a white-haired homeless lady next time **I’m patrolling the area for undesirables**.’

Target: Ray: ‘Ik heb geen dakloos meisje met wit haar gezien. Maar ik kan je verzekeren dat ik **extra zal uitkijken** naar een dakloos meisje met wit haar de volgende keer **dat ik de patrouille doe**.’

(*Seconds*, p. 88, panel 7)

In the above example, the idiom ‘keep my eyes peeled’ is toned down, reducing the ironic incongruence, and the ‘for undesirables’ phrase is deleted (*detractio*), removing much of the police

jargon used by Ray as an ironic cue. As a result, the humorous intent of the line is made less noticeable in the target text. This is the only occasion on which such a shift occurs, however.

Furthermore, no address forms have been deleted anywhere in the *Seconds* sub-corpus, contrary to Pelsmakers and Van Besien's conclusion. In fact, ironic cues are often *added* in the target text to highlight a line's ironic intent, e.g.:

Source: Katie: 'Oh, hey. Can I borrow twelve grand?'

Target: Katie: O hé, kan je me **misschien** twaalf mille lenen?

(*Seconds*, p. 125, panel 3)

Given the large amount of money Katie is talking about, it is obvious enough that she is joking. Nevertheless, the target text has chosen to add in an additional hedge, 'misschien', to further stress the line's jocular improbability. In another example, Katie tries to use irony to make Lis leave her alone, but afterwards realizes that Lis probably doesn't understand sarcasm, and clarifies her true intent. In the target text, the hedge 'en zo' is added to stress the irony that cannot be inferred from the first statement in the source text, which contains no ironic cues:

Source: Katie: 'Anyway, It's been fun chatting, but I've got a lot of work to do now. That means you should go, **by the way**. It's a social cue.'

Target: Katie: 'Het was een leuk praatje **en zo**, maar 'k heb een heleboel te doen nu. Dat is een sociaal signaal voor 'Ga weg', ***by the way***.'

(*Seconds*, p. 127, panel 4)

In conclusion, both translations manage to retain all humourous irony intact, as well as the majority of ironic cues, leading to literal translations being the most widespread strategy adopted for translating ironic turns. This occurs in spite of the conclusions made by Pelsmaekers and Van Besien, whose research findings show a majority of ironic cues being altered. The fact that said research deals with subtitling, an even more constrained form of translation than comic translation, could explain this difference.

Whenever ironic cues *are* altered or deleted in both comic book sub-corpora, however, there is a noticable difference between the shifts occuring in both translations. While the *Scott Pilgrim* translation tends to tone down irony, resulting in a more 'deadpan' style of delivery, the *Seconds* translation tends to play up the irony, either by adding more ironic cues, or making the irony harsher overall, resulting in sarcasm.

5.3.3 Translating Multimodal Humour

As a multimodal medium, comics can make use of the synergy or incongruity between their verbal and visual modes to achieve a humorous effect. Up until now, this dissertation has only analysed strictly verbal jokes, disregarding the visual messages. In Kaindl's model of humour

translation (2004; see §3.4), however, such translation shifts only constitute one of the eight possible categories of humour translation shifts.

Because most of the humour in both sub-corpora is strictly mono-modal, the translations are as well. There are, however, some exceptions. In the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, certain details and background effects do make use of multimodal incongruity. For instance, on page 72, panel 3 of the first volume, a bored Scott is seen sitting on a sofa in a department store, right next to a sign stating 'do not sit' (Image 7a).

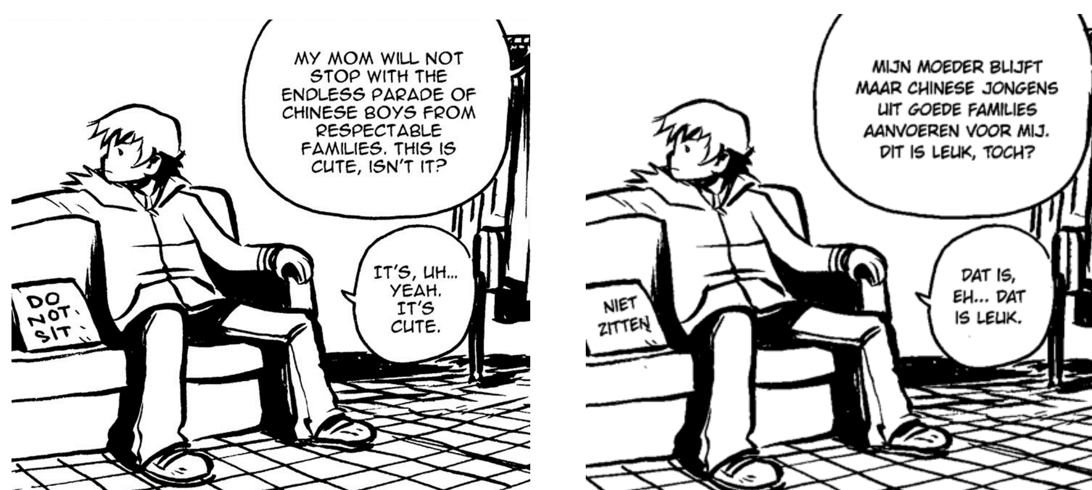


Image 7 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2004

This would be an example of what Kaindl dubs a 'play on signs that depends on a multimodal combination' (ibid.: 176): both the verbal (the sign stating 'do not sit') and the visual message (Scott sitting on the sofa) are required in order for there to be humour, because the humour is derived from the incongruity between the two. Although the large majority of linguistic paratext in the sub-corpus has not been translated (*repetitio*), as mentioned in §5.2.3, this particular sign is an exception (Image 7b – notice also the typographical *detractio*, as the handwritten text has been replaced with the standard font), because of the role it plays in this multimodal joke. As the source text multimodal humour remains multimodal, and both the humour techniques adopted and the relation between verbal and visual message are similar, this technique is classified as E1.

Multimodal humour being translated seems to be the exception rather than the norm, however. One particularly elaborate multimodal joke, which combines O'Malley's tendency towards pop culture references and his eye for detail, occurs during the final sequence of the first volume. Throughout the scene, Scott is wearing a T-shirt of the band Plumtree. This band really exists, and the character Scott Pilgrim was in fact named after their song of the same name, as O'Malley explains in his afterword to the reissue of *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life* (O'Malley, 2012).

On page 142 (Image 8), Scott prepares to square off against Ramona's first 'evil ex', Matthew Patel, who has rudely interrupted a performance by Scott's band at a small club. Here, readers get a first clear look at this text on the back of Scott's shirt. It says 'Mass Teen Fainting', a reference to a similarly titled album by Plumtree (O'Malley, 2012). Not coincidentally, this happens as Scott stands amidst a mess of unconscious bodies: A literal 'mass teen fainting'

caused by the band playing before Scott's band knocking the entire audience out with their loud, experimental music. It is a complicated joke which would require readers to not only notice the small text on Scott's back in the first place, but also be able to recognize the reference to the band Plumtree, associate said band with the name 'Scott Pilgrim' and link the paratext 'mass teen fainting' with the unconscious audience members seen scattered amongst the floor Scott and his opponent are standing on. For this reason, using Young's (2007) parameters, the Cultural Awareness Decisions of this joke are significant.

Image 8 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2004

In the target text, the inscription on Scott's T-shirt has not been translated, not solely out of financial or aesthetic constraints, but simply because it is the title of an existing album. Dutch-speaking readers who know the band would only know the album in question by its English name. Consequently, the multimodal wordplay on the incongruity between Scott's shirt and the situation he finds himself in will only be funny to target text readers who know what the English phrase 'mass teen fainting' means. While translating the text on Scott's shirt would certainly be possible, it would retain the multimodal joke, but remove the reference to the band Plumtree and lead to inconsistency in the way the target text handles localization, as no other names, titles or references have been translated.

Because of that, Hans Enters has opted to retain the visual message as is (*repetitio*), therefore both retaining the Cultural Awareness Decisions – as readers are still required to know that 'Mass Teen Fainting' is an album by a band who also have a song named 'Scott Pilgrim' – but also increasing the Social-Class and Education Considerations – as readers are expected to have a

certain knowledge of English in order to understand the link between the phase 'Mass Teen Fainting' and the events of the comic. Furthermore, Plumtree might be much more familiar to readers from the band's native Canada than to readers from other parts of the world. This makes the exact translation shift difficult to name, as while the multimodality of the joke, the type of humour and the relationship between the verbal and visual message remain the same – indicating an E1 shift – the accessibility of the joke has been lowered to such a degree it might not even count as a joke anymore.

Image 9 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2005

The end of the second volume of *Scott Pilgrim* features a particularly noticeable play on words reinforced by non-verbal signs. When Scott and his friends attend a concert, a former classmate of Scott's asks Ramona whether Scott and she are 'an item', as in whether they are going out. When Ramona repeats this question to Scott, however, he is confused. Psychoperigrams next to Scott, featuring drawings of a star, a mushroom and a flower, are intended to reveal the reason for Scott's befuddlement (Image 9). The star, mushroom and flower are so-called 'items' from the *Super Mario Bros.* series of video games. In video games the word 'item' is commonly used to refer to in-game objects to be collected and used by the player to gain certain advantages. In *Super Mario Bros.* games, for instance, if the player-controlled character finds a star that has been hidden in the game world, they will temporarily become invulnerable. Several jokes throughout the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus poke fun at Scott's video game addiction. In this case, he only seems to know the word 'item' in a video gaming context, and is unaware of one of the word's far more commonly used meanings. In order to clarify Scott's incongruent unawareness, O'Malley has added visual references to the 'items' Scott is thinking about.

In Dutch, however, there is no word that can mean both 'couple' and 'object in a video game'. Consequently, the pun cannot be translated literally, excluding Kaindl's E1 and E3 techniques from the list of possible translation strategies. Furthermore, because of financial and aesthetic constraints, the visual signs inside Scott's thought bubble have not been edited, replaced or removed. Considering these circumstances, Enters provides the following translation, retaining the thought bubbles next to Scott's head as Ramona addresses him:

Target: Sandra: ‘Hebben jullie iets samen?’
Ramona: ‘Hebben wij iets?’
Scott: ‘Sorry, wat?’

(*Scott Pilgrim*, vol. 2, p. 176, panels 5-6)

If there were any incongruity to be found in this translation, it would be that Scott seems to be thinking that the ‘something’ Ramona and he are having is an item from a video game, or simply that he is confused by Ramona’s question because he was too busy daydreaming about video games. Neither of these interpretations provides any real humorous effect, making Enters’ strategy for this particular multimodal joke a G technique.

In his article *Multimodality in the Translation of Humour in Comics*, Kaindl (2004) cites Kotthoff (1996: 250), who states that ‘the comic effect [in comic books] comes not from the punch line […] but from the “dual perspectivisation” of different contexts.’ Though Kaindl does include mono-modal humour in his model, by citing Kotthoff, he seems to imply that the humour in comic books is *inherently* multimodal. The corpus proves otherwise. Most humour in these comics is strictly mono-modal, with only a few background in-jokes in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus making explicit use of multimodal humour techniques, and the *Seconds* one featuring none of note. Considering its heavier reliance on irony and jargon, the humour in O’Malley’s works seems to be based around the wit of its dialogue, whereas Kaindl has based his research around the *Astérix* series, which seems to rely much more heavily on multimodal humour. *Astérix* has been cited by Kaindl (1999: 264) himself as an example of the ‘linguistically demanding’ comic books excluded from academia’s general negligence of comic translation. Given that Kaindl himself has urged for ‘normal’ comics to be subject to research as well, it could be interesting to further look into whether his assessments of the inherent multimodality of comic book humour are, in fact, correct, or only limited to said ‘linguistically demanding’ comics.

5.3.4 Conclusion

Humour in comic books can be divided into three categories: Verbal humour, visual humour and multimodal humour, which combines the two previous categories in some way. While visual messages are not universally interpreted, the corpus features no visual humour that could pose a challenge to translate. Furthermore, not much of the verbal humour in Bryan Lee O’Malley’s works appears to rely on language-specific Logical Mechanisms such as cratylism. Irony and situational absurdity constitute the majority of the jokes in *Scott Pilgrim* and *Seconds*, making the translation of specific jokes not as difficult as translating the language used to voice them. The research conducted into the translation of ironic cues in this corpus reveals that all ironic statements in both source texts remain intact in their respective target texts. Literal translations that retain the humorous intent of the statements are the norm, while occasionally, predominantly in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, the achieved humorous effect becomes harsher or more ‘deadpan’ due to the deletion of ironic cues. The constrained nature of comic book translation is usually the reason for these shifts. On the other hand, in the *Seconds* sub-corpus ironic statements have been made more obviously ironic, either by increasing the number of ironic cues or by changing the register of certain cues to make them more openly sarcastic.

These findings mirror the findings of §5.1: while the *Scott Pilgrim* translation features more *detractio*, the *Seconds* one features more *adiectio* and *substitutio*.

Finally, while the *Seconds* sub-corpus features no multimodal jokes of note – contrary to Kaindl's (2004) assumptions about the nature of comic books – the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus relies on multimodality mostly for background gags. While these jokes are not a part of the main narrative and serve mostly to entertain attentive readers, they nonetheless prove challenging to translate due to their language-related Script Oppositions. Furthermore, redrawing pictures or editing inscriptions would be required in order to reach a translation that retains the source text's humour, and due to financial and aesthetic constraints, the target text's options to do so are severely limited. As a result, few multimodal gags in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus retain their humorous effect in the target text, let alone are translated at all. As these jokes are usually only background gags, however, the impact on the target reader's reading experience is limited. In general, both translations succeed at maintaining the majority of their respective source texts' humour.

5.4 Dealing with Sound Effects

Garcés (2014) defines the word 'onomatopoeia' as 'a combination of sounds in a word that imitates or suggests what the word refers to'. Onomatopoeia may appear both inside and outside speech bubbles in comic books, and pose a challenge for translation 'because the representation of sounds does not always coincide across languages'. In other words, different languages may use different onomatopoeia. Because onomatopoeia in comic books often take the shape of ornate, colourful, pictorial elements in their own right, translating all sound effects is often impossible due to the same financial and aesthetic constraints which make re-drawing visual messages difficult as well.

Nevertheless, the translation of onomatopoeia is important, as representations of sounds are not universal (Garcés, 2014: 236). Apart from differences in phonology, representations of sounds may also be culturally defined or dependent on accepted conventions. Furthermore, Garcés stresses that certain common English onomatopoeia have become so widespread even in other languages – especially in Kaindl's (1999: 264) so-called 'importer' cultures – that they are kept even in translations that would otherwise translate sound effects, or even used as translations for more unconventional sound effects. Garcés (2014: 242) mentions the example of an onomatopoeia for crying in an English comic 'baw, blubber' being translated as 'sob! snif!' in Spanish, despite the latter not actually being Spanish. The use of English onomatopoeia in translated comics is simply so widespread that the average Spanish comic book reader would know that 'sob' and 'snif' are onomatopoeia used for crying.

While the term 'onomatopoeia' implies a certain imitative link between the word and the sound, not all sound effects are necessarily onomatopoeic. Certain research has looked into the notion of 'sound symbolism' or 'phonosemantics', which assumes that particular sounds or phonemes in words are associated with certain feelings or traits. Based on this definition, Kokko (2013: 34) argues that 'word formation is not arbitrary but, instead, at least partly controlled by certain, universally appearing associations.' Words like 'thump', 'whack' or 'boom' are not merely

onomatopoeia. Research has found correlations between the /θ/, /w/ and /b/ sounds used in these sound effects and the situations in which they, and other sound effects with the same sounds, are used. According to Rhodes (1995: 276-278), these sounds would imply a low pitch and a slow onset, a poorly resolvable onset and a sudden, loud onset respectively. These rules, according to Rhodes, apply to more commonly used verbs as well, such as a /dr/ or /tr/ sound implying the involvement of liquid, as in 'drink', drain' or 'trinkle'. Based on Rhodes' findings and her own, Kokko (2013: 99) found some additional English sound symbols, such as /kr/ implying breakage, or repeated letters implying a long-lasting sound. In §5.4.1, this study will try to find if there is any correlation between sound symbolism and the *repetitio* of English sound effects in the Dutch translations of O'Malley's works.

Another, more striking and recent phenomenon in comic book sound effects, however, is the sound effect that carries no onomatopoeic or phonosemantic elements whatsoever. These 'sound effects' used 'only [to explain] or [dramatize] an action' (Kokko, 2013: 41) occur very frequently in O'Malley's work and can hardly be called 'sounds' as such, even though they have all the formal characteristics of sound effects. Examples of this phenomenon from *Seconds* include 'stare' (page 6, panel 5), 'park' (page 21, panel 3), 'vault' (page 130, panel 4) or 'empty' (page 143, panel 2) sound effects. Such sound effects are not intended to imitate or invoke the sound one would associate with the visual message, but rather to describe the action or stress its intensity.

The use of these descriptive effects has not been investigated specifically, though comic book fans on the Internet have coined the term 'unsound effect' (Kokko, 2013: 41; TvTropes) or 'reverse onomatopoeia' to describe the phenomenon. The accuracy of this term is dubious, however, as there is nothing inherently 'unsound' or unreliable about 'unsound effects'. In fact, they are often used to describe empirical perceptions. Because these 'unsound effects' are so common in O'Malley's works, however, this study will attempt to look into the phenomenon from an academic perspective, and attempt to find both a more suitable term and a comprehensive definition in §5.4.2.

5.4.1 Sound Symbolism

A look at the corpus reveals that a large majority of the sound effects in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus has not been translated. Four sound effects have been removed from the target text entirely. When looking for correlations, two characteristics of O'Malley's work need to be taken into account: his use of 'unsound effects', and his tendency towards affixation (see also §5.2.1). The latter characteristic is prominent even in his use of onomatopoeia. On certain occasions, 'ring' will become 'ringy' (vol. 1, page 28, panel 4), 'ding dong' will become 'dingy dong' (vol. 1, page 71, panel 5) or 'krak', the sound of thunder, will become 'krakow' (vol. 2, page 26, panel 1), a reference to the city in Poland.

With the exception of 'skatey skate skate' (vol. 2, page 70, panel 3), all of these affixed sound effects have not been translated. Because the sole exception doubles as both an 'unsound effect' and an affixed effect, its status as the former apparently supersedes its status as the latter, because the target text tends to translate 'unsound effects' wherever possible. Only large, hand-

drawn 'unsound effects', which would require significant redrawing of the panel, are subjected to *repetitio*. Consequently, certain English words like 'peek' (vol. 1, page 55, panel 6), 'dodge' (vol. 1, page 144, panel 1), 'block' (vol. 1, page 144, panel 3), or 'love' (vol. 2, page 43, panel 2, see also §5.2.3) remain in the target text. On one occasion, an 'unsound effect' indicating a character operating a controller with their thumbs, 'thumby thumb', is turned into a regular onomatopoeia, 'thmp! thmp!', to imply buttons being pressed (vol. 1, p. 75, panel 4).

Because of the shared Germanic etymology of English and Dutch, and the influence English has had on Dutch comic book language, it is not unsurprising that the sound symbolism in source and target texts is very similar. Numerous onomatopoeia which are changed in the target text represent sounds in a way very similar to how English represents them, only altered to accommodate for Dutch spelling conventions: 'click' becomes 'klik' (vol. 1, page 64, panel 3) or 'tweet' becomes 'twiet' (vol. 1, page 106, panel 1). On other occasions, there are very obvious similarities between which sounds symbolize which situations. A combination of /r/ and /ʃ/ or /tʃ/ sounds in English usually implies a sharp, grinding sound, such as in 'scratch' (vol. 1, page 39, panel 2), 'brush' (vol. 1, page 106, panel 4) or 'crunch' (vol. 2, page 113, panel 2). These sound effects are translated as 'krab', 'poets' and 'krk!' respectively. The former two are regular equivalents for the English verbs used as sound effects, while the latter is a 'made up' onomatopoeia. Nevertheless, all three Dutch words feature a combination of two or more voiceless consonants and an /s/ or /r/ sound in order to replicate the 'scratching' effect.

It is also possible for the sound symbols in English and Dutch to be the same. Several examples of this phenomenon appear throughout the *Seconds* sub-corpus, such as a combination of an obstruent /b/ or /g/ with an /l/ sound to imply an unsanitary flowing of liquid: 'blorp' (page 103, panel 5), 'glug' (page 116, panel 6) or 'bleah' (page 133, panel 1). Another example of similar sound symbolism in the two languages is the combination of a sonorant nasal /m/ or /n/ with an /a/ to imply loud noises: 'bang' (*Seconds,* page 129, panel 1), 'wham' (*Seconds,* page 129, panel 2), 'slam' (*Seconds,* page 129, panel 3), or 'snap' (*Scott Pilgrim,* vol. 2, page 132, panel 2) in English, and 'vlam' or 'knal' in Dutch. Finally, the /ok/ sound is often used for punching or kicking in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, such as in 'kpok' (vol. 1, page 138, panel 2), 'swok' (vol. 1, page 139, panel 2), 'wrok' (vol. 2, page 26, panel 2) or 'thok' (vol. 2, page 110, panel 2). These sound effects are all carried over into Dutch, though deeper research into original Dutch comic books could reveal more insight into the sound symbolism used for onomatopoeia indicating punching or kicking in Dutch.

In conclusion, the sole defining factor which determines whether or not onomatopoeia are translated in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus is the possibility of translation: If a sound effect can be reasonably edited, it has been translated, if not, it has been left in. Certain source text sound effects the target audience would be able to understand even if they do not fit Dutch spelling conventions, have been translated – such as 'click' becoming 'klik' (vol. 1, page 64, panel 3) – while other sound effects that are English words of which the Dutch equivalent does not sound remotely similar – such as 'dodge' (vol. 1, page 144, panel 1) or 'item' (vol. 2, page 122, panel 5) – have been left in without *adiectio* of a translation or translator's note in the gutter, as Kaindl (1999: 276-277) suggests. No factor other than whether or not it is possible to translate a sound

effect without having to considerably redraw panels, determines if sound effects in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus have been translated.

Because of its strictly mono-modal nature, a higher number of sound effects have been translated in the *Seconds* sub-corpus. Analysis of this sub-corpus reveals that 38% of source text onomatopoeia (32 out of 84) is subjected to a *repetitio* shift, indicating a significant overlap between comic book sound effect conventions in Dutch and English. Furthermore, of the onomatopoeia which have been translated, a considerable number display a significant verbal – e.g. 'stare'/'staar' (page 6, panel 5), 'chew'/'kauw' (page 118, panel 10), 'grab'/'grijp' (page 122, panel 11) – or phonosemantic similarity, e.g. 'wham'/'knal' (page 129, panel 2), 'chomp chomp'/'njam njam' (page 100, panel 5). Further research may discover whether these high levels of correlation between onomatopoeia in English and Dutch are apparent only in translations, or whether the meanings attributed to certain sounds in English are shared with Dutch even in comic books originally written in Dutch.

5.4.2 The 'Unsound Effect'

As established in §5.4, the works of O'Malley are rife with sound effects that do not actually indicate a sound. While certain onomatopoeia have become words in their own right such as 'click', 'crunch' or 'smooch', these 'unsound effects' are often used to indicate actions that do not even make any distinct sound. Often, they are used to draw attention to an action, to indicate intensity or suddenness. The example below shows such use of the 'unsound effect', stressing the intensity of Lis' staring (Image 10).

Image 10 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2014

On other occasions, 'unsound effects' are used to show an action or event which would be hard to visualize otherwise, similar to the epic function Kaindl (2004) ascribes to captions (see §2.1.2.2); such as in the example below. 'Pause' is 'heard' from outside of the panel to indicate that Scott has paused the video game he is playing when his phone rings (Image 11), even if such an action usually does not produce any sound. Rather than as a means of stressing the intensity of the visual message – or what Martinec and Salway (2005) would call 'elaboration' – this 'unsound effect' gives information the visual message cannot give, indicating a relationship of

extension. By using this 'unsound effect', O'Malley avoids having to rely on more roundabout methods of visualizing a less obvious action such as 'pausing a video game'.

Image 11 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2005

A comparison of the two sub-corpora reveals a significant development over time in O'Malley's use of the 'unsound effect'. While the first volume of *Scott Pilgrim* still relies mostly on traditional onomatopoeia, *Seconds* features more absurd and unconventional 'unsound effects' such as 'park' (page 21, panel 3), 'cold' (page 132, panel 2) or 'selfie' (page 142, panel 2). Whereas the fight scene at the end of *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life* mostly relies on onomatopoeia such as 'pow' or 'whap', and imaginative, humorous effects such as 'smurf' (page 141, panel 1), *Seconds* uses 'vault' (page 130, panel 4), 'get' (panel 5) and 'dash' (panel 7) to portray a similarly intense chase, as picture below (Image 12).

Image 12 © Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2014

However, the distinction between regular onomatopoeia and these 'unsound effects' is not always clear. Words such as 'scratch' (vol. 1, page 39, panel 2), 'click' (vol. 1, page 64, panel 3) or 'jingle' (vol. 2, page 122, panel 3) are not solely used as onomatopoeia, like 'kpok' (vol. 1, page 138, panel 2) or 'shwaa' (vol. 2, page 139, panel 2) are; they are commonly accepted verbs in English. Nevertheless, these words do, to a certain extent, imitate the sound of the action they describe, or make use of sound symbolism. After the removal of these 'semi-onomatopoeia', thirty 'pure' 'unsound effects' remain in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus, including 'punch', 'slump' and 'grip'. The 'love' (vol. 2, page 43, panel 2) taking physical form (see §5.2.3.) also counts as a type of 'unsound effect', as do 'reversal' (vol. 1, page 138, panel 3), 'K.O.' (vol. 1, page 158, panel 1) and 'item' (vol. 2, page 122, panel 5), which are meant to replicate the text appearing on-screen in video games.

Volume	Page	Panel	Source text	Target text
1	55	6	Peek!	Peek!
	60	3	Sip	Slp
	64	5	Slump	Slump
	68	1	Chew chew	Kauw kauw
	75	4	Thumby thumb	Thmp! Thmp!
	106	4	Brush brush brush	Poets poets poets
	112	4	Slump	Plof
	123	7	Zoom	Zoom
	144	1	Dodge	Dodge
		2	Block	Block
	146	4	Kissy kissy	Kissy kissy
	158	-	K.O.	K.O.
2	26	4	Choke	Choke
	27	3	Kick	Kick
	43	2	Love	Love
	70	3	Skatey skate skate	Schaats schaats schaats
	110	3	Grip	Grip
	111	1	Spinnnn	Spinnnn
	122	5	Item!	Item!
	128	1	Pause	Pauze
		5	Unpause	Afpelen
	129	6	Pause	Pauze
		8	Unpause	Afspelen
	138	3	Reversal	Reversal
	142	1	Duck	Duck
		2	Tackle	Tackle
	144	2	Grab	Grab
			Slice	Slice
	148	2	Pause	Pauze
	159	1	Chop chop	Hak hak
	167	1	Punch!	Mep!

A look at the list of 'unsound effects' in the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus reveals that 18 of the 31 'unsound effects' have not been translated, conform the conclusion of §5.4.1: Though the target text tries to translate 'unsound effects', like regular onomatopoeia, they are only translated when it is possible to do so without having to redraw a considerable part of the panel. Despite

‘unsound effects’ containing no sound symbolism, and therefore being less transparent to Dutch readers than onomatopoeia, this results in words such as ‘peek’, ‘kick’, ‘dodge’ or ‘slice’ being left in the target text, as seen in the above table. Out of the 13 ‘unsound effects’ that have been translated, three have been translated using a regular onomatopoeia rather than an ‘unsound effect’: ‘thumby thumb’ becomes ‘thmp! thmp!’, ‘sip’ becomes ‘slp’ and ‘slump’ becomes ‘plof!’.

The *Seconds* sub-corpus contains more, and arguably, even more eccentric ‘unsound effects’.

Page	Panel	Source text	Target text
6	5	Stare	Staar
8	6	Hop	Hop
21	3	Park	Parkeer
33	1	Stare	Staar
37	7	Nod!	Knik!
	8	Tap!	Tap!
41	4	Scroll scroll scroll	Scroll scroll scroll
	5	Toss	Gooi
47	1	Flip	Blader
	9	Flip	Flip
56	2	Grab	Grijp
61	7	Wipe	Veeg
76	5	Eat	Eet
82	2	Clutch	Greep
87	6	Lunge	Uitval
	7	Snatch	Steel
90	2	Grab	Grijp
93	1	Kick	Schop
98	4	Sip	Nip
102	3	Hand shake?	Hand schudden?
	4	Wait…	Wacht…
	5	Awkward fist bump	Onhandig vuist… ding?
103	9	Zoom!	Zoef!
118	10	Chew chew	Kauw kauw
120	3	Sexy(?)	Sexy(?)
122	2	Ringing	Tuut tuut tuut
	11	Grab	Grijp
123	1	Scroll scroll scroll	Scroll scroll scroll
	4	Twitch	Trek
130	4	Vault	Spring
	5	Get	Pak
	7	Dash	Sprint
132	2	Cold	Koud
138	3	Shove	Duw
142	2	Selfie!	Selfie!
143	2	Empty	Leeg

Whereas the *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus only used ‘unsound effects’ to denote actions, the *Seconds* sub-corpus also uses them to imply a state or atmosphere. Examples from the above table include ‘empty’ and ‘cold’. Because of the translation’s mono-modal nature, a far larger number

of 'unsound' effects have been translated. Only 'hop', 'tap', 'selfie!' and one instance of 'flip' have been subjected to a *repetitio* shift, as these words are the same across source and target language. Furthermore, on two occasions, an 'unsound effect' has been translated by using a regular onomatopoeia: 'zoom' becomes 'zoef' and 'ringing' becomes 'tuut tuut tuut'. Lastly, it should be noted that the *Seconds* sub-corpus, unlike the *Scott Pilgrim* one, contains no wordplay using sound effects. The *Scott Pilgrim* sub-corpus prominently features affixations of sound effects, such as 'ringy' (vol. 1, page 28, panel 4) or 'skatey skate skate' (vol. 2, p. 70, panel 3), as well as referential humour based on similarities between onomatopoeia and other words, such as 'krakow' (vol. 2, page 26, panel 1) mentioned in §5.4.1, or 'ringu' seen on Image 11, likely a reference to the Japanese film *Ringu*. The *Seconds* sub-corpus, despite featuring more 'unsound effects' than the *Scott Pilgrim* one, features fewer of these idiosyncratic affixations.

The term 'unsound effect', however, remains unsatisfactory for use in an academic context. While the adjective 'unsound' could refer to the fact that these effects are used to indicate actions, feelings or states which do not produce any distinct sound, it also implies that these sound effects are unreliable; when they in fact serve to clarify the visual message of a comic book panel to the reader. Consequently, further research must be carried out in order to coin a suitable term and definition for this phenomenon. While sources pertaining to the relatively recent occurrence of 'unsound effects' in the English language are non-existent, a similar phenomenon is very common in Japanese. Because Japanese comics, or *manga*, served as an inspiration for the works of Bryan Lee O'Malley, his use of 'unsound effects' was most likely inspired by the *manga* industry's reliance on Japanese onomatopoeia known as ideophones.

5.4.2.1 Ideophones and Erikatives

One of the characteristics of *manga* is the use of ideophones, or 'marked words that depict sensory imagery' (Dingemanse, 2012: 655). In other words, ideophones are words which refer to 'perceptual knowledge that derives from sensory perception of the environment and the body' (ibid.: 655-656). These sensory perceptions are not limited to the five sensory modalities, but also for example to 'kinaesthetic sensations, interoceptive experience and balance.' Ideophones are uncommon in Western languages (Nuckolls, 2004), but do feature prominently in Japanese, where they are categorized into three classes: Next to the onomatopoeia or 'phonomimes' known in English, Japanese also has 'phenomimes' and 'psychomimes' (Akita, 2009), words to indicate 'the appearance, state and conditions of the external world' and mental states or feelings, respectively (Hasada, 1998: 83). An example of a phenomime is 'do-kyuu' (sunlight breaking through), while examples of psychomimes include 'muka muka' (irritated) (Hasada, 1998: 84) or 'sowa sowa' (restless) (Spacey, 2012).

Hamano (1998) states that Japanese ideophones are not used only as onomatopoeia, but cover a wider range of meanings, which is what sets them apart from the onomatopoeia known in Western languages. Consequently, ideophones may be used both as substitutes for common words – e.g. a cat ('neko') might also be called a 'nya nya' ('meow meow') (Spacey, 2012) – or as sound effects in *manga*. A nervous character might be accompanied by a 'sowa sowa' sound effect, for example. In Image 13, a panel from the English translation of the *manga, Ouran High School Host Club* (Hatori, 2005), the large sound effect displayed at the bottom of the panel is read

as 'zoro', an ideophone used to indicate a large crowd or people lined up in a row. Notice the *adiectio* subtitling 'SFX (sound effects): lined up' the translator has added, in order to compensate for leaving the Japanese characters in.

Image 13 from 'Ouran High School Host Club' by Bisco Hatori (2003) © Viz Media, 2005

Lining up in a row does not make a specific sound of its own, so the 'zoro' sound effect in the above image serves a purpose beyond that of simply replicating the auditory perception associated with the action pictured. Like 'unsound effects' in the works of O'Malley, the ideophones are used to draw attention to certain actions, feelings or states, even if they would not produce any sound. The 'unsound effect' is the logical conclusion of the ideophone: rather than using a sound-symbolic phenomime or psychomime, the commonly used word for the action, feeling, or state is used to create a similar effect. However, while 'unsound effects' may be ideophones, not all ideophones are 'unsound effects', as ideophones may still be neologisms or 'nonsensical' onomatopoeia, whereas 'unsound effects' only use existing words. The terms are therefore not interchangeable.

Another type of sound effect similar to the 'unsound effect' can be found in the German comic book translation tradition. The 'Erikativ' (usually translated as 'erikative') construction originated in the 1950s and is named after Erika Fuchs, a translator who translated English Disney comics into German. Rather than translating the source text onomatopoeia into German ones, Fuchs would use a newly made-up mood, constructed by using the bare stem of the word used to indicate the action portrayed (Lindsay, 2009). The onomatopoeia for water spurting out of a cave goes from 'brooom' in English to 'spritz' ('spray') in German, or a flat tire going 'ka-pow' in English goes 'zisch' ('fizzle') in German (Babel, 2013). It is important to know that unlike in English, the nominal form of a verb in German is not the same as the bare stem: Fuchs did actually devise a completely new mood in the German language in order to translate sound effects without making up new onomatopoeia. Eventually, Fuchs' use of her newly devised mood 'evolved beyond onomatopoetic use' (Lindsay, 2009: 1), and she started using 'sound effects' such as 'starr' ('stare'), 'heul' ('wail') or 'schlaf' ('sleep'). By using existing German verbs related to the visual message being portrayed, rather than making up 'nonsense words' such as 'blam' or 'woosh', Fuchs' translations helped clarify visual messages which might not have been easy to interpret for the Disney comics' young readers and helped familiarize them with verb stems and wordplay (*Der Spiegel*, 1969).

Afterwards, the Erikativ became popular in German chat rooms on the Internet, where it was used to 'compensate for a lack of non-verbal cues' (Lindsay, 2009: 2), usually marked by 'bounding' asterisks (Zimmer, 2013). For example, where one would yawn in a spoken

conversation, one would type '*gähn*' ('*yawn*') in a written chat. Nowadays, the Erikativ is used prominently on social media, both in German and in English, as means of conveying one's emotions through verbal means, alongside emoticons (Lindsay, 2009: 2). The extension of the Erikativ's use beyond comic book translation led Teuber (1998) to coin a more general synonym: the 'Inflektiv' mood. Because Teuber (ibid.: 8) defines this construction as 'a verb form that is *not* inflected', or '[does not have affixes added] to [its] base or root to determine and limit its grammatical significance' (Hartmann & Stork, 1972: 112), Lindsay (2009: 1) argues that the correct English translation of 'Inflektiv' should be 'uninflective'. The online use of the Erikativ or Inflectiv may encompass both non-verbal cues such as '*sigh*' or '*rolls eyes*' and more elaborate 'pretend play'. In this case, Schlepelmann (2004) describes the Erikativ as a 'contextualization convention', which is used to verbalize entire actions within conversations. For example, where one would pat their conversation partner on the back in a 'live' conversation, '*pats you on the back*' would be used in online conversation. Despite being a written means of communication, online conversation appropriates many of the conventions of spoken language (Blakeman, 2004). As it is used to verbalize non-verbal aspects of conversation, the Erikativ is one of these means online conversation adopts to combine characteristics of written and spoken language.

While O'Malley's use of 'unsound effects' is probably inspired by Japanese ideophones, the types of sound effects he eventually ended up with resemble the Erikativ more. Furthermore, the German-language version of the website TvTropes, where the term 'unsound effect' originated, translates the term as 'Erikativ'. Most 'unsound effects' found in O'Malley's works adopt the formal characteristics of the Erikativ. However, whereas the Erikativ only describes actions or cues, the 'unsound effect' may also convey a phenomimetic or psychomimetic meaning similar to *manga* ideophones. The *Seconds* sub-corpus for example, features such psychomimes as 'sexy' (page 120, panel 3) and phenomimes as 'cold' (page 132, panel 2) or 'empty' (page 143, panel 2). Furthermore, as the Erikativ is a verbal mood, like infinitive or imperative, an Erikativ can only ever be a verb, whereas the corpus shows that adjectives or nouns (e.g. 'selfie!') can be 'unsound effects' as well. Therefore, 'erikative' or 'inflective' would not be suitable enough alternatives for 'unsound effect'.

Despite similarities to constructions originating in the Japanese and German comic book traditions, the 'unsound effect' remains largely unexplored in comic book research. While the 'unsound effects' in the corpus vary widely in terms of lexical category, form or meaning, careful consideration reveals that all 'unsound effects' in the corpus share the follow characteristics: Firstly, like the Erikativ, all 'unsound effects' in the corpus are existing, common words or phrases in their respective language, rather than neologisms or onomatopoeia which exist solely within a comic book context. Secondly, like ideophones, all 'unsound effects' in the corpus serve to describe the action, situation or mood pictured by the verbal message of the panel they are featured in. This description, however, does not have to be objective – as 'awkward fist bump' (page 102, panel 5) or 'sexy (?)' (page 120, panel 3) from the *Seconds* sub-corpus prove. Therefore, rather than having a strictly mimetic function, the 'unsound effect' may also serve as a type of (meta-) commentary. Lastly, similar to both the Erikativ and to ideophones, all 'unsound effects' in the corpus are visually identical to regular onomatopoeia.

From these observations, it may be concluded that the 'unsound effect' is not a type of sound effect at all, as it describes perceivable actions, moods or feelings that do not produce any distinct sound. Consequently, 'unsound effects' are not a category of sound effects, but a category of comic book verbal messages alongside balloons, captions, titles, paratext and sound effects (Celotti, 2014; Kaindl, 2004; see §2.1.2.2). Because their function, regardless of how subjective and mimetic they are, is always descriptive, and they are distinguished from sound effects only in their lack of onomatopoeia, a more suitable term for the phenomenon previously labelled 'unsound effect' would be 'non-onomatopoetic descriptive effect'. Based on the abovementioned characteristics and analogous to Kaindl's (1999: 274) definition of onomatopoeia as '[providing] a visual reflection in writing of the auditive dimension of events and emotions', the descriptive effect could be defined as follows:

> *'A non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect is the verbal description of one or more non-auditive dimensions of events and emotions pictured in a visual message, comprising of a single word or clause, but bearing the formal characteristics of onomatopoeia.'*

A non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect is a *verbal description*, because it uses words to give an account of relevant characteristics, qualities or events. It describes *one or more dimensions* of the events being shown in the drawing it accompanies, because it can refer to both a single aspect of the visual message (e.g. 'sexy (?)', 'cold') or the entire visual message (e.g. 'awkward fist bump'). The events or emotions it describes are *non-auditive*, because otherwise the effect would be a regular onomatopoeia. The non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect consists usually of a *single word*, be it verb form, noun or adjective, but may also be a pre- or post-modified *clause*, as shown by 'awkward fist bump'. Finally, non-onomatopoeic descriptive effects take on the formal characteristics of onomatopoeia in their respective media. As onomatopoeia is not necessarily limited to comic books, but also features in spoken language, animation, or even film, neither are non-onomatopoeic descriptive effects. According to TvTropes' list of examples, 'unsound effects' occur amongst other places in TV shows like *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969) ('inflate!') or *Loony Tunes* (1963) ('gigantic explosion'). Similar to how one may occasionally say regular onomatopoeia out loud – by yelling 'vroom' while driving a car, for example – examples of such use of descriptive effects appear amongst others in the animated movie *Despicable Me* (2010) where the main character says 'lightbulb!' when he has an idea, or in *South Park* (2002), where an angry mob shouts 'rabble rabble rabble'. As the formal characteristics of onomatopoeia may differ across various media, the formal characteristics of descriptive effects will follow suite.

5.4.3 Conclusion

Comic book sound effects are difficult to translate, not only because of the differences between how individual languages vocalize sounds, but also because of the financial and aesthetic difficulties which arise from having to redraw the large, colourful forms onomatopoeia in comic books often take on. While the *Seconds* translation was not marred by the latter problem due to its mono-modal nature, the *Scott Pilgrim* translation made obvious that sound effects tend to be translated only when little redrawing is involved. Garcés (2014) has shown that due to this longstanding tradition, English onomatopoeia have become commonly accepted in several languages, especially those where comic books are imported rather than exported (Kaindl, 1999).

However, not all sound effects in comic books are onomatopoeia. Other sound effects feature certain sounds or syllables which reflect a certain sound or sensation. These sound symbolisms carry over into translation: certain symbolic phonemes in the source language tend to correlate with certain symbolic phonemes in the target language. As these 'phonosemantic' words are no literal vocalizations of sounds, they have been dubbed 'semi-onomatopoeia'. Lastly, the corpus also features 'sound effects' without onomatopoeic elements or representations of sounds. Instead, they serve to draw attention to or stress the intensity of actions, states or feelings. This dissertation has attempted to define this phenomenon and coin a suitable term for it: the non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect. As this type of effect takes the shape of a word from the language's general vocabulary, translating it is harder than translating 'regular' onomatopoeia. As a result, the *Scott Pilgrim* translation leaves in several source language words, as they are used in non-onomatopoeic descriptive effects which, due to financial and aesthetic constraints, cannot be redrawn.

6. General Conclusion

Comic book translation has often gone unnoticed by translation studies, with theoretical models and frameworks few and far between. This thesis has been an attempt at gathering the fundamental theories yet established and applying them to the Dutch translations of the *Scott Pilgrim* series and *Seconds*, comic books oriented towards a 'new adult' audience rather than considered 'linguistically demanding' or culturally significant. By comparing the translation strategies used in both these target texts, the former by Hans Enters, the latter made in function of this thesis, it has reached various conclusions pertaining to the translation of dialogue texts, humour and sound effects. Its results have shown that most of the discrepancies between the source texts and their respective translations, as well as between the target texts themselves, are based on a fundamental difference in the translation principle adopted by both translators, as well as on the different formats and contexts of the different translations.

These factors, for example, contribute to the strategies adopted for translating dialogue texts in both comics – in their attempts to provide an equivalent translation for the vernacular, conversational English used in both source texts, both translations heavily draw onto conversational Dutch from the translator's region of origin. The *Scott Pilgrim* translation contains several words and idioms characteristic of the Netherlands, whereas the *Seconds* translation draws mostly on Flemish vernacular. As concluded in §5.2.5, 'the notion of what constitutes 'natural, conversational language' will always depend on the specific translator and the language tradition they are a part of'. Furthermore, the translation of dialogue texts in comic books, especially so-called 'linguistic paratext' is largely dependent on the possibility to edit the visual message of the comic book. Because of the financial cost, as well as any possible aesthetic grievances related to such a process, an inscription on a comic book page will often need to be both important to the narrative and relatively easy and cheap to edit before it will be translated. That same issue also affects the translation of multimodal jokes – which will be removed if the visual aspect of the joke cannot be edited within the limited options available to the translator – comic book effects, including sound effects or onomatopoeia, and non-onomatopoetic descriptive effects. These latter two elements combine verbal and visual aspects and therefore often need to be *both* translated and redrawn.

The other major difference between the two translations is, as mentioned before, the difference in translation principle adopted by both. In terms of sheer quantitative findings, the *Seconds* translation is more lexically 'faithful' to the original comic than the *Scott Pilgrim* one. However, more important is the fact that in general, the *Scott Pilgrim* translation often favours a 'reductive' translation principle, in which *detractio* shifts are dominant both in its translation of dialogue texts as in its translation of humour, while the *Seconds* translation often features more *adiectio* and *substitutio*, hinting at a more 'additive' or 'enhancing' translation principle. This difference in translation principle is often displayed in the nature of the discrepancies between both translations and their respective source texts. Concerning the translation of humour, particularly through deletion or addition of ironic cues, these strategies result in humorous remarks in the *Scott Pilgrim* translation being more 'deadpan', whereas the humour in the *Seconds* translation is more overtly sarcastic, in line with the characteristic prominence of formal ironic cues, juxtaposed with informal remarks typical of the source texts. Alongside its significantly higher

number of *adiectio* shifts, the *Seconds* translation therefore also maintains a slightly higher percentage of source text style elements.

The higher degree of fidelity to the source text of the *Seconds* translation can however be attributed mainly to the limitations imposed onto the *Scott Pilgrim* translation. The strictly mono-modal nature of the *Seconds* translation has allowed for all of its paratext, onomatopoeia and non-onomatopoeic descriptive effects to be translated without the need to consider the financial and aesthetic constraints of a multimodal comic book translation. This inequality has made it impossible to discuss the handling of inscriptions and typesetting in the *Seconds* translation. Furthermore, given the not insignificant number of inaccuracies and translation errors in the *Scott Pilgrim* translation, possible differences regarding the context in which both translations were made need to be taken into account. Lastly, the absence of existing corpora on the translation of popular comic books and teenage slang into Dutch has limited this thesis' observations in that regard.

Consequently, further research into comic book translation is essential, as even research into the translation of 'low-brow' comic books can lead to interesting and worthwhile conclusions – as this research has attempted to prove. With the comic book industry ever booming (Lubin, 2014), comic book translation will become more prominent, and research into comic book translation should follow suite. For instance, while this dissertation has attempted to coin a term for and define the 'non-onomatopoeic descriptive effect', further research into this fascinating new phenomenon could prove useful to fine-tune this dissertation's findings on the matter. Furthermore, continued research into the financial and aesthetic constraints limiting comic book translation into uncommonly spoken languages such as Dutch could lead to important findings on how this relatively high level of *repetitio* shifts in translated comic books affects the reading experience for readers who do not understand the language of the original. Are readers confused when the inscriptions and effects in a comic book translated into their native tongue are left in a foreign language? Lastly, further research and extensive corpora on the translation of English teen vernacular, such as Valspeak, are essential in a world where literary translation is no longer limited to just 'highbrow' literature. Further research into comic book translation can help boost the prestige of the medium, and lead to more comic books being translated and made accessible to a broader audience.

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