A Study in Subtitles

Translation Universals in *Sherlock*

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the existence and behavior of translation universals in Dutch subtitles. The corpus that will be used in this research is the television series *Sherlock.* The reason of this choice of corpus is that I believe that the distinctive vocabulary and attitude of the protagonist, Sherlock Holmes, will provide interesting translation issues. This thesis will explore how the subtitles deal with these issues and whether translation universals are present in the solutions. In chapter one, the concept of 'translation universals' will be explained and a variety of different categories will be put forward. Chapter two will examine the Dutch subtitling process to understand the possibilities and constrictions of this form of audiovisual translation. Finally, chapter three will combine the theory presented in chapter two and three by analyzing instances of translation universals found in the subtitles of *Sherlock.*

Chapter 1 Translation Universals

1.1 Introduction

The notion of the translation universal was first proposed in 1995 by Israeli scholar and translator Gideon Toury. In his work *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Toury sets out his ideas on this translation phenomenon claiming that "the cumulative findings of descriptive studies should make it possible to formulate a series of coherent *laws* which would state the inherent relation between all the variables found to be relevant to translation" (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 16). In other words, by conducting empirical research, descriptive studies should provide data that confirms the presence of certain regularities that exist in all translated texts. These translation regularities are characterized by two important aspects. First, these regularities contain syntactical, linguistic, or lexical behavior that deviates from the source text. Second, these deviations in translation need to occur on a regular basis. Toury

has named these phenomena ‘translation laws’. However, not all scholars agree with this terminology. The majority prefers the term ‘translation universal’ because they consider these translation features to be universally present in all translations. These translation laws or translation universals have become the starting point of much academic research in the field of Translation Studies. Scholars are still speculating whether translation universals actually do exist and if so, what categories can be discerned. The following chapter will analyze and explain what the term ‘translation universal’ entails. First, the principles that form the foundation of Descriptive Translation Studies and their relevance to the existence of translation universals will be discussed. Next, the term ‘translation universal’ will be explained in further detail along with various methods of categorization provided by various scholars. This section will also briefly discuss which translation universals have the potential to occur in subtitles. To conclude this chapter, doubts concerning the existence and classification of translation universals will be examined to show that still more research needs to be done in order to reach a conclusive verdict on translation universals.

1.2 Descriptive Translation Studies

As mentioned above, Gideon Toury argues that descriptive studies provide the means to define regular language features found in translated texts (Toury “Descriptive Translation” 16). If one is to fully grasp the definition of the translation universal it is thus essential to understand the term ‘descriptive studies’. Toury, in the introduction of his book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, explains his idea of what a descriptive study should include:

> […] no empirical science can make a claim for completeness and (relative) autonomy unless it has a proper *descriptive branch.* Describing, explaining and predicting phenomena pertaining to its object level is thus the main goal of such a discipline. In

> addition, carefully performed studies into well-defined corpuses, or sets of problems, constitute the best means of testing, refuting, and especially modifying and amending the very *theory,* in whose terms research is carried out (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 1).

Toury argues that the descriptive element is thus a vital component of empirical research. Without this descriptive element, empirical research cannot be seen as complete. The primary components of Descriptive Studies are the prediction of data that is likely to be found whilst conducting research, and the description and explanation of the data found. Descriptive research tries to answer the following question: Does the collected information confirm the researcher's expectations and if not, why did the outcome differ from the assumptions? By researching the credibility of a theory, data will be found that either corresponds or disputes the tested theory. When the received data does not correspond with the predicted theory, the hypotheses should be revised in order to match the accumulated data. Mona Baker summarizes Toury's argument by saying that "Its [Descriptive Translation Studies] agenda consists, primarily, of investigating what translation is 'under any defined set of circumstances … and WHY it is realized in the way it is'" (Baker 240-241). Baker stresses that it is important to investigate why certain patterns can be discerned in translation. This research should be conducted by closely monitoring universal features of translations. If particular deviations from the source text are found throughout a large corpus of texts it is highly probable that translation universals can be found.

Another important feature of Descriptive Translation Studies is that its research methods must be designed in such a way that it can be duplicated by future scholars. "One of its main objectives is to render the findings of individual studies intersubjective and to make the studies themselves "repeatable, either for the same or for another corpus"" (qtd. in Baker

240-241). By conducting research in a similar fashion, the data found will be more reliable because the method of research has already been validated by previous research. The careful selection of a well-defined corpus will also help to obtain the best possible results. Thus, Descriptive Studies rely heavily on empirical research.

1.3 Translation Universals

The fact that Translation Studies developed into an empirical science can be traced to an American Scholar named James Holmes (a man who coincidentally shares his last name with a certain Consulting Detective) (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 9). According to Toury, Holmes theories were largely unknown to a wide audience until 1987. For fifteen years, his work was only accessible for people who could read Dutch (Holmes lived in Amsterdam for 36 years), after which Toury himself decided to translate the works into English. He believed that Holmes's work is the cornerstone of Translation Studies and that his ideas should therefore be known to a larger public. Toury's translation of Holmes's work into English finally made his theories known to an international audience (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 8-9). Mona Baker uses the following quote by Holmes to illustrate his views on Translation Studies: "Many of the weaknesses and naiveties of contemporary translation theories are a result of the fact that the theories were, by and large, developed deductively, without recourse to actual translated texts-in-function, or at best to a very restricted corpus introduced for illustration rather than for verification or falsification" (qtd. in Baker 240). Holmes thus argues that research in Translation Studies used to be based on presumptions rather than actual data acquired through empirically researching existing translations. It is precisely this empirical research that marks Descriptive Translation Studies. Sara Laviosa gives a clear, contemporary definition of the term:

> Descriptive Translation Studies are informed by a set of common tenets: they study language in use rather than idealized or intuitive language data; linguistic regularities are viewed as probabilistic norms of behavior rather than prescriptive rules; and these patterns of actual behavior are inextricably related to socio-cultural variables since they reflect and reproduce culture (Laviosa "Translation Classroom" 122).

These "probabilistic norms of behavior" are what Toury calls "laws of translational behavior" and which were later dubbed "translation universals" by other scholars (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 259). But what precisely is understood by the term 'translation universals'? Judging by its terminology it must be 'something' that is universally present in translations. According to Anna Mauranen "translations have been reported to use generally unmarked grammar, clichés, and typical, common lexis instead of the unusual or the unique. They are said to replace standard language for dialect, normalize punctuation and exaggerate target-language features" (Mauranen 41). Translation universals, then, are rules that predict translation behavior and are established by critically examining and comparing translations. Scholars Andrew Chesterman and Mona Baker give two very clear definitions of what a translation universal entails. Chesterman explains the term in the following quote:

> We can define a translation universal as a feature that is found (or at least claimed) to characterize all translations: i.e. a feature that distinguishes them from texts that are not translations. More strictly: to qualify as a universal, a feature must remain constant when other parameters vary. In other words, a universal feature is one that is found in translations regardless of language pairs, different text-types, different kinds of translators, different historical periods, and so on (Chesterman 3).

Mona Baker's definition is more concise. "Universal features […] can be seen as a product of constrains which are inherent in the translation process itself, and this accounts for the fact that they are universal (or at least we assume they are, pending further research). They do not vary across cultures" (Baker 246). According to Baker, translation universals are "features which typically occur in translated text rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems" (Baker 243). So to sum up, a translation universal is:

1. A characteristic of every translation
2. Not present in non-translation
3. A constant factor even when language pairs, text-types, translator, and time periods vary.

Even though Chesterman argues that a language universal is "a feature that is found (or at least claimed) to characterize all translations" there seems to be a difference of opinion between various critics (Chesterman 3). Anna Mauranen explains: "The term 'universals' does not […] necessarily refer only to absolute laws, which are true without exception. Rather, most of the suggested universals features are general or law-like tendencies, or high probabilities of occurrence" (Mauranen 35). She thus argues that translation universals are, in fact, not universally present in translations but rather have a tendency to occur. Their presence in translations is probable but not inevitable. Mauranen's definition corresponds with Gideon Toury's ideas of the laws of translational behavior. He defines his translation laws by saying: "the envisioned laws are everything but absolute, designed as they are to state the likelihood that a kind of behavior, or surface realization would occur under one set of specifiable conditions or another" (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 16). Even though Mauranen and Toury agree on their definitions of translation laws other scholars do not share their views. As was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, some scholars prefer the term 'translation

universals' where others, like Toury and Mauranen, are in favor of 'translation laws'. Mauranen and Pekka explain that "for many [cooperative authors in their book *Translation Universals: Do They Exist?*], the term universal is perhaps too radical, too abrupt, too absolute. Such objections may result in a general preference for another term, such as 'regularity', 'law', or 'tendency', depending on how far we dare to tread" (Mauranen and Pekka 9). The term 'translation universal' implies that a certain language characteristic found in translations occurs in every texts in the entire corpus of translations. This corpus might well include billions of texts that have been translated over the course of history so the chance of a certain translation feature occurring universally seems to be very slim indeed. The term 'law' or 'tendency' leaves room for some deviation because both terms are not absolute. However, I have found that most scholars tend to use the term 'translation universal'. Perhaps they adopted this stricter option because the use of the term 'translation universal' seems to have become common practice over the years. Even though 'translation law' might be a better option, this thesis will make use the term 'translation universal' in order to remain in accordance with the majority of the scholars.

1.4 Categories of Translation Universals

Translation universal is an umbrella term that can be divided into a variety of subcategories. In 1993, Mona Baker published her work *Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies. Implications and Applications*, in which she presents a list of possible translation universals that have been developed further by other scholars. Baker argues that these universals are "linked to the nature of the translation process itself rather than to the confrontation of specific linguistic systems" (Baker 243). These translation universals should thus be present in all translations between all language pairs. The initial list of five potential translation universals presented by Baker include:

1. A marked rise in the level of explicitness compared to specific source texts and to original texts in general
2. A tendency towards disambiguation and simplification
3. A strong preference for conventional 'grammaticality'.
4. A tendency to avoid repetition which occur in source texts, either by omitting them or rewording them.
5. A general tendency to exaggerate features of the target language.

(Baker 243-244).

The first translation universal, also known as explicitation, includes the tendency for translations to clarify obscurities in language and to be more specific than the original source text. Anna Mauranen defines explicitation as: "the translation process tends to add information and linguistic material to the text being translated" (Mauranen 38). The inclusion of additional information makes it unlikely that explicitation will be present in subtitles because subtitles are bound to a specific number of characters per screen. This space constraint, which will be discussed extensively in the following chapters, often forces source text information to be deleted from the translation because no space exist to incorporate a translation for a lengthy utterance or dialogue. Therefore, it seems unlikely that explicitation will be present in subtitles.

The second translation universal that Mona Baker puts forward is a tendency towards disambiguation and simplification. This simplification "includes phenomena such as using shorter sentences in the translation, preferring finite instead of non-finite structures, resolving ambiguity, removing unusual punctuation and producing texts with a lower lexical density and a lower type-token ration (Pym 318). Baker also calls this phenomenon 'levelling out.' She defines 'levelling out' as "the tendency of translated text to gravitate towards the center

of a continuum" (qtd. in Pym 318). Overall, simplification seems to be the exact opposite of explicitation. So how can these two translation universals coexist? This apparent contradiction will be discussed at a later stage of this thesis. Simplification will no doubt be found in subtitles because information deletion caused by the space constraint, as was briefly discussed above, is already a form of simplification.

The third translation universal, "a strong preference for conventional 'grammaticality'", is in fact the translator trying to correct certain language mistakes or marked grammatical constructions made in the source text. This translation universal is also known by the name normalization or conservatism (Pym 317). For the purpose of this thesis, I will stick with normalization. "[Normalization] manifests itself in an overriding tendency to round off unfinished sentences, 'grammaticise' ungrammatical utterances and omit such things as false starts and self-corrections, even those which are clearly intentional" (qtd. in Baker 244). Especially the correction of clearly intentional mistakes is an interesting feature. When this translation universal is found the translator plainly created a target text that deviates considerably from the source text and that fails to maintain the level of ambiguity found in the original. It is entirely possible that the source text contains deliberate ambiguity for either comical effect or as a narrative device to throw the audience off-balance. If this is the case, intentional mistakes shape the narrative of the text and by correcting these 'mistakes' the translator might accidentally create inconsistencies between source and target text. However, the choice to leave unintentional mistakes out of a translation can be a very logical course of action, especially in subtitling where the translator has to make do with a limited number of words. Since these unintentional mistakes are of no importance to the narrative the translator can easily delete them in order to create more space for text that is important. Normalization will therefore most probably be present in subtitles.

The fourth translation universal introduced by Baker deals with the omission of repetition in translation. In novel or other book translations, the translator will not get into trouble by increasing or decreasing the total word count (to a certain extent of course). In book translations, a few pages more will not be any problem for the publisher so in this case repetition omission will not be appropriate. If space restriction is not an issue there is no reason not to include all repetition. This is, however, an entirely different matter when it comes to subtitling. When discussing subtitling there are two reasons why a translator might chose to omit repetition. If a source text contains a large amount of repetition it seems reasonable for a translator to omit some repetition if (1) the amount of space the repetition would have needed in the subtitling could be used in a more useful way (that is, to include other important information) and (2) the target text will not suffer from quality loss by omitting information that is important to the narrative's plot. Baker states that "Toury reports this feature as one of the most persistent, unbending norms in translation in all languages studied so far" (qtd. in Baker 244). Toury's statement thus predicts that this translation universal will be found most frequently when researching translation universals. And indeed, repetition omission will most certainly be present in subtitling because repetition does not provide any new information and it will therefore easily be excluded from subtitles.

The fifth and final translation universal presented by Baker is the "general tendency to exaggerate features of the target language" (Baker 244). This translation universal involves the tendency for translations to make use of certain linguistic constructions present in the target language that make up for the fact that these characteristics do not feature in the source text. Vanderauwera is quoted by Baker, and she "suggests that translations overrepresent features of their host environment in order to make up for the fact that they were not originally meant to function in that environment" (qtd. in Baker 245). This means that a certain language characteristic that is not present in the source text will be found on numerous

occasions in the target text in order to validate its occurrence in the translation. This translation universal seems unlikely to be present in subtitles for the same reason that explicitation seems unlikely. It includes information in the translation that is not present in the source text. Again, the space constraint limits the amount of information that can be included in the subtitles so there is no room for additional content.

Gideon Toury also elaborates on two translation universals, or laws as he calls them, in his book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond.* He defines two translation laws, those which he calls "the law of growing standardization" and "the law of interference". Toury gives three rather lengthy and complicated definitions of the first law, but the following definition is the most concise: "in translation, textual relations obtaining in the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favor of [more] habitual options offered by a target repertoire" (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 268). Toury's law of growing standardization thus predicts that marked or uncommon language features found in a source text have a large probability of being replaced by a less marked or more common language feature in the target text. Sara Laviosa argues that this translation universal "leads to the dissolution of the original set of textual relations" (Laviosa "Corpus-based" 11). In other words, when standardization takes place in translation, the special language features that characterize the source text become more general in the target text. These alterations create a target text that no longer contains the same interconnected language features as the source text. Interestingly, this explanation resembles the definition of other translation universals mentioned before. Anna Mauranen argues that the law of growing standardization can also be included under the header conventionalization or normalization (Mauranen 40). Furthermore, she asserts that "the hypothesis of conventionalization seems to overlap to an extent with simplification; both regard the noticeably high lexical frequencies of certain items as supporting evidence for their hypothesis" (Mauranen 41). Both translation universals include

the re-occurrence of certain language features, namely the simplification of the text. When taking Mauranen's argument into account, Toury's law of growing standardization, and the translation universals conventionalization, normalization, and simplification all seem to be synonyms of the same phenomenon. However, slight difference can be discerned that will be discussed in a later section of this thesis. Standardization will probably be present in subtitles because I think that subtitlers often choose less marked and more general terms in order to make subtitles less difficult. Subtitle lines are shown on screen for a short duration so the audience should be able to understand the narrative quickly.

Gideon Toury's second translation law is the law of interference. Again, Toury gives a number of elaborate definitions but the most comprehensible one is the following:

> in translation, phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text, whether they manifest themselves in the form of *negative transfer* (i.e., deviations from normal, codified practices of the target system), or in the form of *positive transfer* (i.e., greater likelihood of selecting features which do exist and are used in any case)" (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 275)

Translations tend to possess language features that can also be found in the source text. This seems obvious but the two forms of transfer complicate matters slightly. Toury divides these deviations into two categories: negative and positive transfer. Negative transfer focuses on features that "deviate from what is normal in the target-system" (Pym 315). An example of negative transfer can thus be source language words that have not been translated because translation would result in loss of information. Positive transfer includes features that do not deviate from the target text and this is the reason why these features will not be recognized by the readers of the translation. However, the fact that the transfer is not recognizable does not

mean that interference is not taking place. It is simply invisible because this transfer contains language characteristics that are essential to the translation (Pym 315). Pym gives a very clear illustration of positive transfer in the following passage: "between European languages, at least, there is a default norm by which one translates sentence for sentence, paragraph for paragraph, text section for text section, and that whole default behavior might be described as ""interference"" (Pym 316). He explains that translators of European languages are accustomed to translating texts in a certain, chronological order. The target audience, whilst reading the text, is not consciously aware of this universal translation procedure but it is present nevertheless. The law of interference also has high potential to be present in subtitles because loanwords are rather common in Dutch.

Sanitization will be the final translation universal category discussed. This translation universal includes "the suspected adaptation of a source text reality to make it more palatable for target audiences" (Kenny 1). Again, this universal generalizes the source text in order to create a translation that is easier to comprehend and therefore faster to read. Sanitization therefore shares identical features with normalization and standardization. Andrew Chesterman, however, adds a little extra depth to this universal by arguing that sanitization creates "more conventional collocations" (Chesterman 8). Sanitization thus has a large probability to appear in subtitles because collocations often do not correspond across language boundaries.

1.5 Doubts on Translation Universals

The lack of a clear distinction between certain translation universals is not the only problem we face when examining the translation universal. Some scholars doubt their existence, whilst others even deny their existence outright. Juliane House is one of the most-outspoken scholars to deny their existence. In the following quote she expresses her criticism: "I want to go on

suggesting quite bluntly that the quest for translation universals is in essence futile, i.e. that there are no, and there can be no, translation universals (House 11) She argues that translation is "an act that operates on language. […] These are then *not* universals of translation per se, or sui generis universals, but simply universals of language also applying to translation (House 11). Her argument for this statement is that "translation is not identical with language as such let alone with the two linguistic systems involved in translation. Translation is no more and no less than a practical activity (House 11). House thus claims that translation universals do not exist because translation contains artificial language. The language used in translation is thus crafted for practical reasons only: to convey a message to an audience that does not understand the source language. Therefore, House argues that if universals are found in translation they should be listed as language universals rather than translation universals. These universals just accidently also happen to exist in translation. In other words, House argues that since translation is not a natural phenomenon translation universals do not exist. The artificiality of translation prevents it from possessing natural language features and therefore, consistencies or laws cannot be derived from it.

Juliane House is not the only critic who doubts the concept of translation universals. Anthony Pym, in his work "On Toury's laws of how translators translate", also provides a list of problems, albeit that his view on translation universals is not so clear cut as House's opinion. Pym's major problem with the translation universals as put forward by Mona Baker is that there does not seem to be a clear division between them. For example, how can a translation contain both explicitation ('an overall tendency to spell things out rather than leave then implicit') and simplification ('the tendency to simplify the language used in translation') simultaneously? (qtd. in Pym 317). Pym argues that "both explicitation and simplification make texts easier to read, and the line between the two becomes hard to discern. Precisely when is explicitation not also a simplification? Or would it be fairer to say that explicitation is

one of many types of simplification?" (Pym 317). Pym thus suggests that explicitation might be a sub-category of simplification because a translation that is more explicit and explanatory will be simpler and therefore easier to understand for the target audience. He formulates his doubts by saying:

> What is the difference between these four universals [explicitation, simplification, normalization/conservatism, and leveling out] and Toury's law of standardization? Many elements are mentioned in both places, or can be interpreted as such: normalization ('habitual options' in Toury), simplification, disambiguation, low lexical density ('reduced structuration' for Toury), and low type/token ratio ('flattening')" (Pym 318).

Pym argues that no clear distinctions between these universals can be made and that simplification, explicitation and normalization all seem to be subcategories of standardization. However, minor differences can be distinguished. Explicitation often adds information to explain obscurities (Mauranen 38). Normalization, focusses on grammatical issues (Baker 244) and standardization generalizes marked language features into less marked features (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 268). Simplification involves the overall generalization in translation. This results in shorter sentences, loss of ambiguity and marked punctuation (Pym 317). Therefore, if a hierarchy does indeed exist between the generalization translation universals I would argue that explicitation, normalization, and standardization are subcategories of simplification because the other three universals focus on more specific elements of a text.

As this first chapter has shown, there still is a lot of debate about the existence of translation universals. Questions that still need a definite answer include: Do translation

universals actually exist and if they do, what are they and how should they be categorized? On a number of occasions, the variety of articles and books that have been used to write this chapter contradicted eachother outright. So, it is clear that still more research needs to be done in order to find a more conclusive answer. The topic ‘translation universals’ will be returned to at a later stage of this thesis. But first, we will now continue to discuss the process of subtitling. What are their basic principles, and what are their constrains? The answers to these questions are important if we are to understand why translation universals might, or might not occur in subtitling. In the third and final chapter, this information on subtitling will be joined with the information on translation universals presented in this chapter. This will be done by using the brilliant TV-series *Sherlock* as a corpus to find out if and, if so, in what way translation universals are present in subtitles.

Chapter 2 Subtitling

2.1 Introduction

Subtitling is a form of literary translation that deviates considerably from other translation types. To obtain a satisfying result, the subtitler needs to pay attention to more than just the source text. The visual images and sound effects of the original product, together with the space and time constraints that are inextricably linked to subtitling are just a few issues that a subtitle translator has to keep in mind. According to Henrik Gottlieb, the subtitle translator needs to possess a variety of skills in order to produce a decent translation: "Apart from being an excellent translator of foreign-language lines, a good subtitler needs the musical ears of an interpreter, the no-nonsense judgment of a news editor, and a designer's sense of esthetics. In addition, as most subtitlers do the electronic time-cueing themselves, the subtitler must also have the steady hand of a surgeon and the timing of a percussionist" (Gottlieb "International Anglification" 222). This idea certainly sets high standards for every translator of subtitles. Is the process of subtitling really so difficult that a subtitler needs to master all these abilities? The following chapter will examine the way in which subtitles are created in order to comprehend the obstacles that subtitle translators have to overcome in their multi-facetted field of work.

2.2 Dubbing vs. Subtitling

Across the world, different methods of audiovisual translation are used to make a non-native film or television program accessible to the native audience. In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies,* Henrik Gottlieb argues that the world can be divided into four distinct groups. These are:

1. Source-language countries. These include the countries in which English is the native language. Non-English films are rarely imported, but if they are they tend to be subtitled rather than dubbed.

2. Dubbing countries. To this category belong the four largest European mainland countries: Germany, France, Spain and Italy. Dubbing can be defined as "the replacement of the original speech by a voice track which attempts to follow as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip movements of the original dialogue" (qtd. in Baker and Hochel 74-75)
3. Voice-over countries. Countries that cannot afford lip-synch dubbing, primarily Poland and Russia. In voice-over films, one narrator, and thus one voice, is used for the entire cast of characters.
4. Subtitling countries. Subtitling is used in countries with a high literacy rate. Examples of countries where subtitles are primarily used are the Scandinavian countries, and the Netherlands (Gottlieb "Routledge Encyclopedia" 244).

It is interesting to note that there seems to be a tendency for people to favor whichever translation method is used in their native country. Łukasz Bogucki, a Polish scholar who has written numerous articles about audiovisual translation, explains that research carried out in 2002 has shown that "50.2% of Poles prefer voice-over and 43.4% opt for dubbing; subtitling has only 8.1% supporters. A staggering 72.1% of Poles, when asked which type of AVT was the worst, chose subtitling" (Bogucki). In the Netherlands, on the other hand, this attitude seems to differ considerably. Research has shown that 93% of the Dutch prefer subtitling over dubbing (Bontinck 1). The main argument for this division between audiences of different countries seems to be habituation. Apparently, people tend to favor the translation method which with they are familiar. But what are the main reasons for a country to start using either dubbing or subtitling? One of the possible answers to this query is money. Mona Baker refers to research that has shown that dubbing is on average fifteen times more expensive than subtitling (Baker and Hochel 75). Smaller countries simply do not have the means to spend

large amounts of money on something as trivial as dubbing. Gottlieb argues that "in most European speech communities with less than 25 million speakers, subtitling - costing only a fraction of lip-sync dubbing - has been the preferred type of screen translation ever since the introduction of sound film in the late 1920s" (Gottlieb "International Anglification" 220). This is the main reason why the four largest countries in Europe: France, Germany, Spain, and Italy (the United Kingdom being the exception) are the four countries in which dubbing is generally used.

Another issue that plays a part in the selection of either dubbing or subtitling is literacy. Today, 99% of the people who live in Western Europe are literate (CIA World Factbook). But back in the late 1920s, when the first sound film was shown to an international audience this number was not quite so high (Gottlieb "International Anglification" 244). R. Houston argues that people in "peripheral zones were deeply illiterate well into the twentieth century" (Houston). Due to their considerable size, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy all include large areas of countryside. Since these areas can be rather remote, illiteracy remained more common in these communities for a longer period of time than in the cities. It logically follows that if a considerable part of the intended audience is not able to read, the best translation option is dubbing because this form of translation will be understood by the entire audience.

The choice for either dubbing or subtitling might also be influenced by the amount of time that is available for translation. Aside from translating source text into target text, dubbing involves a variety of additional steps. Dubbing requires target language voice actors for the entire cast of the source language film or television program. These actors need to audition, then casting choices have to be made, and finally the entire dialogue needs to be recorded. This, naturally, is a lot more time consuming than simply providing a film or program with subtitles. These three reasons: costs, literacy, and efficiency make it clear why

larger countries like France, Spain, Italy, and Germany make use of dubbing instead of subtitles.

The preceding section has shown why dubbing or subtitling might be chosen as the common form of audiovisual translation. But what are the differences between these two methods? Noticeability is one of these distinctions. In subtitling, the translation of the dialogue is presented as written text on screen. Subtitles, therefore, add another visual aspect to a film or television production. This contrasts with dubbing because dubbing strives to be as unnoticeable as possible. Dubbing is depended on the actor's mimicry because difference between the lip movement of the actors and the words spoken in the target language should not be too noticeable. The length of the utterance in source and target text should be fairly similar to avoid obvious inconsistencies. If the difference is too noticeable the result will be comical and this decreases the integrity of the translation and of the film or television program itself. Therefore, dubbing tries to blend in with the original product. If perfect dubbing would occur, the audience would not notice that they were watching a translation. Subtitles, however, will always be noticeable, no matter their quality. Hence, subtitles can be seen as an overt form of translation whilst dubbing belongs in the category of covert translation. John Denton explains that dubbing "tends to hide its origins as a translation, presenting itself, as far as possible as a (second) original, while the [subtitles] draws attention to its translational status (Denton 24). Henrik Gottlieb explains that the conspicuousness of subtitles can be problematic: "Subtitling is an overt type of translation, retaining the original version, thus laying itself bare to criticism from everybody with the slightest knowledge of the source language (qtd in Denton 24). Consequently, the translator needs to do his or her work thoroughly in order to produce a translation that does not distract the audience from the program itself.

Another downside to the use of subtitles is that subtitles distract the viewers' attention away from the actual film. Ali Hajmohammadi explains that the need to read subtitles decreases the amount of time that the audience can actually watch the narrative unfold on screen.

> Subtitling practitioners are in the habit of making viewers chase after their text. The maximum number of characters a viewer can take within a defined time has been set as the standard for putting lines of subtitles onto the screen. The assumption appears to be that the more characters the viewers manage to read, the more characters the subtitlers are allowed to use […] But this should not be taken as a license for lengthier subtitles […] since films are made to be watched, not read. […] In this context, subtitles should be designed to give viewers the gist of dialogues and let them get through the reading quickly to turn their attention to the image (Hajmohammadi).

In other words, Hajmohammadi argues that subtitles should be as short as possible in order to give the audience more time to watch the film. Of course, a film or television program is meant to be watched and subtitles do have a negative effect on this process, in this respect I do agree with Mr. Hajmohammadi. However, I would not go as far as to argue that subtitles should be as short as possible. A viewer that has absolutely no knowledge of the source language only has the visuals, sound effects, and subtitles to help him or her understand how the film plot unfolds. This viewer will gain no information from the target language dialogue and the subtitles are thus the only reference to the verbal part of the film. To minimalize the subtitle use is like decreasing the voice of the characters. Hajmohammadi asserts that "professionals need to provide viewers with the shortest possible subtitles and spare them unnecessary shades of meaning that hinder the process of image reading"

(Hajmohammadi). The subtitles supply the characters with a voice and it is this voice that gives them personality. Guardini argues, by quoting Nedergaard-Larsen that "direct access to the characters' modes of expression is particularly important in drama, a genre in which people are central to the plot, and the 'translator should attach importance to those elements that describe the speaker's personality'" (qtd. in Guardini 97). I am in complete agreement with Paola Guardini and Birgit Nedergaard-Larsen. For people who do not understand the source language, the subtitles provide the only means to understand conversations between characters. Therefore, I believe that a subtitle translator should try to maintain the personality of a character even though this may prove to be a difficult task since the space constraints require a subtitler to be concise. I believe that a translator should do his or her utmost to stay as close to the source text as possible. Even if this means that the maximum amount of characters per subtitle line is used every single time.

2.3 Subtitle Theory

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'subtitle' as "a caption appearing across the lower portion of a cinema screen, or of the frame of a television program, video recording, etc., and typically supplying a translation of the dialogue, or a version of it for the benefit of the deaf or hard of hearing" (OED subtitle). The spoken dialogue is thus changed into written text that must be read from the screen instead of heard by the audience. This is what Henrik Gottlieb calls 'diagonal translation' because subtitling deals with "'diagonal' translation from the spoken to the written mode, rather than 'horizontal' translation from written to written or from spoken to spoken" (qtd. by Ying-Ting 372). Gottlieb expands this notion by explaining that subtitling uses a different set of channels than the translation of a written text.

> Any translated text must function within a specific communicative situation. Monosemiotic texts use only one channel of communication and the translator therefore controls the entire medium of expression. […] In polysemiotic texts, by contrast, the translator is constrained (or supported) by the communicative channel: visual or auditory. If translation uses the same channel – or set of channels – as the original, the result is an isosemiotic translation; where it uses different channels the result is referred to as a diasemiotic translation. (Gottlieb "Routledge Encyclopedia" 244)

An example of a monosemiotic text is a book without any pictures or drawings. The only channel that is used in this book is the written channel. No other channels like visuals or sounds are present and the translator is therefore able to translate 100% of the source text. The translation of this book is an example of an isosemiotic translation because no switching of channels occurs; the written source text is translated into a written target text. This form of translation can therefore be included in what Gottlieb calls 'horizontal translation' (Ying-Ting 372). Films and other forms of multimedia can be listed under the polysemiotic texts. These texts make use of a variety of channels, like visuals and audio, to convey the story to the audience. The subtitles that are created in film and television translation belong to the category of diasemiotic translation. The spoken dialogue is transferred into written text in the form of subtitles.

Films and other forms of multimedia contain four channels that play a paramount role in their translation:

1. The verbal auditory channel, including dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics
2. The non-verbal auditory channel, including music, natural sound and sound effects

3. The verbal visual channel, including superimposed titles and written signs on the screen
4. The non-verbal visual channel: picture composition and flow (Gottlieb "Routledge Encyclopedia" 245).

In a non-translated television program or film, the verbal auditory channel takes the most prominent position. The audience follows the course of the narrative by listening to the spoken dialogue of the characters on screen. When subtitles are added to a program, the priority of this channel shifts to the priority of the verbal visual channel. However, unlike dubbing where the source language is entirely replaced by the target language, subtitling leaves the complete verbal auditory channel exactly like in the non-translated version of the program. The only difference is that the verbal auditory channel loses its primary position to the verbal visual channel. But since the source text is still present in the translated version the translator needs to be aware that the audience might have knowledge of the source language. Today in the 21st century, the exposure of people in Western Europe to the English language is so high that people understand English to a more or lesser degree. It is, therefore, important that the translator tries to remain as close to the original text as possible in terms of how the text is constructed. If grammatical and linguistic structures deviate too much from the original text the audience might get distracted from the narrative. These inconsistencies remind the audience "that they are reading a translation, and [they] feel that something is missing or wrong, [and thus loose] confidence in the subtitles" (Sanchez 13). When the audience notices inconsistencies that are too striking the translator will not only be criticized for his or her work, but the emphasis will also be drawn towards the subtitles instead of towards the film or program itself.

As we have seen, Gottlieb argues that subtitling is diagonal translation in that it shifts channels from the oral to the written channel. Ying-Ting Chuang, however, argues that this notion of diasemiotic translation does not cover the field of subtitle translation entirely. She explains that other features of multimedia are able to carry information that can be paramount in the process of subtitle creation.

> I argue that subtitle translation is not "diagonal translation" with regard to verbal elements in visual and audio modes, because verbal elements are not the only semiotic mode(s) that contribute meanings to the film text. I argue that subtitle translation is intersemiotic translation, and that all the semiotic modes involved in the film text contribute meanings according to their functional specialization rather than the verbal elements alone. Thus, different specialized meanings produced by the semiotic modes that appear in the film text have to be included in dealing with subtitle translation (Ying-Ting 372).

Ying-Ting thus argues that a subtitle translator should not only pay attention to the spoken dialogue but should also consider other modes when creating subtitles. For this form of translation she uses Roman Jakobson's term 'intersemiotic translation'. This term is defined as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems" (Munday 5). And indeed, this definition applies to subtitling because all the modes in subtitle translation are interconnected to create a single form of multimedia, be it a film, television series or documentary. Ying-Ting presents "five semiotic modes that are most frequently represented in the film text: the spoken mode, the written mode, the mode of music, the mode of sound effects and the mode of moving images" (Ying-Ting 374). In other words, the subtitle translator should take into account, aside from the dialogue: written text on screen, the

film score and accompanying sound effects, and the actual visual images presented on screen which show the actors' actions. Ying-Ting concludes that the information gained from all these modes can substitute information presented in the dialogue. "[…] the translator does not have to render everything in the dialogues into the subtitles, but he can choose to ignore those meanings that are represented in other semiotic modes. Hence, it is not one-to-one relationships in subtitle translation, but many-to-many" (Ying-Ting 375). The fact that other modes are able carry to the information the translator can bring down the number and length of subtitles that are shown on screen. This might be seen as a positive development because subtitles are fundamentally a tool to inform a foreign audience about what is being said on screen. However, subtitles do carry the most (and most important) information so exclusion should not be taken lightly. I do agree that all semiotic modes that Ying-Ting puts forward should be taken into account when creating subtitles. However, in numerous situations other modes will not be able to provide the same amount of information and thus subtitle omission will not be possible. For example, if the other modes are not present or if the information they carry is not conclusive enough. It is of the utmost importance that the audience understands how the story develops. Therefore, the translator should not take changes and only use this method if he or she is entirely certain that the audience will be able to follow the narrative. If information transfer to other modes is found, chances are that this will influence the presence of translation universals. The exclusion of data already points to simplification and there are probably more translation universals to be found when actual examples are further examined (this will be done in chapter 3).

2.4 Subtitle Constraints

Audiovisual translation differs from other forms of translation in that it is subject to a number of constraints. These constraints force the translator to make certain translation decisions that

perhaps would not have been made if these constraints were not connected to the translation of subtitles. Paola Guardini provides a list of three different categories of constraints that influence the translation of audiovisual products. These include the technical constraints, the textual constraints and the linguistic constraints.

Technical constraints are concerned with the "time and space of presentation, imposed by the original work" (Guardini 97). In subtitling, the constraints of the number of characters per subtitle line with a maximum of two lines per six to seven seconds belong to this category. The amount of time that two subtitle lines can be displayed on screen varies according to the speed of speech and the way in which the visuals are edited but six to seven seconds is the average duration (zelfstandige ondertitelaars).

The second group of constraints are what Guardini refers to as textual constraints. These constraints exist due to "the presence of the visual and verbal elements of the original, the spatial constraints implying the reduction of the original, and, the change in medium" (Guardini 97). This category of constraints is connected to the technical constraints because the time and space constraints may require the translator to dramatically shorten the text. If a speaker in a film or television program uses a large number of words in a short amount of time the translator is forced to reduce the word count in his or her translation in order to comply with the technical constraints. Also, in accordance with Ying-Ting's theory, the visuals play a vital part in the narration of the story so the translator needs to pay close attention so as to avoid any inconsistencies between image and audio. Frederic Chaume supports this notion by saying that "audiovisual translation differs from other types of translation in that the non-existence of an image tied to the verbal text in these other types allows for free translation of an existing sentence, or a play with words, or a joke, for example, without this causing errors of coherence within the semiotic construction of the target text" (Chaume 19). The images limit the translator's freedom because the presence of

the images requires the audio to remain as close to the source text as possible. This may, ultimately, lead to a loss of stylistic features in the target text. Wordplay or other forms of humor might be lost in subtitle translation if the visuals reduce the translator's translation options.

The final category of constraints found in audiovisual translation are the linguistic constraints. Guardini divides this category into two subcategories namely the 'intra-linguistic', which deals with the "differences in syntax and grammar between the two language" and the 'extra-linguistic' explained as the "problems referring to the surrounding reality" (Guardini 97). Intra-linguistic constraints deal with grammatical and syntactical issues of which an equivalent does not exists in the target language. In such cases, translators have to devise other grammatical constructions in order to realize a satisfactory translation. Extra-linguistic constraints are concerned with the source and target culture. All text types are influenced by the culture in which the author resides. These cultural influences will not be consciously noticed by an audience with the same cultural background. However, these features will be noticed by a foreign audience who are not familiar with the customs of the source culture. The translator needs to provide the missing information in order to avoid a confused audience. John Denton elaborates:

> While members of the source speech community are expected to draw upon their background knowledge, which source text producers take for granted, to fill in the parts of a text that are not made explicit, when the same text is processed in a translated version and source culture specificity is foregrounded, unless the translator supplies information that he/she considers unavailable to the majority of the new target language reader/viewership, misunderstanding, misinterpretation and even bewilderment can occur (Denton 28).

Again, this might prove a challenge when the technical constraints of space and time are also taken into account. Information concerning the cultural background needs to be added but information also needs to be removed because the dialogue is often too long to fit into the double subtitle lines.

2.5 Subtitle Creation

The information that has been used for this section deals with the creation of subtitles in the Netherlands. The website of the Beroepsvereniging van Zelfstandige Ondertitelaars, the Dutch professional association for independent subtitlers, is written in Dutch so the data has been translated for the purpose of this thesis. It is quite possible the subtitling procedures are quite different in other countries but since this thesis focuses on Dutch subtitles the information on the Dutch working method is the most relevant for this research.

When a new program needs to be provided with subtitles the translator first has to download the film, television series or other form of multimedia from an ftp-server. The script, if available, will be mailed to the translator and will only have a supportive role. The film of television program will be translated by using computer software that is especially designed for the creation of subtitles. The actual translation process starts with the translator watching the entire program inside the subtitle software. The software adds a timer to the program so the translator can easily confirm at which moment a person in the program starts to speak. During the viewing, the translator captures this timecode by simply clicking the corresponding button. Now, the subtitles for that particular piece of dialogue have a starting time. The translator presses that same button again, as soon as another person speaks and now the first subtitles have an ending time and the second subtitles have a starting time. This process is continued until the end of the television program. The reaction time that the

translator requires between the moment of hearing the person speak and actually pressing the button is the reason why all subtitles are delayed by approximately half a second. The translator now compensates this by moving all the subtitles half a second backward at the same time so no inconsistencies between individual subtitles occur. Now the framework for the subtitles is ready and the translator can start the translation. He or she listens to the utterances and translates them one by one. In the Netherlands, different subtitle companies maintain different rules as to how many characters may be present on a single subtitle line. The 'Beroepsvereniging for Zelfstandige Ondertitelaars' maintains a space restriction of 38 characters per line while 'inVision Ondertiteling BV' uses 42 characters per line "Hoe ondertitelen werkt" and "Huisstijlregels inVision". The subtitling software will warn the translator if this limitation is violated. Due to the average reading speed, ten to eleven characters can be displayed on screen every second. Every subtitle can contain two lines per screen so the 76 to 84 characters in total can be displayed on screen for a maximum of six to seven seconds. Therefore a lot of dialogue needs to be cut, sometimes more than half of the dialogue. Translations for words like 'Yes', 'No', 'Thank you' and proper names are also often left out. When the entire program has been translated, the translator will conduct one final review to ascertain that no mistakes have been made. If the entire program looks satisfying the translator will finally email the file to the commissioner. The translation and subtitling of a 90-minute show will take approximately four to five days to complete (zelfstandige ondertitelaars).

It is interesting to note that the Dutch subtitling procedures appear to vary considerably from foreign practices. Diana Sanchez, a Spanish scholar and subtitler, remarks that in her experience subtitle translation is carried out by using a transcription of the entire dialogue. "For example, the directors' commentaries often included in DVDs […] very seldom arrive with a dialogue list. The subtitler therefore has to transcribe the entire text

before it can be translated. Of course, the option exists to have the translator work by ear, but this is not an option we consider (Sanchez 16). This practice differs remarkably from the previously discussed Dutch standards. In the Netherlands, it is rare for a subtitle translator to receive a script at all, let alone a script that completely corresponds to the actual dialogue. Dutch subtitlers translate by ear and the script functions as a backup. In Spain, contrarily, this practice is completely reversed because the script functions as primary source for translation while the audio maintains a secondary position. To me, the Dutch practice seems more sensible, especially if a script is prone to inconsistencies with the spoken discourse. When the actual dialogue functions as the primary source for translation there exists no possibility that the subtitles will include unintentional mistakes. Of course, the quality of the scripts received by the translators in Spain is unknown. If the dialogue lists and the dialogue in the film or television series are a one hundred percent match this option would present the best alternative. Translating from script is less time consuming than translating by ear because the translator is able to re-read the sentence as often as necessary. When translating by ear, the translator might need to rewind the sentence numerous times and the motions to rewind a video file will take more time than simple reverting the eyes back to the beginning of the sentence. Also, a script contains the written words while the dialogue might be hard to interpret due to the deliverance of a sentence. If the actor mumbles or uses a heavy accent it might be difficult for the translator to interpret what is actually being said. Simply reading the correct words from paper will dramatically decrease work time.

We have seen that subtitle creation requires a translator to do more than simply translate the source text. Audiovisual texts possess multiple channels like visual, auditory and verbal that all have to be closely monitored if a satisfactory translation is desired. On the other hand, various constraints limit the translator's options. It seems Henrik Gottlieb was not exaggerating in his praise; a subtitler really should be a jack-of-all-trades.

Chapter 3 Research: Translation Universals in *Sherlock*

3.1 Introduction

The television series *Sherlock* is a modern adaptation of the classic Sherlock Holmes stories, written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, was published in 1887 whilst the last story was released to the public in 1927. Sherlock Holmes is a genius consulting detective who excels in solving crimes by deducting evidence from seemingly trivial matters, such as muddy shoes or an ink-stained sleeve. However, his brilliant intellect is countered by his poor social skills. The stories are narrated by his friend Dr. John Watson, a general practitioner who suffers from an injury he received whilst being an army doctor in the war with Iraq. Together, Sherlock and Watson solve crimes that tend to lean towards the bizarre.

Steven Moffat, writer and co-creator of *Sherlock*, remarks that "Sherlock Holmes is one of a kind: whilst other detectives have cases, Holmes has adventures" (Press Pack Moffat). This might well be why Sherlock Holmes has been such a success throughout the years. *Sherlock* is one of the more recent versions in the impressive list of audiovisual adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes novels. In fact, these adaptations have been so numerous that the character Sherlock Holmes "has been awarded a world record for the most portrayed literary human character in film & TV" by Guinness World Records (Guinness World Records). In total, 254 productions have been shown on television and in cinemas and over 75 actors have played the role of the wayward consulting detective (Guinness World Records). His onscreen debut took place in 1900, whilst television series like *Sherlock* and *Elementary* are currently still running (IMDB). This ongoing interest clearly shows that Sherlock Holmes has been a beloved character ever since his creation in 1887.

3.2 *Sherlock*: the Television Series

Sherlock is a 90-minute, incredibly fast-paced television show created and written by Steven Moffat, Mark Gatiss and occasional guest writers. In the United Kingdom, the series is broadcasted on BBC One with the first series commencing on 10 July 2010, the second series on 1 January 2012 and the third and most recent on 1 January 2014 with each season containing three episodes of 90-minutes. The most apparent difference between the original works by Conan Doyle and this modern adaptation is that whilst the Conan Doyle stories are set in Victorian London, *Sherlock* takes place in a contemporary, 21st century London. Steven Moffat argues that this update does not interfere with the true essence of the original: "Everything that matters about Holmes and Watson is the same. Conan Doyle's stories were never about frock coats and gas light; they're about brilliant detection, dreadful villains and blood curdling crimes and frankly, to hell with the crinoline." (Moffat Press Pack).

Since the original Victorian setting has been swapped for a modern London, the extraordinary characters are the focal points of Sherlock. And indeed, the two protagonists are certainly exceptional. Sherlock Holmes being a cold, calculating, arrogant consulting detective who is delighted when yet another corpse is found. In the very first episode, *A Study in Pink* (S1E1) Sherlock cries out "Four serial suicides and now a note! Oh, it's Christmas!" (Study in Pink). But yet he goes to extraordinary lengths to protect the people he loves. In the final episode of season 3 *His Final Vow* (S3E3), Sherlock kills a news broker who threatens to publish the dark past of John's wife Mary. He shoots the man in presence of the police, therefore sacrificing himself in favor of John and Mary's welfare. Gatiss explains that "he [Sherlock] is a mass of contradictions and that makes him fascinating. He's cold, aloof, arrogant, dangerous, therefore, absolutely magnetically attractive" (Interview Gatiss).

Out of all Sherlock's peculiar habits the deductions will probably provide the most problems for a subtitle translator. They are littered with marked words, the sentences are

remarkably long and are delivered at incredible speed. Benedict Cumberbatch, the actor who portrays Sherlock, admits that these deductions are very hard to get right: "The deductions, they're fantastic. They're sort of show-stopping pieces. They are hell to do, because however well you learn them, you have to deliver them faster than you can think. Everything just comes out as one linear thought and it's a stream of consciousness almost" (Sherlock Uncovered). Since the word count in these deductions is incredibly high the subtitler will most certainly be forced to omit information. In all probability, the vital information that moves the narrative along will be maintained in the subtitles whilst nonessential information will be the first to be deleted. And indeed, research has shown that the majority of translations universals are present in the deductions. However, the number of words in these deductions is so high that they take up too much space in this thesis. Also, the deductions do not provide data that cannot be found in other dialogues so I have chosen to exclude an example from this thesis.

Sherlock's companion, John Watson, on the other hand, seems to be simpler man than Sherlock. He is modest and considerate and he tries to improve people's lives by healing the sick as a general practitioner. Mark Gatiss argues that "when we first join them [Sherlock and John] he [John] was a lost soul and Sherlock gives him back his mojo. And he comes to understand that that's what he needs I think, he's never going to settle for a quite domestic life in general practice. So they complement each other" (Moffat Gatiss Video Interview). The idiom 'opposites attract' certainly applies to these two men because Sherlock and John are best friends, despite their apparent differences. John Watson, in contrast to Sherlock can be seen as a 'normal man'. His personality will probably hardly influence his vocabulary and the subtitler will therefore have little extra problems to deal with. However, John is the narrator of the stories and thus the viewer (or reader) essentially is John Watson. Martin Freeman argues that John is "Sherlock's eyes on the world, but also the world's eyes on Sherlock: everything

is filtered through John" (Press Packs Freeman). In the first season, John is absolutely flabbergasted by Sherlock's ability of deduction. In later episodes, he is used to this behavior and actually humorously criticizes Sherlock for being a show-off. This exactly mimics the viewers' disposition towards Sherlock "Part of what attracted me to this version of Sherlock is the fact that, as in the original Conan Doyle stories, Watson is the story-teller. You're experiencing these adventures through Watson's eyes and through Watson's words" (Press Packs Freeman). It will be interesting to see whether John's role in the narrative will provide subtitling issues.

3.3 Translation Universals in *Sherlock*

In the following section, the information on translation universals that has been presented in chapter one will be connected to the principles of subtitling provided in chapter two. The television series *Sherlock* will function as the corpus for this research. Below the reader will find a short summary of these translation universals for easy reference. The translation universals used in this thesis are:

- Explicitation: translation is more specific and clarifies obscurities of source text (Mauranen 38).
- Simplification: translation makes use of less complicated language features such as grammar and lexical choices (qtd. in Pym 317).
- Normalization: translation corrects certain languages mistakes or marked constructions (Baker 244).
- Omission of repetition.
- Exaggeration of target language features: translation "makes use of certain linguistic constructions present in the target language that make up for the fact that these characteristics do not feature in the source text" (qtd. in Baker 245).

- Law of growing standardization: marked or uncommon language features found in a source text have a large probability of being replaced by a less marked or more common language feature in the target text (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 268).
- Law of interference. Translations possess language features that can also be found in the source text. These language features are divided into negative and positive transfer (Toury "Descriptive Translation" 275).

One by one the translation universals will be examined by looking at their behavior over the course of the nine episodes of *Sherlock*. Only the most striking instances of all types of translation universals will be examined because space does not allow to examine every single occurrence in detail. The provided examples are presented in a table with two windows. In the left window, the English utterance can be read while the right window shows the accompanying Dutch subtitles. If an English sentence does not have a Dutch counterpart it simply means that the utterance has not been translated.

3.3.1 Explicitation

The first universal up for scrutiny is explicitation. This universal predicts that translations include more information than the source text. However, chapter two has shown that subtitles tend to leave out information in order to conform to the space constraints. Explicitation thus appears to be in conflict with the space constraint and it therefore seems unlikely that this translation universal will be found in subtitles. This research, however, has proven otherwise.

The Blind Banker, S1E2, presents the first interesting case of explicitation. In this scene, Sherlock and John discuss graffiti signs that have been left in an office building in order to threaten one of the employees.

John: Some sort of code?	John: Zou het een gecodeerde boodschap zijn?

As we can see, the Dutch translation is a lot more explicit than the English original. First, the translation makes use of the verb ‘zou zijn’ whereas the source text does not include any verb at all. This verb addition creates a complete grammatically correct interrogative sentence where the original only makes use of noun phrase. The inflection in John’s voice is the only signal that his utterance is a question. This makes the translation much more formal than the original utterance. Second, the noun ‘code’ has been translated with the phrase ‘gecodeerde boodschap’ which is an explicitation because the inclusion of the noun ‘boodschap’ explains the function of the word ‘code’. The reason for this grammatical and lexical explicitation remains unclear because the literal translation ‘Een soort code?’ would have sufficed in meaning and this translation would have been more faithfulness to the source text than the current translation.

Another instance of explicitation can be found in S1E3, *The Great Game*. In this particular scene, John (by Sherlock’s orders) investigates the peculiar circumstances that surround the death of a man called Andrew ‘Westie’ West. The following quote belongs to his fiancée, Lucy Harrison.

Lucy Harrison: I knew Westie. He was a good man. He was my good man.	Lucy Harrison: Ik kende Westie. Hij was een goed mens. Een goed mens, en mijn man.

The source text makes use of repetition and the fact that the word ‘man’ is a homonym. First. Lucy tells John that her fiancée did not do anything wrong; he was a good human being. Next, she makes her sentence more personal by changing the article ‘a’ into the possessive adjective ‘my’ to show that Westie was her fiancée and that she loved him. In Dutch, ‘man’ also has the same two possible meanings. So even though a literal translation of the source text is possible

the chosen translation is understandable because the Dutch equivalent of the English idiom ‘a good man’ is ‘een goed mens’. The use of the Dutch idiom, and thus the word ‘mens’ requires a more explicit translation in order to show the audience what Lucy means. The chosen translation seems to be a good option because it maintains repetition, uses a correct Dutch idiom and still manages to convey the same message.

In S3E1 *The Empty Hearse,* we find another prominent example of explicitation. The following quote can be found in a scene in which John walks up to his flat in Baker Street. He is approached by two boys who push a dummy in a wheelchair and they ask John the following question:

Boys: Penny for the guy?	Jongens: Centje voor Guy Fawkes?

The explicitation can be found in the last part of the sentence but let us first briefly look at the first word, for there we can find an instance standardization. A penny, of course, is the smallest unit of the British currency. The translation, however, makes use of the word ‘centje’, the diminutive form of the smallest unit of the Euro. The diminutive form has probably been chosen because the two syllables make the sentence sound more natural. By using domestication, the translation is made to correspond to the Dutch currency customs and this instance therefore belongs to Toury’s translation universal standardization.

Let us return to explicitation. The boys asks John whether he has some money to give to ‘the guy’. At a later point in this episode, the audience finds out that a criminal organization wants the blow up the Houses of Parliament in imitation of the failed Gunpowder plot on 5 November 1605. ‘The guy’ the boys ask money for is thus a reference to Guy Fawkes, the man behind the Gunpowder Plot (BBC History). Residents of the United Kingdom are presumably familiar with the Gunpowder Plot but a fair amount of foreigners probably are not. The subtitles give the audience extra information by providing Guy Fawkes’s last name. The addition of ‘Fawkes’ makes explicit that the boys are not merely asking money for

'some' guy but that 'Guy' is a first name. The inclusion of his last name will make a larger audience aware of the significance of the boys' request. However, viewers who do not know who Guy Fawkes was will still not be any wiser.

Another instance of explicitation can be found in S3E1. In this scene, Sherlock and John are discussing the terrorist organization that is threatening the British nation. Suddenly, Sherlock understands who and what they are dealing with.

Sherlock: Not an underground network but an unground network!	Sherlock: Niet een ondergronds netwerk maar een Underground Netwerk.

Whilst the source text remains brilliantly ambiguous the subtitles already inform the audience about the solution. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, John Watson equals the audience. He is an ordinary man who reacts to Sherlock's genius with surprise and wonder, just like the audience does. This makes John an easily identifiable character. The look on John's face shows that he does not understand what Sherlock means but the subtitles already point out the difference between the two different networks. The subtitles make the solution explicit while the audience should remain in the dark just for a little while longer. Sherlock is the inimitable genius so it is only natural that the audience does not understand his reasoning before he explains it.

S1E1, *A Study in Pink* provides yet another example of explicitation. It can be found in a scene where Sherlock and John take their first look inside their new apartment, 221B Baker Street. During their conversation, John tells Sherlock he has done some research to find out more about Sherlock and his work.

John: I looked you up on the internet last night.	John: Ik heb je gisteren gegoogled.

The verb 'gegoogled' is an interesting translation choice because it is far more explicit than the English verb 'looking up'. The verb indicates that the speaker makes use of the internet

search engine ‘Google’. Google is undoubtedly the most popular search engine on the Internet and ‘to google’ has become a commonly accepted verb for searching the internet for information. (Sullivan and OED). One reason why this verb has been chosen is because the verb ‘googlen’ reduces the phrase ‘to look up on the internet’ into a single word. This results in a shorter translation that leaves more time to watch the images. Another reason, might be the fact that the verb ‘googlen’ is simply more idiomatic Dutch.

The final instance of explicitation discussed in this thesis can be found in the following quote by John Watson.

John: Nice part of town.	John: Leuk stukje Londen.

This sentence occurs in S1E3, in which John and Sherlock walk through a shady part of London. It is interesting to see that the subtitles make use the city’s name whilst the source text remains less explicit. *The Great Game* is the third episode of *Sherlock* that has been broadcasted. After three episodes, viewers will be well aware that this television series is set in the British capital. It remains unclear why ‘London’ was chosen as translation because ‘Leuk stukje stad’ or ‘Leuk deel van de stad’ would have been perfectly fine as well.

Explicitation is thus used in *Sherlock*’s subtitles to explain background information. In some instances, this achieves a positive effect. Examples of this are the ‘Guy Fawkes’ and the ‘Westie’ example. In other instances, explicitation is not really necessary or downright undesirable. Especially the fourth example about the underground network explains too much information. It provides information that the viewer should not be made aware of just yet. Example five has shown that explicitation does not necessary mean longer sentences. The verb in the subtitles of this example contained more information than the verb in the source text and was also more concise. Thus, explicitation occurred more often in subtitles than expected.

3.3.2 Simplification

The translation universal simplification, on the other hand, did occur as expected. It is by far the most common translation universal found in the subtitles of *Sherlock*. The space constraint that is part of subtitling is the most common source of this phenomenon. The following example will demonstrate this clearly. In the opening scene of S1E1 *A Study in Pink,* a man and woman are discussing their friend who refuses to leave the bar with them.

Man: Is she still dancing? Woman: Yeah, if you could call it that.	Man: Staat ze nog steeds te dansen? Vrouw: Ja, zoiets.

As we can see, the woman's reply is much simpler in the subtitles than it is in the source text. The space constraint is the cause of this simplification. Had the woman's reply been literally translated into: 'Ja, als je het zo zou kunnen noemen' the number of characters would have exceeded the space limit. The actual translation is a good alternative because it captures the essence of the message whilst remaining within the limits of the space constraints.

Another conversation that features a fair amount of simplification can be found in S1E2 *The Blind Banker.* In this conversation, Sherlock and John talk to Sebastian Wilkes, a man who was a fellow student of Sherlock. Wilkes wants to hire Sherlock to investigate a crime, but first they discuss their time at university and Sherlock's deduction skills. The subtitles have been presented as they appear on screen; two lines of two sentences.

Sebastian Wilkes: Put the wind up everybody. We hated it. You'd come down for breakfast in the formal hall and this freak knew you'd been shagging the previous night. Sherlock: I simply observed.	Sebastian Wilkes: Bloed irritant. Dan zat je met z'n allen te ontbijten… En hij wist met wie je het gedaan had. Sherlock: Ik keek gewoon goed.

When comparing the source text to the target text it immediately becomes apparent that the translation features a lot less text. Especially Wilkes's text has been cut dramatically. His first two lines, which express his feelings about Sherlock's ability, are combined into one statement in the translation. His third sentence illustrates why he and other students were not very fond of Sherlock's behavior. Even though the translation captures the essence of the message, it fails to maintain the flavor of the original. This third sentence contains a number of lexical words that really make Wilkes's story come alive: breakfast, formal hall, freak, shagging, and previous night. Unfortunately, the only word from this list the translation makes use of is 'breakfast', albeit as a verb instead of a noun. The other words all have disappeared from the story, resulting in a rather flat and dull anecdote. The space constraint is most probably the major factor in the simplification of this passage. The actual translation makes it possible to feature the entire story plus Sherlock's reaction inside two subtitle screens of two lines per screen. Wilkes tells his story rather quickly so dramatically cutting down the text was probably the only possible solution. The translation maintains the core of the story so viewers will completely understand what Wilkes's is talking about. However, it remains unfortunate that an audience with no knowledge of the English language whatsoever will miss out on the nuances and details of this little anecdote.

The following example will show another instance where simplification occurs in subtitles due to the space constraint. The following quote is taken from S1E3 *The Reichenbach Fall*. In the scene, Sherlock is rewarded for retrieving a lost painting with a pair of cufflinks. Sherlock, however, does not appreciate his award.

Sherlock: Diamant cufflinks. All my cuffs have buttons.	Sherlock: Diamanten manchetknopen. Overbodig.

The Dutch translation presents a single word where the source text features an entire sentence. The Dutch word 'overbodig' is the conclusion that is reached when looking at Sherlock's

original utterance. All his cuffs have buttons, therefore the gift of cufflinks are superfluous. The translation also excludes information for viewers with no knowledge of English. While it will be obvious that Sherlock receives cufflinks, the subtitles do not make clear why he thinks the gift unnecessary. The original text, on the other hand, does point out the reason behind his comment. The fact that Sherlock's answer has been simplified into a single word again probably originates from the fact that the subtitles would become too long to still fit inside the space limit. It is, however, unfortunate that the reason behind Sherlock's rude comment is lost to the foreign audience.

In *Sherlock*, simplification also occurs when repetition is present in the same conversation. The following conversation takes place in S1E1, when Sherlock and John take their first look inside 221B Baker Street and speak with their landlady Mrs. Hudson.

Mrs. Hudson: There's another bedroom upstairs if you'd be needing two bedrooms. John: Of course, we'll be needing two.	Mrs. Hudson: Er is nog een slaapkamer boven als u er twee nodig hebt. John: Uiteraard.

The need for two bedrooms is already translated in Mrs. Hudson's utterance. John's repetition of the sentence is probably not translated because it does not add any new information to the narrative. If his repetition would have also have been translated it only would take viewers more time to read the subtitles; time that could also be spend watching the images. Therefore the deletion of unimportant repetition is a sensible translation strategy.

Another instance of simplification due to repetition occurs in S1E3 *The Great Game*. Here, inspector Lestrade repeats Sherlock when he proclaims he has seven ideas as to what might have happened to the deceased found at a crime scene.

Lestrade: Any ideas? Sherlock: Seven. So far. Lestrade: Seven?	Lestrade: Wat zegt je gevoel? Sherlock: Zeven dingen. Tot nu toe.

As the table above shows, no repetition is found in the subtitles. Again, the most probable reason for this omission is that Lestrade's remark does not any new information to the story. His comment just signals that he is baffled that Sherlock has seven ideas while he does not have a clue what has happened to the victim. Again, the fact that the repetition is not present in the subtitles means less reading and more viewing time.

Other frequent instances of simplification throughout *Sherlock* is that, in accordance with the claim of the freelance subtitlers in chapter two, proper names and remarks like 'yes' and 'no' are almost always left out of the subtitles. This is especially the case when 'yes' or 'no' is used as a word sentence. The following scene, found in S1E1 *A Study in Pink*, provides examples of this form of simplification.

Sherlock: You're a doctor.	Sherlock: Je bent arts.
In fact, you're an army doctor.	Je bent zelfs legerarts.
John: Yes.	
Sherlock: Any good?	Sherlock: Beetje een goeie?
John: Very good.	John: Een hele goeie.
Sherlock: Seen a lot of injuries then.	Sherlock: Dus veel verwondingen gezien.
Violent deaths.	Dood door geweld.
John: Yes.	
Sherlock: Bit of trouble too, I bet.	Sherlock: En de nodige ellende gekend.
John: Of course, yes.	John: Uiteraard.
Enough for a lifetime. Far too much	Genoeg voor een mensenleven. Meer dan genoeg.
Sherlock: Wanna see some more?	Sherlock: Wil je nog meer?
John: Oh god, yes.	John: Heerlijk.

Sorry, Mrs. Hudson, I'll skip the tea. Hop out!	Mrs. Hudson, geen thee. We gaan.
Mrs. Hudson: Both of you?	Mrs. Hudson: Allebei?
Sherlock: Possible suicides? Four of them? There's no point sitting at home when there's finally some fun going on!	Sherlock: Bizarre zelfmoorden? Vier? Eindelijk gebeurt er weer iets leuks.
Mrs. Hudson: Look at you, all happy. It's not decent.	Mrs. Hudson: Je straalt helemaal. Dat is niet netjes.
Sherlock: Who cares about decent? The game, Mrs. Hudson, is on!	Sherlock: Wat zou dat. Het spel is begonnen.

In the example above, the word 'yes' is not translated in all three instances of usage. Also, 'Mrs. Hudson' is left out of the subtitles in Sherlock's last line. A reason for this omission might be the inclusion of her name in the subtitles of an earlier line uttered by John. Therefore, simplification due to repetition might have been the reason for the omission of Mrs. Hudson's name in Sherlock's final line. However, the space limit is probably the primary reason for the deletion because Mrs. Hudson's line and Sherlock's line are presented simultaneously and this does not allow room for information.

Another interesting feature of the last example is the use of punctuation marks. As we can see, question marks are repeated in the subtitles whilst exclamation marks are left out. The difference between the uses of these punctuation marks can probably be connected to the fact that interrogative sentences are not grammatically correct if a question mark is not included. Exclamation marks, however, do not possess this feature. They merely signal the volume at which a sentence is uttered. Therefore, the omission of exclamation marks do not make sentences ungrammatical. The audience will be able to hear the volume of the actor's voice and will therefore be able to decide whether he is yelling or speaking. This corresponds

to the subtitling rules provided by inVision Ondertiteling BV which prescribe the omission of exclamation marks (huisstijlregels inVision).

The final example of simplification that will be considered is found in S3E2 *The Sign of Three.* This instance of simplification concerns the resolving of ambiguity. In episode S3E2, John is getting married to his fiancée Marry. Sherlock, being John's best friend, is the Best Man. Hence, he has to deliver a speech and in this speech he discusses several interesting cases that he and John have come across. One of which is 'The elephant in the room.'

Sherlock: The elephant in the room.	Sherlock: De olifant in de kamer.

The images that accompany this particular line show Sherlock and John looking astonished into a living room. The audience does not see what the two men are looking at but the accompanying sound of a trumpeting elephant suggests there is in fact an elephant in the room. In English, 'the elephant in the room' is an idiom that means that there is an obvious truth that no one wants to talk about. In Dutch, however, the translation of this phrase does not possess the same metaphorical meaning. So in this example, not the actual text but the meaning has been simplified. The fact that an elephant's trumpet is heard makes a literal translation is possible. However, it results in a simplified version of the source text because the ambiguity is lost.

The subtitles of *Sherlock* feature numerous instances of simplification. Research has shown that simplification occurs with repetition, as a summary of the original utterance due to the space constraint, and to resolve ambiguity. Overall, simplification provides positive as well as negative aspects to subtitles. The positive aspect is a minimum number of subtitles which results in an increased amount of time to watch the actual images. The negative aspect is the loss of flavor because nonessential dialogue parts are deleted. The vital narrative elements remain but heavy simplification produces a rather flat narrative.

3.3.3 Normalization

Normalization is also a translation universal that is heavily featured in *Sherlock*. In S1E2 *The Blind Banker* we find our first example. This particular instance is uttered by Sherlock in a conversation with John about searching through dirty laundry.

Sherlock: Problem?	Sherlock: Is er een probleem?

The source language consists of a single word whilst the Dutch translation provides a complete sentence. Of course, both versions are identical in meaning but the subtitles have been normalized to formulate the entire question. The addition of function words provides the reader with a translation that mimics everyday speech and the subtitles are therefore less marked than the original. However, in my opinion, this addition does not improve the translation. Sherlock's bluntness is one of his primary character features. By turning his impolite question into a polite question he loses some of his personality. Therefore I believe that a literal translation would have been a better option because it maintains Sherlock's personality and it also does not affect the audience ability to understand the narrative.

This previous example is not the only instance of normalization of Sherlock's speech that can be found throughout the series. The following examples show different responses to other characters or events. The first quote can be found in S1E2 whilst the other three are found in S1E3.

Sherlock: Exactly.	Sherlock: U snapt het.
Sherlock: Elegant.	Sherlock: Wat een verfijning
Sherlock: Address.	Sherlock: Geef ons een adres.
John: People come to him wanting to fix a crime up, like booking a holiday? Sherlock: Novel.	John: Kun je misdrijven bij hem bestellen zoals je een vakantie boekt? Sherlock: Je moet er maar op komen.

These four examples are exclamations by Sherlock that have been normalized in order to make his intentions more straightforward to the audience. Regrettably, this normalization diminishes his bluntness and therefore his personality. The top three examples could easily have been translated with the one word Dutch term. 'Precies', 'Elegant' and 'Adres' respectively. The fourth example, however, is more complicated and the chosen translation is understandable because Dutch does not possess an equivalent term for the word 'novel' in this context.

The Great Game, S1E3, provides yet another example of normalization that influence Sherlock's personality. In this scene, Sherlock is too busy looking through a microscope to get his phone out of his jacket so he asks John for help.

Sherlock: Pass me my phone. John: Where is it? Sherlock: Jacket.	Sherlock: Mag ik m'n mobiel? John: Waar heb je die? Sherlock: In m'n jasje.

The comical aspect of this scene is that Sherlock is wearing the jacket he is referring to. So John has to lean over and take Sherlock's phone out of his pocket. Not only does Sherlock ask John (who is on the other side of the room) to pass something that is within easy reach he also asks it very impolitely. His utterance is not even a question; it is an order. However, this aspect is lost in the Dutch translation. Sherlock's first line has been changed from an imperative sentence into an interrogative sentence. This adjustment increases the politeness of Sherlock's request and this therefore decreases the bluntness of his character. The same goes for the addition of 'in m'n' in his second utterance. Again, the single word answer to John's question is made less crude by adding grammatical words which results in a reduction of Sherlock's rudeness.

A final example where Sherlock's typical way of speaking has been normalized occurs in S1E2. With this line, Sherlock comment on John's idea to take his new girlfriend to the cinema.

Sherlock: Dull. Boring. Predictable.	Sherlock: Wat ontzettend saai.

Again, we see Sherlock's habit of using single word commentaries to express his opinion on certain events. The translation, however, fails to maintain this particular form by instead normalizing the three separate words into a phrase. This more conventional solution is unfortunate because it not only decreases Sherlock's personality but it also is completely unnecessary. For example, the translation 'Suf. Saai. Voorspelbaar.' would remain much closer to the source text and would also comply with Sherlock's unique manner of speaking.

However, Sherlock is not the only character who has been subjected to normalization. The language of a Chinese saleswoman who speaks broken English with a heavy Chinese accent also has been normalized into grammatical correct Dutch. The following scene is taken from S1E2 *The Blind Banker* in which Sherlock and John visit a small Chinese shop called 'The Lucky Cat'.

Chinese woman: You want lucky cat?	Chinese vrouw: Zoekt u een gelukskat?
John: No, thanks, no.	John: Nee, dank u wel.
Chinese woman: Ten pound, ten pound!	Chinese vrouw: Hij kost maar tien pond.
John: No.	John: Nee, hoor.
Chinese woman: I think your wife she will like!	Chinese vrouw: Uw vrouw is er vast heel blij mee.
John: No, thank you.	John: Nee, bedankt.

As we can see, there is a substantial difference between the grammar level of the Chinese woman in the source text and the target text. In the original text, the Chinese woman makes a variety of grammar mistakes. In the first sentence, the article before 'lucky cat' and the auxiliary verb 'do' are left out. In her second sentence, she fails to use the plural form of

'pound.' And in her last line, she changes the object of the verb 'will like' into its subject. These language mistakes provide the Chinese woman with a background story because these mistakes signal that she is not in the habit of conversing with English people. Therefore, customers of 'The Lucky Cat' will most probably be Chinese people. However, this information might not be apparent to a foreign audience because no grammar mistakes are present in the subtitles. The subtitles provide grammatical correct sentences that are also particularly polite. This politeness is another instances of normalization. Her knowledge about the English language is not sufficient to formulate formal sentences and her questions therefore sound rather rude. The subtitles, on the other hand, sound more polite because the woman uses complete sentences. Due to these two forms of normalization, the Chinese woman has been generalized into a more conventional character. The reason for this normalization remains speculation because no reference to correction of ungrammatical utterances in subtitles has been found. But an uneducated guess would be that the utterances have been normalized to improve readability. Some viewers might be bothered by ungrammatical subtitles and this will draw their attention away from the narrative.

Normalization in translation occurs throughout *Sherlock.* In the subtitles, characters with marked speech habits have been normalized in order to conform to a more standard form of language use. Unfortunately, this damages their unique personalities because their speaking patterns become more conventional. Especially Sherlock suffers from normalization because his way of speaking marks his exceptional intellect and arrogance. Due to normalization, these character features are less present in the subtitles than they are in the source text. This is regrettable because a Dutch audience will therefore miss a large portion of this brilliant character.

3.3.4 Repetition Omission

Previous examples have already shown that this translation universal is indeed present in the subtitles of *Sherlock* (simplification ex. 4 and 6). However, a few more examples will be discussed to gain further insight into this translation universal. In S3E2 *The Sign of Three* we find a good example of repetition omission. The following conversation takes place in a scene where Sherlock discusses wedding tradition with Archie, a young boy who is chosen to be the pageboy at John's wedding.

Sherlock: Basically, it's cute smile to the bride's side, cute smile to the groom's side, and then the rings.	Sherlock: Lachen naar de ene kant, naar de andere, dan de ringen.
Archie: No.	
Sherlock: And you have to wear the outfit.	Sherlock: En je draagt het pakje. Dat moet
Archie: No.	
Sherlock: You really do have to wear the outfit.	
Archie: What for?	Archie: Waarom?
Sherlock: Grownups like that sort of thing.	Sherlock: Grote mensen doen dat.
Archie: Why?	Archie: Waarom?
Sherlock: I don't know, I'll ask one.	Sherlock: Ik zal het eens vragen.

As we can see, the amount of text has been dramatically decreased in the translation by deleting the majority of the repetition in this passage. In Sherlock's first sentence, some repetition is maintained due to the linguistic construction of the first two clauses. However, the amount of repetition in the source text is much higher because the noun phrase 'cute smile' is not repeated and the subtitles do not explain to which 'sides' Sherlock is referring. In the source text, Sherlock's third sentence is an almost exact duplicate of his second sentence

but this repetition is completely lost in translation. The subtitles capture the meaning of Sherlock's utterance but the linguistic presentation is entirely different in the subtitles. The repetition in his fourth utterance is also excluded. The two three-word sentences starting with 'I' have been translated with one sentence that also fails to include that Sherlock does not understand why grownups like wedding tradition. Again, we find that the message of the utterance is maintained but the form in which it is presented has been simplified to fit into the space limit that is inextricably linked to subtitling. Due to the speed with which Sherlock and Archie are talking the conversation had to be compactly summarized in order to keep the dialogue and subtitles synchronized. Unfortunately, the humor of this scene is derived from the repetition and by deleting this aspect the scene loses most of its comical nature.

In this thesis research, omission of repetition does not seem to be a translation universal that stands on its own. The presence of repetition omission automatically gives rise to sentences that are simpler than the original. Therefore the line between the translation universal simplification and the omission of repetition seems to blur. Perhaps repetition omission can be seen as a subcategory of simplification because it is one of multiple forms of simplification.

3.3.5 Law of standardization

The next translation universal that will be examined is Toury's 'law of standardization.' This universal is heavily featured in *Sherlock,* especially in the vocabulary of Sherlock and his brother Mycroft. Mycroft is even more socially awkward and aloof than Sherlock and his vocabulary features a fair amount of marked words. The following quote is found in S1E3 *The Great Game.*

Mycroft: I'm afraid my brother can be very intransigent.	Mycroft: M'n broer is soms zo'n stijfkop.

First, let us look at the word ‘intransigent’ and its translation ‘stijfkop’. ‘Intransigent’ is a marked adjective which use fits Mycroft’s aloof personality perfectly. Its Dutch translation ‘stijfkop’, however, does not maintain any of the snobbishness of the original term. In fact, ‘stijfkop’ seems to be a word that someone as complacent as Mycroft would not even use because it is not an awfully eloquent term. It is also rather unfortunate that the clause ‘I’m afraid’ has not been included in the translation. This phrase signals that Mycroft regrets Sherlock’s actions and therefore indicates that he thinks himself above such behavior

Another instance of standardization of Mycroft’s marked speech takes place in S2E1 *A Scandal in Belgravia*. In this scene, Mycroft and John are about to enter *Speedy’s,* a small bar just outside 221B Baker Street.

John: You don’t smoke. Mycroft: I also don’t frequent cafes.	John: Je rookt niet. Mycroft: Ik kom ook niet vaak in café’s.

The use of the word ‘frequent’ as a verb seems to be a marked practice. However, none of this markedness can be found in the subtitles. Also, the use of the noun ‘cafes’ is a posh alternative for the words ‘bar’ or ‘coffee-house’. In Dutch, on the other hand, the term ‘café’ is the commonly used word to describe a place where people go to converse and drink some coffee. So again, we find that Mycroft eloquent choice of words is not mirrored in the subtitles.

Next, three examples of standardization in relation to Sherlock’s marked lexical choices will be looked at. The following example occurs in S1E2 *The Blank Banker.* In this dialogue, John is angry because Sherlock cracked the password of his laptop. Sherlock, however, is not impressed by the level of security.

Sherlock: Not exactly Fort Knox.	Sherlock: Veilig is anders.

The idiom ‘not exactly Fort Knox’ has been standardized in translation. Even though the Dutch translation ‘veilig is anders’ does maintain the meaning of Sherlock’s utterance, it does

not carry the same level of eloquence. This standardization has taken place because Dutch does not include an idiom of the same meaning and weight. ‘Veilig is anders’ seems to be the translation that manages to remain as close to the source text as possible. However, this translation still remains more general in comparison with the original utterance.

The next quote by Sherlock suffers from the same form of standardization. Again, S1E2 is the source of the following example:

Sherlock: This investigation would move a lot quicker if you were to take my word as gospel.	Sherlock: Dus het zou het onderzoek ten goede komen als u gewoon naar me luisterde.

Again, this example shows the standardization of an idiom. *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* states that by using the term ‘gospel truth’, the speaker means that “the absolute truth” has been said (Siefring). By applying this information to the example presented above, we understand that Sherlock means to say that the culprit will be caught much sooner if the police officer will listen carefully and do everything Sherlock says. As we can see, the subtitles include this information but fail to maintain the level of eloquence. Also, the translation makes Sherlock seem less arrogant and friendlier than the original text. ‘To take my word as gospel’ means complete obedience of the person the speaker is talking to, whilst the verb ‘listening’, the word the subtitles use, is not necessarily followed by obedience. Therefore, the subtitles have been standardized into a weaker translation of the source text.

The next example provides the final instance of standardization of marked vocabulary. The example is taken from S2E3 *The Reichenbach Fall.* Sherlock and John are discussing the presence of their names in newspaper articles and Sherlock is less than pleased about the way the papers describe him.

Sherlock: Boffin?! Boffin Sherlock Holmes.	Sherlock: Expert. ‘Expert Sherlock Holmes’.

Again, we find that the subtitles have standardized a marked term. ‘Expert’ essentially means the same as ‘boffin’, however the last term sounds more posh which is more in line with Sherlock’s personality. Once more, we find that the subtitles provide a translation that correspond to the meaning of the original text but have also been downgraded in their eloquence and markedness.

The final form of standardization that will be discussed is the standardization of culture specific terms and names. The first two examples revolve around the English system of public transport. The first examples originates from S1E3 *The Great Game,* whilst the second example is found in S2E3 *The Reichenbach Fall.*

Mycroft: He had an Oyster card but it hadn’t been used.	Mycroft: Hij had een treinabonnement maar dat heeft hij niet gebruikt.

In this sentence, the term that has been standardized in the subtitles is ‘Oyster Card.’ An Oyster card is “a plastic smartcard which can hold pay as you go credit, Travelcards and Bus & Tram season tickets. You can use an Oyster card to travel on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and most National Rail services in London” (Transport London). The Oyster card is a card that lets people make use of most forms of public transport in London. It is thus a specific English concept and this is most probably the reason why the term ‘Oyster card’ has not been used in the Dutch subtitles. The majority of Dutch people, especially those who have never been to London, have probably never heard of an ‘Oyster card’. It is therefore understandable that standardization has been used in order to make comprehensibility a certainty. By turning the term ‘Oyster card’ into ‘treinabonnement’, the subtitles make use of a term that is more general and will therefore be understood by a larger audience

The second example makes use of similar features as the previous example.

John: Jubilee line is handy.	John: Prima metroverbinding.

Again, we find that the more specific term ‘Jubilee line’ has been standardized into a more common term. There exists a large possibility that people outside London or the United

Kingdom are not familiar with the underground Jubilee line. ‘Metroverbinding’ therefore seems to be an understandable translation. Most often I find domestication to be a loss for a translation because the text loses some of its cultural-specific personality. The underground network plays such an important part in London society and the mention of the ‘Jubilee line’ makes the text more realistic. Nevertheless, comprehensibility remains the more important so ultimately, I agree with the subtitles.

The following example, taken from S1E3, will be the final instance of standardization. In the final scene from this episode, Sherlock meets his biggest adversary, Moriarty. Earlier in the episode, John was abducted by Moriarty and in this final scene he is finally released, albeit with a bomb belt bound around his body. When Moriarty threatens Sherlock, John, being a loyal friend, sacrifices himself by holding Moriarty down in order for Sherlock to escape. Moriarty, however, has anticipated this and snipers point their rifles at Sherlock. Defeated, John releases his hold on Moriarty. Moriarty, in turn, checks his suit to see if everything is still in one piece whilst muttering the following phrase:

Moriarty: Westwood.	Moriarty: Duur pak.

Moriarty’s utterance refers to the brand name of his suit. Apparently, he wears a suit by designer Vivienne Westwood, whose suits for men cost approximately €1500.- a piece (Westwood). So, the translation of Moriarty’s assertion ‘duur pak’ is not too far off. The brand name has been standardized into an explanation as to why Moriarty is concerned about the well-being of his suit. However, I do not think that this standardization was necessary. Perhaps not all viewers will be aware of the meaning of Westwood but a native audience will have the same problem. Moreover, Moriarty’s accompanying hand gestures make it clear that he is talking about his suit. Also, the fact that he tells which brand he is wearing tells the audience about Moriarty’s personality. A few seconds before Moriarty says ‘Westwood’ he was held by a man whose body was surrounded by bombs. This must have been a frightening

experience but all Moriarty cares about is the state of his suit. This clearly shows that Moriarty likes to brag about his outfit, as well as about his character. Westwood is an exclusive and expansive brand and his sole interest in his suit shows that he is in fact a lunatic who is not easily scared. Therefore, in my opinion, the subtitles should have maintained the word 'Westwood' because this term is more specific, and it therefore better reflects Moriarty's personality.

Standardization is thus a translation universal that is commonly found in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* Perhaps other television shows will feature a smaller amount of standardization because *Sherlock* does include a variety of characters who make use of marked vocabulary. It is quite possible that a sit-com, for example, will feature less standardization because those characters tend to be more general and will probably use more general language. Again, this translation universal decreases personality features by using less marked terms in translation. Comparable to instances of simplification and normalization, standardization leaves the message of the utterance intact, but dulls the presentation.

3.3.6 Law of Interference

Toury's law of interference is the next translation universal that will be examined in this thesis. In the subtitles of *Sherlock,* interference always takes the form of a certain English term that has not been translated into Dutch. The first example can be found in S1E2. In this particular scene Sherlock and John question a graffiti artist. The man tells them about his current work.

Raz: I call it: Urban. Blood. Lust. Frenzy. John: Catchy.	Raz: Het heet 'urban.blood.lust.frenzy'. John: Geinige naam.

As we can see, the subtitles provide an English name for the graffiti piece amidst the Dutch translation. The name probably has not been translated because the work is of no further

importance to the story. The audience will not miss vital information if they do not understand the meaning of the name. Names can pose difficulties in translation because they play a fundamental part in someone's or something's identity. Translating names might be necessary if the name in question contains important information about a character, like a certain personality feature or a reference another person. However, as mentioned, the foreignization of the graffiti name does not have any consequences for the story so in this particular instance the viewers will not miss important information.

The following two examples of interference occur in S2E2 *The Hounds of Baskerville.* In this first example, Sherlock and John are discussing Sherlock's attempt to quit smoking.

Sherlock: John, I need some. Get me some.	Sherlock: John, ik heb wat nodig. Haal wat voor me.
John: No.	John: Nee.
Sherlock: Get me some.	Sherlock: Haal wat.
John: No. Cold Turkey we agreed, no matter what. Anyway, You paid everyone off, remember. No one within a two mile radius will sell you any.	John: Cold Turkey was de afspraak. Je hebt trouwens iedereen betaald. Niemand binnen een straal van drie kilometer verkoopt je iets.

'Cold Turkey' is a term that is used when an addict suddenly stops taking the substance he or she is addicted to. In Dutch, it is used as a loan word to describe the same phenomenon. Even though 'Cold Turkey' is a loan word, it is still a case of interference because a source language word is used in the translation.

Later in *The Hounds of Baskerville,* Sherlock is talking with Henry Knight, the man who claims to have seen 'the hound of Baskerville.' Sherlock wonders why he did not use the more common word 'dog'. "Strange choice of words, archaic. That's why I took the case" (Hounds of Baskerville).

Sherlock: Why did you say hound?	Sherlock: Waarom zei je ‘hound’?

The subtitles make use of the English term ‘hound’ where in earlier conversations ‘hound’ was always translated with ‘hond.’ The interference is necessary to make clear what Sherlock and Knight are talking about. They are discussing a particular English term and by translating this term the conversation would have lost its function. If Dutch would have had a more archaic synonym for ‘hond’ like ‘hound’ is for ‘dog’ in English, this term could have been used in order to show the audience the unconventionality of Knight’s word choice. However, this is not the case so interference of the source language was necessary in order to point out what Sherlock is talking about.

The final example of interference that will be examined occurs in S3E1 *The Empty Hearse.* John, has been abducted for the second time and the culprit sends his fiancée text messages with clues as to his whereabouts.

Text message: John is quite a guy.	Sms: John is een flinke Guy.

The abduction takes place on 5 November and the ‘guy’ in the text message is a reference to Guy Fawkes, the man behind the Gunpowder plot which has been discussed in a previous example. The English sentence ‘John is quite a guy’ draws little suspicious because this is quite a common phrase to express a positive opinion about someone. However, the Dutch translation immediately strikes as odd. Obviously, the translation of this sentence was rather difficult because the word ‘guy’ serves two distinct meanings. One is ‘guy’ as a synonym for ‘man’, and the other is the reference to Guy Fawkes. The translation wants to maintain this ambiguity by using interference but it results in a rather awkward sentence. However, this is a very difficult sentence to translate and better solutions are difficult to find because the English word ‘guy’ will always draw attention in a Dutch sentence. The law of interference is thus present in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* The source text interferes with the target text because the original English words are used in the Dutch translation.

Finally, before moving on to the translation universals that are not present in the subtitles of *Sherlock* I would like to briefly discuss Sherlock's deductions. As mentioned on page 33/34 these deductions include a high number of words delivered at incredible speed. These factors combined with the space constraint result in subtitles that only include the vital information of the deductions. Explicitation does not occur in the translation of the deductions because this universal includes the addition of information to explain obscurities. The high word count in the deductions simply do not provide space for additional clarifying information. The remaining translation universals discussed above are found in the deductions. But since these universals are already abundantly discussed I have elected to exclude an example of a deduction.

3.4 Translation Universals Not Present in *Sherlock*

The following section briefly looks at translation universals that are nor present in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* This absence, however, does not imply that these universals will not be found in subtitles of other television shows or films.

3.4.1 Sanitization

One instance of sanitization has been found throughout *Sherlock.* A single occurrence, however, is not enough to consider this a universally present translation phenomenon. The instance of sanitization occurs in S3E1 *The Empty Hearse*. In this episode, Sherlock returns to London after an absence of two years. The quote in question is taken from a scene in which the Holmes brothers discuss the actions of John Watson over the last two years.

Sherlock: Have you seen him? Mycroft: Oh yes, we meet up every Friday for fish and chips.	Sherlock: Heb je hem gezien? Mycroft: Ja, elke vrijdag in de snackbar.

This written form of the dialogue does not make clear that Mycroft is in fact being sarcastic towards Sherlock. What he means to say is that he obviously is not aware of John's actions because he does not follow his every move. The part of this dialogue that will be focused on is the collocation 'fish and chips'. As we can see, the target text presents a term that is more conventional to a Dutch audience. 'Fish and chips' is a typical English dish and going to 'the snackbar' can be seen as a Dutch equivalent because a 'snackbar' serves food similar to fish and chips. The translation makes use of a term that fits better in Dutch society. However, I do not think it was necessary to domesticize 'fish and chips' because a Dutch audience will be familiar with this classic English dish. Because this is the only instance of sanitization that has been found we cannot say that sanitization features as a translation universal in the subtitles of *Sherlock.*

3.4.2 Exaggeration of Target Language Features

Exaggeration of target language features did not feature in the corpus of this research. The space constraint of subtitles is probably the reason for the absence of this translation universal. This constraint often forces subtitles to be shorter than the source text and the deletion of information consequently prevents the inclusion of additional information. Of course, explicitation is subject to the same issue and this translation universal has been found in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* I think the reason for the presence of explicitation and the absence of exaggeration of target language features is that explicitation explains issues that might be obscure to a foreign audience. It serves to enhance the comprehensibility of the narrative. When exaggeration of target language features is found these target language features are repeated in order to make up for the fact that they are not present in the source text. This information is not vital to understand the narrative, but it functions to enhance the stylistics of a text. This translation universal might be present in, for example, poetry translation where target language features might ask for a different rhyme scheme. This research has shown that

subtitles often tend to be as concise as possible so exaggeration of target language features does not fit into this behavior.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the existence and behavior of translation universals in Dutch subtitles. In chapter one, I made some predictions as to which translation universals would be present in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* I predicted that simplification, normalization, repetition omission, standardization, interference, and sanitization would probably occur in subtitles. The reason for this prediction is that all these translation universals have a tendency to generalize and simplify a translation. Marked or uncommon language features tend to be replaced with less marked and more common language features. Since subtitles are subjected to the space constraint a large amount of source text has to be deleted from the translation. As the examples in chapter three have shown, in most instances of these translation universals the subtitles include a lower word count than the source text. Therefore, it can be argued that the prediction as to which translation universal would occur in the subtitles of *Sherlock* is mostly correct. Sanitization is the exception, however. Only one instance of this universal was found throughout the corpus. Even though this phenomenon occurs in *Sherlock* it cannot be included as a translation universal because one occurrence does not make this a universally occurring translation feature. However, it is entirely possible that sanitization will be found in other subtitles and that this corpus was simply unsuitable for a study in sanitization.

Aside from these six translation universals, I also predicted that two translation universals, namely explicitation and exaggeration of target language features would not be present in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* Both of these translation universals have a tendency to add information to a translation. In connection to the space constraint, I therefore predicted that these translation universals would not occur. However, this prediction did not prove to be entirely correct because explicitation did occur rather often. The examples of expliciation, discussed in chapter three, show that the presence of explicitation does not necessarily mean that the target text contains more words than the source text. In most instances, obscurities

could be clarified by maintaining a similar amount of words. Of course, some instances of expliciation showed a word count that was far higher than the original (example 1 and 3) but there was also an example of explicitation in which the word count was actually lower in the subtitles than in the source text (example 5).

Explicitation was present in the subtitles of *Sherlock* in contrast to my prediction. The translation universal exaggeration of target language features, however, did behave as expected. Even though both translation universals add information to a translation that is not present in the source text one is found in the subtitles of *Sherlock* while the other is not. The reason for this difference is probably that explicitation adds important information; information that explains obscurities to a foreign audience. Exaggeration of target language features, however, only adds information that does not play a vital role in the narrative. Due to the space constraint, subtitles do not possess enough space to incorporate such information and I therefore think that the translation universal exaggeration of target language features will not be easily found in subtitles.

This research has shown that translation universals do exist in subtitles. Out of eight translation universals discussed, six were present in the subtitles of *Sherlock.* The existence of the space constraint makes the presence of most of these translation universals inevitable. However, it remains unfortunate that the simplifying nature of most translation universals weakens a character's personality by imposing a more general vocabulary. In many films and television series this would not pose too many problems because many characters do not possess a distinct vocabulary. However, when characters with unique speaking patterns, like Sherlock and Mycroft, emerge, most translation universals weaken their personality by imposing a more common vocabulary.

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