

Subtitling Wordplay:

A Case Study of *Sherlock* and *The Big Bang Theory*



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S1110640

25 June 2015

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MA Linguistics: Translation in Theory and Practice

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Images on the cover are retrieved from:

Cover art for: *Sherlock*. BBC and Dutch Filmworks, 2010. DVD.

Cover art for: *The Big Bang Theory, Seizoenen 1-5*. Warner Bros., 2012. DVD.

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Introduction

Subtitling is often the subject of heated debates when people watch a foreign television show. For example, they may point out that “And a happy New Year” cannot possibly be translated as “Geen moeilijke woorden” (The Great Game). Usually, the audience claims to speak the source language quite well and thinks that the subtitling is clearly wrong. Often, however, they forget one very important factor: wordplay is often language-specific and therefore particularly hard to translate in a satisfying manner, especially when the target audience can hear and understand the source language. Though such heated debates may be prominent in certain households, they have hardly taken place among translation scholars. There are many articles about dubbing and wordplay, but hardly any research has been done concerning subtitling and wordplay. This case study will therefore contribute to the relatively new academic field of subtitling research.

Many of us can probably accept that some instances of wordplay will be lost in translation. But to go even further into the discussion: what happens when an instance of language-dependent wordplay is important for plot or character development and therefore has to be maintained in target text? The influence of plot and character development on translation in general and subtitling in particular has hardly been researched. If such wordplay needs to be retained, the subtitler may have to be more inventive. Therefore, it seems to me that when an instance of wordplay is important for plot or characterization in any television series, whether comedy or drama, then the translation will be more likely to also contain wordplay than when the instance of wordplay is not important for plot or characterization.

Before I can prove this claim, however, I will first explain the translation phenomenon of subtitling and what constraints subtitling poses on the translating process in the first chapter. For example, because of the limited space available on the screen, the subtitles always contain less information than the original dialogue. In the second chapter, I will

discuss typologies of humour. I will first explain what humour is according to the linguist Attardo, and then discuss humour and wordplay from the point of view of a translator. After having defined what wordplay and language-dependent humour is for a translator, I will continue by outlining the typology of puns developed by Nash. This typology will be useful in the case study. In the second chapter, I will also discuss some translation options for puns in literature according to Delabastita. The third chapter will discuss previously carried out research in the translation of wordplay and puns in audio-visual contexts. Lastly, the fourth chapter will consist of a case study.

The case study will focus on the subtitling of wordplay and puns in two different television series: *The Big Bang Theory*, an American comedy series about a group of scientists, and *Sherlock*, a British crime drama about Sherlock Holmes in a contemporary setting. Because these series belong to different genres, they are likely to contain a wide range of different types of humour. *The Big Bang Theory*, for example, may have many jokes for the sake of comedy and fewer jokes important for plot or characterization, whereas *Sherlock* probably has fewer jokes for comedy purposes but may contain some that are very important for the plot or characterization. In the case study, I will therefore compare the translations of puns that are important for plot and characterization with puns that are used only for their humorous effect. This will enable me to determine whether a difference in the importance of the humour for the series results in different translation approaches by the subtitler.

Chapter 1: Subtitling and its Constraints on Translation

Subtitling is defined by Díaz Cintas and Remael as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text [...] that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image [...] and the information that is contained on the soundtrack” (8). This definition only defines subtitling in general. There are, however, different uses of subtitling and subtitling raises many problems and involves many constraints. This chapter will discuss the translation phenomenon of subtitling and its translation issues. Firstly, I will discuss different types of subtitling to explain exactly what subtitling is used for. Secondly, I will explain the technical aspects and constraints of subtitling to show in what way subtitles limit the translation of the spoken text. Thirdly, I will discuss some conventions of subtitling which, for example, define what to do with visual texts in the programme or punctuation. Lastly, I will briefly outline some translation issues in subtitling; the issue of translating jokes will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

1.1 Classification of Subtitles

Subtitling can be classified in multiple ways. Díaz Cintas and Remael propose five criteria along which subtitles can be classified; “linguistic, time available for preparation, technical, methods of projection, and distribution format” (13). Since I am only going to look at linguistic features of subtitling in this thesis, only the linguistic criterion will be discussed in detail. I will not discuss the latter three criteria in this chapter, because they do not make any difference for the subtitles themselves; they only make a distinction in the different ways that subtitles are put on the screen. The ‘time available for preparation’ category will not be discussed either, since this category does not distinguish the two television programmes included in the case study. The linguistic criterion divides subtitling into three different types: bilingual subtitles, intralingual subtitles, and interlingual subtitles.

The first major type of subtitling is bilingual subtitling. This type of subtitling is mainly used in countries with two or more official languages. In these countries, “the two lines available for subtitles are in constant use, each one dedicated to a different language” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 18). The availability of only one subtitle line per language puts further constraints on the subtitling process. Another environment for bilingual subtitles is international film festivals. Here, films are often played with subtitles both in English and in the language of the host country.

Intralingual subtitles, the second major category, are defined by Gottlieb as “vertical, in the sense that it involves taking speech down in writing, changing mode but not language” (247). This type of subtitling can be divided into five sub-types. The first and largest sub-type is subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. A special feature of this sub-type is that the subtitles can be presented in different colours for different speakers and that they can “incorporate all paralinguistic information that contributes to the development of the plot or to the creation of atmosphere” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 14). A second sub-type of intralingual subtitles is subtitling for didactic purposes. Such subtitles convey the exact text that has been spoken in a written form. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael, “viewers were thus able to read on the screen the written dialogue of the actors and recognize or confirm what they had not understood aurally” (16). A third sub-type of intralingual subtitling is karaoke subtitling. This type of subtitling conveys the lyrics of the songs of a movie musical, so that the audience can sing along. The fourth sub-type of intralingual subtitling is the subtitling of dialects in the source text. This type of subtitling conveys a written representation in standard language of an oral text spoken in a dialect or accent that may be difficult to understand for the audience. The last sub-type of intralingual subtitling is subtitling used for advertising and news broadcasting. This type of subtitling is different from all of the other sub-types in that it does not convey a written representation of an oral text, but is only a written text transmitted without sound.

The last major type of subtitling is interlingual subtitling. This type of subtitling is defined by Gottlieb as being “diagonal, in the sense that the subtitler crosses over from speech in one language to writing in another, thus changing mode and language”(247). Interlingual subtitling can, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael, be divided into two subgroups: subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and subtitles for hearers. Interlingual subtitling for the deaf-and-hard of hearing differs from intralingual subtitling for the deaf-and-hard of hearing in the sense that interlingual subtitles are translated from one language into to another instead of being a complete representation of the soundtrack in the source language.

The focus of this thesis will be interlingual subtitling for hearers. This type of subtitling gives a condensed written representation in the target language of an oral text in the source language for people who can also hear the original soundtrack. This type of subtitling carries several constraints that make it an interesting subject to focus on, for instance the fact that subtitles have to be considerably shorter than the source text because of the reading speed of the viewers. The next section will discuss more constraints on interlingual subtitling.

1.2 Technical Aspects and Constraints on Subtitling

According to Gottlieb (245), viewers of film and television programmes have four simultaneous channels to process in order to fully understand the programme. Gottlieb explains the four different channels as “the verbal auditory channel, including dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics, the non-verbal auditory channel, including music, natural sound and sound effects, the verbal visual channel, including superimposed titles and written signs on the screen, and the non-verbal visual channel: picture composition and flow” (Gottlieb 245). A viewer of a subtitled programme must process information from all four channels, whereas a viewer of the original programme often only has to process information from three channels, since the verbal visual channel only occasionally contains anything

without subtitles. In other words, whereas a viewer of the original programme only has to listen to the dialogue and background sounds and watch the action on the screen, the viewer of the subtitled programme also has to read the subtitles in addition to everything else. This means that the subtitles must be easy to read, “in order not to distract the viewer’s attention from the programme” (Georgakopoulou 21). However, in order for the translator to achieve readability, he must remember that there are several constraints on subtitling.

Georgakopoulou recognises three different types of constraints in subtitling: technical, textual, and linguistic.

1.2.1 Technical Constraints

Georgakopoulou divides the technical constraints for subtitling into three categories: space, time, and presentation. Her space constraint covers the fact that every subtitle can usually have only two lines, with the number of characters depending on the target language. According to Díaz Cintas, for a target language that uses “the Roman alphabet[,] the maximum number of characters allowed on a one line TV subtitle is usually 37, including blank spaces and typographical signs, which all take up one space” (84). This means that the subtitler has only 74 characters per subtitle to convey the source text in the target language. As a consequence, the target text will often be considerably shorter than the source text.

The time constraint is another technical constraint that Georgakopoulou discusses. One time constraint for subtitling is the amount of time that the subtitle is visible on the screen. On the one hand, if a subtitle appears on the screen for only a short amount of time, there is a risk that the audience fails to read the entire subtitle and possibly misses out on important information. On the other hand, if a subtitle remains on the screen for too long, the audience is likely to read the subtitle more than once, which means that the audience is distracted from watching the video. Díaz Cintas and Remael argue that in order to “avoid this

unnecessary second reading, six seconds is the recommended maximum exposure time to keep a full two-liner on screen” (89). Therefore, if there is an utterance that takes longer than six seconds, it is better to divide the subtitling into smaller units that are on screen for a shorter amount of time to avoid re-reading. A second time constraint is the reading speed of the target audience. For example, the audience of a children’s programme cannot read as fast as the audience of a programme intended for teenagers or adults. Therefore, the subtitles for a children’s programme must contain fewer characters than the subtitles for an adult programme.

The presentation of the subtitles is the third technical subtitling constraint that Georgakopoulou discusses. Some of these constraints are “the size of the characters, their position on the screen, as well as the technology used for the projection of subtitles” (Georgakopoulou 22). The presentation of subtitling differs amongst media; for example films shown in cinemas can contain more characters per subtitle line than films on television because of the width of a cinema screen. However, I will not explain this constraint in further detail, given that the series discussed in the case study both have the same type of presentation.

1.2.2 Textual Constraints

Georgakopoulou also discusses several textual constraints on subtitling. He first claims that “the viewer of a subtitled programme has at least two types of information on which to concentrate: the action on the screen, and the translation of the dialogue, that is the subtitles” (22-23). This means that the subtitles must contain text that is as easy to read as possible. To achieve the highest readability, a subtitler therefore has to make sure that longer lines of text are broken up at appropriate points. Karamitroglou has proposed a rule for the segmentation of subtitle lines: “In cases where the sentence cannot fit in a single-line subtitle

and has to continue over a second line or even over a new subtitle flash, the segmentation on each of the lines should be arranged to coincide with the highest syntactic node possible” (Karamitroglou). This means that a subtitle should not be broken up in the middle of a syntactic phrase, or, in other words, the line should be broken up after “a satisfactorily complete piece of information” (Karamitroglou). For example, a subtitle containing the text “When the police are out of their depth, they consult me” (“A Study in Pink”) should be broken up after the comma, and a subtitle containing the text “Got my eye on a nice little place in central London” (“A Study in Pink”) should not be broken up after ‘nice’, but either after ‘eye’ or ‘place’. This same rule applies for when the text does not fit into one subtitle. In this case, the subtitle must also be broken up at the highest syntactic node possible. In addition to syntactical segmentation, Díaz Cintas and Remael take into account another type of segmentation: rhetorical segmentation. This type of segmentation “tries to take some of the meaningful features of spoken language into account” (179). If rhetorical elements, such as hesitations or punch lines of jokes or ironic comments, are relevant to the message, the subtitler must try to convey this in the subtitle. For example, the punch line of a joke might work best if it is placed on the next subtitle to create suspense.

Another textual constraint on subtitling that Georgakopoulou discusses is the change in mode from an oral text to a written text. This constraint mainly consists of some oral elements of spoken texts that are hard to convey in written texts, such as specific pronunciation features and ungrammatical structures. For example, a character’s idiolect has a specific nonstandard pronunciation feature, but is still understandable. His normal speech can be subtitled into standard language. However, what happens when a joke is being made about his pronunciation? This issue will be discussed later on in this chapter and in the case study, because it is not only a textual constraint, but also, and more importantly, a translation issue for subtitling.

1.2.3 Linguistic Constraints

Georgakopoulou lastly discusses linguistic constraints on subtitling. The main linguistic constraint is that the oral text contains more text than the subtitle can convey. Therefore, according to Georgakopoulou, “with an average 30% to 40% expansion rate when translating from English into most other European languages, reduction is obviously the most important strategy in subtitling” (26). This translation expansion rate is not the only reason for the necessity of reduction in subtitling. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael, there are three reasons for text reduction in subtitling: viewers can comprehend spoken text faster than written text, viewers have to combine reading with watching the action on screen and listening, and there is only limited space available for the subtitles (146), as explained before. The subtitler has to decide which parts of the text are going to be reduced or even deleted. Both Georgakopoulou and Díaz Cintas and Remael therefore stress the importance of relevance. This means that if part of a text is not relevant to the rest of the text, chances are that this part of the text is going to be omitted or reduced. Georgakopoulou also explains which linguistic elements are most likely to be omitted and which are more likely to be reduced. He claims that names, internationally known words such as ‘yes’ and ‘help’, and exclamations are “commonly deleted because they can be retrieved from the soundtrack” (Georgakopoulou 28). If such words would not be deleted, the viewer would be informed twice: by listening and reading. In the case of reduction, he claims that “elements such as repetitions, padding expressions or even ungrammatical constructions may at times be optionally condensed rather than omitted” (28). This is because some of these elements might be relevant for the programme, for example for characterization or for the storyline of a programme, and therefore are more likely to be maintained in the subtitling.

1.3 Conventions in Subtitling

In addition to the constraints on subtitling discussed above, Díaz Cintas and Remael also discuss some other general subtitling conventions. These conventions are not rules, but rather guidelines. Although many of these conventions may still be different around the world, “at European level at least, it is evident that different national subtitling practices share some of the same conventions” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 104). A few of the most important conventions will be discussed below, including conventions for punctuation, which is of importance for the case study when there is a joke being made about punctuation.

Díaz Cintas and Remael provide a thorough explanation of guidelines for the use of punctuation in subtitling. Although it may seem that punctuation in written texts is the same as punctuation in subtitling, given that subtitling is a form of written text, there are some important differences. Firstly, “commas must be used whenever there is a risk for misunderstanding what the original is saying” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 105). For example, an extra comma might be used to mark vocatives, such as ‘dad’ or names. In addition, a comma is sometimes used at the end of a two-line subtitle to indicate that the text continues in the next subtitle. Secondly, semi-colons are hardly used in subtitles and Díaz Cintas and Remael advise to avoid using them. Thirdly, parentheses and square brackets are also hardly used in subtitles. Parentheses are only “used in the translation to replicate the parentheses appearing in the written insert that viewers can see on screen” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 108). Fourthly, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael, exclamation marks should not be overused in subtitling. However, they do take precedence over question marks in the case of an exclamatory question without an answer or a rhetorical question, for example “Isn’t she clever!” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 110). Fifthly, Díaz Cintas and Remael recommend not to use dashes to divide words at the end of a line. In addition, parenthetical dashes are also not to be used. The only instances that dashes are used in subtitling is to link compound words, to create new

adjectival groups, or to display a change of speaker. Sixthly, in addition to a comma marking that a text continues in the next subtitle, subtitlers can use three dots at the end of the first subtitle and two dots at the start of the next. However, Díaz Cintas and Remael (112-116) recommend avoiding this and instead use no punctuation at the end of the first subtitle to indicate that the text is not finished yet. In addition, the three dots are sometimes used when a pause between two parts of a sentence is too long or to create suspense. Seventhly, symbols indicating money and percentage are only to be used when it is not possible to convey the message in any other way. The best way is to write the currency names out in full. Lastly, “quotation marks are mainly used to indicate direct speech” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 119). Quotation marks in subtitling are sometimes used to convey brand names in the source language, to indicate some concepts and ideas, nicknames, and to “indicate that a word or expression is being used with a metalinguistic value, i.e. to speak about language itself” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 122).

Another convention in subtitling focuses on when there are texts visible on screen, for example newspaper headlines or text on shop windows. In this case, Díaz Cintas and Remael’s advice depends on whether and how those visual texts are orally represented. If it is a short text that is not also spoken by a character, then the subtitles can be rendered in capital letters to differentiate them from spoken text. If the text is spoken by a character on screen, for example reading out a visible headline, then the subtitler can translate the spoken text as usual. If, however, the text is thought by a person on or off screen, such as an internal monologue, the subtitles should be in italics to show that it is an internal text (Díaz Cintas and Remael 129-130).

1.4 Translation Issues in Subtitling

The issue of translating jokes and wordplay will be discussed in depth in the following chapters. In this section I will briefly discuss some other common translation issues in subtitling, such as dialects, cultural references, and swear words, language features which are often part of a humoristic scene as well.

Marked speech, such as dialects and register, poses a translation issue for subtitling. For register, “subtitlers usually try to respect registers in as far as they fulfil a function in the narrative” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 189). For example, in a programme such as *The Big Bang Theory* some of the characters often use science jargon and a high register when they are not talking about science while other characters talk in a lower, non-specialised register. In such cases, subtitlers must try to maintain these differences in register, because it is important for characterization. However, because subtitling is restricted in its space for longer words, which is often a characteristic of higher registers, and difficult words should normally be avoided to create a readable text, “subtitlers regularly apply the strategy of compensation when translating marked language” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 188). In this case, if the difference in register cannot be maintained in the same way as in the source text, the subtitles might compensate for this by using the right register in another instance.

In contrast to register, which often only means a different vocabulary, dialects and idiolects have a distinctive pronunciation and can have non-standard grammar. The non-standard grammar factor is an issue for subtitlers, because, as discussed before, the subtitles must be grammatical in order to be easy to read for the viewer. In addition, dialects in themselves already pose a very general translation problem, as there is never an equivalent dialect in the target language that not only has similar pronunciation features but also similar connotations. Therefore, subtitlers must examine whether the instances of dialect are directly of importance to the plot and characterization, for example for a joke or a clue in a detective

series. In such cases, the subtitlers must, in some way, convey the irregularities in the subtitles, for example “the subtitler adapts the spelling of the target language to suggest a foreign accent” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 195).

Cultural references also pose a translation issue in subtitling. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael, “the most challenging situation arises when no similar item exists in the target culture and/or if it is unknown to the majority of the target audience” (201). For such cases, Díaz Cintas and Remael propose nine procedures that subtitlers can use: “loan, calque or literal translation, explicitation, substitution, transposition, lexical recreation, compensation, omission, or addition” (202). I will not go into this translation issue more deeply, because, even though cultural references can be a part of humour as well, the case study will only focus on humour about language. It must, however, be clear that, in contrast to literary translation, subtitling limits the translation of cultural references even more; for example, because of the limited space available, loans in combination with short explanations are normally not possible in subtitles.

Swear-words and taboo words pose another translation issue in subtitling. Such words are often emotionally charged and can be perceived as more offensive in the target language. “Subtitlers must therefore first identify and evaluate the impact and emotional value of a given word or expression in the source culture, and then translate it into a target culture equivalent that is deemed appropriate in the context” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 196). Therefore, the subtitle might not render a literal translation of the swearword, but is likely to convey a swear-word that creates an equivalent effect in the target culture.

All of these translation issues become even more difficult to translate since they often appear in combination with each other and in combination with jokes. For example, there can be a joke involving someone’s pronunciation or a joke involving a cultural reference. In such cases, the subtitler has to try to maintain both a pronunciation peculiarity or a cultural

reference and the joke. Chapter 3 will discuss in more detail how such problems should be tackled according to the literature, while Chapter 4 will investigate how such jokes, involving a combination of translation problems, are translated in practice.

Conclusion

All of these conventions and constraints, such as limited space and time, and subtitling translation issues limit the way in which dialogue can be translated in subtitling. In the same way, some of these conventions and constraints also limit the way in which jokes can be conveyed in subtitling, such as the linguistic and textual constraints and conventions concerning the subtitling of pronunciation features, register, and punctuation. The next chapter will focus on the classification of jokes and whether those classifications can be used for jokes in an audio-visual context as well.

Chapter 2: Theories and Typologies of Humour

In this chapter I will discuss different typologies of humour. Firstly, I will discuss Attardo's view on linguistic theories of humour. Secondly, I will discuss Zabalbeascoa's typology of humour. His typology focuses on humour from the point of view of the translator. Thirdly, I will discuss Nash's typology of puns. I will outline several types of puns that are prominent in television programmes and will be discussed in the case study. Fourthly, I will briefly discuss register humour, as this is also a form of humour which is rooted in language. Lastly, this chapter will discuss Delabastita's translation options for puns and wordplay in literary translation, which will be used in the case study to analyse whether the subtitler succeeded in translating the wordplay. The next chapter will then discuss what should happen, according to scholars, with humour in audio-visual translation.

2.1 Humour Definitions and Theories

Before theories of humour can be discussed, a working definition of humour must first be established. Attardo claims that humour might be undefinable (3), but still tries to formulate a definition. He claims that the definition of humour depends on which field of science it is studied from. For example, "linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists have taken humor [sic] to be an all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is felt to be funny" (Attardo 4), but then he claims that literary criticism needs clearer subdivisions. Additionally, he later on denies the premise that "what makes people laugh is humorous" (10). He claims that there are other uses of laughter outside of humour and that humour does not always elicit laughter. However, one might argue that humour can still be defined as 'that which has laughter as its intended effect', because all those other uses of laughter, such as from ritual or from taking drugs, do not have laughter as their intended effect, rather as a side-effect. Therefore, for the purposes of this case study, I

will use the definition that Attardo also considers at the end of his chapter: “a text is humorous whose perlocutionary effect is laughter” (13).

Then, Attardo continues to describe different types of humour. Because the focus of this thesis is on the translation of one specific type of humour, namely puns, I will only briefly outline some of the other types of humour. Attardo explains different theories of humour, divided into four categories: structuralist, semiotic, script-based, and sociolinguistic theories. These theories seem to share a lot of background, but their main differences lie in which type of humour has been studied in light of the theory.

Firstly, the structuralist theories are based upon notions of isotopy. Isotopies, being the semantic parts of a text, “establish the topic of a text” (Attardo 80). Often, these isotopies are ambiguous and can therefore be considered humorous. In this framework of structuralist theories, puns have been a major focus of discussion. For example, Duchàček (cited in Attardo 113-114) has compiled a taxonomy of puns in light of this theory. However, his taxonomy will not be discussed in depth here, because the next section will discuss the more well-known typology of puns by Walter Nash.

Secondly, the semiotic theories are the only theories that are not linguistic. They do share “an interest in the global perception of the humorous text in its context” (Attardo 174) and also focus on literary humour types. One of the most influential semiotic theories is Koestler’s bisociation theory (in Attardo 175). He defines bisociation as “the perceiving of a situation or idea [...] in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference” (Koestler 35, as cited in Attardo 175). Other scholars have defined the differences of this theory with isotopy, such as the fact that the semiotic theories focus on cognitive functions whereas the isotopies are purely linguistic, but I will not discuss this in depth because this section is only to display different theories of humour.

Thirdly, script-based theories of humour are “proposed within the framework of generative grammar” (Attardo 195). In this framework, the most influential theory is the ‘Semantic Script Theory of Humor’ by Raskin. The main hypothesis of this theory is that “[a] text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying-text if both of the [following] conditions are satisfied: i) the text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts ii) the two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposites” (Raskin, as cited in Attardo 197). To understand this hypothesis, one must know that a script is “an organized chunk of information about something [...]. It is a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker.” (Attardo 198). A script can contain information about a person, a place, time, and other conditions. As an example of a script, Attardo (199) gives the lexical script for ‘doctor’, containing information such as “human and adult”, “activity: study medicine, receive patients [...], cure diseases”, and “place: medical school, hospital, or doctor’s office” (199). According to this theory, a text is humorous when a text can refer to multiple scripts, which are often opposites. As an example of humour based on opposite scripts, Raskin (in Attardo 2006) gives the following joke:

“Is the doctor at home?” the patient asked in his bronchial whisper. “No,” the doctor’s young and pretty wife whispered in reply. “Come right in.”

This joke is based on the two opposing scripts of ‘doctor’ and ‘lover’, creating a humorous effect.

Lastly, sociolinguistic theories of humour involve conversational features in humour. In light of these theories, jokes are divided into two categories: canned jokes and conversational (situational) jokes. Canned jokes are defined as jokes that have been “used before the time of utterance in a form similar to that used by the speaker” (Attardo 295-6) and that do not depend on context; for example, in the Netherlands there are a lot of canned jokes about Germans or Belgians, told for fun but not in the context of the rest of the conversation. A conversational joke, on the other hand, “is improvised during a conversation [and] draws

heavily on contextual information for its setup” (Attardo 296), as when, for example, someone makes a humorous comment on something that has just been said in a conversation. However, Attardo (296) also claims that the boundaries between these two types of jokes are not absolute. In light of these sociolinguistic theories, many joke types have been discussed, including puns.

All of the different theories of humour described in this section show that there are many different types of humour. However, I will not discuss these in further detail, as this thesis will focus on one specific type of humour: language humour in translation. The next section will therefore focus on how a translator would classify humour.

2.2 A Typology of Humour from a Translator’s Point of View

In contrast to Attardo’s linguistic views on humour, Zabalbeascoa focuses on humour from a translator’s point of view. He has classified jokes into six types “according to the way jokes lend themselves to translation and the sorts of translation solution-types associated with each of them” (“Translating Jokes” 251). He not only distinguishes between different types of jokes, but also provides helpful guidelines in translating them. I include this typology to show what different types of humour a translator would recognise and how they are often tackled. One of Zabalbeascoa’s types of humour, though sometimes in combination with one of the other types, is going to be the main focus of the case study.

2.2.1. International/binational Jokes

According to Zabalbeascoa, the humoristic element in international or binational jokes “does not depend either language-specific wordplay or familiarity with unknown specific aspects of the source culture” (251). In other words, if the subject of an international joke is well-known in both the source culture and the target culture, the joke can often be translated

literally and the humorous element can be exactly the same in both cultures. Examples of humorous elements that can be found in international or binational jokes are, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael, “internationally known film stars, multinationals, well-known tourist attractions, famous artists or politicians, political events that have made the world news, well-known facts about a country’s history, etc.” (217). An example of such a joke is “I can’t listen to that much Wagner, you know? I start to get the urge to conquer Poland” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 217). The humorous elements in this joke revolve around an internationally known composer and well-known historical events and can therefore be translated literally.

2.2.2. National-culture-and-institutions Jokes

In the case of national-culture-and-institution jokes, the joke focuses on an institute or cultural reference that might be unfamiliar to the target audience. For example, a joke can refer to a national newspaper, non-multinational brand names, or cultural traditions such as the 4th of July. If the translator suspects that the majority of the target audience is unfamiliar with the reference, then Zabalbeascoa (252) advises to adapt the joke. An example that might need adaptation is “It wasn’t me who put it that way, it was *The Daily Mirror*” (Zabalbeascoa 252), for which Zabalbeascoa suggests the following template for translation in the target language: “I did not coin the phrase, it was the Leader of the Opposition”. This means that the cultural reference is adapted to a cultural element that is common in many cultures. Another solution that Díaz Cintas and Remael mention is the use of hypernyms, for example in the case of brand names: “There’s nothing wrong with you that can’t be cured with a little Prozac and a polo mallet” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 220). In this case, the target audience cannot be expected to know what “Prozac” is and therefore a translator should consider a translation using a hypernym, such as “tablet”.

2.2.3. National-sense-of-humour Jokes

This type of joke relies on the shared tradition of a community to make fun of either themselves or another community (Zabalbeascoa 252). In this case, it is not always possible to call this type of joke a national-bound joke type, because it is often also different across one and the same country. For example, Dutch people in general like to make fun of the Belgians, but it is mainly only people from the ‘Randstad’ who make fun of people living in the ‘Achterhoek’. When translating such a joke, especially when the joke in the source language targets aspects from the target culture, the translator must try to achieve an equivalent effect. For example, in the case of a joke in the source text about the ‘Achterhoek’, a British translator might make a joke about ‘Yorkshire’ or ‘The North’.

2.2.4 Language-dependent Jokes

As the name already suggests, this type of joke depends on language and therefore often involves national jokes. This type includes wordplay and puns, and relies on features of puns as will be discussed below. It is one of the hardest types to translate, especially when the source language and target language are not related to each other. According to Zabalbeascoa, “very often radical substitutions or other major shifts are required” (253). For example, the joke “I’ll be Frank. Oh, so who shall I be?” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 224) relies on the ambiguity of the word “Frank”. The target language will, most likely, not involve the same kind of ambiguity, so the translator must turn to the context to find a solution. In this example, the characters are playing a game, so Díaz Cintas and Remael came up with this translation: “Ik zal eerlijk zijn. Goed dan win ik.” (transl. I’ll be honest. Ok, then I win.) (224).

In addition, Zabalbeascoa also claims that the joke might be translated differently depending on the priorities of the task of the translator, which will be discussed in depth in the next chapter about audio-visual translation of wordplay. His claim is exactly what the case

study at the end of this thesis will focus on: whether the subtitling of puns and wordplay differs when the joke is important for the plot of the series or for characterization from when it is not.

2.2.5. Visual Jokes

Visual jokes obtain their humorous effect from visual information, such as from facial expressions, different camera angles, or other visual elements. Zabalbeascoa recognises two types of visual jokes: “humour derived solely from what one sees on the screen and the kind of joke that may seem entirely visual but is really the visually coded version of a linguistic joke” (253). In the case of the former, a translator does not have to translate anything. The joke is humoristic because of what the viewer sees on the screen, for example someone slipping over a banana. In the case of the latter, the translator should treat it as a linguistic or language-dependent joke and translate it accordingly, for example a character is wearing a t-shirt with a pun on it or a visible newspaper headline containing wordplay.

2.2.6. Aural Jokes

This joke category is not defined by Zabalbeascoa, but added to the typology by Díaz Cintas and Remael. They define aural jokes as “noises as well as the metalinguistic characteristics of speech, e.g. accents and intonation” (227). Even though they claim that many of such jokes do not have to be subtitled, similar to visual jokes, there are some aural jokes that have to be translated. Some aural jokes that do have to be translated are jokes that involve some metalinguistic features, such as intonation or dialect. For example, characters are making fun of someone with an unusual pronunciation. In this case, the joke can also be considered a language-dependent joke.

2.2.7. Complex Jokes

The complex joke, as defined by Zabalbeascoa, “combines any two or more of the abovementioned types of joke” (254). For example, a joke can combine a cultural reference and a language-dependent element, such as cited by Díaz Cintas and Remael: “Lilian: Um, uh, what college, uh, does your son attend? Carol: Brown. Paul: Nice color [sic].” (229) or, for example, a visual element and an international element, such as when a character makes an internationally known gesture.

2.3 Typology of Puns and Wordplay

Whereas Zabalbeascoa focused on all types of humour from the point of view of a translator, Nash focuses his typology only on wordplay and puns. Before puns and wordplay can be classified, there first must be a definition of wordplay. Delabastita suggests a working definition of wordplay: “wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings” (128). In this definition he explains wordplay and puns very generally, but without specifying categories or exploring different types of wordplay. Nash (1985) does outline pun types, describing twelve different prominent categories. In this section, I will outline Nash’s pun types and specify which ones will be included in the case study in chapter 4.

2.3.1 Homophonic Words and Phrases

The first and second pun types that Nash discusses are homophones and homophonic phrases. Homophones are one of the most prominent type of puns and are readily available in the vocabulary of a language. Homophones “are pairs (or more) of words having the same

sound but different meanings” (Nash 138). These word pairs always have different spellings to differentiate one from the other. An example of a homophonic pun is ‘Why is it so wet in England? Because many kings and queens have reigned there’. In this example, the pun lies in the word ‘reigned’ sounding similar to ‘rained’. This type of wordplay is common in audio-visual contexts as well and will be discussed in the case study.

Homophonic phrases are also considered puns, even though they are not very prominent. Homophonic phrases sound alike “syllable for syllable, [...] but the sum of the meaning is different” (Nash 139). Nash claims that such punning phrases, in contrast to homophonic words, have to be forced because such phrases are “not readily available in the stock of the language” (139). An example of a homophonic phrase is found in Nash (139): “Where did Humpty Dumpty leave his hat? Humpty dumped ‘is ‘at on a wall”. This last sentence is homophone with a sentence from the famous Humpty Dumpty nursery-rhyme. This type of wordplay is not very common in audio-visual translation and will not be discussed in the case study.

2.3.2 Mimes and Mimetic Phrases

The third and fourth types of puns that Nash describes are mimes and mimetic phrases. Mimes are, according to Nash, “phonetic similitudes, usually rhymes, with the appeal of homophones” (139). In contrast to the homophones, mimes are often allophonic, which means that they are variant forms of one another. An example of a mime, as found in Nash (139), is the following: “What do cats read? The Mews of the World”. In this case, ‘mews’ rhymes with ‘news’, creating a humorous effect. Additionally, there are also mimetic phrases, although they are not very commonly used. Such phrases often refer to a literary or Biblical text, or a well-known sentence, and the user of such a pun is trying to show off his wit or his knowledge of primary texts. An example of a mimetic phrase is found in Nash (140):

“Hollywood, land of milk and money”, which refers back to the Biblical phrase ‘land of milk and honey’. These types of puns, especially the mime itself, are common in audio-visual contexts and will be included in the case study.

2.3.3 Homonyms and Homonymic Phrases

Homonyms, also sometimes called homographs, are similar to homophones. They are both commonly used puns. Homonyms and homophones both contain two words that sound the same and have a different meaning. However, homonyms also share their spelling. An example of a homonym is the word ‘school’, which can refer either to an institute for learning or to a large group of fish. The different meanings of such words are commonly used in jokes. Additionally, homonymic phrases work in a similar way and are also similar to pun-metaphors, which will be discussed below. Homonymic phrases are also often used in newspaper headlines. An example of a homonymic phrase is found in Nash (141) “ ‘I have designs on you’, as the tattooist said to his girl”. In this case, the phrase ‘have designs on you’ both means that the speaker wants to conquer the girl and that he has tattooed her. Both these types are common in audio-visual contexts as well and will be included in the case study.

2.3.4 Contacts and Blends

According to Nash, an instance of contact wordplay “echo[es] other idioms and take[s] a colour of meaning from them; there is a casual contact of ideas, or a blending of semantic components” (Nash 142). This type of wordplay is very subtle and can often be non-humorous. For example, ‘reading around’ echoes the idea of ‘sleeping around’. Because this type of wordplay is so subtle and often not humorous, it will not be discussed in the case study.

Blends are less subtle than contacts and combine two phrases together. Blends can often be similar to portmanteaux, as discussed below. Nash calls a blend a form of “idiomatic portmanteau” (142). In other words, blends are portmanteaux, but then within a phrase and not within a word. Because blends are often just mistakes of people mixing up idiomatic expressions, they will not feature as a separate type of wordplay in the case study.

2.3.5 Pseudomorphs

A pseudomorphs is a type of wordplay that uses false morphemes “invented to make a homonymic pun” (Nash 143), for example with prefixes such as ex- or dis-. Another type of pseudomorph puns uses “arbitrarily detachable pseudo-morpheme[s]” (Nash 143). For example in words that can seem to be compounds but in fact are not: “What do you do with a wombat? Play wom” (Nash 143). This type of wordplay is not very common in audio-visual contexts and will not be included in the case study.

2.3.6 Portmanteau

A portmanteau combines not only the meaning of two words, but also their spelling into one word. In a portmanteau, the spelling of two words is combined to coin a neologism, which also combines the denotation of the two words. In essence, a portmanteau is a newly formed compound. An example of a portmanteau is ‘Oxbridge’, referring to both the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This type of wordplay is relatively common in audio-visual contexts and will therefore be discussed in the case study.

2.3.7 Etymological Puns

This type of pun is a complex type, containing words that are of Classical descent, i.e. Greek or Latin, with their original classical denotations being different from their modern

denotations. According to Nash, “etymological puns are often coldly, even angrily received, being regarded as pretentious and undemocratic” (144). Such puns are aimed at a highly educated audience. An example of an etymological pun is mentioned by Nash: “Nero made Rome the focus of his artistic attention” (144). In this case, the word ‘focus’ has both the modern denotation of ‘subject’ and the Latin denotation of ‘hearth’. This type of wordplay is not very common in audio-visual contexts and will not be a part of the case study.

2.3.8. Bilingual Puns

In a bilingual pun, similar to an etymological pun, the audience is expected to have some knowledge of a foreign language. According to Nash, “the essence of the bilingual joke is that a foreign word is made to bear the sense of an English word, whether by homophonic accident, by homonymic/semantic contrivance [...], or by literal translation” (145). This can be both in modern languages, but also in classical languages like Latin. In the case of a bilingual pun with Latin, it would differ from an etymological pun in the sense that a bilingual pun relies on homophonic sense and literal translations or calques and an etymological pun would rely on the official translations of the Latin word. An example of a bilingual pun is found in Nash (145): “Here lies Willie Longbottom Aged 6, *Ars Longa Vita Brevis*”. This Latin phrase normally means that the works of a person survive longer than the person himself. However, in this case, if pronounced correctly, the first part of the Latin phrase means the same as the boy’s surname. Bilingual puns are not uncommon in audio-visual contexts but are unfortunately not discussed in the case study, as there was no example to be found in one of the television series.

2.3.9 Pun-metaphors

In this type of punning, a metaphor is used to create a joke, using the metaphor both in a literal and metaphorical sense. This type of punning is often used for newspaper headlines. An example of a pun-metaphor is found in Nash (146): “Council puts brake on progress of cycle path scheme”. In this example, the phrase ‘puts brake on’ both means ‘stop’ and refers to the bicycle with the word ‘brake’. This type of wordplay is also relatively common in audio-visual contexts and will be discussed in the case study.

2.3.10 Summary

The types of pun or wordplay that are going to be included in the case study are: homophones, mimes, homonyms and homonymic phrases, portmanteaux, and pun-metaphors. Although Nash’s typology includes many types of wordplay and puns, there is another type of humour that derives from language: register humour.

2.4 Register-based Humour

Another type of humour that gets its humorous element from language is register humour. Attardo defines this humour as “humor [sic] caused by an incongruity originating in the clash between two registers” (230). A joke can be based on a difference in register between two different speakers, for example if one speaker is using a specialised register and the other is speaking in a lower, non-specialised register, or when a word is used from a register that is not the speaker’s own. This may cause humorous misunderstandings and situations. In addition, I will also class grammar mistakes and corrections under this type of wordplay, as they are often due to different register in speakers: someone makes a mistake and another speaker, who is often speaking in a higher register, corrects the mistake. Because register humour is also based on language, the case study will also include register jokes.

2.5 Wordplay in Translation

In addition to Zabalbeascoa's typology of jokes from the point of view of the translator, Delabastita (134) outlines a range of translation methods for puns in literary translation. In his opinion, a literary translator can choose any of the following eight translation methods for puns, or combine different methods.

- The first method is translating the source language pun into a target language pun, "PUN > PUN, [...] which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function" (Delabastita 134). In this case, the target text pun can focus on a completely different humorous element, but must still be a pun.
- The second method would be to translate a pun into a 'non-pun', which still can maintain a humorous effect, but does not maintain all of the features of a pun. It can even mean that one or even both of the two senses of the ambiguous pun are sacrificed. This method is also called "PUN > NON-PUN" (Delabastita 134).
- The third method involves replacing the pun by a related rhetorical device. In this case, the wordplay in the source text is replaced by another device, such as "repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox [...]" (Delabastita 134). The rhetorical device aims to imitate the effect of the pun in the source text. This method is also called "PUN > RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE" (Delabastita 134)
- The fourth method that Delabastita describes is omitting the pun in the target text. This method might be used when the source text and target text are completely unrelated and it is impossible to formulate a translation creating humorous effect. This method is also called "PUN > ZERO" (Delabastita 134).

- The fifth translation method for puns involves the translator copying the pun, and its context, from the source text and using it in the target text in its original formulation. This method is also called “PUN ST = PUN TT” (Delabastita 134).
- The sixth method involves translating a ‘non-pun’, which must still be a joke, into a pun, as a means of compensation for where a previous pun was omitted or translated into a ‘non-pun’. This method is also called “NON-PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134).
- When using the seventh method, a translator adds a pun in a place where there was no pun, wordplay, or humour in the source text. Similar to the sixth method, this method is also a method of compensation. This method is also called “ZERO > PUN” (Delabastita 134).
- The last method available to literary translators translating wordplay is the addition of editorial techniques. Delabastita describes the following useful techniques “explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translators’ forewords, the ‘anthological’ presentation of different, supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth” (134). This method is also called “EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES” (Delabastita 134).

All of these translation methods as described by Delabastita are very useful for literary translators. However, the lack of examples to illustrate the translation methods implies that they may not have been tested in practice yet. In addition, it is unclear whether audio-visual translators will also be able to use all of these methods, as Delabastita designed them for literary translators. Literary translators are not bound by the same limitations as subtitlers, as described in the previous chapter. For example, a subtitler does not have enough space to use

explanatory notes in his translation. This is precisely why the subtitling of puns and wordplay is such an interesting subject. Delabastita's translation methods for puns will be included in the case study to analyse how the subtitles translated puns and wordplay. The translation of jokes and puns in audio-visual contexts in particular will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined many types of humour and has explained which types are of importance for a translator and subtitler. The next chapter will discuss what happens to puns in audio-visual context in theory, according to scholars. The case study in chapter four will then focus on some of the pun types and joke types described above and discuss whether Delabastita's wordplay translations methods are used in audio-visual translation as well and whether specific methods are preferred in dealing with the constraints posed by the medium.

Chapter 3: Wordplay in Audiovisual Translation Theory

This chapter will discuss various theories on the translation of wordplay in audio-visual translation (from now on referred to as AVT). Although the translation of wordplay has been widely discussed by scholars in literary translation, this field seems to have been neglected in audio-visual contexts. In the last few decades, however, scholarly interest in this area has been growing. In this chapter I will first discuss the theories developed by Chiaro and Zabalbeascoa. Secondly, I will discuss the advice, combining theory with practice, that Díaz Cintas and Remael give subtitlers for the translation of language-dependent jokes. Lastly, I will discuss previous case studies and research in this field by Balirano, Martínez-Sierra, and Zabalbeascoa.

3.1 Wordplay in AVT in Theory

The translation of wordplay is a widely discussed subject in literary translation. However, it has been discussed less often in audio-visual contexts. Delia Chiaro discusses the translation of language-dependent humour in both of these contexts, while Zabalbeascoa focuses on priorities in the subtitling of wordplay.

3.1.1 Delia Chiaro

Delia Chiaro claims that language-dependent humour does not translate very well. She claims that if we were to translate instances of wordplay, we should consider ourselves lucky if “we are able to come up with translations that manage to maintain both original content and the duplicity which render them amusing” (“Translation” 4). In other words, she claims that the biggest challenge for a translator is translating puns and wordplay, because the chances are very slim that there are languages that provide the same ambiguity as the source language. According to Chiaro, the translation of wordplay is so difficult because it “touches upon the

most essential and highly debatable issues of T[ranslation] S[tudies], namely equivalence and translatability” (“Translation” 6). In short, equivalence means that the source text and the target text are equals in the sense that they deliver the same message and/or elicit the same effect in their respective audiences (Chiaro “Translation” 7-13), even though equivalence is still the subject of much debate among scholars. Translatability conveys the fact that the more closely related the two languages are, the more likely it is that a pun in the source language can be expressed by the same pun in the target language.

In the translation of puns and wordplay, “the similarity of lexis and syntax in the source and target versions, is frequently sacrificed for the sake of dynamic equivalence” (Chiaro “Translation” 8), which entails that an equivalent effect is considered to be more important than equivalence in form and content. In the case of the translation of humour, Chiaro considers it more important that the target audience is also amused by the instance of humour than that the same lexis as used in the source text is maintained, which may leave the audience baffled by an unfunny literal.

To prove that the translation of jokes is one of the hardest elements of translation, Chiaro discussed a number of examples, from another study, in which the subtitling failed to convey the humorous effect in translation. One example she shows is the following from the film *The Pianist*, spoken in German:

Captain: What is your name? So I can listen for you.

Szpilman: My name is *Szpilman*.

Captain: Spielmann? That is a good name, for a pianist. (“Issues” 163)

To understand this joke, one must have some knowledge of German to know that ‘spielen’ means ‘to play’. Because ‘Szpilman’ is obviously the name of the character, the subtitler cannot do anything else than maintaining the name. As a consequence, the wordplay is lost to the audience without any knowledge of German.

When wordplay is combined with visual elements, it makes the instance of wordplay even more difficult to translate. These instances often result in humourless translations. As an example of such a translation, Chiaro gives an instance of wordplay combined with visual elements from the movie *The Big Chill*:

[O]ne of the main characters, Sam, on being asked by Meg to father her child, replies: ‘You’re giving me a massive headache!’, to which Meg replies: ‘You’re not gonna use that old excuse, are you? You’ve got genes!’ In response, Sam looks down at his trousers and touches the jeans he is wearing, a bemused expression on his face. (“Issues” 162)

This instance of wordplay derives its humour from the homophones ‘genes’ and ‘jeans’. This same ambiguity is hard to find in other languages, as she shows with the Italian translation: “perché hai dei buoni geni” (“Issues” 162), which translates back into English as ‘because you have good genes’ (my translation). Although this instance is translated correctly in terms of lexis, the ambiguity with ‘jeans’ is lost because ‘geni’, Italian for ‘genes’, does not sound the same as ‘jeans’, which is a loanword from English in Italian.

Chiaro concludes by saying that not all wordplay subtitles go wrong. There are many instances in which the source language and target language happen to have a similar ambiguity in the words or semantic fields that are used, which is most likely to happen with closely related languages. The example that she shows is the following: someone asks for a ‘seal’, ‘sigillo’ in Italian, to make a document official and another character brings an animal seal, ‘foca’ in Italian, on screen. The target audience would have been puzzled if ‘seal’ had been dubbed as ‘sigillo’. However, the dubber translated it brilliantly into ‘focalizziamo’, “meaning literally, ‘Let’s focus on focus on it’ playing on the term *foca* meaning ‘seal’ and the verb *focalizzare* meaning ‘to focus on something’” (“Issues” 163). This instance shows that audio-visual translation does not always lose the humour in the target text.

3.1.2 Zabalbeascoa's Translation Priorities

When translating humour in an audio-visual context, a translator must determine the priorities of the instance of humour. Zabalbeascoa defines the concept of priorities for a translator as “the intended goals for a given translation task” (“Translating Jokes” 243). As a subtitler, one needs to know whether humour is a priority in the programme (Zabalbeascoa “Humor” 201), whether there are other priorities than humour, and which of the priorities is the most important (“Translating Jokes” 243). Zabalbeascoa then places different types of humorous texts on a scale, showing the priority of humour in them:

Top: e.g. humour in TV comedy, joke-stories, one-liners, etc.

Middle: e.g. humour in happy-ending love/adventure stories, TV quiz shows.

Marginal: e.g. humour in texts used as pedagogical devices in school, humour in Shakespeare's tragedies.

Prohibited: e.g. certain humorous moments of high drama, tragedy, horror stories, laws, and other inappropriate situations.

In other words, the subtitler of a TV comedy should try to maintain as many instances of humour as possible, whereas the translator of a tragedy has other priorities that are more important than humour and should therefore be addressed first, with humour only as a last priority.

Zabalbeascoa (“Translating Jokes” 244) claims that there are two levels of priority: global and local. A global priority is a priority for the whole text: for example, humour is a global priority for comedies. By contrast, local priorities are priorities in certain parts of the text: for example, humour can be used as a rhetorical device in specific parts of political speeches. What this means is that whereas humour can be of a low global priority, it can still have a high local priority in the same text. In the current case study, it is assumed that

instances of humour will have global priority in *The Big Bang Theory* (a TV comedy) whereas they will have local priority in *Sherlock* (a TV drama). Zabalbeascoa's priorities theory will be the starting point for my case study, which will discuss whether a difference in priority results in a different approach to the translation of wordplay in two different types of TV series. Whether these two different approaches result in different translations will become clear when the instances of wordplay in my case study have been analysed according to Delabastita's list of translation methods for puns (see Chapter 2).

3.2 Advice on Translating Wordplay in AVT

Díaz Cintas and Remael discuss the subtitling of different types of humour, using Zabalbeascoa's typology of humour from a translator's point of view, discussed in the previous chapter, as a starting point. They claim that in order to translate language-dependent humour in subtitling, "subtitlers must first identify the purpose or intended effect(s) of the wordplay" (223). The purpose of the humorous element does not always have to be humour. It can also be used for plot devices or to lighten the mood. Secondly, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael, the instance of wordplay must be considered in its context to avoid literal, or "word-by-word", translations. This may result in a shift in the type of humour that is used, or even in semantic shifts, if this creates an equivalent effect for the viewer. An example that they give of the adaptation of humour is the following:

A: She's too mousey. B: Well he's a little mousey too. They can have their little rodent time. They can eat cheese together.
 [translated into Spanish as:] A: Es demasiado sosa. (She is too bland.) B: El también. Pueden salarse mutuamente y echarse pimienta. (He too. They can sprinkle salt and pepper on each other.) (Díaz Cintas and Remael 224).

This example shows that sometimes an adapted version of a joke can still be funny. Although a different pun is used, the translation still creates a humorous effect.

In contrast to this previous example, in which the translator succeeded in creating an equivalent effect for the target audience, Díaz Cintas and Remael also display some failed

attempts at translating humour. They claim that this can happen when a translator does “not take the wordplay into account, [and therefore] endanger[s] the logic and comprehensibility of the target sentence” (225). As an example they provide the following instance of language-dependent humour: “I was left for another man. A trainer named Dash. I was left for a punctuation mark.” (226). The Spanish subtitler created the following subtitles: “Me ha dejado por otro hombre. Un entrenador llamado Dash. Me ha dejado de repente.”, which translates into: “He has left me for another man. A trainer called Dash. He has left me suddenly.” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 226). The punch line of this joke appears on a new subtitle in Spanish, which means that the subtitle not only loses the humorous element, but also loses reference to the previous subtitles.

To summarize, Díaz Cintas and Remael advise subtitlers to maintain as much of the original wordplay as possible, if the target language allows it - for example, when the source and target language are closely related. If it is not possible to maintain a humorous effect, they advise subtitlers to adapt the joke, which can either involve a different pun or a completely different type of humour. If these options are all impossible, because of visual elements for example, then the subtitler cannot do anything else but translate the joke literally and lose the humorous element. In such cases, the subtitler can try to compensate for this loss of humour by adding a humorous element in a different place.

3.3 Previous AVT Case Studies on Humour

Almost every case study done in the field of AVT involves dubbing. There are quite a few similarities between dubbing and subtitling, for example the fact that visuals can pose a constraint on the translation, but there are also many differences: for example, in the dubbed version, the original dialogue is not heard by the viewers and there is less reduction since the text is still spoken. However, because dubbing is also a form of audio-visual translation, I will

briefly outline some case studies in this section by Martinez-Sierra, Balirano, and Gottlieb to shed some light on current research on humour in AVT.

3.3.1 Martinez-Sierra: Dubbing *The Simpsons*

Martinez-Sierra conducted a case study to research the dubbing of *The Simpsons* in Italian. He focused his case study on different types of humour as defined by the taxonomy of humour by Zabalbeascoa (see Chapter 2). Although Martinez-Sierra did not focus his study on wordplay specifically, but on all types of humour, it is still relevant to outline his research to show some of the work that has been done in this field. Martinez-Sierra divided all instances of humour into two groups “according to the absence (Group 1) or presence (Group 2) of changes or losses – quantitative or qualitative, total or partial – in their humorous loads after their translation” (292). Afterwards, he analysed why some instances of humour experienced loss in translation in the light of relevance theories, which are similar to Zabalbeascoa’s theory of priority.

In this research, Martinez-Sierra found out that only a few instances lost their humorous elements completely in translation, a few more changed content, or lexis, but were still humorous, and even more only had a partial loss of humour. These findings are surprising in the sense that they contradict Chiaro’s claim that many humorous instances are difficult to translate. However, it must be said that this case study researched all types of humour as described by Zabalbeascoa, not only the language-dependent type, and Chiaro did mainly mean the language-dependent type. Unfortunately, Martinez-Sierra does not specify to which type the jokes that involved a loss in translation belonged. From his results, he concludes that “most humour is translatable, as is shown by the small percentages of diminished humorous loads in the target versions” (294). He also claims that his case study shows that translators “give high priority to the translation of humour” (294).

This case study is of importance to my case study, because it shows that, contrary to what many theorists believe, humour can often be translated well. My own case study might prove to be another example of well translated humour. In addition, he uses a theory closely related to Zabalbeascoa's theory of priority, which therefore proves to be useful in case studies.

3.3.2 Balirano: Dubbing *The Big Bang Theory*

Balirano conducted a case study on the Italian dubbing of humour in *The Big Bang Theory*. His study focused on the context of the humour that may be lost in the translation, namely the scientific and nerd-community context. He describes the humour of the series and the audience as follows: “[t]he comedy series is characterised by a geek-oriented linguistic construction which, by means of both its specialised and humorous discourse, seems to be addressing a community of speakers who share the same lexicon, ideas and habits, i.e. mainly young nerds.” (564). In other words, the humour in this series revolves around the use of different registers, cultural references, and wordplay.

Even though the series has been very popular in America, the Italian dubbed version does not fare as well as the original. According to Balirano, one of the reason for this is “that the Italian adaptation of the first episodes arbitrarily and quite illogically levels out many of the linguistic cultural references to the community of nerds represented in the show” (569). This mainly happened when the humour was supported by visuals. Balirano shows some examples of jokes and their Italian dubs, such as the following: on the screen, the audience sees Sheldon standing alone in front of a locked door, and he says “We’re locked out”, and Raj, another character, responds “Also, the pretty girl left.” (Balirano 570). The Italian dubs - translated back into English by Balirano - are as follows: “[Sheldon:] “Excuse me... Don’t push! Keep calm!” [Raj:] “Why did blondie lock the door?” (Balirano 570). In this instance,

the humour is lost to the Italian audience, because the visuals do not correspond with the Italian dialogue.

In the case of dubbing language-dependent humour, Balirano mainly focused on register humour. He shows that many instances of specialised language, such as scientific or internet references, have been omitted in the dubbed version. His table shows that more than half of the references have been omitted. As a result, Balirano argues that the target audience cannot fully appreciate the humour of the series, because the dubbing has left out many humorous instances, and where the dubbing does maintain the humour, it often does not correspond with the visuals, and very typical language is left out.

Balirano's case study links with the current case study in the way that it focuses on register humour as a type of language-dependent humour as well. It shows that register humour can be an important part of the setting and context of a television programme and that losing this type of humour can have major consequences for the perception of the programme by the target audience. My case study will determine whether the same happens when register humour is subtitled.

3.3.3 Gottlieb: Subtitling Wordplay

Gottlieb discusses some problems and solutions in subtitling wordplay from audio-visual programmes. His case study addresses four main aspects "having to do with the frame of reference for the wordplay in question, the type of wordplay used, its semiotic composition, and its reconstruction in a different speech community, i.e. translation" (Gottlieb 209). In short, frame of reference means text-internal references - to previous dialogues - and text-external references - knowledge from outside the programme. Semiotic composition refers to how the humour is conveyed either through the dialogue, the dialogue combined with non-verbal visuals, or the dialogue combined with verbal visuals (Gottlieb 209-10). His case study

analyses the Danish subtitles of a British programme in light of these four aspects and two hypotheses: firstly, “as Danish and English are closely related languages, English wordplay may be expected to be replaced by Danish wordplay everywhere [...] [and secondly] puns most likely to be lost in the Danish translation will be those based on homophony and homography, as homonymy and paronymy allow for greater differences” (Gottlieb 211).

The results of Gottlieb’s study show, again, that a lot of the wordplay found in the source text is lost in the target text. While discussing his first hypothesis, claiming it is invalid, Gottlieb argues that the loss of humour in the subtitles can be due to three different types of constraints: language-specific, media-specific, and human constraints (216). Firstly, a language specific constraint is that “two specific words that sound alike in any source language will possibly sound more differently in any target language involved” (Gottlieb 217). The Danish subtitler of the programme often opted for the most important option out of the two homophones, losing the humour, but maintaining the meaning. Secondly, media-specific constraints “concerns the processing capacity of the viewing audience” (Gottlieb 218), similar to Georgakopoulou’s constraints of time and space discussed in Chapter 1. In light of these constraints, some instances of humour are lost because the subtitler needed to reduce the target text in order to fit it into the subtitles. For example, an alternative option that Gottlieb gives for a subtitle, containing 53 characters, 2.9 seconds of exposure time, and maintaining the homonymy, would have left the target audience unlikely to read the entire subtitle and understand the humour. Lastly, Gottlieb focuses on the “limits of the performance of the translator” (220), which he also calls the human constraint. By this, he means that no person will always be able to think of all of the creative solutions that are available for the translation of a specific text and that, therefore, some instances of humour in the source text might therefore simply be lost in the target text.

When discussing his second hypothesis - homography and homophony are lost often in the target text -, which he claims is valid, Gottlieb shows that the translations contain more homonymy than the original text and homophony and homography are reduced. He then shows some examples of surviving puns and of a failing translation.

To conclude, Gottlieb claims that “nearly all items of wordplay are translatable” (226), which he illustrates by providing alternative translations when the original translations failed to maintain a humorous element. His study will prove most useful to my own case study in light of the reasons he discusses for why a translation might have lost its humorous element, namely the three types of constraints: language-specific, media-specific, and human. These constraints will help me explain why an instance of wordplay might not have been translated in my own case study.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has developed the framework for the case study that will be presented in the next chapter by discussing theories and previously carried out research on the audio-visual translation of wordplay. Martinez-Sierra’s and Balirano’s case studies show that although there now is some interest in the translation of humour within the field of AVT, the translation of wordplay is still an under-researched area, especially in subtitling. Gottlieb’s case study shows that there is an interest in the subtitling of puns, but my own case study will go in a slightly different direction by studying whether the importance of the jokes in the development of the series’ plot and characters influences how the humour is translated by using Zabalbeascoa’s theory of priority.

Chapter 4: Case Study

This chapter will mainly consist of the results from my own case study in which I studied whether the importance of an instance of wordplay on the development of the plot or characters influences the way in which the wordplay is subtitled. Firstly, I will describe the two television series involved in this case study and explain how humour is represented within the programme. Secondly, I will describe my method of research in order to make clear how the research has been carried out. Lastly, I will present the results of the case study and discuss them in detail.

4.1 Humour and the TV series

In order to properly do research into the subtitling of wordplay in two different TV programmes, it must first be clear how humour is represented in the source texts. Therefore, I will first explain the context and setting of the two series and then explain in what way they use humour.

4.1.1 *The Big Bang Theory*

The Big Bang Theory is an American comedy series produced by Chuck Lorre Productions and Warner Bros. Television. The series started airing in 2007 in the USA and first aired in the Netherlands in 2009. The subtitler of the series is, unfortunately, unknown. Each season, of which there are now eight, contains around 24 episode that run for approximately 22 minutes. The story is set in Pasadena, California, and revolves around a group of four scientists at Caltech University - Sheldon and Leonard, both physicists and sharing an apartment, Raj, an astrophysicist, and Howard, an aerospace engineer - and one girl named Penny, a blonde waitress and aspiring actress living across the hall from Sheldon and Leonard. The show focuses mainly on science, science-fiction and fantasy fandoms, comic

books, gaming, and relationship troubles. The storyline in the first episode starts when Penny moves into the apartment opposite from Sheldon and Leonard. Leonard immediately falls in love with Penny and from that moment onwards the story starts.

Because *The Big Bang Theory* is a comedy series, there is much humour to be found in all episodes. A lot of the humour revolves around misunderstandings of lexicons, for example Penny, the female main character, does not understand the guys' scientific language and the guys, mainly Sheldon, do not understand her pop-culture references. Many instances of this humour is either wordplay or register humour. The priority of the humour in this series, according to Zabalbeascoa's theory (see Chapter 2), is global, since *The Big Bang Theory* is all about the comedy. In other words, the translator must try to maintain as many of the instances of humour as possible.

4.1.2 *Sherlock*

Sherlock is a British drama series produced by Hartswood Films and BBC Wales. It first aired in the UK in 2010, and first aired in the Netherlands in 2011. The subtitling for this series has been done by BTI Studios. There are three seasons, each containing three episodes of 90 minutes. The story is about Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective, and Dr. John Watson, ex-army doctor, and is set in modern London. Most of the episodes are, entirely or partly, based on the original stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In every episode, Sherlock and John are out to solve mysteries.

Although *Sherlock* is a drama series, there are still quite a few humorous elements and even wordplay to be found. However, many of the instances of wordplay are not really intended as humorous, but are used for plot reasons or characterization, while others may be there to refer back to the original Sherlock Holmes stories. Because *Sherlock* is a drama series, humour in this series will have lower priorities for the translator than in *The Big Bang*

Theory. According to Zabalbeascoa's priorities theory, the priority for most of the humour in *Sherlock* will be local, in the way that it is more important to maintain the plot than the humour. In other words, the translator does not have to maintain all the instances of humour.

4.2 Methodology

To select the instances of wordplay that I wanted to use in the case study, I first watched all the episodes of *Sherlock* and many episodes of the first five seasons of *The Big Bang Theory*. While watching, I wrote down every instance of wordplay that I could find in a table (see Appendix) and analysed which type of wordplay the source text had, according to Nash's typology (see Chapter 2). Afterwards, I checked whether the instance of wordplay was important for character or plot development. Then, I analysed the target text. I analysed how the wordplay was translated, according to Delabastita's translation methods for puns (see Chapter 2). Afterwards, I checked whether the wordplay and/or the humour was maintained in the target text.

4.3 Subtitling of *Sherlock*

This section will discuss the results of the part of my case study on the subtitling of wordplay in *Sherlock*. Although *Sherlock* consists of nine episodes, I only found instances of wordplay in six of them. This might be due to the fact that *Sherlock* is a drama series and therefore not always has to contain humour. Most of the instances of wordplay that I found were therefore important for either plot or characterization, but there were also some instances that were just there to lighten the mood. I will first discuss the translation of some instances of wordplay that were not important for plot or characterization. Then, I will discuss the translation of some instances of wordplay that were important for plot or characterization, and lastly I will compare the ways in which these two different types are subtitled.

4.3.1 Instances of Wordplay Unimportant for Plot or Characterization

The first type of wordplay occurs in the third episode of the first season, right after Sherlock has speedily deduced something from a body about which John Watson says “Fantastic”. Sherlock then answers “Meretricious”, on which Detective Inspector Lestrade comments “And a happy new year!” (“The Great Game”). This type of wordplay is called a mime according to Nash’s typology. Its humorous element revolves around the pronunciation of ‘meretricious’, which sounds similar to ‘merry Christmas’, and Lestrade’s reply. The subtitling of this instance shows an interesting case. The first two words are translated literally into “Fantastisch” and “Sycofant”. Lestrade’s comment, however, is translated completely differently into “Geen moeilijke woorden”, which translates roughly into ‘Don’t use difficult words’. In other words, there is no play on the sound anymore, although the translator has tried to maintain a humorous element in the target text. This means that the target text does not contain a pun, and therefore the translation method “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134) has been used, which means that this instance of wordplay has been lost in the target text.

A second type of wordplay without importance for plot or characterization is found in the first episode of the second season. In this case, Sherlock and John are in Buckingham Palace and John asks Sherlock “Here to see the Queen?”. Then Mycroft, Sherlock’s brother, enters, and Sherlock says “Apparently, yes” (“A Scandal in Belgravia”). This instance of wordplay involves a homonym, as described by Nash. Its humour revolves around the homonyms ‘Queen’, as in the Queen of England, and ‘queen’, which is a man who likes to dress up as a woman. The subtitling of this instance is as follows: “Gaan we naar de koningin?” “Blijkbaar wel.”, which translates back into English as ‘Are we going to the Queen? Apparently so’. In this subtitle the homonymy is lost, since ‘koningin’ only refers to the head of state, and Dutch uses the word ‘drag queen’ in the other case. However, because Mycroft’s power is often made fun of, for example Sherlock once says “He is the British

government, when he's not too busy being the British Secret Service or the CIA on a freelance basis" ("A Study in Pink"), the subtitle of the joke might be referring to this, Mycroft's "royal" behaviour. In that case, the homonymy is lost, but at least a bit of the humour is maintained in the target text. The translation method used by the subtitler is again "PUN > NON-PUN" (Delabastita 134), with a loss of the wordplay in the subtitling. This is not the only example of a homonym that got lost in translation, because there are two more examples. Both of these puns also showed a loss, because of the "PUN > NON-PUN" method (Delabastita 134). These examples can be found in the appendix.

The third type of wordplay found in contexts without importance for plot or characterization is the pun-metaphor. The first example can be found at the end of the second episode of season two. The entire episode has focused on a mystery with a hound and Sherlock remarks "Gotta see a man about a dog" ("The Hound of Baskerville"). Because it is the last sentence that is spoken in the episode, it is not important for the plot anymore, it just jokes about it. This idiom is often used when someone leaves for an unmentioned purpose, usually going to the bathroom. This passage is subtitled as follows: "Ik moet een man over een hond spreken.", which is a literal translation of the source text, resulting in a loss of wordplay, a loss of humour, and possibly cause confusion, as Dutch does not have any fixed expression resembling this one. The translation method that has been used here is "PUN > NON-PUN" (Delabastita 134). Two other examples of pun-metaphors found in *Sherlock* are translated according to the same method and to the same effect. These two examples can also be found in the appendix.

A fourth type of wordplay unimportant for plot or characterization can be found in the first episode of season three. In this scene the viewer goes back and forth between two conversations: one between Sherlock and Mrs. Hudson and one between John and a client. Mrs. Hudson asks Sherlock "What did he say?", and as a reply the viewer hears Sherlock say

“F..” and then the scene switches quickly to John examining a client and saying “Cough.”. Then the scene immediately returns to Mrs. Hudson saying “Oh dear.” (“The Empty Hearse”). This instance is an example of homophones, as described by Nash. The subtitling of this instance is as follows: “Wat zei hij?” “Hoest eens?” “O jee.” (translated back into English as “What did he say?” “Cough please.” “O dear.”). What the subtitler did here is use a combination of translation methods: the subtitler has both omitted an important part of the pun (“F..”), which is the “PUN > ZERO” (134) method, and lost the rest of the pun in translation by using the “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134) method. These subtitles not only show an example of humour loss, but they also might cause confusion for the target audience, as they might not understand why John would say “Cough please” to Sherlock, and might not understand Mrs. Hudson’s concerned reply.

A last type of wordplay without importance for the plot is found in the second episode of season three. In this scene, Sherlock and John are slightly drunkenly investigating a crime scene, when John explains to their client “He’s clueing. He’s clueing for looks.” (“The Sign of Three”). This type of wordplay can either be a type of portmanteau or blend, as it features the mixing up of two morphemes in a fixed expression. This example is hard to fit exactly into Nash’s model, as this example does not comply with any of the types mentioned in Chapter 2. The subtitling of this instance of wordplay is as follows: “Ja, hij is aan ‘t wijzen. Hij wijst naar aanzoekingen.”, which is an almost literal translation of the source text. This subtitle shows that it is relatively easy to maintain this type of wordplay, as it does not involve any ambiguities. Although this instance is not exactly a pun, it still can be analysed according to Delabastita’s translation methods as being: “PUN > PUN” (134). Although this is only one example, it does show that wordplay and humour is not always lost when wordplay is not important for plot or characterization.

4.3.2 Instances of Wordplay Important for Plot or Characterization

The first type of wordplay used for characterization occurs in the third episode of the first season. In this scene, Sherlock is interrogating a client whose English is not perfect. The client is talking and Sherlock constantly interrupts him and corrects his grammar. This scene is too long to describe in full here and the translation method is consistent, so only the last part will be discussed as this is also where the wordplay is related to characterization. The client says “Without you, I get hung for this”, to which Sherlock replies “No, Mr Bewick, not at all. Hanged, yes.” (“The Great Game”). This instance of characterization wordplay is an example of register humour, namely grammar corrections. The subtitler translated it as follows: “Zonder u word ik opgehangd.” “Nee hoor, Mr Bewick. Dat gebeurt niet. U wordt hooguit opgehangen.”, which is an almost literal translation of the source text. This instance is translated without loss of humour or characterization: “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134). It might be the case that this type of humour is easily translated between these two languages, because this type of humour does not involve ambiguities and therefore equivalent humour is relatively easy to be found in other languages.

Another instance of register humour is found in the second episode of the second season, although, again, this instance of wordplay does not have humour as its intended effect. Sherlock and John are interviewing a potential client, who says “Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.”, which is subtitled as: “Mr. Holmes, het waren de pootafdrukken van een gigantische hond.” (“The Hounds of Baskerville”). This subtitle uses the word ‘hond’ as a translation for ‘hound’, which means that the higher register of ‘hound’ is lost. This does not seem much of a problem yet, but when this instance is referred to later in the episode, it starts to become problematic. Sherlock and the client went to the place where the animal was seen and the following morning the client says “I only saw the hound for a minute, but”, to which Sherlock replies “Hound. Why do you call it a hound? Why a hound?”,

and the confused client asks “Why - what do you mean?”, and Sherlock replies “It’s odd, isn’t it? Strange choice of words – archaic. It’s why I took the case. ‘Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.’ Why say ‘hound’?” The subtitler has to refer back to the original instance here, because it is quoted by Sherlock and the entire instance is subtitled as follows: “Ik zag de hond maar kort..” “‘Hound’, Waarom noem je het een ‘hound’? Waarom een ‘hound’?” “Hoezo? Hoe bedoelt u?” “Een wat vreemde woordkeuze. Daarom nam ik de zaak aan. ‘Het waren de pootafdrukken van een gigantische hond’. Waarom zei je ‘hound’?” Here, the subtitler has used both the original translation from the first instance ‘hond’ and borrowed the word from the source text, which means that he has both used the translation methods “PUN > NON-PUN” and “PUN ST = PUN TT” (Delabastita 134). In essence, PUN ST = PUN TT is a good choice here, as Dutch does not have an archaic form of ‘hond’ and that choice of words is why he took the case. However, because this is not the only method he used, the translation turns out to be inconsistent. The translator might have tried to maintain the suspense, but the outcome of this method was that the plot is confusing for the target audience. There is another example from the same episode that has been translated similarly by trying to maintain the suspense. This example, which is a homonym, can be found in the appendix. Lastly, there is another instance of ‘hound’ when Sherlock is solving the case. It turns out to be an acronym: “Project HOUND”, which is also visible on the screen. This acronym is subtitled exactly the same as the source text by, again, using the “PUN ST = PUN TT” (Delabastita 134) method. Therefore, the subtitler has done well translating it this way; although the wordplay is lost in some places in the first example, the acronym is still exactly the same as the word that is important in the episode and by maintaining that word, the subtitler made the plot easy to follow for the target audience.

Another type of wordplay important for the plot is found in the last episode of season one. Sherlock and his archenemy Moriarty confront each other and Moriarty is about to leave.

Moriarty says “Ciao, Sherlock Holmes” and Sherlock replies “Catch you later”, and Moriarty ends the conversation by saying “No you won’t” (“The Great Game”). This instance shows an example of a pun-metaphor, as described by Nash, since the idiom ‘catch you later’ is used both literally and metaphorically. This time, the instance of wordplay is not only important for the plot, but is also intended as humour. The subtitler, however, prioritized plot over humour by subtitling it as follows: “Ciao, Sherlock Holmes.” “Ik krijg je nog wel.” “Mooi niet”. The subtitles maintain the literal meaning of ‘catch’, which is important for the plot of next episodes, but lose the metaphorical meaning, which made the instance humorous. Therefore, the translation method that has been used is “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134). This translation shows that the plot was considered to be more important than the wordplay.

A different type of wordplay is found in the third episode of season one. At Scotland Yard, Sherlock gets a message on a phone that is introduced by a the sound of five beeps. Lestrade comments “[...] and the bloody Greenwich pips.”, and Sherlock answers “It’s a warning.”, to which John asks “A warning?”, and Sherlock explains “Some secret societies used to send dried melon seeds, orange pips, things like that. Five pips. They’re warning us it’s gonna happen again.” (“The Great Game”). Although this instance of wordplay is not intended to be humorous, it is important for the plot, as Sherlock will receive more messages introduced by pips during the rest of the episode. This instance of wordplay is an example of homonymy, as defined by Nash, with ‘pips’ referring to sounds and seeds. The subtitling of this scene is as follows: “en de piepjes van het tijdsignaal.” “Het is een waarschuwing. Net als bepaalde schimmige organisaties mensen meloenpitten opstuurden. Vijf piepjes. Het is een waarschuwing dat het nog een keer zal gebeuren.”. In these subtitles, the word ‘pips’ is both translated as ‘piepjes’ and as ‘pitten’. This means that the translation method that the subtitler used is “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134). However, although the pun has not been maintained, the target viewer will not be completely confused by the translation. It is still

clear that the ‘piepjes’ are a modern equivalent of the warning ‘pitten’, because of Sherlock’s explanation. Therefore, the translator considered the plot element and the audible sounds to have priority over the wordplay element and thus tried to maintain the plot elements instead of the wordplay elements. This is not the only example of a homonym lost in translation. The other example can be found in the appendix.

In contrast to the previous two examples of homonyms, the following example of a homonymy is maintained in translation. This example is found in the first episode of season three and runs throughout the entire episode. The homonym that is mentioned several times is “underground network” (“The Empty Hearse”), which is ambiguous in the way that it refers to a secret network and to the ‘Underground’, the London Tube network. Most of the instances are consistently translated as “ondergronds netwerk” or “ondergronds terreurnetwerk”, maintaining the same ambiguity in ‘ondergronds’ as the source text. However, there are two instances which are translated differently. Firstly, Sherlock explains the situation to John and says “There’s an underground network planning an attack on London. That’s all we know.” (“The Empty Hearse”). This is, in contrast to the other instances, translated as: “Een geheim netwerk plant een aanval op Londen.” (translated back into English as ‘A secret network is planning an attack on London’). This subtitle suddenly leaves out the wordplay and only shows one denotation of ‘underground’. Whereas most of the instances displayed the “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134) translation method, this example is suddenly translated according to the “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134) method. It is completely unclear why the subtitler opted for this solution, as there seems to be plenty of space in the subtitle for ‘underground’ and reading speed is also no constraint here, as the subtitle is on the screen relatively long because there is a silence after this utterance. The other instance that has been translated differently is when Sherlock suddenly realises the solution to the case. Sherlock exclaims “Not an underground network, John. It’s an Underground

network.” (“The Empty Hearse”), which is subtitled as “Het is geen ondergronds netwerk, maar een Undergroundnetwerk.”. This example shows that the subtitler did recognise the ambiguity of ‘underground’ and that the previous example might have been a mistake. This translation represents the wordplay best by the use of the “PUN > PUN” method (Delabastita 134).

Lastly, there are two examples of wordplay that are combined with visuals. Both these puns are spelled out on the screen. The first example is found in the first episode of season two. Irene Adler’s phone contains compromising photographs and Sherlock tries to get into the phone, but the screen reads: “I am locked” (“A Scandal in Belgravia”). Every time that Sherlock tries to guess the password, the words are visual again, but they are not subtitled. Apparently, the subtitler assumed that the target audience understands what the words mean. Because he did not subtitle the first instances, he is able to maintain the pun in the last instance: “I am Sherlocked” (“A Scandal in Belgravia”), which is a portmanteau as defined by Nash. Again, this instance is not subtitled and the translator consistently used the “PUN ST = PUN TT” method (Delabastita 134). Even though he used this method, risking that some people would not understand it, the wordplay is maintained and it is likely that it will not cause any confusion in the target audience, as most of the audience will probably be able to understand these words.

The second example of wordplay combined with visuals is found in the third episode of season two. In contrast to the previous example, this instance is not only written out, but also spoken. Moriarty visits Sherlock and says “Because I owe you a fall, Sherlock. I owe you.” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). Because this instance is spoken, it is, of course, subtitled, which is done as follows: “Want ik ben je een val schuldig, Sherlock. Ik...ben het... je schuldig.”. This instance does not show the wordplay yet, but that element arrives a few moments later with the visuals: I O U, which appear on screen throughout the episode. The

first time the letters appear on the screen, they are not subtitled, probably because it has been said only a few seconds before. In the second instance, however, the visuals are subtitled the same way the spoken version was subtitled: “Ik... ben het... je schuldig.”. Although this translation method is “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134), the pun is still maintained, because Moriarty spelled it out very clearly and afterwards the English text is also still visual. In other words, this subtitle is not necessarily used to replace or even translate the instance of wordplay, but is merely there to support the visuals, so that it is clear to the audience that it refers to what Moriarty has said earlier in the episode.

4.3.3 Conclusion Subtitling Wordplay in *Sherlock*

What can be concluded from the discussion of the subtitling of wordplay in *Sherlock* is that the wordplay and humour is almost always lost in the case of instances that are not important for plot or characterization. The types that were lost are one mime, four homonyms, three pun-metaphors, and one homophone. The subtitler did try to maintain some humour in these situations, but that has been done without wordplay. All of these examples have been translated according to the “PUN > NON-PUN” method (Delabastita 134). The only type of wordplay that is successfully maintained in such contexts is one example of a portmanteau or blend.

In situations where the wordplay is important for plot or characterization, the wordplay element is more often maintained. Wordplay is maintained in grammar and register humour. It is also maintained in the case of two homonyms and of one portmanteau, although the latter did not even have subtitles. There were still also types of wordplay that were lost, albeit sometimes only partially, namely one pun-metaphor, three homonyms, and one homophones. Therefore, it can be concluded that most instances of wordplay do not survive in

the target texts of this drama series. The plot seems to have a higher priority over humour in the subtitling of drama series.

4.4 Subtitling *The Big Bang Theory*

The Big Bang Theory is a comedy series, so there are relatively many instances of wordplay found in the episodes that are unimportant for plot or characterization. However, not every episode does contain wordplay, so the numbers in this case study might seem low. I have only used instances of wordplay from thirteen different episodes from the first five seasons.

Therefore, this list of examples might not be complete. In contrast to *Sherlock*, the priority of the humour in this series is global. Because it is a comedy series, humour plays an essential role and the translator will probably try to maintain as many instances of humour as possible, even though the humour might not be important for plot or characterization purposes.

Because *The Big Bang Theory* contains so many instances of wordplay, it is impossible to discuss all of them. Therefore, I will only thoroughly discuss instances that illustrate interesting subtitle choices and point out whether the translation method seems to be consistent across instances of the same type of pun. More examples can be found in the appendix.

4.4.1. Instances of Wordplay Unimportant for Plot or Characterization

A first type of wordplay in the series is an instance of a pun-metaphor, as defined by Nash. In fact, pun-metaphors are one of the most prominent types of wordplay in this series. This particular instance is found in the third episode of season one. Leonard comes back into the apartment after talking with Penny and sits down on the couch deep in thought when Sheldon says “Penny for your thoughts” (“The Fuzzy Boots Corollary”). The subtitling of this example is as follows: “Je peinst over Penny.” (which translates back into English as ‘You’re

pondering over Penny'). The translation method that the subtitler used here is "PUN > RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE" (Delabastita 134), indicating that he considered it more important to maintain the name 'Penny', because of the context, than to maintain the pun. He did, however, use an alliteration as a sort of compensation for the loss of wordplay. So even though the wordplay is lost, the humour is preserved in a more subtle way. Another instance of a pun-metaphor from the same episode is treated in a similar manner. In this example Penny and Leonard are talking about dinner plans and Leonard says "And that's still good for you? As it's not carved in stone." Penny replies "No, six thirty is great.", and then Leonard in turn replies "I'll get my chisel." ("The Fuzzy Boots Corollary"). This example is subtitled as follows: "Is dat nog goed? Want het is nog niet gebeiteld?" "Nee, half zeven is goed." "Dan pak ik m'n beitel.", which is an almost literal translation of the source text. This translation method, "PUN > NON-PUN" (Delabastita 134), results in a loss of wordplay and, in this case, even a loss of humour. This translation might have been an attempt of the subtitler to maintain the old Dutch expression "dat is niet in marmer gebeiteld", which means almost the same as the metaphor from the source text. However, this metaphor is hardly used anymore, especially not by the intended audience of this series. Therefore, this translation not only involves a loss of humour, but might also result in a confused audience.

Another type of wordplay that has been used in multiple situations unimportant for the plot is homonymy. Stuart, the owner of the comic bookstore, asks Leonard "Leonard, what's the deal with Sheldon's friend Amy. Are they a couple?" and Leonard answers "A couple of weirdos, why?" ("The Flaming Spittoon Acquisition"). The subtitling of this example is as follows: "Zijn Sheldon en Amy een stelletje?" "Een stelletje weirdo's.", which means that the wordplay has been translated according to the "PUN > PUN" (Delabastita 134) method. This translation shows that the pun and the humour has been maintained in the target text. Another

example of a homonymy that is translated according to this method can be found in the appendix.

In contrast to the previous example, the translator does not always succeed in maintaining a homonymy. In this case, not only the wordplay is lost, but also the register that is important in this example. Sheldon and Leonard discuss something that Penny has said earlier. Leonard asks “What did Penny mean you’d make a good couple?” and Sheldon replies “Well I assume that the two of you together would constitute a couple that others might consider cute. An alternate and somewhat less likely interpretation is that you could manufacture one. As in, ‘oh look, Leonard and Leslie made Mr. and Mrs. Goldfarber, aren’t they adorable?’” (“The Hamburger Postulate”). This example shows homonymy in the word ‘make’ and register problems in ‘constitute’ and ‘manufacture’. The subtitling of this example is as follows: “Wat bedoelde Penny met, ‘jullie zouden een leuk stel zijn?’” “Waarschijnlijk dat jullie een stel zouden vormen dat algemeen beschouwd zou worden als leuk. Een andere interpretatie is dat jullie een stel zouden kunnen vormen. Als in, ‘Leonard en Leslie zijn al 50 jaar samen.”, which shows that the latter part actually repeats the first part of the reply and therefore loses the ambiguity of the wordplay. The subtitling uses the “PUN > NON-PUN” method and might even cause confusion in the audience as the sentence repeats itself.

Portmanteaux are also used relatively often in this series. In the first example, Leonard and his girlfriend Priya, who is from India, are going to have a dinner date over Skype and Sheldon asks “It’s eight o’clock in the morning in Mumbai. How can she have dinner?”, and Leonard replies “Fine, whatever. Priya will be having breakfast.”, which in turn is answered by Sheldon saying “Alright, so technically it’s not a dinner date. I suppose you could call it a dinfast date.” (“The Infestation Hypothesis”). The portmanteau in this example consist of ‘din’ from ‘dinner’ and ‘fast’ from ‘breakfast’. The subtitling had the following solution: “Dan is het dus geen dineetje. Je zou het eventueel dinbijt kunnen noemen.”. In these

subtitles, the portmanteau is maintained in ‘dinbijt’, consisting of ‘din’ from ‘diner’, which means dinner, and ‘bijt’ from ‘ontbijt’, which means breakfast. The translator therefore succeeded in maintaining wordplay by using the “PUN > PUN” method (Delabastita 134).

Most of the instances of portmanteau are translated in a similar manner as above, but there is one example that has been translated in a different way. In this case, Sheldon and the guys are talking about take-away restaurants and Sheldon says “The name always confused me anyway. Souplantation. You can’t grow soup.” (“The Hamburger Postulate”). The subtitles of this example are as follows: “Ik vond de naam toch al verwarrend. Souplantation. Je kunt geen soep verbouwen.”, which is an almost literal translation of the source text. The translation method for the portmanteau, however, is different from previous example. This instance is translated according to the “PUN ST = PUN TT” method (Delabastita 134). The use of this method does not necessarily mean that the wordplay and humour is lost. In this case, the subtitler assumed that the majority of the target audience speaks English well enough to understand this joke. It is, however, unclear why the translator did not opt for ‘soeplantage’, which is really similar to the source text and definitely understandable for the entire audience.

A less common type of wordplay is homophones, which have only been found three times in situations unimportant for the plot this case study. The first example of this type is found in the first episode of season four. Sheldon receives a message from Amy and reads it out loud: “Amy’s at the dry cleaners and she’s made a very amusing pun. I don’t care for perchloroethylene and I don’t like glycol ether. You get it? She doesn’t like glycol ether. Sounds like ‘either’” (“The Robotic Manipulation”). The homophones in this example are the words ‘ether’, a scientific word, and ‘either’. The subtitling of this scene is as follows: “Amy heeft bij de wasserette een heel leuk woordgrapje gemaakt. Ik hou niet van perchloorethyleen en ook niet van glycol-eters. Snap je ‘m? Ze houdt niet van glycol-ethers. Ethers klinkt als

eters.”. The subtitling shows that the homophonic element is different in Dutch: ‘eters’, which means ‘eaters’, en ‘ethers’. This means that although the translation contains a homophone, the humour is at least partially lost. Whereas English has a construction such as ‘don’t like something either’, Dutch does not have such a construction and must therefore find a different solution, which the translator succeeded in relatively well. The translation method that has been used for this example is “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134).

Another example of a homophone, which is translated in a slightly different manner, is found in eighth episode of season four. There are some ‘knock-knock’ jokes and then Sheldon tells this one to Leonard, who is asking the questions: “Knock knock” “Who’s there?” “Hugh” “Hugh who?” “You people need to listen to me.” (“The 21-Second Excitation”). The two homophonic elements are a name, ‘Hugh’, and the pronoun ‘you’, which combined sound like ‘yoo-hoo’ which can be used when asking for the attention of someone. The subtitling of this joke is as follows: “Klop klop” “Wie is daar?” “Juul.” “Juul wie?” “Juul-lie moeten naar mij luisteren.”. This subtitle shows an almost perfect solution to the joke from the source text: two elements of the homophonic wordplay are maintained in the subtitling, the name ‘Juul’ and the pronoun ‘jullie’. This might be a lucky chance, as not every language will have the possibility to let a name sound the same as the second person plural pronoun. The only element that is lost in this translation is the ‘yoo-hoo’. The translation method that has been used in this situation is “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134).

The last type of wordplay found in situations unimportant for the plot is the mime, which was found several times and was translated in different ways. The first example occurs when Penny has Sheldon over. She sends him to bed and Sheldon asks “May I say one last thing?” and Penny replies “Only if it doesn’t rhyme.”, which makes Sheldon say “Alright.” and a few moments later “Goodnight.” (“The Vegas Renormalization”). This instance of a mime, as defined by Nash, is subtitled in the Dutch version as follows: “Mag ik nog iets

zeggen?” “Alleen als het niet rijmt.” “Goed...Weltrusten.”. These subtitles represent a literal translation of the source text, resulting in a loss of wordplay, because the words ‘goed’ and ‘weltrusten’ do not rhyme in Dutch. The translation method used by the subtitler is “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134) and not only results in a loss of wordplay, but also in a loss of humour. Another example of a mime is translated in a different manner. In this example, Penny is talking about Leonard and says “For the first couple of months, whenever I’d take off my bra, he would giggle and say ‘Oh boy, my breast friends’.” (“The Zarnecki Incursion”). This instance of wordplay revolves around the rhyming of the words ‘best’ and ‘breast’. The subtitling of this example is as follows: “Als ik mijn beha uitdeed, giechelde hij: O jee, m’n boezemvrienden.”. Even though the mime has not been maintained, the translation method that has been used here is still “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134), because ‘boezemvrienden’ is a homonymic play on ‘boezem’, which means ‘breasts’, and ‘boezemvrienden’, which means ‘best friends’. In other words, although the mime has not been maintained, the subtitler did succeed in maintaining some type of wordplay and therefore in maintaining the humour.

A final interesting example of mimes that are not important for the plot is found in the eighth episode of season four. The interesting factor here is that the mime is not found in the source text, but in the subtitling. In the original scene Leonard asks if someone can turn off the ‘Sheldon commentary track’ and Sheldon replies “There’s no switch. Just listen and learn.” (“The 21-Second Excitation”). Obviously, there is no wordplay in this example. However, the subtitler translated this instance as follows: “Er is geen knop. Je steekt er veel van op.” (translated back into English as ‘There’s no switch. You learn a lot from it’). The subtitles, in contrast to the source text, do contain a mime. In other words, the translation method that has been used here is “ZERO > PUN” (Delabastita 134). This method is often used when a translator sees an opportunity to compensate for previous or upcoming losses of

wordplay or humour. Although I only found one instance of this compensation, this does not mean that there aren't more examples of compensation in the subtitling of *The Big Bang Theory*. I only came across this example by accident.

4.4.2 Instances of Wordplay Important for Plot or Characterization

The first type of wordplay that is important for characterization is register humour and it is found in the fifth episode of season one. Sheldon and Penny often need to explain their vocabulary to each other and that happens twice in this scene. Firstly, Sheldon comes to Penny's door and says to her "I need your opinion on a matter of semiotics.", which makes Penny say "I'm sorry?". Sheldon then explains "Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. A branch of philosophy, related to linguistics.", but Penny still does not understand it and says "Ok, sweetie, I know you think you're explaining yourself, but you're really not." ("The Hamburger Postulate"). Sheldon used some scientific words here that Penny does not understand and characterizes both of them. This is subtitled as follows: "Ik wil je mening horen over een semiotische kwestie." "Pardon?" "Semiotiek, de leer van symbolen. Een tak van de filosofie, met betrekking op linguïstiek." "Oké, lieverd, ik weet dat je denkt dat je het uitlegt, maar dat is niet zo.". This is an almost literal translation and it replicates the differences in register very well. The second example from the same episode, however, is slightly more difficult to translate, as it contains a pun-metaphor that is often used in the lower register that Penny uses. She explains a peculiar situation to Sheldon by saying "Alright, look. A tie on the doorknob usually means someone doesn't want to be disturbed, because they're, you know, gettin' busy.", which is apparently a fitting explanation for Sheldon, because he replies "So you're saying Leonard has a girl in there?" ("The Hamburger Postulate"). This instance of lower register defines Penny's character as a less educated girl. This example is subtitled as follows "Een stropdas om de deurknop betekent dat hij niet gestoord wil worden,

omdat hij ergens mee bezig is.” “Bedoel je dat Leonard daar met een meisje is?”. The pun-metaphor in the subtitles can be translated back into English as ‘because he’s busy with something’. In other words, the pun and the lower register or slang from Penny is lost in the subtitles and fails to characterize her.

The second type of wordplay is the mime, which only occurred once. This mime was only important for the plot of the episode in the sense that Penny uses more mimes in a similar way throughout the episode. This happens when Sheldon knocks on Penny’s door and she opens the door saying “What’s up, buttercup?”. Then later, she opens the door again and says “What’s the word, hummingbird?” and lastly, she does this a third time by saying “What’s the gist, physicist?” (“The Infestation Hypothesis”). This type of catch phrase is relatively common in English, but not in Dutch. So, however well the translator may translate it, it might always sound like a strange thing to say for the target viewer. The subtitles are as follows: ““Alles goed, lekkere toet?” “Zeg ’t maar, fladderaar.” “Kom maar op, knappe kop.””. The subtitler not only managed to maintain the mimes by using the “PUN > PUN” method, but he also succeeded in maintaining the images that Penny creates by translating ‘hummingbird’ into ‘fladderaar’, which also conjures up a bird image, and ‘physicist’ into ‘knappe kop’, which means a very smart person as well. In short, the subtitler succeeded in maintaining the wordplay and the humour of the images created by Penny.

Pun-metaphors are found in five situations important for the plot. As a first example, one episode is full of pun-metaphors referring to ‘going to the bathroom’. Most of the pun-metaphors are maintained in the subtitling. For example, when Howard says “It’s kinda like a jack-in-the-box, no one knows exactly when, but at some point something way worse than a puppet is gonna pop out of that box.” (“The Classified Materials Turbulence”). The subtitling of this instance is as follows: “Het is een duveltje-uit-een-doodsje, op een zeker moment komt er iets veel ergers dan een pop uit die doos omhoog.”. The metaphor that has been used in the

subtitles is very similar to the metaphor in the source text and fits perfectly into the plot, without losing any of the humour from the source text. The translation method that has been used here is “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134). Another example from the same episode is translated in a slightly different way. In this scene, Raj explains the concept of karma and says “It’s actually a very elegant system. You know, what goes around comes around.” and Howard answers annoyed “Speaking of what goes around comes around.” (“The Classified Materials Turbulence”) and points to his ‘space-toilet’. This scene is subtitled as follows: “Het is een elegant systeem. Het is een soort morele kringloop.” “Over een kringloop gesproken...”. Although the metaphor is translated as ‘kringloop’, which means ‘cycle’, and the pun-metaphor is lost, the humour is not lost in this instance. The pun-metaphor from the source text is translated as a homonym in the target text. This means that the “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134) method has been used and the humour is maintained. There are more examples of pun-metaphors from this episodes which are translated in a similar manner. These examples can be found in the appendix.

Although the previous two examples show that pun-metaphors are sometimes maintained in the target text, in some way or another, sometimes they are lost as well. An example of this can be found in episode nineteen of season five. Sheldon is complaining about how Amy is making decisions for him, then Howard makes a whip sound with his phone and Sheldon says “You’re right. I’m smart as a whip, I should be able to figure this out.” (“The Weekend Vortex”), although that is obviously not what Howard meant with his sound. The sound is repeated quite a few times in the episode. This instance of a metaphor used in a humorous way is subtitled as follows: “Je hebt gelijk. Ik ben zo’n scherp als een zweep.”, which, for some reason, contains a grammatical error in Dutch and translates back into English as ‘sharp as a whip’. Not only is the wordplay lost in the subtitling because ‘scherp als een zweep’ is not an idiomatic phrase in Dutch, but the humour is also lost as the audience

might not understand what Sheldon means. Although the translation method used here is “PUN > NON-PUN” (Delabastita 134), the subtitler might not have had another choice because of the whip sound. Without the word ‘zweep’ in his translation, the audience might have been even more confused and unsatisfied.

The next type of wordplay is the homonym, of which six examples are found that were important for the plot. Most of the homonyms in *The Big Bang Theory* that are important for the plot are sexual references. Often, these are relatively well represented in the target text as well. For example, when Leslie, while Leonard is playing cello, says this in the first season: “That was before I saw you handling that beautiful piece of wood between your legs.” (“The Hamburger Postulate”), this instance of homonymy is subtitled as “Toen had ik je nog niet met dat instrument tussen je benen zien spelen.”. The translation method that has been used here is “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 143), which in this case means no loss of wordplay or humour. There are more examples of homonyms that have been translated according to the same method (see Appendix). However, there is one interesting example of the same homonym as before, ‘wood’, that does show a slight loss in humour and wordplay. This example comes from episode thirteen of season five when the guys are playing *Settlers of Catan*, a board game. There are multiple examples of this homonym in the episode, but I will only discuss one that is combined with another homonym. Sheldon is talking about the game and says “Now that I have some wood, I’m going to begin the erection of my settlement.” (“The Recombination Hypothesis”). This instance of a double homonymy is subtitled as follows: “En nu ik een paal heb, kan ik eindelijk zorgen dat mijn dorp klaarkomt.”. The subtitles do portray two homonyms in the target language, namely ‘paal’, denoting both ‘pole’ and (erect) ‘penis’, and ‘klaarkomt’, denoting finishing a task and climaxing in sex. In other words, although the translation method “PUN > PUN” (Delabastita 134) is used twice here, something is not entirely correct in the translation of ‘wood’. The right term for ‘wood’ in the

Dutch version of Settlers of Catan is 'hout', but that does not have sexual connotations. So, although the term 'paal' does not fit with the game they are playing, the translator did make a good choice by translating it as such, because in this way the sexual reference, which is what the entire episode is about, homonymy, and humour are maintained.

The fifth type of wordplay involves homophones. Unfortunately, I only found one example of a homophone that was important for the plot of an episode. This is found in the tenth episode of season four when the girls are having dinner at a restaurant and Penny's ex-boyfriend walks in. Penny and Bernadette say 'hi', but all Amy can say is an inadvertent sound: "Hoo." ("The Alien Parasite Hypothesis"). This first encounter with this sound is not subtitled. The next encounter of this sound, however, is subtitled. This time, Amy and Sheldon are discussing why she would constantly make that sound and Amy explains the situation by saying "Penny's friend Zack stopped by and said 'hello' and I said 'hoo'.". Then Sheldon says "Who?" and Amy replies "Zack", which surprises Sheldon and he says "Then why did you ask?" ("The Alien Parasite Hypothesis"). The two of them have a confused discussion for a longer time, but the subtitling of the homophones does not change, which is why this short part of the scene will be sufficient. The subtitles are as follows: "Penny's vriend Zack kwam langs en zei 'hallo' en ik zei: 'wie'." "Wie?" "Zack" "Waarom vroeg je het dan?". The subtitler translated the 'hoo' as if Amy said 'who'. This might cause some confusion in the target audience, because firstly the audience hears Amy say 'hoo' not 'wie' and secondly the miscommunication between Sheldon and Amy would be confusing, as now there is not an inadvertent sound and a word, but only a word that is used twice. The translator tried to maintain the wordplay by using the "PUN > PUN" (Delabastita 134) method and turned the homophone into a homonym, but some of the humour is definitely lost.

The last examples in this case study involve portmanteaux. These portmanteaux are found in the tenth episode of season five and refers to characters in a game that the guys are

playing. Raj talks about an older set of the game and says “They’re not even trying. Remember the Satanimals pack with the Hellephant? Absurd. What was he, a bad elephant who died and went to hell? What could an elephant possibly do that would cause him eternal damnation?” (“The Flaming Spittoon Acquisition”). This example is subtitled as follows: “Weet je nog die Satanimals, met die Hellephant? Wat is dat? Een olifant die naar de hel ging? Zo’n beest doet geen vlieg kwaad.”. These subtitles show an interesting translation method, namely “PUN ST = PUN TT” (Delabastita 134). Often, this method has the risk of losing the humour in the target text. However, in this case the humour is maintained, because ‘hell’ and ‘Satan’ are very similar in Dutch, namely ‘hel’ and ‘Satan’. Even though the other half of the two puns are not the same in English, the knowledge of English of the target audience will probably be sufficient to understand this wordplay.

4.4.3 Conclusion Subtitling Wordplay in *The Big Bang Theory*

What can be concluded from the results in section 4.4.2 is that the wordplay in situations unimportant for the plot is maintained on many occasions in the subtitling of this comedy series. Sometimes the subtitler managed to maintain the same type of wordplay, sometimes one type of wordplay has been translated into another type of wordplay, and one time there even was an instance of compensation. The only type of wordplay that has completely disappeared from the subtitling is the pun-metaphor, which the subtitler also tried to compensate once by using an alliteration. In short, the subtitling maintains many instances of humour and even wordplay in situations unimportant for plot or characterization.

Similarly, many of the instances of wordplay have been maintained in the subtitling of situations that are important for plot and characterization. In fact, every type of wordplay that I found is maintained at least once in the subtitles. Wordplay has been lost only a few times in these situations, namely in the subtitling of register humour, because the lower register in the

source text contained an idiom and the target text left this idiom out, changing it into a neutral register, and in the subtitling of some instances of wordplay that were reinforced in the source text by visual or sound effects. In the case of the latter, the subtitler opted to maintain the words of the sound or the visual in the subtitling, which meant that the wordplay was lost, but the audience would not be confused by an incongruity between sounds or visuals and words.

Overall, the subtitling of *The Big Bang Theory* has maintained many instances of wordplay in one way or the other, whether by maintaining the same type of wordplay or changing it into another type of wordplay, and even compensated for some losses in wordplay and humour. Therefore, it can be concluded that wordplay in comedy series has a very high translation priority.

Conclusion

Concerning the models that I used during the case study, I can conclude that both Nash's pun typology and Delabastita's translation methods were relatively useful. Nash's pun typology proved to be useful in analysing wordplay in the TV programmes. However, register humour was not included in his typology, even though it is a very important type of wordplay as far as humour and characterization in these TV series were concerned. In addition, some of Nash's pun types were not found in the TV series, such as pseudomorphs or etymological puns. Therefore, new or adjusted typologies of puns, especially typologies of puns used in TV programmes, would need to make some adjustments to Nash's typology, such as adding register humour and deleting puns that are unlikely to be found in audio-visual texts. Similarly, Delabastita's translation method model may require some adjustments as well. Although it was useful in analysing the translations, his typology contains methods that are not used in subtitling. Therefore, if a new or revised model of subtitling methods were to be developed, then it might be useful to mention that some methods are only used as a means of compensation and it may be better to leave out the "editorial techniques" method (Delabastita 134), as it is impossible to use in subtitling.

The case study in Chapter 4 revealed different results in the translation of the two television series. Firstly, the results from the drama series *Sherlock* show that wordplay is indeed maintained more often in situations that are important for plot and character developments. Register and grammar humour are always maintained and homonyms and portmanteaux are sometimes maintained. Some instances of wordplay are only partially maintained, for example the "I O U" (The Reichenbach Fall, see Chapter 4) which is translated without wordplay in the subtitles, but the wordplay is maintained in the visuals and the audio. When the wordplay did not survive in the target text, the translator either tried a different type of humour, or he only maintained those elements of the ambiguous source text

wordplay that were important for the plot, or the wordplay was translated in a confusing manner, often a literal translation, especially when the humour was not important for the plot. In this series only a small variety of translation methods was used, namely mainly “PUN > NON-PUN”, some “PUN > PUN”, some “PUN ST = PUN TT”, and one “PUN > ZERO” (Delabastita 134). The methods that were used show that humour might almost have been neglected by the subtitler. However, it is still a very important characteristic of the programme and should therefore receive as much attention from the translator as the plot and suspense. The results from this series, therefore, support my initial claim that wordplay in situations important for plot and character development are more likely to be maintained in the target text.

Secondly, in contrast to the subtitling of *Sherlock*, the results from the comedy series *The Big Bang Theory* show something different. In the case of this series, the puns seemed to be more important than the plot. Almost every type of wordplay in situations unimportant for the plot have been maintained in the subtitles. Although the joke was sometimes altered slightly in the translation, for example “screwed” turned into “zuur” (The Desperation Emanation, see Chapter 4) in translation, many instances of wordplay were at least maintained in a humorous way in the target text, for example by changing the type of wordplay or even the type of humour. The only few times that the subtitler did have problems in maintaining the wordplay was in situations that were accompanied by sounds or visuals that were repeated throughout the episodes. In addition, the subtitler of this series also added compensations in the subtitles. The translator therefore also used a wider variety of translation methods, namely a large number of “PUN > PUN”, some “PUN > NON-PUN”, one “PUN > RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE”, some “PUN ST = PUN TT”, and one “ZERO > PUN” (Delabastita 134). This list of methods shows that the translator tried to maintain as much of the humour as possible, whether the instances were important for the plot or not. The results

from this series, therefore, disprove my initial claim, since both jokes important or unimportant for the plot or characterizations were maintained as instances of wordplay in approximately an equal number of times.

This case study supports Zabalbeascoa's claim that global and local priorities result in different translation approaches. The jokes with local priority, the ones in *Sherlock*, are mostly not humorous in the target text. The only time jokes in this series had a chance of being retained in translation was when the wordplay was important for the plot. The jokes with global priority, the ones in *The Big Bang Theory*, did mostly survive in translation. Whether they were important for the plot or not, most of the instances of wordplay were at least translated in a humorous way in this comedy series. Therefore, it can be concluded that, contrary to my initial claim, instances of wordplay are very likely to be maintained in the translation of comedy series and are only likely to be maintained in instances important for plot or characterization in drama series.

In addition to this conclusion, it must be noted that more research is needed to make such conclusions definitive. In this thesis, I have only studied two TV series. Moreover, I have not been able to study every single episode from *The Big Bang Theory*, as there were simply too many of them, and *Sherlock* had too few instances of wordplay to draw any definite conclusions. Therefore, it would be interesting to do further research into the subtitling of wordplay, and then specifically in non-humorous TV series, because my case study indicates that in comedy series humour is already taken very seriously. In non-humorous series the importance of plot and characterization seems to make more of a difference in translation. For example, although in *Sherlock* some of the wordplay was not important for the plot, these instances were very typical of the series, creating a humorous layer in an overall dramatic series. In spite of this systematicity, these instances were almost all lost in the translation. It would therefore be interesting to see whether this happens in other

non-humorous series as well, which could reveal whether subtitlers must take humour more seriously in such series in order to do them justice.

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Appendix

Table of instances of wordplay found in Sherlock

Series & episode	ST	subtitle	Pun type	Plot?
Sherlock se 1 ep 3 openingsscene	<p>“Weren’t a real man.” “wasn’t a real man” “It’s not weren’t it’s wasn’t” “Me old man was a butcher, so I know how to handle knives, he learned us how to cut up a beast.” “Taught. Taught you how to cut up a beast.”</p> <p>“Then I done it.” “Did it.” “Then I looked down and she weren’t.. wasn’t moving no more. Anymore.”</p> <p>“Without you, I get hung for this.” “Hanged, yes.”</p>	<p>“Geen echte man zou wezen.” “Geen echte man zou zijn” ““Wezen’ is fout, het is ‘zijn” “Mijn vader was slager, dus vlees in stukken snijden, ken ik als de beste.” “Kan. Kan je als de beste.”</p> <p>“Toen hep ik ’t gedaan.” “Heb.” “Toen zag ik dat ze niet meer ken... dat ze niet meer beweegde. Bewoog.” “Zonder u wordt ik opgehangd.” “U wordt hooguit opgehangen.”</p>	Grammar correction/register	characterization
Sherlock se 1 ep 3 12:45 Not humour loss per se, though loss of pun!	<p>“Greenwich pips.” ... “Some secret societies used to send dried melon seeds, orange pips, things like that. Five pips. They’re warning us it’s gonna happen again.”</p>	<p>“piepjes van het tijdsignaal.” ... “Net als bepaalde schimmige organisaties mensen meloenpitten opstuurden. Vijf piepjes. Het is een waarschuwing dat het nog een keer zal gebeuren.”</p>	Homonym (also referencin g original story: Five Orange Pips)	Yes! More pips later on, with every new case. (Though only this explanation refers to the homonyms.)
Sherlock se 1 ep 3 55:50 Humour loss!	<p>“Fantastic.” “Meretricious.” “And a happy new year.”</p>	<p>“Fantastisch.” “Sycofant.” “Geen moeilijke woorden.”</p>	Mime. (allophone, meretricious sounds like merry christmas)	No
Sherlock se 1 ep 3 1:26:20 Slight loss	<p>“Ciao, Sherlock Holmes.” “Catch you later.” “No you won’t.”</p>	<p>“Ciao, Sherlock Holmes.” “Ik krijg je nog wel.” “Mooi niet.”</p>	Pun metaphor	Yes
Sherlock se 2 ep 1 15:08 Humour loss	<p>“Here to see the Queen?” (Mycroft enters) “Apparently yes”</p>	<p>“Gaan we naar de koningin?” “Blijkbaar wel”</p>	Homonym	No
Sherlock se 2 ep 1 37:55	<p>“Our hands are tied.”</p>	<p>“We staan machteloos.”</p>	Pun metaphor	No

Loss	"She'd applaud your choice of words."	"Ze zou je woordkeuze waarderen."		
Sherlock se 2 ep 1 50:52 1:21:55 Loss? Or clear for all audiences?	"I AM LOCKED" visual, though next visual is subbed > as are most! I AM SHERLOCKED	Not subtitled	Portmanteau	Yes, Password for Adler's phone
Sherlock se2 ep 1 1:15:16 Loss	"But that's the deceased for you. Late in every sense of the word.	"Maar dat is typisch voor overledenen. Te laat, in elk opzicht."	Homonym	No
Sherlock se2 ep 2 LOSS! 11:00? 50:10 Loss = switching in vocabulary = makes it unclear 1:12:10	"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound." "I only saw the hound for a minute, but.." "Hound." "What?" "Why do you call it a hound? Why a hound?" "Why - what do you mean?" "It's odd, isn't it? Strange choice of words – archaic. It's why I took the case." "Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound." Why say "hound"? "Project HOUND"	"Mr. Holmes, het waren de pootafdrukken van een gigantische hond." "Ik zag de hond maar kort.." "Hound', Waarom noem je het een 'hound'?" Waarom een 'hound'? Hoezo? Hoe bedoelt u? Een wat vreemde woordkeuze. Daarom nam ik de zaak aan. 'Het waren de pootafdrukken van een gigantische hond'. Waarom zei je 'hound'? "Project HOUND"	Register	JA! (later on when Sherlock explains why he took the case, see below.) (AND last instance = acronym) (many instances hound=hond)
Sherlock se2 ep 2 16:30 32:45 1:11:08 (visuals, not subtitled > though most are) 1:12:15	"Liberty, in."	"Vrijheid, in." "Liberty Indiana."	Homonyms	Yes (maybe translated because just like them were not supposed to know that it's a place name yet)
Sherlock se 2 ep 2 1:26:55 Humour loss	"Gotta see a man about a dog."	"Ik moet een man over een hond spreken."	Pun-metaphor	No

Sherlock se 2 ep 3 25:35 Loss? 26:05	"Because I owe you a fall, Sherlock. I ... owe ... you" spoken>repeat=same "I O U" visuals	"Want ik ben je een val schuldig, Sherlock. Ik...ben het... je schuldig." Repeat=same No sub! With sub at 43:35	Homophon es (owe=o)	Yes, returns often in visuals
Sherlock se 2 ep 3 No loss	"Fairy tales. And pretty grim ones too."	"Sprookjes. En behoorlijk grimmige ook."	Homonym	No
Sherlock se 3 ep 1 36:20 > Humour loss! No loss	1.MRS HUDSON: What did he say? SHERLOCK: F... JOHN: Cough. MRS HUDSON: Ooh dear! 2. SHERLOCK: Mr Windibank, you have been a complete and utter ... JOHN: ... piss pot.	"Wat zei hij?" NOT SUBBED "Hoest eens?" "O jee." "Mr. Windibank, u bent een echte ... "pispot.	Homophon e Homonym (swearwor d)	No
Sherlock se 3 ep 1 Whole ep 8:40 no loss 13:54 58:20 Loss! NO loss!! 59:40	Underground network "There's an underground terrorist network active in London" "I will find your underground terror cell, Mycroft." "There's an underground network planning an attack on London." "Not an underground network, John. It's an Underground network."	"In Londen bereidt een ondergronds terreurnetwerk 'n zware aanslag voor." "Ik zoek je ondergrondse netwerk wel, Mycroft." "Een geheim netwerk plant een aanval op Londen." "Het is geen ondergronds netwerk, maar een Undergroundnetwerk."	Homonym	YES!
Sherlock se 3 ep 2 21:39 >plot loss	"The best man." (John) "The best man?" (S) "What do you think?" (J) "naamenuitleg" (S) "For my wedding. For me. I need a best man." (J)	"Wie is mijn beste .." "De beste?" "Wat vind je?" "namen">nothing to do with John "Voor mijn huwelijk. Ik heb een getuige nodig"	Homonym (Best man and wedding thing)	Yes, wedding context
Sherlock se 3 ep 2 28:56 Loss	"And of course I have to mention the elephant in the room"	"En dan de olifant in de kamer."	Pun metaphor and aural	No
Sherlock se 3 ep 2 52:32	"He's clueing. He's clueing for looks."	"Ja, hij is aan 't wijzen. Hij wijst naar aanzoekingen."	Portmante au or blend	No

Sherlock se 3 ep 2 54:30 loss	"What a wasted opportunity."	"Wat een gemiste kans."	Homonym	No, but refers back to drunken state
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Table of instances of wordplay found in The Big Bang Theory:

Series episode	ST	TT	Wordplay type	Plot importance
BBT se 1 ep 3 3:27 loss	"Penny for your thoughts"	"Je peinst over Penny"	Pun- metaphor	No
BBT se 1 ep 3	"I was thinking more of a biosocial exploration with a neurochemical overlay." "Wait, are you asking me out?"	"Ik dacht meer aan een biosociaal onderzoek met een neurochemisch accent" "Vraag je me mee uit?"	Register	Yes, characterization
BBT se 1 ep 3 ?	"We tried kissing, but the earth didn't move. I mean, any more than 383 miles that it was gonna move anyway."	We probeerden te kussen, maar de aarde bewoog niet. Niet meer dan de 616 kilometer die hij sowieso zou bewegen."	Pun- metaphor	No
BBT se 1 ep 3 loss	"And that's still good for you? Cause it's not carved in stone." "No, six thirty is great." "I'll get my chisel."	Is dat nog goed? Want het is nog niet gebeiteld. Nee, half zeven is goed. Dan pak ik m'n beitel.	Pun metaphor	No
BBT se 1 ep 4 00:40 (discussing time travel) No loss	"Then I guess congratulations are in order." "No congratulations will have been in order."	"Dan moet ik je feliciteren." "Nee, dan had je me moeten feliciteren."	Register grammar	Yes, characterization
BBT se 1 ep 5 3:00 Loss!	"What did Penny mean you'd make a good couple?" "Well I assume that the two of you together would constitute a couple that others might consider cute. An alternate and somewhat less likely interpretation is that you could manufacture one. As in, 'oh look, Leonard and Leslie made Mr. and Mrs. Goldfarber, aren't they adorable?' "	"Wat bedoelde Penny met, 'jullie zouden een leuk stel zijn'?" "Waarschijnlijk dat jullie een stel zouden vormen dat algemeen beschouwd zou worden als leuk. Een andere interpretatie is dat jullie een stel zouden kunnen vormen. Als in, 'Leonard en Leslie zijn al 50 jaar samen.'"	homonym And register	No

<p>BBT se 1 ep 5 6:00 No loss</p>	<p>"I thought you weren't interested in me." "That was before I saw you handling that beautiful piece of wood between your legs." "You mean my cello." "No I mean the obvious crude double entendre." ... A little musical foreplay. Terrific.</p>	<p>"Ik dacht dat je me niet leuk vond." "Toen had ik je nog niet met dat instrument tussen je benen zien spelen." "Je bedoelt m'n cello." "Nee, de overduidelijke dubbele bodem." " "Muzikaal voorspel. Geweldig."</p>	<p>Homonym</p>	<p>Yes, theme of entire episode</p>
<p>BBT se 1 ep 5 No loss</p>	<p>"Hi Sheldon, what's going on?" "I need your opinion on a matter of semiotics." "I'm sorry?" "Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. A branch of philosophy, related to linguistics." "Ok, sweetie, I know you think you're explaining yourself, but you're really not." "Well?" "Well what?" "What does it mean?" "O come on, you went to college." "Yes, but I was eleven." "Alright, look. A tie on the doorknob usually means someone doesn't want to be disturbed, because they're, you know, gettin' busy." "So you're saying Leonard has a girl in there?" "Well, either that or he's lost his tie rack and got really into Bryan Adams."</p>	<p>"Hoi, Sheldon. Wat is er?" "Ik wil je mening horen over een semiotische kwestie." "Pardon?" "Semiotiek, de leer van symbolen. Een tak van de filosofie, met betrekking op linguïstiek." "Oké, lieverd, ik weet dat je denkt dat je het uitlegt, maar dat is niet zo." "Nou?" "Wat?" "Wat betekent dat?" "Je hebt op de universiteit gezeten." "Ja, maar toen was ik elf" "Een stropdas om de deurknop betekent dat hij niet gestoord wil worden, omdat hij ergens mee bezig is." "Bedoel je dat Leonard daar met een meisje is?" "Dat, of hij is z'n stropdassenrek kwijt."</p>	<p>Register</p>	<p>Yes, characterization</p>
<p>BBT se 1 ep 5 Loss > but only for people not good at English</p>	<p>"The name always confused me anyway. Souplantation. You can't grow soup.</p>	<p>"Ik vond de naam toch al verwarrend. Souplantation. Je kunt</p>	<p>Portmanteau</p>	<p>No</p>

		geen soep verbouwen.”		
BBT se 2 ep 21 loss	“May I say one last thing?” “Only if it doesn’t rhyme.” “Alright...Goodnight.”	“Mag ik nog iets zeggen?” “Alleen als het niet rijmt.” “Goed...Weltrusten.”	Mime	No
BBT se 2 ep 22 Sheldon explains jokes throughout episode Seems like a loss	“Just think, thanks to your hard work, an international crew of astronauts will boldly go where no man has gone before.” “Is that supposed to be funny?” “I believe it is. The combination of the Star Trek reference and the play on words involving the double meaning of the verb ‘to go’ suggest that Leonard is humorously mocking your efforts in space plumbing.”	“Dankzij jouw harde werk kunnen astronauten dapper naar de wc gaan waar nog niemand hen voorging.” “Is dat een grap?” “Ik vind het grappig. Met de Star Trek-verwijzing en de woordgrap met ‘gaan’ drijft Leonard de spot met je pogingen tot loodgieterij in de ruimte.”	Pun- metaphor	Yes, rest of scene and characterization
BBT se 2 ep 22 Sheldon explains jokes throughout episode >no loss, use of explanation!	“He’s right, this is an important achievement for two reasons. Number one and of course number two.” “O, clever. Playing on the use of cardinal numbers as euphemisms for bodily functions.”	“Hij heeft gelijk. Dit is belangrijk om twee redenen. Eerst nummer één en van achteren nummer twee.” “O, wat gevat. Je gebruikt hoofdtelwoorden als eufemismen van lichaamsfuncties.”	Pun- metaphor	Yes follows episode theme & characterization
BBT se 2 ep 22 >no loss	“It’s kinda like a jack-in-the-box, no one knows exactly when, but at some point something way worse than a puppet is gonna pop out of that box.”	“Het is een duveltje-uit-een-doesje, op een zeker moment komt er iets veel ergers dan een pop uit die doos omhoog.”	Pun- metaphor	Yes episode theme
BBT se 2 ep 22 Metaphor is lost, but humour isn’t	“It’s actually a very elegant system. You know, what goes around comes around.” “Speaking of what goes around comes around..”	“Het is een elegant systeem. Het is een soort morele kringloop.” “Over een kringloop gesproken..”	Pun- metaphor	Yes, refers to poophumor again
BBT se 3 ep 19 Visual: tshirt met tekst	“The Wesley Crushers?”	“De Wesley Crushers?”	homophone	No

No loss	<p>“No not the Wesley Crushers. The Wesley Crúshers.”</p> <p>“I don’t get it.”</p> <p>“Wesley Crusher was Will Wheaton’s character on Star Trek.”</p> <p>“Still don’t get it.”</p> <p>“It’s a blindingly clever play on words. By appropriating his character’s name and adding the ‘s’, we imply that we will be the crushers of Wesley.”</p>	<p>“Niet de Wesley Crushers. De Wesley ‘Crushers’.”</p> <p>“Ik snap het niet.”</p> <p>“Wesley Crusher was Will Wheatons personage in Star Trek.”</p> <p>“Ik snap het nog niet.”</p> <p>“Een schitterende woordspeling. De naam van z’n personage plus een S en het lijkt of we Wesley crushen.”</p>		
BBT se 4 ep 1 PUN MAINTAINED > no loss	<p>“Amy’s at the dry cleaners and she’s made a very amusing pun. I don’t care for perchloroethylene and I don’t like glycol ether. You get it? She doesn’t like glycol ether. Sounds like ‘either’”</p>	<p>“Amy heeft bij de wasserette een heel leuk woordgrapje gemaakt. Ik hou niet van perchloorethyleen en ook niet van glycol-eters. Snap je ‘m? Ze houdt niet van glycol-ethers. Ethers klinkt als eters.”</p>	Homophone Ether and either	No
BBT se 4 ep 2	<p>“You don’t get it Leonard. I’m going to miss so much. The Unified Field Theory, cold fusion, the dogapus.”</p> <p>“What’s a dogapus?”</p> <p>“A hybrid dog and octopus. Men’s underwater best friend.”</p>	<p>“Je snapt het niet. Ik loop van alles mis. De Theorie van Alles, koude kernfusie, de hondopus.”</p> <p>“Wat is dat?”</p> <p>“Een kruising tussen hond en octopus. Een onderwater-mensenredder.”</p>	portmanteau	No
BBT se 4 ep 5 Pun > different pun? loss	<p>“What would you be if you were attached to another object by an incline plane wrapped helically around an axis?”</p> <p>“Screwed.”</p>	<p>“Wat wordt er door een base geneutraliseerd onder vorming van een zout en water?”</p> <p>“Zuur.”</p>	Homonym	No
BBT se 4 ep 8 COMPENSATION?	<p>“There’s no switch, just listen and learn.”</p>	<p>“Er is geen knop, je steekt er veel van op.”</p>	Mime	No
BBT se 4 ep 8 >no loss!?	<p>“Knock Knock”</p> <p>“Who’s there?”</p> <p>“Olive”</p> <p>“I love you too”</p>	<p>“Klop klop”</p> <p>“Wie is daar?”</p> <p>“Olive”</p> <p>“I luv you too”</p>	Homophone	No

	<p>“Knock knock” Who’s there?” “Hugh” “Hugh who?” “You people need to listen to me.”</p>	<p>“Klop klop” “Wie is daar?” “Juul.” “Juul wie?” “Juul-lie moeten naar mij luisteren.”</p>		
<p>BBT se 4 ep 10 loss</p>	<p>“Hoo”(inadvertent sound) “and I keep involuntarily saying ‘hoo’.”</p> <p>“Penny’s friend Zack stopped by and said ‘hello’ and I said ‘hoo’.” “Who?” “Zack.” “Then why did you ask?” “Ask what?” “Who!” “Zack.” “Alright let’s start over. What did you say when Zack walked in?” “Hoo.” “Zack” “Why do you keep saying Zack?” “Because you keep saying ‘who’.” “I’m not saying ‘who’ now, I said ‘hoo’ last night.” “And the answer was ‘Zack’, correct?” “There was no question. I simply said ‘hoo’.” “Alright, I think I have enough to go on. Possible explanations for your symptoms are, in descending order of likelihood: hyperthyroidism, premature menopause, hosting an alien parasite, or, and I only include it for the sake of covering absolutely all bases, sexual arousal.” “Where would I have picked up an alien parasite?”</p>	<p>Not subtitled.</p> <p>“en ik zeg steeds onwillekeurig: ‘wie’.”</p> <p>“Penny’s vriend Zack kwam langs en zei ‘hallo’ en ik zei: ‘wie’.” “Wie?” “Zack” “Waarom vroeg je het dan?” “Wat?” “Wie.” “Opnieuw. Wat zei je toen Zack binnenkwam?” “Wie.” “Zack” “Waarom zeg je steeds ‘Zack’?” “Jij zegt ‘wie’.” “Dat zei ik gisteravond.” “En het antwoord was toch ‘Zack’?” “Het was geen vraag. Ik zei gewoon ‘wie’.” “Oké, genoeg informatie. Mogelijke verklaringen zijn, in volgorde van waarschijnlijkheid: hypertheroïde, vervroegde menopauze, een buitenaardse parasiet, of, en ik noem dit alleen voor de volledigheid, seksuele opwinding.” “Hoe zou ik aan een buitenaardse parasiet komen?”</p>	<p>homophone</p>	<p>Yes</p>

BBT se 4 ep 15 loss	<p>“Or worse, it could go to the Liberal Arts. Millions of dollars are being showered on poets, literary theorists, and students of gender studies.”</p> <p>“Oh the Humanities.”</p>	<p>“Nog erger, het kan ook naar de Geesteswetenschappen. Dan worden er miljoenen verspild aan dichters en literatuurwetenschappers.”</p> <p>“Wel alle alfastudies.”</p>	Homonym	No
BBT se 4 ep 19 No loss, but different pun!	<p>“For the first couple of months, whenever I’d take off my bra, he would giggle and say ‘Oh boy, my breast friends’.”</p>	<p>“Als ik mijn beha uitdeed, giechelde hij: O jee, m’n boezemvrienden.”</p>	Mime	No
BBT se 4 ep 20 No loss!	<p>“Bernadette just asked about my sexual encounter with you. The meme has reached full penetration.”</p> <p>“Pun intended?”</p> <p>“No, happy accident.”</p> <p>“I should let you know that she asked for details about our dalliance.”</p> <p>“Interesting. So it went beyond the mere fact of coitus to a blow-by-blow, as it were.”</p> <p>“Pun intended?”</p> <p>“I’m sorry, what pun?”</p>	<p>“Bernadette vroeg me net naar de seks. De meme is volledig gepenetreerd.”</p> <p>“Woordgrapje?”</p> <p>“Nee, ongelukje.”</p> <p>“Ze vroeg naar details over onze vrijerij.”</p> <p>“Interessant. Dus ze wilde helemaal tot het gaatje?”</p> <p>“Woordgrapje?”</p> <p>“Welk woordgrapje?”</p>	Homonym	Yes, both characterization and plot
BBT se 5 ep 1 loss	<p>“Let’s put on our thinking caps, shall we?”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“O, now I look silly wearing this.”</p>	<p>“Ik zet even m’n denkhelm op.”</p> <p>..</p> <p>“Ben ik even dom dat ik die helm heb opgezet.”</p>	Pun-metaphor	No, but visuals!
BBT se 5 ep 2 No loss	<p>“We are going to have a dinner date.”</p> <p>“It’s eight o’clock in the morning in Mumbai. How can she have dinner?”</p> <p>“Fine, whatever. Priya will be having breakfast.”</p> <p>“Alright, so technically it’s not a dinner date. I</p>	<p>“We hebben straks een dineetje.”</p> <p>“Het is ochtend in Mumbai. Hoe kan ze nou dineren?”</p> <p>“Oké, voor Priya is het ontbijt.”</p> <p>“Dan is het dus geen dineetje. Je zou het eventueel dinbijt kunnen noemen.”</p>	Portmanteau	No

	suppose you could call it a dinfast date.			
BBT se 5 ep 2 Catch phrases common in English, not in Dutch, but nice solutions rhyming. No real loss	<p>“What’s up, buttercup?”</p> <p>“What’s the word, hummingbird?”</p> <p>“What’s the gist, physicist?”</p>	<p>“Alles goed, lekkere toet?”</p> <p>“Zeg ’t maar, fladderaar.”</p> <p>“Kom maar op, knappe kop.”</p>	Mime	Yes, but only in the sense that she goes on with more mimes
BBT se 5 ep 8 No loss	<p>“Can we? Stand back. Watch how I turn this conversation into a conversensation.”</p>	<p>“Of dat kan? Let op hoe ik van deze conversatie een conversensatie maak.”</p>	portmanteau	No
BBT se 5 ep 10 No loss > ST = TT	<p>“They’re not even trying. Remember the Satanimals pack with the Hellephant? Absurd. What was he, a bad elephant who died and went to hell? What could an elephant possibly do that would cause him eternal damnation?”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“Wild Bill Witchcock”</p> <p>“A tribe of Abra-Comanches.”</p> <p>“A flaming spittoon”</p> <p>.....</p> <p>“Did it look ridiculous when we bought the Satanimals pack and I dressed like a Beelzebocat?”</p>	<p>“Weet je nog die Satanimals, met die Hellephant? Wat is dat? Een olifant die naar de hel ging? Zo’n beest doet geen vlieg kwaad.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“Wild Bill Witchcock”</p> <p>“Een horde Abra-Comanches”</p> <p>“Een vlammeende Kwispedor.”</p> <p>“Liep ik bij Satanimals ook voor gek, verkleed als Beelzebocat?”</p>	Portmanteaux	Yes, more portmanteaux in the game they’re playing.
BBT se 5 ep 10 No loss	<p>“Leonard, what’s the deal with Sheldon’s friend Amy. Are they a couple?”</p> <p>“A couple of weirdos, why?”</p>	<p>“Zijn Sheldon en Amy een stelletje?”</p> <p>“Een stelletje weirdo’s.”</p>	Homonym	No
BBT se 5 ep 13 Reference = maintained, however, game says “hout” not “paal” Loss	<p>“I want to build a road. Either of you fellas have wood?”</p> <p>...</p> <p>Does anyone have any wood? Come on, I just want wood. Why are</p>	<p>“Ik wil een weg bouwen, maar daar heb ik palen voor nodig. Heeft een van jullie een paal?”</p> <p>O ja. Heeft een van jullie een paal? Kom op, ik wil gewoon palen. Geen geleuter.”</p>	Homonym	Yes, whole episode = sexual references

Paal again, but otherwise no loss	<p>you making this so hard?"</p> <p>"Now that I have some wood, I'm going to begin the erection of my settlement."</p> <p>"You were in the middle of an erection." "Alright, of course, it's right here in my hand."</p>	<p>"En nu ik een paal heb, kan ik eindelijk zorgen dat mijn dorp klaarkomt."</p> <p>"Je was bezig met je paal." "Natuurlijk, ik heb 'm in de hand."</p>		
BBT se 5 ep 14 No loss	<p>You got Siwi eh? Voice wecognition on that thing is tewwible. Look. Siwi, can you wecommend a westauwant?"</p> <p>"I'm sorry, Bawwy. I don't understand 'wecommend a westauwant'."</p>	<p>Dus je hebt Siwi. Die stemhewkenning wewkt voov geen metew. Let op. Siwi, kun je me een westauwant aanbevelen?" "Sowwy, Bawwy. Ik weet niet wat je bedoelt met 'westauwant'."</p>	Register/ pronunciation	Yes, characterization
BBT se 5 ep 19 loss	<p>*WHIP SOUND</p> <p>"You're right. I'm smart as a whip, I should be able to figure this out."</p> <p>➤ Not what sound meant!</p>	<p>"Je hebt gelijk. Ik ben zo'n scherp als een zweep."</p>	Pun- metaphor	Yes, sound throughout episode